Social Media as A Strategic Communication Tool in The Development and Promotion of Ecotourism (The Case of a Small and Medium Ecotourism Enterprise in Pangalengan, West Java)

Media Sosial sebagai Sarana Komunikasi Strategis dalam Pengembangan dan Promosi Ekowisata (Studi Kasus UKM Ekowisata di Pengalengan, Jawa Barat)

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the role of social media as a strategic communication tool in developing and promoting ecotourism enterprise. The research was conducted by studying five social media used by Ecoethno Leadcampsite, an ecoturism site located in Pengalengan, West Java runned by a Small and Medium Enterprise (SME). This study assesses how social media is used to strengthen the visibility of these destinations, facilitate engagement with tourists, and promote sustainable tourism practices. The research findings show that not all social media are used effectively, and they tend to highlight certain aspects of strategic communication, including tourism activities, resource utilization, and environmental orientation. Strategic communication aspects of travel expenses, timetables, and customer care are relatively not covered in the marketing communications messages. Insights from this research have implications for tourism stakeholders, policymakers, and society in general, demonstrating the need for a paradigm shift towards integrated use of digital technology to promote and build sustainable ecotourism.

Keywords: communication, development, ecotourism, promotion, rural

INTRODUCTION

In the era of digital connectivity, social media platforms have emerged as a powerful strategic engagement and communication tool. It is broad reach and interactive nature that presents a unique opportunity to promote various sectors, including ecotourism. Ecotourism combines environmental aspects, cultural awareness, and empowering local communities to achieve sustainable tourism development (Sri Wahyuni et al., 2023). Activities that are considered part of ecotourism include (Riadhussyah et al., 2021): 1) visiting natural tourist objects; 2) minimizing the impact on the environment; 3) respecting local culture; 4) encouraging environmental concern; 5) providing local communities with financial impact and empowerment; 6) generating direct economic benefits; and 7) supporting human rights and democracy movements in economic development.

At this time, the management of ecotourism destinations has developed by involving Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). They manage ecotourism destinations using equity participation, shares, and buying or renting tourism areas. SMEs have a significant and strategic role in national development in economic growth and employment; besides that, SMEs have also proven to be more resilient to economic crises. Even so, several obstacles are owned by SMEs, namely regarding access to capital and human resources. These constraints ultimately force SMEs to maintain their existence cheaply, including simple promotional activities and marketing communications.

Ecoethno Leadcampsite is a camping ground-based tourist spot SME in Pangalengan, Bandung Regency, West Java Province, established in 1997. The tourism concept developed is the development of leadership aspects, such as understanding self, getting along with others, communication, managing the organization, working in a group, learning to learn, and making decision processes. The media used is nature in the form of hills, lakes, and forests with the guidance of facilitators and psychologists. Ecoethno Leadcampsite is one of the ecotourism destinations that has survived the COVID-19 pandemic by developing marketing communications in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology through the Independent Campus Learning Program (MBKM) in 2021-2022 (Ahmadi et al., 2023).

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a very negative impact on Indonesian tourism growth. Tourist visits fell by -89.22 percent in August 2020 compared to August 2019 (Anggarini, 2021), resulting in a 20.7 billion IDR drop in state revenue from the tourism sector. Many tourism services have seen a reduction in income of up to 50 percent to 80 percent due to the decline and low level of visits (Nugraha, 2021; Priyanto et al., 2021). Some have even encountered bankruptcy (Naziri & Rafikasari, 2021). The remaining tourist services need to figure out how to stay in business and turn a little profit. Using social media to boost visitor interaction is one of their tactics.

Since 2022, there has been a significant increase in tourist arrivals. Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) data shows that 2022 foreign tourist visits reached 5.47 million, an increase of 251.28 percent compared to the number of foreign tourist visits in 2021. Until March 2023, tourist visits to Indonesia reached 809.96 thousand visits. There will likely be an increase in foreign tourist arrivals again, considering that the World Health Organization (WHO) has revoked the COVID-19 emergency status globally.

The growth of ecotourism is closely related to the growth of tourism. The number of tourists visiting the Ecoethno Leadcampsite has recently varied (Ahmadi et al., 2023). There were 751 visits in 2018, which increased to 831 visits in 2019. During the peak period of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a decrease with only 38 visits, which increased to 242 visits in 2021, and 563 visits in 2022.

Ecoethno Leadcampsite's success in surviving the COVID-19 pandemic era was also influenced by its social media presence. In 2022, Ecoethno Leadcampsite will be quite active in updating its social media. They have at least six social media and one website.

The growth of ecotourism in Indonesia is currently quite good because it is associated with increasing public awareness regarding the sustainability of the natural environment and cultural experiences. Nonetheless, the rich tourism potentials in rural areas are often not well represented due to a lack of promotion and marketing targeting potential tourists.

For ecotourism businesses, social media is an effective strategic communication tool, especially in boosting visitor involvement. Travelers can use technology, have meaningful interactions with other people, and share stories (Gretzel et al., 2006). By recounting stories about their experiences, travelers may remember them and find significance in them (Gretzel et al., 2006). Travelers can now comment

on the promises made by the tourism provider and share their experiences using some media platforms, including social media (Buhalis & Inversini, 2014).
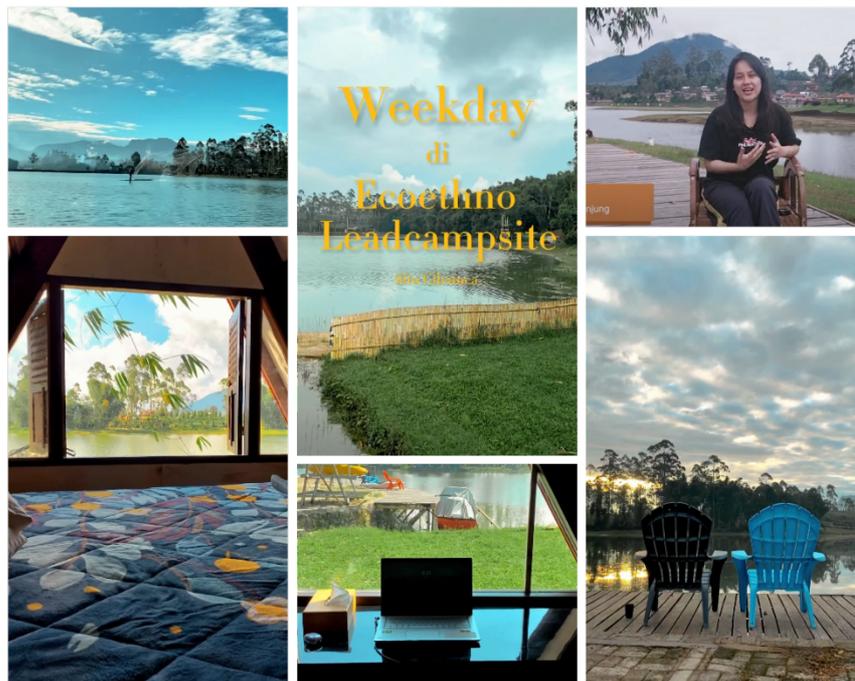

