

Instagram as a Tourism Village Promotion Media: A Study of Sumber Urip Tourism Village

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ABSTRACT : Instagram has emerged as one of the most popular social media platforms, widely used not only for personal purposes but also for group or institutional needs. This study examines the utilization of Instagram as a promotional medium for Sumber Urip Tourism Village. In the digital era, social media has become a crucial tool in tourism destination marketing strategies; however, its effectiveness in the context of rural tourism villages requires further exploration. The aim of this research is to analyze content strategies, engagement levels, and their impact on the promotion of Sumber Urip Tourism Village through the Instagram account @sumber.urip_. Employing a qualitative approach with netnographic methods, this study conducts digital content analysis on Instagram posts from December 2020 to September 2024. The results indicate that while Instagram holds great potential as a promotional medium, its utilization by Sumber Urip Tourism Village has not been optimal. Inconsistencies in posting frequency, limited use of hashtags, and lack of interaction with followers were observed. Visual content, especially that showcasing natural beauty, received positive responses but was not supported by a strong storytelling strategy. The research also reveals a lack of collaboration with influencers or other tourism accounts, which could enhance the destination's visibility and credibility. In conclusion, a more comprehensive and planned strategy is needed in leveraging Instagram, focusing on content consistency, interactivity, storytelling, and optimal utilization of platform features to increase the effectiveness of digital promotion for Sumber Urip Tourism Village.

KEYWORDS: Instagram, Tourism Promotion, Tourism Village

1. INTRODUCTION

The utility of technological advancement lies in its ability to create social connections among users who share similar interests, activities, and backgrounds. These connections manifest as both tangible and professional relationships (1,2). The emergence of platforms has significantly facilitated human life, particularly in terms of media effectiveness, specifically social media. Social media plays a pivotal role and provides utility as a medium for promotional marketing through various existing strategies (1). In social media usage, individuals engage in various sharing activities and information exchange, such as selling, shopping, conversing or discussing, disseminating moments through photos and videos, among others (2). Kotler asserts that social media represents a medium commonly utilized by society in the form of text, video, images, or audio shared through platforms or applications for disseminating information, both personally and collectively (institutions and companies), with specific characteristics aimed at garnering attention and views. Van Dijk further posits that social media constitutes a platform focused on supporting user existence by providing facilities for creativity and collaboration (3).

The Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association reported that internet usage in Indonesia increased to 215.63 million users during 2022-2023, up from 210.03 million in the previous period (2). Furthermore, social media usage in 2023 reached 167 million users. Various social media platforms are popular among the public, including Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and Twitter. According to Good States data, compiled by We Are Social and Hootsuite in October 2022, Instagram ranked fourth among the most frequently used applications worldwide. This phenomenon presents significant opportunities for the tourism sector, particularly tourism villages, to utilize this platform as an effective and efficient promotional tool.

Sumber Urip Tourism Village, located in Rejang Lebong Regency, Bengkulu Province (4,5), is one of the tourist destinations attempting to leverage Instagram's potential in its promotional strategy. However, despite Instagram's various features supporting visualization and interaction, there remains a gap between the platform's potential and its optimal utilization by tourism village management. Previous research by Fatanti & Suyadnya (2015) demonstrated that social media usage can enhance destination brand awareness; however, its implementation at the tourism village level remains limited.

Field observations indicate that many tourism villages, including Sumber Urip, have not maximized Instagram features such as Stories, Reels, and IGTV to present engaging and informative content. This contrasts with the expectation that social media

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should serve as the spearhead of tourism promotion in the digital era. Additionally, interaction between tourism village managers and their followers remains minimal, despite engagement being a key success factor in social media promotion (7).

Theoretically, the concept of "social media marketing" proposed by Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) emphasizes the importance of content strategy and interaction in building relationships with audiences. However, the application of this concept in the context of Indonesian tourism villages requires further exploration. Gartner (1994) "destination image formation" theory is also relevant, considering Instagram's significant role in shaping destination imagery through shared visual content.

