

How can social media marketing create positive image of nature-based tourist destination in Indonesia?

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Community, Communication, Destination Image, Environment, Nature-Based Tourist Destination, Social Media Marketing

Abstract

Botanical Garden of Plant Conservation Center – Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI) or often be called Bogor Botanical Garden is a highly renowned tourist destination in Bogor. As a nature-based tourist destination, Bogor Botanical Garden develop an image through its positive role in conserving environment and educating community. However, in reality, there is a discrepancy between the image which was built by the Bogor Botanical Garden with the perceptions in the visitors' mind. Based on the result of the initial survey, there was a negative image which was evolved in the community. Bogor Botanical Garden was continuously trying to restore the image. One of the chosen strategies was by utilizing its social media marketing which consists of online communities, interaction, sharing of content, accessibility and credibility. This study aims to reveal the influence of social media marketing on destination image of Bogor Botanical Garden. The method used in this study were explanatory survey and cross-sectional approach. Using simple random sampling, questionnaires were given to 363 respondents who were followers of Bogor Botanical Garden's social media account. The data were analyzed using multiple regression technique. The results showed that there is a positive influence between social media marketing and the destination image. It is important for the management to engage more on social media marketing strategy in terms on how they involve the community to their events and how they change the way they communicate and interact with their followers.

1. The Introduction

Indonesia has many potentials in natural resources and it is proven by the diversity of animals and plants in the country. Those resources should be utilized and developed as tourist destinations with the spirit to conserve their existence through wildlife sanctuaries, national parks, forest parks and natural tourism parks.

There are many nature-based tourism destinations in Indonesia, one of the most well-known by the tourists is Botanical Gardens Conservation Center - Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI). Located in the heart of Bogor city, this garden is known as Bogor Botanical Garden by the public. It covers an area of 87 hectares which is planted variety of plants for the purpose of conservation and education. It is the first botanical garden in Indonesia, built in 1817, since then, it becomes role model for other botanical gardens which has the same goal to increase tourist visits.

Despite the fact that it has many tourist attractions, Bogor Botanical Garden faces a decline in the number of tourist visits. This is due to the incongruity between the expected image that the destination built and the image that is formed in public's mind. Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI) as a management, has made positioning strategy and it could be viewed in their vision statement which is to become one of the best botanical garden in the world in conserving and researching tropical plants, environmental education and tourism.

According to the vision, Indonesian Institute of Sciences plays a role as an institution which supports research on plants. Therefore, through the existence of the botanical garden, the community could learn about plants. In the other hand, on public's perception, Bogor Botanical Garden is a place for recreation only; hence, it is different from what management planned.

This phenomenon is supported by the fact that 54% of the comments and reviews about Bogor Botanical Garden on Facebook and Trip Advisor tend to be negative. Moreover, 49% of all testimonies in Trip Advisor were negative comments about the attractions in Bogor Botanical Garden. It could be analyzed that the positioning of Bogor Botanical Garden was not clearly received by the public. As a result, there was a distorted image risen in community. The advancement of technology especially in terms of social media brings many impacts to almost all aspects of human life including tourism. From the management's perspective, social media could become a marketing tool to deliver the positioning of a tourist destination. Thus, the image of a destination could be shaped.

Bogor Botanical Garden uses social media to implement that concept by publishing their nature-based educational programs through its official account on Facebook and Twitter. For instance, the recent publication was when Bogor Botanical Garden launched the Ecodome building, which was the first non-permanent building in Indonesia. It was functionalized for the purpose of exhibition, environment education, art and culture. Hopefully, such publication in social media could raise the image of Bogor Botanical Garden.

2. Literature review

A destination is a location where people go to travel, it is different from a place where they live (Wang and Pizam, 2011). To attract visitors to come, every destination needs to optimize the role of marketing. The application of destination marketing should be centered on visitors and proactive on economic and cultural development from a destination which integrates and balances the interests of tourists, service industry and community (Wang and Pizam, 2011). There were many experts who had formulated marketing mix and one of them is Kotler and Keller (2016). They stated that there are 8 dimensions of the marketing mix, those are product, price, place, promotion, people, processes, program and performance. From those dimensions, promotion becomes one of the common tools to communicate products and services.

