

## CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

#### 1.1.1 The Development of Social Media and its Different Purposes

The idea of social media originated in 1978 from the invention of the Electronic Bulletin Board System by Ward Chirtensen and Randy Suess (Allen, 2017). In this electronic bulletin board, users could upload or download information, share it, or communicate with others who also got access to the bulletin board, usually those within the same institution. Bulletin Board System (BBS) was the first site that allowed users to connect and interact with each other.

*BBS* operates locally and is often linked to other bulletin board systems on a national or international scale (Allen, 2017). Typically, these networks provide services within geographically adjacent areas and fulfill the specific needs of local users. According to Allen (2017) despite of the limited network that this bulletin board allowed, this was the first time people could actually socialize within a community in online network with internet. BBS remained popular until the end of 1990. BBS still exist to the present time, but its usage is limited to the use of it as a hobby rather than a daily communication or information source like social media nowadays.

In 1997, the first social networking site appeared, which was called Sixdegrees.com. This site allowed someone to reconnect with friends or acquaintances by inviting them to join the person's network. Once they are connected, they can expand the networks further by inviting others that might share some similarities with them, such as alumni of a particular school, or members of certain institution. Sixdegrees offered social interactions for its users with features such as messaging, bulletin boards, and e-mail updates on the activities of our networks. Social media today are inspired by Sixdegrees because it was the first social medium, which made us interact with people without face-to-face method.

The users of Sixdegrees reached 3.5 million in 2001. During that time, Sixdegrees was so advanced and at that time not lot of people had access to the Internet. Thus, it was difficult for Sixdegrees to stay in the market. In 2001 Sixdegrees was sold to YouthStream Media Networks for \$125 million.

As internet technologies developing further, many other social media also entered the market. Some of the most significant and popular ones include Friendster, which was very popular in Asia, and Myspace, which was the first social media to reach global users (Edosomwan, 2011). At the moment, social media that still popular are Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and many more.

The presence of social media offers various conveniences for their users to access and share information quickly, easily and cost-effectively. Despite of its initial purpose as a tool to socialize with others, social media also give other advantages for their users, such as for businesses, for self-branding, education, and many more (Priambada, 2015). The possibility to expand one's network is one of the potentials of social media, and it is one of the most effective ways to market business.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic happened in early 2020, Statistica.com reported that active users of social media in 2017 was around 2.86 billion users. In 2018, this number increased to 3.14 billion users. By the end of 2019, it was 3.4 billion users and by the end of 2020, it was 3.6 billion users.

Based on data from Statisca.com, active social media users for Facebook in 2020 reached 2.4 billion, YouTube reached 2 billion, WhatsApp reached 1.6 billion, Instagram reached 1 billion, and Twitter reached 340 million. According to research conducted by GAVI, 2020 pandemic is one contributing factors to this massive increase. This is because human movements and contacts are limited resulting in people run to social media to connect with family, friends, and acquaintances.

Social media have an important role for people in this era. The rise of social media proved they have big impact on our life, such as the changing of mind set, life style, politics,

civic life, communication patterns, and many more (Perrin, 2015). One of the fields that gains the most benefit from social media is business. With social, businesses can reach hundreds of millions of users. Thus, social media can be used for promotion of products or for communicating with potential consumers.

Social media users can be the main target to increase the income by selling via internet. The presence of social media is important to increase visitors to your online business website. Where the website functions as an online business media and social media functions as a marketing channel. Social media is actually a bridge that connect people to visit the online store website that run (Business Queensland, 2020).

It is because social media allow businesses to communicate directly with their potential consumers about their brand and products. At the same time, consumers can interact and ask questions about the brands and products directly to the businesses. So, social media promote the two-way interactive communication between businesses and consumers, which were more challenging to be done in the more traditional forms of communication.

### **1.1.2 The Use of Social Media during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

Since the end of 2019, the world has been facing its most challenging crisis, the Corona Virus Disease in 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic COVID-19 cases were first found in the animal market in Wuhan, China in November 2019. COVID-19 is suspected of being carried by bats and other animals that eaten by humans until infection occurs. The virus quickly spread all around the world.

The emergence of the COVID-19 outbreak caused panic since it affects various aspects of life (Mughtar et al., 2020). The governments in many countries have carried out various policies related to the prevention of COVID-19. For instance, Chinese government imposed very strict lockdown in January 2020. The lockdown policy is considered to be highly effective in reducing the spread of COVID-19. By February 2020, the number of infection in China had been reduced by 90%. By the end of June 2020, China had been able to return life as more or less normal. Therefore around 15 countries have implemented the same policy, namely in Italy, Spain, France, Ireland, Belgium, Malaysia, the Philippines and others (Kompas, 2020).

