

The Utilization Of Social Media As Marketing Communications Medium On Pandemic Situation (Study On Bogor Botanical Garden)

Rika Nurismah Safitri^{1*}, Pitoyo²

^{1,2} Master of Communication Science, Gunadarma University, Depok, Indonesia

* Corresponding author:

Email: rikanursimahsafitri@gmail.com

Abstract.

The tourism industry is one of the sectors that impacted by the covid-19 pandemic. The Bogor Botanical Garden is the most visited tourist spot in Bogor City in 2016. But since December 2019 the coronavirus has spread around the world, until WHO declared it a global pandemic. Therefore, people are required to stay at home to reduce interaction with other individuals and reduce the spread of the corona virus. Many tourist attractions can not survive until they have to close. However, Bogor Botanical Garden still survives during this pandemic. Because of these problems, researchers aim to examine marketing communications conducted by Bogor Botanical Garden by utilizing social media. The research used qualitative method by taking data in an interview. The theories used are the Computer Mediated Communication Theory or CMC and constructivism paradigm. The results showed that The Botanical Garden has several social media whose main purpose is to conduct marketing communication to its consumers. The Botanical Garden also implements some form of CMC. The social media used by the Botanical Gardens are website, Facebook, Instagram, twitter, YouTube, and ticktock. There are four forms of CMC found in the Bogor Botanical Gardens, namely social media, instant messages, video conferences, and email.

Keywords: Bogor Botanical Garden, Social Media, Covid-19 Pandemic

I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the sectors that has the potential to be developed. The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) explains that tourism consists of activities that people undertake when traveling and settling in different locations from their usual territory for less than a year directly for business purposes, holidays or other destinations. Bogor is one of the cities in Indonesia that has a favorite sector in the field of tourism. Tourism is one of the leading sectors that must be empowered. Geographically, the city of Bogor is very close to the Indonesian capital, Jakarta, which makes it potential and strategies for the growth and development of services and economy, transportation, trade, national activity centers for industry, communication, and tourism. Bogor has several excellent tourist attractions in 2016 including Bogor Botanical Garden [1]. Bogor Botanical Garden as the most visited tourist spot in Bogor in 2016 is also the oldest tourist spot in Bogor. The Bogor Botanical Garden is said to

be a large botanical garden located in Bogor, Indonesia. As one of the natural attractions in Bogor and also the oldest tourism, Bogor Botanical Garden must experience various problems both internally and externally. The number of visitors is definitely different every year, this can be influenced by various factors. In the table below is the number of visitors to the Bogor Botanical Garden in recent years [2]:

Table 1. Number of Visitors to Bogor Botanical Garden

	2016	2018	2019
Domestic	-	-	1.089.935
Non-domestic	-	-	19.183
Total	952.279	1.270.825	1.109.118

The World Health Organization (WHO) has designated the coronavirus or covid-19 as a global pandemic. The most common covid-19 symptoms are fever, dry cough, and fatigue. Covid-19 has been spread by contracting it from other individuals who have been exposed to the virus. Coronavirus is spread through splashes from the nose or mouth when people cough, sneeze, or talk [3]. Therefore, to reduce and break the chain of spread of the coronavirus, preventive measures are needed, namely 3M or wearing a mask, maintaining distance, washing hands and 3T, namely Tracing, Testing, Treatment [4]. Direct interaction between humans is the cause of the spread of the coronavirus, so people are encouraged to stay at home. Indonesian tourism is also experiencing the impact because of this, one of which is the Bogor Botanical Garden. On March 19, 2020 to March 31, 2020 Bogor Botanical Garden was temporarily closed and will see the development of the situation. On July 7, 2020 Bogor Botanical Garden reopened after being temporarily closed for several months, this can happen because it has obtained permission from the government. The birth of this new normal era or new normal makes people still able to carry out activities by implementing health protocols.

