

## Social Media as a Marketing Media for Pandansari Mangrove Forest Tourism Object

Anisa Nur Andina <sup>a,1,\*</sup>, Rafif Zain Ramadhan <sup>b,2</sup>, Hasna Leginasawati <sup>b,3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup> Universitas Amikom Purwokerto, Indonesia

<sup>1</sup> andina@amikompurwokerto.ac.id \*; <sup>2</sup> rafifzrr@gmail.com ; <sup>3</sup> hleginasawati@gmail.com

\* corresponding author

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### ABSTRACT

*Facing the industrial revolution 4.0 which makes technology development even more rapid making the world of tourism in Indonesia also progresses. Tourism that is experiencing development certainly provides additional foreign exchange for the country. Brebes Regency as a district that has many hidden tourism treasures is currently one of the regencies in Central Java that is quite reckoned with in the world of tourism. The purpose of this study are to see how much social media impact has in order to enlarge the number of visitors in Pandansari mangrove forest at Kaliwlingi Village Brebes Regency through tourism promotion. The idea of marketing through social media is currently the new prima donna. Social media is used to market tourism objects more broadly. Reaching larger audiences, the work of social media continues to be improved mainly in attracting potential visitors who have never come to this place at all. The analysis object in this paper is the social media account belonging to the Pandansari mangrove forest located in Kaliwlingi Village Brebes Regency which is often referred to as Dewi Mangrovesari. Using descriptive qualitative research technique, it was found that the use of social media as marketing was effective because currently people are very familiar with technology. Good management and efforts to preserve the environment are also one of the things promoted by the Pandansari mangrove forest tourism object.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

It is undeniable that the existence of tourism objects makes a very large contribution to the Regency or City. Through tourism objects, local governments can provide many new jobs that can absorb the community around tourism objects. Social media provides the best offers in terms of marketing, especially in the digital era like today. In 2012 eMarketer has predicted that one in five people in the world will have a social media account and use it actively with the highest users from China and America while the highest user growth is in India and Indonesia. Indonesia is a very good market for tourism because of its abundant natural wealth and great potential to attract tourists.

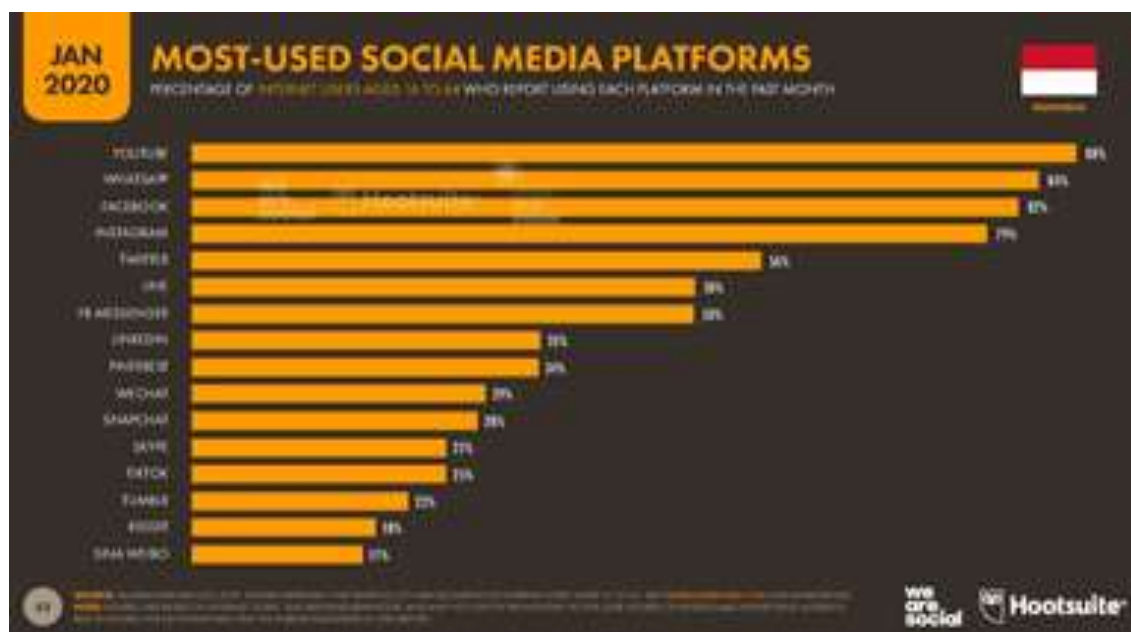
The location of Brebes Regency which is in the northernmost part of Central Java Province is one of the advantages because Brebes Regency is one of the regencies with a fairly large area and good natural potential to be developed. Armed with potential natural resources, Brebes Regency has a lot of tourism that can be developed. Judging from its strategic location, tourism in Brebes Regency is a different attraction from other tourist attractions. One that has recently become a byword is the Pandansari mangrove forest in Kaliwlingi Village.

