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New Media-Based Tourism Marketing Communication for Raising Awareness of Curiak Island Mangrove Forest

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ABSTRACT

Curiak Island presents nature tourism with a wealth of flora and fauna typical of South Kalimantan, namely the Proboscis Monkey and Rambai Mangrove. Curiak Island is a research center for proboscis monkeys, an endemic fauna of South Kalimantan. Curiak Island ecotourism is not widely known to the people of South Kalimantan. The purpose of this research is to find out the new media-based tourism marketing communication of mangrove forest tourism on Curiak Island in increasing tourist awareness. Data collection techniques are interviews, documentation and literature studies. The research method uses a qualitative approach with descriptive type. The research informants were the manager of the Curiak Island mangrove forest tour, the Barito Kuala Regency Tourism Culture, Youth and Sports Office and Curiak Island tourists. Data analysis techniques using Manual Data Analysis Procedure (MDAP) in the form of daily notes, transcripts, coding, categories, themes, and memos. The results of the study are marketing communication of Curiak Island using new media in the form of Instagram, Facebook and YouTube. Curiak Island is a special interest tour intended for researchers and study groups. Tourist attractions offered in the form of planting mangroves, seeing the life of proboscis monkeys in the wild, observing birds and reptiles.

Keywords: Marketing Communication; Tourism; New Media; Awareness; Curiak Island

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INTRODUCTION

Nature tourism has an attraction for tourists to visit it. South Kalimantan with its wetland geography has a variety of natural tourism potential in the form of rivers, lakes, mountains, waterfalls and beaches. However, tourism management in several tourist destinations has not been well managed, such as hygiene problems, public facilities, accessibility that cannot all be reached by public transportation modes, and less vigorous promotion.

Curiak Island is a small island located in the Barito River delta, Anjir Muara District, Barito Kuala Regency. The distance of Curiak Island from downtown Banjarmasin is about 18 kilometers. Initially this island was not taken care of and was not included in the google map because the area was only about 2.7 hectares. Currently, the area of Curiak Island is 3.9 hectares after being planted with rambai trees. Since June 2018, the Curiak Island area has been used as a Proboscis Monkey Research Station by the Yayasan Sahabat Bekantan Indonesia (SBI) until it is widely recognized by tourists as a natural tourist destination in South Kalimantan.

Various tourist attractions are presented on Curiak Island, namely observing bird life in its natural habitat, observing proboscis monkeys as endemic animals of South Kalimantan, planting mangrove trees or mangrove rambai and research centers. Curiak Island can be reached using a kelotok boat available around the tourist area.

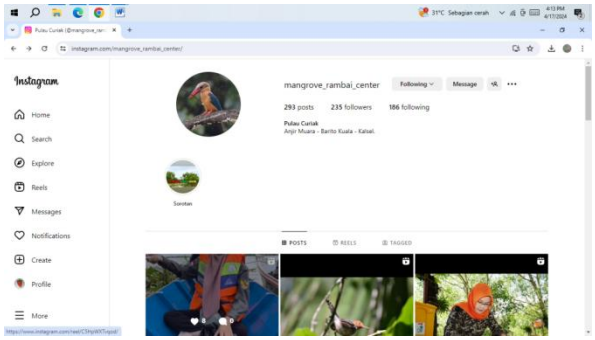

Figure 1 Screenshot of @mangrove_rambai_center Instagram account

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Curiak Island has an Instagram account to promote this nature-based tourism. In addition, online media portals also report a lot about tours that are the original habitat of proboscis monkeys (Bekantan) and also rambai mangroves. Curiak Island has good potential to be further developed and recognized by tourists to foreign countries. Through an Instagram account, the manager of Curiak Island uploads tourist activities and also preserves Rambai Mangrove.