Figure 1. SMEs Ecotourism Social Media Screenshot
Source: Researcher Documentation

A theoretical and conceptual understanding of social media becomes important in developing and promoting rural ecotourism in Indonesia (Du Plessis & Satar, 2020). According to Ngai et al. (2015), the enormous potential for social media to support ecotourism initiatives lies in its function as a dynamic interaction platform. The "Social Media Engagement Theory" provides in-depth insight into users' interaction, participation, and emotional engagement of users (Di Gangi & Wasko, 2016). This theory was developed in order to gain a better understanding of how individuals interact and engage with social media. Furthermore, philosophical approaches such as dialectical materialism, postmodernism, feminism, and constructivism provide a variety of perspectives on the function of social media and its influence (Qi et al., 2018). The selection of appropriate research methods, including quantitative and qualitative approaches, as well as ethical considerations, need to be taken into account based on the research objectives and specific contexts (Du Plessis & Satar, 2020). Understanding how information and influence spread and how they can shape the behavior and attitudes of users is helpful (Liu et al., 2017). When developing effective communication and marketing strategies for ecotourism in Indonesia, this overarching framework and set of theories may prove to be essential components.

Social media can be for personal and professional use (Freberg, 2019). It is frequently observed how a group uses it for the community with whom it interacts, but often overlook how this is seen from other viewpoints. Social media need a balance that enables the company to engage with people and produce content that informs and educates its audiences. To avoid coming across as a robot, the company should be personal enough. It is crucial to use social media carefully and successfully based on the needs and expectations in the field because there is a thin line separating these two realms.

Choosing the right platforms for your role comes down to a few factors. First, companies don't have to be on every social media platform. Yet, like all reports on social media, once content is published, it is outdated and has not accounted for other mobile-based platforms gaining traction within the community and society. To choose a particular platform, a social media professional must consider several factors, such as audiences, purpose, business relationships, business personality, content, business innovativeness, media analytics, and business action (Freberg, 2019).

Audience consideration, for example, refers to the company's audience profile. The company must make sure about the character of each individual and their conversation on the company's social media. Other things that can be researched through social media can be done based on the number of "likes" and "shares" or the videos they watch.

The distinctive features of social media are referred to as social media purposes. Companies must comprehend the characteristics of each social media platform they employ, whether it is for news gathering, producing original content, providing customer service, sharing negative experiences or handling crises, sharing and creating stories, or launching a call to action to boost revenue, bolster reputation, and build on an existing community.

Systematic treatment as part of strategic communication in private companies was first written by Igor Ansoff (Joyce, 2015). The main concepts are objectives, strategy (discussed in terms of choice of product-market scope, growth, synergy, and competitive advantage), and capabilities. Ansoff sees strategy as moving a firm from its present position to the position defined by its strategic objectives. It was difficult to set objectives and goals for the firm without considering the environment, so managers may set objectives initially and later decide that they needed revisions in light of environmental information. Objectives need to be revised after an appraisal of the firm's resources. In summary, setting objectives did not occur only once and at one moment, and the strategy formulation process did not necessarily follow a simple linear sequence.

Researchers have carried out several previous studies regarding ecotourism marketing communications. For example, studies on the use of social media and the potential for changing the relationship between ecotourism and the natural environment (Cheng et al., 2017), ecotourism attributes in social media (Go et al., 2020), the role of social media in promoting sustainable tourism (Chatterjee & Dsilva, 2021), and the role of government in promoting ecotourism (Rawali & Ramadhani, 2021). The novelty of this research is in deepening strategic communication as an integral aspect of promoting ecotourism via social media so that the promotion can be sustainable and increase regenerative tourism.

The main question of this research is regarding the implementation of strategic communication in developing and promoting ecotourism through social media. How does Ecoethno Leadcampsite SMEs construct social media messages in developing resources and promoting its tourist attraction? What strategic communication aspects stand out in the social media campaign? Why does Ecoethno Leadcampsite SMEs highlight this strategic communication aspect?

Through this research, we hope to provide valuable insights for stakeholders in the tourism sector, policymakers, and rural communities. These findings will encourage a paradigm shift towards integrating digital technologies for promoting sustainable rural development and ecotourism, particularly in regions like Indonesia that offer immense yet untapped potential.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative text analysis method on Ecoethno Leadcampsite SMEs social media content. Some research literature generally uses this method to study advertisements (Runtiko, 2011, 2013), movies (Sihite et al., 2021), newspaper news (Cohen et al., 2019), and even nursing studies (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

The approach used in this study is a qualitative content analysis method. It was chosen to understand the product or media content and relate it to the social context of the message (Kriyantono, 2006). The research data sources are the last ten active social media content posts, including Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. In addition, there are additional data sources, namely data from interviews with MBKM apprentice students and secondary sources from online on the Linktree website.

The social media accounts studied were: (1) an Instagram account with the address @ecoethno.leadcampsite; (2) Twitter account with the address @ecoethno; (3) TikTok account with the address @ecoethno_leadership; (4) Facebook account with the address ecoethno.leadcampsite; and (5) a YouTube account with the "ecoethno center" address. Supporting data addresses are obtained from the Linktree website at https://linktr.ee/ecoethno.leadcampsite. This address also replaces the campinggroundbandung.com website, which is currently observed to be no longer active.