For tourism enthusiasts in Brebes and its surroundings, they must be familiar with the Pandansari mangrove forest, Kaliwlingi Village, especially with its beautiful and beautiful scenery. Besides being known for its scenery, Pandansari mangrove forest is also known for its complete facilities. With affordable entrance tickets and the tour packages offered are not so expensive for ordinary people. The place is quite comfortable for traveling while resting with family members. Other facilities provided by the mangrove forest are a large enough parking lot, prayer room, boats to take tourists to the mangrove forest, toilets, viewing towers, gazebos, with all buildings with traditional architecture and rural nuances, making the mangrove forest of Pandansari Village suitable as a place to stay. vacation to release the stress that interferes with the mind due to schoolwork or work.

According to the Director General of P2HP, mangroves are a type of plant with split seeds or pieces of seeds that are commonly found in brackish water and sea water. Mangroves are plants that are the result of cultivation activities and are not protected, they can still be used but the number is limited. The application of the concept of ecotourism to mangrove forests is not only a tourist attraction but also for the conservation and sustainable management of mangrove forests for that tourists must also comply with written rules.

Mangrove plants that grow on the coast are most commonly found at the boundary between the coastal estuary and the river. With the characteristics of these mangrove plants live in groups in large numbers, have large roots, and have fruit. Pandansari mangrove forest is also known as mangrovesari which is used as a tourist area, visitors can take a boat that has been provided by the manager to tourist attractions.

The use of social media as a marketing tool is very important. Social media is like a living organism that keeps changing all the time. Social media develops according to the times. Social media is changing in response to developer ideas, user demand, politics and social awakening. Today many people are spending more time in cyberspace. In the world of tourism, it is very important to always keep abreast of social media developments because there are so many potential tourists who seek information through social media.



Picture 1. The Most-Used Social Media Platform in Indonesia 2020

(<https://hootsuite.com/research/social-trends>)

There is no denying that social media has a dramatic impact on the world around us. However, there are only a few industries that have presented such significant marketing opportunities, one of which is the tourism industry. Social media and tourism marketing seem to be a pair from heaven which are indeed complementary to each other at this time. The world with its rapid development makes tourism seem inseparable from social media. People love to share their new experiences and journeys through social media. It is undeniable that marketing through social media is currently more effective than word of mouth because people prefer to linger on social media than meeting other people.

According to research conducted by As'ad Nurul Akhil and Edi Kurniawan (2021) found weaknesses regarding the human resources involved in the management of Pandansari mangrove tourism objects are not knowing well about education-based management so it is necessary to do better research and provide an understanding of educational tourism. This research will help how to increase the involvement of human resources in the management of education-based tourism objects by maximizing the social media used and assistance in providing education about mangrove forests to visitors who come.