Instagram (in Untari & Fajariana, 2018) is the most popular application utilized for sharing moments through photos and videos. Instagram represents a crucial and influential component of social media (11). To date, Instagram has amassed 700 million users with daily posts reaching 60 million, generating 1.6 billion likes. According to Dandy Rizkiansyah & Qodariah (2023), as of November 2021, Indonesia recorded over 92.5 million Instagram users, with 34.4 million nominal users aged 18-24. Instagram's functionality extends beyond photos and videos, encompassing various features that enhance its capabilities, including links, gifts, location tagging, captions, background music, tags, hashtags, comment sections, chat or discussion features (direct messages), photo or video captions, and live streaming capabilities (10–13).

Previous research has demonstrated the effectiveness of social media as a tourism promotion tool. Oktaviani & Fatchiya (2019) found that social media was particularly effective in the desire and interest stages of tourism promotion for Umbul Ponggok, Klaten. Factors such as information clarity, attractiveness, and income levels influenced promotional effectiveness across various stages. Specifically, Syaifillah & Amaranggana (2023) examined Instagram's utilization for culinary tourism promotion through the @Darihalte_Kehalte account. Their research revealed that persuasive messaging in Instagram posts effectively disseminated information about culinary destinations in Indonesia while simultaneously promoting local MSMEs. This success was achieved by implementing the AIDDA model (Attention, Interest, Desire, Decision, Action) in Instagram content strategy. Meanwhile, Nofi & Danang (2017) revealed that Instagram's visual content significantly impacts tourists' visitation decisions. However, these studies have not specifically examined Instagram utilization in the context of tourism villages, particularly in lesser-known regions like Sumber Urip.

Based on this background, this research aims to analyze the utilization of Instagram as a promotional medium for Sumber Urip Tourism Village. Specifically, this study will examine content strategy, engagement levels, and their impact on tourist awareness and visitation interest. The findings of this research are expected to provide practical contributions for tourism village managers in optimizing Instagram usage, while enriching academic literature on the role of social media in community-based tourism development.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This research adopts a netnographic approach, a qualitative research method that adapts ethnographic techniques for studying online communities and cultures (16). The primary focus is on digital content analysis of Sumber Urip Tourism Village's Instagram account, employing non-participant data collection techniques to preserve the authenticity of online interactions.

The data collection process in this research encompasses several stages. First, systematic observation is conducted, wherein researchers examine all Instagram posts of Sumber Urip Tourism Village (@sumber.urip__), documenting posting frequency, content types, hashtag usage, and interaction patterns. Second, during the digital documentation phase, researchers utilize NCapture software to archive posts, comments, and related metadata for further analysis. Subsequently, visual analysis is performed on visual content, such as photos and videos, employing a visual semiotics approach to identify prominent elements in destination branding strategy (6).

To ensure the validity of results, researchers implement data triangulation by comparing findings across various content types (text, images, videos) and sources (posts, comments, hashtags). Additionally, peer debriefing is conducted by involving other researchers experienced in social media analysis to validate data interpretation (17).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Content Strategy and Engagement

Based on netnographic analysis, the content strategy and engagement of the @sumber.urip__ Instagram account demonstrate several significant strengths and weaknesses. The inconsistent and relatively low posting frequency contradicts the social media marketing principles proposed by Kaplan & Haenlein (2010), which emphasize the importance of activity and consistency in building digital presence. This inconsistency may negatively impact the account's visibility in Instagram's algorithm, which tends to favor accounts with regular posting activities.

Recent studies indicate that accounts with higher posting frequencies tend to achieve better engagement rates. Nevertheless, @sumber.urip__'s visual content showcasing natural beauty receives positive responses from followers, aligning with Gartner (1994) destination image formation theory. This suggests that the account successfully leverages visual elements in influencing potential tourists' perceptions, although this potential remains underutilized due to limitations in posting strategy.