There are lot of impacts from COVID-19. According to the latest figures from UNESCO, 3253 million students in South Korea, China and Japan from pre-primary to high school were not attending school in March 2020 (BBC, 2020). This action made the situation difficult in Asia, because in East Asian countries lot of people work as teachers and with this situation their salary got cut or they were losing their jobs.

Another effect from COVID-19 pandemic is the decline of economic activities. Various economic activities ranging from the tourism sector to trading are forced to close their doors because they cannot make enough business due to the low numbers of consumers. Consequently, they also need to lay off their employees. In Indonesia, the Minister of Manpower, Ida Fauziah, stated that 29.12 million workers are affected by the pandemic (Santia, 2020). This number include workers who are laid off, forced to take early retirement, forced to take less working hours, and those who cannot find a job due to COVID-19 (Liputan6, 2020).

Among all the industries that are affected by the pandemic, tourism sector is the hardest hit. Before the pandemic, Indonesian tourism is one of the fastest growing tourism industries in the World Travel & Tourism Council (Rosana, 2019). In 2019, Indonesian tourism was placed 9th in the world, 3rd in Asia, and 1st in Southeast Asia in comparison to tourism of other countries (Tempo, 2019). This achievement in the tourism sector was also recognized by the media company in the UK, The Telegraph, which listed Indonesia as "The Top 20 Fastest Growing Travel Destinations".

Foreign tourists visiting Indonesia increased significantly from 2015 - 2017. In 2015 the number reached 10.41 million, in 2016 the number increased to 12.01 million, and in 2017 it increased further to 14.04 million. Until August 2018, the number of foreign tourists reached 10.58 million. The number of domestic tourists also continued to rise. Since 2015 there have been 256 million domestic tourists, in 2016 it grew to 264.33 million, and in 2017 it increased to 270.82 million (Tempo, 2019).

According to research by Booking.com the majority of tourists today are those who come from millennials or generation Z. Booking.com managed to see the result of the behavior from Generation Z through a survey of 21,807 respondents aged 16 years. Or, 25 percent aged 16-24 years. Respondents came from Australia, Germany, France, Spain, Italy, China, Brazil, India, USA, UK, Russia, Indonesia, Colombia, and South Korea. Each country is taken 1,000 respondents.

Generation Z is very familiar with the digital world both pragmatically and realistically. They are more difficult to reach when compared to the previous generation and only have 8 seconds to give their attention. However, they are always connected 24/7 to access Instagram, Youtube, WeChat and many more. Generation Z is expecting more organized content. They communicate with images and they don't watch TV like the generations before them. They want an authenticity and no substandard content. They are aware and want to be tied to brands that match what they believe in (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2018).

From the statement above it can be concluded that generation Z, they have high purchasing power, and brave to take risks by traveling frequently, and also not afraid to spend money, not think twice to spend money for traveling to make new experiences. They are also a good promotional tool because they like to share their travels and experiences on social media so other people could see.

In 2020, as the center of Indonesian tourism, Bali stated that suffered a loss of IDR 48.5 trillion due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Other alternative are needed in this situation to make every industry still running in this difficult time. In this pandemic when people cannot meet each other face to face, then people interact and communicate through social media. Social media is the greatest way to helps industry still running especially for tourism sector (BBC Indonesia, 2020). This drastic drop is due to the imposition of travel restrictions by many countries which are trying to stop contain the spread and transmission of the potentially fatal virus.

As mentioned above, lockdown, social Distancing and travel restriction that are applied in many countries has forced tourism industry to be shut down for almost a year now. In

order to mitigate this crisis, tourism industry started to focusing their marketing strategy in social media. The COVID-19 pandemic is a challenge for tourism sector to be able to run in the pandemic by providing a sense of safety to the citizen, both tourists and local people around tourist attractions.

With tourism activity cancellation, many flights were canceled, specifically reducing domestic and international travel. This situation pushed businesses across the travel and tourism sector, including transportation services, lodging, entertainment and restaurants, and other tourism places. Lufthansa forcibly need to shut the operations of Germanwings because it was unable to survive the COVID-19 pandemic. Germanwings is Lufthansa's low cost airline. A total of 40 airplanes were deactivated. In addition to closing Germanwings, Lufthansa also plans to close Austrian Airlines, Swiss International Airlines and Eurowings (KompasTV, 2020).

In addition to the closure of tourism sites and restrictions on human movement, one of the factors that makes the tourism industry suffer is the fear of tourists in carrying out tourism activities. Tourist fear is caused by the increasing spread of the corona virus, according to COVID-19 Data Repository by the Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) at Johns Hopkins University, average number of cases increase as per February 1<sup>st</sup> 2021 it reach 12.865 cases in 7 days. This number make people afraid to travel during COVID-19 pandemic.

