

Empowerment of Cultural Tourism in West Nias Using Social Media

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Abstract

Tourism is a quarter that is growing to be the top mover of improvement inside the vicinity. Nature and cultural diversity are belongings owned by way of each region in Indonesia, that have the capacity to be advanced as traveler destinations. West Nias Regency is one area that has incredible ability to be advanced as a traveller destination, especially cultural tourism. The tourism industry these days can't be separated from the role of social media in book and promoting. numerous varieties of tourism, and tourism destinations in faraway regions can be recognized to the public through social media. One form of social media that has a photograph and video sharing characteristic is Instagram, so Instagram may be used as a medium in selling tourism through the posts of human beings inside the location. the motive of this research is how to empower cultural tourism in West Nias by using maximizing the usage of social media in this example is Instagram. The approach used is exploratory with a qualitative approach. The effects of the look at indicate that the promotion of cultural tourism in West Nias has now not been maximized, specially by way of utilizing social media.

Keywords: social media, Instagram, cultural tourism, exploratory research



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INTRODUCTION

The presence of social media in the last decade has increasingly benefited most people. Various types of social media platforms with their respective characteristics open up many options for users. IG, Twitter, Youtube, and others are still the audience's main choice. Social media with a global reach, cheap and effective as a means of sharing information, discussing, and interacting, becomes a special attraction for its users. Social media is not only used by individuals, various agencies also use social media for their interests. This includes tourism activities managed by the central government, local governments, and the private sector.

Tourism is a sector that is growing to be the prime mover of regional development. Natural potential and cultural diversity are assets owned by every region in Indonesia, which have the potential to be developed as a tourist destination. West Nias Regency is one area that has great potential to be developed as a tourist destination, especially cultural tourism. In other words, the potential in the tourism sector can be a driving factor for economic improvement and community welfare in West Nias Regency. For this reason, strategic steps are needed towards a more in-depth tourism sector development.

This research focuses on cultural tourism in West Nias Regency which has not been explored at all. In West Nias, there are many traditional houses.

There are four types of West Nias traditional houses called: the *Sitolubanua* Traditional House, the *Sisobambowo* Traditional House, the *Simaeasi* Traditional House, and the Omo Hada Traditional House. These traditional houses are in the form of houses on stilts with a height of 1.5 meters, oval in shape with a diameter of 12 x 10 meters, facing east, having one ladder, wooden frames that are interconnected (not connected with nails), and thatched roofs. The traditional houses of West Nias are about 200 years old on average. According to data from the West Nias Tourism and Culture Office, there are currently 153 units but the number is decreasing due to expensive maintenance costs. In the

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West Nias area, there are also many megaliths or megalithic cultural relics of the ancestors of the Nias tribe which read the year of manufacture 1778.

Unfortunately, this historical heritage is less publicized so that not many tourists know the location and history of these cultural artifacts. Apart from artifacts, there are also Nias arts and Nias specialties that need to be published in order to attract both domestic and foreign tourists to come to West Nias. Therefore, it is necessary to collect data and analyze it related to West Nias culture which can be an attraction for tourists.

In the development of tourism promotion is an important element, because even though the existing and available tourist sites are so beautiful, but not known by the wider community, no one will visit. Currently, the media that is quite important in promoting tourist attractions is Instagram social media, because Instagram has various features such as photos and videos that support it as a promotional media. Previous research has shown the benefits of using social media, such as research conducted by Wenday Dwi Novi Kurniawati (2016) showing that Instagram social media through the Grobogan tourism community plays a role in promoting tourism potential in the area.

The tourism industry today cannot be separated from the role of social media in informing and publicizing various types of tourism, and tourism destinations in remote areas. It is time for the relevant parties in the development of tourism in Indonesia and West Nias in particular to take advantage of the current development of social media. This research is expected to increase knowledge about social network analysis regarding the success of cultural tourism destinations in West Nias and the results can increase data collection for local governments and local communities. The question in this research is how can Instagram social media develop the potential of cultural tourism from time to time? The purpose of this research is how to empower cultural tourism in West Nias by maximizing the use of social media, in this case Instagram.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism Communication with Online media

Online communication is communication that occurs online. Online communication is a way of communicating where the delivery of messages is done by or through the internet network. Communication that occurs in the pseudo-world is commonly called communication in cyberspace or cyberspace. The term online communication refers to reading, writing, and communicating through or using a computer network (Warschuer, 2001: 207-212 in Nurjanah, 2018:41).

The basis of communication is conveying messages from one person to another, messages can be delivered directly or using the media. In the context of tourism communication, when a person or group of people travels, a communication process occurs between tourists and other tourists, or between tourists and local residents.

Tourism communication has the aim of introducing or promoting tourist destinations to the public. Communication is very necessary in the delivery of tourism promotion. One of the media that is quite effective today in promoting tourism is social media. With the development of social media is currently widely used by tourists and managers of tourist attractions to promote their area. People who will travel often seek information through social media. The social media in question are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, etc.

