Utilization of Social Media as Indonesia's Tourism Public Relations Strategy

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is one of the main economical sectors in Indonesia, supported by enormous tourism potential of existing tourist destinations and cultural diversity. Various modes of promotions are required in order to further raise tourists’ awareness of existing tourist destinations and to build a positive tourism image of Indonesia. The use of social media is one of the most effective solutions in promoting Indonesian tourism, that is also in line with the digitalization in public relations 4.0 development. Using the Systematic Literature Review method of five journals from Google Scholar in the last four years, it was found that Instagram is the most widely used social media to promote tourism in Indonesia.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the sectors that supports the economy in Indonesia. Every year, there is an increase in tourist visits, both domestic and foreign, to tourist destinations in Indonesia. Indonesia has enormous tourism potential, supported by various existing tourist destinations and cultural diversity within them. To continue to increase tourism visits in Indonesia, promotional efforts are needed in this sector to further expand the reach and information regarding existing tourism to attract more tourists, both domestic and foreign tourists. One promotion that can be done for tourism in Indonesia is through social media platforms (Rambe & Jafeta, 2017). In today’s digital era, social media has become a useful platform for promoting tourist destinations so that they can be reached more widely (Chaffey & Smith, 2022).

Social media is a group of internet-based applications built on Web 2.0 ideology and technology, which allows the creation and exchange of user generated content (Kaplan & Hanlein, 2010). According to (Wang, Cheng, & Sun, 2021), currently social media has changed the relationship patterns that exist between corporations and employees, customers, competitors, suppliers, media and parties who are in contact with or directly impacted by the organization. Social media seems to offer a space for interaction that is unlimited by distance and time, because it is free to be accessed by anyone and at any time. Social media also allows users to process their own content, which is known as user-generated content. One of the characteristics of social media is sharing, where what is meant is activities between users to receive, exchange and distribute content (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, & Silvestre, 2011). This sharing activity then allows the content to become viral and the message to spread widely and quickly, so it does not require a lot of processing because the distribution is carried out by the social media user himself.

Social media has developed rapidly in recent years and is used as a communication and promotional tool. Social media offers convenience for organizations and individuals to communicate with the public in real-time (Schaarschmidt & Walsh, 2020). According to the We Are Social report, in
January 2023, there will be 167 million active social media users in Indonesia, and this number is equivalent to 60.4% of the population in Indonesia. Users on average spend 3 hours and 18 minutes playing social media, which ranks tenth in the world in terms of highest social media usage. Industry also continues to develop until the emergence of the term industry 4.0 with cyber-physical systems (Fuchs, 2021) as its marker. This system allows collaboration between two things, namely physical activities that occur in the real world and cyber activities that occur via the internet. Industry 4.0 is said to be able to optimize operationalization, communication and information technology to maximize automation processes in manufacturing (Gilchrist, 2016). One of the most extreme things that happens in Industry 4.0 is that goods are completely produced, sent, used, repaired and recycled automatically, without human intervention, through a network of various technologies via the internet (Fuchs, 2021). According to Dian & Irwansyah (2018), in the industrial era 4.0, technology is projected to dominate all aspects of human life.

In the context of public relations in Industry 4.0, social media plays an important role in digital public relations (Nurjanah & Nurnisya, 2016). In the current digital era, social media has become an effective communication tool for building an image and expanding the reach of information for an organization or institution. Each organization or institution can use social media to strengthen its brand image, increase awareness, and expand the reach of information regarding products and services, as well as activities that take place within the institution or organization.

In the context of digital public relations through social media platforms, the Indonesian tourism industry can introduce Indonesian tourist and cultural destinations, promote existing tourism objects and provide information regarding safety and comfort in tourist destinations (Irfan, Malik, & Zubair, 2022). Through digital public relations, a positive image of Indonesian tourism can be built through active interaction with social media users. In optimizing digital public relations, the tourism industry must understand the use of social media well so that it can carry out promotions in a targeted and effective manner (Mansur, Saragih, Susilawati, Udud, & Endri, 2021). Therefore, this research will examine the extent to which the use of social media is effectively used in digital public relations strategies for promoting tourism in Indonesia, as well as what factors influence the success of using social media in the context of tourism promotion. It is hoped that the results of this research can contribute to the development of digital public relations strategies at other institutions that utilize social media as an effective communication tool (Sriramesh & Vercic, 2003).