Indonesia, as one of the countries of choice for tourist destinations, cannot escape from this impact. In this difficult time, other alternatives are needed. The role of social media is a right way to keep every industry running to still promoting every company. Since pandemic when people are forced to stay at home, social media helps people to still doing normal activities from home by the development of technology, one of the example is people still can go to travel virtually.

### **1.1.3 The Use of Social Media in Tourism Industry**

Thanks to social media that could spread information in few minutes, by the help of it we could do other alternatives to do other plans to keep the industry running. Social Media as our part of our daily life now, plays an important part in information sharing. Any

topics could be easily and quickly distributed through Social Media, no exception to Tourism industry.

Marketing through social media will affect external factors that influence consumer perceptions of a product, which in turn will influence consumer purchase interest (Maoyan et al, 2014). Gunawan and Huarng (2015) suggest that social interactions and perceived risks through social media have an impact on consumer buying interest. According to Chih-Chin Liang and Hanh Thi Dang (2015), the components of company and social and environmental group factors influence buying interest.

Even before the pandemic, social Media has been massively used by tourist to organize, share, search information and define their travel stories and experiences through blogs and microblogs, online communities, media sharing sites, social bookmarking site, social knowledge sharing sites, and other tools in a collaborative way (Leung et al., 2013).

Social media plays a significant role in many aspects of tourism, especially in information search and decision-making behaviors, tourism promotion and in focusing on best practices for interacting with consumers (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014). Social Media also has an important role in crisis management in tourism. According to Pennington-Gray, London, Cahyanto, and Klages (2011), Social Media can be used to effectively communicate during a crisis in tourism.

For example, during the case of Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill in Florida, the local government developed a social media campaign, titled "Visit Florida" to communicate vital information and to combat misperceptions related to the oil spill (Gray et al., 2013). As a result, tourists gained trust of the way the government handled the spill and the number of tourists to Florida was not affected (Pennington-Gray, London, Cahyanto, and Klages, 2011). (Schroeder, Pennington-Gray, Donohoe, and Kiouisis, 2013).

Recent study conducted by Aldao & Mihalic (2020) in the town of Longyearbyen, Norway, proved that social media such as Facebook and Instagram influenced the decision-making process of the tourist to visit the town. Both Facebook and Instagram were used as sources of information and inspiration. As for Instagram's hashtags provided the tourists with constant updates from posts of other user or travelers. Another recent study conducted in Romania also showing a similar result, Briciu & Briciu (2020) found

that YouTube as a social media has become the main information source for travelers in the form of video sharing platform and spreading information.

One of the newest things in social media is *TikTok*. *TikTok* is a Chinese social network and music video platform launched in September 2016 by Zhang Yiming. The application allows users to create their own short music video (Lee, 2017). *TikTok* used to be an application called Musical.ly in 2014 but still has the same goal, to make users able to make short videos 15 seconds such as lip-sync videos, and dancing or funny videos.

At first *TikTok* was not used for promotion. *TikTok* is a short video maker application with a lot of special effects to help people build their creativity. One of the information for social media users is making short videos on *TikTok* and it will be known by other *TikTok* users. The contents in *TikTok* that currently famous are about daily life hacks, information, singing while dancing and many more. Not only useful as a source of information, this application can also be a medium of entertainment because people thought the content on *TikTok* are entertaining.

*TikTok* can be used anywhere and anytime. The content for its user is practically free or without a theme so the content creators can share lot of things, not focused on one issue or a theme that we want to share on social media. The difference in *TikTok* with other social media is *TikTok* only share a short video. People love to see video rather than a picture then to read the caption.

By only watch a video in *TikTok* we get all information in one time. This application provides a tools to edit videos with features such as background music, adding text or stickers and providing special effects. We also can add song and beautify the video that we want to created. *TikTok* also suggest us which video and that currently popular so it helps people to create similar video.

*TikTok* is one of the social media platforms that became famous instantly and has been downloaded by more than 700 million users in 2019 (Pertiwi, 2020). According to Wallaroo (2021), *TikTok* has 1 billion monthly active users. In November of 2018, *TikTok*



reported that the number was 680 million monthly active users. It estimated that it's increased to over 1.1 billion as of now in February 2021. Head of User and Content for *TikTok* Indonesia, Angga Anugrah Putra, said that *TikTok* users in Indonesia have unique characters which like to share and use a variety of unique features with lot of creativity.

