

Tourism Communication Management of the Yogyakarta Special Region Tourism Office as a Strategy to Increase Tourist Visits

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ABSTRACT

Keywords

Management;
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Tourism communication is an integral part of the development of communication science in utilizing the progress of a tourism object. In the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY), the main challenge is optimizing digital media to reach its full potential in promoting tourist destinations. This research aims to provide insight and recommendations to local governments and related stakeholders in increasing the number of tourists in DIY through more effective communication strategies. This research use descriptive qualitative approach. Descriptive research aims to explain observed phenomena in depth. Data collection was carried out through observation and in-depth interviews with sources involved in the DIY tourism industry. The research results show that the DIY Tourism Office has great potential to increase the effectiveness of tourism communications through optimizing digital media, better segmentation, close collaboration with industry players, and strategic innovation. It is hoped that this research recommendation can become a basis for the DIY Tourism Office in developing more effective communication strategies to attract more tourists to this destination.

1. Introduction

Tourism is an important factor in economic development as it stimulates the growth of the national economy, such as by fostering new industries related to tourism services, for example: transportation services, accommodations (hotels, motels, lodges), expanding markets for local tourism goods, creating new job opportunities (hotels or other lodging facilities, travel agencies, government offices dealing with tourism and translators, handicrafts and souvenir industries, and other retail outlets), and aiding the development of remote areas if they possess tourism appeal (Wahab, 2003).

Tourism Communication is a manifestation of the development of communication sciences in the field of tourism by harnessing advancements in a tourism object. The existence of tourism in an area can be seen as a phenomenon sparked by community interest in existing beauty. According to Bungin (2015), communication plays a crucial role in media and content communication. Tourism communication is shaped by various disciplines of communication and tourism.

Aside from providing entertainment venues, tourism plays a crucial role in expanding and equalizing business opportunities and employment, driving regional development, increasing national income to enhance the well-being and prosperity of the people, nurturing patriotism, enriching national culture, and strengthening national identity and fostering friendship among nations.

In December 2023, there was a significant increase in the number of foreign tourist visits to Yogyakarta Special Region. Data shows that there were 11,338 visits by foreign tourists during that month, marking a 17.19% increase from the previous month, November 2023, which recorded only 9,675 visits. This increase reflects the strong allure of various tourist attractions and promotional efforts by the DIY Tourism Office and local tourism industry partners (BPS, 2024).

Several factors can influence this increase, including promotional efforts. Promotion is a crucial factor in introducing tourism in Yogyakarta Special Region. The DIY Tourism Office maximizes tourism promotion in Yogyakarta through various media such as advertisements, videotron, television, events, and exhibitions. However, challenges include financial constraints, especially for promoting to Asian countries, suboptimal infrastructure such as transportation infrastructure and roads to tourist areas, and insufficient quality of human resources managing tourist attractions and supporting tourism.

Through this research, it is hoped that valuable insights and recommendations can be found for the local government and related stakeholders to increase the number of tourists in Yogyakarta Special Region.

2. Method

This research adopts a descriptive research type using a qualitative descriptive method. According to Creswell in Raco, research methods represent an approach or exploration to understand a central phenomenon. Qualitative research aims to achieve a deep understanding of a phenomenon, fact, or reality in order to explain, describe, and analyze the subject and object of research (Nurlatifah & Priyanti, 2023). There are three (3) crucial processes in this qualitative research: starting with topic determination, followed by data collection, and then analysis. The outcome aims to provide understanding and insight into the specific topic, phenomenon, or issue being studied. This method requires researchers to conduct observations and in-depth interviews to achieve optimal results. Researchers have the freedom to observe the research subject thoroughly for accurate and precise data. Thus, the research not only describes but also addresses issues and events effectively.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. Results

1. Optimization of digital media is not yet optimal

In this research, one of the main findings is that the optimization of digital media for tourism promotion in the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY) is still not optimal. The interviewee, who is someone actively involved in DIY tourism projects, observed that despite efforts to use digital media such as Visiting Jogja managed by GenPi Jogja, its use has still not reached its full potential. Visiting Jogja, as one of the main platforms owned by the DIY tourism office, is operated by a third party with support from the local government.