Sujatmi, et all (2018) found that the promotions that have been carried out have not been maximized and have not been effective, not all members take an active role in managing the area, because they consider tourism only as a side activity also there are no professional mangrove forest area managers engaged in tourism or conservation.

Social media is a result of developments in the field of information dissemination. Technology that is growing rapidly makes television and radio no longer an idol in the search for information because the internet has covered everything. The public can quickly get the latest news both at home and abroad. This is the main consideration why marketing through social media is considered very important and effective today.

Harsono and colleagues (2019) said intensive coaching, resources existing humans can be encouraged to be actively involved in village formation tourism so that the productive age can take advantage of the potential and build village without the need to look for work outside the city (Harsono & Suhandi, 2019)

In the digital era like today, the behavior of internet users is considered similar to one another. It is said to be similar because on average they will imitate the behavior of other internet users when they see their social media. By using hashtags to search for keywords or a tourist place, they will easily get information. The use of hashtags as keywords for searches makes it easier for consumers to find more information about tourist attractions.

#### Purpose Of This Study

The purpose of this study was to find out how much impact social media had on increasing the number of visitors to the Pandansari mangrove tourism object. Social media is used as a marketing media that is considered effective to reach various groups, especially young people who spend most of their time surfing in cyberspace. when we talk about the influence of social media we can not just let go of a tourist attraction that can be promoted through social media.

## 2. METHOD

This research uses descriptive qualitative method. (Kriyantono, 2012) stated that the purpose of qualitative research is to explain a phenomenon in depth through data collection that shows the importance of depth and detail of the data studied. In qualitative research, the deeper the data obtained, the better the quality of the research. (Sugiyono, 2007) states that qualitative research is used to find hypotheses or theories. Furthermore, Sugiyono also said that the main characteristic of this research is to conduct research in natural conditions, the researcher goes to the data center to obtain data, presents the data in text or image form, without emphasizing numbers and prioritizing the process, conducting data analysis and more summarizing and emphasizing the meaning in the text. return observed data.

The process of collecting data in this study through interviews, observation and library research. Interviewing is the process of obtaining information for research through questioning and answering between the interviewer and the respondent using a tool called an interview guide. Interviews are an effective way to collect data. Meanwhile, during the observation process, the researcher observed directly the object to be studied, in this case the Pandansari mangrove forest.

Description, facts and data are stored in various materials and are not limited by space and time. Therefore, researchers can strengthen observation and interview data by understanding the facts to check the validity of the data, explain and draw conclusions. The documents used are from the Brebes Regency Culture and Tourism Office.

The informants who reviewed in this study were those who were directly involved in the management of the Pandansari mangrove forest such as the head of Pokdarwis and also the head of the finance and program sub-section of the Brebes Regency Culture and Tourism Office. Informants give the informations about visitors who visits Pandansari mangrove tourism object and said some of them continue to come because of the attractions.

## 3. RESULTS

Digital marketing is a marketing concept that uses digital media and the internet. This is increasingly being done considering the increasing number of internet users. Digital marketing is known to save time and money. Tourism is the act and process of spending time away from home in

pursuit of pleasure, relaxation while taking advantage of all the commercial services provided by the provider.

Social media was seen as a way to interact with friends and family, but was later adopted by businesses looking to take advantage of popular new communication methods to reach customers. The power of social media is the ability to connect and share information with anyone around the world, or with many people at the same time.

Simultaneously, digital marketing is related to social media where the use of social media serves as a liaison between tourism managers and consumers more broadly. Meanwhile, the attractions offered through social media can be quickly updated by uploading photos or videos via Facebook or Instagram pages.

#### a. Tourism

According to (Yoeti, 2016) tourism is etymologically derived from two words, namely "pari" and "tourism" which are absorbed from Sanskrit which means "many times" and "travel". The definition of tourism according to Law no. 10 of 2009 concerning Tourism are various kinds of tourism activities and are supported by various facilities and services provided by the community, businessmen, government and local governments.