Previous research stated that "The results of the study show that tourism communication in Pulau Pinus and Bukit Batu fulfills the components of tourists, marketers, communication, accessibility, human resources and institutions, capital owners and destinations(Hanief, L. et al. 2023). The media used for promotion through social media instagram, facebook, website and word of mouth marketing. Bukit Batas Tourism is currently unkempt, seen with road access full of weeds. The tourism communication components consist of: tourists, marketers, communications, accessibility, human resources and institutions, capital owners and destinations."

There are several other studies that also discuss related issues. One of them is related to the potential of river tourism in Banjarmasin city(Waluyo, B. D., & Buwono, A. B. C. 2023). The research explains that Banjarmasin has significant tourism potential, especially through the development of river-based tourism villages. The Sahabat Sungai community plays an active role in promoting and managing the river's potential as a tourist destination, as seen in Dua Wajah Village on the Jaruju River, where people are beginning to realize the importance of the river as a source of life. By maintaining the cleanliness and ecosystem of the river, and increasing public awareness, Banjarmasin has the opportunity to become an attractive tourist destination, providing economic benefits and welfare for the communities living around it.

Another paper that discusses similar issues also discusses sustainability in tourism marketing (Font, X., & McCabe, S. 2017). The results show that sustainable marketing can increase consumer awareness about the importance of sustainability in tourism, as well as encourage the adoption of more responsible travel practices. The discussion highlights the challenges faced in integrating sustainability principles into marketing strategies, including the need for consumer education and appropriate product development. Overall, synergies between marketing and sustainability can create added value for the tourism industry and the environment.

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There is also a previous paper that discusses e-marketing in the tourism industry (Labanauskaitė, D., Fiore, M., & Stašys, R. 2020). The paper discusses the use of e-marketing tools in the tourism industry in Lithuania, focusing on effectiveness and tourist preferences. The survey results show that although e-marketing tools are effective, some strategies are still underutilized, such as search engine optimization (SEO) and mobile applications. Travelers' top preferences lie with search engines and reservation systems, indicating the importance of a strong online presence. E-marketing tools have great potential to increase competitiveness in the tourism industry, so improvements in the use of digital marketing strategies, including content updates and technological innovations, are needed. The recommendation for tourism managers is to focus more on SEO and mobile applications to attract more tourists.

There are several fields of tourism communication studies, namely tourism marketing communication, destination branding, tourism communication management, tourism transportation communication, tourism visual communication, tourism group communication, public relations and MICE (meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions) and tourism communication research (Kriyantono, 2012). The tourism marketing communication approach is used to solve this research problem.

Martin Lister states that new media is a term used to mention something about large-scale changes in the production of a medium, meaning that there is media distribution, and the use of media that is technological and conventional culture (Utami, A.H. 2021). There are 13 elements of marketing communication (Bungin, B. 2017, Kriyantono, 2012) namely product, price, place, promotion, people, physical conditions, process, brand, segmentation, service, positioning, sales and target. New media can serve as a medium to promote Curiak Island tourism.

Based on the background above, the author formulates the research problem, which is How is the application of 13 elements in Curiak Island Mangrove Forest tourism marketing communication in increasing community awareness. Then how is Curiak Island Mangrove Forest tourism marketing communication based on new media?

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RESEARCH METHODS

The research approach used is descriptive qualitative. The definition of qualitative is an approach to exploring and understanding the meaning of individuals or groups that come from human and social problems (Creswell, 2014, Bungin, 2021).

Qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data.(Creswell, 2014)

This research was conducted in Curiak Island Mangrove Forest Tourism, Anjir Muara Baru, South Kalimantan. The collection techniques in this study used: interview to informants such as Ferry and Rizki Amalia as founder Sahabat Bekantan Indonesia (SBI), local tourist and Government Tourist Office of Barito Kuala Regency. Literature of books, journals and diares used as secondary data. Documentation is a data collection technique in the form of videos, photos and data from informants' social media that can complement research data. Documentation is a process of collecting data in the form of writing, images and digital. The data analysis technique uses Manual Data Analysis Procedure MDAP through stages, namely (Bungin, 2021):

1. Daily notes: research data collection is carried out by collecting daily notes every day when researchers are sensing in the field. This stage is the beginning of researchers doing theoretical sampling.
2. Transcripts: copies of daily notes obtained from the field, which are made very objectively resembling the circumstances that occurred during data collection. Consists of the content and course of interview conversations, the content and course of discussions, observation data and events that occurred during the interview.
3. Koding: codes in qualitative research are words or short phrases that symbolically summarize, emphasize the message, capture the essence of a portion of the data. Coding is done by giving codes to segments of data.

