

FOMO Labubu in AISAS Approach (Digital Communication Study of Instagram User Behavior on Labubu Dolls)

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Abstract

This study aims to describe FOMO pumpkins in depth and detail using the AISAS approach. This research uses a descriptive qualitative method in which researchers conduct observations and documentation on Instagram's social media. The results showed five stages in the decision-making process for Instagram users as potential customers of FOMO Labubu. The first stage, namely Attention, is the form of attention seen by the post of an influencer named Lisa Blackpink. The second stage, namely Interest, shows the interest or enthusiasm of several Instagram users towards pumpkin dolls. The third stage is search; at this stage, Instagram users and potential consumers try to find as much information as possible about Labubu. Next, the fourth stage is action. At this stage, potential consumers will determine their behavior in carrying out the buying process or not; those who decide to buy pumpkins will take several actions to get the product based on the information they have previously collected. Finally, share. At this stage, consumers will share their overall experience in getting the pumpkin, and their uploads or posts can also influence other potential customers to do the same.

Keywords: FOMO; Labubu; AISAS Approach; Instagram

INTRODUCTION

These days, "Labubu" is a trending topic that netizens discuss on social media, including Instagram. Instagram is an application that allows its users to share photos and videos with other Instagram users. (Kartini, Juwita Syahrina, Nisya Siregar, 2022). Founded in 2010, Instagram has attracted the public's attention. As of January 2024, it had become the most downloaded application worldwide, beating other popular social media such as TikTok and Facebook. (Rni/dmi, 2024). Netizens use this application to upload completed activities, personal photos, food or drinks, pets, favorite items, and more. (Jakpat, 2015).

This recent incident shocked netizens worldwide when a celebrity named Lisa Manobal (familiarily called Lisa Blackpink, one of the popular bands in South Korea) uploaded a video on her Instagram story showing her hugging and holding a Labubu doll. Lisa's upload made Labubu the center of attention. The Labubu doll immediately went viral and became the center of conversation in cyberspace (L. Aisyah, 2024).

Labubu is a fur fairy character created by Hong Kong Artist Kasing Lung in 2015. Labubu is described as a fairy character with pointed ears, a mischievous smile, and sharp teeth. The emergence of the Labubu doll was caused by Lisa Blackpink's upload, which

became an online meme followed by a shopping frenzy in Thailand, where many celebrities and key opinion leaders (KOL) hunted for this doll collection. The craze and collecting of Labubu dolls was also followed by other famous people, members of the Thai royal family, and senators, who then spread to the Southeast Asian region and the international market.

In 2015, Lung created Labubu as part of "The Monster" group, which included characters such as Zimomo and Tycoco. Norse fairy tales inspired these characters and were first depicted in children's books. Then, in 2019, Lung signed an exclusive licensing deal with Chinese toy company Pop Mart, known for its toys often sold in blind boxes. This relationship transformed The Monster from a storybook character into a toy collection. (Harianaceh, 2024).

The Pop Mart company then released this Labubu in various colors, shapes, and sizes, ranging from dolls to Labubu accessories such as small Labubu statues, Labubu doll key chains, plush dolls, cellphone cases, and many other types. The Labubu doll is sold for 65.9 US dollars or equivalent to Rp. 998,638, while the most expensive is worth 167.90 US dollars or equivalent to Rp. 2.5 million. Labubu accessories, such as small statues, are sold at 29.9 US dollars or equivalent to Rp. 453,118 and cellphone cases worth 18.90 US dollars or Rp. 286,419 (Ramadhian & Dewi, 2024).

Judging from the price range of Labubu dolls and accessories from Labubu sold by the Pop Mart company, they are relatively expensive. Although relatively expensive, this doll is still a target for collectors worldwide. Its unique, cute, and characterful design makes Labubu a sought-after item. One of the reasons for the popularity of Labubu dolls is that this doll is sold in limited production. Because of this limited production, Labubu dolls have an exclusive value and are difficult to obtain. The uniqueness of Labubu's design, coupled with the activeness of the fan community, who often share information about the latest releases, tips for getting limited edition Labubu, and often post photos of their collections, creates an emotional bond and a sense of pride in having Labubu among fans (Wahyuni, 2024). This is what makes people willing to queue for dozens of hours just to get a Labubu doll.

