

**Digital Marketing Communication Strategy for Strengthening Bengkulu City Tourism Brand**  
**Strategi Pemasaran Digital untuk Memperkuat Bengkulu sebagai Kota Pariwisata**



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ARTICLE INFORMATION	
<p><b>Keywords</b>                      Tourism;                      Local Government;                      Digital Marketing;                      Communication Strategy;</p>	<p><b>ABSTRACT</b>  <i>Bengkulu City has various historical, cultural and natural tourism assets, this has allowed Bengkulu City to become a tourism city. The internet penetration rate of Indonesia's population continues to increase from year to year. However, the regional government of Bengkulu City has not read the opportunities for digital marketing platforms and made branding efforts for the Bengkulu tourism sector. This study aims to determine the digital marketing branding communication strategy for Bengkulu city tourism destinations. The research approach used is a qualitative approach based on the philosophy of postpositivism. This research is a case study research using the concept of AISAS theory which consists of Attention, Interest, Search, Action and share. The results of this study state that digital marketing communications carried out by the Bengkulu government focus on creating marketing content to create tourist attraction through social media. Image quality, content content, content duration and words in the content are important parts that must be considered. In addition, it is known that the creation of digital marketing content requires quite a lot of effort so that the content is of high quality and attractive, it is necessary to have human resources with special digital skills and a qualified team of creators.</i></p>
<p><b>Kata Kunci</b>                      Kepariwisataaan;                      Pemerintah Daerah;                      Digital Marketing;                      Strategi komunikasi;</p>	<p><b>ABSTRAK</b>  <i>Kota Bengkulu memiliki berbagai aset pariwisata sejarah, budaya, dan alam, hal ini memungkinkan Kota Bengkulu menjadi kota pariwisata. Tingkat penetrasi internet penduduk Indonesia dari tahun ke tahun secara terus menerus mengalami kenaikan. Namun, Pemerintah daerah Kota Bengkulu belum membaca peluang platform digital marketing dan melakukan upaya branding terhadap sektor pariwisata Bengkulu. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui strategi komunikasi digital marketing branding destinasi pariwisata kota Bengkulu. Pendekatan penelitian yang digunakan adalah pendekatan kualitatif yang berdasar pada filsafat postpositivisme. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian studi kasus dengan menggunakan Konsep teori AISAS yang terdiri dari Attention, Interest, Search, Action dan share. Hasil penelitian ini menyatakan bahwa komunikasi digital marketing</i></p>

	<p>yang dilakukan oleh pemerintah Bengkulu memfokuskan pada pembuatan konten-konten marketing untuk menciptakan daya tarik wisatawan melalui media sosial. Kualitas gambar, muatan konten, durasi konten dan kata-kata dalam konten merupakan bagian penting yang harus diperhatikan. Selain itu, diketahui bahwa pembuatan konten-konten digital marketing memerlukan usaha yang cukup keras agar konten-konten menjadi berkualitas dan menarik perlu Sumber daya manusia yang memiliki kapasitas ketrampilan khusus digital dan tim creator yang mumpuni.</p>
<p><b>Article History</b>                  Send 16<sup>th</sup> December 2022                  Review 19<sup>th</sup> December 2022                  Accepted 4<sup>th</sup> January 2023</p>	<p>Copyright ©2022 <a href="#">Jurnal Aristo (Social, Politic, Humaniora)</a>                  This is an open access article under the <a href="#">CC-BY-NC-SA</a> license.                  Akses artikel terbuka dengan model <a href="#">CC-BY-NC-SA</a> sebagai lisensinya.</p> 

## Introduction

Tourism is one of the potential sectors that can help develop the national and regional economy. The tourism sector has a chain that can provide community welfare. In several studies it is stated that the tourism sector has an important role and must be managed optimally (Darmi, 2017; Ulum & Suryani, 2021; Vergori & Arima, 2020; Yuniningsi, Darmi, & Sulandari, 2019). Tourism activities create demand for both consumption and investment which in turn will lead to the production of goods and services. The tourism sector for an area influences economic growth. Tourism can increase foreign exchange earnings, create jobs, reduce unemployment, stimulate the growth of related industries such as hotels, inns, culinary, and the like (Anggrayini, 2022; Darmi & Mujtahid, 2021).

