

ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION CHANNELS OF THE NORTH SUMATRA TOURISM OFFICE IN PROMOTING THE "SUMUT TOURISM FESTIVAL 2024" EVENT FOR STUDENTS OF THE D-IV MICE STUDY PROGRAM AT THE MEDAN STATE POLYTECHNIC

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Keywords

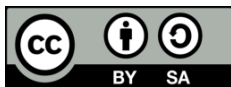
Communication Effectiveness;
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Abstract

This research aims to analyze the effectiveness of the media and communication channels used by the North Sumatra Tourism Office in promoting the 2024 North Sumatra Tourism Festival event to students in the Diploma IV MICE Study Program at the Medan State Polytechnic. A quantitative descriptive approach was used, with 170 MICE students selected through random sampling. Data collection was conducted through a questionnaire with four main indicators: ease of access to promotional media, effectiveness of digital media in attracting young audiences, consistency of information across platforms, and suitability of communication channels to audience characteristics. Data were analyzed through validity, reliability, and descriptive frequency analysis. The results showed that the effectiveness of the North Sumatra Tourism Office's media and communication channels was categorized as good, with an overall average score of 3.87. Digital media such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube were considered the most effective because they were able to reach students quickly, engagingly, and interactively. This study concludes that the effectiveness of tourism public communication is determined not only by the content of the message, but also by the suitability of the media and delivery method to the behavior and needs of the audience.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The development of the tourism industry in today's digital era requires local governments to adapt to more innovative and integrated communication patterns. As one of the leading sectors in North Sumatra Province, tourism has significant potential to support regional economic growth, create jobs, and strengthen local cultural identity. However, the effectiveness of tourism promotion and information dissemination often depends on the public communication strategy employed, including the selection of appropriate media and communication channels.



The North Sumatra Tourism Office, through its "Sumut Tourism Festival 2024" event calendar, seeks to enhance the region's image while promoting local tourism potential through activities based on culture, arts, and the creative economy. This festival also serves as a strategic momentum in preparation for the 21st Aceh-Sumut National Sports Week (PON) in 2024, which is expected to attract both domestic and international tourists. In this context, the effectiveness of communication media—both digital and conventional—is a key factor in reaching a wider audience and increasing public participation.

According to Mulyana (2023), communication effectiveness is influenced by three main aspects: the message conveyed, the media or channels used, and the characteristics of the target audience. In modern public communication practices, combining digital media such as Instagram, YouTube, and online news portals with conventional media such as billboards, brochures, and print media remains a primary strategy for amplifying message exposure. However, the effectiveness of each medium needs to be evaluated to ensure that communication truly impacts audience understanding and interest in tourism activities.

Students of the Diploma IV MICE (Meeting, Incentive, Convention, and Exhibition) study program at the Medan State Polytechnic are a strategic group to be studied in this research. As aspiring professionals in the field of event management and tourism promotion, they are not only recipients of information but also potential actors in supporting tourism destination promotion. An analysis of MICE students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the media and communication channels used by the North Sumatra Tourism Office can provide a clear picture of the extent to which public promotional messages are optimally conveyed.

Previous research conducted by Prasetya (2018) in Malang City and Mingkid (2015) in Manado City showed that the effectiveness of tourism communication media is significantly influenced by the media's suitability to the audience's characteristics and the government's ability to manage content in an engaging and interactive manner. Given the increasingly rapid development of information technology, this research is relevant to examine how the North Sumatra Tourism Office utilizes various communication channels to disseminate information about tourism events, as well as their effectiveness, according to the perceptions of young audiences exposed to digital media daily.

Against this backdrop, this study was conducted to analyze the effectiveness of the media and communication channels used by the North Sumatra Tourism Office in promoting the "Sumut Tourism Festival 2024" to students of the Diploma IV MICE (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) program at the Medan State Polytechnic. The results of this study are expected to provide strategic recommendations for optimizing public communication in the regional tourism sector and strengthening synergy between the government and educational institutions to create more effective, creative, and sustainable tourism promotions.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a descriptive quantitative approach. This approach was chosen because it aims to objectively describe the effectiveness of the media and communication channels used by the North Sumatra Tourism Office in promoting the 2024 North Sumatra Tourism Festival event, based on respondents' perceptions. This approach allows researchers to measure the level of media effectiveness based on numerical data obtained from questionnaires, which are then statistically processed.

