

Digital Promotion of Naruu Beach, Nias through English Content on Instagram and TikTok

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Abstract

This study examines the role of English-language digital content on Instagram and TikTok in promoting Naruu Beach, Nias, as an emerging tourism destination. The rapid growth of visual-based social media has transformed destination marketing strategies, enabling lesser-known destinations to reach global audiences more effectively. Employing a qualitative descriptive research design supported by descriptive quantitative analysis, this study analyzes English-language promotional content published on Instagram and TikTok, focusing on content characteristics, storytelling strategies, visual presentation, and audience engagement metrics. Data were collected through systematic observation and documentation of relevant social media posts, including videos, captions, hashtags, and engagement indicators such as views, likes, comments, and shares. The findings indicate that the use of English as a global communication medium enhances international accessibility and destination visibility. Instagram content primarily contributes to destination image formation through visual aesthetics, while TikTok demonstrates stronger potential in expanding reach due to its algorithm-driven distribution and trend-based short videos. However, the results also reveal limitations in branding consistency, interactive engagement, and narrative depth. Despite these challenges, English-language short-form video content on Instagram and TikTok presents a cost-effective and strategic approach for promoting Naruu Beach in the global tourism market. This study contributes to digital tourism literature by providing empirical insights into social media-based promotion for emerging destinations and offers practical implications for sustainable destination marketing strategies.

Key Words: Digital Tourism Promotion, English-Language Content, Instagram, Tiktok, Emerging Destinations.

A. Introduction

The rapid development of digital technology has significantly transformed the global tourism industry, particularly in the way destinations are promoted and communicated to potential visitors. Traditional tourism promotion methods, such as printed brochures, television advertisements, and travel exhibitions, are increasingly being replaced or complemented by digital platforms that allow for interactive, visual, and real-time communication. Social media, in this context, has emerged as one of the most influential tools in destination marketing, enabling tourism stakeholders to reach global audiences with relatively low cost and high impact (Gretzel et al., 2020; Xiang et al., 2021).

Among various social media platforms, Instagram and TikTok have gained prominence due to their strong focus on visual and short-form video content. These platforms are particularly effective in shaping destination image and influencing travel intentions, as they allow users to experience destinations virtually through engaging photos, videos, and narratives (Liu et al., 2022). Instagram is widely recognized for its aesthetic-oriented content and its role in destination branding, while TikTok has rapidly become a powerful medium for viral tourism promotion through creative, entertaining, and trend-driven videos (Zeng et al., 2021). The algorithmic nature of these platforms further amplifies content reach, making them strategic tools for tourism promotion in the digital era.

Recent studies indicate that social media content significantly influences tourists' decision-making processes. Travelers increasingly rely on social media platforms as primary sources of travel inspiration, information, and recommendations, often perceiving social media content as more authentic and trustworthy than traditional advertising (Leung et al., 2023). Visual storytelling and short videos have been shown to enhance emotional engagement and stimulate interest in visiting a destination (Chen & Lin, 2022). Consequently, destinations that actively utilize Instagram and TikTok tend to gain higher visibility and stronger brand recognition in the global tourism market.

Another critical aspect of digital tourism promotion is language use, particularly the use of English as an international communication medium. English functions as a global lingua franca in tourism, enabling destinations to reach broader international audiences. Research has demonstrated that English-language tourism content significantly enhances accessibility, comprehension, and engagement among international tourists (Hernández-Méndez & Muñoz-Leiva, 2020). Destinations that fail to provide content in English often experience limited global exposure, as their promotional messages remain confined to domestic or regional audiences (Putra & Fitriana, 2021).

In the context of social media marketing, the use of English is especially important due to the global nature of platforms such as Instagram and TikTok. Studies show that tourism-related content presented in English is more likely to be shared, saved, and engaged with by international users, thereby increasing the likelihood of destination awareness and visit intention (Mariani et al., 2022). Despite this, many emerging tourism destinations in developing regions still rely heavily on local languages in their digital promotions, resulting in missed opportunities for international market penetration.