Through some of the views above, it is concluded that tourism is all forms of activities that occur in the community, which are related to tourists, namely people who travel as an act of temporary travel of a person from one place to an interesting tourist spot that is carried out consciously of their own volition.

Philosophically, tourism develops on the human need for self-fulfillment and existence which has recently been in the spotlight. Called self-fulfillment because tourism can bring peace and pleasure to the soul who is tired from daily routines. Traveling can make someone happy because they can forget the tiring routine. As for self-existence, currently traveling makes a person feel more than others. When someone goes on a trip and then uploads it on social media and gets a lot of responses from other people, usually he will feel satisfaction.

(Muljadi, A, 2014) said that the community is an active participant in tourism activities that aim to improve the welfare of the community and tourism is a manifestation of the populist economic system which is an activity of all levels of Indonesian society as a source of creative economy for the community.

Tourism is currently a very important sector to increase foreign exchange, especially in Indonesia which has tremendous potential that is a pity to miss. The contribution of tourism which increases every year makes the Regional Government of Brebes Regency through the Department of Culture and Tourism continue to improve innovation in terms of maintaining the quality of tourism in tourist attractions in Brebes Regency.

With the various attractions offered to the Pandansari mangrove forest tourism object, which continues to innovate in various aspects, making it increasingly the prima donna of tourism in Brebes Regency. Among the efforts made by the manager of the Pandansari mangrove forest tourism object is to improve facilities and update selfie spots in several places. These selfie spots can be used free of charge by visitors.

Not only selfie spots are offered but there are also other facilities such as speedboats, banana boats and several rides that can be enjoyed by paying a fee that is not too expensive. Visitors can feel at one with nature because they can directly intersect with nature.

The concept of ecotourism by the International Ecotourism Society (2015) is a responsible trip to the natural region, including protection of the environment, support for the well-being of the community, interpreters and environmental education. According to the head of the finance and program sub-section of Brebes Regency Culture and Tourism Office, there are still visitors who are unable to comply with regulations, for example regarding the prohibition of littering so that at every point a trash can is given so that there are no more stubborn visitors.

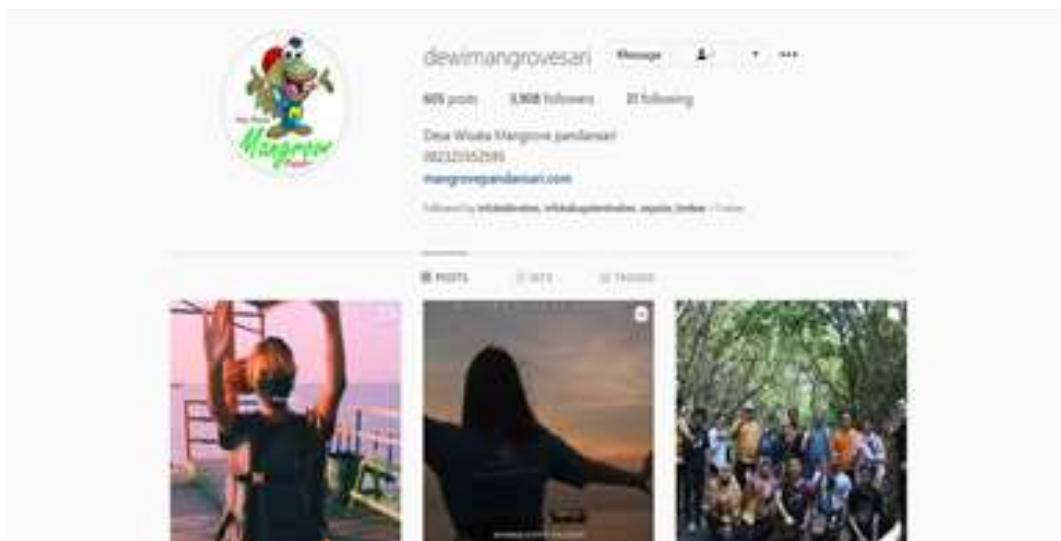
Talking about ecotourism, of course can not be separated from tourists who attend. The high level of visits is a concern for the guides, therefore guides always try to improve services even though they are still lacking because sometimes the number of visitors is far more than the guides available in the field.

