

Social Media as a Means of Tourism Promotion by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Youth, and Sports of Palangka Raya City

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ABSTRACT

The use of social media as means for promotion has been widely used in the tourism industry. One of the departments whose responsibility for promoting tourism is Department of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports (*Disparbudpora*) of Palangka Raya City. In relation to its main responsibility, there must be a specific management on the use of social media for tourism promotion. This research objective was to investigate the social media patterns a means of tourism promotion by Disparbudpora Palangka Raya. This descriptive qualitative research employed observation, interviews, documentation and literature to help collect the data. The informants were the social media staffs of Disparbudpora and social media followers of Disparbudpora accounts. The research results showed that the pattern of promotion using social media carried out by Disparbudpora consisted of four stages, including content creation, platform determination, program implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and the four mix promotions carried out were advertising, sales promotion, public relations and publicity, and direct marketing.

Keywords: Social Media, Tourism Promotion, Department of Tourism

I. Introduction

Today social media is used as means for networking and connecting people for various purposes, including in the tourism industry. The use of social media has been growing and very influential in the tourism as it is one of vital economic sectors for the Republic of Indonesia.

The tourism destinations and products in Palangka Raya City is very diverse and. They are divided into four types of tourism: natural tourism, cultural and religious tourism, artificial tourism, and culinary tourism. This potential for tourism needs optimal promotion strategies from the government. The Department of Tourism Culture Youth and Sports of Palangka Raya City (*Disparbudpora*) Palangka Raya) has its primary responsibility to develop and promote the tourism sectors in

this city. Therefore, it is important to take a closer look at its policies and implementations in promoting this tourism sector. Based on the Indonesian Government's Law Number 10 Year 2009 concerning Tourism, Chapter VIII, Authority Government and Regional Government Article 30 in Point f, it is stated that government district / city authorized: to facilitate and carry out promotion destination tourism and products tourism in its area. Therefore, promoting destinations and products tourism is also task from Department of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports Palangkaraya .

According to Alma (2018:181), promotion is one of form communication marketing, which is a marketing activity to spread information, influence or persuade as well as remind target market or companies and their products to willingly accept, buy and be loyal to products provided by the company. Tourism promotion using social media creates more innovations in the last years. The use Disparbudpora Palangka Raya has small quantity in number *subscribers* and followers on Instagram, Facebook and Tiktok. The interaction that occurs like the number of likes and comments on the posts are also minimal. The low number of followers and lack of strategy and pattern in promotion will limit the range of contents on social media accounts from Disparbudpora Palangkaraya.

A number of previous studies have revealed various findings on the topic. Atiko et al (2016) found that the promotional strategy carried out by the Marketing Division of the Ministry of Tourism in using Instagram account @indtravel as a promotional media for Indonesian tourism is advertising and sales promotion through quizzes and photo competitions, as well as offering various cultural events. Romadhan & Rusmana (2017) found that tourism promotion using social media tools showed its impact on the development of tourist objects as the visitors could access information about tourist objects through social media. Betari et al (2016) stated that promotional strategies carried out by the Department of Culture and Tourism Banyuwangi Regency through mix promotion had already given positive impacts on the number of visits but not yet effective to increase the length of tourists' stays.

The issue highlighted in this present research is the use of social media by Disparbudpora Palangka Raya as a means for tourism promotion in Palangka Raya

City which aims to increase *engagement* from the public regarding the social media used by Disparbudpora Palangkaraya. Therefore, the objective of this research is to investigate social media patterns as a means for tourism promotion Disparbudpora Palangka Raya.

According to Sugeng (in Retnasary et al., 2019:79), social media is an online media that supports social interaction. This web based social media change communication become an interactive dialogue. Promotion using social media is still classified as a new thing and begins to show power to develop the tourism industry. Fahrudin et al (2020) stated that travelers rely heavily on user - generated social media content. Reviews like content quality, quantity of likes and comments on social media influence intention traveler For visit or buy product tourism. This can be seen with the amount tourists who visit to a tourist spot through information on social media.

It can be concluded that social media is a means to represent, share, cooperate and do social interaction with other users, and as means to promote something that can get the respons directly. In this research, the focus is the social media run by Disparbudpora Palangka Raya as a means for promotions of tourism in the city of Palangka Raya.

According to Suwarso (2021:154), tourism promotion is a form of communication marketing in the tourism insdustry whose purpose is to influence target tourists to visit to an area promoted. To promote, it requires tools to inform, persuade, or increase visitors to visit the promoted spots or to buy the tourism products. Therefore, the promotion must be done through effective communication media to target a wide range of tourists with different tastes and desires.

