



Marketing Communication Strategy Implementation of the Bantul Regency Tourism Department's Instagram @jelajahbantul.id to Increase Followers in 2023

Sofi Sukmasari*

**Department of Communication,
Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, Indonesia
E-mail: sofisukma5@gmail.com*

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ABSTRACT

The Bantul Regency Tourism Department has strategically positioned Instagram as a key platform in its marketing strategy. Utilizing Instagram, the department executes effective marketing communications, ensuring swift and extensive engagement with consumers. This study aims to assess the implementation of the Bantul Regency Tourism Department's marketing communication strategy through Instagram, with a focus on increasing followers in 2023 on the @jelajahbantul.id Instagram account as a replacement from @dinparbantul account which was hacked on August 3rd 2023. The research adopts a qualitative approach, employing a case study method. Data for the study were gathered through structured interviews and document analysis. The interviewees included three employees from the tourism department and two followers of the @jelajahbantul.id account. Additionally, document analysis involved examining posts, comments, and direct messages on the Instagram account @jelajahbantul.id, collected through screen captures. The selection of samples followed purposive criteria defined by the researcher. In this research, the researcher used four types of activities in data analysis: data collection, data reduction, data display, decision-making, and verification. The findings reveal that out of the four strategies implemented by the Bantul Regency Tourism Department on their Instagram account, there have proven most effective in increasing followers: increasing engagement and collaborations. Increasing engagement emerged as the most impactful strategy for increasing follower numbers increasing engagement,

this strategy was adopted as a distinctive approach to set the department apart from others and excel in public service, while collaboration became the most intensively applied strategy by the Bantul Regency Tourism Department. These two strategies emerged as exceptional, becoming the primary focus for implementation during the post-hack period in the department.

Keywords: *Marketing, Communication, Strategy, Instagram, Followers, Bantul Regency Tourism Department*

INTRODUCTION

The tourism sector has become the mainstay of every country in its efforts to increase the country's foreign exchange, even in developed countries. Besides contributing to state income, tourism development can also maintain and improve the sustainability of communities' natural, social and cultural environments in various countries. In fact, according to Teles da Mota & Pickering (2020), tourist areas have multiple benefits for individuals and communities, such as recreation, physical and mental well-being, and even in increasing environmental awareness. The unique characteristic of tourism is that it is a renewable resource. For this reason, the tourism sector has become a favourite foreign exchange earner for various countries.

In Indonesia, the development of the tourism sector, especially in Article 2 paragraph (1) of Government Regulation Number 50 of 2011 concerning the National Tourism Development Master Plan for 2010-2025, states that national tourism development includes tourism destinations, tourism marketing, tourism industry and tourism institutions. In article (6), it is noted that the objectives of tourism development are: a) Increasing the quality and quantity of tourism destinations; b) Communicating Indonesian tourism destinations using marketing media effectively, efficiently and responsibly; c) Creating a tourism industry to drive the national economy, and; d) Develop tourism institutions and governance that can synergize tourism destination development, tourism marketing and the tourism industry in a professional, effective and efficient manner. The success of increasing the number of visitors cannot be separated from the policy of the regent as regional head of the Bantul Regency, which was then implemented by the leadership and all levels of employees of the Bantul Regency Tourism Department. These efforts include using it to introduce marketing communication activities via social media to the broader community. According to Gunelius in Priansa (2017:362), social media marketing aims to build relationships, brands, publicity, promotions and market research. According to Burhan Bungin, in his book "Tourism Marketing Communication and Destination Brands", communication plays a role in

various components of tourism marketing factors, which have a role in communication media or content. This role is to be a communication medium in the tourism sector, where this communication can be a marketing medium, destination, accessibility, or media channel for HR and tourism institutions. Marketing activities involve many communication activities. Communication is an activity carried out by individuals or organizations who exchange ideas (Shimp, 2003:4). When marketing and communication are combined into a new study called marketing communication, which contains the brand marketing mix, then there will be an exchange of meanings, and ultimately these meanings will be disseminated to consumers (Shimp, 2003: 4).

