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Bintan Image Formation via Instagram in The Pre- And Post-Covid-19 Pandemic Period: A Comparative Study Between Projected Image and Perceived Image

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Abstract

Several studies have proven that visual content uploaded on Instagram is a factor in forming destination images. On the other hand, tourists and local tourism authorities are two elements that form a destination image. This research aims to identify the image formation projected by local authorities and the image perceived by tourists through visual content uploaded to their official Instagram accounts in two time periods (before and after the COVID-19 pandemic). All visual content uploaded to their Instagram accounts was collected and analyzed using qualitative content analysis techniques to identify differences and similarities in the images formed by these elements in the two highlighted periods. This research found several things. First, various themes are exploited by these two elements in the production of visual content to be uploaded to their Instagram accounts, including natural attractions (AA), cultural attractions (AB), historical and religious buildings (BSK), tourist activities (TA), culinary and restaurant activities (CR), transportation and accommodation (AT), and local people (LP). Second, AA, TA, and AT are the dominant themes in the two periods (pre- and post-COVID-19 pandemic). Third, in the post-pandemic period, there was a significant decline in the population of visual content uploaded to the Genpi-Bintan account compared to the pre-pandemic period. On the other hand, local authority accounts saw an increase in the population of visual content in the post-COVID-19 pandemic period compared to the period before the pandemic. Theoretical and practical implications and several recommendations are presented at the end of this article.

Introduction

Image is an important thing in tourism marketing because of its influence on tourists' decisions/interest in visiting (Afshardoost & Eshaghi, 2020) DMO and tourists are two typical image-forming elements. DMO creates a projected image, while tourists create a perceived image (by tourists) (Jenkins, 2003). Several case studies show that there is a gap/difference in the image formed by these two elements (Chan & Zhang, 2018) (Marine-Roig & Ferrer-Rosell, 2018) (Duan, Marafa, Chan, Xu, & Cheung, 2020) (Paül i Agustí, 2021).

At the same time, social media has been widely used as a tool for creating images, both by DMOs (De las Heras-Pedrosa, Millan-Celis, Iglesias-Sánchez, & Jambrino-Maldonado, 2020), (Jaya & Prianthara, 2020), tourists (Al-Gasawneh & Al-Adamat, 2020) as well as DMOs and tourists (Sun, Tang, & Liu, 2021) (Egger, Gumus, Kaiumova, Richard, & Surkic, 2022)

Furthermore, photos are a form of visual content that influences image formation (Song, Park, & Park, 2020). 35 studies have documented the importance of photos in forming a destination image (Picazo & Moreno-Gil, 2019). Through Instagram (one of social media platform, thousands of photos have been distributed and are closely related to the formation of the destination image (Acuti, Mazzoli, Donvito, & Chan, 2018) (Bernkopf & Nixon, 2019) (Taufiqurrachman, 2020b) (Egger et al., 2022).

The Covid-19 virus, which broke out at the end of 2019, has presented a crisis for the tourism business, as shown by a significant decline in the number of foreign tourist arrivals (Central Bureau of Statistics for the Riau Islands 2023), a sharp decline in hotel room bookings and flight tickets (Foo, Chin, Tan, & Phuah, 2021). This condition is triggered by the formation of a perception of risk (Sánchez-Cañizares, Cabeza-Ramírez, Muñoz-Fernández, & Fuentes-García, 2021), threat, and fear (Zheng, Luo, & Ritchie, 2021) among tourists so that they postpone their visitation plans. Apart from that, the low interest tourists have in visiting is also reinforced by the media coverage of COVID-19 (Yang, Isa, & Ramayah, 2021).

While social media is a recommended marketing tool to navigate this crisis (Dash & Sharma, 2021), more research is needed explicitly into social media, particularly Instagram, in the context of destination marketing, especially about image formation before and after the pandemic. These gaps in the existing literature present an intriguing opportunity for further exploration.

Indeed, the influence of image on tourist intention to visit in the context of forming a Malaysian destination image has been revealed by a study (Ahmad, Jamaludin, Zuraimi, & Valeri, 2021). However, this research did not examine the image formation by the two local elements (DMO and tourists) through social media and the harmony between the images formed by these two elements. So, the existing literature still needs

to answer the role of social media (Instagram) in image formation in responding to the negative impacts brought by the pandemic.

At the same time, the existence of Genpi (Gerapa Pesona Indonesia) provides its character in forming a destination image in Indonesia, in Bintan. Genpi is a gathering place for people with an interest/passion for traveling. Then, through social media, they share their tourism experiences as a form of participation in promoting Indonesian destinations.

Indeed, several studies have studied Genpi about tourism, including the role of genpi in online destination marketing (Dharmajaya, Suroso, Setyanto, & Kaukab, 2020), the use of ICT for marketing tourist destinations (Singgalen & Timisela, 2021), the role of Genpi in developing digital tourism (Kagungan, Zainal, & Rosalia, 2021). However, these studies did not highlight the role of Genpi in forming the destination image and the harmony of the image formed by Genpi with other elements.

This research attempts to fill the gap, as explained in the problem background section, by examining the formation of the image of the Bintan destination before and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, this research is focused on answering several problem formulations, namely as follows: How was the image of the Bintan destination formed by the local DMO through visual content (photos) distributed on its official Instagram account before and after the COVID-19 pandemic? Is there a harmony or difference in the image formed in the two time periods (before and after the COVID-19 pandemic)?; How was the image of the Bintan destination formed by the Genpi-Bintan community before and after the Covid-19 pandemic? Is there a harmony or difference between the images formed in the two time periods?; Is there a harmony or difference in the images formed by the Genpi-Bintan community and DMO public in the two time periods highlighted?

Review of Literature

Image

Image is essentially an impression (Reynolds, 1965), and tourists' trust in a destination (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991), which consists of several dimensions: cognitive, affective, and overall (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). The image category is formed by cognitive and affective images (Santana & Gosling, 2018). Apart from being formed through these two image categories, the overall image is also formed by a unique image (Santana & Gosling, 2018) - an image formed through a branding process to instill unique characteristics of a destination (Qu, Hyunjung, & Hyunjung, 2011).

