GOVERNMENT DIGITAL PUBLIC RELATIONS MODEL IN TOURISM-BASED EVENTS IN SUMENEP REGENCY

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ABSTRACT

Events as instruments for tourism development have become a growing trend in various regions, including Sumenep Regency, which is considered one of the most strategic areas in Madura for advancing the tourism sector. With its advantageous geographical conditions and relatively high public awareness of tourism, the Sumenep Regency Government consistently launches an annual event calendar focused on top tourist destinations such as beaches, mangrove forests, and islands. This condition demands government public relations (PR) practitioners to be increasingly adaptive to digital PR approaches, which serve as key strategies in planning and ensuring the success of tourism-based events. This study aims to: first, formulate an effective digital PR model to optimize tourism-based events; second, analyze the implementation of digital PR practices by stakeholders in Sumenep Regency. The research employs a qualitative method with a constructivist paradigm, using quick ethnography techniques, field observations, in-depth interviews, and limited focus group discussions. Informants were selected from government agencies, public relations practitioners, tourism associations, and tourists. The results show that the Sumenep Regency Government adopts three public relations communication models: Press Agentry, Public Information, and Two-Way Symmetric. Digital PR is carried out through the use of social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok, as well as the official tourism website. A pentahelix collaboration between the government, community, academia, media, and the private sector has successfully increased public engagement and promotional effectiveness. The government also tailors digital content to match Generation Z preferences by producing short visual content (snackable content). This model demonstrates a successful adaptation to digital technology in supporting tourism promotion while also generating positive local economic impact.

Keywords: Tourism Events, Digital Public Relations, Government Public Relations

PENDAHULUAN

Sumenep Regency, located at the eastern tip of Madura Island, is a region with unique geographical characteristics and abundant tourism potential. Comprising 27 subdistricts—19 located on the mainland and 8 in the archipelago—Sumenep offers a diverse range of tourist attractions, from natural to cultural destinations. According to data from the official website of the local government, the regency features two religious tourism sites, four nature-based attractions, and two artificial destinations spread across various areas (Kabupaten Sumenep, 2024). This diversity positions Sumenep as a leading region in the development of community-based tourism.

The local government's commitment to the tourism sector is reflected in several notable achievements. In 2022, Sumenep was recognized as one of Indonesia's top village tourism destinations in the Anugerah Desa Wisata Indonesia (ADWI) awards, organized by

the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy. This recognition validates that Sumenep's tourism development is not only grounded in natural potential but also managed through participatory approaches involving local communities (Palaniswamy, 2021; Hasan, 2024).

The success of tourism development in Sumenep is closely linked to the synergy among three key pillars: the community, the private sector, and the government. The government plays the role of initiator and facilitator in planning and managing tourism events aimed at improving community welfare and increasing regional revenue (Rahadi & Abdillah, 2013). The active participation of local residents and entrepreneurs further strengthens the socio-economic system of tourism, in line with the pentahelix approach, which incorporates five elements: government, community, academia, media, and business sectors (Walid et al., 2025).

One tangible effort by the Sumenep Regency Government to promote tourism is the publication of an annual event calendar. This calendar outlines a series of tourism activities held throughout the year, with locations spread across top destinations such as beaches, mangrove areas, and island regions. Featured events in 2024 include the Bupati Cup Bull Racing (Kerapan Sapi), Tong-Tong Music Parade, Wanderfull Sumenep, and the Madura Body Contest (Disbudporapar Sumenep, 2024). These events not only aim to promote tourism destinations but also to highlight the region's rich cultural heritage and local wisdom.

Figure 1. Sumenep Regency Event Calendar for January, March, and April 2024

In distributing event-related information, the Sumenep Regency Government utilizes various digital channels as part of its Digital Public Relations (Digital PR) strategy. Routine updates and promotional content are delivered through social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok. For example, a post featuring the Madura Body Contest at Slopeng Beach reached 2,960 viewers via the official Instagram account of the relevant local agency. In addition, the Department of Communication and Information (Diskominfo) of Sumenep supports dissemination through its YouTube channel, featuring live-streamed content that allows the public to follow events in real-time (Li & Gretzel, 2023).