In addition, the actions taken by netizens to get this doll are also inseparable from a phenomenon called Fear of Missing Out (FOMO). One of the factors that makes an Instagram user become FOMO is the influence of the social media algorithm (Utami & Tashandra, 2024). When he accidentally sees a post on someone else's social media account and then likes it, then indirectly, his Instagram algorithm will show similar posts, not to mention his social media friendships, which are also more or less influential, influencers or idols who also sometimes influence the content he posts, not just the influence of the algorithm formed by Instagram, the feeling of fear of being left behind by things that are currently popular is also one of the factors that people become FOMO.

The background above then became the author's focus to study and examine FOMO Labubu experienced by netizens on Instagram using the AISAS approach. This approach is expected to explain in more detail and systematically the data and information collected from observations about FOMO Labubu on Instagram.

FOMO (Fear of Missing Out)

FOMO stands for Fear of Missing Out. The term FOMO was coined in 2004 when author Patrick J. McGinnis published an op-ed in *The Harbus*, the magazine of Harvard

Business School, titled McGinnis' Two FO's: Social Theory at HBS, in which he referred to FOMO and other related conditions. Those who experience FOMO feel a fear of missing out on the latest news and anxiety when not connected or following the latest trends in the online world. Some say FOMO refers to two ways: trait FOMO and state FOMO. Trait FOMO can be defined as a desire to stay connected to what others are doing. While certain events or situations trigger state FOMO (Klütsch et al., 2024). People who experience FOMO will experience social anxiety syndrome (Akbar et al., 2019).

One of the causes of someone becoming FOMO is the use of social media. It is explained that the use of the internet and social media unknowingly changes individuals' habits in their daily lives. These changes occur as a negative impact of dependence on the internet and social media (Khadijah et al., 2023). Several experts, including those based on the Oxford Dictionary, convey other opinions about FOMO; FOMO is a feeling of anxiety about unique events in other places that occur, where content posted by others builds anxiety. Meanwhile, according to Alt and Boniel-Nissim, FOMO is a phenomenon where someone feels anxiety about others, has an experience of pleasure even though they are not directly involved, and seems to cause individuals to try to join in the activities of others through social media (Taswiyah, 2022).

AISAS Model

AISAS (Attention, Interest, Search, Action, and Share) is one form of transformation of the AIDMA model, which is considered anomalous in the development of technology in the modern era. AIDMA is a non-linear model that can only explain the one-way flow of information. In contrast, in the current era, consumer information searches are not limited to one source, including through communication with other consumers or information from various information media, including social media. The change from the AIDMA model to the AISAS model occurs through a condensed psychological transformation process and an expanded action process into a search, action, and sharing process.

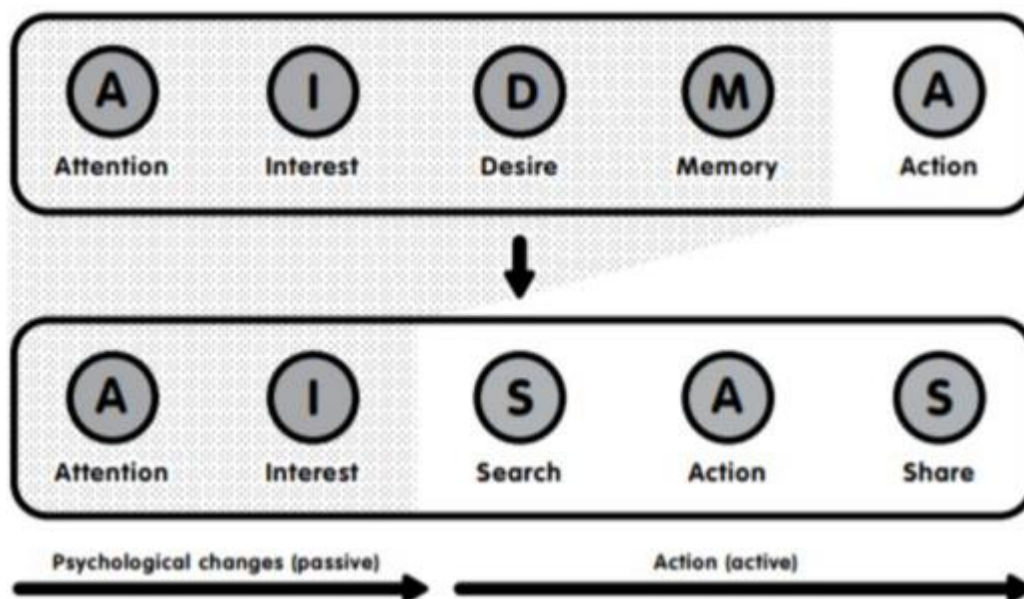


Figure 1. AIDMA and AISAS models
Source :Yuliati & Simanjuntak (2024)