Media Sosial

In keeping with Van Dijk (2013 in Nasrullah 2017: 11), social media is a media platform that specializes in the life of users who facilitate them of their sports and collaboration. consequently, social media may be seen as an online medium (facilitator) that strengthens the relationship among customers in addition to a social bond.

Some other opinion (Boyd 2009 in Nasrullah 2017: eleven) describes social media as a set of software program that lets in people and communities to acquire, share, talk, and in certain cases collaborate or play with each other. Social media has energy in consumer generated content material (UGC) in which content material is generated by way of users, not by editors as in mass media institutions.

One form of social media this is pretty famous nowadays is Instagram, a special function that distinguishes Instagram from other social media is the functions it gives. Instagram is more dominant in displaying facts inside the shape of photographs or videos. inside the Instagram app, it allows customers to upload photographs and motion pictures right into a feed which can be edited with numerous filters and prepared with tags and place data. Uploads may be shared publicly or with pre-accepted followers. users can browse other users' content through tags and area and consider trending content. Instagram continues to increase by adding new functions as a form of development.

With the numerous features offered by way of Instagram, it is no wonder Instagram is one of the favorite social media in advertising and marketing products and services, which include in advertising and marketing tourism. using Instagram social media also can be used to express reports thru pics and motion pictures, which can be in the form of feedback as a form of interplay now not most effective with family but also with different humans. (Martínez, Berrozpe, & Lasarte, 2014).

Cultural Tourism

According to Geriya (1995:103), cultural tourism is a type of tourism that relies on cultural potential as the most dominant attraction and at the same time provides an identity for tourism development. Cultural tourism is one of the sectors in the tourism industry where the main attraction is culture. These attractions can be in the form of shows, museums, and other similar attractions (Arsadi, 2011 in Larasati, 2017:15).

Cultural tourism is a shape of cultural enterprise, because cultural tourism utilizes diverse components of lifestyle en masse in a manufacturing gadget. As cultural capital (sources), lifestyle is aligned with other sources including natural and financial (economic) resources. one of the worldwide developments is the developing cognizance of tourists to understand the cultural heritage of the past. this is to find the depth and cultural identification of the travelers involved. Efforts to understand the cultural background of the beyond aren't simplest completed in the territory of the united states of america itself, however additionally throughout countries. beyond cultural background is considered as cultural capital inside the development of cultural tourism. (Richards, 1999 in Ardika, 2008: 209) quoted from <https://kekulturan.kemdikbud.cross.identification/bpcbsubar/pariwisata-kultur-untuk-pelestarian-cagar-subculture/>)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The method used in this study is an exploratory method with a qualitative approach. exploratory research is preliminary research with the aim of obtaining an overview of a subject that will be observed further (Adhawati et.al, 2020: 11). This type of exploratory research aims to find and formulate problems from a phenomenon. Researchers do not know much information about a problem to be studied.

This type of research does not require references to theories and hypotheses, but develops hypotheses. This type of exploratory research only looks for new ideas or relationships, so that data collection depends on the intelligence and imagination of the research worker concerned, to formulate or formulate a problem systematically. more precise. Explorative design research does not conclude the results because the research objective tends to only answer about what. Determine alternative actions to be taken, and priorities for further research, and determine research variables for further testing (Mudjiyanto, 2018:73).

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Instagram as a tourism marketing communication medium

Based on the results of a virtual search on promotional media used by the Tourism Office in West Nias, local communities, and tourists who have come to West Nias, we see that social media has not been maximized, especially Instagram. Based on observations and interviews with informants who are domiciled in West Nias, it is said that the main obstacle to the less-than-optimal use of social media is the uneven infrastructure. The internet network is only available in certain locations, namely in the city center.

The development of tourism cannot be separated from promotions carried out by related parties. Based on the results of our research, the success of tourism can be realized by involving the local government of West Nias as a facilitator and regulator, the private sector as investors, and the local community as well as domestic and foreign tourists who have come to West Nias. One of the roles of local governments is to accelerate infrastructure development, especially the internet network so that promotions can run well.

As we know that nowadays the internet and social media are something that cannot be separated from human daily life. Not only to communicate and interact between friends or family, but also as a means of sharing experiences, including experiences in visiting tourist attractions. When someone visits a tourist spot, they usually devote beautiful moments, sights, and local cuisine. With current mobile phone facilities, tourists do not only take selfies, but can directly upload the photos and videos on their social media accounts. Uploaded photos and videos quickly spread to fellow social network users.

Instagram can be effectively used in marketing communications, besides being much in demand by the public, it also has interesting menus and features as quoted by Dian Prajarini (2020:13) and Jubilee Enterprise (2021: 6)

- Feed menu which features like, share, comment, direct message;
- Follow and follower features
- Stories that are used to share photos, videos that are shared from other accounts. Live video streaming feature, this feature has a short duration of 24 hours.
- Story highlights, long-term and can be seen by followers at any time
- IGTV Video, this feature allows to post short videos
- Guide, this feature allows you to post content that can be equipped with plots, comments, tips, recommendations.

