

***The Meaning and Perception of Korean-Style Flower Arrangements:
A Marketing Strategy and Consumer Behaviour Pattern in Florist Business Development***

Magdalena Lestari Ginting, Pelita Harapan University, Indonesia
Fina Oktavianti, Bandung Institute of Technology, Indonesia

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Abstract

This study is important to determine the influence of Korean-style flower arrangements on the development of marketing communication strategies to support the development of florist businesses. Flower marketing activities using the Korean waves approach are the idea in developing a florist business. In this study, the interaction between humans uses the exchange of symbols that can be represented by flowers with their arrangements that have messages in their delivery. Korean and Indonesian cultures, although in the same Asian region, are different. The Symbolic Interaction Theory in this study focuses on the meaning given by human interaction both verbally and non-verbally into a symbol. Communication as an exchange of meaning is believed to be a way to accommodate people to convey their thoughts and feelings. The object of this study is Korean-style flower arrangements. The way of arranging flowers in this study has six principles that can be associated with their meaning to human interaction, namely proportional, balanced, focal point, rhythm, harmony, and unity. This study tries to interpret flowers as a symbol in Korean-style symbolic interaction and its influence on the market in Jakarta, Indonesia. The research method used is FGD using a qualitative approach. The research found that the meaning and perception of Korean-style flower arrangements can be used as a marketing strategy in the development of the florist business.

Keywords: Marketing Communication, Symbolic Interaction, Florist, Flower Arrangement, Korean Culture, Business Development

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Introduction

Background

The flower industry has increased along with the improvisation that occurs in the standard of living of the Korean people, with a geographical condition in the form of a peninsula of 223,000 km². The amount of production from floriculture shows that cut flowers per stem have the highest value in conveying their messages, then flowers arranged in pots, and flower arrangements with wooden ornaments (Kim, 1999).

Flowers have become one of the free trade commodities since 1981 with a tax rate of 25%, Korea carries out both imports and exports in this trade, among others, the most frequently imported are lilies. There are a number of prohibitions in this trade related to royalty charges from UPOV (The International Union for the Protection of New Varieties in Plants), for countries that are not members of UPOV. The pattern of flower consumption in Korea is on average used for ritual celebrations, which is up to 60%, for flower arrangement practice reaching 20%, for home decoration 10%, and office decoration 10% (Kim, 1999).

Relationships are cultural, because interactions depend on meaning and symbols, in different cultural perspectives (Larentis, 2019). This is also reaffirmed by Ellis that interactions are built on cultural premises (Ellis, 2006). Therefore, relationships involve different cultural meeting points (Plewa, 2009). In relation to the business world, there is an integrated perspective presented in the following chart:



Figure 1: Cultural Integration Image
(Source: Larentis, 2018)

In the early stages of cultural integration, especially from the customer perspective, there will be moments to share meaning, share symbols, openness to new ideas, frequency and quality of interactions, and the role of boundaries and leadership, past experiences and asymmetrical power are also seen. Then at the intermediate stage, cultural integration is seen in the existence of trust in certain information, actions or people, the existence of a commitment to act until a goal is achieved (Larentis, 2019).

Previous research related to flower arrangements in business and socio-cultural aspects has proven that there are positive impacts such as in the context of arrangements, such as increasing emotional stability and depression (Lee et al, 2000). Various colours of flowers that will be used for flower arranging activities can provide and develop a picture of the thoughts and actions of consumers (Kim, et al, 2018). With the various intersections of benefits obtained from this product, it is interesting to find a consumption pattern of basic consumer needs which can then be calculated into a business value.

A theory that can be used in this study is the Symbolic Interaction Theory by Herbert Mead and popularized by his student, namely Hebert Blumer. This theory explains that a person is motivated to act in response to the meaning of stimuli given by a person, object, and event (Blumer, 2004). This meaning appears in the language used when interacting in the context of interpersonal communication (West, 2018). Here are six assumptions of symbolic, namely: First, meaning is created in interactions between people, not the intrinsic meaning of any object or substance (West, 2018); Second, humans act towards others according to the meaning that others give to them; Third, an individual's self-concept is shaped by their interactions with others, which leads someone to manifest the Pygmalion effect (West, 2018); Cultural and social processes influence fourth, society and groups; and self-concept as the key to behavioural motivation (Aksana, 2009); Fifth, language is a collection of symbols, and Sixth, the way language works in this theory is to transfer meaning from culture to individuals, or at the cultural level it is associated with products and then interpreted by consumers.