The process consumers go through in the AISAS model starts from the consumer's attention to a product or goods, service, advertisement, or post that causes interest so that there is a desire to search for more in-depth information about the product, service, or advertisement. Information can be searched from various available sources, both from the internet, such as social media, blogs, e-commerce, official company websites, and from people who have the product or use the service. Consumers will make an action or a decision (action) to purchase. After making a purchase, consumers will convey or spread information by sharing reviews or showing activities when they open the product packaging (unboxing) through content on their social media. In this AISAS model, it can be seen that consumers experience a behavior change to become more active, namely by adding the search and share stage. These two stages arise because of the influence of the presence of the internet in society, which allows consumers to search for and share information about a product more actively.

Pumpkin

Labubu is a unique doll that resembles a fairy with a monster appearance. Pop Mart produced it. This doll has striking characteristics, such as colorful fur, long ears, pointy teeth, and a mischievous smile. Labubu was created by Kasing Lung, a Hong Kong-born artist who grew up in the Netherlands. Inspired by Norse fairy tales to create the world of "The Monsters" in 2015. The characters in this series, including Labubu, Zimomo, Tycoco, Spooky, and Pato, are all inspired by fairies, pixies, and monsters from Norse mythology. (Sukri, 2024). In the story of Kasing Lung, Labubu is depicted as a kind character who always wants to help but often does bad things unintentionally.

Labubu is a non-humanoid fairy with unique features. Her soulful eyes and long, pointy ears, similar to rabbits', give her image a childish feel. In addition to her youthful and cute appearance, each Labubu product from Pop Mart is controlled to the size of an adult's palm, making it easy to collect. (Yu, 2022).

Labubu's popularity skyrocketed after Kasing Lung signed an exclusive licensing deal with Pop Mart in 2019. The company is known for its collectible toys, which are often sold in blind box formats, making every purchase a surprise. In addition, Labubu has become a symbol of a global trend that reflects the fusion of modern art and pop culture. Its popularity is furthered by social media, where influencers and fans share photos and videos of their collections.

Labubu has been released in over 300 variations, including various colors, shapes, and sizes. (Azizah, 2024). This makes it attractive to collectors looking for rare and unique items. Collectors like Rachel Yohannan, editor at lifestyle magazine Time Out Singapore, have been collecting Pop Mart figures since 2021 and boast dedicated display shelves for their figures, even though they may not be too bothered by the hustle and bustle around Labubu (Azizah, 2024).

Instagram

People often use the internet and new media for various activities. One of the dominant activities is accessing social media networks. Social media has grown faster than other internet activities over the past decade. There are dozens of social media sites spread throughout the new media. One of the popular social media sites lately is Instagram. Instagram, which was bought by Facebook in 2012, has gained enormous popularity (Mackson et al., 2019).

In addition, the main reason for choosing Instagram social media is that the Labubu trend started from Lisa Manobal's post on Instagram; another supporting reason is that Instagram focuses on visual and audio-visual content. So, observing the FOMO wave from Labubu fans through this platform is easy. Finally, the features provided by the Instagram platform, such as stories and reels, provide freedom for users to create and share their narratives about Labubu in innovative ways, thus increasing user interactivity and encouraging the involvement of other users (Shim, 2024).

Current evidence suggests that Instagram is a positive space for social connection (Calvo González et al., 2024). Instagram is used as a medium for sharing information and communicating, but as it develops, It is also used as a medium for self-actualization. Through Instagram, a person's personality can be assessed in relation to what they post, whether in the form of photos, images, or visual forms such as videos (Restusari & Farida, 2019).

METHODOLOGY

Based on the problems and objectives that the author has explained, the author chose to use a descriptive qualitative approach where the author will collect data through documentation and observation. The author's purpose in conducting this qualitative research is to describe in depth and detail about the FOMO trend of Labubu dolls with the Attention, Interest, Search, Action, and Share (AISAS) approach.

