

ABSTRACT

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the hotel and restaurant industry suffered a massive impact, where most of the profit generating activities are restricted by to suppress the spread of the highly contagious disease. Companies tried their best to maintain the brand awareness. With profit being reduced greatly, marketing budgets suffered the same fate, in order to maintain or increase the brand awareness to gain advantages from popularity, companies needed to think of the most effective way with minimum budget spending. Social media, such as Instagram is a software application that allows people to digitally interact with each other, eventually adding more features that supports businesses for closing a sales deal to marketing and advertising their company or products. In order to stand out and gain popularity for business advantages, companies need to think of a way that is beyond what Instagram offer as their features. One of it, is through partnership with social media celebrities. With a lot of followers, companies can promote their products, services and other offering utilizing the fame of social media celebrities through a partnership known as endorsement. This research conducted qualitatively to figure how social media celebrities through endorsement partnership can gain brand popularity for the hotel, restaurant and café's industry during the COVID-19 pandemic period. This research concludes, that through social media celebrity's endorsement, companies can gain brand popularity effectively with relatively small budget.

Keywords: *Social-media, social media celebrity, brand awareness, hotel industry, endorsement, popularity.*