Basically, the marketing strategies used by the Bantul Regency Tourism Department are divided into digital and conventional. This conventional promotion is through exhibitions and events held by the Bantul Regency Government and the Government above, such as the Bantul Creative Expo, an annual event to commemorate Bantul's anniversary organized by the Regency Government to support the broader community regarding existing MSMEs in Bantul Regency and also introduce the services within the Bantul Regency Government including the Tourism Department. This has become an obligation as regulated in Bantul Regent Regulation No. 170 of 2021 clause 4 that the department has the task of assisting the Regent in carrying out government affairs in the tourism sector. And according to clause 5 Bantul Regent Regulation no. 170 of 2021, the Tourism Department has the function of coordinating planning for implementing government affairs in the tourism sector. Carrying out increases in tourism attractiveness and organizing tourism marketing.

Meanwhile, the digital promotion carried out by the Bantul Regency Tourism Department is by utilizing social media. Febrian (2021) explains that social media is now seen as trendsetters, particularly as photo-sharing sites. This platform can also update material and offers a function for customer feedback in the form of a comment column. Digital marketing communication, in the context of businesses operating in the digital age, is a marketing strategy that is very relevant and continues to develop. This procedure includes delivering marketing messages through various digital channels, including social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, search engines such as Google, email marketing, company websites, and more (Yupi & Heryadi Putri, 2023). Many social media are used, such as websites, Twitter, YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram.

As stated in We Are Social data, Hootsuite (in Katadata, 02/26/2020) stated that Instagram is in fourth position of the ten most frequently used social media in Indonesia, with a percentage of 79%. Thamwika Bergstrom

expresses this in Afifah (2016: 12-13), who says that Instagram provides a platform where users and companies or organizations can communicate publicly and directly, making Instagram an ideal platform for companies, organizations or brands to connect with consumers and target consumers.

Meanwhile, Instagram itself is an application used to share photos and videos. (Hubner, 2021). The Instagram platform was created with simplicity, a variety of photo editing features, and visual branding in consideration. Currently, Instagram is the most widely utilized means of communication (Mat Sharif & MD Razif, 2021). Instagram plays a crucial role in government agencies as it effectively communicates information to the public using simple language and appealing visuals (Sukmono et al., 2022).

According to Widiastuti and Indriastuti (2020), interactive stories through the Instastory feature uploaded by paying attention to the upload time proven to increase the understanding of the message conveyed by the account owner to his followers and increase the account's engagement. It also happened to the @jelajahbantul.id account after the admin became more intense about using the Instagram feature. Photos and videos uploaded to the @jelajahbantul.id Instastory have increased the appeal, knowledge, and number of tourist visits to tourist attractions in Bantul. The number of DMs asked about the event details or given specific comments has increased alongside the release of Instagram stories, which means that the followers can directly understand and respond to the messages. By doing so, the account's engagement is also automatically increased.

In line with Yananingtyas's (2020) opinion, you can use the Generalized Growth Strategy to increase followers, which includes publishing new content frequently, sharing the Instagram account, and staying consistent. Mauliana, Tayo, and Kusumaningrum (2021) also explained that strategies such as feed content are related to the regular distribution of information. This information is shared with the public and proven to provide good insight so that it becomes one of the main content. In addition, there is also promotional content, which is created with the aim of persuasion and emphasizes the invitation sentence. In product and event promotion, they try to adjust to the audience's needs. The Instagram account of @jelajahbantul.id also attempts to provide content containing information its audience needs. The account always considers the publication time of its content with careful planning and preparation, which is advantageous in increasing engagement and followers.

Several previous researches examining the use of Instagram social media related to tourism have been conducted by several researchers. Dwi Fitriani conducted the first research from the Yogyakarta University Communication Science study program entitled Using Instagram as a Media for Promotion of Tourism Potential of the Sleman Regency Tourism Depart-

ment. This type of research is descriptive qualitative with the conclusion that the use of Instagram has been able to realize the goal of introducing tourism potential and increasing the number of tourist visits. Besides that, it can be concluded that Instagram is a tool for advertising tourism activities, promoting sales of tourism activities with special hotel stay packages, publishing information on tourism activities and interacting with potential tourists.