Communication through instagram digital content must contain informative and persuasive meaning (Retnasary et al., 2019). Informative messages mean containing necessary information, while persuasive messages contain an invitation to the public to visit tourist destinations and spots and buy products or services provided in the tourist spots.

According to Kotler and Amstrong (2016:121), promotion mix is a specific combination from any promotion tools by companies to introduce and build connection with consumer. Promotion mix consists of these five elements below.

1. Advertising, is a non-individual communication in the form of promotion of ideas, goods or services that use a number of costs incurred by companies, institutions, groups, and individual through various media.
2. Sales Promotion, is one of the promotion activities carried out to stimulate purchase a product or service.
3. Public relations and publicity, is a program designed to promote and protect image company or the product.
4. Personal Selling, is an interaction to look at advance with candidate buyer to offer product or service.
5. Direct Marketing, is an activity that allows a seller or company to come to candidate consumer to offer product or service directly.

This was a descriptive qualitative study. Through this method, the researchers conducted an investigation on the real condition of the objects, where the researchers took a role as a key instrument. The technique data collection was carried out in a way of triangulation (observation, interviews, and documentation) to obtain the qualitative data.

The object of this study was the use social media for the tourism promotion by Disparbudpora Palangka Raya, Central Kalimantan, Indonesia. In study, the research informants consisted of five people: three social media account staff of Disparbudpora social media accounts, and two followers of the social media accounts of Disparbudpora.

Data analysis was done following Miles and Huberman (in Sugiyono, 2020:541), consisted of *data collection*, *data reduction*, *data display*, and *conclusion drawing/verification*.

II. Discussion

2.1 Social Media Patterns as a Means of Tourism Promotion

Tourism promotion is an important element in the development of tourism sector. An effective tourism promotion can give good contribution to the growth of economic, social, cultural sectors, and many more especially the city of Palangka Raya. Currently Disparbudpora Palangka Raya has been utilizing social media for

digital marketing. The use of social media was to inform and persuade tourists to visit the tourist destinations in this city.

According to one the social media staff, the use of social media has started since in 2017, namely making account for Instagram, next Facebook, Youtube and Tiktok. Now social media has more massive and different impacts compared to the past like radio or television. Now using social media and uploading content promotion be done anytime and considered cheaper.

This was aligned with another staff who stated that the use of social media is an everyday activity. Now making social media accounts are free and not limited For its ownership so that it really helped them to operate the social media accounts of Disparbudpora to promote tourism in Palangka Raya City for local, national, even international public.

Related to that, a follower expressed the same thing, as seen in the following transcription.

"I think, everything about tourism now is digital, so manual marketing is already not enough as it is expensive and cannot reach wider market. It is the right move for Disparbudpora Palangka raya to determine to utilize such social media for the promotion."

(Interview, April 30, 2024)

To sum up, the use of social media as means for promotion by Disparbudpora Palangka raya was considered effective compared with the manual marketing and broadcast media like television and radio. Therefore, it is good for Disparbudpora to maximize the use of social media so that it not only can reach community at the local scale, but also national and international scales.

2.2 Social Media Accounts of Disparbudpora Palangkaraya

There are four social media accounts of Disparbudpora including Youtube, Instagram, Tiktok and Facebook as follows.

1. Facebook

Disparbudpora Palangka Raya had two accounts. The first account page: @Dinas Pariwisata, Kebudayaan, Pemuda, dan Olahraga Palangka Raya with 1,400

followers as a public account. The second is a personal account: @Disparbudpora Palangka Raya with 4,991 followers. However, the contents and posts uploaded were the same. This social media has features to share content like photos, videos or articles. Users can send text, sound, image, file, location, as well as give likes, comments or share other people's posts and do direct broadcast.