This use of social media aligns with Marshall McLuhan's media ecology theory, which posits that "the medium is the message"—emphasizing that the effectiveness of

communication is heavily influenced by the medium through which it is conveyed (Adenuga, 2025). The communication strategy is also tailored to suit the preferences of Generation Z, the primary target audience, who tend to consume short-form, visual, and interactive content. Responding to these trends, the Sumenep Regency Government designs visually appealing content with durations of 15–30 seconds, consistent with the snackable content concept (Smith, 2020; Pradini et al., 2024).

Beyond social media, the official website datawisata.sumenepkab.go.id serves as a central hub of information for potential visitors. The site provides comprehensive details on tourist locations, event schedules, and supporting facilities. In this context, a well-structured and visually integrated digital content design plays a vital role in shaping narratives and strengthening the image of Sumenep as a tourist destination (Awaloedin et al., 2024). In addition, articles and blogs published through this platform further reinforce storytelling related to the cultural uniqueness and heritage of Sumenep.

Given this progress, there is a growing need for in-depth research on the digital PR model implemented by the Sumenep Regency Government to support the organization of tourism-based events. Such a study is important to formulate a digital communication model that is not only effective and replicable in other regions, but also aligned with the principles of sustainable development. Through a collaborative and data-driven approach, local governments can continue to refine tourism communication strategies that do more than introduce destinations—they also foster positive social and economic impacts for local communities (Sari, 2024; Stikosa–AWS, 2025).

Literature Review

The Role of Digital Public Relation in Event-Based Tourism

Digital Public Relations (Digital PR) plays a vital role in the effectiveness of destination promotion, particularly for event-based tourism. Ki and Ye (2012) argue that e-PR leverages online platforms to deliver messages and manage public perception in real-time. This is increasingly relevant when integrated with social media marketing strategies, which have proven to enhance sales, branding, and audience engagement for tourism companies (Palaniswamy, 2021).

Visual Short-Form Content and Snackable Media

Marshall McLuhan's theory that "the medium is the message" highlights the importance of choosing the right format for each platform. In the case of digital tourism promotion, snackable content—short, visual, and easily digestible media—has emerged as a dominant strategy to engage Gen Z audiences, especially through platforms like TikTok and Instagram Reels (Smith, 2020).

User-Generated Content (UGC) and Authentic Branding

User-generated content (UGC) significantly contributes to the authentic branding of tourism destinations. A recent study by Nur'aeni et al. (2024) revealed that travelers are increasingly motivated to produce UGC to share helpful information, which serves as a form of digital citizen journalism. The presence of reliable infrastructure also encourages content production and sharing.

The Pentahelix Model and Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration

The pentahelix model involves collaboration among five key actors: government, community, academia, media, and the private sector. Research by Walid and Junaidi (2025) and Haq et al. (2023) demonstrates that this model can enhance innovation, local empowerment, and sustainable event management in tourism, especially when applied in regions like Tetebatu and Hambalang.

Digital Applications in Pentahelix-Based Tourism Governance

Digital technologies have been adopted to support pentahelix collaboration in regional tourism. For instance, Ambarwati et al. (2023) documented how a mobile application helped promote ecotourism in Lampung by fostering visitor engagement and loyalty. Likewise, the Lunpia App in Semarang exemplifies how real-time tourism data integration benefits visitors through digital platforms.

Sustainability and Safety in Digital Tourism Development

Digital PR also supports sustainable and safe tourism initiatives. A study on Samalona Island by Seniwati et al. (2024) combined digital communication with pentahelix partnerships to enhance eco-tourism security. This illustrates that digital outreach can scale tourism promotion while maintaining environmental integrity and visitor safety.

Event Classification and Effectiveness Measurement through AI

Recent work by Camacho-Ruiz et al. (2024) introduced an AI-based classification system to catalog tourism events from digital sources. This points to a new frontier in assessing the effectiveness of tourism promotions by utilizing digital data analytics and machine learning to track engagement and reach.