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Further analysis reveals that while visual content receives appreciation, the overall engagement rate may remain low due to suboptimal posting frequency. The gap between content quality and account management strategy indicates significant untapped potential. Through increased posting consistency, utilization of Instagram features such as Stories and Reels, and community involvement in content creation, @sumber.urip__ has substantial opportunities to enhance its effectiveness in promoting Sumber Urip Tourism Village through the Instagram platform.

3.2 Follower Interaction and Engagement

Follower interaction and engagement serve as key indicators in evaluating the effectiveness of an entity's social media strategy, including in the context of tourism destination promotion. Analysis of follower interaction and engagement on the @sumber.urip__ Instagram account reveals relatively low participation levels, with average likes ranging from 50-100 and minimal comments (1-3) per post. These figures indicate suboptimal engagement rates, particularly when compared to industry benchmarks reported by Hootsuite (in Aryani & Murtiariyati, 2022), where the average engagement rate for business accounts on Instagram is approximately 0.54%. This low interaction level can be attributed to several factors, including inconsistent posting frequency, limited content variety, and minimal two-way interaction between account managers and followers.

To enhance interaction and engagement, several strategies can be implemented. These include incorporating questions in captions, organizing contests or challenges, creating interactive content such as polls or quizzes in Instagram Stories, and maintaining consistency in responding to comments. The utilization of user-generated content can also increase follower involvement. Furthermore, in-depth analysis of content types generating the highest engagement can assist in developing more effective content strategies, such as focusing on themes proven popular among followers.

Improving follower interaction and engagement is not only crucial for enhancing account visibility in Instagram's algorithm but also vital in building a solid and loyal online community for Sumber Urip Tourism Village. High engagement can amplify digital word-of-mouth, potentially increasing tourist visitation interest. Therefore, optimizing engagement strategy represents a critical step in effectively utilizing Instagram as a tourism destination promotional tool, which can significantly contribute to the overall success of Sumber Urip Tourism Village's digital marketing efforts.

3.3 Utilization of Instagram Features

3.3.1 Instagram Profile

Figure 1. Screenshot of the Sumber Urip Tourism Village Instagram account profile



Source: Instagram account of the Sumber Urip tourist village

In terms of Instagram profile utilization, the management has leveraged all available aspects and features. Atmoko (in Puspitarini & Nuraeni, 2019) states that information about Instagram users, whether individual, group, or institutional, can be discerned through the profile presentation by users (managers). The name "Desa Wisata Sumber Urip" (@sumber.urip__) is prominently displayed on the profile to facilitate easy account discovery by other Instagram users.

Ibnu Ismail (in Haidar & Martadi, 2021) explains that a logo comprises sketches, images, and text with specific meanings to represent an identity such as a product, company, institution, or organization. In this context, the @sumber.urip__ Instagram account utilizes a logo as its profile picture to represent Sumber Urip Tourism Village. The logo incorporates green agricultural fields, trees, mountains, sun, and the text "Desa Wisata Sumber Urip." This design effectively represents the tourism village, with the mountain imagery depicting Mount Kaba or Bukit Kaba, a popular destination and pride of Sumber Urip, while the green agricultural fields represent the community's agritourism gardens that serve as tourist attractions within the village.

The Instagram Bio feature has been utilized to indicate the location of Sumber Urip Tourism Village, stating "Location: Sumber Urip, Selupu Rejang, Rejang Lebong, Bengkulu." However, regarding location information, it would be beneficial if management included a map pin in the linktr.ee section to facilitate easier navigation for potential tourists to Sumber Urip Tourism Village. This would eliminate the need for users to switch applications independently, as clicking the provided link would directly guide users to the village's location on a maps application.

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Management also employs the Instagram bio to introduce the national tourism tagline "Wonderful Indonesia" and the local tourism tagline "Bengkulu Natural". These taglines need consistent promotion to help Instagram users and tourism enthusiasts appreciate the development of Indonesia's tourism industry, particularly rural tourism.