Interviewees highlighted that although there are efforts to optimize media digitally, there is a need to further improve the management and utilization of these platforms. He pointed out that algorithm management, content strategy, as well as how to influence potential audiences on platforms like TikTok, still need to be improved. This deeper and strategic involvement in social media is considered important because of the potential reach and wide influence it has in promoting tourism destinations.

Apart from that, the interviewee also highlighted that digital media management currently tends to be centered on Visiting Jogja, while there is potential to expand to DIY presence on other platforms that are also popular among internet users. This shows that the DIY Tourism Office needs to explore and adopt more innovation in their digital strategy to reach a wider and more diverse audience, including those active on other social media platforms.

Thus, although initial steps have been taken in using digital media for DIY tourism promotion, there is still room for significant improvement in optimizing its effectiveness. This includes the development of more sophisticated strategies, deeper utilization of data analytics, and better

integration between various digital platforms to achieve the goal of increasing the number of tourists expected by local governments and related stakeholders.

2. Segmentation and target audience

Furthermore, the findings from this research also found audience segmentation and targeting strategies carried out by the Yogyakarta Special Region Tourism Office (DIY). The resource person identified two main segments that are the focus of DIY tourism promotion efforts, namely business people who combine business visits with holidays, as well as students and university students for comparative study activities.

First, the DIY Tourism Office needs to direct promotions to business people who conduct meetings and other business activities in the special area of Yogyakarta. This reflects an effort to attract tourists who have dual interests, namely completing business matters while enjoying the tourism experience offered by DIY. Data shows that many companies choose Yogyakarta as their meeting location for this reason, indicating great potential to further develop this segmentation with a more targeted strategy.

Second, the resource person also highlighted the increase in visits from pupils and students who came for comparative studies to DIY. This shows that the DIY Tourism Office is also targeting a segment that is interested in combining their formal education with an educational and engaging tourism experience. This phenomenon shows the importance of DIY as an attractive educational and tourism destination for the younger generation, which is an important part of the sustainability of the DIY tourism industry.

3. Collaboration with industry players

Research findings also include collaboration between the Yogyakarta Special Region Tourism Office (DIY) and other industry players, such as hotels, travel agents, local guides, etc., which are the main focus. The resource person highlighted that this collaboration is a crucial element in strengthening DIY's tourism infrastructure as a whole.

The DIY Tourism Office has succeeded in establishing a solid partnership with GenPi Jogja (Generasi Pesona Indonesia Yogyakarta), a digital community that is actively involved in tourism promotion. This collaboration not only leverages digital expertise from GenPi Jogja to increase DIY's visibility on social media and other online platforms, but also allows DIY to integrate various tourism services offered by other industry players.

The interviewee underlined the importance of collaboration with hotels, restaurants and academics in expanding the reach of promotions and services. This collaboration not only enriches the tourist experience by offering a variety of accommodation options and food facilities, but also strengthens the DIY tourism value chain as a whole. Thus, close integration between tourism agencies, local tourism communities and related industry players is key in providing a holistic and satisfying tourism experience for visitors.

4. Challenges in managing communications

The main challenges faced in managing tourism communications in the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY) highlight several crucial problems that hinder the effectiveness of communication in promoting DIY tourism.

First, there is a mismatch between the government's vision and the readiness of tourism destinations. Interviewees pointed out that there is often a gap between the government's expectations for tourism destinations and the actual readiness of the destination itself. This may include a lack of understanding of how to market their destination effectively, or perhaps they do not have sufficient resources to manage promotions and communications optimally.

Second, limited human resources (HR) are a serious obstacle. The DIY tourism industry tends to be dominated by the older generation, with a limited number of younger generations having a dominant role in decision making or communication strategies. This can hinder innovation and conformity to new trends and preferences in increasingly digital tourism marketing.

Apart from that, the interviewee also highlighted that focusing too much on one platform such as Visiting Jogja may not be enough to optimize DIY digital marketing potential as a whole. This

shows the need for diversification in digital media strategies, as well as better integration between various social platforms to reach a wider and more diverse audience.