b. Social media

The most trusted form of advertising today is recommendations from others through social media. Taking advantage of this opportunity where more people spend time on their social media online then marketers must be more observant in taking advantage of the situation. Based on today's ever-changing market and changing times, companies can no longer use information from media such as television or newspapers.

The era of social media began about ten years ago. First LinkedIn was launched in 2003, then MySpace and Facebook in 2004, YouTube in 2005 and Twitter in 2006. In less than ten years, the number of internet users has grown rapidly around the world. Facebook even has more than 500 million users worldwide, and Indonesia has around 175 million active users of the Facebook site.

According to Stelzner (2011) in the report social media marketing according to industry reports, 64% of marketers spend about five hours or more per week marketing their products on social media and 39% of them spend ten hours or more. This finding shows that more and more companies are increasingly actively involved in marketing activities through social media. The emergence of social media sites as a new marketing or promotion platform is also known as social media marketing. (Matthews, 2010) said social media has proven to be an invaluable tool for the industry and the future provides a wider range of teaching and implementation of these tools. Internet-oriented tourism will use a more generalized customer-integrated technology that allows to interact with visitors more interactively.



Picture 2. Instagram account of mangrove forest tourism object

(<http://www.instagram.com/dewimangrovesari/>)

Meanwhile, according to (Kotler, Philip, Armstrong, 2014) marketing philosophy is planning and implementing a series of concepts of goods and services, prices, promotion and distribution processes to create transactions that can meet personal and organizational goals. Marketing includes all content used to market goods or services. (Rangkuti, 2010) suggests that marketing is a human activity designed to meet demand through an exchange process. The fact is that social media provides the ability to reach customers at multiple points of contact rather than through a single channel.

According (Saravanakumar & Suganthalakshmi, 2012) marketing through social media is primarily internet-based but has similarities with word of mouth marketing. Marketing through social media is a way of promoting a website, brand, or business by interacting with attracting potential customers through internet channels. The advantages of social media marketing include cost, social



interaction, interactivity and target market. Social media marketing can play an important role in replacing traditional marketing to help companies carry out their marketing activities.

(Miller & Lammas, 2010) said that the effectiveness of advertising in rapid digitization could be improved in many ways. The advantages of social media marketing include cost, social interaction, interactivity and target market. Social media marketing can be play an important role in replacing traditional marketing to help.

According to the management of the Pandansari mangrove forest tourism object carried out on social media has started to improve and with the help of visitors who massively share their stories through their personal social media, more and more new visitors are attracted. But the shortcoming on their social media is the lack of updates that are carried out due to a shortage of personnel who specifically handle social media.

Referring to the high use of social media in 2020, the Pandansari mangrove forest tourism object launched various social media to reach all circles. Active social media will raise the interest of potential visitors to visit these attractions.



Picture 3. Facebook account of mangrove forest tourism project

(<http://facebook.com/Dewimangrovesari>)

Marketing strategies through social media are strategies used by leaders who engage and communicate with individuals via the internet. Social media is currently on the rise as a powerful marketing medium to reach a wider audience. In this case, the Pandansari mangrove forest must be more innovative in creating something new, such as a selfie spot that can attract the attention of visitors.

### c. Attractiveness of Pandansari Mangrove Forest

This 200 hectare land is a comfortable place to live for more than 3 million mangrove trees. Pandansari mangrove forest is useful for reducing abrasion as well as a place to live for several wild animals such as cranes, shrimp, reptiles to unique fish called glodok fish by residents. With comfortable trekking facilities, a beautiful atmosphere, visitors are also spoiled with the sound of the birds greeting. Not only that at low tide, visitors can also be greeted by glodok fish that appear on the surface as if welcoming.