Indonesia, as one of the world's leading tourism destinations, has embraced digital marketing strategies to promote its tourism sector. Popular destinations such as Bali and Lombok have successfully leveraged Instagram and TikTok through professionally produced English-language content to attract international tourists (Suryani et al., 2022). However, this success has not been evenly distributed across all regions. Many destinations in eastern and peripheral areas of Indonesia remain underrepresented in global digital tourism promotion, despite possessing significant natural and cultural attractions (Rahman et al., 2023).

Nias Island, located off the western coast of Sumatra, represents one of Indonesia's emerging tourism regions with substantial yet underutilized potential. The island is known for its distinctive culture, maritime traditions, and coastal landscapes, which offer strong appeal for nature-based and cultural tourism. Naruu Beach, in particular, has considerable potential as a coastal tourism destination due to its scenic beauty, relatively pristine environment, and suitability for sustainable tourism development. However, its presence in digital tourism spaces remains minimal.

Preliminary observations indicate that promotional content related to Naruu Beach on Instagram and TikTok is limited in quantity and lacks strategic orientation. Most existing content is produced in Indonesian or local languages, with little emphasis on English-language communication. Furthermore, the content is often fragmented, lacking consistent storytelling,

branding, and optimization for platform-specific features such as hashtags, reels, or trending audio. Similar challenges have been identified in other local tourism destinations, where ineffective social media strategies result in low engagement and limited international reach (Widodo & Hidayat, 2021).

The limited use of English-language content on Instagram and TikTok significantly constrains Naruu Beach's visibility in the global tourism market. As previous studies suggest, destination image formation on social media is strongly influenced by language, narrative style, and visual presentation (Kim et al., 2020). Without targeted English content, Naruu Beach remains largely invisible to international audiences who rely on social media platforms for travel planning and inspiration.

Moreover, the increasing dominance of short-form video content in social media algorithms highlights the importance of TikTok and Instagram Reels in contemporary tourism promotion. Short videos have been proven to generate higher engagement rates and stronger emotional responses compared to static images (Su et al., 2022). For emerging destinations such as Naruu Beach, utilizing English-language short videos presents a strategic opportunity to introduce local attractions, cultural elements, and unique experiences to a global audience in an effective and cost-efficient manner.

From an academic perspective, existing research on digital tourism promotion has predominantly focused on well-established destinations or influencer-based marketing strategies. There remains a lack of empirical studies examining how English-language content on Instagram and TikTok can be strategically utilized to promote lesser-known destinations, particularly in developing regions. Addressing this research gap is essential to provide both theoretical contributions and practical insights for destination managers and local tourism stakeholders (Mariani & Borghi, 2023).

Based on the issues discussed above, it is evident that Naruu Beach possesses significant tourism potential that has not yet been optimally promoted through digital platforms. The limited use of English-language content and the underutilization of Instagram and TikTok as strategic promotional tools constitute major challenges in enhancing the destination's international visibility. Therefore, considering these problems, it is necessary to conduct a systematic study entitled "Digital Promotion of Naruu Beach, Nias through English Content on Instagram and TikTok." This research aims to analyze how English-language promotional content on Instagram and TikTok can enhance destination visibility, audience engagement, and international appeal, thereby contributing to sustainable tourism development and digital tourism promotion strategies for emerging destinations.

B. Methodology

Research Design and Approach

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research design supported by descriptive quantitative analysis to examine digital tourism promotion of Naruu Beach, Nias, through English-language content on Instagram and TikTok. This approach is appropriate because the research aims to explore content characteristics, communication strategies, and audience engagement rather than to test causal relationships between variables. Qualitative descriptive research enables an in-depth understanding of digital narratives, visual representations, and promotional messages embedded in social media content (Creswell & Poth, 2021).

The integration of descriptive quantitative data, particularly engagement metrics, serves to strengthen the qualitative findings by providing empirical indicators of content performance. This mixed analytical approach has been widely applied in social media and tourism marketing studies to assess promotional effectiveness in digital environments (Zeng et al., 2021; Mariani et al., 2022).

Research Site and Object

The research site of this study is Naruu Beach, located on Nias Island, North Sumatra Province, Indonesia. Naruu Beach was selected due to its significant natural tourism potential and limited exposure in international digital tourism promotion.