5. Evaluation of success and performance indicators

Evaluation of success and performance indicators in the context of the Yogyakarta Special Region (DIY) tourism communication strategy highlights that although there are several evaluation methods used, such as visit and income data integrated in the National Tourism Information System (Sisparnas), there are still challenges in evaluating it thoroughly.

The resource person said that data on visits and income from Sisparnas provides a clear picture of Yogyakarta's tourism performance. This data helps in assessing whether the promotional campaigns carried out have succeeded in increasing the number of tourist visits and related revenues. However, the interviewee also pointed out that not all data is available transparently or easily accessible, which can affect the ability of the DIY Tourism Office to carry out in-depth analysis and strategic planning based on accurate data.

The interviewee also highlighted that evaluation does not only look at numbers, but also needs to pay attention to the effects of promotional activities. For example, the impact of promotions through Visiting Jogja or other social media can be seen from user interactions, market response, or the reputation of the destination that is built. Holistic evaluations like this help the DIY Tourism Office to better understand the effectiveness of their communication strategies in the eyes of the public and the tourism industry.

6. Innovation and future strategy

In terms of innovation and future strategies in managing tourism in the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY), the resource person highlighted several findings and recommendations regarding innovative steps that DIY can take to increase the effectiveness of promotion and management of tourism destinations.

The DIY Tourism Office has started several innovative initiatives, such as active collaboration with GenPi Jogja in using digital media for tourism promotion. However, the interviewee emphasized the need to continue developing this strategy by expanding DIY's presence on different digital platforms. This includes exploring the potential of TikTok and other social media platforms to reach a wider and more diverse audience. The resource person suggested increasing the participation of the younger generation in the management and development of tourism communication strategies. The active involvement of the younger generation, both in leadership roles and implementing innovative programs such as digital training bootcamps, is expected to bring fresh ideas and new thinking to the DIY tourism industry.

Apart from that, the DIY Tourism Office also needs to continue to innovate in the management of destinations and the tourist experiences offered. Developing new programs, improving service quality, and utilizing technology such as artificial intelligence (AI) to personalize tourist experiences could be potential future strategies. By combining innovation in various fields, including digital technology, destination management and human resource development, the DIY Tourism Office can strengthen its appeal as a superior tourism destination. These strategies will not only help increase the number of tourist visits, but also strengthen the local economic base, as well as increase the reputation of the DIY Tourism Office as one of the leading tourism destinations in Indonesia.

3.2. Discussion

Tourism communication is a key element in promoting and developing tourism destinations, including in the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY). The DIY Tourism Office plays a crucial role in designing and implementing effective communication strategies to increase tourist visits to the region. Through various media and communication channels such as official websites, social media, and specialized apps like Visiting Jogja, the office strives to deliver engaging and relevant information about attractions, cultural events, and services available in DIY to a wide audience (Wolah, 2016).

However, optimizing digital media remains a significant challenge in DIY's tourism promotion strategy. Experts indicate that while DIY Tourism Office utilizes digital platforms like Visiting Jogja managed by third parties such as GenPi Jogja, there is still untapped potential in maximizing

these platforms. Overemphasis on one platform may overlook opportunities from other high-potential platforms like TikTok, which has a powerful algorithm for reaching broader audiences. Therefore, DIY Tourism Office needs to diversify and experiment with various digital platforms to enhance its visibility across different market segments.

Additionally, there is a need to improve content strategy in digital media. Despite informative applications like Visiting Jogja, not all potential content and appealing information for tourists may be effectively conveyed. This highlights the importance for DIY Tourism Office to better understand digital consumer preferences and behaviors, adapting content strategies to be more attractive and relevant (Fadhil & Zaenuri, 2021). Utilizing data analytics and user feedback, DIY Tourism Office can optimize more personalized and market-oriented content strategies.

Furthermore, DIY Tourism Office could consider strategic partnerships with local influencers or digital narrators who wield significant influence on platforms like Instagram or YouTube. Their presence could help expand DIY's promotional reach and inject stronger personality into digital campaigns. Collaborating with influencers enables DIY Tourism Office to strengthen its brand image among audiences not effectively reached through conventional strategies (Haryono & Albetris, 2022).

