

PODCAST STORYTELLING: A NEW WAY OF TOURISM MARKETING IN INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the trend of using podcasts and storytelling approaches as a new way to market regional tourism, in Indonesia. In the last two years, there has been a significant increase in access to audio on demand content in Indonesia. The use of new media such as podcasts in the promotion of the tourism sector is inevitable. Research on podcasts in Indonesia, especially tourism podcasts, is still not prevalent. However, the use of podcast platforms by actors in the tourism sector is starting to emerge. The storytelling approach is also increasingly important for the tourism sector because a good authentic story has the potential to create a better sense of place and connections. This study seeks to explore the opportunities and challenges of tourism podcasts, as well as the importance of the storytelling approach for marketing regional tourism in Indonesia. The method used in this study is a literature review which includes the process of reading and analyzing articles in journals, previous research reports, reference books and news related to podcasts. The results of the study show that podcast is an important marketing tool to enrich information on tourist destinations in Indonesia, and of course help encourage regional tourism marketing. This research is expected to be an input and recommendation to practitioners, government, communities, private sector and researchers to work together to equip tourism activities in various regions with podcasting and storytelling skills as a new way to develop tourism marketing in Indonesia.

Keywords: *podcast, tourism promotion, storytelling, tourism marketing, tourism podcast*

Introduction

Indonesia has a great potential as a world tourist destination. In addition to having a beautiful nature heritage, people who are known to be friendly, Indonesia has a variety of cultural richness that is its trademark. These elements have the potential to support the rapid progress of regional tourism in Indonesia in the future. However, technological developments and adaptation to new media have also become supporting elements that are no less important. Especially in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, which encourages digital acceleration.

According to a report published by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy: "Tourism Industry Trends 2021", the new tourism economy is characterized by 4 characteristics, including *low touch, low mobility, hygiene* and *less crowd*. One of the characteristics, namely low-touch, shows that contactless solution are the main choice for tourists, and digital is a solution in this new tourism economy era.

The digital acceleration that occurred during the pandemic also affected changes in people's behavior and the customer journey. When going on vacation, from choosing a place, choosing accommodation, buying ticket, compiling an itinerary to finding culinary references, it really depends on the availability of information that can be accessed online. Not only the availability of tourism information, marketing activities for tourist objects must also utilize digital marketing. People who are increasingly aware of the development of digital technology must also be supported by actors in the tourism sector who are also adapting.

The presence of new media has the privilege of having interactive characteristics that can be found in traditional media. A study released in early 2016 by the Reuters Institute stated that the internet has the potential to revive audio formats (Nielsen, 2016). What is quite interesting is the prediction that 2020 will be the beginning of the “new golden age of audio”, which actually happened. Gradually people begin to leave the old media and switch to new media, which are faster in sharing information, and one of them that is increasingly popular is podcast (Nguyen et al., 2010).

Regarding podcast, PEW Research Center data (Madden, 2006) shows that in 2006, only 11% of people listened to podcasts. Then the PEW Research Center data in 2019 showed that until 2019, the number had increased significantly to 51%. This indicates that people have used podcast as a medium to enjoy audio content (Pew Research Center, 2019).

Storytelling through podcast media, which is increasingly trending today, can be an alternative and new way to promote tourism objects in various regions in Indonesia. This concept in the realm of tourism is referred to as tourism storytelling. Story-driven marketing is one being developed by the Ministry of Tourism to boost Indonesia’s tourism sector. According to Nur Alam in Bakti et al (2019), the purpose of storytelling is to make a tourist attraction more attractive and make a potential tourist curious. Therefore, the marketing approach using tourism storytelling is considered to have the opportunity to increase the number of tourist visits and foreign exchange.

The current trend shows the growing of podcast that market tourist attraction in various regions, through stories that also promote local wisdom. There are podcasts developed by institutions /organizations, individuals, local governments, communities, and associations of tourism activists in various regions. In 2021, the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy encourages those in charge of tourist village throughout Indonesia to take full advantage of digital platforms, creating creative content within the framework of digital marketing strategies (Kemenparekraf.go.id, 2021). With this effort, various tourist destinations in the region, including tourist villages, can also increase competitiveness and encourage regional development and the welfare of its people through sustainable tourism marketing.

In practice, the author sees the development of the use of podcasts for tourism marketing by local governments, those in charge of tourist villages, communities and tourism activist. Meanwhile, the author found that there are still very few studies that examine podcast tourism and podcast storytelling in the tourism sector, especially research in Indonesia. Based on the description above, this research seeks to explore the opportunities and challenges of tourism podcast and the importance of the storytelling approach for regional tourism marketing in Indonesia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

a. Podcast and their development in Indonesia

The superior value of podcast lies in the light and attractive packaging of each content, where each podcast has a specific theme and special topic (Hubackova, 2013). Popova & Edirisingha (2010) also stated that podcast is a flexible technology that can be used for various purposes, such as supporting publication efforts, information dissemination, multi-context learning and marketing.