Kotler and Keller (2016) also argued that in promotion there is a marketing communication mix which consists of advertising, sales promotion, events and experiences, public relations and publicity, online and social media marketing, mobile marketing, direct and database marketing and personal selling. All of those media could deliver the information to customers effectively; however, through the development of information and technology there is one of those communication media which is proven not only effective but also relatively efficient, that is online and social media marketing.

Social media marketing itself is an online activity and program which is designed to involve customers or prospects and increase direct or indirect awareness, improve the image or to obtain sales of products and services. It utilizes various social media networks, including the online community, marketing blog, and many others (Arief and Millianyani, 2015) and it reaches a much larger community that may not be available in traditional channels (Khan and Jan, 2015).

More and more researchers in the field of tourism have an interest in improving the role of social media in the formation of destination image (Kim et al., 2017). Experts have stated that the usage of social media marketing could create or have a positive impact on destination image (Jalilvand, 2016; Kim et al., 2017; Lim et al., 2012; Stepaniuk, 2015). This study used dimensions of social media marketing from Abu-Rumman and Alhadid (2014). They adopted several experts in order to formulate five dimensions, those are online communities, interaction, sharing of content, accessibility and credibility.

a. Online Communities

A company or business can use social media to build a community around a product or a business. Dynamic society can create loyalty and encourage discussion that can contribute to the improvement and development of business (Taprial and Kanwar, 2012).

b. Interaction

A Facebook page or Twitter account can tell its followers on a particular topic quickly and simultaneously. Social networking sites allow greater interaction with online communities through up-to-date broadcasts and relevant consumer information (Fischer and Reuber (2011).

c. Sharing of content

This is about the extent to which individuals make changes, distribute and receive content in social media (Babac, 2011).

d. Accessibility

Social media can be accessed easily and does not take much time or there is no cost for its use. Social media is very easy to use and does not need any special skills and knowledge to use it (Taprial and Kanwar, 2012).

e. Credibility

It is about how to deliver a clear message to everyone, building credibility for what we say or do, connecting emotionally to the target we want, motivating buyers and generating loyal customers (Taprial dan Kanwar, 2012).

To discover the influence of social media marketing towards destination image, the dimensions to assess destination image were adapted from Tapifrios et al. (2015), which are functional characteristics attribute, functional and psychological - holistic characteristics and psychological characteristics attribute. He also said that destination image is often described as "the impression of a place" or "perception of the area". It can be concluded that the destination image is a reciprocal from tourists for what they felt both through experience and information received, can be the impression, commentary and feelings towards a tourist destination.

The dimension of functional characteristics attributes is the physical attribute associated with tourism destinations including such things as tourism destinations, parking area conditions, climate, and infrastructure conditions. Functional and psychological dimension - holistic characteristics are associated with tourism destinations and comprise personal security, tourism development, reputation and impression. While psychological characteristics attribute is a psychological physical attribute associated with tourist destinations such as hospitality and environmental sustainability.

3. Research methodology

This study was conducted in Bogor Botanical Garden which is a nature-based tourist attraction. There were two variables analyzed in this study. The independent variable was social media marketing (X) which had five sub-variables, online communities(X1), interaction (X2), sharing of content (X3), accessibility (X4) and credibility (X5). The dependent variable was destination image (Y) which had three indicators including functional characteristics attribute, functional and psychological - holistic characteristics and psychological characteristics attribute.

Since This study was done in less than one year; therefore, it could be classified as the cross-sectional method. As stated by Umar (2008) that cross-sectional approach is a research method to study an object in a period of time or not continuous in the long run, same with Maholtra (2009) who said that in this method data were collected once in a period of time. The data were collected through questionnaires which have been tested its validity and reliability.

The unit of analysis or the respondents in this study were followers in social media accounts of Bogor Botanical Garden. The number of followers was 3,972 followers. The number of samples was determined by using Slovin formula with 5% for the margin of error. The result of the sample calculation was 363 respondents. Furthermore, the questionnaires were given to 363 respondents with simple random sampling technique. Afterward, the data were analyzed descriptively and using statistical verification including multiple regression analysis.

4. Findings/results

The analysis of data was carried out through various statistical techniques which is validity and reliability test and multiple regression. The data was analyzed using SPSS 23 for windows.