Image formation is complex because it involves interaction patterns between tourists and information sources. When tourists search for information passively regarding a destination, what is produced is a baseline image. In contrast, the tourist will

produce an enhanced image if the information search is carried out actively (Li, Pan, Zhang, & Smith, 2009). Apart from that, image formation also involves various elements, including tourists, tourism agents/industry, and autonomous agents (Xu & Ye, 2018). Each of these elements produces a different image category. Tourists produce an image that is perceived by themselves (perceived image) (Jenkins, 2003) (Stepchenkova & Zhan, 2013); Tourism agents/organizations, and industries produce projected images (Selby & Morgan, 1996) - also called induced images through the use of promotional media for tourist destinations, both traditional media and new media (Kislali, Kavartzis, & Saren, 2020); autonomous agents (newspaper stories, information generated by word of mouth, the experience of visiting a destination) produce an organic image (Gabbioneta & De Carlo, 2019).

Several studies show that these different actors create different destination images of differences in image elements that appear dominantly. For example, the different destination images of Catalonia are created by three elements: the Catalan Tourism Board, Lonely Planet, and social media users (Marine-Roig & Ferrer-Rosell, 2018). Misalignment also occurs when Barcelona's destination image is formed. The local tourist board focuses more on specific limited locations that are the center of tourist visits. In contrast, tourists prefer to project the city's image and highlight more diverse locations, not just the locations that center their visits (Paül i Agustí, 2021).

Likewise, Australia's destination image is projected differently by local tourism marketing agencies and tourists in 2 dimensions (cognitive and affective image). From the perspective of the cognitive image, tourists emphasize the dimensions of tourist attractions. In contrast, marketing agencies emphasize the environmental dimensions of tourism, history, culture and arts, recreation, and infrastructure. Second, from the affective image aspect, tourists emphasize the "excitement" attribute, whereas marketing agencies focus on the "comfort" attribute.

Social Media, Destination Images and Photos

Previous studies have presented various findings showing that social media is a powerful instrument in marketing tourist destinations (Nghiem-Phú & Pengiran Bagul, 2020), (De las Heras-Pedrosa et al., 2020), (Jaya & Priantara, 2020), (Al-Gasawneh & Al-Adamat, 2020), (Afshardoost & Eshaghi, 2020), (Farhangi & Alipour, 2021). Several things trigger this power. First, various social media platforms can be accessed by global tourists. In its development, social media has become one of the primary sources of information for tourists to plan their visits (Farhangi and Alipour 2021). Second, social media has features that can facilitate direct relationships between providers and users (Nghiem-Phú and Pengiran Bagul 2020).

Third, travelers' decisions in determining visit dates are determined by their perception of a destination, and the destination image formed by social media influences tourists' perceptions of a destination (Al-Gasawneh and Al-Adamat 2020). Fourth, the

use of social media in tourism marketing has succeeded in strengthening engagement between tourism operators and tourists (De las Heras-Pedrosa et al. 2020). Fifth, social media influencers mobilized by tourism marketing agencies have succeeded in directing decision-making regarding tourist visits (Farhangi and Alipour 2021) and strengthening the destination's image (Jaya and Prianthara 2020).

On the other hand, photos are essential in forming a destination image, both in terms of the tourism management organization and tourists (Bhatt & Pickering, 2022). The results of a review conducted by Picazo of 35 studies have shown empirical evidence of the power of photos in projecting an image of tourist destinations (Picazo & Moreno-Gil, 2019). Instagram is a social media platform equipped with various features to make it easier for users to share photos (photo sharing) (Serafinelli, 2018). On the other hand, the use of Instagram has impacted the formation of destination images in various contexts. For example, photos shared by the Aceh and West Sumatra tourism offices via their official social media accounts have shaped the image of the two destinations (Taufiqurrachman, 2020a)

Likewise, the city destinations of London and Florence (Acuti et al., 2018) and Mexico (Bernkopf and Nixon, 2019) were formed through photos shared by tourists via their Instagram accounts. Meanwhile, other research shows interesting findings: photos shared by both parties (tourism promoters and tourists) produce a harmonious (same) destination image for Saalbach-Hinterglemm, a resort in Australia (Egger et al., 2022)

At the same time, various empirical evidence has been presented by existing research regarding the power of social media in tourism marketing, specifically through improving the image of tourist destinations. Various image themes exploited through social media content, including beaches, mountains, religion, sports, culinary and others, have succeeded in developing the image of tourist destinations in several regions in Spain, namely Andalusia, Catalonia and Valencia (De las Heras-Pedrosa et al., 2020).

Likewise, six tourist attraction attributes in social media content (fascinating culture, cultural diversity, good quality tourism infrastructure, relaxed/relaxed atmosphere, cool and clean environment, exotic destination) succeeded in building the destination image of Baratan Lake Tourism in Bedugul. In line with this, the image that has been developed has a significant influence on tourists' satisfaction and their visiting decisions (Jaya and Prianthara 2020). Meanwhile, similar findings were shown by research by Egger et al. (2022) and Sun, Tang, and Liu (2021) that content distributed through official social media accounts of tourism marketing agencies has strengthened the projected image. However, when comparing the projected and perceived images, the findings of the two studies are contrastingly different.

The first research shows empirical evidence that, based on comparative analysis between content shared by tourists and DMOs, congruence has emerged (Egger et al. 2022). In general, the themes raised by Instagram content from both parties (DMO and

tourists) are mountain atmosphere in winter, winter sports, and residents. However, the number of occurrences of each theme is different.

In contrast, based on an analysis of both sources of social media content (national tourism marketing agencies and tourists) aimed at comparing projected and perceived images of Australia, Sun, Tang, and Liu (2021) found striking differences, both in terms of cognitive and social image dimensions. Affective image. First, from the perspective of the cognitive image, tourists place more emphasis on the dimensions of tourist attractions. At the same time, marketing agencies emphasize the dimensions of the tourism environment, history, culture, arts, recreation, and tourism infrastructure. Second, from the affective image aspect, tourists emphasize the "excitement" attribute, whereas marketing agencies focus on the "comfort" attribute.