To enhance internal capabilities in managing digital media, DIY Tourism Office should invest in intensive training for staff in digital marketing and data analysis. This would empower them to independently plan and execute more effective digital strategies, fostering long-term positive outcomes. Additionally, integrating various digital platforms with existing tourism information systems like Sisparnas can streamline data collection and analysis, enabling DIY Tourism Office to measure and evaluate campaign effectiveness more comprehensively.

In tackling challenges of digital media optimization, DIY Tourism Office should enhance integration among platforms and tourism information systems, fostering adaptive, evidence-based strategies. Staying flexible and responsive to changes in consumer behavior and technology is crucial (Bonita, 2016). As the digital landscape evolves rapidly, DIY Tourism Office should regularly evaluate its strategies and embrace emerging innovations in the digital tourism industry. This approach ensures competitiveness in an increasingly dynamic tourism market while preserving the unique identity and appeal of Yogyakarta as a tourism destination..

Segmentation and identification of target audiences are critical aspects in DIY tourism promotion strategy that require deep consideration. Sources reveal that the DIY Tourism Office has directed their promotional campaigns towards two primary segments: business travelers seeking leisure in Yogyakarta and students coming for study tours and leisure. This indicates initial efforts by the DIY Tourism Office to recognize and target potential market segments relevant to Yogyakarta's unique attractions.

However, there's potential for deeper market segmentation. Sources suggest the need for DIY Tourism Office to better understand the preferences and specific needs of each segment. For instance, distinguishing between businesses preferring Yogyakarta for business meetings versus those interested primarily in vacation and recreation. By understanding the characteristics and motivations of each segment more effectively, DIY Tourism Office can design more targeted and relevant promotional campaigns.

Moreover, DIY Tourism Office should consider adopting a more dynamic and adaptive segmentation approach. Given the rapid changes in consumer trends and preferences within the tourism industry, continuous updating of segmentation is crucial. This includes using data analytics and in-depth market research to identify shifts in consumer behavior and predict future trends (Setyanto & Winduwati, 2017).

In this context, leveraging technology and digital platforms can enhance DIY Tourism Office's segmentation capabilities. Utilizing data from platforms like Sisparnas or others can help DIY Tourism Office identify finer and more comprehensive market segments, providing more accurate and detailed information about consumer preferences and habits.

Furthermore, it's essential for DIY Tourism Office to expand the use of relevant communication channels tailored to each target segment. For example, leveraging popular digital platforms among

students and young travelers such as TikTok or Instagram to create engaging content that encourages participation from these segments. Additionally, involving influencers or digital narrators with audiences aligned to their segments can amplify the impact of their promotional campaigns.

In addition to understanding and targeting existing market segments more deeply, DIY Tourism Office can explore new or emerging market segments. For instance, identifying potential from international tourists interested in Yogyakarta's culture or history. By broadening their segmentation scope, DIY Tourism Office can open new opportunities to increase tourist visits and diversify tourism revenue sources.

Collaboration with industry stakeholders such as hotels, restaurants, and other accommodations is also crucial in enriching tourists' experiences. These partnerships extend beyond joint promotions to developing comprehensive tourism packages and coordinated experiences. For instance, collaborating with hotels to offer promotional packages including accommodation, transportation, and local tours adds value for visitors seeking convenience and ease in their travels.

However, sources also highlight the need to enhance these collaborations to a more strategic and structured level. DIY Tourism Office should continue building deeper relationships with various industry players, including local transportation companies, tour guides, and service providers. This strengthens DIY's overall tourism infrastructure and expands the portfolio of services offered to tourists.

The importance of collaboration is also reflected in DIY Tourism Office's efforts to improve visitor services and experiences. By actively collaborating with other industry players, DIY can be more responsive to visitor feedback and quicker to adapt to changes in market trends and needs. For example, implementing joint training programs to elevate service standards in the tourism sector or developing integrated information systems that facilitate coordination among all parties involved in the tourism industry (Suhartono & Budiharja, 2023).