This pandemic make the tourism industry out due to the declining number of visitors. Many tourist places closed because they were unable to survive the difficult time of the covid-19 pandemic. However, the Bogor Botanical Garden can still survive in this crisis time. One of the efforts made is to conduct market communication. Marketing communication has a very important role when establishing a relationship between the provider and its consumers, so that all parties can benefit [5]. The use of social media is part of the marketing communication strategy. An effective marketing communication strategy is that marketers implement two main strategies to succeed to the target of communication, namely message strategy and media strategy [6]. Digital media and social media have become an indispensable part of everyday activities for individuals around the world. By 2020, most of the world's population is locked down due to a pandemic, causing social media users to grow rapidly compared to the last three years of 4.20 billion. Based on the data we are social 2021 describes the number of population, internet users, and social media as follows [7]:



Fig 1. Mobile, Internet, and Social Media Usage Data in Indonesia

In the data above, there are 202.6 million people using the internet in Indonesia in January 2021. Total internet users in Indonesia increased 16% to 27 million between 2020 and 2021. Social media users in Indonesia in January 2021 were 170.0 million. Then, the number of social media users in Indonesia increased by 6.3% to 10 million between 2020 and 2021 or equivalent to 61.8% of Indonesia's total population in January 2021 [7]. The process of communicating through social media is closely related to CMC theory. CMC is the process of communication carried out by individuals using computer intermediaries, the people involved, located in a certain context, existing in the process for media formation with various purposes [8]. CMC has several forms in the form of computer applications connected to the internet network, including Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, YouTube, LinkedIn, Skype, BBM, Line, WhatsApp. All are included in the CMC because the communication process does not require direct contact between the perpetrators of the communication [9].

The authors cite several previous studies related to the title of this study. The first previous research was to examine the communication conducted by virtual communities when promoting Tangerang through social media. The results of the study mentioned that AboutTNG using media strategies and message strategies in promoting Tangerang is said to be successful. The statement is evidenced by the increase in the number of Instagram account followers significantly and there is an effect of the message that has been conveyed, namely successfully making changes to the actions of followers to want to follow the activities held by @abouttng to visit places that have been uploaded, such as natural tourism, culinary, history, and icons of Tangerang city [10]. Based on the introduction, the formulation of this research problem is how Bogor Botanical Garden uses social media as a marketing communication medium during the covid-19 pandemic. The purpose of this study is to find out the use of social media carried out by Bogor Botanical Garden for marketing communication media during the covid-19 pandemic.

II. METHODS

The research approach used in this research is qualitative. Qualitative research is research that aims to understand phenomena about what is experienced by research subjects, such as behavior, motivation, perception, action, and so on. Thoroughly by

defining the form of language and words that fit a special natural context that uses various scientific methods [11]. The paradigm used is the constructivism paradigm. The constructivism paradigm says that truth or reality is not singular. Reality is created by individuals in a group because of the basis of the results of their interpretation. This paradigm has the benefit of research to find the meaning of an event or event by using several methods such as interviews, observations, case studies, and so on.

There are several constructivist approaches used to acquire prior knowledge of a theoretical perspective in which there is inter pretivism, phenomenology, symbolic interaction, and critical [12]. Data collection is done by means of in-depth interviews. In-depth interviews are a way to obtain data directly by face to face with informants in order to obtain complete and in-depth data. This interview process is done intensively or repeatedly [13]. The key informant in this study was the general manager of corporate communication of PT Mitra Natura Raya Bogor Botanical Garden. Data analysis is the stage of interpretation of the data that has been obtained in the field. The tools of data analysis determine how researchers analyze and explain the data obtained until the data can be understood as findings [14]. The data analysis used in this study is the analysis of Milles and Huberman qualitative data consisting of three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion withdrawal or verification [15].

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Bogor Botanical Garden is one of the tourist attractions in Bogor for a long time and still survives to this day. The Bogor Botanical Garden is a large botanical garden located in Bogor City, Indonesia. Located at Ir. H. Juanda street No.13, Paledang, Central Bogor, West Java 16122. It has an area of 87 hectares excluding Bogor Palace, a total of 115 hectares. It has 15,000 species of tree and plant collection. Plants in Bogor Botanical Garden are grouped by type.