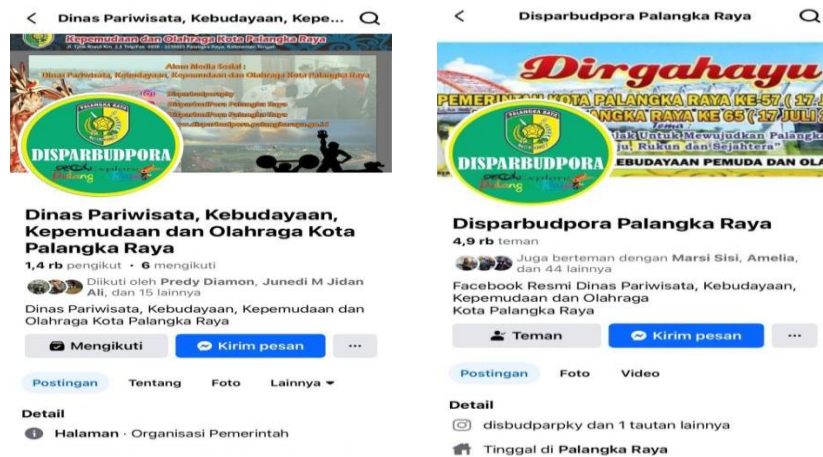


Figure 2. Disparbudpora's Facebook Accounts

2. Instagram

@disparbudporapky is the Instagram account of Disparbudpora Palangka Raya with 1,510 posts and 3,800 followers. This account is used to share photos and videos via features of posts, stories, reels (short videos), direct messages, live and broadcast.

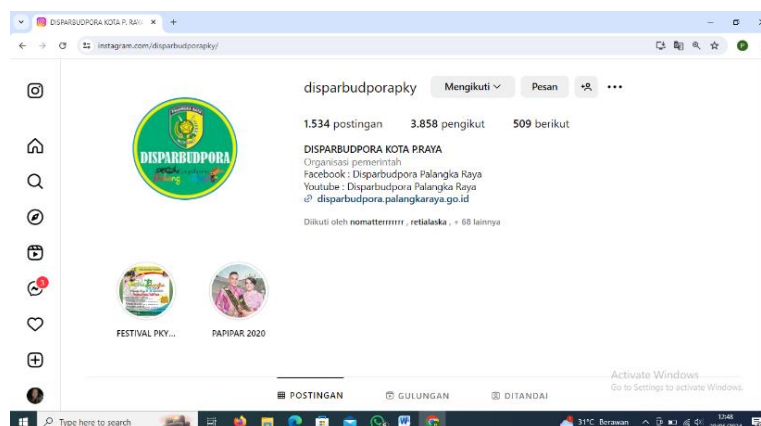


Figure 3. Instagram Account of Disparbudpora Palangka Raya

3. Youtube

The Youtube channel Disparbudpora Palangka Raya had 1.7 thousand subscribers. It is a platform to upload, watch, and share videos and as well to broadcast. The users can also comment, hit the likes and dislikes buttons on YouTube videos.

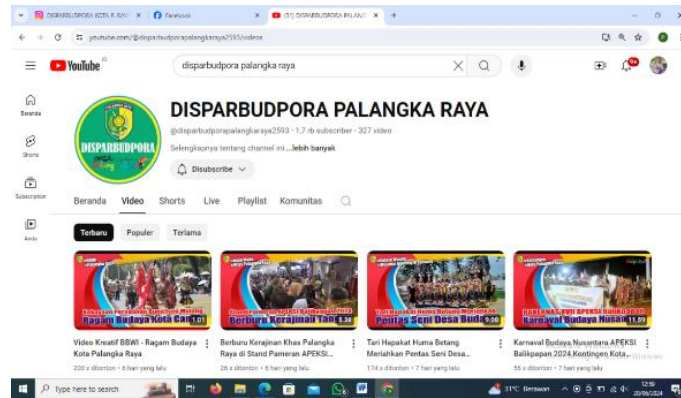


Figure 4. Youtube Channel of Disparbudpora Palangka Raya

6. Tiktok

The Tiktok account of @disparbudporapky had 85 followers. TikTok is a social media that is currently trend used from to share videos. Users can make a short video with their voice or songs. This has become a trend with added filters or special effects to gain likes, comments, and shares. This account also allows its users to send message and broadcast.

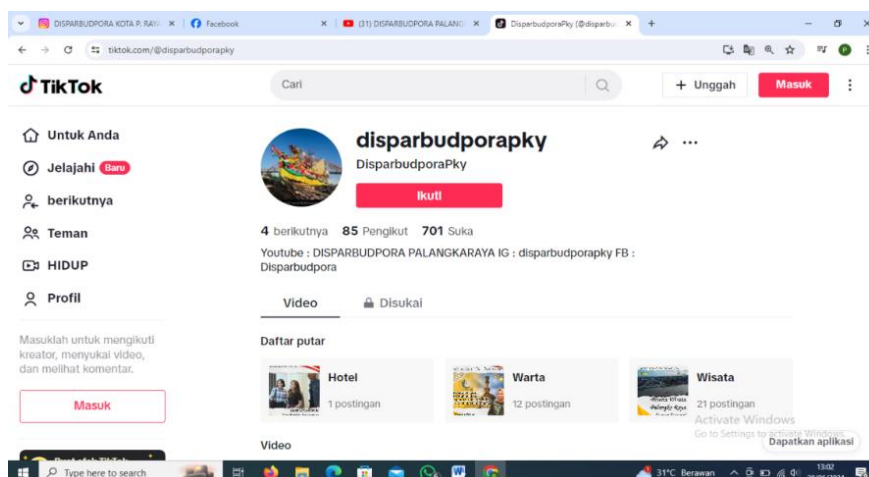


Figure 5. Tiktok Account of Disparbudpora Palangka Raya

Disparbudpora Palangka Raya always made sure to do an interconnection among these social media account to create the synchronization of the information posted. The example can be seen in the following Figure 6.



