

# Visibility labour: Engaging with Influencers' fashion brands and #OOTD advertorial campaigns on Instagram

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## Abstract

Influencer commerce has experienced an exponential growth, resulting in new forms of digital practices among young women. Influencers are one form of microcelebrity who accumulate a following on blogs and social media through textual and visual narrations of their personal, everyday lives, upon which advertorials for products and services are premised. In Singapore, Influencers are predominantly young women whose commercial practices are most noted on Instagram. In response, everyday users are beginning to model after Influencers through tags, reposts and #OOTDs (Outfit Of The Day), unwittingly producing volumes of advertising content that is not only encouraged by Influencers and brands but also publicly utilised with little compensation. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork among Instagram Influencers and followers in Singapore, this article investigates the visibility labour in which followers engage on follower-anchored Instagram advertorials, in an attention economy that has swiftly profited off work that is quietly creative but insidiously exploitative.

## Keywords

advertorials, followers, Influencers, Instagram, OOTD, social media

In the last 5 years, Influencer commerce has experienced an exponential growth, resulting in new forms of digital practices among young women. Influencers are one form of microcelebrity (Senft, 2008) who accumulate a following on blogs and social media through the textual and visual narration of their personal, everyday lives, upon which paid advertorials – advertisements written in the form of editorial opinions – for products and services are premised. In Singapore, Influencers are predominantly young women whose commercial practices are most prominent on Instagram (Abidin, 2014a,

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2016). In response, everyday Instagram users are beginning to model themselves after Influencers, taking up the ‘cultural scripts’ (Banet-Weiser, 2012: 66) they display through tags, reposts, and #OOTDs (Outfits Of The Day), producing huge volumes of advertising content that is not only encouraged by Influencers and brands but also publicly utilised without remuneration or with little compensation. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork among Instagram Influencers and followers in Singapore, this article investigates the visibility labour in which users engage on follower-anchored Instagram advertorials. This case study therefore explores an attention economy (Goldhaber, 1997) that has swiftly profited off work that is quietly creative yet unevenly reciprocal.

In Singapore, Influencers generally refer to users who ‘follow’ them on social media as ‘followers’ as opposed to ‘fans’ (Marwick and boyd, 2011) because this term obscures the status elevation and sense of social distance between Influencers and their following (Abidin, 2015). Despite proliferating on Instagram, Influencers initially started out on various blog platforms in 2005, but slowly took up various social media such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, AskFM, Snapchat and Vine as these became popular. Although the term is inspired by Katz and Lazarsfeld’s (2009) concept of ‘personal influence’ pre-social media, the industry vernacular term ‘Influencers’ encompasses multi-platform microcelebrity and is the latest iteration of ‘bloggers’. Most notably, in their earliest days as lifestyle bloggers, many Influencers also started their own blogshops – blogs that were repurposed to hawk wares – as owners and models. As the Influencer industry progressed, these blogshops eventually professionalised into dedicated dotcoms as web stores, with dozens even moving into brick-and-mortar holdings in Singapore and around the South East Asian region.

With the rise of Instagram, Influencers focused on improving the quality of their advertorials (cf. Kozinets et al., 2010; McQuarrie et al., 2013) – advertisements written in the form of an opinion editorial and deeply intertwined with Influencers’ recounting of their everyday lives as lived. Various web stores and international brands began securing their advertising presence on social media (Kulmala et al., 2013) in forms of ‘open-ended innovation’ (Carah and Shaul, 2016: 70). Influencers from this trajectory of lifestyle blogging are predominantly women between the ages of 15 and 35 years, with the age range ever expanding as younger Influencer aspirants join the industry while veteran Influencers gradually shift into parenting and homemaking genres. Personal interviews with Influencer agencies and observations from fieldwork reveal that roughly 70% of followers are women, with ages ranging from 13 to 40 at the time of writing.