Linktr.ee is a service that facilitates link sharing through a landing page or specialized webpage containing multiple links. The @sumber.urip__ Instagram account utilizes this feature to streamline information dissemination, including links to their YouTube channel, Facebook account, and contact person (WhatsApp) as supporting media for distributing information about Sumber Urip Tourism Village.

Based on the above analysis, it is evident that the @sumber.urip__ Instagram account managers have effectively utilized the profile section by implementing all available features to provide clear initial branding information about Sumber Urip Tourism Village. Research by Syaifillah & Amaranggana (2023) indicates that social media, particularly Instagram, serves as an effective promotional medium for Indonesian culinary tourism, helping increase MSME business sales and assisting managers in disseminating information about culinary tourism areas to the broader public. Thus, Instagram plays a competent role in helping promote or introduce tourism destinations to the public.

3.3.2 Instagram Highlights

Figure 2. Screenshot of highlights on the Instagram account @sumber.urip__



Source: Instagram account of the Sumber Urip tourist village

The Instagram account manager @sumber.urip__ has effectively utilized the Highlights feature by organizing and categorizing content with relevant labels. The "Sumbermadu" highlight contains information about honey products manufactured in Sumber Urip Tourism Village. The "Pokdarwis" highlight showcases activities involving the Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis). The "DWSU" highlight presents the Sumber Urip Tourism Village logo. The "Agrowisata" (Agritourism) highlight displays tourist activities related to agricultural tourism in Sumber Urip Tourism Village. The "NTT" highlight documents the reception of the 2021 Nature Conservation Award in tourism services received by Sumber Urip Tourism Village. The "Belakang rumah" (Backyard) highlight features sunrise and sunset photographs from one of Sumber Urip Tourism Village's premier destinations, Bukit Kaba.

This feature serves as a valuable resource for Instagram viewers or users seeking specific information aligned with the highlights displayed by the management. The Highlights feature is an Instagram-facilitated tool that enables users to showcase collections or archives of previously created Instagram Stories. While Instagram Stories typically remain visible for only 24 hours, this feature allows Story posts displayed in Highlights to persist beyond the 24-hour limitation, ensuring continued visibility (21).

The strategic implementation of Instagram Highlights demonstrates the management's systematic approach to digital content organization and accessibility, particularly in the context of rural tourism promotion and information dissemination. This digital archiving method effectively preserves and presents the destination's various aspects, from local products to natural attractions, making it an important tool for tourism communication and marketing.

3.3.3 Feeds Instagram

Instagram Feed Posts represent one of the platform's original features since its inception. This feature functions as a sharing medium for users to disseminate information to others through posts in both photographic and video formats (21). Video technology, through electronic processing, represents moving images, while photographs serve as a communication medium used to convey ideas or messages to audiences through static images (22).

The longitudinal analysis of content distribution on the @sumber.urip__ Instagram account can be systematically categorized and quantitatively presented as follows:

Table 1. Instagram Posting Data Analysis of Sumber Urip Tourism Village

No	Year	Posts		Total
		Video	Photo	
1	2020 (December)	1	3	4
2	2021 (January – December)	15	50	65
3	2022 (January – December)	9	7	16
4	2023 (January – December)	8	39	47
5	2024 (January – September)	3	13	16
Jumlah		36	112	148

Based on the Instagram posting data of Sumber Urip Tourism Village from the @sumber.urip__ account during the period December 2020 to September 2024, significant fluctuations in posting activity are evident. A total of 148 posts were uploaded, comprising 36 videos (24.3%) and 112 photographs (75.7%), demonstrating a clear preference for static visual content. The year 2021 recorded peak activity with 65 posts, followed by a sharp decline in 2022 to merely 16 posts, before recovering in 2023 with 47 posts. This inconsistency is particularly evident in the year-over-year posting variations, with 2021 marking the apex of activity and 2022 representing the nadir. Although posting frequency increased in 2023, the figures remained below 2021 levels, while partial data for 2024 (through September) indicates relatively consistent trends with the previous year. This pattern suggests shifts in social media management strategy or fluctuations in resource allocation for digital promotion activities of Sumber Urip Tourism Village over the years.