*TikTok* has been very popular with Indonesian users since its launch in 2017. *TikTok* was awarded the best Indonesian application at the 2018 Google Play Awards (CRI Online, 2020). Why is *TikTok* a popular application in Indonesia? *TikTok* knows exactly that Indonesians love to dance and sing. According to data from Dailysocial regarding music streaming in the Indonesian market, 90% of respondents use streaming music, 51% of respondents whose usage time reaches 1-14 hours per week.

*TikTok* gained momentum during the pandemic and become very popular when the pandemic people stayed at home and access everything through laptop and phones. The younger the population in a country, the higher the overall usage time. That's why countries with developing markets lead the duration of social media play ranking.

Sandy.ss is the one of the most popular accounts in *TikTok* in Indonesia. He has 13,8 million followers on *TikTok* and he created lot of entertaining content through his *TikTok*. The likers that he could get reached 379,7 million per March 2020. The second biggest user in Indonesia is Jharnabhagwani, she has 9,7 million followers on *TikTok*. The content on her *TikTok* is mostly about make up transformation with lot of sense of creativity. She also added lot of effect on her video to entertain people so the viewers could enjoy more. *TikTok* as the current most popular Social Media, especially during COVID-19 pandemic *TikTok* is being used by tourism industry as one of their promoting tool.

The impact from COVID-19 pandemic, online entertainment is experiencing explosive growth. *TikTok* became the most downloaded non-game application in Indonesia in August 2020. Angga Anugrah Putra, Head of User and Content Operations for *TikTok* Indonesia, explained that this year is different from the previous year. The creativity of *TikTok* users is not only to entertain but also to provide a sense of connection, audience

engagement, and to support each other in period of the COVID-19 pandemic (CNBC, 2020).

Official Account of the Indonesia Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy is called “@indonesia.travel”. Sharing short-video of how Indonesia’s tourism industry is still interesting and also safe during COVID-19 Pandemic is one of the way to mitigate the crisis in tourism industry by using Social Media (*TikTok*) as their platform. Indonesia.travel on *TikTok* has 66 posts, 244,700 followers and reached 1.6 million likes as per March 2021.

Since the amount of *TikTok* user is a lot and most them are young people, *TikTok* has potential to support tourism industry during pandemic. Due to the large number of users and generally young people. Several tourist destinations have already benefited. It has benefit from *TikTok* by helping the tourism sector in pandemic era is quite significance when we see the usage of *TikTok* are increasing. *TikTok* users in Indonesia are actually dominated by teenagers aged 14-24 years. Meanwhile, from a regional perspective, *TikTok* users in Indonesia come from big cities (Potkin, 2020).

Most of the usual activities that used to do normally now everything done by virtually such as meeting, studying and even traveling. Traveling now is banned due to COVID-19 but one of travel company in Indonesia provided a virtual tour which we can still travel during pandemic so people could still able to travel during pandemic.

## 1.2 Research Problem

The research problem written according to the discussion above

- The tourism industry has been severely affected by the pandemic, not only because of the restrictions on travel and human movement by the government but also because of the fear/doubt that many people have for traveling during this pandemic.
- Social media has been used for a long time for business purposes, one of which is for tourism. This is because social media is a popular information medium, especially for tourism where people like to share information and experiences. In addition, many people today rely on social media as a source of information.

- The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy opened a *TikTok* account to promote Indonesian tourism during the pandemic. *TikTok* is the media chosen because it is a very popular social media today. In addition, *TikTok* is the right medium to communicate with young people, who make up the largest percentage of the number of tourists.
- Therefore, the researcher want to analyze the communication strategy carried out by the Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy through his *TikTok* account, especially to promote travel safety during a pandemic.

Social media has lot of benefit, and we use to support our daily needs, such as for work, socialize and even to contact with our family. One of its benefit with is helping business including tourism industry. Social media has potential to build a good communication do deliver information with certain customers especially young generation. According to Statista (2020) the most social media users in Indonesia in 2020 are aged 25-34 years old.

As we know the pandemic of COVID-19 has a lot of negative effect on almost every industry, in Indonesia specifically has affected in tourism industry. *TikTok* became a social media that has increased its user since pandemic happened as mentioned earlier. Various industries are starting to look at *TikTok* as the potential promotion tool to support in times of pandemic.

The Indonesian Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy is aggressively promoting Indonesian tourism through *TikTok* account with the account name @indonesia.Travel. Therefore, the researcher want to see how their strategy in promoting tourism through *TikTok* and the response of young people to the strategy carried out by the ministry of tourism.

Based on data from world tourism statistics, the number of tourist arrivals worldwide has decreased during the pandemic when compared to the previous year when the pandemic had not yet emerged. Destinations and Infrastructure Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy was predicted that foreign tourists visiting Indonesia was stuck in 4 million people. The drop in visits has certainly had an impact on the income of tourism actors in the local region. With the continued increase in positive cases of COVID-19, it is also