Fig 2. Bogor Botanical Garden Logo

In early 2020 there was a change in the internal side of Bogor Botanical Garden. Previously Bogor Botanical Garden was managed entirely by the Indonesian Institute of Sciences or LIPI. However, currently Bogor Botanical Garden is managed by PT Mitra Natura Raya or MNR. The Botanical Garden has several official social media that houses four botanical gardens, namely Bogor Botanical Garden, Cibodas Botanical Garden, Purwodadi Botanical Garden, and Bali Botanical Garden. These social media include websites, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok. It turns out that the main purpose of the Bogor Botanical Garden using social media is to help the marketing process.

This is revealed by key informants as follows:

"That's right, this is part of the process of utilizing technology and information that are trending among the public" (Zaenal Arifin, Interview August 3, 2021)

Mr. Zaenal also said there was no difference in content from each social media: *"Nothing, all social media content has something in common, just adjusting to the type of social media" (Zaenal Arifin, Interview August 3, 2021)*

Every social media owned by the Botanical Garden has no difference in content. The difference lies only in the content format that adapts each social media.

Use of social media

Researchers will explain the utilization of what the Bogor Botanical Garden does when using social media as a marketing communication tool for each social media owned. Bogor Botanical Garden website page is a platform that has the most complete and detailed contents. The website page is also more official than other media, because it contains very important information such as conservation, research, educational education programs, interesting spots, events, rentals, souvenirs, members, history, profiles even to careers.



Fig 3. Display of Bogor Botanical Garden Website

All information on the page is equipped with explanations and images that support, making it easier for prospective visitors. Online ticket bookings are also made through the website. This statement is said by Mr. Zaenal as follows:

"We encourage visitors to buy tickets online through the kebunraya.id website, as well as botanical garden applications that can be accessed both through the Apple store and the app store on Android. We also enforce 3M, including using masks, using hand sanitizer, maintaining distance or physical distancing, and washing hands. " (Zaenal Arifin, Interview, August 3, 2021)

The next social media is Instagram, a media that focuses on photos and videos. The Botanical Garden first joined Instagram on November 14, 2019. Currently, the Botanical Garden Instagram account has more than 34,000 followers and follows more than 140 accounts. It can be said that the Botanical Garden Instagram account is quite active because it uploads photos of content every day. The Bogor Botanical Garden's

Instagram account also uses a highlight feature that contains information about educational classes, virtual tours, café & resto, frequently asked questions, hashtags for collaboration with Pertamina, and online tickets. Also conducted a live sale of the plant during the pandemic.

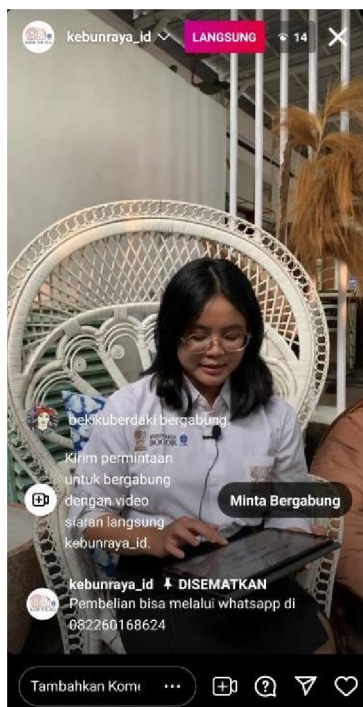


Fig 4. Live Sale on Instagram

This activity is often done periodically. The items sold are products from olive stores ranging from plants to souvenirs typical of Bogor Botanical Garden such as T-shirts and the latest masks. This statement is supported by the informant's answers, namely:

“The product related to health protocols, such as masks and hand sanitizer, fashions, plants and the treatment equipment” (Zaenal Arifin, Interview, August 3, 2021)

The next social media is Facebook. Facebook is a social networking medium that has many features. On the Facebook account of the Bogor Botanical Garden - LIPI has been followed by more than 5700 people, has been visited by more than 57,000 people, and given more than 5400 people. The Botanical Garden also has a twitter account. However, researchers see that the Botanical Garden twitter account is less active than other social media. It can be said that the Botanical Garden twitter account rarely uploads, posts, even though the twitter account has been created since May 2013. It currently has more than 900 followers and follows more than 40 accounts. In the image below displays one of the posts on the Bogor Botanical Garden twitter account.

followers. The uploaded content is more fun because it adapts to the TikTok platform itself. Below is one of the content uploaded to the Botanical Garden's TikTok account:



Fig 7. Content on TikTok

The image shows one of the content uploaded to the Bogor Botanical Garden's TikTok account. The video features a promotion of Liberian hampers made from Olive store, the promotion is said there is a special promo lebaran hampers, if buying two hampers it will get a free T-shirt which is the official merchandise of the Botanical Garden in collaboration with local illustrators.