In addition, collaboration with industry stakeholders also helps the Yogyakarta Tourism Office (DIY) to address several challenges faced in managing tourism destinations. For example, by sharing resources and knowledge, DIY can overcome limitations in human resources or finances in managing tourism promotion and infrastructure development. This enables DIY to focus more on innovation and developing long-term strategies that support sustainable growth in Yogyakarta's tourism sector.

Furthermore, collaboration with industry stakeholders can strengthen DIY's position as a sustainable and responsible tourism destination. By working together on sustainability initiatives such as waste management or environmental conservation, DIY can attract market segments increasingly concerned about the social and environmental impacts of their travels. Such collaborations not only provide economic benefits but also help DIY build a reputation as an ethical and sustainable tourism destination (Nurlatifah & Priyanti, 2023).

The management of tourism communication in the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY) faces several challenges that need to be overcome to improve promotional effectiveness and attract more tourists. One of the main challenges is the lack of synchronization between the government and tourism destinations in terms of development and marketing. It has been noted that there is often a gap between the government's expectations for destinations and their actual readiness, which can hinder coordinated and effective promotional efforts and slow down the tourism industry's growth in DIY.

Another challenge is the limited availability of human resources (HR) in DIY's tourism industry. Despite efforts to involve younger generations in tourism activities, their roles tend to be limited and not dominant in organizational hierarchies. This reflects the potential for expanding youth involvement in tourism management and communication strategies. Investing in the training and development of younger HR can help address these challenges and bring freshness and new innovations to the industry.

Additionally, DIY faces challenges in managing the diversity of communication media available. While efforts have been made to optimize digital media such as Visiting Jogja, there is still a need to

further explore and utilize new platforms like TikTok. Algorithms and content strategies tailored to these platforms can help DIY reach a broader audience, including younger generations who increasingly rely on social media for travel information and inspiration (Prastiyanti & Yulianto, 2019).

Issues related to measuring the success of communication strategies also pose significant challenges. It has been noted that available data is not always transparent or easily accessible, making it difficult to accurately evaluate the impact of various promotional initiatives. These limitations hinder DIY's ability to make timely adjustments to ongoing communication strategies and optimize resource allocation to support the success of tourism promotion.

The complexity of managing collaborations with other industry players is also a challenge. Although there has been cooperation with various parties such as GenPi Jogja and tourism promotion agencies, further efforts are needed to ensure that these collaborations are efficient and productive. Managing expectations, clearly defining responsibilities, and ensuring the sustainability of these collaborations are key to maximizing synergy among the various entities involved in promoting tourism in DIY.

Finally, challenges in managing DIY's tourism communication also include the need to build a more structured and comprehensive evaluation system. This includes using clear and measurable performance indicators and developing monitoring systems that can provide real-time information on the effectiveness of various promotional campaigns. Thus, DIY can be more responsive to market changes and tourist needs, while enhancing transparency in managing and reporting on the outcomes of various communication initiatives (Yohana & Rummyeni, 2019).

Firstly, the evaluation of tourism communication strategy success can be conducted by assessing visitor arrivals. This data serves as a primary indicator reflecting the extent to which promotions and campaigns attract interest and visitor numbers to Yogyakarta. By analyzing trends in tourist visits from year to year, DIY can evaluate whether the strategies implemented are successful or need adjustment to increase their positive impact. Additionally, through the National Tourism Information System (Sisparnas), DIY can directly monitor the number of visits to hotels, restaurants, and other tourist destinations as more detailed performance indicators (Sumiyati & Murdiyanto, 2018).

Secondly, to measure success in reaching the specified target audience, DIY can utilize market segmentation analysis methods as mentioned by the interviewee. It was mentioned that DIY directs its promotions to business and educational segments. Evaluation can be conducted by comparing visitation data and activities from these segments, including the number of business meetings held in DIY or the number of study visits from schools. Careful evaluation of success in reaching these target segments will help DIY adjust promotional strategies to be more targeted and effective.

Thirdly, in the context of evaluating communication strategy success, DIY can leverage data from their social media platforms like Visiting Jogja. Analysis of engagement levels, follower counts, and interaction with published content can provide a clear picture of how effective DIY is in building awareness and interest in their tourism destinations. Evaluating public responses to posted content is also important to assess how relevant and engaging the content is to the intended audience (Umami, 2015).

