Unveiling Pekon Way Empulau's Tourism Potential: West Lampung Youth's Creative Training in Destination Promotion

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Article Info	Abstract
	West Pesisir Regency has tourist attractions that are not yet widely known, both domestically and internationally. One area with great tourism potential is Pekon Way Empulau Ulu, West Lampung, which boasts the natural beauty of highlands, beaches, and a rich cultural heritage. The aim of this community service activity is to empower local youth through creative content creation training as an effort to promote the tourism potential of the region. The method used in this service involves intensive training on creating and packaging attractive digital content for social media, such as photos, videos, and creative narratives. The results of the training showed an improvement in the youth's skills in producing effective promotional content. This activity also raised awareness among the youth about the importance of technology in advancing local tourism. Its implications are that this activity is expected to increase tourists' awareness of Pekon Way Empulau Ulu's tourism potential and encourage local economic growth through broader promotion on social media. Furthermore, ongoing collaboration between the youth and local government is necessary to maintain the momentum of tourism development.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the sectors most affected when the COVID-19 pandemic hit the world. Before the pandemic, Indonesia's tourism sector contributed directly to the GDP by 4.8 percent in 2019, an increase of 0.3 percent from the previous year (Kemenparekraf, 2020). However, the pandemic led to restrictions on global travel, including in Indonesia, through the Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) policy. This significantly impacted the tourism sector, with a sharp decline in foreign tourist visits by 53.36 percent (BPS, 2020). On the other hand, this crisis also affected micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) dependent on tourism, resulting in the loss of millions of jobs (WTTC, 2020).

Despite the pandemic hitting the tourism sector, innovation and adaptation through information technology became solutions for recovery. Various previous studies, such as Chebli (2020), showed that the pandemic has changed tourist behavior, with tourists now tending to choose less crowded destinations, being more health-conscious, and preferring private travel. This study highlights the importance of using social media for tourism promotion, especially for lesser-known destinations. Alam (2021) also introduced a promotion strategy using the Third Wave Framework,

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which combines content-based, platform-based, and community-based strategies to enhance digital promotion.

Utilizing information technology is crucial to ensure tourism promotion continues effectively, providing the best information for tourists. Especially post-pandemic, society is considered to have a high level of stress and needs tourism, but with various considerations. As mentioned in previous research, (Chebli, 2020) explored the impact of COVID-19 on tourist behavior and identified motivations for these changes. The findings showed that COVID-19 significantly influenced tourist behavior, where tourists are now more likely to choose lesser-known tourist spots, avoid crowded places, prioritize health and cleanliness, and prefer private trips over group travel.

Social media can be leveraged to facilitate the promotion and publication of local potential in a region. Furthermore, the use of social media has significantly spread across various age groups, from teenagers to adults. Social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok are commonly used today. The YouTube platform, in particular, can act as a bridge between strangers, facilitating communication and enabling profile exchanges that create intimacy in the virtual world (Lange, 2007). This platform can be used to promote tourism through videos and images, which can be presented in the form of image posts, informative captions, videos, and running text, making it easier to promote tourism. Hanan and Putit (2014) also mention that social media contributes to promoting a tourist destination.

Several tourist locations in Lampung Province have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. One of these locations is Pekon Way Empulau Ulu in West Lampung Regency, Lampung Province. Therefore, the focus of the problem lies in (1) the tourism aspect still lacking promotion, due to the low role and participation of the community in tourism promotion. (2) The lack of promotional media to optimize tourism promotion, thus requiring training to empower youth in promoting the Way Empulau Ulu tourism area.

The purpose of this training activity is to provide additional knowledge on how to maximize technology and enhance the role of youth in tapping into their creativity to promote local tourism, especially in Pekon Way Empulau Ulu, West Lampung Regency. Additionally, it aims to promote tourism in Way Empulau Ulu, referring to the plans and strategies of the Creative Economy Agency (Bekraf), where the productive-age population can be directed to become high-quality creative individuals to drive creative economic development. The goal is to provide creative content training on social media to promote Way Empulau Ulu tourism.

The benefits of this activity are to empower the youth of Pekon Way Empulau Ulu to creatively produce tourism promotion content. To develop the creative economy, high-quality human resources (HR) with innovative abilities and high creativity are needed (Sugiarto, 2018). The second benefit is to synergize between Pekon officials and the youth to achieve the vision in the tourism sector of Pekon Way Empulau Ulu. Based on these problems, the purpose of this community service is to empower youth in promoting the tourist attractions of Pekon Way Empulau Ulu through creative content creation training.

