INSTAGRAM AS SOCIAL MEDIA AND HIS ROLE IN THE TOURISM PROMOTION

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Abstract: The Covid-19 pandemic has brought significant changes in all fields, including the tourism sector. This qualitative descriptive study aims to describe tourism promotion through Instagram social media in the city of Semarang. This research is a qualitative descriptive study. Since the research was still ongoing during the Covid-19 pandemic, the research was carried out using an online system using the Questionnaire and Interview instrument which was also conducted online through the WA application. The informants are Instagram account admins, Instagram social media users, academics in the tourism sector, and travel agencies that use Instagram social media as a promotional medium. The result of the research is that tourism promotion in Semarang City through Instagram social media is carried out by designing content, determining platforms, designing programs, program applications, and monitoring and evaluation.

Keywords: promotion, Instagram, tourism, content, covid

Abstrak: Pandemi Covid-19 telah membawa perubahan signifikan dalam segala bidang tak luput bidang wisata. Penelitian deskriptif kualitatif ini bertujuan untuk menggambarkan promosi wisata melalui media sosial Instagram di kota Semarang. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian Deskriptif Kualitatif. Berhubung saat penelitian masih berlangsung pandemic Covid-19, maka penelitian dilakukan dengan sistem online dengan menggunakan instrument Kuisioner dan Wawancara yang juga dilakukan secara online melalui aplikasi WA. Adapun Iinformannya yaitu admin akun Instagram, pengguna media sosial Instagram, akademisi di bidang pariwisata, dan biro perjalanan yang menggunakan media sosial Instagram sebagai media promosi. Hasil penelitian yaitu promosi wisata di Kota Semarang melalui media sosial Instagram dilakukan dengan : mendesain konten, penetapan platform, perancangan program, aplikasi program, dan monev.

Kata kunci: promosi, Instagram, wisata, konten, covid

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INTRODUCTION

Social media is a network of technologies used to create news through internet users and communicate and disseminate information. In Indonesia, the number of social media users is already very high (Moy et al. 2020). Social media is used more for consumption (eg. travel planning) rather than production (eg, sharing experiences, posting, reviewing) (Widiana & Novani, 2022), including service products in the form of tourism.

Several social networking platforms are already known by the company for helping to do online marketing (Febrian & Ahluwalia, 2021). Various digital business platforms have sprung up to respond to these developments, such as e-commerce and social media (Faizurrohman et al. 2021). The use of social media is considered to be able to save costs and be more time efficient in marketing. Marketing plays an important role in determining the orientation and strategy of an organization's business performance (Prayogo & Nirawati, 2017 in Prayogo & Nirawati, 2019). Hanson (2009) in Sumarsono et al. (2021) says that social networks focus on analyzing individual relationships with other individuals in accessing resources through relationships, collective action, the strength of relationships in the network and how to access resources.

Yoga & Putri (2022) states that in practice, a marketer must be creative and full of imagination to attract customers and not only stimulate customers to buy. In terms of service to customers, a marketer must continue to innovate in providing the best service based on technology (Rosiana et al. 2020). All the facilities offered through Instagram will have the potential to support and advance marketing for various industrial sectors, including the tourism industry. In using digital marketing, it will combine several factors, such as: psychological, humanist, demographic, psychographic, and technological factors through multimedia by using large capacities and must be interactive (Rurianto et al. 2021).

The city of Semarang has become one of the main destination cities along with the development of the government system and investment from various parties, as evidenced by the increasing tourist attraction. The important role of Instagram in popularizing tourist destinations has attracted many researchers to conduct research and analysis (Handayani & Adelvia, 2020).

The Instagram account @semarangpemkot is the official account of the Semarang City government which is used as promotional media and shares information about tourist destinations in the city of Semarang. The researcher raised the topic of Instagram because it was the most capable of developing a business, especially in the tourism sector. This is in accordance with the opinion of Prihatiningsih (2017) that Instagram is a social media that is most able to meet all needs compared to other social media. This is what encourages and attracts researchers to research. to find out how to develop tourism potential through social media, especially Instagram social media in promoting tourism potential in Semarang City. This qualitative descriptive study aims to describe tourism promotion through Instagram social media in the city of Semarang.

METHODS

This research is a qualitative descriptive study. Researchers describe how the implementation of tourism promotion through Instagram and the problems faced in its implementation based on the results of the questionnaire that were presented and analyzed. The results of the questionnaire were then elaborated more broadly qualitatively by referring to the results of interviews. Descriptive research is used to examine various problems and issues collected through interviews, questionnaires or observations (Sugiyono, 2018). The case study analyzed how to develop a tourism destination in the city of Semarang by promoting it through Instagram social media. This study was carried out from June to December 2021.

The types of data used are primary data (through questionnaires and interviews) and secondary data (documents, literature). Since the research was still ongoing during the Covid-19 pandemic, the research was conducted using an online system using several instruments as follows: 1) Questionnaire. The researcher distributed a questionnaire (questionnaire) that the informant had to fill out online. The questionnaires were distributed using the Google Form application. 2) Interview. To get more detailed data, researchers who conducted interviews were also conducted online through the WA application.

Data Credibility Test. To test the validity of the data, the researcher used data triangulation techniques, namely source triangulation and method triangulation.

The selection of respondents (informants) is done through a purposive method, namely, informants are people who can provide information in accordance with the research objectives. The selected informants are people who have the following criteria: a) Have knowledge and experience about tourism promotion through Instagram social media; b) Able to tell properly and correctly about tourism promotion through Instagram social media; c) Have sufficient time to be asked for information. Informants in the study consisted of community members, community admins, the department of culture and tourism, and Instagram users in the city of Semarang.