Figure 6. Disparbudpora Facebook post on April 26, 2024

Based on Figure 6, it can be seen from the Facebook posting that Disparbudpora Palangka Raya includes the Youtube video link and a distinctive template that showed each social media account and website of Disparbudpora. It was to show the interconnection process among the social media accounts of Disparbudpora Palangka Raya. The use of specific template on each post aimed to be the branding or identity so that it was easier for the public identify these Disparbudpora accounts.

The existence of these social media accounts gave positive impacts towards the followers. It was identified from the results of interview with the followers. According to one of the followers who is also a tour guide, these social media accounts helped him in searching and sharing information about tourist destinations in Palangkaraya. In addition, he argued that following this Department social media accounts could support the development of sustainable tourism and tourism promotion. This was in line with the statement of another follower who explained that it facilitated her to search information about the events of tourism held in this city, especially held by the government. Therefore, these social media accounts were very helpful to promote the tourism in Palangka Raya.

2.3 The Promotion Strategies by Disparbudpora Palangkaraya

Based on these research results research, it can be summed up a number of stages for the promotion strategies by using social media conducted by Disparbudpora, as follows.

1. Content creation, which was done by the creative team from the marketing tourism division. This team was responsible for documenting various activities and photo/video editing. In addition, the team did some cooperations with various parties for making content promotion and tourism, such as hotels, restaurants, local rituals and events, etc.
2. Platform determination began with choosing the right social media used as well as the contents in accordance with target market.
3. Program implementation was carried out after determining the platform to use. The team would make the final content and upload it. This team should also make captions, hashtags, and mentions a number of accounts that allowed interaction among these accounts. The team should post at least one posting on a day, and every account was managed by different people.
4. Monitoring and evaluation.

One of followers stated that the postings and contents made by Disparbudpora was already good and consistent. Unfortunately, there were still low responses from the followers and netizens. She further recommended the Department to think of some strategies to increase engagement with its followers. Another follower specifically mentioned about making contests or quizzes for the followers. For increasing *engagement* and interaction with the followers, the Department can hold a contest or quiz giveaways on social media and work with other tourism and economy creative agencies in Palangka Raya City.

The stages of promotion strategies conducted by Disparbudpora aligned with Atiko et al (2016:5) that mentioned the four stages, namely content creation, platform determination, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.

2.4 The Promotion Mix

The research results showed the promotion mix carried out by Disparbudpora in promoting the tourism is as follows.

1. *Advertising*. Disparbudpora Palangka Raya only promoted the tourism through free posts on social media so that only the existing followers and connections that could be reached. The paid promotion that allowed automatic promotion to the wider netizens has never been used.
2. *Sales Promotion*. Disparbudpora had made some collaboration with other parties and stakeholder to promote the tourism, such as with some tour and travel agencies, small and medium enterprises, hotels and practitioners in tourism.
3. *Public Relations and Publicity*. the role of public relation in this Department was run by the marketing division. Thus, this division also had responsibilities to provide appropriate and proper information about tourism on social media as well as to weave good relationship and communication with social media users to build and maintain the positive image of the Department.
4. *Direct Marketing*. It was carried out by the Department by giving fast response to inquiries through comments or messages on the social media accounts.

To sum up, the promotion mix elements by Kotler and Amstrong (2016:121) had actually been implemented by Disparbudpora Palangka Raya.

III. Conclusion

Based on abovementioned findings, there are some conclusions were drawn. First, the tourism promotion using social media by Disparbudpora Palangka Raya consisted of four stages of strategies: content creation, platform determination, program implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. Second, the promotion mix run by this Department included: advertising, sales promotion, public relation and publicity, and direct marketing. In addition, the followers have an important role to contribute to the development of this Department platforms by following, responding, and/or sharing the postings and contents. Finally, this research suggests that Disparbudpora Palangka Raya should optimize the promotion strategies to increase engagement on social media.

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