This research was conducted during July-September 2023 on the last ten social media posts from Ecoethno Leadcampsite. Each social media has differences in its updating period. Some social media last updated their content several months ago due to the need for more human resources. Social media managers ultimately have to prioritize social media, producing more effective engagement.

The researcher then developed a coding-like technique based on the categorization of strategic communication's advantages as described by Berry & Wechsler (1995), Flynn & Talbot (1996), and

Freberg (2019), in a survey of various leaders of nonprofit and for-profit enterprises. To build a general grasp of something, the material is organized into chunks or segments of text and written words or phrases into segments (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). Here are the coding points:

Table 1. Research Coding Points

Coding points	Description
1. Travel expenses	Post on social media explaining expenses incurred on the trip and while at the location.
2. Resource utilization	Social media posts utilize and optimize natural and human resources owned by ecotourism sites.
3. Environmental orientation	Messages on social media are oriented toward nature conservation or loving nature.
4. Tourism activities	Explain tourism activities carried out correctly and in detail.
5. New activity idea	Social media posts offer new things that have never been thought of and are unique for tourists.
6. Visually attractive	Posted messages are visually appealing (composition, color, angle, etc.)
7. Persuasive sentence	Social media posts have words that invitation to do or not do something that benefits the company or the environment.
8. Caption or complete information	Social media posts have complete complementary information.
9. Brand voice	There is a unique brand projection conveyed through messages.
10. Client in Focus	Address the audience and make them the main focus of the message.
11. Calendar or timetable	There are exact travel times and detailed schedules.
12. Address and customer care	There are addresses or actual numbers that can be saved in unwanted situations.
13. Media optimization	Social media posts optimize the media used.
14. Person in charge	There are names of people who can be contacted if something is needed or something unpleasant happens.

After open coding, the category lists are grouped again under higher headings. The purpose of categorizing is to describe the phenomenon, increase understanding, and generate knowledge. To guarantee the objectivity of the data, the researcher must also triangulate the data. Triangulation is a data validity checking technique that utilizes something other than the data for checking purposes or as a data comparison. The most widely used triangulation technique is through other sources (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). The last is to make a descriptive report on the research findings, including quoting a statement if necessary.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Practitioners create communication tools during a company campaign. Websites, blogs, podcasts, tweets, infographics, videos, displays, emails, publications (such as regular newsletters posted online or occasionally in hard copy), meetings, media releases, posters, speeches, annual reports, staff meetings, face-to-face meetings with target audiences, and special events are all examples of what the target publics see or experience. These resources support achieving strategic goals (Mahoney, 2023).

Technology has significantly changed stakeholder behavior over the last ten years, impacting how companies assess strategic communication's efficacy. Traditional approaches can still be employed, but the development of data collection technologies has given professionals a new tool to measure communication efficacy.

Strategic communication experts from around the world gathered in Barcelona, Spain, in 2010 to discuss significant changes in communication and technology and to find new and improved approaches to assess the efficacy of strategic communication (Holtzhausen et al., 2021). For many years, traditional metrics like media reach and frequency, advertising value equivalency (AVE), and other metrics were the main ways to gauge the success of communications. To evaluate more effectively and uniformly across the industry, practitioners created The Barcelona Principles after realizing that the strategic communication sector needed improved measuring procedures. These principles served as a framework for measurement in strategic communication and were updated in 2015.

One of the important principles in The Barcelona Principles is to measure social media consistently. Social media is always evolving; what's popular now could not have been around several months ago. Being consistent in your social media measurement is crucial as a result. Social media measurement involves more than merely tallying likes, shares, and engagements.

Social media frequently focuses on the related community to a certain topic. A company's unfavorable post can do a great deal of damage to a firm. A positive post, however, can result in favorable press. The secret is to monitor negative behavior and change attitudes through interpersonal connections. Social media must be continually evaluated because it is constantly in a company's life.

Research Description

Research on the Ecoethno Leadcampsite SMEs started with the MBKM collaboration, which involved students doing internships for six months in 2022 at the ecotourism site. The research team then became involved as field supervisors. The focus of MBKM activities at the Ecoethno Leadcampsite is to assist in the marketing process for ecotourism locations during the COVID-19 pandemic, which decreased the number of tourist visits.

Ecoethno Leadcampsite presents the concept of private camp tourism, favored by urban tourists who want to take a vacation and get soul healing. This tourist location is in the highlands with cool and beautiful air, which will be an additional tourist attraction. Ecoethno Leadcampsite also utilizes social media as a strategic communication tool to develop and promote tourist attractions.

Ecoethno Leadcampsite is not optimal in using social media as a marketing tool for its tourist attraction. As explained by one of the interns:

"...Ecoethno's party still follows their old concept and doesn't keep up with the times, such as tourism needs, self-actualization on social media, for example, the lack of photo spots at Ecoethno."

Based on observations of the official social media used by Ecoethno Leadcampsite, some posts appear to be under-updated. One of the social media that is still widely used by Ecoethno Leadcampsite is Instagram. The following is a post on Instagram regarding the event held in May 2023.

Meanwhile, other social media seem less managed. Even the official website, which was previously used as one of the primary sources of information regarding events and costs for tourist visits at Ecoethno Leadcampsite, is no longer accessible. It seems to be related to the character of Indonesians, who tend to prefer information that is disseminated through displays that are mobile and easily accessible, as well

Figure 2. Instagram Post about Kayak Event 2023
Source: Researcher Documentation

as more interactive media, such as Instagram. The technical aspects of ease of management and low cost may be part of Ecoethno Leadcampsite's considerations in choosing social media over websites. Considering that visits to these tourist objects are still in a micro context.

Instagram: Always Updated

One of the most widely used social media platforms in Indonesia is Instagram. The rationale is that this platform prioritizes visual components over text. Comparatively speaking to other social media, Instagram is also quite user-friendly. In addition, the platform offers some entertaining services to its customers.

As of October 2022, there were 97.38 million Instagram users in Indonesia, according to data from Napoleon Cat. With 91.01 million users, this number climbed by 7% compared to the prior year. However, from the 101.3 million accounts the previous month, Instagram users in Indonesia declined by 3.89 percent. According to previous research, Instagram is dominated by teenagers, with middle to high education levels, and those not yet married (Susilo, 2018).