In addition to the research stated above, Taufiqurrachman (2020), through research on the formation of the destination image of Aceh and West Sumatra, presents five image attributes that are exploited by local authorities, namely attractions and social involvement, cultural and natural facilities, transportation and accommodation, infrastructure, food and local residents, recreational activities and physical comfort. Likewise, other experts have formulated different image attributes in their studies which highlight the relationship between social media/media and image formation, including Kislali, Kavaratzis, and Saren (2020), Song, Park, and Park (2020) Gabbioneta and De Carlo (2019). Several destination image attributes they developed are presented in Table 3.

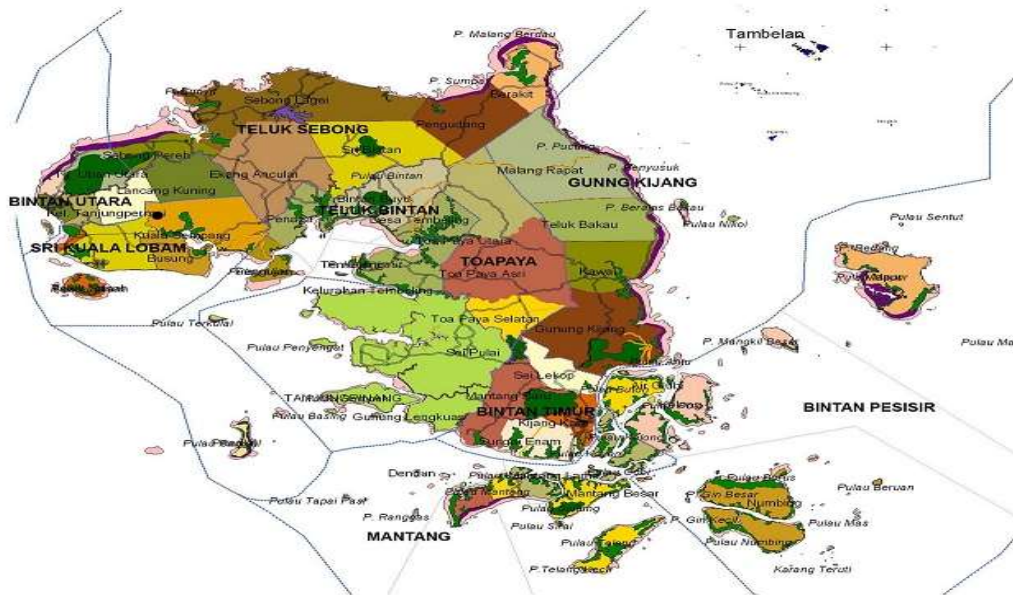
Research Method

Bintan Destination

Bintan Regency is an autonomous region of the Riau Islands provincial government. The district, called the island of a bushel of pepper, consists of 272 islands with an area of 87,411.92 km²; however, of the total area, most of it is the ocean, which occupies the South China Sea, namely 98.50%.

In general, the entire national sea area, including the Bintan Sea, is an important asset that has been developed through various development projects, including marine tourism development. At the same time, tourism marketing is an integrated part of national tourism development (point c, article 7 of Law No. 10 of 2009). For tourism marketing, the government has formulated the image of the Bintan destination as Family Fun 365 Days A Year (PP No. 50/2011 concerning the 2020–2025 National Tourism Development Master Pla).

Figure 1. Map of the Bintan Regency Government Administrative Area



Research Plan

This research was carried out within one year, in 2023. This research aims to identify the projected image by the local DMO (Dinas Pariwisata dan Kebudayaan Kabupaten Bintan), as well as the perceived image by the Genpi Bintan community in the pre-and after the COVID-19 pandemic and how the image formed by the two elements (DMO and Genpi Bintan) is congruent. To realize this goal, this research will apply visual content analysis to all photos uploaded to the official Instagram accounts of both parties.

Content Analysis

Content analysis is a method developed to interpret text by grouping data by coding and identifying themes or patterns (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). This method is appropriate to use in this research because several previous studies that applied this method succeeded in identifying how destination images are formed through text content and media images, including social media, including: Stepchenkova and Zhan (2013), Taufiqurrachman (2020), De las Heras-Pedrosa et al. (2020) Egger et al. (2022), Sun, Tang, and Liu (2021).

In this research, content analysis will be carried out to identify image attributes in visual data (photos) distributed by the local DMO and the Genpi Bintan community through their official Instagram account. This method is applied through three 3-stage stages: preparation, organization, and reporting (Elo, Kanste, & Utriainen, 2014). At the preparation stage, all visual data posted on those official Instagram accounts was

collected by copying each photo. Each piece of data (photo) was given a number and distributed into 2 clusters. The first cluster is provided for visual data uploaded before the pandemic, while the other cluster is for data uploaded after the pandemic.

The dividing line between the two time periods is the second quarter of 2020. Every photo uploaded after that time will be distributed into the post-Covid 19 pandemic folder. Determining the dividing timeline considers that the second quarter of 2020 is the heaviest impact of this pandemic. To the national economy the government formulates strategic steps to maintain national growth (Edward, 2020). The time allocated for collecting this data is two months, from August to September 2023. Therefore, photos uploaded after the deadline will not be taken as data.

Then in the organization stage, those collected data was analyzed by adopting a deductive content analysis approach (Satu Elo & Helvi Kyngas 2007) and directed content analysis (Hsieh and Shannon 2005). With this approach, a coding framework is constructed based on a review of the findings or results of existing research. The results of this review regarding the image concept documented by previous studies are presented in Table 3. This coding framework is used to code all the visual data that has been collected.

Finally, the result of data analyzing was reported by developing a data matrix (Schreier 2013). This data matrix was developed in the first stage to present three aspects: a description of each image category/attribute/theme in two periods (before and after the COVID-19 pandemic). The second stage describes the congruence in term of image attributes that emerge from the data in the two time periods.