Much research on various forms of Influencers on social media has focused on self-curation (Abidin, 2014a; Marwick, 2015; Wissinger, 2015), follower-engagement (Abidin, 2015), authenticity (Hopkins and Thomas, 2011) and advertorial disclosure (Ots and Abidin, 2015), as well as ordinary users as ‘promotional apparatus’ for brands (Carah and Shaul, 2016) and as participants in electronic word of mouth (Erkan, 2015). This article turns to focus on Influencers’ followers and the labour in which they engage in tandem with Influencers’ advertorial posts. I focus on follower-anchored Instagram campaigns, wherein advertorial posts published by Influencers inspire followers to generate volumes of visibility labour and amplify content circulation. Not only is this practice highly encouraged by Influencers and clients, the products of followers’ labour are also publicly utilised with little to no remuneration, compensation or acknowledgement.

I first introduce my research methods and the genres of follower-anchored Instagram campaigns: advertorial dissemination, advertorial aggregation and advertorial instigation. In the next section, I survey some key literature on the publicity work performed by women in creative industries to develop the notion of ‘visibility labour’ or the work enacted to flexibly demonstrate gradients of self-conspicuousness in digital or physical spaces depending on intention or circumstance for favourable ends. In the final section, I scrutinise the practice of #OOTD posts on Instagram and followers’ visibility labour among Influencers and their fashion brands.

## Methods

This article is an extension of a larger research project on the Influencer industry in Singapore, comprising over 173 interviews conducted between December 2012 and July 2013 and ethnographic fieldwork between December 2011 and December 2015. I focus on a subset of interviews with three Influencers and 12 followers, and fieldwork on Instagram collected between January 2015 and April 2016. A grounded theory approach (Glaser, 1978) was adopted in the thematic coding of all content. The screenshots featured are from the feeds of four Influencers who own three fashion brands selling apparel (two of the Influencers are sisters and co-founders) and the feeds of their stores' dedicated accounts and associated hashtags. Such textual and visual content from the Instagram screenshots are publicly disseminated and intentionally pitched for public consumption. However, some of the interviews were held in confidence. On this basis, Influencers and their fashion brands will be identified by their Instagram handles in reference to their publicly available and publicity-oriented Instagram posts, while interviewees will be acknowledged with pseudonyms.

## Follower-anchored Instagram campaigns

Instagram is the 'fastest growing media application among mobile-savvy users' (Aw Yeong, 2013) in Singapore. Between July 2011 and July 2012, the platform's 'share of total social site visits grew 8,121 per cent' (Aw Yeong, 2013). Among this spurt of users are Influencers whose prolific Instagram feeds function as 'real-time billboards to eager, watchful eyeballs' (Abidin, 2014a: 119). In a previous article in which I investigated Influencers' curation of commercial selfies in Singapore (Abidin, 2016), I argued that Influencers had repurposed Instagram's original philosophy – prior to its iteration with embedded native advertisements – (Instagram, 2016) by appropriating its networked intimacy for a non-reciprocal mass audience, supplementing mobile phone photography with high-end digital cameras and apps, converting memory keepsakes into broadcast material for high circulation and reworking spontaneous captures into purposeful staging (Abidin, 2016: 7).

Marwick's work on an American sample of prolific everyday users perceives Instagram as the 'convergence of cultural forces', such as 'a mania for digital documentary, the proliferation of celebrity and microcelebrity culture, and conspicuous consumption' (Marwick, 2015: 139). With followers numbering from the low tens of thousands to the high hundreds of thousands, Influencers conscientiously manage their Instagram posts and overall feed to curate taste displays, publish advertorials and wrestle for viewership (Abidin, 2014a).

I posit that Influencers' posts may generally be repurposed for three genres of advertorial practice: dissemination, aggregation and instigation. Advertorial dissemination is the most basic and frequently adopted narrative device on Instagram, in which Influencers broadcast content on their feeds to their followers. This invites little to no action from followers who are simply passive receivers of the circulated information.