We Are Social keeps track of Instagram usage, which reached 93.6 million users in Indonesia in October 2022. The fourth-largest number on the entire planet is this one. With 248.65 million Instagram users, India tops the list. The United States and Brazil follow, each having 147.45 million Instagram users, while Brazil follows with 117.3 million accounts (Rizaty, 2022).

Ecoethno Leadcampsite actively posts on Instagram and at least have 489 posts and 2383 followers. The last post was uploaded on May 28, 2023, so the owner constantly updates this social media. One of the MBKM intern students talked about social media, which the owner of Ecoethno Leadcampsite actively manages.

"However, the social media that remain active until now are only WhatsApp and Instagram; other social media are only active when there are interns." (Irga, 24/07/2022).

So, the selection of Instagram (and WhatsApp) as social media that is actively managed is based on considerations of the manager's preferences, time efficiency, and human resources owned by ecotourism. Table 2 is the last ten Instagram posts studied.

Table 2. Last Ten Instagram Posts at SMEs Account

No.	Instagram Posts	Date
1	@defajarfamily	01-05-2023
2	Bani Umaran	03-05-2023
3	Barbeque Night	07-05-2023
4	Fun Kayak Camp 2023 Poster	08-05-2023
5	Sebelum Dateng Tamu	12-05-2023
6	Botram at Lake	15-05-2023
7	Anak Sungai	21-05-2023
8	Fun Kayak Camp 2023 Video	22-05-2023
9	Foto Tengah Danau	27-05-2023
10	Morning Vibes	28-05-2023

The Instagram account managed by Ecoethno Leadcampsite is filled with photos and short videos, although more short videos are posted. The choice of language in the Captions accompanying each photo or video is also adjusted to the target audience of Instagram. According to (Ahlgren, 2023), 446.4 million Instagram users are aged 18 to 24, the largest user demographic, accounting for 31.2% of the total audience. In addition, 70% of Instagram users are under 35 years old. Only 2.3% are over 65 years old.

There is no doubt that Instagram is a top-rated social media platform. It currently ranks fourth on the list, with an incredible 1.28 billion monthly active users, and is expected to reach around $40 billion in annual ad sales by 2023. The shift in the trend of posting on Instagram has occurred throughout 2022, from stills and starting towards "reels". This short video is Instagram's attempt to start competing with TikTok (Kemp, 2023).

The findings on the last ten Ecoethno Leadcampsite Instagram posts show that the highest average in coding is found in the Tourism activity category (15.9), Media optimization (15.1), and Environmental

orientation (14.2). Tourism activity in the high sort is under the character of Instagram as a medium for displaying daily ecotourism activities. Ahlgren (2023) states that around 70% of Instagram users watch video content on Stories daily. Media optimization categorization, which is relatively high, shows that Ecoethno Leadcampsite can take advantage of the advantages of Instagram's character to greet a younger audience and introduce environmental orientation around ecotourism locations.

The lowest categorization in research findings is Travel expenses (8). Ecoethno Leadcampsite only sometimes mentions the costs that tourists in tourism activities must incur in detail. They want to put their business into an 'elegant' image so that it doesn't show the amount of money tourists must spend or related to price fluctuations. Ecoethno Leadcampsite also thinks that tourism financing issues have been delegated to other social media (Linktree) or negotiated via telephone or WhatsApp, which are more flexible.

"...the use of media should be increased again because it's not enough to just rely on Instagram social media...." (Tasya, 16/08/2022)
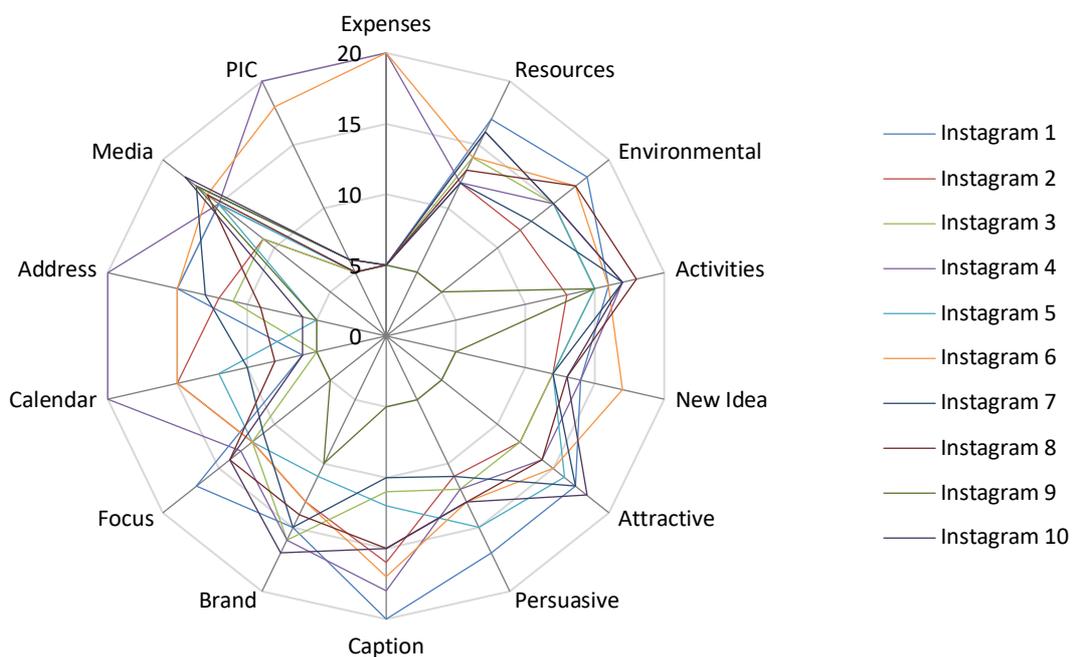

Figure 3. Instagram Posts by Coding Categories

Instagram characters that highlight visual aesthetics are favored by marketers for producing content that increases brand engagement. Information loaded with visual aesthetics becomes a reality in the virtual world, encouraging the audience's desire to engage more intensively with the communicator. Wohn & Bowe (2014) refer to the intention of engaging social media audiences intensively with communicators as "crystallization."