The research was conducted at the Medan State Polytechnic, with students of the MICE (Meeting, Incentive, Convention, and Exhibition) Diploma IV study program as the subjects. MICE students were selected as respondents because they possess knowledge and direct involvement in tourism and event management, enabling them to provide a more relevant assessment of the communication strategies employed by the Tourism Office. The number of respondents in this study was 170 active students, selected using a total sampling technique, as the population size was within reasonable limits for the entire sample.

The types of data used consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through offline questionnaire distribution to MICE students. The questionnaire was constructed using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) containing statements about students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the North Sumatra Tourism Office's media and communication channels. Secondary data were obtained from official Tourism Office documents, reports on the 2024 North Sumatra Tourism Festival, and academic literature related to public communication and tourism promotion. The research instrument consisted of four questions describing the "Media and Communication Channels" indicators, including:

- (1) ease of access to promotional media,
- (2) the effectiveness of digital media in attracting young audiences,
- (3) consistency of message delivery across various platforms, and
- (4) the suitability of communication channels to audience characteristics.

Before use, the questionnaire was tested through validity and reliability tests using SPSS version 26 software. The test results showed that all statement items had a correlation value (r count) > 0.150 and a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.880, thus declared valid and reliable. The data analysis technique was carried out in several stages. First, the questionnaire data were coded and tabulated to facilitate the processing process. Second, a descriptive analysis was conducted to calculate the frequency, percentage, and average values for each statement item. The results of this analysis were used to determine the level of effectiveness of media and communication channels based on respondents' perceptions. The average value (mean) was then interpreted using the effectiveness assessment criteria, namely:

- 1.00–1.80 = very ineffective;
- 1.81–2.60 = ineffective;
- 2.61–3.40 = moderately effective;
- 3.41–4.20 = effective; and
- 4.21–5.00 = very effective.

In addition to statistical analysis, the research results were also analyzed interpretively, linking the quantitative data obtained with public communication theories, such as Effendy's (2003) theory on communication effectiveness and Rogers' (1983) theory on Diffusion of Innovations, which emphasizes the importance of selecting communication channels appropriate to the characteristics of the message recipients.

This research was conducted from August to October 2025, encompassing instrument development, testing, data collection, data processing, and final report preparation. This method is expected to provide a clear picture of the extent to which the North Sumatra Tourism Office's media and communication channels effectively disseminate tourism promotional messages to MICE students, while also providing strategic input for the future development of tourism public communication.

3. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

Descriptive Result

Based on the results of processing questionnaire data on 170 respondents from D-IV MICE students at the Medan State Polytechnic, the Media and Communication Channels indicators were measured through four main statements that describe respondents' perceptions of the media used by the North Sumatra Tourism Office in promoting the 2024 North Sumatra Tourism Festival. Overall, this indicator achieved an average score of 3.87, which is considered good. These results indicate that the North Sumatra Tourism Office's selection of media and communication channels was deemed appropriate and effective in reaching a young audience.

Table 1. Frequency Distribution, Percentage, and Average Value of Media and Communication Channel Indicators

No.	Statement	Average	Category
1	The promotional media used by the North Sumatra Tourism Office are easily accessible to the public.	3.83	Good
2	Digital media (such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube) are effective in attracting a young audience.	3.95	Good
3	Tourism promotional information is delivered consistently across various media platforms.	3.80	Good
4	The communication channels used are aligned with the needs and habits of the target audience.	3.88	Good
Average Total		3.87	Good

Easily Accessible Promotional Media

The analysis results show that indicator 1 obtained an average score of 3.83, with the majority of respondents (68.3%) agreeing that the promotional media used by the North Sumatra Tourism Office is easily accessible. This finding indicates that the government agency has successfully utilized various communication channels to reach the wider public, both through digital media such as the official website and social media, as well as conventional media such as billboards, brochures, and local media. This high level of information accessibility reflects that public communication efforts have been carried out openly and efficiently.