METHOD

The type of community service activities designed to help address the problems experienced in Pekon Way Empulau Ulu, as a partner community, involves the implementation of several approaches, including the creative content training method for the youth of Pekon Way Empulau Ulu. This creative content training activity is divided into three stages: preparation, implementation, and monitoring. The following are the details of each stage conducted.
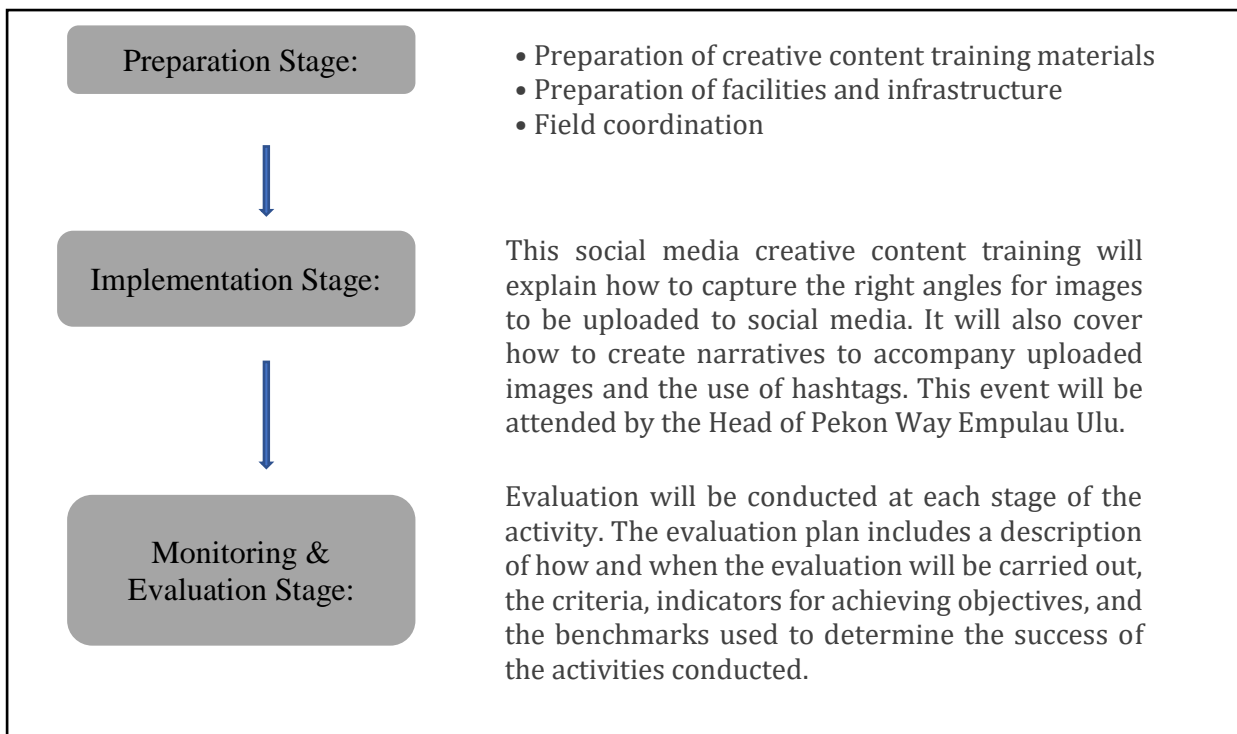
Preparation Stage:	• Preparation of creative content training materials • Preparation of facilities and infrastructure • Field coordination
Implementation Stage:	This social media creative content training will explain how to capture the right angles for images to be uploaded to social media. It will also cover how to create narratives to accompany uploaded images and the use of hashtags. This event will be attended by the Head of Pekon Way Empulau Ulu.
Monitoring & Evaluation Stage:	Evaluation will be conducted at each stage of the activity. The evaluation plan includes a description of how and when the evaluation will be carried out, the criteria, indicators for achieving objectives, and the benchmarks used to determine the success of the activities conducted.

FIGURE 1. Stages of Activity

This Community Service Program was held in Pekon Way Empulau Ulu, located in the Pesisir Barat Regency, Lampung. The target audience for this community engagement activity was the youth of Pekon Way Empulau Ulu, consisting of both male and female participants, totaling 23 individuals. The stages of the creative content training started with aligning perceptions about the tourism potential of Pekon Way Empulau Ulu. The next stage involved explaining the use of social media as a promotional tool for the tourism attractions in Pekon Way Empulau Ulu. Following that, the participants were taught techniques for capturing images to promote local tourism. Finally, the training concluded with techniques for video production to promote Pekon Way Empulau Ulu's tourism attractions.

FIGURE 2. Creative content creation training

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To achieve the vision of Lampung Barat Regency, which is "To create a civilized, morally noble, and prosperous society through the development of agriculture, plantations, forestry, and tourism," a program concept based on accurate data is needed, guided by the Strategic Plan of Lampung Barat Regency. The district has a population of 5,169 people and households, with a total area of 175.63 km² (17,563 hectares). The topography of Balik Bukit Subdistrict is mostly undulating, hilly, and mountainous, located at an altitude of 1,000 meters above sea level. Way Empulau Ulu is a village in Balik Bukit Subdistrict, with a population of 1,947 people and households, covering an area of 1,940 hectares.