If we look at the various menus and features offered by Instagram, it is appropriate that cultural tourism in West Nias is introduced to the public through this medium. Several privately owned Instagram accounts that manage one of the resorts on Asu Island, West Nias, have proven to be quite successful in promoting natural tourism, namely the beaches on Asu Island which are beautiful and have World-class Surfing.

Electronic word of mouth from followers and Instagram accounts that are opened to the public makes the messages conveyed reach large audiences. no wonder the followers of the IG account reached 17.5 K. It is a habit of people nowadays if they want to visit a place they will find out through social media, including reading comments about the situation in the area. This is what makes social media a trend in marketing tourist destinations.

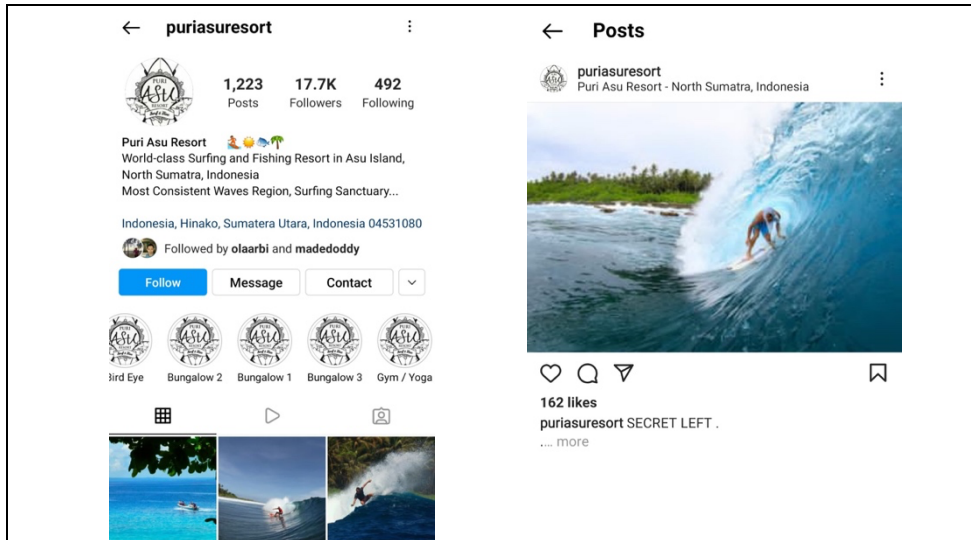


figure 1 Instagram account of Resort Puri asu owner

Photos and videos uploaded by the iG account of the owner of the Puri Asu resort have good image quality, quite a lot of followers, from likes, shares, and comments from followers, this is Asu Island, which is best known by foreign tourists compared to other tourist attractions. feedback from Instagram users has proven to be effective in promoting tourist destinations, because users can directly upload photos and videos.

West Nias Cultural Tourism

On the other hand, cultural tourism as local wisdom of the people of West Nias has not become the attention of Instagram users from the local community and local government. it is possible that domestic and foreign tourists only know the beauty of the beaches in West Nias because this is indeed what is widely uploaded on social media, while the diversity and uniqueness of culture is very minimal. This should be the concern of relevant parties such as the West Nias tourism and culture department, indigenous peoples, local residents.

Some of the potential for cultural tourism in West Nias include megaliths, traditional houses, traditional arts, traditional foods, and others.



Figure 2. Megaliths of Lahomi and Ulu Moro'o Cultural Villages. West Nias

This is where the role of communicators such as local governments, the private sector and the community is needed to continue to update their status on social media about cultural activities, cultural festivals in their respective regions. In addition, historical places, monuments and megaliths are quite unique, and of course can attract people who see for a time to visit there. From these cultural artifacts, educational tours related to the study of architecture, archaeology, anthropology can be developed throughout the world.

If in the past, communication through word of mouth was effective as a means of promotion including tourism, in the current era of technological development, EWOM (Electronic Word of Mouth) has become a mainstay in disseminating information and promotions, because through electronic word of mouth messages spread quickly and can be repeated. Information about tourist objects can be discussed by social media users by sharing and liking from followers all over the world.

The example of cultural tourism that has gone global by utilizing social media, especially Instagram, is the Jember Fashion Carnival. this can be an example for cultural tourism from other regions.



Figure 3. Instagram account Jember fashion carnival

CONCLUSION AND FURTHER RESEARCH

This research is an exploratory study where researchers want to explore data in depth, based on research findings it can be concluded that Instagram social media can play an important role in promoting the potential of cultural tourism, including in West Nias which is not widely known by the public. Because several studies have proven that Instagram social media has advantages and is effective in conveying messages, including as a means of tourism promotion, in the case of tourism in West Nias it has been proven through the Asu Island Instagram account. However, for cultural tourism, it has not been used massively through social media promotions.

Researchers hope that there will be further research on the development of cultural tourism in West Nias, so that more in-depth results can be obtained. And of course, the results of these studies can provide recommendations for local governments in carrying out development strategies in the tourism sector, especially cultural tourism.

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