Synergy between Digital PR and Pentahelix in Event Promotion

In conclusion, Digital PR and the pentahelix model complement each other. Together, they foster public engagement, extend social media reach, and build strong storytelling through both official channels and user-generated content. This combination enhances sustainability, local empowerment, and the scalability of tourism event promotion models across various regions.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach, specifically utilizing the quick ethnography method, which aims to conduct in-depth research within a relatively short period. This method involves gathering insights, reactions, interpretations, and perceptions from individuals within a specific internal group about their community and social context. The selected methodological approach is constructivism, which was chosen to explore, analyze, and reconstruct how the government's digital public relations model is applied in tourism-based events in Sumenep Regency. The stages of this research include data collection through in-depth interviews and direct observation. The research was conducted in Sumenep Regency, particularly at governmental institutions related to public relations management and tourism event implementation in key destination areas.

The selection of research informants was carried out using purposive sampling, meaning that informants were chosen based on the specific objectives of the study. This sampling also considered the informants' access and credibility in providing in-depth and relevant information on the topic being studied. The purposive/judgmental criteria used to

determine informants included: (1) the Communication and Information Office of Sumenep Regency (Kominfo), providing insights into public relations planning strategies; (2) the Tourism Office of Sumenep Regency, responsible for policies related to tourism development and event management; (3) public relations practitioners selected by the local government, who provided perspectives on program goals and their impacts; (4) the Sumenep Tourism Association and PR professionals in Madura, offering insights on macro-level tourism planning and coordination; and (5) individual tourists, representing micro-level experiential perspectives.

Data collection in this study was divided into primary and secondary data. Primary data were gathered through in-depth interviews and participant observation. In addition, focused group discussions (FGDs) were conducted on a limited basis to further refine the findings and confirm key issues that required more targeted exploration. Secondary data were obtained through documentary research, particularly analyzing data from Kominfo Sumenep, the Tourism Office, selected public relations practitioners, the Tourism Association of Sumenep, visitors to tourism events, and professional PR organizations in Madura.

This study applied the interactive model of analysis developed by Miles and Huberman (1994), which consists of three core stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. According to Miles and Huberman, data reduction is the process of simplifying, organizing, and extracting major themes from the collected data. Creswell (2014) emphasized that data reduction is a critical component of qualitative data analysis, involving the elimination of irrelevant information and the extraction of essential content. Strauss and Corbin (1990) described data reduction as the process of sorting, structuring, and analyzing data to produce more abstract concepts. Lincoln and Guba (1985) noted that data reduction aims to minimize the complexity of data and identify emerging patterns or themes.

Figure 3.1

Data Presentation in Research
Interactive Model of Analysis

(Source: Miles and Huberman, 1994)

Figure2. Data Presentation in the Research Process. Source: Processed by the researcher (2023).

DISCUSSION

Government Digital Public Relations Model for Tourism Events in Sumenep Regency
In promoting tourism-related events, the Sumenep Regency Government applies several communication models, including the Press Agentry/Publicity Model and the Two-Way Symmetric Model.

Press Agentry/Publicity Model

This model represents a one-way communication process from the organization to its audience. It emphasizes the role of public relations in promotion, publicity, and propaganda with the aim of building a favorable image of the organization.

In this context, the Sumenep Regency Government has actively utilized social media platforms to publish and promote its event calendar, along with other governmental activities, in order to capture public attention and increase visibility through various planned agendas and programs.

Figure 3. Madura Ethnic Carnival Flyer and News Coverage of the Sumenep Regent: Village Tourism Festival as a Promotional Medium

Public Information Model

In addition to promotion, the government public relations (PR) office also collaborates significantly with mass media as part of its role in disseminating public information. This second model, the Public Information Model, does not focus on media promotion, but rather on distributing information that is accessible to the public. The information is delivered selectively, accurately, and in a manner relevant to the audience who needs it, with criteria determined by the organization based on its interests. The primary goal of this model is to build public trust through one-way communication, without emphasizing persuasion.

