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## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DIGITAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT BY LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN TOURISM MARKETING**

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### **Abstract**

Local governments as administrators and regulators of the regional development industry are beginning to recognize the potential of digital media in tourism marketing. In Medan City, North Sumatra, Indonesia, the marketing of tourism is managed with care, as indicated by the wide range of digital media employed. Therefore, this study aims to assess the effectiveness of digital media management by the Medan City Tourism Office in marketing tourism. An online questionnaire obtained the main data and was processed using the EPIC Model approach. The results show that all digital media have been managed effectively. Instagram belongs to the very effective category, while YouTube, Facebook, and Website are classified in the effective category. The ineffective category consists of Twitter and Application.

**Keywords:** Effectiveness, Digital Media, EPIC Model, Local Government, Tourism Marketing

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The fast-paced advancement of technology has had a significant influence on the continually growing tourism sector (Mior Shariffuddin et al., 2023). The presence of technology in the form of digital media has influenced the modern community's lifestyle and serves as a source for information and communication (Ibrahim et al., 2023). These digital media advancements have reshaped tourist behavior, establishing it as the preferred method for travelers to plan, research, and book their trips. With the convenience and accessibility that digital media provides, it has become important for both tourists and tourism stakeholders to collaborate in the growth of the tourism sector (Azwar et al., 2023).

This research is conducted in Medan, one of Indonesia's major cities and one of the entry points for international tourists, particularly from Malaysia and Singapore. Tourism industry is crucial as it is often understood in economic terms and perspectives where it is deemed as one of the crucial contributors to global economic performance with Medan without exception (Azinuddin et al., 2022a; 2022b; 2022c). Medan, 'The Kitchen of Asia' is a tourism tagline promoted by the local government. Furthermore, Medan is one of the most popular tourist attractions because of its rich cultural diversity. Heritage, culture, shopping, nature, as well as culinary and gastronomic tourism, are all possible in this city. In addition, digital media has also been optimized through the Tourism Office.

The combination of the advantages of digital media and extraordinary tourism potential in Medan City, as well as the government's seriousness has not been able to increase the number of tourists. Tourism marketing through digital media needs to be reviewed for the effectiveness of its management. Therefore, this study formulates the objective of examining the effectiveness of digital media for each platform used by the Medan City Tourism Office. It was carried out using several approaches, such as the EPIC Model, including four critical dimensions of empathy, persuasion, impact, and communication (Indah & Maulida, 2017). Empathy is a factor that determines consumers' level of appreciation for an advertisement (Suryaningsih & Widi Nugraha, 2019). This dimension provides valuable information about a brand's attractiveness (Ernestivita & Subagyo, 2020). Persuasion is a factor that informs what digital media may do to enhance or improve a brand's identity (Putra & Lisdayanti, 2020). It is a change in beliefs, attitudes, and behavioral intentions caused by promotional communication. The impact is a criterion that indicates whether a product can distinguish itself from others in its category (Alias et al., 2023; Oktanizar & Kurniawan, 2021).

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY







A descriptive approach was used to observe the effectiveness of digital media by using the EPIC Model and measuring it quantitatively for further interpretation. Data was obtained through the distribution of online questionnaires to measure the effectiveness of each digital media platform used by the Medan City Tourism Office. The population consists of digital media users, whose numbers are listed in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Sample Determination

Platform	Population	Sample	
		Minimal Cochran	Result
Instagram	24.218	68	75
Facebook	33.332	68	79
Twitter	275	55	71
Aplikasi	1000	64	70
Youtube	6620	68	76
Website	Unknown	69	154
<b>Total</b>			525

The data collection technique is carried out through the distribution of online questionnaires using links and QR Codes to users of each digital media platform. The information is as follows:

**Table 2:** Questionnaire Links

Platforms	Questionnaire Links	QR Codes
Instagram	s.id/IG2022	
Facebook	s.id/FB2022	
Twitter	s.id/TW2022	
Application	s.id/Aplikasi2022	
Youtube	s.id/YT2022	
Website	s.id/WEB2022	