In the context of tourism public communication, easy access to information is crucial. MICE students who participated in the study generally relied on social media such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok, as well as the official website of the North Sumatra Tourism Office, to obtain information regarding promotional activities and the schedule for the 2024 North Sumatra Tourism Festival. These digital platforms are considered to provide easy access to information because they can be accessed anytime and anywhere via mobile devices. Furthermore, the concise, visual, and interactive presentation of messages makes digital media more engaging than conventional media, which tends to be static and one-way.

Easy access to tourism information not only plays a role in increasing audience knowledge but also fosters a positive perception of government institutions as credible and open sources of information. In the context of public communication, ease of access is a crucial indicator in assessing the government's ability to carry out its transparency and information services to the public. According to Mulyana (2020), communication effectiveness is measured not only by the success of message delivery but also by the ease with which audiences can obtain, understand, and utilize those messages according to their needs.

Furthermore, ease of media access also demonstrates a transformation in government communication patterns, which are now more participatory and oriented toward public needs. Local governments no longer act solely as senders of messages but also as facilitators, providing a space for the public to interact, provide feedback, and even participate in disseminating tourism information through their personal social media platforms. This practice demonstrates a more dynamic communication process, where the public is no longer an object but rather a part of the public communication chain.

Thus, the ease of media access indicator not only reflects the technical success of information dissemination but also reflects a high level of public engagement in regional tourism promotion programs. Good accessibility allows promotional messages such as event schedules, activity themes, and local cultural values to be received more widely, strengthen audience interest in tourism activities, and ultimately contribute to improving the positive image of the North Sumatra Tourism Office in the eyes of the public, especially among the younger generation who are the main target of this public communication.

The Effectiveness of Digital Media in Attracting Young Audiences

The analysis results show that indicator 2 achieved an average score of 3.95, the highest compared to the other three indicators in the media and communication channels dimension. This data demonstrates that the majority of respondents—more than 70% of MICE students—agreed that the digital media used by the North Sumatra Tourism Office was effective in attracting their attention to the 2024 North Sumatra Tourism Festival.

This high score is due to the characteristics of MICE students, who are very familiar with information technology and social media usage on a daily basis. The younger generation tends to be more responsive to messages that are presented visually, concisely, and engagingly, making short video-based promotional content on Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube the most effective communication channels. These media not only serve as a means of disseminating information but also as a social interaction space where audiences can provide feedback, repost, or even participate in creating content that supports tourism promotion activities.

The effectiveness of digital media in this context is also related to the appeal of the message. MICE students found visual content such as photos of tourist destinations, video documentation of festival activities, and participant testimonials to be a more engaging form of communication than formal text or conventional announcements. Content that showcases the lively atmosphere of festivals, community participation, and elements of local culture can foster a sense of pride and curiosity, ultimately encouraging interest in participating in or promoting similar activities.

From a communication theory perspective, these results reinforce Rogers' (1983) Diffusion of Innovations theory, which argues that the success of a message is highly dependent on the media's suitability for the recipient's characteristics. Digital media enables rapid information diffusion due to its viral nature and ease of sharing. Information about the 2024 North Sumatra Tourism Festival can spread widely in just a matter of hours through posts, comments, or tagging between users.

Furthermore, according to Nasrullah (2015), social media serves as a new space in mass communication that allows audiences to play an active role. In the context of this research, MICE students are not only recipients of promotional messages but also subjects who contribute to expanding the reach of communication through their digital activities. They can re-upload promotional content, create short reviews, or even re-live festival activities through their personal accounts. This demonstrates a paradigm shift in public communication, leading to a more participatory and collaborative approach.