Bengkulu is a province that has tourism potential. Various natural attractions, historical and cultural riches are one of the reasons the government pays more attention to the tourism sector. The development of the Bengkulu tourism sector is expected to make Bengkulu a tourist destination for tourists. In 2020 the Bengkulu provincial government launched the "Wonderful Bengkulu 2020" program. Actually Bengkulu tourism sector has long been the government's attention. The Bengkulu government has started planning various programs to support Bengkulu tourism since 2016 by launching the "Smiling Bengkulu" program. However, at that time the Bengkulu smiling program was not implemented so intensively because of the lack of awareness from the Bengkulu people regarding the program, namely related to ethics and cleanliness.

Unlike the "Bengkulu Smiling" program, the "Wonderful Bengkulu 2020" program focuses on several things. Five events are included in it, one of which is expected to become the top 100 Pesona Indonesia. The five events include Sport Tourism of Bencoolen, Rafflesia Earth Festival, Ark Festival, Bencoolen International Marine Festival (BIM-FEST), Long Coastal Festival. Furthermore, in 2021 the government will continue the program by changing its name to "Natural Bengkulu 2021." Unlike the previous program, Natural Bengkulu has a priority for the development of Bengkulu Province, including poverty alleviation, improving the quality of competitive human resources, developing strong and sustainable infrastructure, expanding connectivity for equity, strengthening resilience, economic transformation, innovation and government governance. This program has a vision of developing Integrative and Competitive Bengkulu Tourism, as well as developing a creative economy.

Some of the Bengkulu government programs are actively proclaimed on social media and mainstream media. This is done as an effort to introduce Bengkulu tourism to local and national tourists as well as branding Bengkulu as a tourism city. Social media and other media

that are connected to the internet are one of the mainstay media. Wide and unlimited reach and easy access to the media itself make the media the main choice in developing the Bengkulu tourism program (Info Negeri.id, 2022). As for the activity, there is a marketing process. Marketing is marketing activities in the form of products or services. This is interesting to study considering that it is relevant to the current condition; building a tourism brand through digital marketing communications or digital marketing.

From the elaboration of the background above, the formulation of the problem in this study is how digital marketing communication strategies are in Bengkulu branding as a tourism city. This study aims to determine digital marketing communication strategies in Bengkulu city tourism branding. Using a qualitative research approach, with analysis using the concept of AISAS theory which consists of Attention, Interest, Search, Action, and Share.

The era of the industrial revolution 4.0 and currently moving towards 5.0, forces all parties to improve to keep up with the pace of industrial development. The marketing system is no exception. Digital marketing is digital-based marketing. The advantages of digital marketing are broad reach, speed of access to information and not relatively expensive for promotion, practical, fast and efficient, which is what the concept of digital marketing offers. As technology develops, the concept of digital marketing can not only be done through the web or Ads. However, it can be done with social media. The Bengkulu government has social media accounts and several other accounts that specifically display Bengkulu tourism icons. Digital marketing communication in branding Bengkulu as a tourism city will be analyzed using the AISAS theory. This theory was invented by Dentsu. The AISAS theory consists of attention → interest → search → action → share ((Nurjanah, et al. 2020).

## **Method**

The qualitative approach is a method based on the philosophy of postpositivism, while for research on natural objects, where the researcher is the key instrument, data collection techniques are carried out by means of triangulation (combined). Data analysis is inductive or qualitative, research results emphasize meaning rather than generalization. In qualitative research data presentation can be done in the form of brief descriptions, charts, relationships between categories, lowcharts and the like (Sugiyono, 2009). A qualitative approach is an approach that intends to understand phenomena about what is experienced by research subjects such as behavior, perceptions, motivations, actions and others holistically and by means of descriptions in the form of words and language, in a special context that is natural and with using natural methods (Moleong, 2022). The method used in this research is case study, which

is a qualitative research based on human understanding and behavior based on human opinion (Polit & Beck, 2004). Subjects in research can be individuals, groups, agencies or even the community (Yona, 2006).