Data collection is also carried out through a literature review and observation of all digital media included. The data analysis technique is adapted to the EPIC Model protocol. In determining the assessment procedure, the adoption is adjusted to the needs of the study (Amira & Nurhayati, 2019; Indah & Maulida, 2017; Oktanizar & Kurniawan, 2021; Suryaningsih & Widi Nugraha, 2019), including:

**Table 3:** Data Analysis Technique

Stage	Description
Determining a particular account of the digital platform as the basis for measuring its effectiveness	This is performed specifically for websites, Instagram, and Facebook, which consists of more than 1 account. The determination of the account as the basis for the assessment is conducted based on the activeness of updates on the website and the number of followers on Instagram and Facebook
Measurement of effectiveness is divided according to the variables of Empathy, Persuasion, Impact, and Communication	The scales used are as follows: SA: Strongly Agree (-2 points) A: Agree (score -1) DA: Disagree (score 0) SDA: Strongly Disagree (score 1)
Determination of the perception scale range $R_s = \frac{R}{M}$ Rs:Scale range R:The most significant weight to the smallest weight, where the highest is 1, and the lowest is -2 M:Number of weight categories	Result: $R_s = \frac{2-(-1)}{4} = 0.75$ Therefore, the scale range is: -2 to -1.25 Very Ineffective (VI) -1.24 to -0.50 Ineffective (I) -0.49 to 0.25 Effective (E) 0.26 to 1.00 Very Effective (VE)

The visualization in making decisions using this EPIC Model is as follows:



**Figure 1:** Measurement Scale

Tourism marketing in Medan City is conducted using 12 digital media as follows:

**Table 4:** Digital Media Accounts and Platforms for Medan City Tourism Marketing

No	Accounts	Platforms
1	IG : pariwisatakotamedan	Instagram
2	IG :medan.thekitchenofasia	Instagram
3	IG :medancreativemarket	Instagram
4	IG :colourfulmedan.tourism	Instagram
5	FB : Medan The Kitchen Of Asia	Facebook
6	FB : Dinas Pariwisata Kota Medan	Facebook
7	@Disparmedan	Twitter
8	Medan Tourism	Application
9	Dinas Pariwisata Kota Medan	Youtube
10	Pariwisata.pemkomedan.go.id	Website
11	Medantourism.pemkomedan.go.id	Website
12	pariwisatamedan@gmail.com	E-mail

### **Instagram**

Four Instagram accounts are used for different purposes, including:

- a. Pariwisatakotamedan's account provides general information on tourism in Medan City related to events organized by the Tourism Office. The caption is made according to the photo/video display, and there is an invitation to follow other Instagram accounts and digital media owned by the Medan City Tourism Office.
- b. Medan.thekitchenofasia is an Instagram account formed to support the 'Medan the Kitchen of Asia' program initiated by the mayor of the city. This account focuses on informing culinary in Medan, including promoting products from hotels, restaurants, and MSMEs engaged in related fields.
- c. Medancreativemarket is an Instagram account intended as a promotional tool for creative economy Actors in Medan. It is linked to FB groups intended like a local marketplace.
- d. The Colorfulofmedan account promotes social and cultural diversity that strengthens the position of Medan as one of the melting pot cities in Indonesia. In addition, this account describes other ethnic groups in North Sumatra.

### **Facebook**

There are two Facebook accounts, with Dinas Pariwisata Kota Medan having the most followers 33,000. The content is the same as the @pariwisatakotamedan Instagram account, which is shared simultaneously using the 'also post to' feature. In addition, there is a marketplace group to accommodate creative economy actors in Medan City. The management is carried out internally by staff within the Tourism Office.

### **Twitter**

The Twitter account @Disparmedan, managed by the Medan City Tourism Office, has been around since the end of 2017. The names of other digital media accounts are also informed on the initial profile page. However, this account is inactive, as seen from the last post on May 1, 2021. The form of content is only the same as Instagram, and the published name is not the latest.