According to Nursapia Harahap(2020)Qualitative research aims to understand social reality, namely seeing the world as it is, not the world as it should be, so a qualitative researcher must have an open mind. Therefore, conducting qualitative research correctly and adequately means having a window to understand the world of psychology and social reality. This approach is expected to provide a detailed picture of the writings, speech, and behavior observed by individuals, groups, communities, and even certain organizations.

In this study, the target that the researcher aims for is Instagram posts that are by the theme of this study, namely the post "FOMO Labubu". With this approach, researchers can systematically describe the data and information collected from observations of FOMO Labubu with the AISAS approach from the perspective of FOMO Labubu Instagram posts.

Data collection techniques in this study can be obtained through Observation and documentation. Documentation is an activity of collecting data by reviewing literature, journals, books, articles, and websites related to the research title, which are then used as argument material.(Oktalisa et al., 2023).Observation is a data collection technique by observing directly or indirectly the things being observed and recording them on an observation tool.(Sanjaya, 2014).

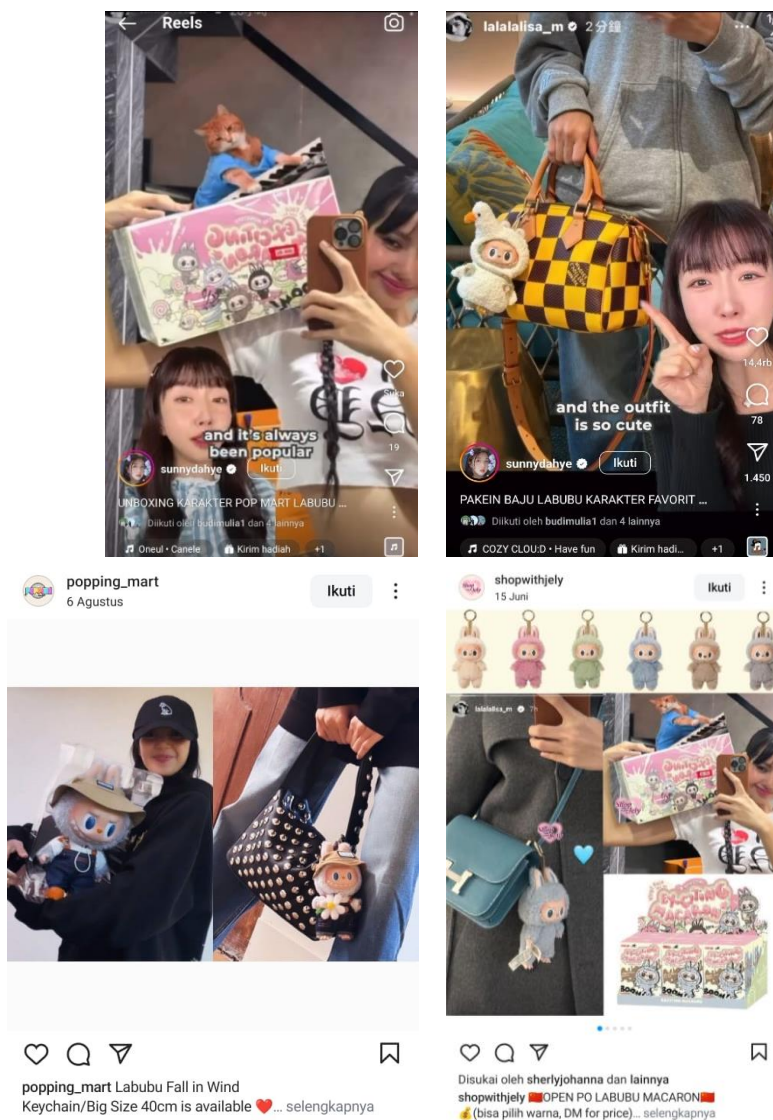
In this study, the researcher's observations and documentation consisted of a collection of screenshots of Instagram posts and reels about the FOMO trend in Labubu. The data validity checking technique used is data triangulation, which is a technique for checking data from various sources in various ways and times (Wijaya, 2019).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Attention

Attention is an initial step in which the audience starts to pay attention to a stimulus in the form of content broadcast through media (TL et al., 2023). In this “Labubu” phenomenon, the event that attracted the attention of several audiences was a post made by Lisa Manobal (Lisa Blackpink) on her Instagram account, which finally caused a stir among several netizens or audiences on Instagram social media.