"Crystallization" describes the information flow process and reality formation in the social media era. The assumption is that individuals have a fundamental psychological desire to create a shared reality with others considered in-groups. Individuals' online social networks will help them curate the vast amount of information generated by various media sources, including social media and personal connections of individuals. These individuals will also develop attitudes about the cognitive and affective attributes of the information presented. This process leads the individual to the development of objective and subjective reality.

Information and attitudes are assumed to be small molecules, forming groups based on specific similarities and forming "crystals" of reality in the human mind. Human perception of reality, then, will depend on the information it receives and its attitude toward that information. Social media users often receive information through online social networks, which are accompanied by preferences for the attitude of the online information provider. Through a process that is not simple, reality is formed in the minds of individuals as social media audiences.

The audience solidly internalizes brand marketing campaigns through Instagram visual aesthetic posts. In the context of ecotourism SME marketing, audiences can feel more interested in the situation of tourist sites after watching the video reels on Instagram or reading the comments and reviews of other visitors. Audiences can also find out the main facilities owned by ecotourism MSMEs and the events being held, such as barbeque facilities, the convenience of an outdoor family gathering place, and kayaking competition events.

Twitter: Link to Other Social Media

Twitter has gone through several changes since being acquired by Elon Musk. For example, a blue tick account that previously indicated legal ownership can now be obtained by paying a monthly fee of $8 to $11. Furthermore, there are gold and silver check accounts and statistical metrics, which means every tweet now has the number of replies, likes, retweets, bookmarks, and views attached. Users who purchase blue ticks can post up to 10000 characters instead of only 280 characters (Moon, 2023). Twitter's new facility encourages the passion of its users; so far, it is used by 60.2 percent of social media users and ranks sixth in social media in Indonesia (Anonymous, 2023).

Ecoethno Leadcampsite SMEs is not making optimal use of Twitter. The advantages of Twitter are its ability to accommodate narration or captions and its higher level of interactivity compared to other social media. Twitter can also accommodate short videos and pictures like other social media. Ecoethno Leadcampsite chooses Twitter as a social media feeder, which directs its readers to other social media, such as Instagram.

Figure 4. Twitter Link to Instagram

Twitter tends to be used by Ecoethno Leadcampsite as a linked feeder for other social media, making the research coding categorization less meaningful. In the end, the character of the Ecoethno Leadcampsite Twitter account became similar to Instagram. In theory, posts on Twitter should be different from Instagram, as they are more text-based than image-based. The lack of human resources at Ecoethno Leadcampsite makes social media less well-handled.
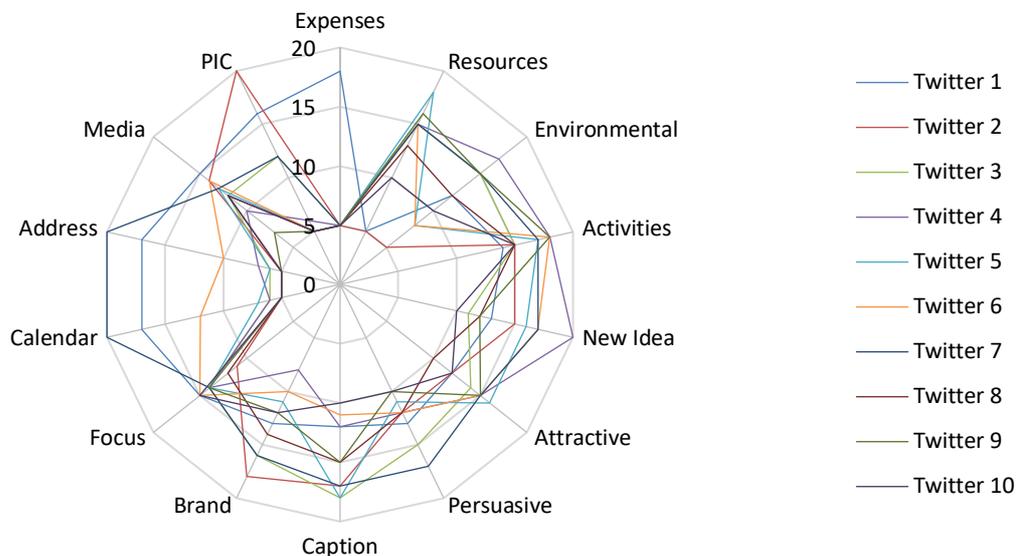

Figure 5. Twitter Posts by Coding Category

At present, the character of engagement with brands that carry out marketing communications via Twitter is unpredictable. Since being purchased by Elon Musk, many Twitter policies have changed. Recently, Twitter even carried out a significant rebranding and changed its name to brand X. This rebranding was also accompanied by several new policies that were quite controversial, one of which was a plan to remove the blocking feature for audiences.

The Twitter plan to remove the blocking feature could hinder the crystallization process due to the audience's massive negative comments about the brand. Wohn and Bowe (2014) stated that one of the assumptions of crystallization is that a person's access to information will be determined by his communication pattern with the source of that information. In other words, if the communication pattern tends to be negative, crystallization will be challenging to form.

The text-based character of Twitter ultimately forces the audience to prefer reading posts to seeing or watching. Audiences tend to be more interested in seeing other audiences' comments than watching or viewing content created by creators. Ecotourism SMEs rely heavily on visual aspects and will face quite a challenge in developing their marketing campaigns via Twitter. One way to answer this challenge is to make Twitter a social media link feeder.

TikTok: Future Potential

Regarding bringing in organic traffic, TikTok is the best because its users' engagement and growth rates are very high compared to other social media. The demographics of active Indonesian TikTok users, among others, are more dominated by women, as much as 63.5%, and the number is 109.9 users (39.8% of the population).

Even though it is known for its Gen Z platform, the fact is that in Indonesia, in total, this platform is mainly used by adults over 25 years old (25 - 55+). - 24 years old, still the most users on this platform. Also, from a gender perspective, women are more active on this platform than men. 83% of users are 19-34 years (Anonymous, 2023).

In the future, TikTok will further develop in Indonesia, as seen from the emergence of adult domination on this platform, which will make TikTok a platform that reaches all people (not just Gen Z). Of course, this fact will affect "commercialization" because more and more brands will be promoting, placing paid advertisements, and increasing their brand awareness on this platform.

Ecoethno Leadcampsite makes TikTok a relatively updated social media. The content displayed on the official account also differs from other social media due to the potential for TikTok, which may multiply.

