Social Media Marketing Dynamics Towards *User Generated Content* : A Qualitative Approach to Content Reach, Paid Advertising, *Endorsements* , and *Hashtags* at *Dairyland On The Valley*

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Abstract : *The development of social media has transformed tourism marketing strategies into participatory and experience-based communication. User Generated Content (UGC) plays a crucial role as it is perceived as more authentic and credible than official promotional content. This study aims to analyze the dynamics of social media marketing in encouraging UGC creation at Dairyland On The Valley, focusing on content reach, paid advertising, endorsements, and hashtag utilization. A qualitative case study approach was employed through in-depth interviews, observation, and social media content analysis. The findings reveal that content reach remains fluctuating and momentum-dependent. Paid advertising and endorsements increase visibility but have not effectively encouraged sustainable user participation. The official hashtags are not consistently used, limiting structured UGC aggregation. Supporting factors include the destination's visual appeal and interactive experience, while inhibiting factors include low user awareness and limited participatory strategies. The study concludes that social media marketing success depends not only on visibility but also on participatory integration strategies.*

Keywords: *Content Reach ; Endorsement; Paid Advertising; Social Media Marketing; User Generated Content.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has driven significant changes in communication, consumption behavior, and marketing strategies of organizations across various sectors, including tourism and the creative industry. Social media today serves not only as a means of sharing information but also as a strategic space for building image, expanding *audience reach* , and sustainably increasing audience engagement (2023, 2021).

These changes require organizations to adapt their marketing strategies to align with the characteristics and dynamics of social media. Social media marketing enables two-way interactions between organizations and *their audiences* . These interactions provide organizations with opportunities to build closer relationships with users through relevant, engaging, and participatory content (Perkebunan & Papua, n.d.). Social media plays a crucial role in shaping destination perceptions, disseminating tourism experiences, and influencing potential tourists' visit decisions (Quillian & Hexel, 2016).

One form of user participation in social media marketing is user-generated content (UGC). *User-generated content* is content produced independently by users, such as photos, videos, reviews, and comments shared through digital platforms (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). This content has a high level of credibility because it is sourced from real user experiences, so it is often considered more authentic than official promotional content created by organizations

(Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). *User-generated content* plays a strategic role in building trust and interest among potential visitors. Tourists often use *user-generated content* as a primary source of information before making a decision to visit because it reflects the real experiences and personal views of previous visitors (Filieri et al., 2015).

A tourist destination's ability to drive user-generated content is a key indicator of successful social media marketing. Increasingly fierce competition among tourist destinations, particularly in Central Java, is driving destination managers to optimize their digital marketing strategies. One emerging educational tourism destination in the region is *Dairyland On The Valley* Bawen, Semarang. This destination implements a family and educational tourism concept by offering a modern farm experience, educational rides, and engaging visuals to share on social media. These characteristics offer significant potential for *Dairyland On The Valley* to utilize social media marketing as an experiential marketing tool *(* Schmitt, 1999).

Dairyland On The Valley 's social media content . Content published through the destination's official account typically fluctuates in reach and depends on specific moments, such as holiday seasons or special promotions. This indicates that the content distribution strategy is not yet fully optimized in reaching a broad and sustainable *audience . As a result, the content's potential to generate interaction and encourage visitors to produce user-generated content* has not been fully utilized. The use of paid advertising and *endorsements* has not been fully integrated with the goal of increasing user participation. Paid advertising is more oriented towards increasing visibility and visitor numbers, but not directly directed at encouraging visitors to create and share their own content. This results in *user-generated content* that is temporary and unsustainable in the long term. The success of social media marketing is not only determined by the existence of an official destination account, but also by the content's ability to reach a broad *audience . Content reach* indicates the extent to which content can be seen, accessed, and interacted with by social media users (Zhang, 2010). Content with high reach has a greater opportunity to encourage *user engagement* and the creation of *user-generated content* . Content reach is influenced by various strategies, such as paid advertising *,* endorsements *,* and *hashtag use* . Paid advertising allows organizations to target specific *audiences based on demographic characteristics, interests, and user digital behavior (Belch & Belch, 2021).*

This strategy is considered effective in increasing content visibility, but it does not always guarantee active user participation in the form of *user-generated content* . The *endorsement strategy* through *influencers* has become a widely used approach in social media marketing. *Influencers* have the ability to influence the attitudes and behaviors of followers

due to the established relationship of trust and emotional closeness (Freberg et al., 2011). *Endorsement content* delivered in a narrative and authentic manner has the potential to encourage *audiences* to interact and share their own experiences. However, the effectiveness of endorsements depends heavily on the suitability of *the influencer's image* to the characteristics of the tourist destination (Lou & Yuan, 2019).