Riddell, Robins & Brown (2020) stated that podcast are very easy to use, interesting, create wide exposure, and offer a variety of personalized content, The power of podcast, which are able to create more personalized content, has driven a unique experience when accessing it. Podcast are like bringing back the tradition of telling or storytelling that had faded due to attacks through images and videos (Zellatifanny, 2020). In his research, Rusdi (2012) explained that the speech culture of the Indonesia people is one of the potential indicators for the development of audio podcast.

The revival of podcasting has led to the birth of audio storytelling in 2005, podcasting is considered to provide convenience both in terms of recording and audio digital production, as well as convenience in the promotion and dissemination of audio stories through social media (McHugh, S. 2014). In Indonesia, the podcast boom began in 2018, where podcast showed their existence when several podcast service applications emerged. An example is the Anchor platform which provides free hosting services and can be used to distribute audio content to various platforms. Before the emergence of Anchor, several podcast creators were using the free version of Soundcloud audio services or distributing their contents to various platforms using paid hosting. Indonesians one of the countries with a significant development of podcast. Fatina & Puspitasari (2020) stated that podcasts are new media that offer a unique experience because they can be accessed in mobile phones anytime anywhere.

Daily social research (2018) also reveals that 53% of Indonesians have listened to podcast. The potential of podcast as new media, both in audio and video formats, is an alternative for effective communication channels and information conveyers. In the Populix Survey (2020) it is known that more than 70% of Indonesians have listened to podcast. Most state that the reason to listen to podcast is because it is screenless and multitasking.

According to Carl Zuzarte, Head of Studios for Southeast Asia Spotify, the growth of listeners and podcast creators in Indonesia and Southeast Asia continues to increase from time to time. This is supported by the fact that there are currently more than 2,9 million podcast contents in Spotify globally. The audio content ecosystem is growing. In Indonesia, Zuzarte explained that podcast listeners in Spotify are dominated by the younger generation. 83% of millennials and 66% of generation Z (Antaranews, 2021).

Another audio content provider application, NOICE, prioritizes locality and collaboration as its content approach. The NOICE application, which was founded in 2018, collaborates with more than 300 content creators from various regions to work on presenting a variety of content on the platform (Dailysocial.id, 2021).

According to Niken Sasmaya, Chief of Business Officer NOICE, content with local and unique flavors is content that is sought after by the public today. The narrower the topic is, the more listeners will enjoy the content (hyperlocal content).

b. Storytelling and tourism marketing

Storytelling is a fundamental component of communication between people. *Storytelling* is a method and approach used when telling a story to an audience (Bury, 2019). Stories have power because they involve reason and emotion (James & Minnis, 2004) and give meaning and context to information and narratives (Bury, 2019). Storytelling is a form of narrative in telling everyday events (Fog, Budtz, & Yakaboylu, 2005). This concept is understood as the art of using words and actions, which build interactions and the goal is to reveal elements

and images of a story to stimulate the listener's imagination (National Story-telling Network, 2011).

In contrast to word of mouth which tends to state facts or informative content (Delgadillo & Escalas, 2004), storytelling is a communication of information and experience, which adopts a story structure and has the power to integrate cognitive elements, involve other people and generate discourse about experience (Fontana, 2013; Minazzi, 2014; Solnet, Kandampully, Klarj, 2010).

Howison et al. (2017) explained that storytelling has become an important approach in tourism marketing, and efforts to build tourism experiences. The stories told, in tourism marketing, can be produced by various interested groups: residents, visitors, tourism staff, local governments or those in charge of tourism objects (Moscardo, 2010).

c. Podcast Storytelling in Tourism Marketing

Several studies raised topics related to the use of digital media for the promotion of tourism objects in several locations in Indonesia. For example, a study conducted by Setyanto & Winduwati (2018) on the use of Youtube and Websites as social media used by the NTB Provincial Tourism and Culture Office to disseminate tourism information and promote NTB tourist destination. Then Novianti and Wulung (2020) study on the use of websites and social media as an effort to realize smart tourism destinations in West Java.

Studies on storytelling in the context of tourism have also been carried out by several researchers, including studies on storytelling on Instagram for tourist destinations of Borobudur and Lake Toba (Yuliarti et al, 2021); a study of tourism storytelling with video narrative analysis on "The Journey to A Wonderful World" of the Ministry of Tourism (Trisakti & Alifahmi, 2018); as well as the implementation of the storytelling concept through making short films with the theme of tourism (Prasetyo & Setyadi, 2017).

One of the studies that author found on the use of podcast in tourism marketing was a study conducted by Kasatriyanto et al (2021) who analyzed the effectiveness of video podcast, in promoting and educating the public about Borobudur Temple. Video podcast on the Youtube platform (named BUSUR) were developed by the Borobudur Conservation Center. The results of the analysis of the study show that the video podcast BUSUR is very attractive to the public and is quite successful as an alternative media in promoting Borobudur Temple.

In other countries, tourism storytelling research is growing and being explored, especially during the last 5 years. Meanwhile, research on the use of podcast for tourism marketing has not been widely explored, both in Indonesia and other countries.