The objects of the study consist of digital promotional content related to Naruu Beach published on Instagram and TikTok, specifically content that utilizes English as the primary language in captions, narration, on-screen text, or hashtags. The focus on Instagram and TikTok is based on their dominant role in contemporary tourism marketing, particularly in visual storytelling and short-form video dissemination (Leung et al., 2023).

Data Sources and Data Collection Techniques

This study uses both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were collected through systematic observation and documentation of Instagram and TikTok content related to Naruu Beach during a predetermined research period. The observed content includes promotional videos, captions, visual elements, audio usage, hashtags, posting frequency, and narrative styles. All relevant content was documented using screenshots and video archives to ensure accuracy and consistency during analysis. This technique is commonly employed in social media content analysis research (Kim et al., 2020).

Secondary data were obtained from scholarly literature, including peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and research reports related to digital tourism promotion, social media marketing, destination branding, and English-language communication in tourism. These sources provide the theoretical foundation and contextual support for data interpretation (Gretzel et al., 2020).

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted in several stages. First, a qualitative content analysis was applied to identify dominant themes, promotional messages, narrative structures, and visual representations within the English-language content on Instagram and TikTok. Content analysis is an effective method for examining communication patterns and meanings conveyed through digital media and has been extensively used in tourism and marketing research (Neuendorf, 2019; Mariani & Borghi, 2023).

Second, the content was categorized based on key analytical dimensions, including language use (*English proficiency and clarity*), visual aesthetics, storytelling techniques, and platform-specific optimization. Instagram content was analyzed in terms of visual composition, branding consistency, use of hashtags, and Instagram Reels features, while TikTok content was examined based on creativity, trend utilization, video duration, audio selection, and potential for virality. These dimensions reflect the distinctive characteristics of each platform as identified in previous studies (Zeng et al., 2021).

Third, descriptive analysis of engagement metrics was conducted to assess audience responses to the promotional content. Engagement indicators included the number of views, likes, comments, and shares. These metrics were not analyzed inferentially but were used as supporting evidence to evaluate the relative effectiveness of English-language content in attracting audience interaction. Engagement metrics are widely recognized as practical indicators of content performance in social media-based tourism promotion (Liu et al., 2022).

Trustworthiness and Validity of Data

To ensure data trustworthiness and research rigor, this study applied methodological and source triangulation. Source triangulation was achieved by comparing findings across two different platforms Instagram and TikTok while methodological triangulation was implemented by combining qualitative content analysis with quantitative engagement data. This approach enhances the credibility and reliability of qualitative research findings in digital communication studies (Creswell & Poth, 2021).

Additionally, the interpretation of findings was consistently supported by established theories and empirical studies in tourism marketing and digital media research. The use of recent and peer-reviewed literature helps minimize researcher bias and strengthens the academic validity of the study (Mariani et al., 2022).

C. Result and Discussion

1. Overview of Digital Promotional Content of Naruu Beach

The results of this study indicate that digital promotion of Naruu Beach through Instagram and TikTok has begun to utilize visual-based social media platforms as tools for destination communication. The analyzed content consists primarily of short promotional videos that highlight coastal landscapes, beach scenery, and the natural atmosphere of Naruu Beach. These videos are generally accompanied by captions and on-screen text written in English, reflecting an initial effort to reach international audiences.

The use of English as the primary language in promotional content is a strategic element in global tourism marketing. English functions as a lingua franca in international tourism communication, allowing destinations to broaden their reach beyond domestic markets

(Hernández-Méndez & Muñoz-Leiva, 2020; Mariani et al., 2022). The findings suggest that Naruu Beach has started to align its digital promotion with global tourism communication practices, although the quantity and consistency of content remain limited.

Overall, the promotional activities observed are still fragmented and not yet integrated into a comprehensive destination branding strategy. This condition is consistent with findings from Widodo and Hidayat (2021), who reported that many emerging tourism destinations in Indonesia face challenges in maintaining consistent and strategic digital promotion despite the widespread use of social media platforms.

2. Characteristics of English-Language Content on Instagram

The analysis reveals that English-language promotional content on Instagram predominantly emphasizes visual aesthetics, particularly panoramic beach views, shoreline perspectives, and natural lighting. Most content is published in the form of Instagram Reels, which aligns with current algorithmic preferences favoring short-form video content. The captions are generally descriptive and persuasive, using simple but effective English expressions to convey the beauty, tranquility, and uniqueness of Naruu Beach.