Table 1 shows the profile of the respondents based on demography. The gender distribution was 37.2% male and 62.8% female. The majority of the visitor was >20 years old (32%), followed by 30-35 years old (31.1%), >35 years old (21.5%), and 25-30 years old (15.4%). The highest proportion of occupation (32.5%) fell into housewife, followed by student (27.3%), employee (15.7%), government officer (14.9%), and entrepreneur (9.6%). For the annual income, majority of the respondents (36.1%) got £3158, followed

by £1580-£3158 (30.9%), <£632 (18.7%) and £632-£1580 (14.3%). In terms of length of each visit, the highest frequency was 1-2 hrs (48.2%), followed by 2-3 hrs (32.2%), >3 hrs (15.7%), and <1 hr (3.9%). The respondents mostly visited Bogor Botanical Garden with their families (59.8%), followed by friends (25.6%), colleagues (10%) and others (students, partners, tour package). A variety of sources of information were reported by the respondents. The highest frequency was social media (32.8%), followed by friends (30.3%), family (17.9%), website (15.4%) and others (brochure, other websites and blogs).

Table 1: Profile of the Respondents (n=363)

	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	135	37.2
	Female	228	62.8
Age	>20 years old	116	32
	25-30 years old	56	15.4
	30-35 years old	113	31.1
	>35 years old	78	21.5
Occupation	Student	99	27.3
	Entrepreneur	35	9.6
	Housewife	118	32.5
	Employee	57	15.7
	Government Officer	54	14.9
Annual Income	<£632	68	18.7
	£632 - £1580	52	14.3
	£1580 - £3158	112	30.9
	>£3158	131	36.1
Length of Visit	< 1 hour	14	3.9
	1-2 hours	175	48.2
	2-3 hours	117	32.2
	>3 hours	57	15.7
Companion	Family	217	59.8
	Friends	93	25.6
	Colleagues	36	10
	Others	17	4.6
Source of Information	Social Media	119	32.8
	Website	56	15.4
	Family	65	17.9
	Friends	110	30.3
	Others	13	3.6

Table 2 presents the validity test. All of the items under social media marketing variable and destination image were valid, since all of the scores are higher than the value of 0.3610.

Table 2: Validity Test

No.	Item	r_{count}	Remarks
A. Online Communities			
1.	Activity of the community lover, especially in facebook fanpage	1,00	Valid
B. Interaction			
2.	Interaction between social media admin with the netizens	0,926	Valid
3.	Polling frequency to the netizens	0,901	Valid
4.	Feedback frequency in the form of comments and like	0,854	Valid
C. Sharing of Content			
5.	Information shared in social media	0,847	Valid
6.	The attractiveness of information about tourist attraction	0,872	Valid
7.	Content quality of information	0,860	Valid
8.	Variety of content information	0,824	Valid
9.	Review frequency at the social media	0,841	Valid
D. Accessibility			
10.	The ease in accessing the official social media	0,853	Valid

No.	Item	I _{count}	Remarks
11.	The ease of finding information in social media	0,811	Valid
E. <i>Credibility</i>			
12.	Clarity of information on the quality of facilities	0,873	Valid
13.	Conformity of information on tourist attraction	0,887	Valid
14.	Credibility of source of information	0,867	Valid
F. <i>Functional Characteristics Attribute</i>			
15.	The attractiveness of nature-based edu-tourism attraction	0,754	Valid
16.	Availability of parking space	0,675	Valid
17.	Availability of facilities	0,762	Valid
18.	Frequency of information on climate	0,658	Valid
G. <i>Functional and Psychological – Holistic Characteristics</i>			
19.	Quality of security	0,860	Valid
20.	Reputation as nature-based edu-tourism park	0,662	Valid
21.	Education perception toward the park	0,725	Valid
22.	Nature conservation of the park	0,675	Valid
H. <i>Psychological Characteristics Attribute</i>			
23.	Friendliness of the officers	0,811	Valid
24.	Cleanness of the park	0,816	Valid
25.	Service quality of the officers	0,768	Valid
26.	Logo/branding awareness in social media	0,607	Valid

Table 3 presents the reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha. The reliability for variable social media marketing was 0.946 and for destination image was 0.916. It means all the variables are reliable since the scores are higher than the value of 0.70.