In this study, flowers as a product are also interpreted as symbols that help people communicate with others, groups, and themselves (Aksana, 2009). In the same way at the cultural level, meaning is associated with the product and then finally can be perceived by consumers

Problem Formulation

This study is important to find out how Korean-style flower arrangements become a symbol that is interpreted by the market and its impact on the development of marketing communication strategies in supporting the development of florist businesses in Jakarta. Flower marketing activities using the Korean waves approach are an idea in developing a florist business whose effectiveness is not yet known, so the formulation of the problem in this study is:

1. How is the symbolic interaction of flowers in the development of florist businesses in Jakarta, especially Korean-style flower arrangements
2. How do Korean-style flower arrangements support the development of florist businesses in Indonesia
3. How is the effectiveness of florist marketing strategies using Korean waves

State of the Art

This study is expected to identify internal and external stimuli that influence the market to use Korean-style flower arrangements in their interactions. Marketing planning strategy for the florist business sector in Indonesia with Korean-style.

Method

This study will be conducted over one year, throughout 2023. This study trace the list of florists in Indonesia with their flower arrangers. This study will use a qualitative approach with the data collection technique used being Focus Group Discussion. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) is a focused discussion group with 8-12 participants and led by a moderator. The discussions are often used in qualitative research, especially social sciences. In this study, FGD participants were florist owners in the Indonesia area, as follows:

1. Bungalogy
2. Wiewie Florist
3. Beeflo
4. Balleton
5. Toko Kembang Bahagia
6. Migi Flowershop
7. Kalaluna
8. Olusta

List of Questions

The following is a list of questions adapted from Leigh & Gabel, in their research on the use of symbol interaction in relation to market segmentation and marketing mix.

Market Segmentation

1. Do current flower buyers tend to buy because of the symbolic aspects of flowers?
2. Who are your current florist customers? Are these customers a relevant reference group?
3. Are there other segments that might see flowers as an important symbol? If so, will the symbol have a negative impact on the existing customer database?

Marketing Mix

Product

1. What is the symbolic meaning of the existing product category?
2. Does the company benefit from this symbolic association?
3. What features of your florist brand can be developed to form other symbolic meanings?
4. Are there any product accessories that can be developed to create a collective symbol?

Promotion

5. What features of the symbol provide benefits that can be detailed to enhance the meaning of a flower symbol?
6. Are there any everyday life events that can be used as relevant flower symbol illustrations?
7. Are there celebrities or spokespersons who can represent the symbol?

Price

8. How much does the flower (flower arrangement) cost?
9. Does the price match the symbolic appeal offered?

Distribution

10. In its distribution, does the current florist outlet match the desired symbol?
11. What should be added or removed from the outlet in order to imply the symbolic meaning of the flower?

Results and Analysis

Profile of Informants

This study uses Focus Group Discussion as a method of data collection, which in the process of conducting interviews with the following florist owners: Yuri from Bungalogy, Novita Srigati from Wiewie Florist, Thrisa from Balleton, Vanessa from Beeflo, Affan from Toko Kembang Bahagia, Ghita Damayanti from Migi Flowershop, Putri from Kalaluna, Shinta from Olusta.

Bungalogy

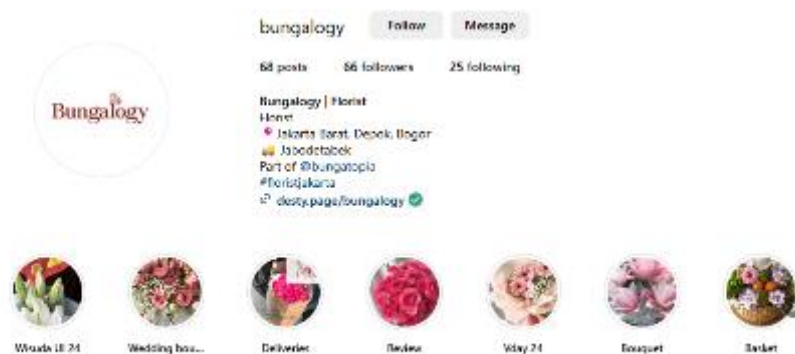


Figure 2: Sumber: Instagram Bungalogy (2024)

Wiewie Florist



Figure 3: Sumber: Instagram Wiewie Florist (2024)

