



CLICKBAIT IN BEAUTY CONTENT: TYPES AND RELEVANCE OF HEADLINES IN ONLINE MEDIA

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Abstract (English)

The rise of digital media has intensified the use of clickbait as a strategy to capture readers' attention and boost engagement. This study analyzes the types and relevance of clickbait in 15 beauty-related articles from various online platforms using a descriptive qualitative method and Barthes' semiotics theory. The findings reveal that teasing clickbait is the most commonly employed type, accounting for 40% of the analyzed headlines. Exaggeration and formatting clickbait follow with 26.7% and 20%, respectively, while less common types include ambiguous and inflammatory clickbait, each at 6.7%. Graphic, bait-and-switch, and wrong clickbait were not observed in the sample. While these strategies effectively attract attention, they often risk creating a mismatch between the headline and the actual content, leading to concerns about audience trust and ethical implications. This research contributes to the discourse on digital media practices by emphasizing the importance of balancing engaging headlines with accurate and relevant content in beauty journalism.

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INTRODUCTION

In today's digital age, online media competes fiercely for readers' attention. One strategy frequently employed is clickbait, headlines designed to spark curiosity and encourage clicks. While clickbait effectively attracts readers, it often leads to content that does not align with the headline, creating a gap between expectation and reality. This phenomenon is particularly evident in beauty-related content, where sensational headlines are used to promote products or share tips. For example, titles like "Achieve Flawless Skin Overnight—#3 Will Shock You!" have become common in beauty portals and blogs.

Beauty content holds a unique appeal, particularly among younger audiences who are keen on self-care and lifestyle trends. However, while these headlines successfully grab attention, they may also mislead readers or exaggerate claims, raising concerns about transparency and credibility. Despite its prevalence, limited research has focused on analyzing the types and effectiveness of clickbait in beauty-related articles. Several previous studies have explored the use of clickbait in different contexts, such as news coverage of COVID-19. For example, Sukmono (2021) analyzed the use of clickbait in COVID-19 reporting, identifying several types like *exaggeration*, *teasing*, and *inflammatory* headlines that mislead readers while generating clicks. Other studies have looked into clickbait in political news, highlighting its role in shaping reader engagement through sensational headlines.

This study aims to fill the gap by exploring how clickbait is utilized within the beauty industry and assessing its relevance to the actual content. The purpose of this research is to identify and analyze the different types of clickbait used in beauty-related online content and to examine the relevance of these headlines to the actual content they introduce.



REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Clickbait is a term that refers to content designed to attract readers or internet users to click on a link or article. Clickbait comes from two words: click and bait, and can literally be interpreted as "bait to get clicks". Pogue (2014), as written in Nurzain & Purnama's (2021) research, also defines clickbait as a teaser headline, which is also a new form of tabloid journalism. In line with this, Blom & Hansen (2015) argue that clickbait is a headline designed to arouse excessive curiosity so that readers feel compelled to click.

The use of clickbait is usually found on digital platforms such as Facebook, BuzzFeed, and YouTube. Clickbait generally uses sensational, provocative, or curiosity-inducing headlines, images, or opening sentences, often without providing information that matches the reader's expectations after clicking on the link. Because of this, most audiences consider clickbait as a negative strategy because it can mislead many audiences. But no doubt, the use of clickbait can also be used to attract attention without compromising the quality of information provided and relevant to the title.

Clickbait also has many types that can be seen as different. Biyani, Tsioutsoulis, and Blackmer (2016), in Hidayat's research, (2019) divided clickbait into 8 types, namely;

Exaggeration

As the name suggests, this type of clickbait is a type of headline that is highly exaggerated. In this case, the title usually uses words that are too dramatic, disproportionate to the content, or even lead to the wrong perception. This technique aims to arouse users' curiosity or emotions to click on the link, even though the content of the article does not always match the expectations created. For example, "Anda Tidak Akan Percaya Apa yang Dilakukan Wanita Ini di Dapur, Nomor 3 Akan Membuat Anda Menangis!". While in fact the content of the article only describes common cooking recipes.

Teasing

This type of clickbait is a provocative, teasing, or entertaining headline that arouses the audience's curiosity by creating a headline that is intentionally vague, so that the reader feels tense, curious, and feels compelled to click to find out more. Clickbait works by tapping into the reader's emotions, especially curiosity or anxiety, known as the curiosity gap. For example, "Inilah Penyebabnya Mengapa Semua Orang di Kota Ini Tidak Bisa Tidur Malam Tadi!". While in fact the content of the article only reports on a night concert event in the city center.

Inflammatory

This type of clickbait is a type of headline that is created to cause or provoke the audience with anger or hatred. This kind of headline usually uses vulgar, hyperbolic, or inappropriate words to evoke feelings of anger, rage, or even hatred towards a certain subject. Clickbait aims to attract attention through strong emotions, so that readers feel compelled to click on the link and possibly participate in the heated discussion, such as through comments or sharing on social media. For example, "Selebriti Ini Menghina Negara Kita, Simak Ucapannya yang Sangat Menyakitkan!". While in fact the content of the article discusses the celebrity's comments taken out of context and not actually insulting.