The public relations division of the Sumenep Regency Government consistently provides comprehensive information regarding every tourism event. The government PR team utilizes multiple social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube to disseminate updates on local tourism events. As stated by the Head of the Sumenep Regency Communication and Information Office (Diskominfo), Indra Wahyudi:

> *"We use all types of social media including YouTube, Instagram, TikTok—every platform."* (Interview, September 11, 2024).

Social media platforms have unique characteristics in information dissemination: the messages shared are general in nature, open to the public, and have the potential to spread far more rapidly than traditional media (Novianti et al., 2020). Given these characteristics, the Communication and Information Office can effectively leverage social media both for public communication and promotional purposes. Among the various platforms used, Diskominfo tends to prefer YouTube due to its larger audience reach.

"We use live streaming on YouTube. There's a lot of content, and we have many followers. We're also trying to keep improving how we reach more people. Because not everyone in the community has the chance to attend events in person—they can watch from home, and we record it so they can view it again afterward." (Interview, Head of Communication and Information Office, Indra Wahyudi, September 11, 2024)

This approach differs from the strategy of the Department of Tourism, Culture, Youth, and Sports (Disbudporapar) of Sumenep Regency, which places greater emphasis on Instagram. According to Toufan, Disbudporapar prefers to use their Instagram account to publish posters that contain information about tourism activities and local events. These differing strategies between government agencies highlight how social media plays a critical role in supporting the dissemination of local tourism event information to broader audiences. The utilization of platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube in event promotion reinforces the relevance of McLuhan's media ecology theory, which posits that the medium itself is the message.

Two-Way Symmetric Model

This model focuses on building mutual understanding rather than merely persuasion. The organization views the public as active partners, and communication is seen as a reciprocal, transactional process. In Sumenep Regency, this approach is reflected in the pentahelix collaboration employed in the planning and execution of tourism events, indicating an inclusive model of tourism management. The concept is rooted in cross-sector collaboration theory, which holds that the development of tourism destinations requires the active involvement of the government, community, academia, private sector, and media. According to Ritchie and Crouch (2003), the sustainability of tourism depends on how well stakeholders cooperate to generate added value for a destination. In the context of events, collaboration with the Sumenep Journalists Community (KJS) and the private sector demonstrates how the pentahelix model drives innovation, expands promotional networks, and creates local economic impact. This collaboration also aligns with stakeholder theory, which emphasizes the importance of integrating diverse stakeholder interests to achieve shared goals. The involvement of local communities and the private sector in tourism events reflects the relevance of networked governance in tourism event management. Dinnie et al. (2021) argue that such collaborative models can enhance tourism promotion effectiveness through the contributions of various stakeholders with different resources and expertise.

Data from the Communication and Information Office (Diskominfo) shows that the majority of social media users are young people. This demographic insight drives the need for strategies tailored to the preferences of youth.

"We also learn from content creators on social media—what's trending now? What kind of humor works? We noticed that Gen Z doesn't like long content— just 15 seconds, 30 seconds. So, we follow that style. We also have to innovate." (Interview, Head of Diskominfo Indra Wahyudi, September 10, 2024)

Generation Z, as the primary audience for tourism events, possesses distinct characteristics, including a strong preference for dynamic, personalized, and short-form visual content. Smith (2020) notes that this generation has grown up during the explosion of digital technology and is more responsive to video-based platforms such as TikTok and Instagram Reels. Adjusting content to fit Gen Z behavior also aligns with the uses and gratifications theory by Blumler and Katz, which suggests that individuals use media to satisfy specific needs, including the desire for entertainment and quick information.

The communication strategy adopted by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Youth, and Sports (Disbudporapar) includes the production of short 15–30-second videos, which reflects the application of snackable content—content designed for fast consumption without sacrificing the core message. TikTok videos promoting events are not only informative but also entertaining, which makes them particularly appealing to younger audiences. This digital PR strategy also contributes to local economic growth, particularly through the participation of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in events.