Advertorial aggregation builds upon advertorial dissemination by circulating information and inviting followers to respond directly on a dedicated thread. These invitations often take the form of giveaways or contests in which followers are asked to comment, give feedback, answer specific questions or tag friends on the Influencer's advertorial post for a chance to win prizes (usually sponsored by the advertising client), 'follow-backs' (a practice in which Influencers mutually follow a highly select group of followers, thus according them prestige) or 'shout-outs' (an 'amplified reference' (Zappavigna, 2012: 35) practice in which Influencers mention select follower handles on their Instagram post according to their visibility). Influencers or clients usually archive the content collated in the dedicated thread as consumer data, such as when feedback is enacted to improve

consumer experience or when tagged friends are added to a database of potential consumers. This practice capitalises on the free labour of followers who volunteer survey information for the potential of small rewards.

Advertorial instigation builds upon advertorial dissemination by circulating information and encouraging followers to generate similar content on an amplified scale. This occurs when Influencers publish contests in which participating followers are encouraged to ‘regram’ Influencers’ or clients’ posts (copy and republish a post on one’s own feed through the use of third-party apps or manual screengrabbing) or produce original Instagram posts in the likeness of the original. In both instances, followers are almost always asked to tag their post with the advertorial campaign’s dedicated hashtag into a streamlined channel; social media linguist Zappavigna (2012: 1) terms such discourses ‘searchable talk’, wherein users tag their content in order to be discovered by other users with whom they can ‘bond around particular values’. Influencers’ and followers’ uses of hashtags may also be used to construct coherent branding (such as posing with clients’ products and services), encourage bonding through conversation (such as dialoguing about clients and brands), situate and hypervisibilise one’s social status amid other users on Instagram (such as demonstrating in-group knowledge of Influencer vocabulary) or display one’s social relevance as ‘in scene’ or connected to the bustle and highlight of trending events (such as posting selfies at exclusive Influencers or client events) (Abidin, 2014b). In this manner, followers become a network of advertorial capillaries by duplicating, amplifying and multiplying the Influencer content to their own circle of followers and personal friends. Thus, follower-anchored Instagram campaigns are a newer form of word-of-mouth campaigns (cf. Kozinets et al., 2010) in which advertising messages are circulated from Influencers to consumers and from consumers to consumers. This practice capitalises on free labour of followers who fashion themselves into small-scale advertising ‘billboards’ (cf. Abidin, 2014a).

## Publicity work and visibility labour

The labour in which women in creative industries partake has been researched and branded in various forms. Conceptually useful to this article are studies of women who engage in self-publicity work, such as models, creative workers and Influencers. As forms of ‘immaterial labor’ or ‘labor that produces an immaterial good, such as a service, knowledge, or communication’ (Hardt, 1999: 94), this work constitutes ‘affective labor’ that is ‘corporeal’ and ‘somatic’ since the women produce ‘social networks, forms of community, [and] biopower’ (Hardt, 1999: 96) through conscientious self-posturing, self-curation and self-discipline.

Neff et al. (2005: 207) define this genre of work as a form of ‘entrepreneurial labour’ or ‘the cultural quality of cool, creativity, autonomy, self-investment, compulsory networking, portfolio evaluations, international competition, and foreshortened careers’. Examining women as self-promotional canvases more closely, Wissinger (2015) investigates the modelling industry and coins ‘glamour labour’ as ‘both the body work to manage appearance in person and the online image work to create and maintain one’s “cool” quotient’ (p. 4), including a ‘demand to be always “on” and seen everywhere’ (p. 3). Focusing specifically on publicity work in the realm of social media commerce, Duffy (2016) looks at digital culture industries as a form of ‘digital brand labor’ (Duffy, 2015) and introduces the notion of ‘aspirational labor’ as a ‘highly gendered, forward-looking and entrepreneurial enactment of creativity’ wherein young women ‘hold the promise of social and economic capital’ despite a reward system that is ‘highly uneven’ (Duffy, 2016: 443). Turning from creative industry producers (e.g. Influencers) to their viewership, I had previously adapted Horton and Wohl’s (1956) work on parasocial relations to understand how Influencers mobilise different modes of intimacy labour – commercial, interactive, reciprocal and disclosure – in order for

followers to feel a sense of closeness (Abidin, 2015), albeit while being motivated by ‘underlying commercial interests’ (Abidin and Thompson, 2012: 472).