This post by Lisa shows her using a Labubu keychain in her bag and shows a box containing the Labubu keychain. This immediately made a number of her followers and non-followers of her Instagram account (@lalalalisa_m) follow suit to have the keychain. This can be seen in the picture below, where one of her followers and a celebrity reacted to Lisa Blackpink's post.



Source: (researcher processed data, 2024)

Interest

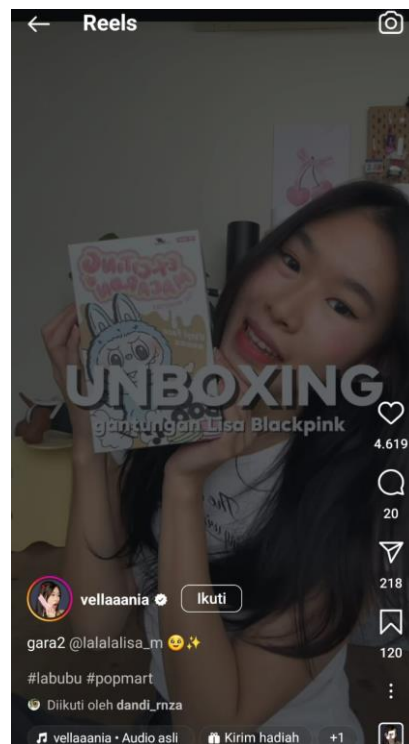
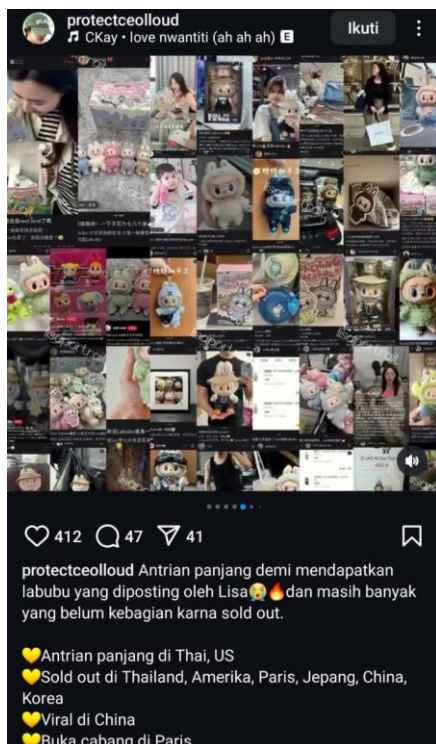
At the interest stage, after netizens pay attention to the products contained in the content of @lalalalisa_m, they have an interest, attraction, curiosity, and a desire to own the product. At this stage, the form of interest that can be observed based on the author's

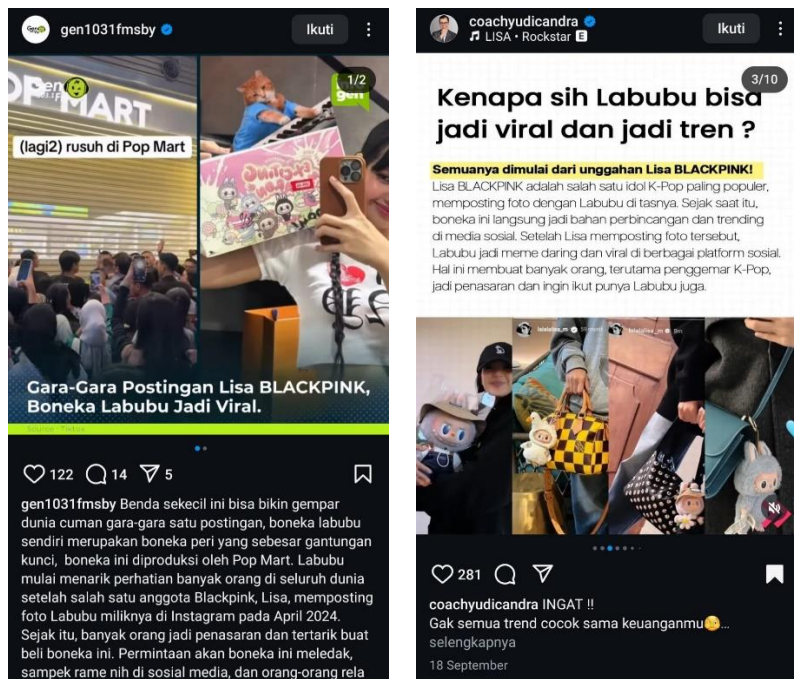
observations on Instagram social media related to the Labubu trend can be seen from the captions written by several accounts that confirmed that they took action, namely buying Labubu dolls because they were influenced by the Instagram story post of a famous singer from Korea named Lalisa Manobal (or people often call her Lisa Blackpink).