Digital PR Content for Events and Local Government Collaboration

From the perspective of ideal digital communication content, a well-structured and user-friendly website is the foundation of any digital strategy for tourism events. This site serves as a central information hub for potential visitors, offering details about village attractions, accommodations, activities, and upcoming events. The website should also be search engine optimized (SEO) to ensure it ranks well in search results. Its design should reflect the identity of the village, showcasing its culture, heritage, and natural beauty. High-quality images, engaging videos, and compelling storytelling can help create a sense of emotional connection with the audience, making them more likely to choose the village as a travel destination.

Meanwhile, social media platforms are powerful tools for reaching a global audience. Tourism events can utilize platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok to connect with potential visitors. Regularly updated social media profiles keep followers informed about the latest news, events, and local promotions. Engaging content—including photographs, user-generated content, and videos—offers a glimpse into the unique offerings and experiences available. Leveraging storytelling and community engagement on social media helps build an online following that can translate into real-life visitors.

Creating and curating high-quality content is essential for effective digital communication in tourism events. This content can take the form of blog posts, articles, videos, and podcasts. It not only informs potential visitors about the destination but also educates them on its history, culture, and traditions. The Sumenep Regency Government has taken content quality seriously in its communication strategies, particularly by enhancing the quality of video and photographic materials. This is evident from the

YouTube Live streams conducted by Diskominfo Sumenep during major tourism events, which frequently attract thousands of viewers.
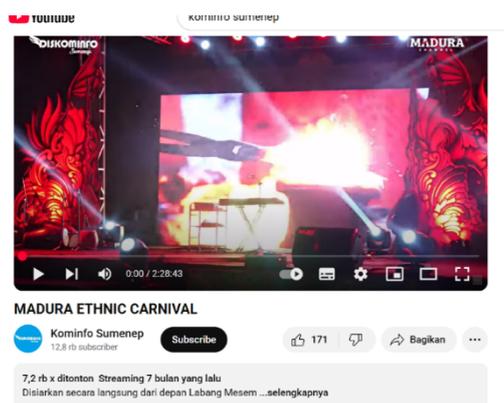

Figure 4. Live YouTube Broadcast of the Madura Ethnic Carnival

CONCLUSION

The digital PR strategy implemented by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Youth, and Sports (Disbudporapar) not only aligns with digital communication theory but also reflects the integration of modern tourism development concepts. Social media-based approaches, cross-sector collaboration, and content personalization are progressive steps that allow the government to reach broader audiences while simultaneously generating local economic impact. However, challenges such as limitations in human resources require long-term solutions to ensure the sustainability of this strategy. The digitalization of tourism events (EVENT) serves as a clear example of how technology can be used to connect local culture with global audiences, creating a positive impact not only on the tourism sector but also on the broader community of Sumenep.

The government's digital PR model in organizing tourism events demonstrates a successful adaptation of digital technology to support tourism promotion. Strategies involving social media, pentahelix collaboration, and data-based evaluation have become the core pillars of this model. However, the ongoing challenge of limited human resources must be addressed to improve implementation effectiveness in the future. The annual tourism events held in Sumenep Regency have become iconic for both the local government and the community. Several departments are involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of each event. Among these, Disbudporapar and the Department of Communication and Information (Diskominfo) play central roles. The government incorporates elements of culture, society, and tourism as key components in curating the uniqueness of each event. By designing events based on cultural themes and situating them in tourism destination areas, the events themselves become distinct attractions for visitors.

The application of the pentahelix concept has proven to be an effective strategy in creating tourism events that involve external stakeholders such as academics and community groups in Sumenep. The public relations (PR) role undertaken by local government departments includes both internal and external communication, utilizing various digital platforms. The Sumenep Regency Government has strategically leveraged events and digital technology to promote its tourism sector. Additionally, the government PR team has collaborated with journalist networks and media outlets to optimize

promotional efforts. This optimization of digital PR media is carried out through websites and social media platforms. The digital PR model applied in Sumenep consists of two primary approaches: the Press Agentry/Public Information Model and the Two-Way Symmetric Model.

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