I posit that these disparate studies of feminised modes of publicity work fall under the more general umbrella of ‘visibility labour’ or the work enacted to flexibly demonstrate gradients of self-consciousness in digital or physical spaces depending on intention or circumstance for favourable ends. Visibility labour is the work individuals do when they self-posture and curate their self-presentations so as to be noticeable and positively prominent among prospective employers (Neff et al., 2005), clients (Duffy, 2016), the press (Wissinger, 2015) or followers and fans (Abidin, 2015, 2016; Duffy, 2016; Wissinger, 2015), among other audiences. Unlike studies on algorithmic visibility (Bucher, 2012: 1164), visibility labour is concerned with analogue affective labour ordinary users perform to be noticed by prolific elite users. The work of followers is also a form of tacit labour – ‘a collective practice of work that is understated and under-visibility from being so thoroughly rehearsed that it appears as effortless and subconscious’ (Abidin, 2016: 10; cf. Polanyi, 1958).

The advertorial campaigns investigated here rely on knowledge of Instagram’s platform affordances and the Influencer ecology. Interviews with participating followers reveal three groups of strategies. First, followers enact knowledge on how to use hashtags, @mentions, usertags and geo-location tags and when to use them in isolation or in combination. Several followers would overload their posts or comments with multiple hashtags, @mentions or usertags, perhaps in a bid to increase their visibility to Influencers. Several followers interviewed concurred that this was the case, but also asserted that the practice is distasteful. For example, 26-year-old marketing manager Ellie reveals that she and her colleagues refer to such users as ‘spammers’ who ‘just look desperate’. Meanwhile, 22-year-old wedding planner Sheryl mentioned that she and her peers would playfully tease each other when they observed each other spamming posts: ‘We’ll be like, oh why you also wanna be Influencer ah, want to be their BFFs [best friend forever] is it?’

For these reasons, 23-year-old educator Carrie tries to participate only in campaigns that require her to ‘like’ an advertorial post, but not comment on it. She points out that commenting on an Influencer’s prolific post means that the high traffic of fellow followers will be able to see her handle, which she finds embarrassing: ‘I don’t want to look like I’m trying too hard. So I only comment on my [personal] friends’ post[s] ... but for Influencers I will just “like,” if I want to win or something’. Vivian, a 21-year-old undergraduate, discloses that she is a strategic spammer as she manually introduces ephemerality to her posts: ‘I’ll just spam a lot of hashtags to get “likes” ... and some people will also spam and tag many [user handles] so they will get notifications and see your post ... and then after I get enough “hits,” I’ll just delete all the hashtags and tags ... so it looks as if my post was very popular [organically]’.

Second, followers model after Influencers’ digital estates in enacting ‘cultural scripts’ (Banet-Weiser, 2012: 66) by concealing selected information through privacy filters, the management of duplicate social media accounts or self-selection of publicly posted information. Kristine, a 25-year-old communications officer, tells me that she set up separate social media accounts specifically to participate in Influencers’ contests to conceal her active participation from friends, citing embarrassment, like Ellie, Sheryl and Carrie. Although Kristine adopts pseudonyms on her ‘contest’ accounts, certain campaigns still require her to provide a legitimate email address, which she does. However, she ensures that her ‘real accounts’ linked to her email address are set to private so that ‘random people who Google [her] email’ won’t be able to see her actual content. Unlike Kristine, 28-year-old curator Dahlia insists that she is ‘unabashed’ about the visibility of her participation in Instagram advertorial campaigns, often rallying peers across various social media to ‘like’ her posts or leave favourable comments on her ‘regram’ so that Influencers would see her as a potential contest winner. Nevertheless, a hint of embarrassment seems to come through when Dahlia revealed she would begin her caption with an apologetic signpost to friends. Despite participating in such campaigns