RESULTS

Instagram as a Social Media for Tourism Promotion

Kotler & Armstrong (2018) states that, online marketing and social media are online activities and programs designed to involve customers either directly or indirectly in order to increase awareness, improve image and increase product sales and improve service. Social media is a marketing communication activity that uses electronic media (online) to attract consumers or companies in various forms (images, writings, etc.) to increase awareness, corporate image, and sales. Social networking sites as web-based services that allow individuals to build public or semi-public profiles in a restricted system. Promoting tourism through Instagram needs to be supported using the #hashtag and location story features that make it easier for other users to find tourist attractions that are being promoted (Virtarini & Ngatno, 2020).

Tourism Promotion with Instagram Social Media has Goodness

Interviews have been conducted, with the results:
1. Mrs. Rohmah as the admin of the @lunpiasemarang Instagram account related to the activities carried out by the followers of @lunpiasemarang, about the post from @lunpiasemarang. The respondents said

that I did not download photos and videos on my account due to time constraints, but the photos and videos were reposted or tagged with followers.
2. Ms. Rina as the admin of the Instagram account @semarangtugumuda related to the activities carried out by followers of @semarantugumuda. Respondents said that they generally look for stock photos that already exist in the image bank of the City of Semarang and from photos from the competition for "Tugumuda" photographers in Semarang.
3. Mas Karis as the admin of the Instagram account @disbudparkotasemarang in relation to the activities carried out by followers of @disbudparkotasemarang, Respondents said that I hire several photographers every time I have an event in Semarang from bloggers we have collaborated with.
4. Pak Aji as the owner of Aji Tour Semarang, said that most of the tourism photos in the city of Semarang that we have uploaded on Instagram are requests from our tour bureau customers. We usually make photo edits to show off these interesting tourist promos.

Based on the foregoing, it can be concluded that the strategy for creating content can be carried out in the following ways: obtaining content from tourism images in Semarang City, collaborating with photographers and bloggers, reposting, or using hashtags from Instagram users. Instagram social media has a fairly high number of users in the city of Semarang, this happens because Instagram social media can be owned by everyone. In Semarang, many places can be used as Instagram content, including Ayanaz Gedongsongo. This place is very loved by tourists because of its uniqueness. Instagram makes it easy for its users by offering Instagram as a medium that quickly attracts people to use it. Instagram makes it easy for users to post photos or videos, search for photos and videos somewhere, follow, comment, share stories, give likes, to search for hashtags can be done easily (Xu & Pratt, 2018). In terms of promotion, Instagram is an easy-to-use promotional media with the advantage of providing connections with several other social media. This is supported by the results of their research by Rukmiyati & Suastini (2016), namely, social media is the most popular media and is widely used to obtain tourist information by tourists among the youth segment. The information source platform is dominated by the internet, along with television, magazines and travel agents.

Tourism Promotion Through Instagram Social Media has its Drawbacks

The results of the informants' statements can be concluded that in carrying out promotions through Instagram social media there are also weaknesses, including 1) Must update regularly; 2) The authenticity of the product is still in doubt; 3) Prone to spamming, the convenience provided by Instagram in terms of interacting makes this social media prone to spamming. Usually, a lot of spamming is seen in the comments column. However, you can work around this by imposing private on your Instagram account so that not just anyone can comment on the post owner of the account.

The interview results are in line with Sugiarto (2018) who stated that marketing through Instagram is easy to understand, has 24-hour broadcast time, is easy to use, and easy to convey new things. Also supported by Sari & Basit (2020) who stated that the advantages of Instagram features by posting photos, live videos, comments, and direct messages can be easily used by followers in communicating either to account owners or admins or to fellow followers of Instagram accounts. The results of the interview are in line with the statement of Nainggolan et al. (2018) that the convenience provided by Instagram in terms of interacting makes this social media very prone to spamming. Generally, a lot of spamming is seen in the comments section.

Prospects of Tourism Promotion Through Instagram Social Media

Social media is a technological network that is used to create news through internet users and communicate and disseminate information. Almost all aspects of human life such as lifestyle, social interaction, education and other aspects cannot be separated from social media (Muhlisian & Putri, 2019). Dissemination of information through social media can provide advantages or disadvantages depending on how it is used. By using social media appropriately, it has the potential to increase tourism interest for internet users who read and follow social media. The right use of social media includes the process of persuasion and establishing emotional closeness so that it can increase the confidence of the followers of the account in the information provided.

Managerial Implications

The use of tourism promotion through the Instagram social network, which has good prospects, should continue to be increased, especially for the Semarang City government so that Semarang City tourism promotion will be more alive after the COVID-19 pandemic.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Tourism promotion in Semarang City through Instagram social media is carried out in stages, namely: content creation, platform determination, program planning, program implementation, and monitoring & evaluation. The advantages of promoting through Instagram are that Instagram is a free promotion media, can be used at any time, is easy to use, can be connected with other social media, and have many users. Weaknesses of promotion through Instagram social media must be updated regularly, product authenticity is still in doubt, and prone to spamming. Furthermore, the analysis of sharia tourism promotion through Instagram social media has very effective prospects in the future.

The advantages of advertising through the Instagram social network are advertising media for free, often available, easy to use, channeled to other social networks, and has a large number of users. Due to the lack of advertising through the Instagram social network, it needs continuous updates, the authenticity of the product is still questionable, and the tendency is spam. On the other hand, tourism promotion through the Instagram social network has good prospects for its future.

Recommendations

All stakeholders should always take advantage of Instagram optimally considering the advantages of advertising through the Instagram social network is that tourism advertising (promotion) media is free, often available, easy to use, channeled to other social networks, and has a large number of users.

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