Table 3: Reliability Test

No.	Variable	CO _{count}	Remarks
1.	<i>Social Media Marketing</i>	0,946	Reliable
2.	<i>Destination Image</i>	0,916	Reliable

A multiple regression analysis was used to further investigate the influence of social media marketing which consists of online communities, interaction, sharing of content, accessibility and credibility in predicting destination image. Table 4 shows the results of the regression analysis. The hypotheses testing was conducted to check the direct relationship between social media marketing and destination image. The result reveals that online communities, sharing of content, accessibility and credibility were found positively significant to destination image. Nevertheless, interaction was not found significant to destination image. An examination of the t-values for the five dimensions indicated that the most important factor in predicting destination image evaluation is online communities followed by sharing of content, accessibility and credibility. It appears that park manager should undertake more attempt and focus to develop its social media marketing along these dimensions as shown in Table 4, especially on online communities dimension.

Table 4: Regression Results on Social Media Marketing and Destination Image

Social Media Marketing	t-value	Standardized Coefficients Beta
Online communities	6.961	0.286
Interaction	0.185	0.007
Sharing of content	5.868	0.261
Accessibility	5.556	0.231
Credibility	5.249	0.225
F		70.298
R ²		0.496
Adjusted R ²		0.489

Through the multiple regression analysis, we can acquire multiple regression equation for the influence of social media marketing on destination image, as follows:

$$Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + b_4X_4 + b_5X_5$$

$$Y = 13.907 + 2.017X_1 + 0.024X_2 + 0.470X_3 + 0.956X_4 + 0.795X_5$$

Y	= Destination image
X ₁	= Online communities
X ₂	= Interaction
X ₃	= Sharing of content
X ₄	= Accessibility
X ₅	= Credibility

The analysis shows that a value constant of 13.907 means that if X₁, X₂, X₃, X₄ and X₅ are ignored, then destination image will be 13.907. If there is an increase of activities on all dimensions of social media marketing in each unit, so then the destination image of Bogor Botanical Garden will then will increase to $13.907+2.017+0.024+0.470+0.956+0.795 = 18.169$.

5. Discussions and conclusions

Based on the fifth dimensions of social media marketing, there are four dimensions that positively influence destination image. Those are online communities, sharing of content, accessibility and credibility. This is aligned with the study by Stepaniuk (2015) which stated that SNS (Social Networking Sites), which is part of social media, influenced tourism destination image. Content from tourism information in social media is used to create brand identity, demonstrate a positive relationship, and has an influence on tourism destination image (Jalilvand (2016); Kim, et al (2017); Lim et al (2012)). Other studies on social media marketing produced different outcomes. In regards with the hierarchy of dimensions of social media marketing on brand equity, it reported that accessibility and interaction played an important role where online communities and sharing of content didn't affect brand equity (Abu-Rumman and Alhadid, 2014). Kim et.al (2017) stated that various aspects of tourism information quality in social media, which is content cues and non-content cues, are positively associated with different types of destination image. Tourists used social media as an influential source for obtaining tourism information. In this study, it was found that online communities is the most important factor in predicting destination image. This finding suggests that it is very important for the management to engage more with the community and involved the community in activities and events that are held by the management. This can build a positive image of Bogor Botanical Garden itself as a nature-based destination. This finding is contradictory with the study by Divinagracia et.al (2012) which stated that the most important digital media in creating destination image were search engines and tourism-specific websites, while social media was not considered as the most important one. It is aligned with the study from Foroudi et.al (2018) that reported that place website is the key factor that contribute to building a destination image.

The finding also reveals that interaction doesn't have any influence on destination image. This shows that any interactions done between the admin of social media and the followers didn't affect the perception of the followers toward the image itself. It is mainly because interaction between the admin and the followers tend to be low. Followers tend to interact more with the community such as fan base or community rather than with the admin itself. This finding is contradictory with the study by Fischer and Reuber (2011) which reported that interactions on social media affects effectual thinking and behaviour. It is important for the management to change the way they communicate with the followers in terms of sharing information about Bogor Botanical Garden itself. Hipperson (2010) and Lim, Chung and Weaver (2012) stated that a two-way communication in social media allows followers to engage in forming destination brand identity and image.

6. Limitations and direction for future research

This research has certain limitations. First, the study has been conducted in nature-based tourism destination. Future research should look into the comparison between nature-based and non nature-based tourism destination. Second, the social media used in this study is mainly facebook. Future research should include other social media such as instagram, twitter or you tube. Third, participants in this study were followers of fan page itself. Further research should acquire respondents from other sources which will cover more segment. Fourth, other variables which are not included in this study may have

influenced on destination image, such as advertising, public relation, event, and tourist motivation. Finally, future research should compare social media marketing and traditional media marketing and its impact on destination image.

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