Fourthly, DIY can evaluate the success of their communication strategies by analyzing visitor satisfaction levels. Surveys and direct feedback from visitors can provide valuable insights into their experiences while visiting Yogyakarta. This evaluation helps DIY improve existing services and facilities, as well as adjust communication strategies to meet the increasingly high expectations of visitors (Sitepu & Sabrin, 2020).

Fifthly, in efforts to measure the impact of specific promotion and campaign initiatives, DIY can utilize ROI analysis methods involving comparisons between promotional costs and revenue generated from increased tourist visits. This will help DIY assess the efficiency of their expenditures in tourism promotion and identify areas where additional investment may be needed or can be reduced.

Lastly, to enhance transparency and accountability, DIY also needs to improve their reporting and data collection systems related to evaluating the success of their communication strategies. Ensuring that collected data is easily accessible and understandable by all relevant parties, including the general public and the tourism industry, will help DIY make more informed decisions based on strong evidence and analysis.

The Yogyakarta Tourism Office (DIY) can adopt Innovations in technology and social media to enhance audience reach and engagement. Platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube can be optimized with creative and compelling content strategies to connect with the increasingly active younger generation on social media. TikTok, in particular, offers significant opportunities for wide exposure through its algorithm that supports viral content, which can be leveraged to promote various tourism destinations and local events in DIY.

DIY can develop experiential marketing strategies to provide deeper experiences for tourists. For instance, organizing local cultural events, festivals, or workshops that actively involve tourists in local activities. This not only enhances destination appeal but also creates emotional connections between visitors and the places they visit, encouraging repeat visits and recommendations of DIY to others (Rusdiananingtyas, 2015).

Enhancing the integration of the National Tourism Information System (Sisparnas) can provide deeper and real-time data analysis on visitor trends, preferences, and travel patterns. By effectively utilizing this data, DIY can be more responsive to market demand changes and strategically allocate resources to enhance promotional outcomes and maximize tourist experiences.

In terms of innovation, DIY can consider developing an informative and interactive mobile application for tourists. Such an app can provide information about local attractions, upcoming events, dining options, transportation, and offer navigation features and personalized recommendations. Integrating features such as user reviews can also help build trust and enhance tourist experiences during their time in DIY.

To enhance global competitiveness, DIY can collaborate with prominent influencers or travel bloggers to promote their destinations. Partnering with local and international influencers with large and engaged audiences can significantly increase DIY's exposure across various social media platforms. This strategy can expand DIY's reach and appeal to international markets, which is crucial for attracting foreign tourists (Dwijulianto & Dewi, 2019).

As part of their future strategy, DIY needs to continue promoting sustainable and environmentally friendly tourism infrastructure. These steps include improving public transportation facilities, better waste management, and preserving cultural and environmental heritage. By integrating sustainability aspects into their promotional strategies, DIY not only attracts environmentally conscious tourists but also contributes positively to local communities and cultural preservation.

4. Conclusion

Based on the research findings presented, there are several significant discoveries regarding the optimization of digital media, audience segmentation, industry collaborations, communication management challenges, evaluation of success, and innovative strategies for tourism in Yogyakarta Special Region (DIY). Although the Yogyakarta Tourism Office (DIY) has utilized digital media such as the Visiting Jogja platform, there is still room for improvement in managing and implementing more effective content strategies, particularly in reaching potential audiences through social media platforms like TikTok. DIY also needs to diversify to maximize the potential of other digital platforms to reach a wider and more diverse audience.

DIY has identified potential tourist segments, such as business travelers combining business trips with vacations, as well as students for study tours. This strategy reflects DIY's efforts to maximize the destination's appeal not only as a tourist spot but also as an educational experience. Collaboration with other industry players, such as hotels and travel agencies, is also key to expanding promotional reach and providing comprehensive services to visitors. However, challenges such as discrepancies between government vision and destination readiness, as well as

human resource limitations, underscore the need for DIY to continuously innovate in tourism management and promotion strategies. The integration of technology and involvement of the younger generation are expected to strengthen DIY's competitiveness as a leading tourism destination in Indonesia, creating memorable and sustainable tourism experiences for visitors.

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