From an institutional perspective, the high effectiveness of digital media also demonstrates that the North Sumatra Tourism Office has been able to adapt its communication strategy to changing public information behavior. Utilizing social media for tourism promotion not only reduces publication costs but also increases audience reach without regional boundaries. For MICE students, digital media serves not only as a source of information but also as a practical learning tool that supports their expertise in events and tourism marketing communications.

Overall, these indicators demonstrate that the use of digital media has successfully increased the effectiveness of public communication. Interactive social media provides a space for the Tourism Office to strengthen its positive image among the younger generation, build emotional connection, and raise awareness of the importance of regional tourism. Thus, digital media is not only a tool for disseminating information but also a strategic tool for building long-term relationships between the government and the public, especially educated young people who will be the main drivers of the tourism sector in the future.

Information Consistency Across Media Platforms

The analysis results show that indicator 3 obtained an average score of 3.80, which is considered good. However, this score is the lowest compared to other indicators in the media and communication channels dimension. This indicates that the majority of respondents considered the information conveyed by the North Sumatra Tourism Office to be consistent, but there were still differences in the timing of posts, presentation style, and depth of messages across the various media platforms used.

MICE students, as critical respondents, noted that promotional information for the 2024 North Sumatra Tourism Festival was sometimes updated more quickly on social media platforms like Instagram than on the official website. This indicates an imbalance in coordination between platforms, potentially compromising the integrity of the intended message. In the context of public communication, information consistency is crucial for maintaining an institution's credibility. Inconsistencies between media can cause confusion and reduce the effectiveness of message delivery.

According to Cangara (2019), consistency in public communication is part of an integrated communication strategy, namely the alignment between message content, timing, and media used to create a shared perception in the minds of the audience. Consistent messaging will strengthen public trust and minimize misunderstandings about the institution's communication intentions. When each media channel conveys a consistent message, both visually and verbally, communication effectiveness increases because the audience receives a coherent image and message.

This view is reinforced by Kotler and Keller (2019), who emphasize that in modern marketing communications strategies, integration across media platforms is key to building brand awareness and image. The same principle applies to tourism public communications. When the Tourism Office is able to align promotional messages across various media, both digital and conventional, audience trust in the institution will increase.

Furthermore, Wardani (2021) emphasized that in the digital media era, consistency relates not only to message content but also to the rhythm and frequency of publication. Regularly updated information across all media channels reflects the institution's professionalism and maintains public attention. If the upload rhythm is inconsistent, young audiences—especially students—will more easily lose interest due to their fast-paced and dynamic information consumption patterns.

In the context of this research, the North Sumatra Tourism Office has actually taken positive steps by utilizing various digital platforms, but still needs to strengthen cross-media content management to ensure the 2024 North Sumatra Tourism Festival promotional message is delivered

synchronously. By implementing an integrated communications system, each media channel can support each other, creating a unified narrative, and strengthening the image of North Sumatra tourism in the public eye.

Furthermore, Susanto and Rahmawati (2022) explain that consistency of messaging across media is a form of branding alignment, a unified message that serves to maintain the integrity of an institution's identity. In this case, consistent tourism promotions will strengthen North Sumatra's identity as a leading cultural and tourism destination. Therefore, the Tourism Office needs to establish editorial guidelines and a communications calendar to ensure that information dissemination across platforms is uniform, orderly, and professional.

Thus, indicator 3 illustrates that the North Sumatra Tourism Office's communication effectiveness is already in the good category, but still requires improvement in synchronization between platforms. This step is crucial to ensure that all promotional messages delivered, whether through social media, the official website, or print publications, continue to reflect a unified identity and communication vision. Consistency in information delivery will strengthen public trust and increase the effectiveness of tourism promotions in the eyes of younger audiences.

Suitability of Communication Channels to Audience Characteristics

The analysis results show that indicator 4 obtained an average score of 3.88, which is considered good. This score indicates that the majority of respondents, students of the Diploma IV MICE Study Program at the Medan State Polytechnic, assessed that the communication channels used by the North Sumatra Tourism Office were appropriate for their needs and habits as a young audience. In other words, the agency's communication strategy has adapted to the communication style of the digital generation, which tends to be fast-paced, visual, and interaction-based.