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4.Categories: categorization can use James P. Spradley's analysis of domain analysis, taxonomy analysis, component analysis and the discovery of cultural themes.

5.Themes: analyzing the text is done by finding themes and subthemes, selecting themes into manageable ones, building a hierarchy of themes and codes, connecting themes into theoretical models.

Memos: memos can help clarify thinking about the research topic, provide a mechanism to articulate the assumptions and subjective perspectives of the research and develop the research design.

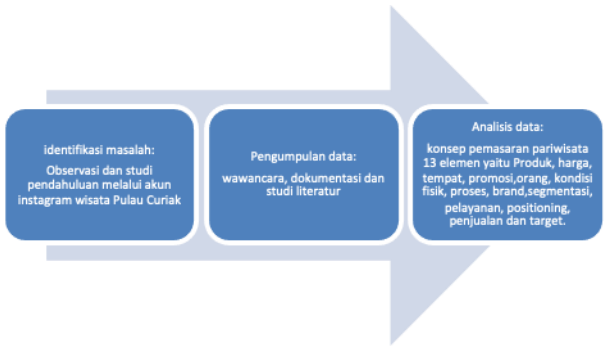

Figure 2 Research flow chart

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of research obtained through interviews and documentation, it is known that Curiak Island was first discovered in 2017. Currently, Curiak Island is divided into a rambai mangrove forest that can be visited by general tourists and the Proboscis Monkey Research Station is managed as a special interest tour, namely for research and conservation schools.

Ferry, one of the founders of the proboscis monkey research station, stated that:

> "In 2017, we found Curiak Island while conducting a proboscis expedition on the Barito River. We saw that this area was very limited in stands and feeding grounds for proboscis monkeys. At that time the proboscis monkey population was 14, now there are 52. In 2018, a proboscis monkey research

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> station was established, including Robert's camp, for the purpose of proboscis monkey conservation, research and sustainable tourism, and special interest ecotourism. 2018 was the beginning. It started with a summer cost for Newcastle Australia university students. Since then, every year we routinely send groups twice. Europe, Germany, Netherlands, Spain, America. Then we opened special interest tourism for the community, but for the general public there is Mangrove Rambai center managed by the general public. This one is for research. This is a restricted area." (interview dated June 9, 2024).

The Bekantan Research Station presents a variety of special interest tourism attractions, namely seeing the life of proboscis monkeys in the wild as a typical fauna of South Kalimantan, bird watching, observation of reptiles and nocturnal fauna.

> "This is a bumper zone area that can observe the activities of proboscis monkeys, they eat, sleep. Bird watching, herving tours but at night they tend to be American or Australian. Reptiles and amphibians, that is also a fairly expensive tour package. Must be accompanied by Sahabat Bekantan Indonesia (SBI). Fauna, glodok / timpakul fish, depending on our ability to sell, apparently timpakul also sells well. There is a group from Japan that likes to observe timpakul fish," (interview dated June 9, 2024).

Figure 3: Tim Roberts' Camp Research

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The threat to the proboscis monkey fauna is the conversion of land into industrial areas. The area around Curiak Island is an industrial area that has the potential to threaten the survival of proboscis monkeys and other flora and fauna if they are not wise in using land.

> "We want to show the world that we can coexist, this is what Mrs. Amel said. One of them is Ms. Amel, her selling point. When they want to meet, they will donate, this is a new thing, if research is done it will be a novelty. With nature preserved, fish can thrive. The local people earn money by fishing, felting, merengge, especially when the water recedes around this area because there is a lot of forest. They have been friendly with the local people since the beginning. The expert is for tourism promotion. This land is owned by the foundation by way of buyback land, by way of donations on the side of the road, selling used clothes at the Blauran market, developing, what we can help then becomes this land 10-11 hectares now but scattered."