Formatting

This type of clickbait is a type of headline that is created by utilizing certain writing styles in the headline, such as the use of capital letters, exclamation points, or a combination of other visual elements, to grab the reader's attention. Clickbait not only emphasizes the words in the title but also creates a sense of urgency, emotion, or importance to the information being conveyed. For example, "BONGKAR!! RAHASIA KECANTIKAN YANG TIDAK INGIN DIKETAHUI INDUSTRI KOSMETIK!".

Graphic



This type of clickbait is a type of headline that uses a title or description that contains explicit graphic or visual elements, often disgusting, bizarre, vulgar, or unbelievable. The goal is to trigger shock, disgust, or even controversy to attract the audience's attention. This type tends to capitalize on the emotional aspects of the audience, especially curiosity or discomfort. For example, "Rahasia Tersembunyi dari Produk Kecantikan yang Akan Membuat Anda Jijik!"

Bait and Switch

This type of clickbait is a type of headline that uses the technique of deceiving the audience by providing a headline that attracts attention but does not match the content or only provides partial information. Readers are then directed to visit other sites or click on additional links to get the desired information. Clickbait aims to increase traffic or engagement on a particular site, often at the expense of a good user experience. For example, "Lihat Bagaimana Selebriti X Mengubah Hidupnya Dalam Waktu Seminggu!". However, the content of the article only provides an introduction to the celebrity's healthy lifestyle and directs the reader to a diet product page.

Ambiguous

This type of clickbait is a type of headline that uses a deliberately vague or confusing title to attract readers' curiosity. This headline usually provides little concrete information, so the reader feels the need to click on the link to find out more. This strategy focuses on manipulating curiosity in a subtle but enticing way. For example, "Sebuah Kesalahan yang Semua Orang Lakukan Tanpa Sadar". While the content of the article only discusses small habits such as misplacing items.

Wrong

This type of clickbait is a type of title that deliberately contains information that does not match the actual facts or even contradicts the content of the article. This kind of clickbait is very dangerous because it can mislead readers, cause unrest in the community, or even trigger conflict if it involves sensitive issues such as politics, religion, or health. For example, "Hasil Penelitian Baru Membuktikan Minuman Ini Menyembuhkan Segala Penyakit!". While in fact the content of the article only discusses the health benefits of herbal tea without any strong scientific claims.

METHODOLOGY

This research uses descriptive qualitative methods on technology news to analyze clickbait content on news portals. Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (2018) stated that the descriptive qualitative method is an approach that focuses on describing and understanding social phenomena. They emphasize that descriptive qualitative research relies on narrative data to understand the meaning that individuals give to their experiences, thus producing deep insights into the broader social context. According to Creswell (2014), descriptive qualitative methods aim to provide a detailed and in-depth description of the phenomenon under study, focusing on understanding the context and meaning of the data obtained. This approach allows researchers to explore the nuances that exist in journalistic practices and how clickbait is used to attract readers' attention. In general, this method emphasizes narrative data collection and unstructured analysis, so as to describe complex realities.

RESEARCH STEPS

Data Collection

The first step in this research is collecting data consisting of 15 news headlines from various technology news portals known for using clickbait. The data collection process involves noting down attention-grabbing headlines and recording the context in which these



headlines appear. According to Yin (2014), systematic data collection is crucial to ensure the validity and reliability of research results.

Identification

Once the data is gathered, the next step is identifying the clickbait elements in the news headlines. This includes analyzing the use of provocative language, numbers, and rhetorical questions. Barthes' (1964) semiotics theory can be applied to understand how signs in headlines function to attract readers' attention.

Analysis

The third step involves analyzing and categorizing the types of clickbait found and the communication strategies employed. According to Flick (2018), qualitative analysis involves grouping data based on emerging themes or patterns. In this context, the researcher will compare different headlines and evaluate the impact of clickbait on reader engagement.

Description

The final step is describing the research findings by providing a detailed explanation of the characteristics of clickbait and its influence on technology news. This description will include interpretations of the collected data and the implications of clickbait usage on readers' perceptions and behavior. This aligns with Denzin and Lincoln's (2011) perspective, emphasizing the importance of providing a comprehensive overview in qualitative research.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

FINDINGS

The analysis of 15 beauty-related headlines reveals the distribution of clickbait types across the dataset. Table 1 summarizes the frequency of each type of clickbait based on Biyani et al.'s (2016) framework.