only ‘once every few months’, Dahlia’s assortment of captions – ‘hey guys sorry for this contest post, pls skip if not interested’; ‘heh sorry for the spam’; ‘soz for clogging your feed :3 [an emoticon meant to stand for eyes and cat whiskers as a variant of the smiley face :)] vote for me?’ – demonstrates that her visibility labour was contingent upon compliant friends whose free labour she was concerned about soliciting.

Other followers, such as 25-year-old public relations officer Janice, are more embracing of their visibility labour. In the biographical section of her Instagram account, Janice specifically lists that she is a ‘civil servant’ in the hopes that this would elevate her status among the mass of followers who participate in advertorial campaigns:

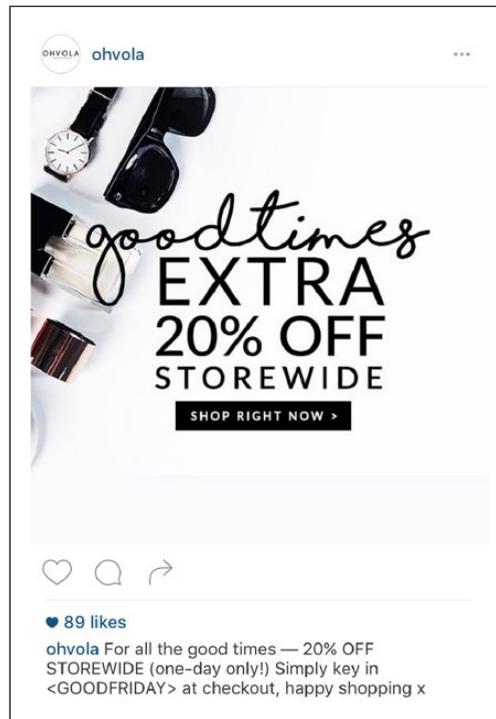
When [Influencers] pick winners they will surely just quickly check to see who we are, I think ... and they will see me as a ‘proper OL [office lady]’, not like young students or *xiaomeimei* [colloquialism used in jest to refer to young girls who are inexperienced or frivolous].

Adapting from ‘click bait’ – a ‘stylistic and narrative luring device [that] induce[s] anticipation and curiosity’ among followers, capturing their attention and thus inviting them to click on a link to ‘read on’ (Blom and Hansen, 2015: 87) – 27-year-old air stewardess Wendy utilises Instagram’s line breaks and ellipses (see Lee, 2015) to hide her captions on ‘regrams’ or commercial posts to entice Influencers and followers to ‘tap to see’ her content. While this strategy ‘unclogs’ her feed and ‘keeps it clean’, Wendy believes it also makes her memorable to Influencers when they are selecting winners as she has demonstrated her savvy of platform affordances.

Finally, followers accumulate understanding of in-group vocabulary, semiotics and practices – community norms – to remain favourable among Influencers and increase their own visibility. For 27-year-old medical worker Sally, she only publishes #OOTDs (see section ‘#OOTD and fashion brands’ uptake of visibility labour’) on the dedicated Instagram account she uses to respond to advertorial campaigns (cf. Kristine) so that Influencers who check her feed (cf. Janice) may view her as a ‘fashionista’ and favour her contest entry: ‘I think they will [see] that I’m familiar with their campaigns, their dress sense ... and [that I] put in effort to win’. To this effect, Corrine, a 26-year-old teacher, feels the need to signal that she is devoted to select Influencers and brands in order to present the digital persona of a ‘good follower’ who is not brand promiscuous. She thus only tags brands endorsed by her favourite Influencers and omits tags when she wears competing Influencers’ labels in the hopes that they will reward her loyalty.