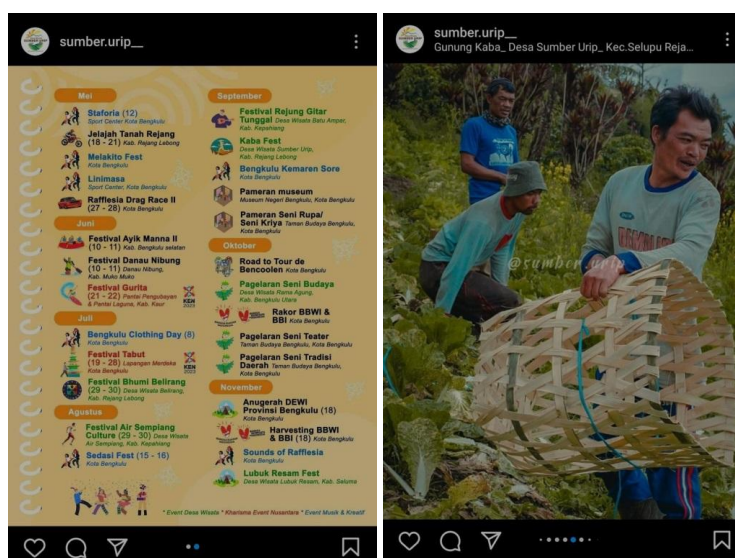
Posts or Feeds extend beyond mere photos and videos. Each upload component incorporates numerous features that enhance post optimization for both photographic and video content. These supporting features include:

a. Location Tag Feature

Atmoko (in Puspitarini & Nuraeni, 2019) posits that the location feature enables users to specify where photos or videos were captured. Instagram qualifies as a social network as users maintain interactive capabilities through the application. The utilization of this feature extends beyond merely indicating photo or video capture locations; it serves as an integral component of promotional strategy, as users can discover content based on geographical location.

In the analysis of video and photographic content uploaded to the @sumber.urip__ Instagram account, location tagging features have been partially utilized across posts. Detailed examination reveals 44 posts lacking location tags, distributed as follows: 10 posts in 2021, 4 posts in 2022, and 30 posts in 2023.

Figure 3. Screenshot demonstrating location feature utilization.



Source: Instagram Account @sumber.urip__ (2024)

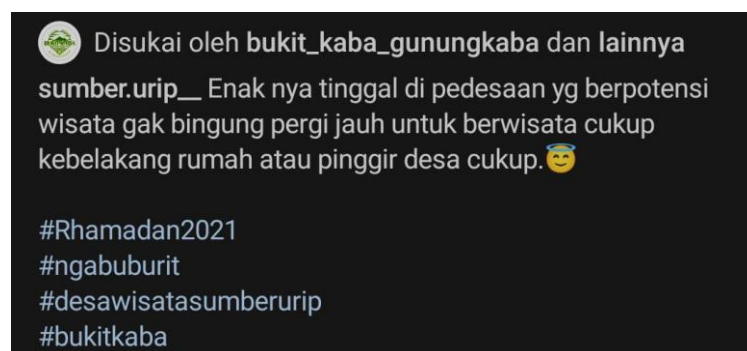
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b. Caption Features (Storytelling and Destination Image Formation)

The analysis of caption feature utilization on the Instagram account of Sumber Urip Tourism Village reveals suboptimal implementation in the context of digital tourism destination promotion. Although most posts incorporate captions, their quality and consistency require significant enhancement. Several captions appear notably rudimentary and insufficiently informative, while 29 posts entirely lack captions. This indicates a substantial gap in content strategy that may impact the effectiveness of destination promotion efforts.