Based on the research results of Lin et al. (2019) (in(Shadrina & Sulistyanto, 2022) shows that influencer credibility has a positive effect on attitudes toward Instagram posts. Furthermore, attitudes toward Instagram posts positively affect attitudes toward the promoted brand, and attitudes towards the advertised brand positively affect purchase intentions, which lead to consumer purchasing decisions.

The form of attention from several accounts that the author considers as a form of interest, including the @protectceolloud account, where he posted a collection of photos showing the attention of several netizens in getting Labubu dolls. This can be seen from his caption, which states that people's interest in Labubu dolls caused long queues. Of course, when potential consumers see and read this, it can increase their attraction or interest in having the product, especially seeing other people already have Labubu products; more or less, it will influence potential consumers in making purchases.

Furthermore, the @vellaania account also shows that, from the caption she wrote, she bought the Labubu product because of Lisa Blackpink's upload. A similar thing is also shown by the posts of @gen1031fmsby and @coachyudicandra, which are the riots that occurred in one of the Labubu shopping centers (Pop Mart) and the trend that is currently viral on Instagram due to netizens' interest in the story upload made by Lisa Blackpink.





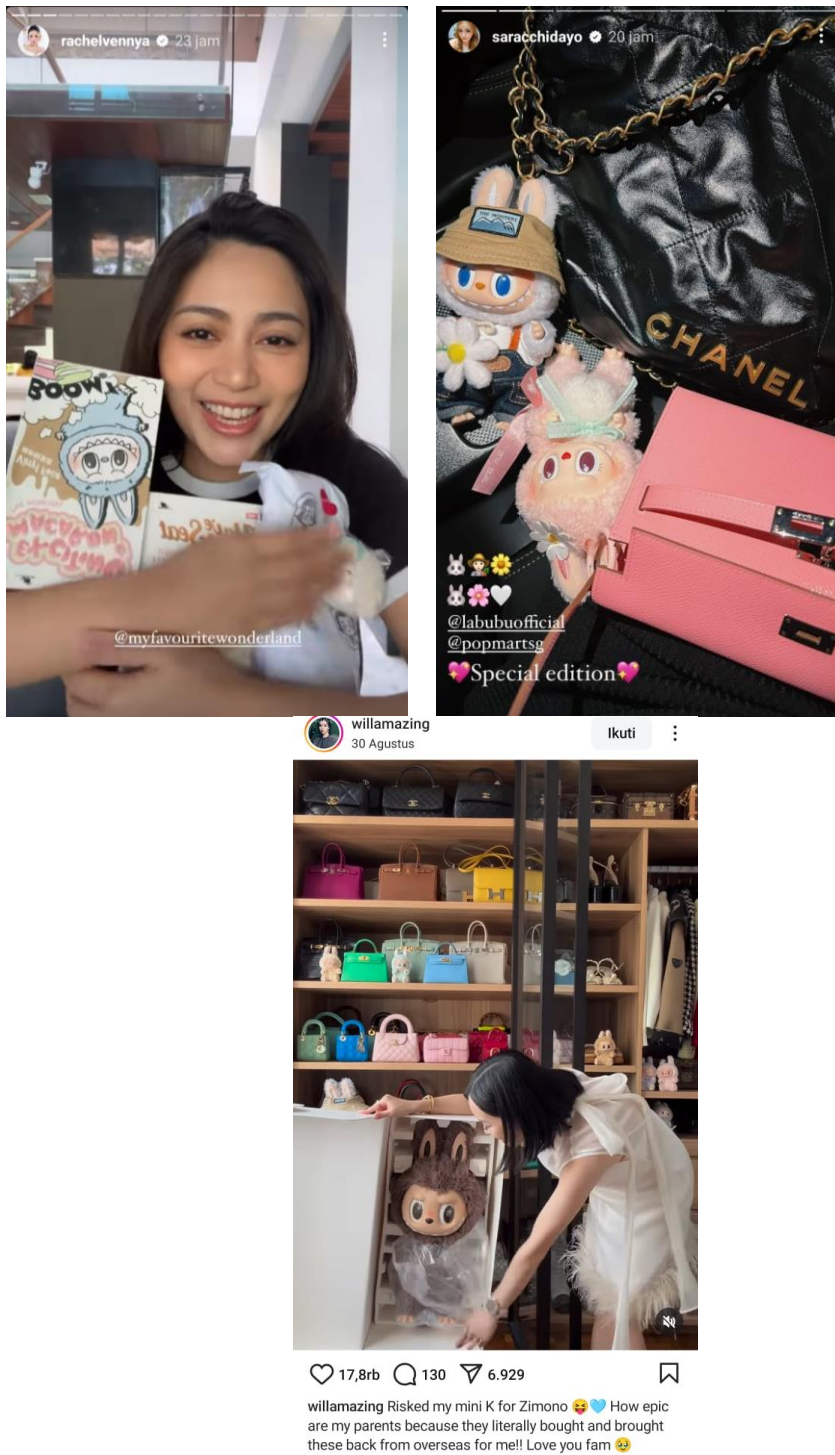
Source: (researcher processed data, 2024)