METHODS

The method used is systematic literature review (SLR), which is a term for a series of methods for identifying, evaluating and interpreting all available research that is relevant to the formulation of the problem or topic being researched (Calderón & Ruiz, 2015). SLR research is carried out to collect and evaluate research related to a particular topic focus (Triandini, Jayanatha, Indrawan, Putra, & Iswara, 2019). SLR is used to synthesize scientific evidence by including appropriate published evidence on the topic and can assess the quality of the selected topic. In writing this literature review, the first step taken was identification. Identification is carried out systematically by identifying scientific journals and articles with titles that suit the research context (Xiao & Watson, 2019). This literature review search was carried out using the Google search engine and Google Scholar using the keywords 'social media', 'digital public relations', and 'Indonesian tourism promotion'. After obtaining several articles, selection was carried out by selecting literature that was relevant to the research topic (Ridley, 2012). The articles selected to be used as references are articles published during the period 2019–2019. 2023, with the aim of the article being the latest article that has followed technological developments over the last four years. There are limited articles discussing the use of social media in
digital public relations strategies for tourism promotion in Indonesia, so the journal search period used was only four years (Warmayana, 2018).

After identification, the next step is to carry out an evaluation by analyzing the suitability between the concept studied and the realization in the journal writing that has been chosen to be used as a reference. This evaluation then uses an analysis of existing aspects related to the role of social media in tourism promotion in Indonesia. The next step is to interpret the findings from the selected journal. This literature review was carried out selectively by selecting articles with the greatest level of relevance to the research topic because, literature reviews must be carried out selectively, critically, comprehensively and in accordance with a good flow (Neuman Lawrence, 2014).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the search results using Google Scholar, five journals were selected that were in accordance with the research topic regarding the Use of Social Media as a Digital Public Relations Strategy: Implementation of Public Relations in Promotion of Indonesian Tourism. Each journal article discusses the use of social media in promoting tourism in the city discussed (Agya, 2022).

From research by (Oktaviani & Fatchiya, 2019), the use of social media as a tourism promotion medium for Umbul Ponggok, Klaten Regency is effective in attracting visitor interest. The number of visitors has increased significantly after using social media as a promotional medium. In 2008, before using social media, the number of visitors to Umbul Ponggok was only 165,034. However, after using social media as a promotional medium, the number of visitors increased to 367,019 in 2015. This shows that using social media as a promotional medium can increase visitor interest and is effective in promoting tourism.

Research conducted by (Nugraha & Dami, 2021) attempted to evaluate the effectiveness of Liman Beach tourism promotion efforts by utilizing Instagram social media via the @pantailimansemau account. This research was carried out by analyzing data from features on Instagram such as hashtags, tagging, captions, and others to find out the effectiveness of using Instagram in promoting Liman Beach. The research results show that the use of Instagram social media in promoting Liman Beach tourism is quite effective, especially through the use of hashtags. From hashtag data analysis on @pantailimansemau posts, there are more than 1000 posts that use the hashtag Pantai Liman. Apart from that, the use of social media Instagram is also able to increase public knowledge about the Liman Beach tourist area, as the @pantailimansemau account becomes increasingly well known among Instagram users.

The results of research on the effectiveness of Instagram in increasing interest in visiting tourists in the Special Region of Yogyakarta (Wijayanti, 2021) show that Instagram is an effective promotional medium for increasing interest in visiting tourists in Yogyakarta. This is supported by the complete features that Instagram has, such as hashtags and geographic locations, which allow users to find information about tourist destinations easily. Apart from that, effective communication facilities between tourists and managers and between tourists themselves via Instagram also play a role in increasing tourist interest in visiting. The D.I.Y. Tourism Office, which has provided public facilities such as free WiFi in various areas, also makes it easier for tourists to access information about Yogyakarta tourist destinations via Instagram (Dhanesh, Duthler, & Li, 2022).