Atmoko (in Puspitarini & Nuraeni, 2019) emphasizes that captions play a crucial role in reinforcing the intended message conveyed through uploaded photos or videos. In the context of tourism destination promotion, captions function not merely as visual explanations but also as tools for constructing compelling narratives about the destination. However, the analysis indicates that the Sumber Urip Tourism Village Instagram account has not fully leveraged the storytelling potential within their captions.

Figure 4. Screenshot of caption feature utilization in posts.



Source: Instagram Account @sumber.urip__ (2024)

The lack of a robust storytelling strategy in post captions indicates suboptimal utilization of Instagram for constructing compelling destination narratives. According to destination image formation theory, strong narratives play a crucial role in shaping perceptions and enhancing tourism destination appeal. Well-crafted captions can serve as a medium for conveying the uniqueness, history, and experiences offered by Sumber Urip Tourism Village, thereby fostering a more robust and appealing destination image in prospective visitors' minds.

Optimizing caption usage by combining informative elements with engaging storytelling can significantly enhance the promotional effectiveness of Sumber Urip Tourism Village on Instagram. This strategy would not only facilitate the dissemination of essential destination information but also foster emotional connections with the audience, potentially increasing visitation interest and strengthening the destination's image.

c. Hashtag, Tag Usage, and Reach

Analysis of hashtag and tag usage by the Instagram account @sumber.urip__ reveals a suboptimal strategy in digital tourism destination promotion. Fatanti & Suyadnya (2015) emphasize that hashtag usage limited to local contexts can significantly restrict a tourism destination's promotional reach. This finding aligns with observations of the @sumber.urip__ account, where hashtag and tag usage predominantly focuses on government institution-related posts or specific events, indicating a disparity between actual practices and Instagram's potential for expanding destination visibility.

Atmoko (in Puspitarini & Nuraeni, 2019) explains that hashtags function to facilitate user discovery of content within specific categories, while tag or mention features enable connections with other users. In this context, broader and more consistent utilization of both features by @sumber.urip__ could significantly expand promotional zones and relationships in introducing Sumber Urip Tourism Village. Implementing a more comprehensive hashtag and tag strategy, extending beyond government institution-related or event posts to encompass all content, has the potential to enhance the reach and effectiveness of Sumber Urip Tourism Village's digital promotion on Instagram.

d. Background Sound or Music

The recently introduced background sound or music feature enables users to easily incorporate songs or music into both photo and video posts. This feature functions to play music deemed appropriate for shared content, eliminating the need for editing through

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external applications or supporting media. This functionality allows users to enhance post attractiveness and create a more engaging and emotional atmosphere for their audience without requiring complex technical skills.

Based on posts from the @sumber.urip__ account, management has not yet utilized this feature in their feed posts, both photos and videos. This may be attributed to the feature's novelty, with management not yet considering its implementation. Future expectations include management utilizing this supporting feature for both photo and video posts, enabling message delivery through the collaboration of photos or videos, songs or music, and captions.

e. Comments Section

The comments section serves as a platform for Instagram users to express their thoughts or opinions through statements regarding photos or videos uploaded by other users (19). This feature can be utilized by users seeking additional information regarding content disseminated through photos and videos on the @sumber.urip__ Instagram account. However, observation reveals minimal user engagement with this feature, suggesting that account management may be less effective in stimulating inter-user interaction. This feature is not limited to inquiries but can also be used for expressing congratulations, gratitude, and similar sentiments to management for their efforts in providing information about Sumber Urip Tourism Village.

3.4 Collaboration and Influencer Marketing

Collaboration and influencer marketing have emerged as key strategies in promoting tourism destinations in the digital era. The absence of collaborations with influencers or other tourism accounts on Sumber Urip Tourism Village's Instagram platform indicates the non-implementation of globally proven effective strategies. Rinka & Pratt (2018) argue in their research that influencer marketing can significantly enhance tourism destination credibility and appeal. They emphasize that influencer-generated content is often perceived as more authentic and relatable by potential tourists, particularly millennials and Generation Z. Additionally, Gretzel (2018) emphasizes the crucial role of social media influencers (SMIs) in shaping tourist perceptions and preferences. She contends that SMIs function not only as information disseminators but also as shapers of tourism trends and experiences. In the context of Sumber Urip Tourism Village, the absence of influencer collaborations represents untapped potential for enhancing destination visibility and appeal on digital platforms.