The author found one of the studies conducted by Feifan Xie & Lew (2014), "*Podcasting and Tourism: An Exploratory Study of Type, Approaches and Content*", which reviewed the Convention & Visitor Bureaus website in US cities about the use of podcast for tourism promotion. The study by Lee & Wicks (2010), "*Podcast for tourism marketing: University and DMO Collaboration*", which describes the collaboration of student, lecturers and DMO (*Destination Management Organization*) in producing tourism podcast for marketing tourist destinations.

Based on previous research, it is known that research related to podcast storytelling is still very rare and still requires further exploration because storytelling has the potential to be an effective approach in the present and future for the tourism sector, including its use through podcast platforms.

METHODS

The method used in this research is a literature review. As suggested (Baumeister & Leary, 1997; Tranfield, Denyer, & Smart, 2003), a broad literature review can be drawn in a systematic way to collect and synthesize previous research. Through the integration of findings and perspectives from various empirical evidences, literature reviews are judged to be able to answer research questions with strengths that a single study does not have (Snyder, 2019).

The process of collecting data in this research is through a series of reading activities, selecting and analyzing journal articles, reference books, previous research reports, as well as news related to podcast and storytelling.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Opportunities and Challenges of Podcast Storytelling in Tourism Marketing

Research conducted by Minazzi (2014) explains that tourism research on storytelling mainly focuses on two areas: a management approach, which looks at how stories help destinations and those in charge of tourism, in improving marketing strategy and branding. Then the second focus is the customer approach, which studies the role of stories told by other visitors/ tourists, as a decision-making effort.

In this study, the author examines the management approach, in an effort to improve marketing strategy and branding. The author seeks to see and analyze the opportunities and challenges of podcast storytelling in an effort to develop sustainable tourism, using the 5M Management Model. Among them are analysis based on factors: Man (human), Machines (devices/ equipment), Money (capital), Methods and Materials.

In the aspect of man (human), it takes human resources who have the will and ability to develop tourism potential. For example, local governments and tourism village managers, in collaboration with universities or companies, can conduct training and debriefing to build digital talents in their regions. Podcast storytelling training can be carried out regularly and continuously. Because from the machine aspect, podcast technology is very flexible, affordable, and can reach a wide audience. Devices for producing podcast content can also use smart phone with supporting applications.

Then in the aspect of money (capital), the cost needed to market tourism promotional content through the podcast platform tend not to require large costs. For podcast in audio format, the costs required from the pre-production, production to post-production processes are still affordable. If the travel podcast content is made in video format, it will likely cost more to produce than audio podcast. However this can be adjusted to the needs and availability of funds.

In terms of methods, one approach that is still and continues to be used for the development of the tourism sector is the storytelling approach. According to Ekström (2000), the narrative approach to storytelling has long been a characteristic of broadcast news formats,

mainly because it attracts listeners/ viewers. Storytelling is also “the center of new marketing today” (Pulizzi, J. 2012). Podcast, both in audio and video formats, are one of a number of platforms that use a storytelling approach.

Then, content in the form of typical stories from destinations or tourist objects, are raw materials that need to be processed and packaged as optimally as possible. Each region in Indonesia has a unique story in their respective tourist destinations. This is a key factor and needs to be paid attention to by podcast creators who market tourism, in order to be able to raise interesting stories from these tourist destinations.

The previous explanation, with the 5M management model, shows that podcast has the potential as a marketing tool for sustainable tourism development. Because in terms of machines and money, the podcast platform is easy to use, the content is easy to distribute and accessible to many people.

The challenge is on the side of man (human) aspect, materials and methods. Tourism managers or those in charge of tourism in regions in Indonesia, local governments and communities need to develop their human resources so that they are adaptive to podcasting technology as a new way of marketing tourism. Through collaboration with universities and the private sector, podcast storytelling training and debriefing activities can be carried out to encourage skilled talents in various regions in Indonesia.

The next challenge is materials in the form of stories and information, historical stories that contain the uniqueness and advantages of tourist destinations. Local governments, tourism managers and community leaders need to collaborate together, so that each region has data sources and databases that can then be narrated and visualized into persuasive stories for regional tourism marketing content.

Contents on travel and tourism podcast, according to Feifan Xie & Law (2008), can be generalized into 3 basic types, namely:

- (1) *Destination podcasts*, tends to be more insightful and experience that encourages listeners to stay or visit a particular tourist destination.
- (2) *Travel experience podcasts*, related to experiences while traveling, especially from a personal perspective. For example, information about travel plans, flight experiences, hotels & meals or descriptions and experiences from various different places.
- (3) *Travel and tourism industry & education podcasts*, focusing more on certain travel and tourism areas

CONCLUSION

Further research on podcast storytelling needs to be done to improve overall understanding of its use in tourism marketing. Based on the literature review and analysis conducted by the author, podcast storytelling has the potential as a new way of marketing regional tourism in Indonesia. Opportunities and challenges in the practice of using podcast storytelling can be an input as recommendations for the government, universities, communities and the private sector to work together to equip tourism managers and tourism activists in various regions with podcasting and storytelling skills as a new way to develop tourism marketing in Indonesia.

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