MICE students, as a group of respondents, represent a segment of society that is highly adaptable to developments in communication technology. They not only consume information but also actively participate in the dissemination and creation of content through social media. Therefore, effective communication channels for them are media that enable direct engagement, such as Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and interactive websites. These media provide a space for users to interact quickly through likes, comments, and shares, which constitute a form of real participation in public communication.

According to Sukmono and Handayani (2021), the effectiveness of communication in the digital era depends heavily on the ability of message managers to understand audience behavior patterns and adapt the media used to their information consumption habits. Communication channels that don't align with the lifestyles and preferences of young users will struggle to capture attention, even if the message is informative. Therefore, in the context of tourism promotion, media customization is key to optimal message reception.

This view aligns with Nugraha and Rachmawati (2020), who explain that the younger generation has a strong preference for visual and interactive media, as these provide a more personalized and enjoyable communication experience. In the context of this research, the North Sumatra Tourism Office successfully selected digital media relevant to the characteristics of MICE students, resulting in well-received promotional messages for the 2024 North Sumatra Tourism Festival and their interest in participating.

Furthermore, Wardhana (2019) states that the suitability of communication channels is also closely related to the concept of audience-centered communication, where messages and media are fully tailored to the social, cultural, and psychological backgrounds of the audience. In this regard, tech-savvy MICE students require a participatory, rather than instructive, communication approach. The use of social media as a primary promotional tool has opened up a dialogue between the government and the public, replacing the one-way communication model commonly used by public institutions.

From a practical perspective, the appropriateness of these communication channels demonstrates that the North Sumatra Tourism Office has adapted to the communication patterns of modern society. The use of digital platforms with light, visual, and interactive message formats creates a closer emotional connection between the agency and the younger public. This aligns with Wibisono's (2022) findings, which state that the success of public communication in the digital era is determined by the agency's ability to interact directly with its audience and adapt its communication language to the social context of its users.

Therefore, indicator 4 demonstrates that the North Sumatra Tourism Office's communication strategy is on the right track, as it has successfully adapted its communication channels to the key

characteristics of a dynamic and interactive young audience. This effort not only increases the effectiveness of message delivery but also strengthens the emotional bond between the government and the younger generation as strategic partners in regional tourism development.

The alignment between media and audience characteristics reflects an adaptive, participatory, and future-oriented form of public communication. Through this approach, the North Sumatra Tourism Office can continue to expand the reach of its messages, increase public participation, and build a positive image as an institution responsive to social change and current communication technology.

4. CONCLUSION

The results of the study indicate that the effectiveness of the media and communication channels used by the North Sumatra Tourism Office in promoting the 2024 North Sumatra Tourism Festival is in the good category with an average score of 3.87. This finding confirms that the communication strategy implemented is relevant to the needs and behavior of young audiences, especially students of the D-IV MICE Study Program at the Medan State Polytechnic. Digital media such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube have proven to be the most effective communication channels in reaching and attracting audience interest due to their visual, interactive, and easily accessible nature. The use of these media has succeeded in creating a form of participatory two-way communication, where the audience not only receives messages but also plays a role in disseminating tourism information independently. This indicates that the local government's public communication strategy has moved towards a more open, adaptive, and collaborative pattern. Consistency in message delivery across platforms and the suitability of communication channels to audience characteristics also strengthen the positive image of the Tourism Office as an institution that is responsive to developments in information technology. High information accessibility is clear evidence of the application of the principle of public openness in government communication practices. Overall, this study concludes that the success of tourism public communication is determined not only by the content of the message, but also by the suitability of the media and the method of delivery to the characteristics of the target community. Communication effectiveness will be strengthened when public institutions are able to integrate digital media strategies with a deep understanding of audience behavior. Thus, the North Sumatra Tourism Office has demonstrated the right steps in developing modern, participatory, and sustainable tourism communications, thereby strengthening North Sumatra's image as a leading destination at the national level.

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