The second research was conducted by Rizki Andini Herat, Max R. Rembang and John Kalangi in the e-journal "Acta Diurna" Volume IV number 4 of 2015 with the title The Role of the Promotion and Marketing Sector of the Morotai Island Regency Tourism Department in Promoting the Tourism Potential of Morotai Island Regency. This research uses a qualitative descriptive method with promotional mix theory. The conclusion is that to promote and market the tourism potential of Morotai Island, the Promotion and Marketing sector should implement a promotional mix strategy and increase the quantity and quality of its human resources.

Meanwhile, the third research was carried out by Dinda Puspa Prastiyanti and Yulianto from the Hospitality study program at Bina Sarana Informatika University, Yogyakarta, in 2019, entitled Promotional Media at the Yogyakarta Special Region Tourism Department in Increasing Tourist Visits. This research uses a qualitative descriptive analysis approach with the conclusion that overcoming promotional obstacles includes collaborating with travel agents, maximizing promotion on social media, collaborating with related agencies, communicating with district/city governments to send different participants to train, coordinate and establish a harmonious relationship with the district/city Tourism Department to determine tourism development priorities and provide education to the public about tourism. Therefore, this research aims to determine the implementation of the marketing communication strategy of the Bantul Regency Tourism Department via Instagram to increase followers in 2023.

ISSUE

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Therefore, this research aims to determine the implementation of the marketing communication strategy of the Bantul Regency Tourism Department via Instagram to increase followers in 2023.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Implementation of Marketing Communication Strategy

Marketing communication is one of the tools used by many organizations or companies to promote their product in order to increase and reach their goals. In this case, Bantul Regency Tourism Department employed Instagram as one of the marketing communications to promote the tourism destinations in Bantul to the public. In an effort to do that, increasing follower's numbers became their main interest. Thus, the Bantul Regency Tourism Department has carried out various promotional efforts to increase followers on their Instagram, both on old and new accounts. Focusing on increasing the number of followers, the department decided to implement the same strategies used in the previous account in the new account @jelajahbantul.id. According to the data and theory of Integrated Marketing Communication from Kotler & Keller (2012), it can be concluded that the Bantul Regency Tourism Department has four superior strategies that are considered capable of increasing followers. The following are the superior strategies of the Bantul Regency Tourism Department which are implemented in their Instagram account.

The first step was holding giveaway, followed by increasing engagement, doing collaboration posts, and holding events.

a) Holding Giveaway

Giveaway is an effective marketing strategy to attract public attention and increase brand awareness. By holding a giveaway, account owners can increase engagement and followers on social media, build community loyalty, and reach new followers. Instagram features that used to hold giveaway are feeds, comment columns, tag, Instagram story, and DM.

The researcher is gathering data from the interview. Below is the excerpt of the interview conducted by the researcher with the social media analyst as well as the Instagram account admin.

Bantul Regency Tourism Department uses giveaways as a superior strategy to increase the number of followers in 2023. Usually, there are some requirements that the followers need to do to get involved in giveaways. For instance, the participants must follow and tag several accounts as a requirement to join the giveaways. By doing so, more people will find out the targeted account and start to follow it.

Besides that, the Bantul Regency Tourism Department also sees the opportunity tendency from the netizens' perspective. Indonesian netizens are mostly interested in getting something for free, thus the institution is usually taking advantage of this situation by implementing the giveaways strategy.

Related to the integrated marketing communications theory, a giveaway strategy is more likely in accordance with Public Relations. According to Cutlip, Center & Canfield (2016), one of the tasks of public relations is to create reciprocal two-way communication by disseminating information from the organization to the public and channelling public opinion to the organization. The giveaways strategy is actually an implementation of the public relations function of the Bantul Regency Tourism Department to create symmetrical two-way communication as per the communication model of E. Grunig and T. Hunt (1984) in Mitrin (2023). With this model, the public relations activities carried out by Bantul Regency Tourism Department are to obtain feedback from the community and then utilize the feedback from the community as a consideration to create conditions for mutual adjustment between the organization and its community.