## **Result and Discussion**

Digital marketing communication in the context of branding Bengkulu as a tourism city, one of which is done through the Instagram account @visitbengkulu. The account contains posts related to Bengkulu tourism, be it natural tourism, about culture and history as well as activities and programs related to tourism such as various kinds of festival agendas in Bengkulu. This is the first stage of the AISAS theory, namely attention. Promote on social media or create interesting content to attract consumers to be interested in the product being promoted. These contents are not just seen or heard which will pave the way for both local and national tourists to be interested in the content created. Furthermore, in this process, there needs to be continuity in uploading content so that over time interest will emerge from the content that has been distributed. In this section the content created requires a persuasive communication content. Persuasive communication can basically affect a person's interest psychologically (Joseph, 2010). The next stage is search, this stage occurs when someone has an interest in a product. When the target market consumes content on social media, after they are interested in the content created, they will unconsciously take action in the form of something that fulfills their curiosity, namely looking for information that makes them feel interested, such as looking for more complete information about Bengkulu tourism. such as tourist sites, entrance tickets, and environmental conditions around tourist attractions. Furthermore, at the action stage, the content that has been shared by the Insagram account will be an impetus for the target market to do more by visiting these tourist attractions. Because the target market feels interested, they take action on the content they see on social media. The last stage, namely share (sharing). At this stage, when the target market feels interested, he will tell people about it. This is where word of mouth is created, so he shares his experience directly or even writes about it on his personal account by commenting on social media accounts based on the features provided. At this stage, the target market sees content and is interested in the content, so they will do a (search) search on the internet and then share the information they get with others. Or a step that may be skipped or repeated.

In this case the market behavior of the digital marketing communications that have been carried out has given a positive response, marked by the large number of comments on each post in the uploaded content on Instagram @visitbengkulu. In AISAS there are important

elements that influence and play a role in producing Word of Mouth communications, namely search and share elements. Two elements can serve as a benchmark for whether content created for digital marketing communications can respond as expected.

Digital marketing is a potential strategy because Indonesia is in the first position with digital marketing growth reaching 26%, followed by India (20%) in second place. position, then Russia, Thailand and Mexico. The rapid development of digital marketing in Indonesia is caused by an increase in the population of internet users which has reached 265.4 million people or exceeds almost the entire population of Indonesia (Widiastuti and Surendra, 2020). The digital marketing strategy will provide several things such as (1) Provide future directions for digital marketing activities; (2) Involves analysis of the organization's external environment, internal resources and capabilities to inform strategy; (3) Determine digital marketing goals that support marketing goals; (4) Involves selecting strategic alternatives to achieve digital marketing objectives and creating sustainable differential competitive advantages including the formulation of strategies to overcome distinctive marketing strategy choices such as target markets, positioning and marketing mix specifications; (5) Help identify which strategies to pursue and which marketing tactics are not suitable to be implemented; (6) Determine how resources will be used and how the organization will be structured to achieve the strategy (Sponder and Khan, 2021; Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).

The digital marketing communication strategy implemented is to focus on creating content that is considered interesting and can be an attraction for tourists. Taking pictures, content content, content duration and words used are some of the things that are done as a digital marketing communication strategy. Given that this strategy does not require costs such as creating advertisements, SEO optimization and others.

## **Conclusion**

The conclusion that can be drawn in this study is that digital marketing communications are carried out with a focus on content marketing. Create marketing content by utilizing existing social media and optimizing on other media such as online/mainstream media. Based on the data collected, the 'Wonderful Bengkulu 2020' program saw an increase in the number of tourists. Although these tourists are local tourists.

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