Table 1. Summary of Image Element in the available literature

No	Authors	Destination	Image Elements
1	(Acuti et al., 2018)	London dan Florence	Historical buildings and heritage (ancient palaces, monuments, works of art); Cultural Stage; gardens and parks (natural landscape); fashion (clothing, accessories, shopping centers); tourism facilities and infrastructure (hotels, museums, tourist attractions); entertainment (concerts, parties); Beautiful view (bird's eye); Local cuisine and dishes (food, drinks, restaurants, grocery stores); Recreation and sports (matches, stadiums, sports activities); local residents (in their daily lives).
2	(Gabbioneta & De Carlo, 2019)	Milan	Popularity and reputation, safety, accommodation, festivals, entertainment, nightlife, economic development/prosperity, friendliness, ease of communication, cleanliness, price/cost

No	Authors	Destination	Image Elements
3	(Kislali et al., 2020)	Turki	Islamic, Bridge between East and West, family oriented, sun-sea-sand destination, safety, good food
4	(Song et al., 2020)	Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea	architecture/historical objects, architecture/religious objects, urban/landscape, festivals/rituals/entertainment, food/restaurants, recreation/travel experiences, nature/landscape, availability of promotional materials, availability of travel/infrastructure information
5	(Sun et al., 2021)	Australia	Tourist attractions, tourism environment, cultural and artistic history, recreation and tourist experiences, tourism infrastructure (accommodation, catering and transportation)
6	(Egger et al., 2022)	Austrian, resor Alpine-Saalbach-Hinterglemm	Mountains, snow, landscapes, winter (snow) sports (ski equipment), crowds, music concerts, nightlife,

Result

The Data Selection

As presented in the previous section, the time duration highlighted by this research is six years. Then, the duration was divided into two periods, namely before and after the Covid-19 pandemic. In particular, the pre-pandemic period is in the time interval from March 2017 to February 2020. The post-Covid-19 pandemic period is from March 2020 to March 2023. So, each of these periods is in a time interval of approximately three years.

Through data collection activities within the period determined by this study, researchers found 2250 contents posted on the Genpi Bintan account. Especially in the pre-pandemic period, 1683 contents were found. Meanwhile, in the post-pandemic period, it was 567. There was a decrease in the number of visual content produced by these accounts in the post-pandemic period.

This downward trend is closely related to the decline in visiting activities carried out by tourists during the spread of the Covid-19 virus. This is because the Genpi Bintan account is managed by a community of volunteers who care about developing and promoting tourist destinations, especially those in their area. One way of showing this concern is by sharing their experiences visiting various district destinations. However, along with the outbreak of the Covid-19 virus, they postponed their visit to avoid being infected by the virus. As a result, they have yet to share new visitation experiences through this account.

Furthermore, through this stage, researchers found that the account produced content in two formats: video and visual (images). The total amount of content in the video file format is 486 content. 329 content was produced during the pre-pandemic period, and the remaining 157 content was uploaded during the post-pandemic period. Meanwhile, the total amount of visual content is 1572 pieces. 1160 content was produced before the pandemic, and the remaining 412 were posted after the pandemic. Because this research specifically examines the formation of projected images and images that are perceived visually, data produced in video format is not taken as data. So, from the total amount of data, which reached 2250 pieces, only 1572 had the potential to be selected as data.

Furthermore, researchers found that from all of the visual data, some content was considered irrelevant to the main issue highlighted by this research, namely the formation of the image of the Bintan destination from the perspective of public agencies and tourists. This is because some content has a different theme than the Bintan destination but rather other destinations, such as Bali, Tanjungpinang, and so on. Apart from that, some content is considered not to represent the theme of the Bintan destination but instead takes the form of announcements regarding specific events and public service messages, such as guidelines for processing plastic waste, including advertising content, and so on. Content considered irrelevant is distributed into two periods (pre- and post-pandemic). In the pre-pandemic period, 523 data were found. Meanwhile, in the post-pandemic period, there were 155 data.

As with video content, some content considered irrelevant was also not taken as data because, rationally, it would not provide information to answer this research problem. So, after deducting data that was considered irrelevant, the total content selected for analysis in this research amounted to 1086 pieces of content. Eight hundred thirty-one were uploaded during the pre-pandemic period, and the remaining 255 were uploaded after the pandemic.

Furthermore, through this stage, researchers found that in these six years, the Bintan Regency Culture and Tourism Department, as a public agency, produced 475 pieces of content. One hundred thirty-five were produced before the pandemic, and 340 were produced during the pandemic. In contrast to the Genpi Bintan account, which produced much more visual content during the pre-pandemic period, the Disbudpar account shows that most of the data was produced during the post-pandemic period. As mentioned previously, this was because, during that period, there was a high level of tourism activity carried out by the volunteer community, then the experiences of these activities were immortalized in the form of video recordings and images, and the results were shared via this account.

On the other hand, the high population of data/content on these public agency accounts during the pandemic compared to the pre-pandemic period is a response to the significant decrease in the number of tourist visits to Bintan destinations during the

pandemic. (insert the Table). As explained in the previous section by several existing studies, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought a crisis to the tourism industry, triggered by the low number of tourist visits.

The decline in tourist visits was triggered by fear or worry among tourists about being infected by the virus while traveling. This fear is increasingly strengthened by the massive coverage of COVID-19 through media reports. Therefore, the agency's high content production is an effort to address these fears. This is reinforced by content highlighting the theme of strict health protocols when carrying out tourist activities in Bintan, the handling system, and the actions taken by tourists infected by the virus.

Within six years, this public agency has also produced its content in two file formats (video and visual). A total of 372 pieces of content are visual content, and 103 are files in video format. Apart from that, some visual data is considered irrelevant because it does not highlight the Bintan tourism theme and contains announcements, advertisements, and publications regarding the agency's routine activities. The amount of irrelevant data is 47 pieces spread across two periods: before and after the pandemic. Because data considered irrelevant was not selected, the total data that will be analyzed to identify the formation of the projected image is 325 pieces. A total of 97 data were produced before, and 228 data were produced after the pandemic. More details regarding the amount of data are presented in Table (2).