### **Application**

The Medan Tourism application is available on the Google Playstore, but can only be downloaded through Android-based mobile phones. The last update was in January 2019, and the most updated content is the news menu similar to the website. Many other menus are neglected, while some are inaccessible.

### **YouTube**

YouTube had 7,000 subscribers when the observation was conducted on June 10, 2022. The most recent type of content was the live stream of the Medan Creative Home activity and other Tourism Office events. The most popular video with the highest number of views is “Ahooi, Ikon Baru Kota Medan (the New Icon of Medan City)”, uploaded 3 years ago with a total of 454,000 viewers.

### **Website**

The Medan Tourism Office also manages two website accounts, including [medantourism.pemkomedan.go.id](http://medantourism.pemkomedan.go.id) and [pariwisata.pemkomedan.go.id](http://pariwisata.pemkomedan.go.id). For [medantourism.pemkomedan.go.id](http://medantourism.pemkomedan.go.id), information is constantly updated through the latest news menu, which becomes the landing page. Meanwhile, other menus are neglected, as in the Medan Tourism application.

### **E-mail**

The official e-mail of the Tourism Office is [pariwisatamedan@gmail.com](mailto:pariwisatamedan@gmail.com). This account is used for electronic mail communication regarding tourism promotion.

## **ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

### **The Effectiveness of Digital Media for Tourism Marketing in Medan City**

Before explaining the effectiveness of digital media, the results of the instrument test are described as follows:

**Table 5: SPSS Test Summary**

		N	%
Cases	Valid	30	100.0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	.0
	Total	30	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Based on the table above, the number of respondents in the validity and reliability tests is 30. The determination in this initial test is related to the r-table value that does not change after the number (Wolf et al., 2013). The reliability test results in this instrument are as follows:

**Table 6: Reliability Test Results**

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha
Empathy	0.963
Persuasion	0.951
Impact	0.936
Communication	0.973

Based on the table above, Cronbach’s Alpha in this instrument is 0.977, more significant than 0.600. Therefore, it can be interpreted that this instrument is reliable.

**Table 7: Validity Test Results**

Variable	Item	r-count	r-table	Interpretation
Empathy	E1	0.965	0.374 (df28 = 30 – 2)	Valid
	E2	0.938		Valid
	E3	0.892		Valid
Persuasion	P1	0.842		Valid
	P2	0.863		Valid
	P3	0.908		Valid
	P4	0.880		Valid
	P5	0.885		Valid
Impact	I1	0.911		Valid
	I2	0.897		Valid
	I3	0.857		Valid
Communication	C1	0.909		Valid
	C2	0.924		Valid
	C3	0.958		Valid
	C4	0.956		Valid
	C5	0.889		Valid

The table above shows that the validity and reliability test results for all variables related to the effectiveness of digital media have fulfilled the requirements. It can be seen that  $r\text{-count} > r\text{-table}$ .

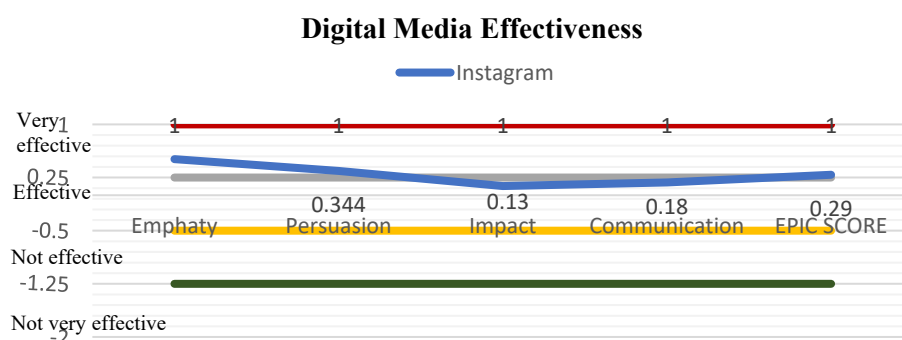
The next step is to analyze the effectiveness of digital media using the EPIC Model protocol from a questionnaire distributed to 525 main respondents. This is conducted per platform, and the focus test is carried out on the account selected by the respondent. The assessment results for the effectiveness of digital media per platform are as follows:

***Instagram***

In implementing the EPIC Model for the Instagram platform, it is necessary to determine the account that will be tested. Based on the number of followers, the account that underlies the effectiveness assessment with the EPIC model approach is @pariwisatakotamedan. The effectiveness assessment with the EPIC Model approach is shown as follows:

**Table 8: Instagram Effectiveness Assessment**

Aspect	Result	Interpretation
Empathy	0.51	Very effective
Persuasion	0.344	Very effective
Impact	0.13	Effective
Communication	0.18	Effective
EPIC Score	0.29	Very effective



**Figure 2: Instagram EPIC Test Visualization**

Based on the table and visualization above, empathy and impact have the highest and lowest values of 0.51 and 0.13. In general, Instagram @pariwisatakotamedan is considered very effective, with a score of 0.29.

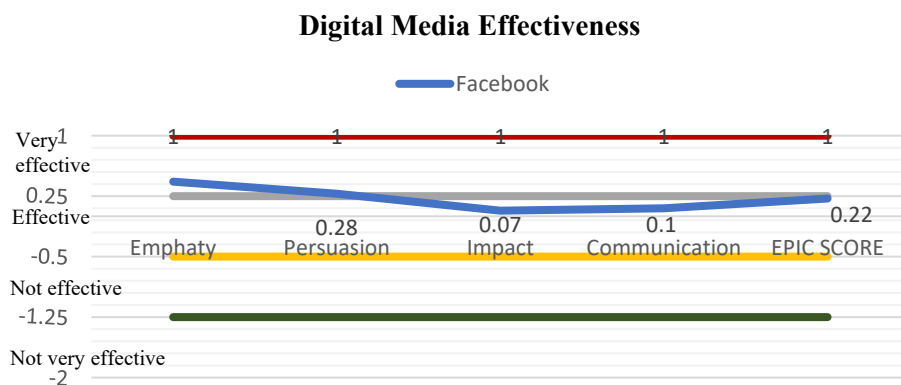
### Facebook

To assess the effectiveness of Facebook, the Dinas Pariwisata Kota Medan account becomes the reference based on the number of followers. The results of the account using the EPIC model approach are shown as follows:

**Table 9: Facebook Effectiveness Assessment**

Aspect	Result	Interpretation
Empathy	0.43	Very effective
Persuasion	0.28	Very effective
Impact	0.07	Effective
Communication	0.10	Effective
EPIC Score	0.22	Effective





**Figure 3:** Instagram EPIC Visualization

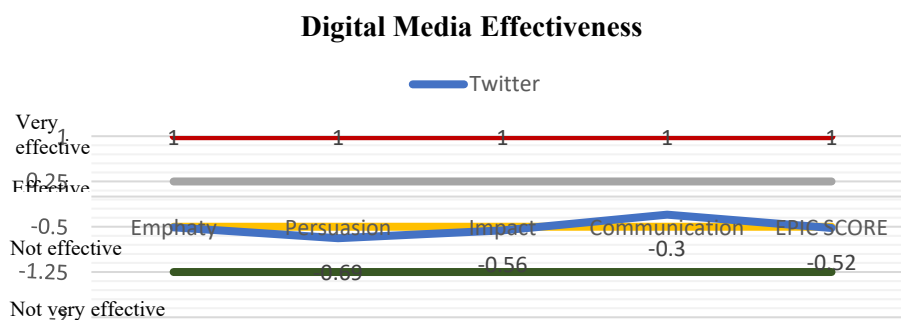
Based on the table and visualization above, empathy and impact have the highest and lowest values of 0.43 and 0.07. The Dinas Pariwisata Kota Medan Facebook account is considered adequate, with a score of 0.22.