The importance of grasping the vernacular of the Influencer ecology was confirmed through interview snippets with various Influencers. Bianca, aged 25, tells me that she ‘can usually remember’ who the ‘frequent commenters’ and ‘loyal followers’ are: ‘After a while you kinda get the hang of who keeps participating ... sometimes I feel bad that I cannot select more people to win, but I will make sure I make them feel included somehow’. However, 27-year-old Influencer Kelly’s more discriminate approach reveals that some Influencers are indeed concerned with the visibility labour of their followers as prospective campaign winners: ‘I won’t only pick the “spammers” actually ... because some of them spam all the Influencers and all the contests just to win ... it’s like not very sincere ...’ To this, Laura, aged 28, adds, ‘Usually I will quickly just click on their profile to see their recent posts ... get a feel of what they are like then choose ... [it] doesn’t take much effort’.

Despite their eagerness to participate in Instagram advertorial campaigns, indiscriminate hyper-visibility by followers is chastised and counter-productive. Instead, followers are concerned with the ‘narrative labor of [their] branded self’ (Carah and Shaul, 2016: 80); they engage in visibility labour when displaying gradients of self-conspicuousness by commenting on advertorial posts, regramming posts or curating their own campaign posts in order to maximise ‘likability’. This enables them to remain favourable among Influencers while maintaining their reputation with various social groups.



**Figure 1.** @ohvola discount announcement, 2016, Instagram.  
Image courtesy of @ohvola.

## #OOTD and fashion brands' uptake of visibility labour

This section presents case studies from three fashion brands @klarra, @vgystore and @ohvola – founded by Influencers @beatricesays, @vaingloriousyou and sisters @lucindazhou and @jolen-zhou, respectively. Specifically, it considers the visibility labour undertaken by followers who participate in the #OOTD genre of Instagram advertorial campaigns.

The #OOTD is a genre of posts popular on social media in which users share photographs modelling the clothes they wear (cf. Bailey, 2016; Gurrieri and Cherrier, 2013). In focus is how users have ensembled an outfit from various apparel and accessories. While the acronym suggests that these captures are taken daily to document one's dressing, prolific users such as Influencers have been known to organise photography sessions to document several different OOTDs at once before queuing the posts and selectively publishing them over the ensuing week or month. The convention for OOTDs is also to state the labels and brands that one is wearing through hashtags or usertags as a fashion diary archive in order to display one's social capital or engage in dialogue with other users, such as in Instagram advertorial campaigns. Some OOTD users may also publish the price of the individual pieces of apparel for the convenience of followers who wish to make a similar purchase or to signpost their cultural and financial capital.

Although these fashion brands are usually hosted on dotcoms, most of them have dedicated Instagram accounts through which they accumulate followers, interact with customers and broadcast content in the vein of advertorial dissemination. For instance, @ohvola is observed announcing discount codes (Figure 1), while @vgystore reminds followers to subscribe or 'turn on' their notifications for frequent updates (Figure 2).



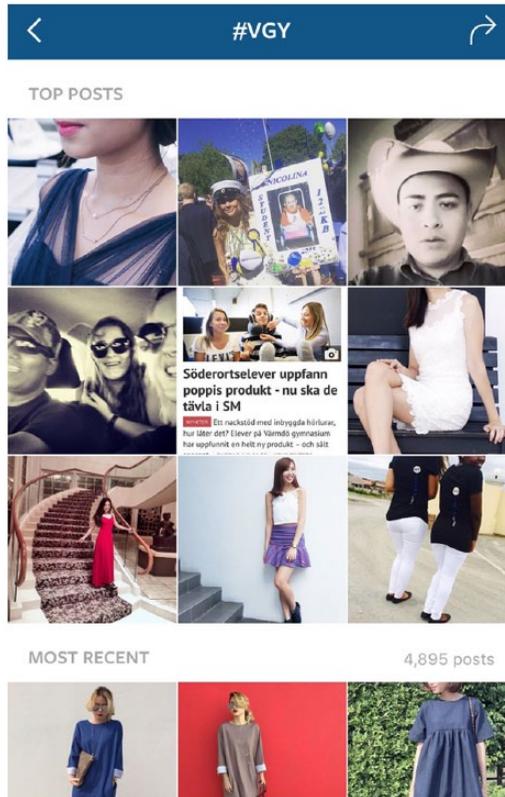
**Figure 2.** @vgystore notification alert, 2016, Instagram.  
Image courtesy of @vgystore.