Search

At this stage, prospective consumers will look for as much information as possible regarding the product or service information offered. The presence of Instagram makes it easier for prospective consumers to find out about Labubu products. Sagiyanto & Sulfiah (2020) (inParamitha & Doho, 2021) describes Instagram as an application that can be used to share visual content, either photos or videos. Instagram is also known as one of the social media that is very useful as a direct marketing channel for sharing messages. Through Instagram, consumers can see the products or services offered and packaged through photo content or short videos.

At the search stage, netizens actively search for information about the Labubu doll until they finally decide to make a purchase (action) of the doll. This is by previous research, which states that when the audience has a high interest in a product, the higher their interest in searching for information (TL Aisyah & Alfikri, 2023).

Information search: After the researcher conducted observations, netizens carried out various ways, including searching for information about which Pop Marts still provide the complete Labubu edition or the location of the Labubu purchase directly. Some are looking for information on services or consignment services that are currently open. Some deliberately communicate with their families to ask whether they are abroad or not to be asked to help buy the Labubu product. Or some deliberately plan carefully to start traveling to neighboring countries, preparing the routes that must be taken to achieve their goal of buying Labubu dolls. This can be seen from several posts below:



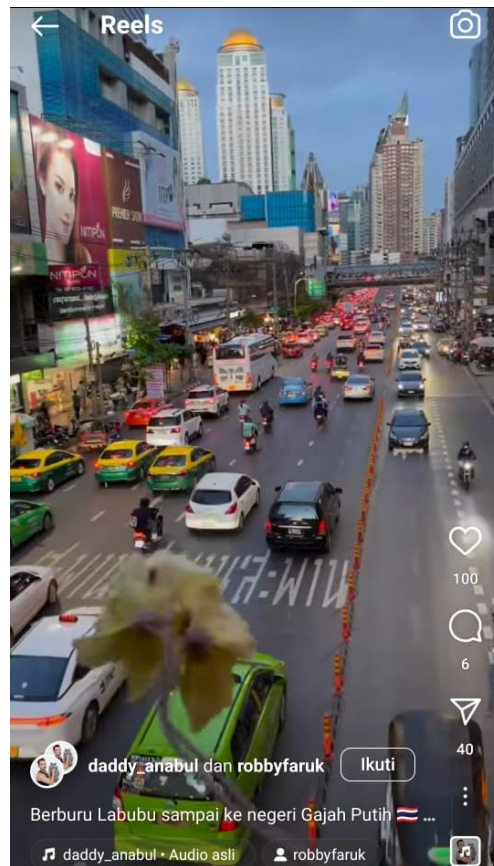
Source: (researcher processed data, 2024)

Action

The next stage is action. At this stage, the consumer's response or behavior after getting information about the product will be increasingly clear (Saadah et al., 2023). The behavior or response shown by the audience can be purchasing a product (Khomariyah et al., 2019). At the action stage, netizens purchase Labubu products because they feel confident in their decision.