Along the trekking path there are many educational boards containing information about mangrove plants. Not only that, the education board also contains an invitation to love the environment and prohibit littering. Visitors, of course, find it very helpful to have this educational board because it adds to their knowledge that this location is often used as a place for educational tours for schools around Brebes.

As a place for educational tours, the Pandansari mangrove forest tourism object has also developed several fauna conservation parks. Among them are soka crab conservation, butterfly garden and there is also a bird park. The manager also provides selfie spots for visitors to take pictures at tourist attractions. Selfie spots that are always updated make visitors more interested in coming.

#### d. Result

Leung and colleagues (2013) showed the key role of social media in travel decisions. They realized that visitors generally use social media during the research phase of the process planning their trip (Leung, Law, Van Hoof, & Buhalis, 2013). This was shown when we conducted interviews with several visitors who said that they were interested in visiting because they saw on social media that the Pandansari mangrove tourism object is one of the must-visit tourist objects when coming to Brebes Regency. Visitors first find out about what tourist objects are in the Brebes Regency and then after that they see the hashtags embedded in the photos and videos uploads that point to the Pandansari mangrove tourism object.

Visitors who are interested will immediately come to see firsthand and treat their curiosity about the Pandansari mangrove tourism object. Some of them even did a pre-wedding photo session. In the future, internet-oriented tourism will use more generalized customer-integrated technology that allows for interactive interaction with visitors.

### 4. DISCUSSIONS

In light of the aftereffects of the review, it very well may be presumed that social media can bring more visitors to tourist attractions. This is because many people use social media and look for unique and different tourist attractions. Pandansari mangrove tourism object provides a holiday sensation that is different from the others. Apart from being a tourist spot, Pandansari mangrove tourism object offers educational tours for school children who come to visit. Not only that, the shady area makes videos and photos that are taken and uploaded on visitors' social media which bring special interest to those who see it.

It very well may be inferred that the social media give the light on promotion Pandansari mangrove tourism object. Of course, in terms of increasing visitors, it does not only depend on social media but also service improvements that must be continuously improved. It is not only about cleanliness that is everyone's responsibility, the existing educational services must also be improved. Education about the benefits and impacts of mangroves on people's lives must continue to be echoed so that people better understand the importance of preserving nature for life.

The consequences of this review are in accordance with the exploration directed by Hidayah (2013) where the active role of the community is needed in the entire development process so that a good synergy will be created between the community with the Government and the participating groups. If there is continuity between one party and another, there will also be an increase in the number of visitors who come, which of course will increase income.

### 5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The rapid development of technology brings many impacts, including positive and negative impacts, especially on the tourism industry in Indonesia. Product marketing methods have also changed from conventional to more modern. The changing marketing concept inevitably brings many changes in the way to market a product or service. Tourism marketing through social media using Facebook and Instagram is considered effective enough to attract potential visitors. Visitors provide hashtags and tags on the manager's social media accounts so that the manager can repost or repost effectively to attract attention.

Information provided through social media accounts can also be well received by potential visitors, marked by the number of "likes" received on each uploaded photo. Managers in this case must be smart in using social media as a medium for marketing because it is a good tool for business activities. The rapid changes in social media have created many new business ideas, especially regarding the improvement of tourism facilities and infrastructure. Following something that is currently hits on social media can also help managers to always improve the facilities provided at tourist attractions, especially places for photos.

For further research, it is hoped that other researchers can develop more indicators used in the relationship between digital marketing and tourism. This is done in order to get maximum and accurate results in accordance with what is happening in the field.

Based on the conclusions obtained, the suggestions that can be proposed to the Pandansari mangrove forest tourism object related to digital marketing and its implementation in the field are to focus on wider promotion using various existing social media.

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