Table 2. Population distribution of data on the Genpi Bintan Account and Bintan Disbudar Account

No	Content Categories	Genpi Bintan		Total	Disbudpar Bintan		Total
		Pre Pandemic	Post Pandemic		Pre Pandemic	Post Pandemic	
1	Video	329	157	486	28	75	103
2	Pictorial contents	1160	412	1572	107	265	372
3	Irrelevant content	523	155	678	10	37	47
4	Relevant content	831	255	1086	97	228	325

Results of Content Analysis

The results of the content analysis carried out in this research show that various image themes were displayed in two time periods (pre and the Covid-19 pandemic) by both parties (Disbudpar Bintan Regency and Genpi Bintan), including Buildings with Historical/Religious Architecture (BSSK), Tourist Activities (AT), Food/Culinary (MK), Safety and Family Friendly (K&RK) Accommodation/Transportation (A&T), Natural Attractions (AA), Cultural Attractions (AB) and Local People (PL).

However, these two elements emphasize different image themes, both in the six-year time period, which is the total time duration highlighted by this research, as well as in the pre and post-COVID-19 pandemic period. This difference in emphasis is shown by

the difference in the number of appearances of each theme in the data sourced from the Genpi Bintan and Disbudpar Bintan accounts.

In general, within 6 (six) years, AA was the theme most highlighted by Genpi Bintan. It is indicated by the highest number of appearances compared to other themes. This theme appeared 739 times. This theme appears in 2 categories. First, visual content that depicts nature without including human images, whether tourists or local residents. Both visual content include human images.

So, every content in the second category gets coded twice, namely AA and AT coding. This is done by considering the human images in the visual content representing various tourist activities, such as cycling, participating in various tourism events, leisure walking competitions, kite flying, swimming, and so on.

Furthermore, the second theme with the dominant number of appearances after AA is AT. This theme appeared 560 times in the Genpi Bintan account. As mentioned above, this theme appears in 2 ways. First, the image of tourists with all their activities is displayed in the dominant size in an image. Second, an image consists of a visualized image of tourists carrying out their activities against the natural background of the Bintan destination. In particular, this second category or images with these two codings (AA and AT) are content that displays the two images in a balanced manner so that each image is visible.

Meanwhile, if there are two images (humans and nature) in a piece of content, but only one image is the dominant size, At the same time, the other image is displayed unclearly because it is blurred or too small, then the content is coded only once. TA is another theme that has received much attention from the Genpi Bintan community. This theme appeared in the data 141 times.

Apart from the themes shown above, other themes appear in the data, namely BSK, MK, AB, KR, and PL. However, these themes received little attention, as the number of appearances was much lower compared to the three themes mentioned above (AA, AT and TA). In particular, the PL theme only appears five times and BSK 11 times. Meanwhile, MK appeared 25 times and AB 43 times. Furthermore, if we look at each of the two time periods that have been determined in this research, namely pre- and post-pandemic, in the pre-pandemic period, AA, AT, and TA were themes with a dominant level of appearance compared to other themes in the Genpi account Bintan. AA appeared 600 times in that period, followed by AT with 492 appearances and TA 103 times.

Then, several other themes, such as BSK, AB, and KR, were categorized as having a moderate or medium occurrence level. As Table (1) presented, BSK appeared 88 times, KR 39 times, and AB 38 times in the pre-pandemic period. Apart from these themes, there are two other themes with a low level of occurrence, namely MK and PL. In particular, PL is the theme with the lowest occurrence rate, namely one time, while MK is 16 times.

Table 3. Data Distribution on Image Themes

No	Data source	Time Period	Theme							
			BSK	AT	MK	AB	AA	KK	TA	PL
1	Genpi Bintan	PrePandemic	88	492	16	38	600	39	103	1
		Post Pandemic	23	68	9	5	139	14	38	4
		Sub-total	111	560	25	43	739	53	141	5
2	Disbudpar Bintan	Pre-Pandemic	6	26	1	9	20	4	9	0
		Post Pandemic	10	26	1	4	86	9	47	1
		Sub-total	16	52	2	13	106	13	56	1

In the post-pandemic period, the dominance of several themes based on the number of appearances shows no difference. AA, AT, and TA still show a more striking number of occurrences than the other themes. However, the numbers are much lower in quantity due to the striking differences in population data between pre- and post-pandemic. During that time, AA appeared 139 times, AT 68, and TA 38.

In the moderate/intermediate category, there are new differences. This category was filled with three themes in the pre-pandemic period: BSK, KR, and AB. However, during the post-pandemic period, AB's position was especially replaced by MK. Meanwhile, BSK and KR remain in the moderate category. BSK appeared 23 times, KR 14, and MK 9 times. Meanwhile, AB and PL are the two themes with the lowest occurrence rates. AB appears only five times and PL 4 times.

Genpi Bintan and Disbudpar emphasize the AA theme in forming the image of the Bintan destination. In particular, Disbudpar shows this by the highest appearance of the AA theme compared to other themes. The results of the content analysis of this research found that AA appeared 106 times. However, in the second position, there is a difference between the Genpi Bintan and Dispar accounts.

As explained in the previous section, AT is in second place after AA, while in the Disbudpar account, TA is in second place with an appearance rate of 56 times. Meanwhile, AT is in third place, appearing 52 times. Furthermore, BSK, AB, and KR are three themes in the moderate category. In this category, BSK ranks first with 16 appearances. AB and KR appeared 13 times. Lastly, MK and PL are two themes in the low category. The MK only appeared twice in six years, while the PL appeared once.

Especially in the pre-pandemic period, in the Bintan Disbudpar account, AT was the theme that appeared most prominently. As presented in Table (1), this theme appears in first place 26 times, followed by AA, which appears 20 times. AB and AT both appear nine times. The following three themes in the low category are BSK, MK, and PL. In

particular, PL never appeared at all during the pre-pandemic period. Meanwhile, MK appeared one time and BSK 6 times.

Then, in the post-pandemic period, the number of AA and AT occurrences significantly increased compared to the previous period (during the pandemic). In particular, AA, which in the previous period only appeared 20 times, became 86 times. Likewise, AT went from 9 times to 47 times. Meanwhile, the number of AT appearances during this period did not change, namely 26 times. On the other hand, several other themes also experienced changes in the number of appearances, which was insignificant. For example, BSK experienced an increase from 6 times to 10 times, as did KR from 4 to 9 times. On the other hand, AB fell from 9 times to 4 times. Lastly, PL and MK both appeared only once.