Baleton

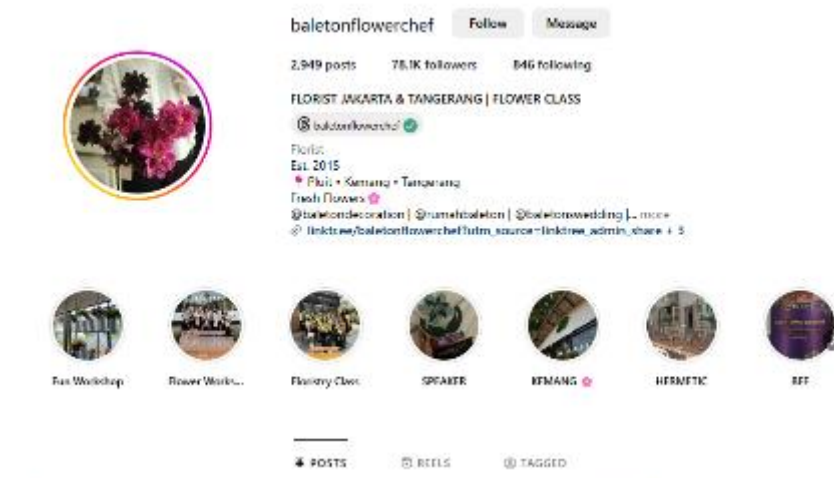


Figure 4: Sumber: Instagram Baleton (2024)

Beeflo



Figure 5: Sumber: Instagram Beeflo (2024)

Toko Kembang Bahagia

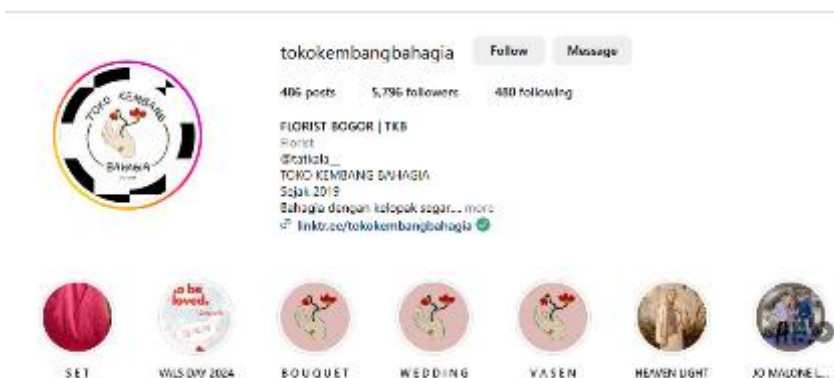


Figure 6: Sumber: Instagram Toko Kembang Bahagia (2024)

Migi Flowershop



Figure 7: Sumber: Instagram Migi Flowershop (2024)

Kalaluna

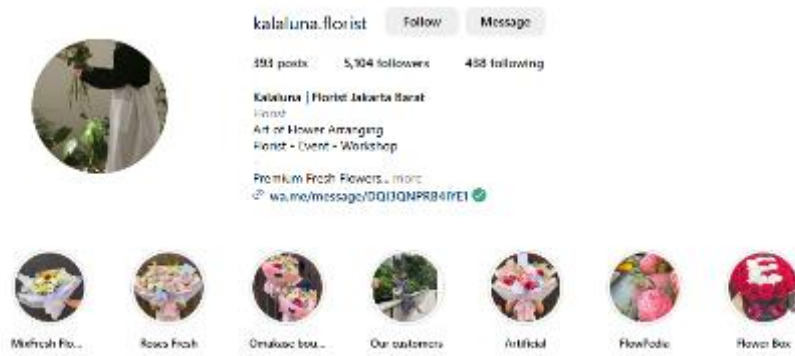


Figure 8: Sumber: Instagram Kalaluna (2024)

Olusta

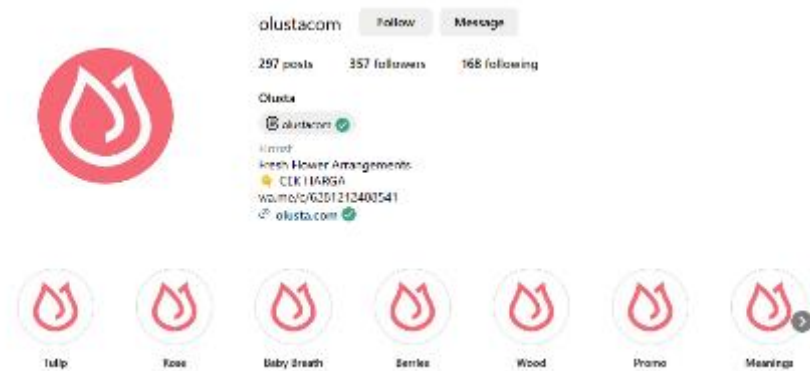


Figure 9: Sumber: Instagram Olusta (2024)