The Bantul Regency Tourism Department implemented the giveaway strategy in the form of a quiz. The quiz is mostly related to the tourism destinations, tourism programs, and tourism policies in Bantul. Instagram users,

especially the followers, who want to participate in the quiz need to answer the quiz and tag several accounts required by the department. Moreover, the quiz is also a part of the Tourism Department's campaign so that the public gets a deep understanding and new insight into tourism destinations, programs, and policies in Bantul. Meanwhile, the responses or answers from netizens to the quiz are genuinely public opinion, which is the community's feedback on the policy programs that have been implemented by the Bantul Regency Tourism Department.

At a certain time, the Bantul Regency Tourism Department will evaluate its programs and policies by considering the public's feedback. The results of this evaluation will be used to evaluate the current programs or policies and to formulate new programs or policies for the better future of the Bantul Regency Tourism Department. From the giveaway strategy, the department can identify how far it can educate and influence the followers. The department can also find out how much the giveaway program has an impact on increasing followers.

b) Increasing Engagement

Increasing engagement becomes the higher-rank strategy to increase followers in 2023. An increasing engagement is proven to build up the followers' loyalty to the account. In this case, the increasing engagement shown by the Instagram admin of @jelajahbantul.id can truly engage interaction and increase loyalty between the department and its followers. This strategy became a superior value and plus point for the Bantul Regency Tourism Department compared to other departments in the Bantul Government's Instagram account.

Furthermore, public services also became a superior value and plus point for the Bantul Regency Tourism Department compared to other departments in the Bantul Government's Instagram account. The implementation of the increasing engagement excellent service urges the admin to be more active to respond to the question, criticism, and suggestions from followers. This response includes via DM feature and in the comment' column. Bantul Regency Tourism Department uses increasing engagement to increase the number of followers of the @jelajahbantul.id Instagram account. The department believed that increasing engagement can increase followers' loyalty as it is part of public services. As society members, Indonesian people are known for being friendly, meaning that they tend to feel comfortable interacting and getting treated. Thus, increasing engagement is a good strategy to be implemented to reach the aims set by the Bantul Regency Tourism Department.

Similar to giveaways, increasing engagement is also closely related to public relations. According to, Cutlip, Center, and Canfield (2016) argue that PR is required to be able to serve the public or society and advise organizational leaders in the public interest. From this opinion, it can be interpreted that the Bantul Regency Tourism Department, in carrying out its PR role, is required to provide engagement to the public. One way is to actively respond to all questions, criticism, or suggestions via DM or in the comment' column of Instagram posts. Apart from that, PR should be able to provide input in the form of criticism and suggestions to the leadership of the Bantul Regency Tourism Department in order to create a harmonious relationship between the organization and the public or society.

c) Collaboration

Collaboration posts become the second highest strategy to increase followers in 2023. By collaborating with partners' accounts who have more followers, it is possible to disseminate information more widely and further which can increase the number of followers. Based on the data, this strategy is proven to increase followers.

According to Bryson (1995) in Purnomo (2022:68), to respond effectively to environmental changes, organizations or companies must understand their internal and external environments so that they can develop effective strategies by linking these two environments. Internal environmental analysis describes the existing situation and conditions by understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the organization's internal environment. From the analysis of its internal environment, Dinpar or Dinas Pariwisata, found weaknesses that had the potential to thwart the achievement of the organization's vision, mission, and goals. This is due to the hacking of their previous Instagram account, which is a means of promoting tourism in the Bantul district.

Meanwhile, external environmental analysis involves explaining the existing situation and conditions with the aim of identifying various opportunities and threats that must be faced by the organization. The external environment here refers to the opinion of Steers (1985) in Purnomo (2022:69), namely part of the total structure that is relevant for setting organizational or company goals and activities towards achieving goals. One of the factors or trends that need to be observed in the external environment are competitors and collaborators such as similar organizations. Basically, each Instagram account has a role in supporting competitive marketing promotions to realize their respective vision and mission. With the hacking of Dinpar's Instagram account, one of the strategies carried out by Dinpar was to change the Instagram account from a competitor to a col-

laborator. Instagram collaborators here are collaboration features that make it possible to upload single feeds or reels but appear on two profiles at once. One uploader can invite other people to appear as collaborators.