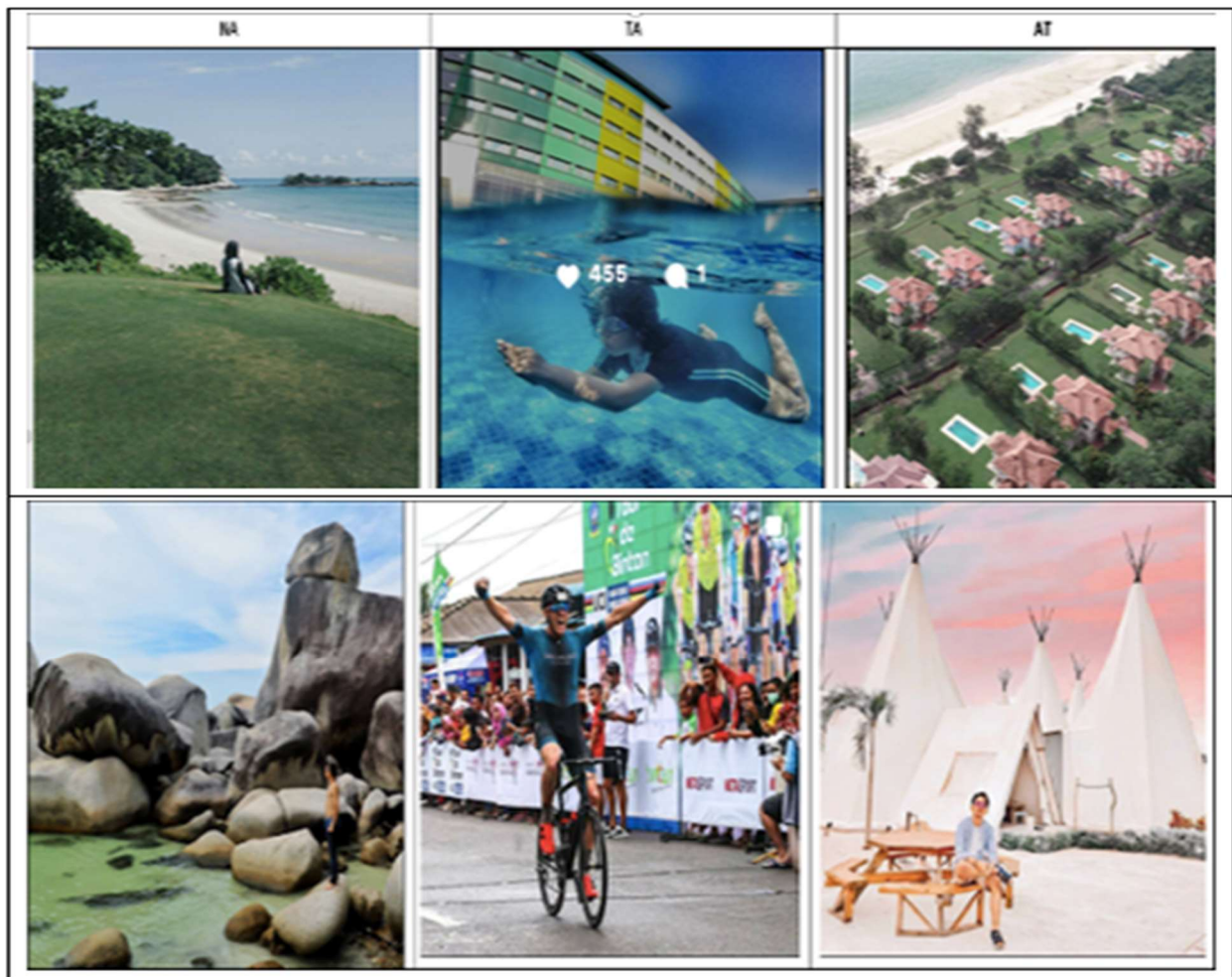


Figure Several examples of dominant theme attributes (AA, TA and AT) depicted through visual content from the Genpi Bintan account

Based on the description above, several conclusions can be drawn. First, AA, AT, and TA are the three themes most emphasized by the two accounts selected in this

research (Genpi Bintan and Dispar). Among the three themes, AA is the most popular theme if you look at the highest number of appearances among the other two themes, both in the Genpi Bintan and Disbudpar accounts. AT is in second place on the Genpi Bintan account but third place on the Disbudpar account. Meanwhile, TA is in second place on the Disbudpar account but third place on the Genpi Bintan account. Second, BSK is a theme that is categorized as medium, like the Genpi Bintan and Disbudpar accounts. Likewise, PL is categorized as the lowest theme in both accounts. Meanwhile, the number of occurrences for other themes varies based on time period and different accounts.

Discussion

The content analysis results in this research show that Genpi Bintan and Disbudpar Bintan Regency display various image themes. These themes are Historical and Religious Buildings (BSK), Touristic Attractions (AT), Food and Culinary (MK), Cultural Attractions (AB), Natural Attractions (AA), Security and Hospitality (KK), Transportation and Accommodation (TA), Local People (PL). In general, in the six years, which consist of the pre-and post-pandemic periods, both elements equally emphasized the theme of nature (AA). Various natural destinations in the Bintan district are exploited to produce their visual content, including various beach areas, mangrup forest areas, waterfalls, and deserts in Telaga Biru.

Likewise, in each period, both pre and post-pandemic, AA is still a theme that appears dominantly in the visual content uploaded to the Instagram accounts of these two elements. It shows that natural destinations are still superior destinations that can attract tourists. So, the features inherent in natural destinations, such as trees that grow lush and green throughout tourist areas, beaches with stretches of white sand, and mountainous areas that offer authenticity and a relaxed atmosphere, are always the main themes in tourism promotional content. This is as shown by Taufiqqurrachman's (2022) study, which highlights the process of forming the tourism destination image of Aceh and West Sumatra by their respective local authorities.