Meanwhile, Veirman et al. (2017) in their study published in the *International Journal of Advertising*, explore the effectiveness of various influencer types in marketing campaigns. They found that micro-influencers, despite having fewer followers, often generate higher engagement rates and are perceived as more trustworthy by their audience. These findings are relevant for tourism destinations like Sumber Urip Tourism Village, where collaborations with local or regional micro-influencers could serve as an effective and efficient strategy for increasing awareness and visitation interest.

Thus, a holistic approach to digital destination marketing combines influencer marketing strategies, big data analysis, and tourist experience personalization to create greater impact. Effective collaboration between tourism destinations, influencers, and technology platforms can generate stronger narratives and more engaging experiences for potential tourists. Implementing these insights into Sumber Urip Tourism Village's promotional strategy could significantly enhance digital marketing effectiveness. The synergy between these various elements would not only expand promotional reach but also attract broader audience attention and increase engagement, thereby driving increased visitation to the tourism village.

3.5 Sentiment and Visitation Interest

Analysis of the @sumber.urip__ Instagram account reveals interesting phenomena regarding sentiment and visitation interest in Sumber Urip Tourism Village. Although existing comments tend to be positive, their limited number indicates that the account has not fully succeeded in building substantial engagement. Fatanti & Suyadnya (2015) argue in their study on Instagram's role in tourism destination branding that high social media engagement positively correlates with strong destination image formation and increased visitation interest. These findings indicate a gap between Instagram's potential as a promotional tool and its implementation by Sumber Urip Tourism Village management.

Furthermore, research by Hanan & Putit (2014) affirms that in tourism destination marketing contexts, positive social media sentiment significantly influences tourist visitation intentions. However, they also emphasize that consistent interaction volume and engagement are key factors in converting positive sentiment into actual visitation actions. In Sumber Urip Tourism Village's case, although positive sentiment is evident from existing comments, limited interaction volume may impede Instagram's effectiveness in optimally driving visitation interest.

Nevertheless, while positive sentiment is evident from existing comments, the limited interaction volume on the @sumber.urip__ Instagram account indicates that the platform's potential for building engagement that drives visitation interest has not been fully

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realized. Implementing strategies more focused on increasing interaction volume, developing emotive storytelling content, and enhancing responsiveness could help optimize Instagram's role in promoting Sumber Urip Tourism Village and increasing tourist visitation interest.

4. CONCLUSION

This research reveals that while Instagram possesses substantial potential as a promotional medium for Sumber Urip Tourism Village, its utilization has not reached optimal levels. Key findings include inconsistencies in posting frequency, hashtag usage limited to local contexts, low follower interaction rates, insufficient robust storytelling strategies, and the absence of collaborations with influencers or other tourism accounts. The gap between actual practices and theoretical potential in Instagram utilization within the context of tourism village promotion indicates the necessity for a more strategic and planned approach.

To optimize Instagram utilization, several recommendations are proposed, including the development of a content calendar to ensure posting consistency, expansion of hashtag usage to enhance discoverability, increased interactivity through active response to comments and utilization of Instagram's interactive features, integration of strong storytelling in each post, initiation of collaborations with local or regional influencers, and utilization of Instagram analytics to understand audience preferences and optimize content strategy.

The implementation of this more comprehensive strategy is expected to enhance Instagram's effectiveness as a digital promotional tool for Sumber Urip Tourism Village. By attending to key aspects such as content consistency, interactivity, storytelling, and optimal utilization of platform features, Sumber Urip Tourism Village has the potential to increase online visibility, follower engagement, and ultimately, tourist visitation interest. This conclusion emphasizes the importance of adapting more sophisticated social media strategies to maximize Instagram's potential in rural tourism destination promotion.

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