Table 1: Distribution of Clickbait Types in Beauty-Related Headlines

Clickbait Type	Number of Headlines	Percentage (%)
Teasing	6	40%
Exaggeration	4	26.7%
Formatting	3	20%
Ambiguous	1	6.7%
Inflammatory	1	6.7%
Graphic	0	0%
Bait-and-Switch	0	0%
Wrong	0	0%

The findings show that teasing clickbait dominates beauty-related online content, accounting for 40% of the analyzed headlines. Next is exaggeration constitutes 26.7% of the sample. Then, formatting clickbait, used in 20% of the headlines, relies on structured elements such as numbered lists to promise clarity and ease of understanding. And last, interestingly, ambiguous and inflammatory clickbait appeared less frequently (6.7% each).





While for the bait-and-switch, or wrong clickbait were no examples identified, suggesting that these types are not commonly employed in beauty-related content, likely due to their potentially damaging effect on credibility.

DISCUSSION

The analysis reveals various types of clickbait employed in beauty-related headlines, each tailored to attract readers by leveraging different emotional or intellectual triggers. Below is a deeper analysis of each type identified, supported by specific examples.

Teasing Clickbait

As example from the data, the article title, "*Unik banget, ini rekomendasi jelly blush yang punya tekstur kenyal*". This headline employs teasing by using the phrase "*unik banget*" (very unique) to intrigue readers without providing sufficient detail about the product's uniqueness. The vague descriptor "*tekstur kenyal*" (bouncy texture) adds to the curiosity, compelling readers to click to learn more. This aligns with the beauty industry's strategy to evoke emotional engagement by promising something novel or extraordinary. While the headline successfully attracts attention, the lack of specificity might disappoint readers if the content fails to fully elaborate on the product's unique aspects.

Exaggeration Clickbait

As example from the data, the article title, "*Diminati artis sampai influencer, ternyata ini alasan operasi hidung populer*". This headline exaggerates the popularity of rhinoplasty by claiming it is highly sought after by both celebrities and influencers. The use of the word "ternyata" (turns out) further amplifies curiosity, suggesting readers will uncover surprising or exclusive insights. However, upon reviewing the article, the connection between rhinoplasty and its popularity among these groups is generalized and lacks detailed evidence. This approach can engage readers initially but risks undermining trust if the article does not substantiate the bold claims.

Formatting Clickbait

As example from the data, the article title, "*Hair perm 101: Ini 5 hal yang perlu kamu tahu sebelum treatment*". The headline uses a numbered format ("5 hal") to provide a clear and organized promise of information, which appeals to readers looking for quick, practical advice. The inclusion of "Hair perm 101" frames the content as a comprehensive guide, making it even more attractive to readers who are unfamiliar with the topic. Unlike other types, formatting clickbait often aligns closely with the content, as the structure of the article typically delivers on the promised points. In this case, the headline successfully draws in readers and meets expectations by presenting the five promised insights.

Ambiguous Clickbait

As example from the data, the article title, "*Jangan ngaku-ngaku, ini ciri-ciri wajah yang awet muda*". This headline is intentionally vague, using the provocative phrase "jangan ngaku-ngaku" (don't claim) to create curiosity. The lack of specific information about what constitutes "ciri-ciri wajah awet muda" (characteristics of a youthful face) pushes readers to click to satisfy their curiosity. While the headline's ambiguity effectively engages readers, its relevance to the content can vary. If the article provides substantial insights into these characteristics, the clickbait achieves its purpose; otherwise, it risks leaving readers unsatisfied.

Inflammatory Clickbait

As example from the data, the article title, "*Zat kimia berbahaya ditemukan di kosmetik kecantikan, ini daftar produk nyawa*". This headline uses fear-based language, such as "zat kimia berbahaya" (dangerous chemicals) and "produknyawa" (products risking lives), to provoke alarm and urgency. The intent is to compel readers to click, driven by concern for their safety. While the headline is impactful, its effectiveness depends on whether the article



provides verifiable information. In this case, the use of inflammatory language may undermine the credibility of the article if the content lacks supporting data or overstates the risks.

The discussions highlight the varied use of clickbait types in beauty-related content. Teasing, exaggeration, and formatting were the most prevalent, each serving different purposes, such as; teasing builds curiosity, exaggeration amplifies allure, and formatting provides structure for quick comprehension. Ambiguous and inflammatory types, while less common, still play roles in engaging readers emotionally. However, the alignment between headlines and content significantly impacts reader trust. Effective clickbait balances attention-grabbing techniques with substantive, relevant information.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the extensive use of clickbait headlines in beauty-related online content, particularly the dominance of teasing (40%), exaggeration (26.7%), and formatting clickbait (20%). These types effectively capture readers' attention by exploiting curiosity and emotional triggers, while less common types such as ambiguous (6.7%) and inflammatory (6.7%) play smaller roles in engaging readers. However, the findings reveal a frequent disconnect between the content of these headlines and the actual articles, raising ethical concerns about transparency and credibility. Despite their success in driving clicks, misleading headlines can erode reader trust over time, particularly when the content does not align with the promises made in the headline.

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