Considering that TikTok's character tends to lead to comedy, it is quite natural that the highest average categorization is Tourism activities (16.2) and Brand voice (15.7). According to Kemp (2023), users must pay attention to trends to win the TikTok algorithm. TikTok is a platform full of light entertainment content, so overly commercial content is frowned upon by audiences. TikTok is a platform built on a community, so it needs to prioritize aspects of "mutual enjoyment" for its users, aspects of entertainment that do not disturb other users and can promote business.

Social media researchers believe that each social media has different characteristics so that its users use it differently. Users generally know that Twitter is used to write short text messages, while Facebook is used to post long text messages combined with pictures. Instagram presents aesthetic images, while TikTok focuses more on short videos (Wawrzuta et al., 2022). Thus, the user "crystallization" process occurs differently, depending on their social media.

Wohn dan Bowe (2014) explains the different dynamics of the Internet in accommodating the user's "crystallization" process. These differences are driven by different algorithms for each website. Social media also has different algorithms for displaying the most recommended messages. TikTok has FYP or "For Your Page" as a marker for a video corresponding to the user's search pattern. According to Pasanen et al. (2019), this recommendation video creates a potential intention to visit the tourist destinations contained in the video. The effort that communicators can make on TikTok is to use hashtags that match the target audience's interests.
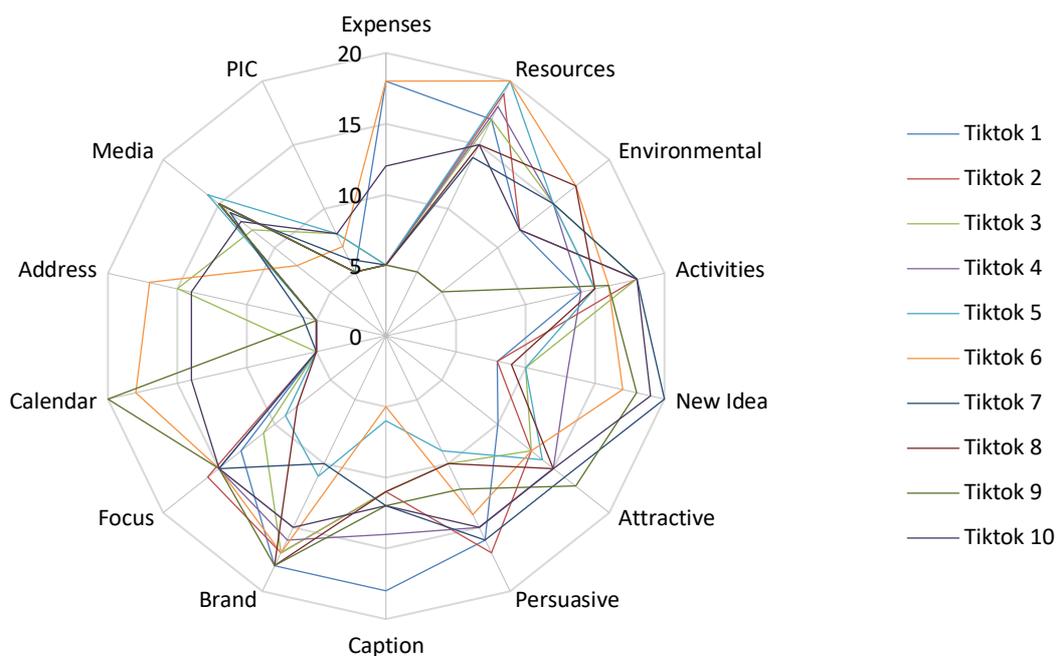
Figure 6. TikTok Posts by Coding Category

Efforts to post ecotourism marketing campaigns in FYP on TikTok are significant because TikTok has a big role in shaping the image of a destination, changing tourist behavior, and influencing tourist perceptions (Du et al., 2022). One of these posts could help "crystallize" the tourist attraction in user perception (Wohn & Bowe, 2014).

Facebook: Slowly Descending

The number of Facebook users in Indonesia has decreased, switching to other social media along with the increasing penetration of these other social media. Based on data from Napoleon Cat, the number of Facebook users in Indonesia was 178.7 million accounts in December 2022. This number decreased by 0.17% compared to the previous month, reaching 179 million users. Compared to the same period the previous year, the number of Facebook users in Indonesia decreased by 4.95%. In December 2021, the number of Facebook users in Indonesia reached 188 million (Sadya, 2023). According to Susilo (2018), the segmentation of Facebook users is that they are adults, highly educated, and already married. So the decline in Facebook users is also affected by users' aging.

Ecoethno Leadcampsite is not active enough in managing Facebook's social media. It can be seen from the results of observations in the last post when a Kayakers event was held on May 23, 2023. In contrast, the previous post was made in 2022.

Table 3. Last Five Facebook Posts by Ecoethno Leadcampsite SME

No	Facebook Posts	Date
1	Gathering kayakers di campsite	23-05-2023
2	Bermain kayak di Situ Cileunca	20-12-2022
3	Waktu paling menyenangkan	16-12-2022
4	Ragam wisata petik	16-12-2022
5	Mentari pagi	14-12-2022