### Twitter

The effectiveness assessment results of Twitter media management are shown in the following table:

**Table 10:** Twitter Effectiveness Assessment

Aspect	Result	Interpretation
Empathy	-0.51	Ineffective
Persuasion	-0.69	Ineffective
Impact	-0.56	Ineffective
Communication	-0.30	Effective
EPIC Score	-0.52	Ineffective



**Figure 4:** EPIC Twitter Visualization

The table and visualization above show that communication and persuasion have the highest and lowest values of -0.30 and -0.69. In general, the @disparmedan Twitter account has an EPIC value of -0.52 with an ineffective category.

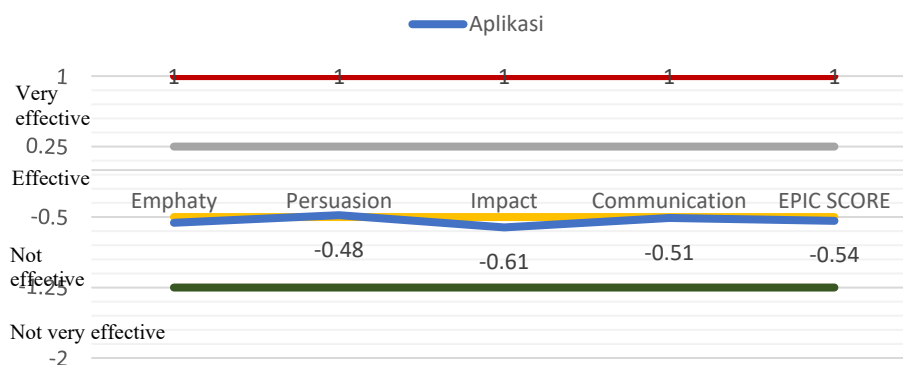
**Application**

The effectiveness assessment results of the Medan Tourism Application management are shown in the following table:

**Table 11: Application Effectiveness Assessment**

Aspect	Result	Interpretation
Empathy	-0.56	Ineffective
Persuasion	-0.48	Effective
Impact	-0.61	Ineffective
Communication	-0.51	Ineffective
EPIC Score	-0.54	Ineffective

**Digital Media Effectiveness**



**Figure 5: Application EPIC Visualization**

The table and visualization above show that persuasion and impact have the highest and lowest values of -0.48 and -0.61. The Medan Tourism application is in the ineffective category with an EPIC Score of -0.54.

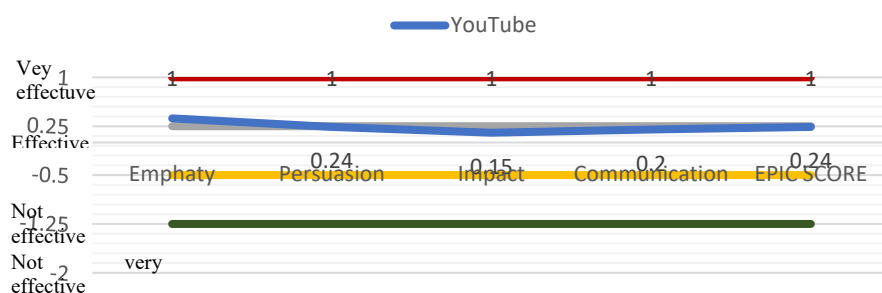
**YouTube**

The effectiveness assessment results of the Dinas Pariwisata Kota Medan’s YouTube media management are shown in the following table:

**Table 12: YouTube Effectiveness Assessment**

Aspect	Result	Interpretation
Empathy	0.37	Very effective
Persuasion	0.24	Effective
Impact	0.15	Effective
Communication	0.20	Effective
EPIC Score	0.24	Effective