Implementation of CMC Theory

CMC consists of three core concepts, namely communication, mediated, and computers. The first concept is communication. Marketing communication is a means for Bogor Botanical Garden to try to provide information and remind visitors and prospective visitors about their products. Marketing communication should have some things that are closely related. First, the product. The special thing about the products owned by Bogor Botanical Garden is a characteristic of history, atmosphere, scenery, and tourist education about plants that are not owned by other places. Second, it's easy to get the product. The location of the Bogor Botanical Garden is very strategic in the middle of Bogor City, information about Bogor Botanical Garden can be accessed easily through the internet. Third, the opportunity for consumers to negotiate, especially about the price. Bogor Botanical Garden held discounts for several products such as the sale of plants through olive stores, promos for members, free shipment, and t-shirt gifts for the purchase of two lebaran hampers.

The next core concept of CMC theory is that mediated means transmitting messages that act as mediums. In the implementation of Bogor Botanical Garden the media used is social media. The Bogor Botanical Garden has several social media that aim to conduct marketing communication. The last concept is a computer that acts as a tool. For example, a computer that uses digital technology. Bogor Botanical Garden applies this one of its programs, namely the virtual education tour de Kebun Raya paid which utilizes the video conference zoom application. In implementation, Bogor Botanical Garden uses a camera to record the tour and visitors use a laptop or smartphone to watch it.

CMC has view form, researcher sees that Bogor Botanical Garden applied some forms such as:

First is social media, the Bogor Botanical Garden has several social media, namely web pages, Instagram, twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and ticktock. Social media is an application that is widely used by people today. By using social media, Bogor Botanical Garden in establishing communication even though it does not meet face to face with its visitors.

The second form is instant messaging that can be used as a messaging application. Bogor Botanical Garden applies this when conducting a live sale of plants, because for those who are interested can contact the contact through the WhatsApp application.

The third video conference, this form is done before botanical garden to communicate with certain groups. One of the Bogor Botanical Garden programs that apply this form is a virtual education class, where visitors who want to learn about gardening can do virtually in their respective places using video conferences.

Another form of CMC that Bogor Botanical Garden does is email. Email is one form of CMC, with the existing feedback, notes not obtained directly at that time. An example of this CMC form in the Bogor Botanical Garden is on the web page provided an email address that can be used by visitors, stakeholders, or anyone who wants to establish more official and personal communication can use email.

IV. CONCLUSION

The conclusion obtained from this study is that it is true that the covid-19 pandemic has a big impact on the tourism industry. The Bogor Botanical Garden as a tourist spot experienced the impact because it needed to limit the number of visitors even had to close while following the rules of the central government and local government. The Bogor Botanical Garden strives to be able to survive during the covid-19 pandemic. The effort is made to utilize social media as a marketing communication tool. Marketing communication using social media is in accordance with the assumption of CMC theory that communicates to visitors and prospective visitors using social media.

The Bogor Botanical Garden has six social media whose main purpose is for marketing communication, assisted by the use of technology and information that is trending among the public. The forms of CMC used by Bogor Botanical Garden are social media, instant messaging, namely WhatsApp, video conference, and email. Researchers want to provide advice on income alternatives to Bogor Botanical Gardens, namely by utilizing YouTube, social media by creating interesting content because the resources and parks in the Bogor Botanical Garden have uniqueness, distinctiveness, and science about plants.

V. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors are grateful to the Bogor Botanical Garden, Mr. Zaenal Arifin as a General Manager Corporate Communication and Security PT Mitra Natura Raya Bogor Botanical Garden, and all people that helped researcher made this research.

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