From a destination marketing perspective, such visual-oriented content plays a crucial role in shaping a positive destination image. Kim et al. (2020) argue that visually appealing tourism content on social media enhances tourists' emotional responses and increases visit intention. The findings indicate that Instagram content related to Naruu Beach successfully communicates visual attractiveness, thereby contributing to favorable destination perception among viewers.

However, the analysis also shows that the use of international hashtags and consistent destination branding remains suboptimal. Several posts do not fully utilize globally relevant hashtags related to coastal tourism or hidden destinations, which limits the potential reach of the content. Previous studies have demonstrated that strategic hashtag usage significantly enhances content discoverability and audience reach on Instagram (Liu et al., 2022).

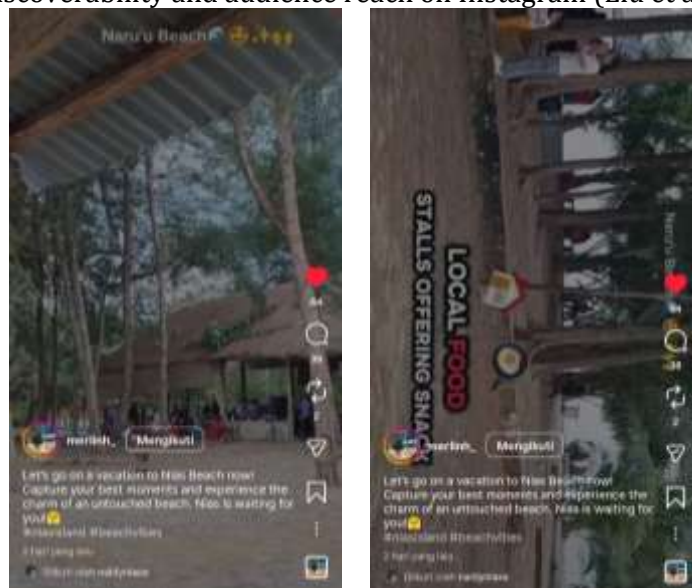


Figure 1. English-language promotional content of Naruu Beach on Instagram

3. Characteristics of English-Language Content on TikTok

In contrast to Instagram, English-language promotional content on TikTok demonstrates a more dynamic and trend-oriented approach. TikTok videos generally have shorter durations and focus on specific visual moments, such as ocean waves, sunsets, and brief visitor activities. The use of trending background music and simple visual transitions increases the likelihood of content being distributed through the *For You Page (FYP)* algorithm.

These findings support the arguments of Zeng et al. (2021), who state that tourism promotion on TikTok relies heavily on creativity, trend adaptation, and alignment with platform-specific algorithms. While the content related to Naruu Beach is visually engaging, it often lacks deeper storytelling elements that could further enhance audience immersion and emotional connection.

The use of English captions on TikTok contributes to broader audience accessibility and international visibility. Su et al. (2022) emphasize that short tourism videos using globally understood language tend to generate higher engagement and cross-border interaction. Thus,

TikTok presents substantial potential as a promotional platform for Naruu Beach if supported by consistent narrative strategies and cultural storytelling.

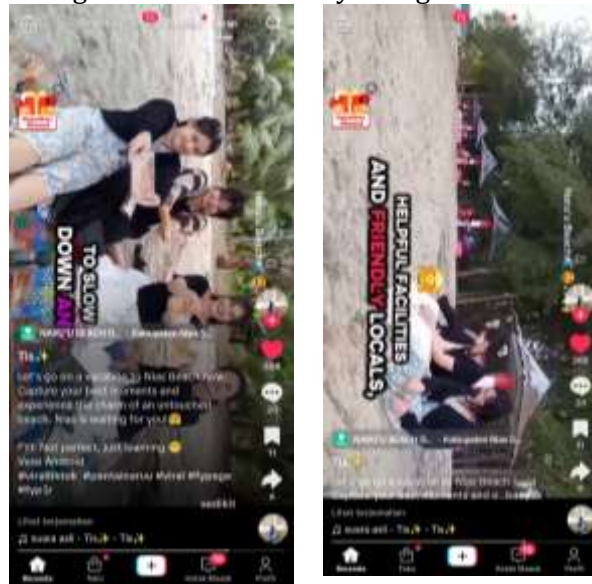


Figure 2. English-language promotional content of Naruu Beach on TikTok

4. Audience Engagement Analysis

Audience engagement metrics were analyzed to assess the effectiveness of English-language promotional content on Instagram and TikTok. Engagement indicators include the number of views, likes, comments, and shares, which are commonly used as descriptive measures of content performance in social media-based tourism marketing (Liu et al., 2022).