At this stage, the research findings obtained show various actions carried out by netizens, including those who make individual purchases or go directly to the Pop Mart location (store) that sells the Labubu collection. Some are willing to go directly to the central distributor (Thailand) to get the Labubu dolls they want. When they arrive at the Pop Mart or Thailand store, they often queue for quite a long time, even up to dozens of hours, to enter the store and choose the Labubu doll they have been eyeing directly.

In addition, some make purchases through intermediary services. It's like when people pay others to buy something for them, or in Indonesia, and the people call it *Jasa Titip* or *Jastip* because they cannot afford to queue for dozens of hours. This can be seen from the upload below:



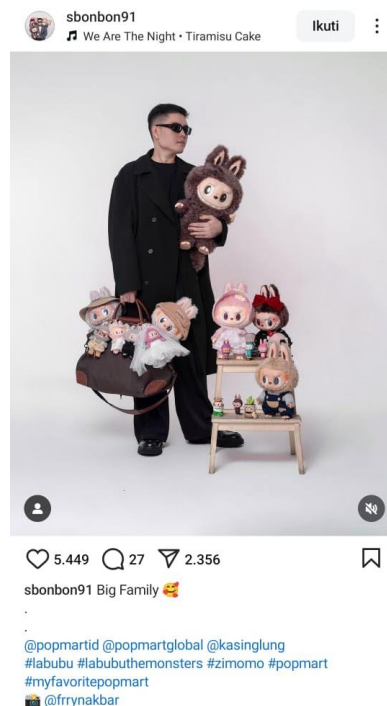
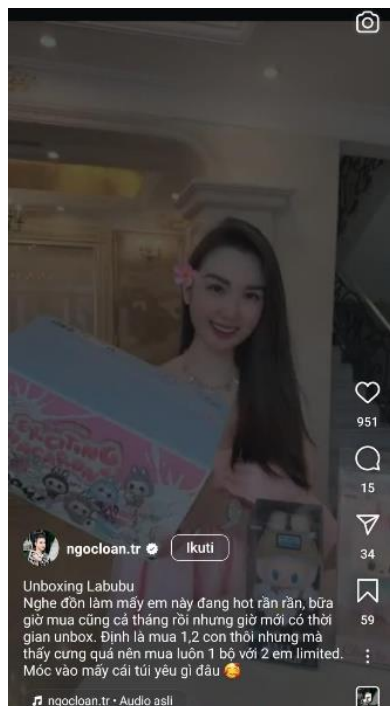


Source: (researcher processed data, 2024)

Share

The last stage is sharing. At this stage, netizens share content in the form of photos or videos that they make themselves to inform their followers or other Instagram users that they have a collection of Labubu dolls. It is not uncommon for their posts to get responses and reactions from other Instagram users.





Source: (researcher processed data, 2024)

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research and discussion on FOMO Labubu in the AISAS approach, it is known that the behavior of Instagram users, in this case as prospective consumers, is divided into five stages. Among them is the first stage, namely Attention. At this stage, the form of attention that is seen is shown by the post of an influencer named Lisa Blackpink, who made a story related to Labubu, which is a toy in her bag, and uploaded it to her Instagram account, from her story caused virality in several countries which many people finally followed. The second stage, namely Interest, at this stage shows the interest or enthusiasm of several Instagram users towards the Labubu doll, where once again, the posts of these Instagram users are interspersed with the caption "because of Lisa Blackpink." The third stage is Search.

At this stage, Instagram users, as well as prospective consumers, try to find out as much information as possible about Labubu, both information about shops or distributors that still sell the complete edition of Labubu or tip services that are still opening their services, or any information related to the product. Next is the fourth stage, action. At this stage, potential consumers will determine their purchasing behavior. Those who decide to buy Labubu will take several actions to get the product based on the information they have collected previously, either buying directly from the store/distributor or through an intermediary. Finally, share. At this stage, consumers will share their overall experience in getting Labubu, where their uploads or posts can influence other potential consumers to do the same.

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