Followers have contributed to developing official hashtags and channels for Influencers and their fashion brands. @klarra's initial hashtag on Instagram used to be '#klarra', on which most users shared their OOTDs featuring pieces from the label. However, when the original channel became crowded with spam posted by followers of other fashion brands attempting to hawk their own wares or solicit apparel for purchase, a portion of users innovated with the more specific '#klarraootd', featuring #OOTDs from customers of @klarra.

Across both hashtags, users voluntarily exchange information regarding apparel or shared personal reviews of customer feedback and user experience with the brand. A similar initiative occurred when @vgystore's '#vgy' became cluttered with spam (Figure 3) from unrelated users and when some followers began hawking wares from other stores on the @vgystore hashtag (Figure 4). Keen followers then took to '#vgyootd' to share their outfits.

In response, fashion brands regularly introduce new hashtags to streamline their feed and weed out spam and bots. For instance, @klarra later introduced two official hashtags, '#frontrow-byklarra' for a specific line of @klarra products and '#byklarra' for users to share their OOTDs, as did @vgystore with its fashion line '#vgydesignercollective' and its luxury range '#swanbyvgy' (Figure 5).

However, as followers increasingly bandwagon on commercial hashtags, advertorial dissemination is eroded by white noise. Thus, web store @ohvola debuted '#ohvolaupcoming', primarily utilised by sister-founders @lucindazhou and @jolenezhou and the official @ohvola Instagram to showcase new products in store. As the content in this channel primarily comprises sneak previews, very few followers and customers have been able to cross-post their OOTDs on the tag without appearing too eager, as reflected in the interview snippets above.



**Figure 3.** #VGY hashtag stream, 2016, Instagram.  
Image courtesy of @vgystore.

Fashion brands may call upon followers to participate in contests (Figure 6) or to solicit feedback (Figure 7) in the vein of advertorial aggregation.

They may also perform advertorial amplification by regramming and recaptioning OOTD posts from followers to be repurposed as publicity material. Followers may be remunerated (Figure 8) or compensated with shout-outs (Figure 9).

Followers hold a generative power to augment and intensify Influencers' advertorial efforts on their fashion brands. Despite some small compensation, most of the labour is volunteered by tens of thousands of followers. However, perhaps it is Influencers' communicative intimacies (Abidin, 2015), a brand's self-packaging of 'lovemarks' where customer loyalty is fostered via emotional attachments (Roberts, 2005), the slim opportunity of being acknowledged or sheer interest that motivates followers to continue their work.

## Conclusion

In follower-anchored Instagram campaigns, followers partake in under-compensated and under-acknowledged highly gendered visibility labour through advertorial dissemination, advertorial aggregation and advertorial instigation. In the genre of #OOTD posts, established tropes include purchasing, wearing, photographing, promoting and conversing about products, and the

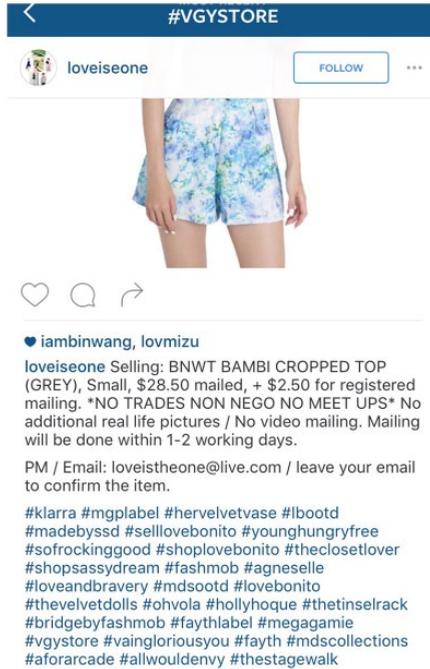


Figure 4. #VGYSTORE hashtag stream, 2016, Instagram. Image courtesy of @vgystore.