Social media offers a variety of features that can help communities promote tourism. Features like captions, image effects, and camera options can make visuals more appealing and enhance the attractiveness of tourist sites. This makes social media an effective tool for tourism promotion, capable of reaching regional and international audiences due to its wide coverage.

During the community service in Pekon Way Empulau Ulu, training was provided on digital marketing strategies, focusing on the use of hashtags (#). The service process began with a pre-test on the use of social media features. The results showed that while the community was familiar with hashtags, they did not fully understand their function and purpose. Therefore, the focus of the training was on the deeper understanding of the hashtag feature.

In addition to content creation, the training also emphasized post-production strategies for promotional videos, such as using hashtags to make content easier to find, faster to discover, more targeted, and widely spread. On social media, hashtags (#) are often used as markers to group messages, making them easier to search. Hashtags play a role in social media marketing (Mahfouz, 2020), including:

1. Increasing engagement with followers,
2. Opportunities to build brand positioning,
3. Adding context to social media posts, and
4. Helping target audiences find the brand.

After the training, participants demonstrated an understanding of the materials and began practicing hashtag use, as seen in the following image..
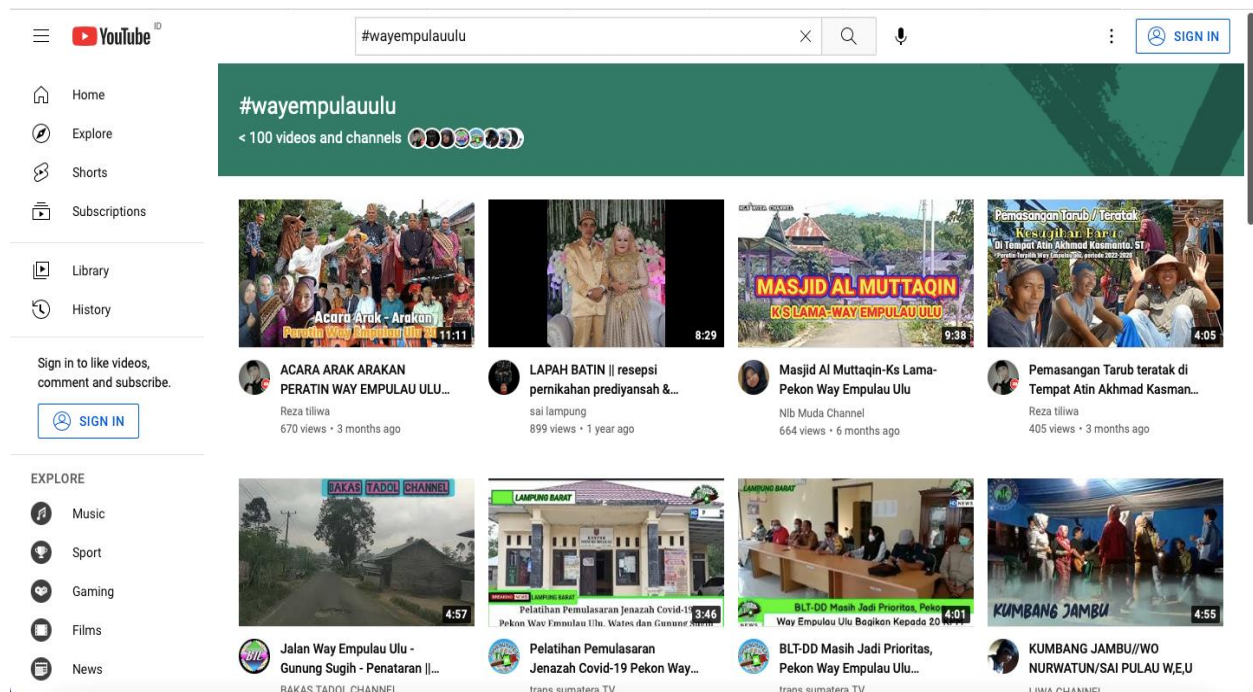

FIGURE 3. Hashtag use on Youtube content

CONCLUSION

This community service activity fostered and shaped a creative and innovative mindset among the youth of Pekon Way Empulau Ulu. When the youth develop strong competitiveness and creativity, they will help the surrounding community or the local government in efforts to promote the economy through tourism in Pekon Way Empulau Ulu.

SUGGESTIONS

A recommendation for this report is the creation of an official social media account managed by the Pekon Way Empulau Ulu village government, where the youth can serve as content creators. This would enable positive synergy and collaboration between the village government and the youth to boost tourism in Pekon Way Empulau Ulu.

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