Figure 4: Borneo's proboscis monkeys in the wild.

Dewi as the Head of Tourism Development Section of the Tourism, Youth and Sports Office of Barito Kuala Regency said that there are 13 tourist attractions in Barito Kuala. For the mangrove rambai center, Curaik Island is under the management of SBI.

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> "There are 13 tourist attractions in Barito Kuala, such as Curiak Island which is managed by Sahabat Bekantan Indonesia. Bekantan Indonesia, 3 attractions managed by BKSDA namely Shock Island, Kembang Island and Bakut Island, artificial tourism Jejangkit Ecopark, Setara, mangrove rambai center and Abdusamad Dome. Jejangkit Ecopark just had its grand opening on June 8, 2024."

Dewi added that the Barito Kuala Regency Youth, Sports, Culture and Tourism Office does not participate in managing Curiak Island tourism.

> "No, the disporbudpar only monitors tourist visits and most recently facilitated the construction of 2 toilets on Curiak Island."

Afif Fakhri, a visitor from BEM Faculty of Medicine, Lambung Mangkurat University, said he learned about Curiak Island from the Chairperson of the organization he joined, BEM Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences. In addition, Afif also learned about Curiak Island Tourism from Instagram social media.

> "I was from the Muhammadiyah Student Association organization, in that organization there is an Environmental Division and approximately 2 years ago made a visit to Curiak Island. Then I also have a friend who is a member of the Indonesian Proboscis Monkey Friends (SBI). I also happened to be a BEM administrator from the beginning planning to visit here. Besides that, I know from social media Instagram and Ka Amel who often gives material at ULM."

There are 13 elements of marketing communication, namely product, price, place, promotion, people, physical condition, process, brand, segmentation, service, positioning, sales and target. Products in the form of tourist attractions are presented, namely planting mangroves, seeing the life of proboscis monkeys in the wild, research and observation of reptiles and bird watching. Curiak Island Tourism in the Proboscis Monkey Research Station section is a special interest tour so it is intended only for researchers and groups who want to study the life of proboscis

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monkeys. Visitors can make donations in exchange for mangrove seedlings. Promotion of Curiak Island uses social media, namely Instagram, Facebook and YouTube. The person in the marketing communication element in question is Sahabat Bekantan Indonesia, which is part of the manager of the Proboscis Monkey Research Station.

The physical condition of the Proboscis Monkey Research Station is well maintained and has facilities in the form of pavilions, gazebos sponsored by several companies and toilets. The process element, namely marketing communication, is designed by creating attractive marketing messages through social media content so that people know and are interested in the existence of Curiak Island. The brand is Curiak Island, which is a special interest tourist spot and the intended segmentation is researchers and study groups. Services are provided by the manager well, tourists must make reservations in advance. Positioning in the form of Curiak Island being the only proboscis monkey ecotourism typical of Kalimantan fauna. Sales in this context do not make a target because this is a special interest tour. The target is associated with marketing communication, namely so that people are aware of the existence of Curiak Island as a proboscis monkey breeding and participate in protecting the life of proboscis monkeys.

Amalia Rezeki as the founder of Sahabat Bekantan Indonesia said that her party uses social media in the form of Instagram, Facebook and YouTube to promote special interest tourism on Curiak Island. In addition to social media, SBI also uses word of mouth marketing through participation in national and international activities. The use of social media is still less than optimal because the number of followers only reaches 788 in instagram.

Amalia also explained that the Proboscis Monkey Research Station is a special interest tour that is in great demand by researchers from foreign tourists. In addition, domestic tourists can also carry out activities in the form of mangrove planting, see the life of proboscis monkeys in nature and donate by donating mangrove seeds that serve as food for proboscis monkeys.