Table 1. Audience Engagement Metrics of Naruu Beach Promotional Content

Platform	Average Views	Likes	Comments	Shares
Instagram Reels	265	64	38	2
TikTok	2.518	221	20	11

Source: Researcher's Compilation, 2026

The results show that TikTok content generally achieves higher view counts compared to Instagram Reels, indicating broader content exposure on TikTok. This finding is consistent with previous studies suggesting that TikTok's algorithm provides greater organic reach for short-form video content, particularly for tourism-related visuals (Zeng et al., 2021).

Although the number of likes indicates positive audience reception, the relatively low number of comments suggests limited two-way interaction between content creators and viewers. According to Mariani and Borghi (2023), interactive engagement such as comments reflects deeper audience involvement and can be enhanced through explicit calls to action within captions. Therefore, future promotional strategies should incorporate more interactive elements to stimulate audience participation.

5. Implications for Digital Tourism Promotion of Naruu Beach

The findings of this study highlight the strategic importance of English-language digital promotion for enhancing the global visibility of Naruu Beach. The use of Instagram and TikTok as promotional platforms enables the destination to showcase its natural beauty through visual storytelling that resonates with international audiences. These results align with Gretzel et al. (2020), who emphasize that digital transformation in tourism should focus on accessibility, engagement, and global reach.

From a practical standpoint, the results suggest that local tourism stakeholders can leverage English-language short-form video content as a cost-effective promotional strategy. Consistent branding, strategic hashtag use, and platform-specific content optimization can further strengthen Naruu Beach's presence in the international tourism market.

Academically, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on digital tourism promotion by providing empirical insights into the use of English-language content on Instagram and TikTok for emerging destinations. By focusing on a lesser-known destination such as Naruu Beach, this research addresses a gap in tourism marketing studies that have traditionally concentrated on established destinations and influencer-driven campaigns.

D. Conclusion

Based on the research findings and discussion outlined above, it can be concluded that the use of English-language content on Instagram and TikTok plays a strategic role in increasing the digital visibility and international appeal of Naruu Beach, Nias Island. The use of English as a global tourism lingua franca has been proven to expand audience reach and improve information accessibility for international tourists, particularly in the context of developing destination promotions.

The analysis shows that Instagram and TikTok have distinct yet complementary promotional characteristics. Instagram is more effective in building a destination image through consistent visual aesthetics and landscape representation, while TikTok demonstrates greater potential for reaching a broad audience through short-form videos that are dynamic, creative, and follow algorithmic trends. The high number of views on TikTok content indicates that this platform has significant potential to increase Naruu Beach's exposure in the global digital tourism space.

However, this study also found that Naruu Beach's digital promotion still faces several limitations, particularly in terms of consistent destination branding, optimizing the use of international hashtags, and in-depth storytelling capable of building emotional engagement with audiences. Two-way interaction with social media users, as reflected in the number of comments and active audience engagement, remains relatively low and requires a more persuasive and participatory communication strategy.

Academically, this research contributes to the study of digital tourism promotion by highlighting the role of English-language content on visual social media for under-exposure destinations. Focusing on Naruu Beach as an emerging destination expands the literature, which has previously focused on popular destinations and influencer-based strategies. Practically, the findings of this study can serve as a reference for local tourism stakeholders in designing more targeted, sustainable, and internationally market-oriented digital promotion strategies.

Thus, it can be emphasized that strengthening digital promotion through planned, consistent English-language content aligned with the characteristics of the Instagram and TikTok platforms is a strategic step to support the sustainable development of Naruu Beach tourism and enhance the destination's global competitiveness.

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