Research from (Trihayuningtyas, Wulandari, Adriani, & Sarasvati, 2018) regarding the use of social media as a means of information and tourism promotion for generation Z in Garut Regency, namely the method used is AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) to measure the effectiveness of tourism promotion via Instagram. The research results show that 100% of generation Z are interested and seek information about Garut Regency tourist destinations through browsing on Instagram. The interest percentage reached 92.45%, where generation Z was interested in photos and videos uploaded.
by promotional accounts for Garut Regency tourist destinations. From the interest seen visually on Instagram, a desire to visit emerged with a desire percentage of 21%. Garut Regency is considered the first tourist destination for Generation Z before visiting further places. The level of action or actual visits to Garut Regency is also quite high, namely 84.9%. This shows that Instagram social media is effective as a means of information and tourism promotion for generation Z in Garut Regency.

The results of research by (Nandaryani & Santosa, 2022) regarding Instagram content as a promotional medium for the Tenganan Dauh Tukad tourist village in an effort to increase tourist visits after the pandemic explain that designing Instagram content as a promotional tool can be an effective strategy to increase tourist visits to the village. Tenganan Dauh Tukad. Interesting and informative content can then help attract the interest of domestic and foreign tourists and provide a clear picture of what to expect when visiting the tourist village. Apart from that, the use of Instagram as a promotional medium also allows the Tenganan Dauh Tukad tourist village to reach a wider audience effectively and efficiently. However, you need to remember that, apart from interesting content, promotions also need to be carried out consistently and integrated with broader marketing strategies to achieve maximum results (Kotler, Kartajaya, & Setiawan, 2019).

Through the five selected journal articles above, each journal was researched further, thus obtaining a discussion about Instagram as a social media that can be used to implement tourism promotion in Indonesia. The results of the discussion will be linked to analyzing digital public relations in the development of communications industry technology. Literature studies were carried out on five journals and other articles as reference sources (Maria, Pusriadi, Hakim, & Darma, 2019).

In the context of Instagram, Ma’mun, A., Suroso, R. P., & Rakhmawati, A. (2018) researched the use of Instagram as a tourism promotion medium. An analysis of five Instagram accounts of tourist destinations in Indonesia was carried out and the research results showed that Instagram can be an effective medium for strategies for promoting tourist destinations. Creating interesting and high-quality content can increase the interest and desire of tourists to decide to visit existing tourist destinations. Apart from Instagram content, active interaction and participation from users is also a supporting factor that is no less important in expanding the reach of tourism promotion through Instagram social media.

Similar research by Mohamad, O. A., and Shaari, Z. H. (2021) shows that Instagram is an effective medium for increasing tourists’ interest in visiting tourism destinations. Even though this research was not conducted in Indonesia but in Malaysia, the results of this quantitative research on 315 respondents showed that content with good visualization was deemed effective in increasing tourists’ interest in visiting tourist attractions. Apart from attractive visuals, the content must also be interactive and informative for potential tourists. Tourism managers must be active in promoting existing tourism as well as assistance from tourists by uploading or sharing moments during visits to tourist attractions via Instagram media so that they can be reached by a wider audience, which can be converted into increased tourist interest and intention to visit tourism destinations. Apart from that, easy access to social media sites such as Instagram is also an important factor in expanding the reach of tourism promotions.

**CONCLUSION**

Based on research using SLR, it can be concluded that the use of social media as a digital public relations strategy can achieve the goal of promoting tourism in Indonesia. In the last four years, it has been found that technology has increasingly developed and aspects of social media have developed. Instagram has become one of the most popular social media sites in Indonesia, used by many people to share information and experiences in various fields, including tourism. According to the research results, Instagram can be an effective tool for promoting Indonesian tourism by using various digital marketing strategies such as attractive visual content, collaboration with various parties, and the use of hashtags that are relevant to tourist destinations. In this case, the implementation of digital public relations in tourism promotion via Instagram can help increase potential tourists’ awareness of Indonesian tourist destinations and expand the reach of promotions via social media.
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