Utilizing hashtags is also a crucial strategy for increasing organic content reach. *Hashtags* serve as a content grouping tool, making it easier for users to find information based on specific topics (Social et al., 2015). Using official hashtags can help collect and display *user-generated content* in a structured manner. However, inconsistent or irrelevant hashtag use can reduce the effectiveness of user reach and engagement. *Dairyland On The Valley* faced challenges in optimally integrating these various social media marketing strategies. Although the destination boasts strong visual appeal and a compelling tourism experience, not all visitors were motivated to share their experiences on social media or use the destination's official hashtag. This situation indicates a gap between the potential of digital marketing and the realization of user participation in generating *user-generated content* (Hutchinson et al., 2014).

Dynamic changes in social media algorithms also affect the reach and visibility of content. Algorithms typically prioritize content with high engagement and strong user relevance (Kietzmann et al., 2011). Destination managers need to understand algorithm dynamics to ensure effective and sustainable social media marketing strategies. Previous research generally examined the influence of social media marketing on visitor interest or purchasing decisions using a quantitative approach. However, research that explores the perceptions, experiences, and practices involved in the process of creating *user-generated content* is still limited, particularly in the context of educational tourism destinations. A qualitative approach is relevant because it allows researchers to understand phenomena contextually and holistically (2023, 2021).

The qualitative approach in this study allows for an in-depth exploration of how content outreach, paid advertising, *endorsements* , and *hashtag strategies* are understood and implemented at *Dairyland On The Valley* . Through in-depth interviews, *observations* , and social media content analysis, this study is expected to identify factors that encourage or hinder the creation of *user-generated content* . The results of this study are expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of digital marketing studies and practical contributions for tourism destination managers in designing more effective and participatory social media marketing strategies.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method to deeply understand the dynamics of social media marketing in encouraging the formation of *User Generated Content* (UGC) at *Dairyland On The Valley* . The qualitative approach was chosen because this research focuses on the meaning, process, and experience of social media actors and users, rather than on quantitative measurements. Case studies were used because the research focused on one specific object, thus allowing for a more comprehensive and in-depth contextual exploration. The research was conducted at *Dairyland On The Valley* , Semarang Regency. Research informants were determined using a *purposive sampling technique* , namely the selection of informants based on considerations of relevance to the research focus. Informants consisted of *Marketing Officers* as designers and implementers of social media marketing strategies, *Content Creators* as parties who produce digital content, and tourists as social media users who have the potential to produce UGC. The selection of these three informants aimed to obtain perspectives from the managerial side, content production, and user participation.

Data collection techniques were conducted through *in-depth interviews* , observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner to gather information regarding content outreach strategies, the use of paid advertising, *endorsements* , *hashtags , and responses to UGC. Observations were made on Dairyland On The Valley's* social media account activities , including posting patterns, interaction levels, and forms of user participation. Documentation in the form of content screenshots, *engagement data* , and promotional archives were used to strengthen the analysis results. Data analysis used a model that includes data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions and verification. Data reduction was carried out by selecting and categorizing information relevant to the research theme. Next, the data was presented in the form of descriptive narratives and categorization tables to facilitate interpretation. The final stage was carried out by drawing conclusions based on the patterns and relationships between the themes found. Data validity was maintained through triangulation of sources and techniques, namely by comparing interview results between informants and matching them with observation and documentation results. With this approach, this study is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of social media marketing in encouraging user participation through *User Generated Content* in a sustainable manner.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. research results.