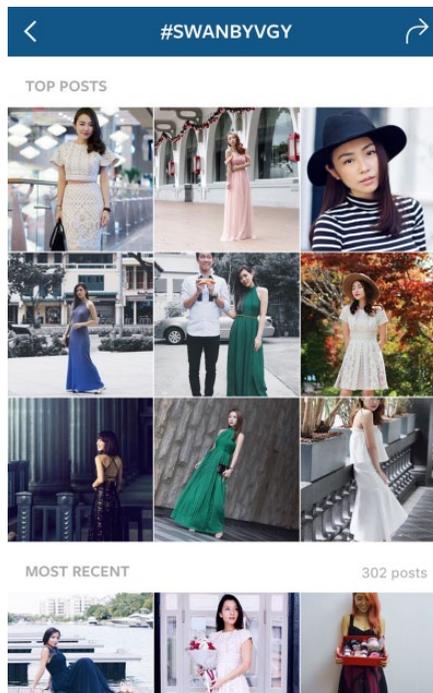


Figure 5. #SWANBYVGY hashtag stream, 2016, Instagram. Image courtesy of @vgystore.



**Figure 6.** @ohvola Christmas giveaway, 2016, Instagram. Image courtesy of @ohvola.



**Figure 7.** @vgystore EULIA & HANNAH post, 2016, Instagram. Image courtesy of @vgystore.



**Figure 8.** @ohvola Monochrome Monday regram, 2016, Instagram.  
Image courtesy of @ohvola.

subsequent maintenance, production and curation of Influencers' and fashion brands' digital estates on Instagram. Followers' complex yet internalised and seemingly effortless rationales for their polysemic 'networked performances' (Papacharissi, 2012b: 1989) on Instagram 'combine a variety of semiological references so as to produce a presentation of the self that makes sense to multiple audiences, without sacrificing coherence and continuity' (Papacharissi, 2012a: 209).

In her work on 'amateur or non-professional' fashion producers, Duffy (2015) asserts that 'despite the rhetoric of creative production, the aspirational labor system ensures that female participants remain immersed in the highly feminized *consumption* of branded goods (p. 3, emphasis in original). While consuming apparel is an undercurrent among followers analysed in this article, the bulk of the labour in which they engage posits them also as intensive producers of content, since their visibility labour is repurposed and amplified for Influencers' profit and as free advertising for fashion brands.

The labour and content followers generate is highly viable and effortful, and they vex over their self-presenting strategies. Yet, the followers I interviewed did not seem to express a sense of ownership nor frame their work as labour. Instead, their OOTDs are performed as 'tacit labour' (Abidin, 2016), such that there is little resistance to their complicit investment and uneven reciprocity in the OOTD circuit of Instagram advertorials. Yet, what they lack in financial repayments, followers gain in cultural capital, such as when gradients of exclusive or elite followers become identified by Influencers, at times even to be groomed into amateur Influencers themselves. When such status elevation becomes acknowledged by a viable mass of followers, such elite follower-turned-Influencers may then cash in the visibility labour invested for financial



**Figure 9.** @vgystore ESSENCE regram, 2016, Instagram.

Image courtesy of @vgystore.

rewards. As a self-reflexive strategy for self-conspicuousness, visibility labour can be strategically enacted such that internet brand names, international Influencers and million-dollar empires can be build one #OOTD at a time.

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