Analysis

For analysis of market segmentation, current flower buyers tend to buy flowers because of the symbolic aspects of flowers. Current florist customers are men and women aged 20-50 years, florist customers are a relevant reference group with word of mouth through the tagging feature on social media. Other customer segments that see flowers as symbols are the government and companies.

For analysis of flowers as a product, the following symbols were found Tulips are usually used for someone to start a relationship, tuberose have recently been used for annual company celebrations, white is often used for mourning events, roses for love, and lilies symbolize eternity. Flower arrangements consisting of gompie flowers, carnations, and orchids, and garden roses can be used to convey apologies, happy birthdays, and birthday celebrations. Happiness can be symbolized by red roses, farewells can be symbolized by gerbera flowers. The recognition from florist owners is that flowers can make all feelings valid, and Korean-style flower arrangements are more expressive so that companies can benefit from this symbolic association. This flower arrangement product can be further developed to enrich its meaning, namely by adding various types of flowers in the flower arrangement, soft colour combinations for wrapping, and can be added accessories such as ribbons, balloons, dolls, boxes, baskets, greeting boards, and trending Korean actors. In its digital management, this Korean flower arrangement can be identified with the hashtags #koreanflowerarrangement, #koreanstyle or other similar hashtags.

For the analysis of flowers related to promotions, the results of the FGD conveyed things related to features that can be added to be able to provide more meaning to flowers as symbols, namely greeting cards and government logos that show support for the world of flowers in Indonesia. The results of the FDG also showed that everyday life that can usually be used to make flowers a representative symbol is on birthdays, company anniversary celebrations, promotions, congratulations for a special event, starting a relationship, apologies, greetings for recovery from physical weakness, Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, and Eid al-Fitr celebrations. Discussions with florist owners also provide insight into people who can usually be representatives of flowers as a symbol, namely Korean artists from Korean films, florist owners themselves, and word of mouth.

For the analysis of flower arrangements from the price, the average price is between Rp. 250,000 to Rp. 1,500,000 for the high school segment, Rp. 500,000. - Rp. 4,000,000 in the corporate and government segments, Rp. 350,000 - Rp. 5,000,000 in the teenager and family segments, and Rp. 300,000 - infinity for florists with segments that open B2B and B2C opportunities. The price and representation of the symbol are considered to be in accordance with what is obtained from each flower arrangement sold.

For the analysis of the distribution of Korean-style flower arrangements, florist outlets can better describe flowers as a symbol if there is an opportunity to provide education to the public about more informative things about flowers. Discussions with florist owners provided information on things that need to be added in the process of agreeing on symbols in flower arrangements, namely by having a "how to grow flower" class, making more combinations of flowers and their variations, official logos from the government, adding photos of Korean actors from trending Korean films, opening other businesses that complement the florist business such as a clothing business with a Korean feel or a greeting card and parcel business with a Korean feel.

Conclusion, Suggestions, and Research Continuation Plan

The symbolic interaction of flowers in the development of florist businesses in Jakarta, especially Korean-style flower arrangements, provides opportunities and chances for florist entrepreneurs in Indonesia to be creative by finding interesting flower variations to combine into flower arrangements and giving meaning to life events from the shape and colour of flower arrangements.

Korean-style flower arrangements provide new symbols and icons such as wrapping, photos of Korean artists, additional business opportunities, and even strengthen florist business owners to ask for government support.

This research is the initial step in mapping the existing database, data mining, and data meaning for designing florist marketing plans which are then continued with various trainings in making Korean-style flower arrangements for florists to provide added value to the business of florist owners in Indonesia. The existing and future phenomena are a combination of materials for further research with quantitative surveys throughout Indonesia to find out the consumption patterns of the florist market in Indonesia which are expected to be useful in creating a florist business development strategy with Korean-style flower arrangements in Indonesia which in > 5 years can provide input for policies related to plantations, provide ideas for the marketing world in Indonesia in marketing strategies (price, place, product, promotion).

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