The collaboration and sponsorship established by Dinpar is to take advantage of the popularity of collaborator accounts to promote the Bantul Regency Tourism Department's Instagram content. The collaborators' accounts include @visitingjogja, which is owned by a special public community in Yogyakarta that works on public and government services in the tourism sector. The collaboration is utilized to promote special events in Bantul held by the Bantul Regency Tourism Department. Apart from @visitingjogja, @jelajahbantul.id also collaborates with accounts belonging to the Bantul Regency Government, namely @pemkabantul, and also accounts belonging to tourist villages in Bantul Regency such as Bumi Mataram Pleret, Kreet Tourism Village, and Jamu Kiringan Tourism Village.

d) Holding Events

An event is a specific agenda or activity that is used to commemorate important events and promote specific tourist attractions or cultural events that is held at a particular time. To communicate messages to visitors, this activity is carried out by bringing people to a place so that they can get important information or experience.

According to Hermawan (2012: 54-56), one of the integrated marketing communications is organizing events and experiences. This activity is a publicity development which refers to the provision of organizational activities that support promotion, such as sponsoring or supporting events that are of concern to the public. Referring to this opinion, the Bantul Regency Tourism Department has organized various kinds of events, both annual events and certain events such as the Gumuk Pasir Symphony, the Muri Record Breaker of 1000 Montro Dancers, Keroncong Pesisiran, Culinary Festival, Bergadha Festival in the Parangtritis beach area. The activities, which are primarily funded by the Yogyakarta Special Fund, are carried out based on considerations for developing publicity that supports the promotion of the Parangtritis area. Focusing on things related to Jogja culture. It was included in the nomenclature of the Special Law and Special Funds, namely those related to Mataram culture, one of them being in this area. Parangtritis Beach has one philosophical axis, namely Parangkusumo.

The excerpt showed that the Bantul Regency Tourism Department actively held events throughout the year. Through the events' MC, the Bantul Regency Tourism Department invited visitors to follow the @jelajahbantul.id account by explaining the benefits of following the ac-

count which is getting the latest information to the recent and following events.

Studies on Instagram Related to Tourism

Several previous researches examining the use of Instagram social media related to tourism have been conducted by several researchers. Dwi Fitriani conducted the first research from the Yogyakarta University Communication Science study program entitled Using Instagram as a Media for Promotion of Tourism Potential of the Sleman Regency Tourism Department. This type of research is descriptive qualitative with the conclusion that the use of Instagram has been able to realize the goal of introducing tourism potential and increasing the number of tourist visits. Besides that, it can be concluded that Instagram is a tool for advertising tourism activities, promoting sales of tourism activities with special hotel stay packages, publishing information on tourism activities and interacting with potential tourists.

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Meanwhile, the third research was carried out by Dinda Puspa Prastiyanti and Yulianto from the Hospitality study program at Bina Sarana Informatika University, Yogyakarta, in 2019, entitled Promotional Media at the Yogyakarta Special Region Tourism Department in Increasing Tourist Visits. This research uses a qualitative descriptive analysis approach with the conclusion that overcoming promotional obstacles includes collaborating with travel agents, maximizing promotion on social media, collaborating with related agencies, communicating with district/city governments to send different participants to train, coordinate and establish a harmonious relationship with the district/city Tourism Department to determine tourism development priorities and provide education to the public about tourism. Therefore, this research aims to determine the implementation of the marketing communication strategy of the Bantul Regency Tourism Department via Instagram to increase followers in 2023.

Methods and Subject of the Research

The type of research is a qualitative approach, in which through this qualitative approach, the researcher tries to explain the research results in a comprehensive and in-depth manner regarding the implementation of the marketing communication strategy of the Bantul Regency Tourism Department via Instagram to increase followers in 2023. According to Pat Bazeley, "Qualitative Research is a covering term for a variety of research approaches that tends to focus on the qualities of things more than quantity", meaning that the Qualitative Approach is a term that covers various research approaches that focus more on quality, not quantity (Bazeley, 2013:3). This research approach is seen from its descriptive aim. The descriptive approach shows that the research was conducted to describe the symptoms during that period. This research only describes objects systematically and as they are (Sandjaja, 2006:57). In this study, the researcher used four types of activities in data analysis, namely:

a. Data Collection

In qualitative research, data is collected by observation, in-depth interviews, documentation, or a combination of the three (triangulation). Researchers conducted observations, interviews, and documentation for three months to obtain sufficient data. All data collection results were recorded to ensure data authenticity.