The message characteristics with the content of tourism activities (15.8) are the highest category values posted by Ecoethno Leadcampsite. Like other social media managed by ecotourism, Facebook is trying to invite the audience to share the traveling experience. The marketing strategy carried out by Ecoethno Leadcampsite can be categorized as soft selling. Audiences are not directly given a specific price but are invited to experience the benefits of doing ecotourism activities.
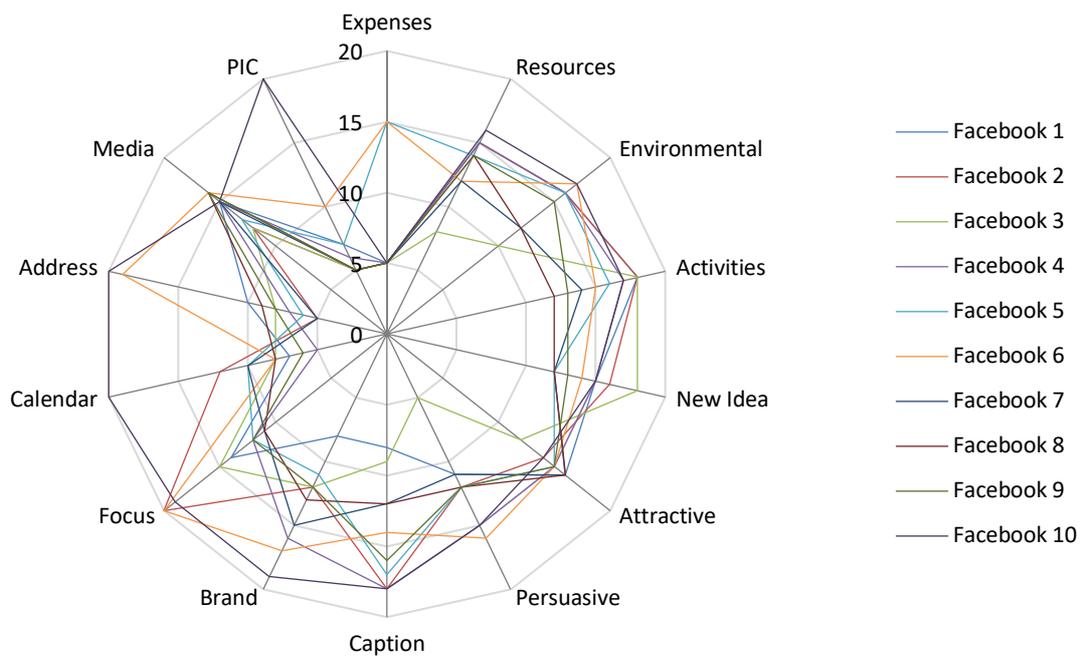
Figure 7. Facebook Posts by Coding Category

Facebook's declining popularity may be related to the aging age of users. However, the transformation of Facebook as a place to buy and sell is a consideration for marketing practitioners to carry out marketing activities. At least Facebook has several advantages, including the availability of information such as age, user location, and preferences and a feedback feature on the products being sold (Piranda et al., 2022).

The group feature on Facebook is a good marketing choice, with a quota of up to hundreds of thousands of members. The circle of friends, thus, opens up wide, bringing together users from different locations with the same interests. The crystallization process of the same interest can be fostered through the features of this group. These groups are usually made based on similar hobbies or needs, not by marketers. Ecotourism marketers should enter the group and sell their products based on the topic of conversation. Entering the Facebook group is essential, following the assumption that the crystallization process will be moderated by the attributes of individual social networks and individual attributes (Wohn & Bowe, 2014).

However, the age structure of Facebook users is the oldest among other social media users discussed in this paper (Wawrzuta et al., 2022), so it is necessary to pay attention to marketing regarding the marketing campaigns appropriate for this age segment – for example, the tendency for long and detailed Facebook user comments. Also, an algorithm does not seem to push messages into everyone's homepage, so ecotourism marketers must know which communities to join.

YouTube: Explain Everything

YouTube offers anything from children's amusement to specialized video dissertations. Nevertheless, it was not always this way. This video-sharing website has developed into a content behemoth over the years. Moreover, this expansion has impacted our entertainment habits as well as the lifestyles of YouTube stars.

YouTube is one social media that has survived and has increased its users. In April 2023, YouTube users reached 34.63% of social media users, up from 21.4% in April 2022 (Kemp, 2023).

Almost all videos about everything are on YouTube. Just imagine, according to data, over 500 hours of video are uploaded to YouTube every minute. There are over 51 million YouTube Channels (Flynn, 2023). It is a shame that Ecoethno Leadcampsite did not update its YouTube profile, where it last posted in 2022. Technical constraints in editing videos and inadequate human resources were obstacles.

The media has a crucial role in shaping the perception of a tourist location. There are currently numerous sorts of social media. There are numerous social media platforms with perks, such as Facebook for

sharing personal or business-related information, Twitter for sharing the most recent news, Pinterest for recipes and images, Instagram for our photographs, and YouTube for long-duration videos. The influence of information technology on the growth of Indonesian tourism is undoubtedly successful. The availability of social media facilitates the dissemination of information in multiple formats, such as text, photos, and videos.

Along with the rise of various social media in recent years, it appears that behavior and tour satisfaction have also been affected. Prior to a few decades ago, a traveler would actually take the time to explore the tourist attraction's attractions. Now, a traveler will devote more time to taking pictures and videos, and since more people use social media, YouTube is no exception. Similarly, when traveler utilities are recorded at a popular location and uploaded on YouTube, the level of enjoyment experienced will be greater, especially if the video garnered numerous good comments.

Table 4. Last Five YouTube Posts by Ecoethno Leadcampsite

No	YouTube Posts	Date
1	Testimoni Pengunjung Ecoethno Leadcampsite	16-12-2022
2	After Movie Ngariung	11-12-2022
3	After Movie EduCamp	3-12-2022
4	Pengalengan Lake House	1-02-2022
5	Pengalengan Lake Cottage	01-02-2022

What can marketers get from YouTube? Market potential with the fact that 51% of YouTube viewers say they rely on YouTube videos to learn to do something new. 90% of consumers discover new brands or products through YouTube (Anonymous, 2023).

Channels that contain entertainment, such as shows about travel, also have the potential to be seen by more people. Based on facts, eight of the ten largest YouTube channels worldwide are about entertainment. Likewise, the largest YouTube channels in Indonesia contain entertainment, not information (Flynn, 2023).

The highest coding categorization research findings using YouTube by Ecoethno Leadcampsite are Tourism activities (15.2) and Brand voice (14.7). Ecoethno Leadcampsite uses YouTube as a strategic communication medium to establish long-term relationships with visitors.