Strategic Aspects	Key Findings	Impact on Visibility	Impact on UGC	Main Problems	Implications
Content Reach	Upload performance fluctuates; peak during weekends, holidays, and events; visual content & experiences are more engaging	Increase engagement and content accessibility	Not consistently encouraging user participation	There is no clear call to participation; it depends on the momentum.	Need an experience-based content strategy + call to action for UGC
Paid Ads	Effectively increase awareness and profile visits	Exposure increases rapidly and in a targeted manner	Not significantly generating UGC	One-way and promotion-oriented	Need to integrate advertising with participatory campaigns
Influencer Endorsement	Increase exposure and positive perception of the destination	Attract new audiences and strengthen image	The impact of UGC is short-term	Not integrated with participation program	Need appropriate influencer selection + UGC campaign
Use of Hashtags	The official hashtag is not used consistently by visitors	Helps with content categorization if used	UGC is difficult to categorize and track	The gap between management strategies and user behavior	Need for hashtag standardization and user education
The Potential of Experiential Marketing	High visual appeal and interactive experience	Increase emotional engagement	Huge potential for UGC	Not yet integrated into digital strategy	Need a co-creation-based digital ecosystem

The results of the study indicate that the dynamics of social media marketing *at Dairyland On The Valley* are influenced by content reach, paid advertising, *endorsements* , and the use of *hashtags* in encouraging the formation of *user-generated content* (UGC). These four elements play a role in increasing destination visibility, but have not been fully integrated to build sustainable user participation. In terms of content reach, the findings indicate that the performance of posts on the destination's official account is fluctuating and highly dependent on momentum such as weekends, holiday seasons, and certain *events* . Content that features interactive experiences and engaging visuals tends to achieve higher *engagement than informative content. However, this increased reach has not consistently resulted in UGC from*

visitors. This finding aligns with Zhang (2010) who stated that content reach determines the level of accessibility and opportunities for audience interaction . Furthermore, social media algorithms that prioritize content with high *engagement* (Kietzmann et al., 2011) explain why experience-based content is more easily responded to. However, high visibility does not automatically encourage active participation without a clear call-to-action strategy.

The use of paid advertising has proven effective in increasing *awareness* and profile visits, especially during specific promotional periods. This supports the view of Belch and Belch (2021) that *paid advertising* allows organizations to target specific audiences and increase exposure quickly. However, advertising is more oriented towards increasing visitor numbers than encouraging the creation of UGC. This finding suggests that promotional strategies are still predominantly one-way, even though social media marketing demands a dialogic and participatory approach. *Endorsement strategies* through *influencers* have an impact on increasing exposure and positive perceptions of destinations, but the effects tend to be short-term. This aligns with research by Freberg et al. (2011), which states that *influencers* have the power to influence *audience attitudes* through relationships of trust. However, the effectiveness *of endorsements* depends heavily on the fit between *the influencer's image* and the destination's character (Lou & Yuan, 2019).

Without integration with participatory campaigns, the impact *of endorsements* does not consistently increase UGC. Visitors have also not consistently used official *hashtags , resulting in suboptimal UGC grouping. Hashtags* serve as a categorization tool and expand organic reach (Social et al., 2015). This inconsistency indicates a gap between management strategies and actual user behavior on social media. Research findings indicate that *Dairyland On The Valley* has significant potential for generating UGC through its visual appeal and interactive experiences. This aligns with the concept of *experiential marketing* (Schmitt, 1999), which emphasizes that meaningful experiences can drive consumer engagement. However, without integrating content reach strategies, *paid advertising* , *endorsements* , and *hashtags* within a participatory framework, this potential remains untapped.

The results of this study confirm that the success of social media marketing is not only determined by the level of visibility, but by the destination's ability to build a digital ecosystem that encourages *co-creation* and active user engagement on an ongoing basis.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the dynamics of social media marketing at *Dairyland On The Valley* indicate that the implemented strategies have been able to increase the visibility and exposure of the destination, but have not been fully optimal in encouraging sustainable user participation in the form of *User Generated Content* (UGC). Content reach has been shown to increase during certain moments such as weekends and holiday seasons, while paid advertising and *endorsements* are effective in expanding *awareness* and attracting *audience attention* in the short term. However, this increased visibility has not consistently resulted in structured and sustainable UGC. The use of official *hashtags* has not been consistently implemented by visitors, and participatory invitation strategies are still limited. This indicates that the marketing approach still tends to be oriented towards exposure rather than building participatory engagement. The findings of this study confirm that the success of social media marketing in the context of tourist destinations is determined not only by the reach and intensity of promotions, but also by the manager's ability to build a digital ecosystem that encourages *co-creation and active audience* engagement . Therefore, the integration of more participatory strategies, such as consistent hashtag-based campaigns, explicit invitations to share experiences, and a system of appreciation for user content is needed so that UGC can develop authentically and sustainably.

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