b. Data Reduction

The data obtained from the field is quite significant in number, so it needs to be recorded carefully and in detail. As previously stated, the longer the researcher is in the field, the more data will be complex and complicated. For this reason, it is necessary to conduct data analysis through data reduction immediately. Reducing data means summarizing, selecting, and sorting the main points, focusing on important things, and looking for themes and patterns. Thus, the reduced data will provide a clearer picture and make it easier for researchers to collect further data and search for it if needed.

c. Data Display

In qualitative research, data presentation can be done in brief descriptions, charts, relationships between categories, flowcharts, and the like. The most frequently used to present data in qualitative research is with narrative text. By displaying data, it will be easier to understand what is happening and plan further work based on what has been understood. Researchers display data using tables and photos to make it easier to read and understand the data.

d. Decision Making and Verification

The fourth step in qualitative data analysis is drawing conclusions and verification. The initial findings are still temporary and will change if no substantial evidence is found to support the next data collection stage. However, suppose the conclusions put forward in the initial stage are supported by valid and consistent evidence when the researcher returns to the field to collect data. In that case, the conclusions put forward are credible.

In this research, the author chose subjects or sources by applying the following criteria:

- a. Bantul Regency Tourism Department employee.
- b. Is involved with the marketing communications activities of the Bantul Regency Tourism Department via the Instagram social media.
- c. Followers of the Bantul Regency Tourism Department Instagram account, both old and new account.

Based on predetermined criteria, the researcher selected four sources or research subjects as follows:

- a. Head of the Bantul Regency Tourism Department, namely Mr. Kwintarto Heru Prabowo, S.Sos.
- b. Sub-coordinator of the Substance Group for Information Services and Tourism Cooperation, namely Mrs. Catarina Issri Putranti Hendrayanti, A.Md
- c. Marketing and Cooperation Analyst for the Bantul Regency Tourism Department and the Instagram Admin, Mr. Danang Hari Wibowo, S.Par.
- d. Tourists who have followed the Bantul Regency Tourism Department Instagram account, both the old and new account.

CONCLUSION

From the analysis of the Bantul Regency Tourism Department's strategies that it used, it can be concluded that the department has four strategies to increase followers in 2023 which are holding giveaways, increasing engagement, doing collaboration posts, and holding events. Based on the data, it can be summarized that the upper-level strategies to be implemented in @jelajahbantul.id account are increasing engagement and doing collaboration posts.

This is the implementation of the strategy that used by Bantul Regency Tourism Department to increase followers in 2023. This is proven by the followers of the account @jelajahbantul.id which previously had 0 followers until now it has reached 1,461 followers in 7 months.

From this research analysis, it can be concluded that the department has four strategies to increase followers in 2023: holding giveaways, increasing engagement, doing collaboration posts, and holding events. Based on the data, the upper-level strategy to be implemented in the @wisatabantul.id account is increasing engagement and doing collaboration posts.

Increasing engagement becomes the higher-rank strategy to increase followers in 2023. An increasing engagement is proven to build up the followers' loyalty to the account. In this case, the increasing engagement shown by the Instagram admin of @wisatabantul.id can truly engage interaction and increase loyalty between the department and its followers. This strategy became a superior value and plus point for the Bantul Regency Tourism Department compared to other departments in the Bantul Government's Instagram account.

This research will likely contribute insight into thoughts in the field of Communication Studies, especially those related to implementing the marketing communication strategy to increase followers, primarily via Instagram, because it can add new studies to the field of marketing communications and complement previous research.

For other departments, This research is expected to be a reference and also an inspiration and example for similar agencies to carry out strategies that have been successfully carried out by the Bantul Regency Tourism Office to be able to increase followers in order to increase the dissemination of information from the agency to its audience.

Lastly, For future research, it is hoped that this research can be referenced so that its results are more prosperous and deeper. Future research may be able to focus more on marketing communication strategies because by deepening the study of marketing communication strategies, it can improve many positive aspects, not only followers but also as well as engagement, product or service sales, and wider dissemination of information.

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