Weaknesses that must be fixed in the Ecoethno Leadcampsite YouTube account are consistency, theme novelty, and videography techniques. Several intern student informants said the owner dominated the Ecoethno Leadcampsite social media admin, which seemed unprofessional.
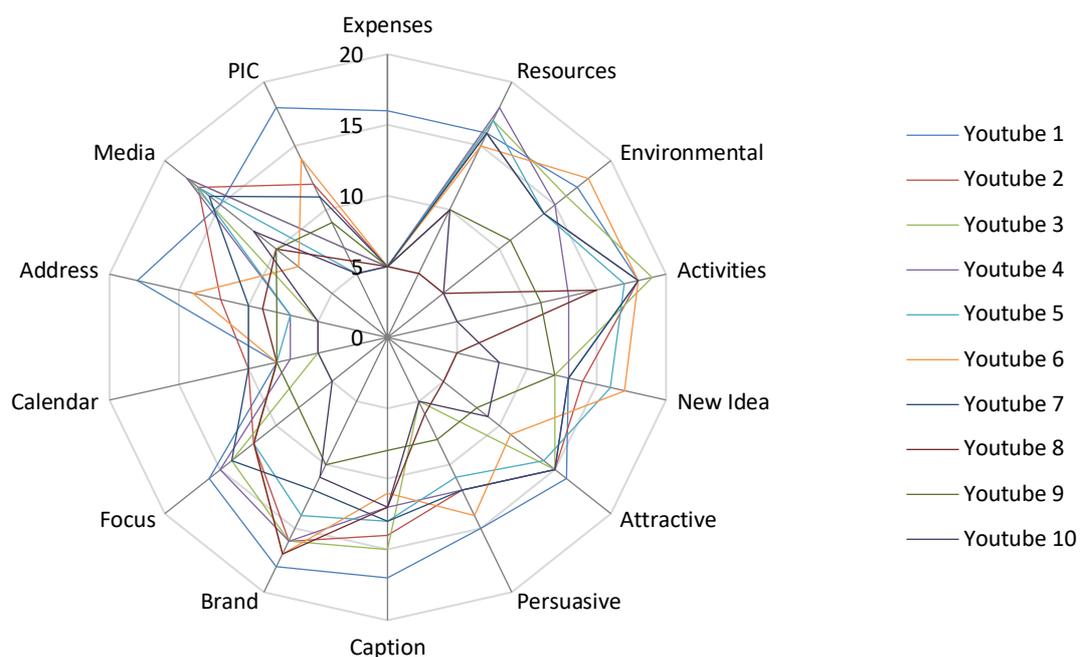

Figure 8. YouTube Posts by Coding Category

The social media that are considered the most effective as Ecoethno's strategic communication media are WhatsApp and Instagram due to the simplicity of their use in the promotion process. According to informants, WhatsApp Ecoethno Leadcampsite is often included in various tour groups in Pangalengan and Bandung, as well as being a means of booking tours for prospective tourists. However, this study was not used as the research object because there needed to be a database.

The "crystallization" character of YouTube users begins with their freedom to access videos of almost unlimited duration. Ecotourism marketing videos have the potential to gain engagement due to the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has shaped the culture of watching videos for the community (Herlina, 2022). In addition, people are also more used to being open in their comments. Comments on social media can attract users to carry out their mission of finding new or old justifications. Gomez et al. (2022) term this process of seeking justification as "online upward social comparisons," in which each social media user tries to compare himself to others above him (better fared), aiming to gain self-esteem, identity, and life satisfaction.

Construction of Reality in Ecotourism SMEs Social Media

The social construction of reality is a social process in which an individual or group continuously develops a subjectively owned and collectively experienced reality via activity and interaction. Berger & Luckmann (1991) stated that social construction requires three components: externalization, objectification, and internalization. The inseparability of these three parts stems from the fact that humans, as subjective persons, are always immersed in a genuine social world.

Externalization is the step of human adaptation to the sociocultural world or external causes by expressing himself in action amid social life, which is called outsourcing activities. Objectivation is the initial stage of human involvement with society, particularly as an intersubjective world that undergoes a process of institutionalization. Internalization happens when individuals identify themselves as part of social institutions as part of subjective consciousness (Mustakim et al., 2020; Yuningsih, 2006).

The existence of social media in the digital era has made the study of the construction of reality more extensive. Humans are almost always connected to the internet network to interact with other humans worldwide, thus forming a "global village" or "global community". Social media has removed the boundaries of socializing. Disappearing the boundaries of space and time, social media users can communicate whenever and wherever they are. In this situation, people will communicate with each other in various ways, for example, by using different styles of chat abbreviations, having like buttons, emojis, becoming followers, et cetera. Thus there is a change in the construction of social reality, such as when social media users post links to news items and social events and comment about them, and this would imply that those users are transforming their subjective reality into a symbolic reality. Then when those posts are shared with trusted contacts on online social networks, they can crystallize into something perceived as an objective reality.

SMEs in the ecotourism industry are currently utilizing social media to create virtual reality. Through social media, ecotourism SMEs want to cultivate audience perceptions of the reality of tourist objects through their social networks, and everyone who accesses social media will observe that the information provided by their social networks corresponds to reality. In addition, social media has provided a new arena for engagement, facilitating audience participation and arousing their interest in the ecotourism industry as a whole.

Social media has an important role in increasing the accessibility of a person's network, the visibility of topics they deem important, and their attitudes toward those topics. In the pre-social media era, there were limits to interactions with personal connections due to space and time limitations, thereby limiting the exchange of opinions with people with whom an individual communicates frequently. However, social media removes many of these time and space constraints, providing direct access to a wider network. In addition, social media allows individuals to see other people's attitudes toward a particular topic that would not be discussed in a face-to-face situation.

CONCLUSION

Small-scale ecotourism requires social media as a strategic communication tool. Limited budget and human resources make the character of social media, which is almost free of charge, popular. Ecoethno Leadcampsite once tried to use paid media by renting a website. However, in the end, they stopped subscribing because the character of Indonesian audience tends to ignore website information for tourism.

In the end, small-scale ecotourism returned to choosing social media, which is free and easy to measure its effectiveness, adjusting to the scale of ecotourism which is still relatively small. The selection of social media as a strategic communication tool that highlights the strategic communication aspects are Tourism activities, resource utilization, and Environmental orientation. Aspects left out in using social media are Travel expenses, the Person in charge, and Address and customer care.

Social media created by ecotourism SMEs is an effort to process virtual reality construction. Unfortunately, constructing social reality in ecotourism SMEs social media is a long process because promotional efforts and marketing communications tend to be simple. The reason for the simplicity of marketing promotion and communication efforts is the limited cost and human resources that manage it.

In the future, this research needs to be developed by confirming aspects of coding points to ecotourism business operators. The goal is to formulate a strategic communication model in the context of ecotourism.

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