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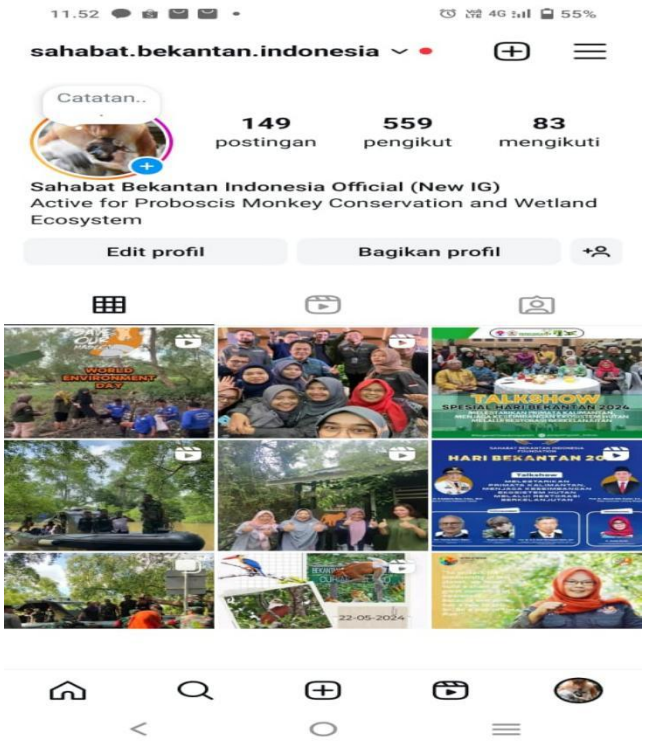

Figure 5 Instagram screenshot of Sahabat Bekantan Indonesia

Discussion

The findings of this study align with existing communication theories, particularly in the context of tourism communication and digital media engagement. Tourism communication involves digital engagement, branding strategies, and audience interaction through various media channels. Curiak Island's use of social media as a marketing tool highlights the effectiveness of new media in tourism communication.

Flew (2008) explains the advantages of new media as a tourismmarketing communication medium are: flexibility and user can acces information anytime, interactivity and participation, ability to create communities, ability to measure effectiveness, relatively low cost, present dynamic content and ability to enhance user experience. In line with the research result of Tanjung, et al (2024) the role of social media platform in promoting tourism in Central Tapanuli has very significat, especially in creating attractive and potentially viral tourist spot on instagram. The

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tourism office said the importance of utilizing social media as an integral part of their digital marketing strategy. Curiak Island tourism manager can optimize promotion by creative content of instagram, facebook and YouTube. The new media can reach many people to interest for visiting Curiak Island and grow awareness to save Bekantan and their ecosystem.

The study emphasizing that digital engagement fosters long-term relationships between the destination and its visitors. The direct interaction between the Curiak Island management and potential tourists via social media strengthens brand loyalty and enhances visitor experiences. Overall, the findings demonstrate that strategic tourism communication using new media significantly contributes to increasing tourist awareness and engagement. Future research could explore the impact of influencer collaborations and virtual reality (VR) tourism experiences in enhancing eco-tourism appeal.

CONCLUSION

The Proboscis Monkey Research Station, which is part of Curiak Island, is a special interest attraction. Tourists can learn and research related to proboscis monkeys, reptiles and birds. Curiak Island's marketing communications utilize social media, namely Instagram, Facebook and YouTube to increase public awareness. Amalia Rezeki as one of the founders plays an important role in introducing the Curiak Island Proboscis Monkey Research Station internationally through events she participates in with word of mouth marketing.

The government, community, community and NGOs that love the proboscis monkey fauna can collaborate in promoting Curiak Island through events that are participated in at the national and international levels. Proboscis monkeys as a typical Kalimantan fauna that is protected should be preserved by all parties. This study contributes to the discourse on digital tourism marketing and provides practical insights for ecotourism stakeholders. Future research should explore comparative case studies to identify best practices in digital tourism promotion.

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