In addition, the high dominance of natural themes found in this study is in line with other studies conducted by Song, Park, & Park (2020). This researcher shows that in the context of developing involvement in marketing, nature is one of the themes that tourism promotion authorities in various countries, such as Hong Kong, Japan, and North Korea, highlight when producing their tourism promotion content. Apart from these two studies, many other studies have succeeded in revealing the importance of natural themes in the tourism image production process, such as (De las Heras-Pedrosa et al., 2020), (Lian & Yu, 2017), (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991).

Tourist activity is another theme that appears prominently in the data from the Genpi Bintan and Disbudpar Bintan accounts. Especially in the Genpi Bintan account, this theme is second after the nature theme. Meanwhile, on the Bintan Disbudpar account, this theme is third after the nature and TA themes. This theme is visualized

through images of tourists' involvement in various tourist events, such as playing beach volleyball, archery, parachuting, camping, going around the beach using a small boat, cycling, taking part in leisure walking competitions, international marathon races, Tour de Riau Islands, driving a motor boat, and various maritime sports events.

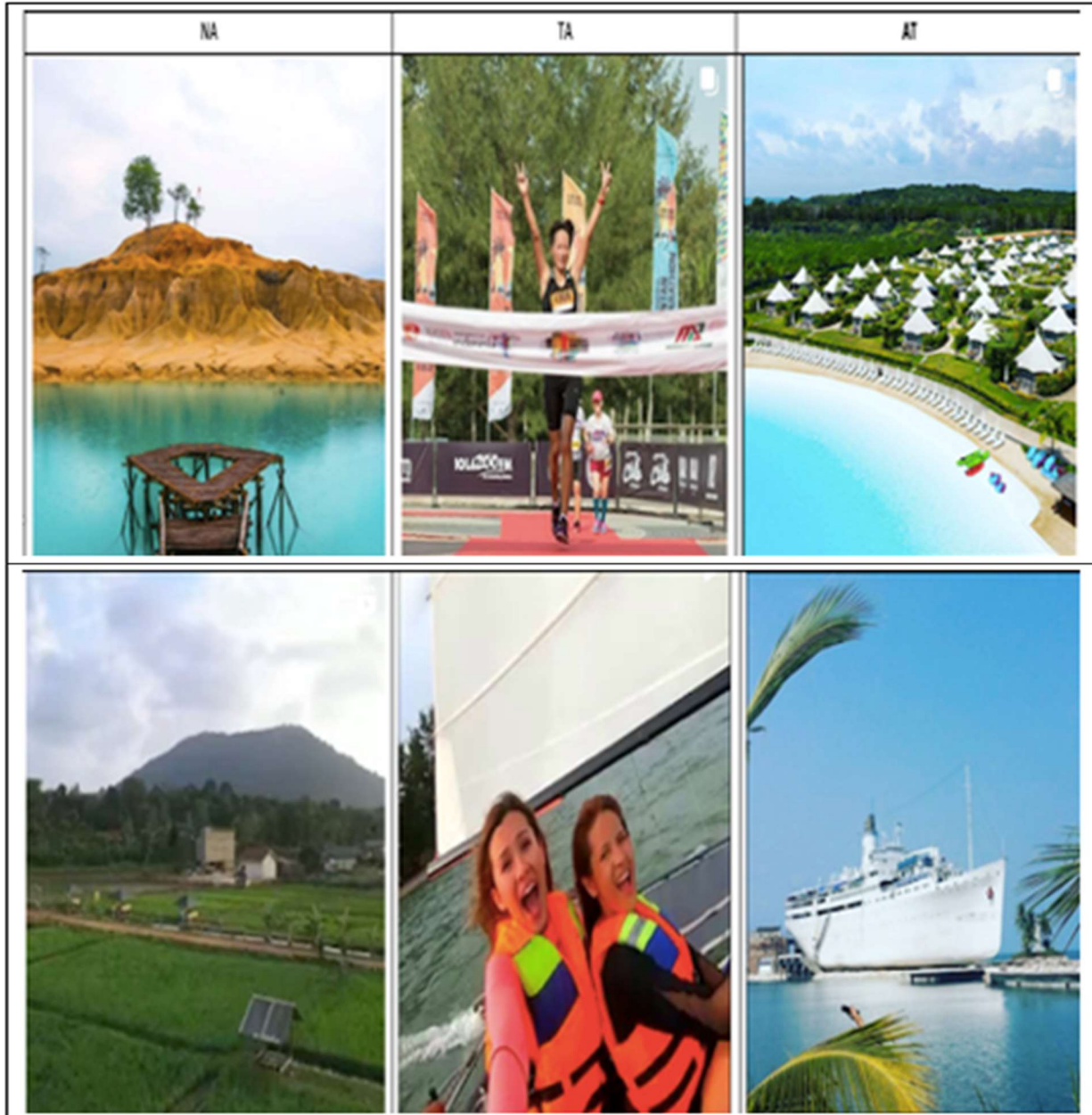


Figure 3. Several examples of dominant theme attributes (AA, TA and AT) depicted through visual content from the Bintan Disbudpar account

Apart from that, this theme is also visualized through images of tourist activities at various destinations in this district, such as enjoying the typical fruit of this district, namely durian, young coconut water, swimming, participating in beach parties, playing

golf, diving, snorkeling, etc. TA is the last theme, categorized as the central and the other two. This theme is third after AA and TA on the Genpi Bintan account. Meanwhile, on the Bintan Disbudpar account, that theme (TA) is second after AA. Indeed, several attributes are highlighted in this theme, such as resorts, cruise ships, bridges, roads, ports, and ferries. However, the resort is one attribute that appears prominently compared to others. Several images of resorts specifically located in Lagoi (an international tourist area in this district) appear repeatedly in the data, including Nirwana Resort, Mayang Sari Beach Resort, Indah Lagoi Beach, and others. The appearance of this theme in research data is rational because it is an essential element in forming the image of a destination. It has been proven in various existing studies, including (Gabbioneta & De Carlo, 2019), (Lian & Yu, 2017), (Tseng, Wu, Morrison, Zhang, & Chen, 2015). The findings of this research are in line with the findings of that study.

Furthermore, BSK is a theme in the moderate/medium category in data sourced from the Genpi Bintan and Disbudpar Bintan accounts in the pre-pandemic period. Even though there is a striking difference in the number of occurrences between the two time periods, this difference is the influence of differences in the data population. In the pre-pandemic era, this theme was filled with several image attributes, such as several mosques spread across the Bintan district, the sleeping Buddha statue in Tanjung Uban, North Bitan sub-district, and the giant turtle statue located in Sebang Bay, Bintan.

Meanwhile, in the post-pandemic period, other attributes were highlighted besides those mentioned above, such as thousand pantung tourist destinations and charcoal kitchens. The attributes in the BSK theme that have appeared on the Genpi Bintan account have also appeared on the Bintan Disbudpar account. However, this public body displays other attributes, namely the image of a maritime museum and monastery in the pre-pandemic and post-pandemic periods.

BSK is one of the elements that form the image of a destination (Song et al., 2020), (Kislali et al., 2020) (De las Heras-Pedrosa et al., 2020). So, it would be original if the two accounts exploited this theme in producing their visual content. In particular, the appearance of mosque attributes in this theme cannot be separated from two things. First, most people of the Bintan district embrace Islam, and the mosque is a facility for them to carry out their worship. In this context, the appearance of mosque attributes in the data represents their Islam.

This has an empirical basis through a study conducted by Kislai, et al, (2020). In its study, which highlights the formation of Turkey's destination image, this research found content that reflects Islamic culture in the local community. Second, local authorities project Bintan as one of the halal destinations in Indonesia, especially Pengudang village. Likewise, several resorts in Lagoi have developed Muslim-friendly tourist destinations.

Halal tourism is a tourist attraction developed based on sharia (Islamic law) in order to produce a product or service aimed at target customers who are mostly Muslim (Battour & Ismail, 2016). Viewed from this perspective, the presence of mosque attributes in the visual content on the Genpi Bintan and Disbudpar Bintan accounts is an effort to strengthen the image of the Bintan destination as a Muslim-friendly destination. Because the visual image of the mosque itself means a house of worship for Muslims. So, the appearance of this image suggests that the Bintan destination has provided convenience for tourists who want to worship. In this context, strengthening the image of halal tourism in Bintan is carried out by producing visual content depicting the image of the mosque and by presenting the image of female tourists wearing the hijab.

Other themes in this moderate category are KK and AB. The number of occurrences of these two themes is similar. Like other themes, the emergence of this theme was also higher in the pre-pandemic period than in the post-pandemic period, both on the Genpi Bintan and Disbudpar Bintan accounts. However, especially in the Disbudpar account, the number of KK appearances is higher post-pandemic than pre-pandemic. Genpi Bintan highlighted several AB attributes for the production of visual content in these two periods, including performances of cultural events (gasing games, malay dance performances) and kite competitions.

Some of these attributes also appear in the Disbudpar account, but besides these attributes, other attributes appear in the pre- and post-pandemic periods, namely cultural parades and Malay arts festivals. Likewise, during the pandemic, several of these attributes were found in addition to others, namely the congkak game.

The reasons for the emergence of this theme are based on various tourism studies literature (Dilley, 1986)(Gartner, 1989) (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991)(Potwarka & Banyai, 2016). For example, Dilley (1986) proposed cultural elements as one of the image-forming factors. Then, besides these factors, Fakeye and Crompton (1991) and Potwarka and Banyai (2016) included another theme, namely friendliness in tourism services, as a factor that influences the formation of the image of a tourist destination.

Lastly is the PL and MK theme. Referring to various studies, these two themes can be exploited to form the image of a tourist destination (Taufiqurrachman, 2020a)(Tseng et al., 2015)(Hu & Ritchie, 1993)(Fakeye & Crompton, 1991) (Gearing, Swart, & Var, 1974). However, the findings of this research show that this theme still needs to be addressed in the production of visual content by Genpi Bintan and Disbudpar Bintan, both in the pre- and post-pandemic periods. This is indicated by the low occurrence of these two themes, as presented in Table (2).

Conclusion

This research concluded that during the COVID-19 pandemic and pre-pandemic, several themes appeared dominantly in the Genpi Bintan and Disbudpar accounts,

including AA, AT, and TA. This shows that the presence of the pandemic did not influence the dominance of the appearance of these themes in the visual content produced by the two agencies.

Apart from that, the findings of this study also confirm the findings of previous studies, which show that mass media influences the formation of destination images from the tourist perspective. This is shown by the harmony between the themes raised in the news from the two media selected as data sources for this research and the themes that emerged from informants through ZMET interviews. Moreover, as an informant, he admitted to using online mass media, including Kompas and Detik.com, as sources of information regarding planning their visits to tourist destinations in Bintan.

Furthermore, the findings of this study also have practical/managerial implications for both parties. For tourism industry players, intensifying destination development projects based on local culture needs to be done to strengthen their attractiveness to tourists. Even though local culture is still part of the same family as its parent culture, namely Malay culture, the uniqueness and specificity of local culture can be exploited through various performances or cultural performances that highlight local themes. Other development projects can also be carried out by designing tourist packages that include cultural sites in this district, including Malay House, Arang Kitchen, and Kerang Hill Site.

Then, tourism operators/promoters can proportionally increase promotional content production for tourist destinations. In particular, potential themes that have yet to receive attention from the mass media, such as AB, PL, and MK, need to be given primary attention.

Apart from that, this research has only succeeded in identifying the image formed by two elements, namely, tourists and local DMOs, in two periods (pre and post-COVID-19 pandemic). Researchers suggest including other elements in the study of destination image formation, namely Bintan destination marketing agents. This is because this element is a party that responds to fluctuations in tourist visit numbers through promotional strategies, including producing promotional content for the Bintan tourist destination.

So, by including these elements, various breakthroughs can be identified by various elements acting as image makers, including tourism promotion agents, to revive tourists' interest in visiting. Thus, the complete and comprehensive image of the Bintan destination can be understood with a study that includes various elements.

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