### Digital Media Effectiveness



**Figure 6: YouTube EPIC Visualization**

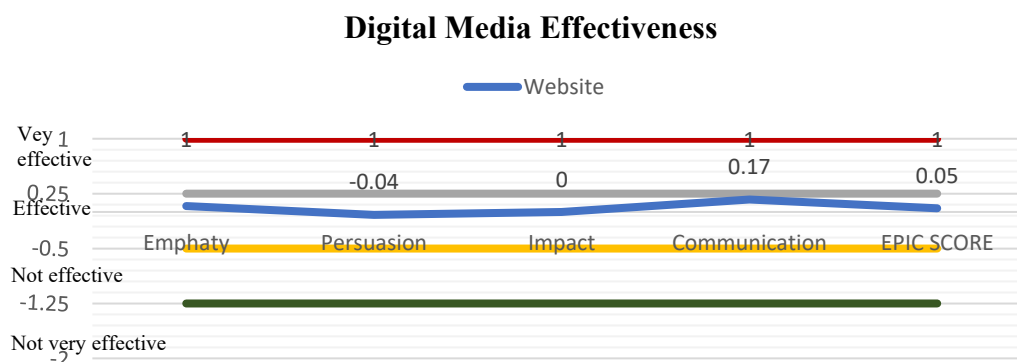
Based on the table and visualization, empathy, and impact have the highest and lowest values of 0.37 and 0.15. The Dinas Pariwisata Medan's YouTube account is appreciated as one of the effective digital media, with an EPIC Score of 0.24.

### Website

The effectiveness assessment for the digital media website is based on [medantourism.pemkomedan.go.id](http://medantourism.pemkomedan.go.id) because the other web account ([pariwisata.pemkomedan.go.id](http://pariwisata.pemkomedan.go.id)) is no longer active.

**Table 13: Website Effectiveness Assessment**

Aspect	Result	Interpretation
Empathy	0.08	Effective
Persuasion	-0.04	Effective
Impact	-0.00	Effective
Communication	0.17	Effective
EPIC Score	0.05	Effective



**Figure 7:** Website EPIC Visualization

The table and visualization above shows that the communication and persuasion aspect on the website digital media of [medantourism.pemkomedan.go.id](http://medantourism.pemkomedan.go.id) have the highest and lowest values of 0.17 and -0.04. In general, this website digital media has an EPIC Score of 0.05 in the practical category.

## DISCUSSION

The effectiveness assessment of all digital tourism marketing media in Medan City can be summarized in the following table:

**Table 14:** Overall Effectiveness Assessment

Aspect	Result	Interpretation
Empathy	0.13	Effective
Persuasion	0.01	Effective
Impact	-0.07	Effective
Communication	0.04	Effective
EPIC Score	0.03	Effective

Based on the table above, tourism marketing digital media in Medan City are categorized as effective with an EPIC Score of 0.03. The highest and lowest effectiveness values are obtained by the empathy and impact of 0.13 and -0.07. This empathy aspect shows that users like digital tourism marketing media in Medan City. Even though the impact value is negative, it is still in the practical category. This indicates that with the presence of tourism marketing digital media, users become aware and motivated to visit the activities offered.

The results did not show the same pattern in determining the dominance of each aspect. A study on advertising promotion media, specifically for Instagram in Kediri, showed the highest effectiveness level is in communication

compared to other aspects (Suryaningsih & Widi Nugraha, 2019). Another study in Langsa City also showed that the highest effectiveness value is in the communication aspect (Indah & Maulida, 2017). This shows the flexibility of assessing the effectiveness of digital media. Therefore, a score of 0.03 does not necessarily appreciate the effectiveness of all tourism marketing, and it requires an exposure aspect of each digital media as follows:

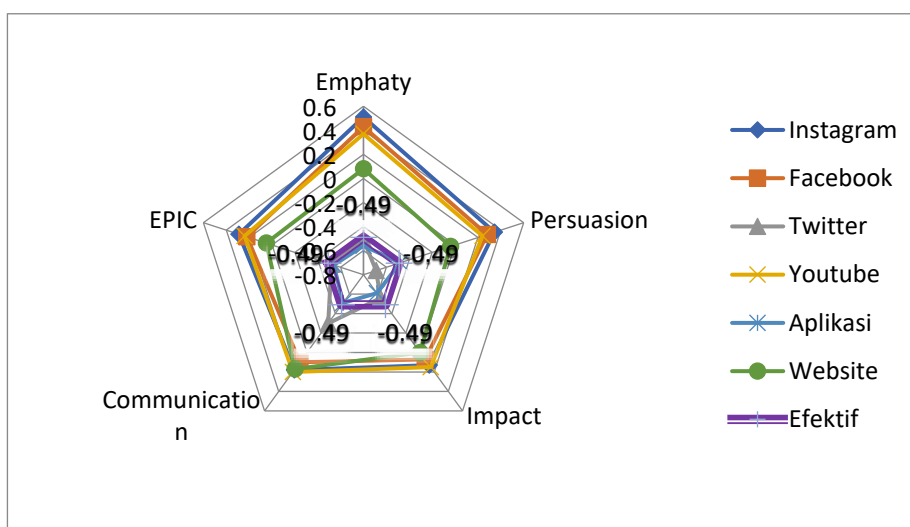


Figure 8: EPIC Diagram of all Digital Media

The table and diagram above show that Instagram (EPIC: 0.29) is in a very effective category, followed by YouTube (EPIC: 0.24), Facebook (EPIC: 0.22), and Website (EPIC: 0.05) in the effective category. Meanwhile, the ineffective category consists of Application (EPIC: -0.54) and Twitter (EPIC: -0.52).

The Instagram media tested is the account of @pariwisatakotamedan, which has content of more than 3,000 posts. The empathy aspect of 0.51 indicates that the user likes this media. The quality of the photos/videos displayed is also maximized with appropriate and informative captions. The post has a tourism theme in Medan City, especially with information on events designed by the Tourism Office, such as the Creative Homepage. However, the impact value on Instagram is only 0.13, which is the lowest of the other aspects. This shows that the post has been effective in distributing information, hence users are aware of the event promotion offered by Instagram. This information is not best for encouraging consumers to make additional contributions to the event offer. The primary consideration is interaction on Instagram, where the number of likes on 1 post is only about 1% of the total existing followers.

The 'also publish to' feature allows similar content to be posted on Facebook and Instagram. Therefore, the EPIC Score assessment for Facebook shows the same result for Instagram.

For YouTube media, the highest level of empathy or liking is 0.37 in the very effective category. The pattern is the same as on Instagram, where the impact of posts is the lowest with a score of 0.15 in the practical category. This YouTube account, created on July 4, 2017, has garnered 1 million views, and 7,000 of them have become subscribers. The high impact value is due to the activeness in distributing its content, such as live streaming and coverage. In live streaming, the content displayed is an ongoing event. The list of videos, teaser videos, or promotional content that invites users to attend upcoming events is still limited. For example, the video teaser for the Creative Economy Agency's weekly City Hall page event on May 28, 2022, will be posted on May 25, 2022. Subsequently, there will be no video teaser for activities in the following week. This may be due to the repeated concept of the event and the absence of a particular theme.

One particular note in managing this YouTube is that caption writing on videos needs to be considered and adjusted to the General Guidelines for Indonesian Spelling (PUEBI). The limitations of video teasers, event themes, and the rules for writing captions are why the impact value on digital media is still not optimal.

In website media, the highest value is on the communication aspect at 0.17. This is because the most updated menu is news, where the content update period is carried out almost every working day. Persuasion on the website has the lowest value of -0.04, and in this aspect, digital media is expected to increase the trust and understanding of its users. This is because the content related to tourism in Medan City is still limited.

In the Medan Tourism application media, the content created is the same as the news on the website. This media has a negative value because there is no perceived benefit to using the application. However, the contents can be found on other websites/media, and there is a download process that takes time and consumes phone memory.

On Twitter, ineffectiveness is evaluated since the account has been dormant for an extended period. This can be seen from the last post in May 2021 as a report or the use of the 'also post to' feature from Instagram. The use of this media is still ineffective because it does not optimize the opportunities as a narrative platform that is still in demand by some internet users.

Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and Instagram are common platforms widely used in digital marketing (Fondevila-Gascón et al., 2020). However, this study showed that Twitter is still not effectively utilized by the Medan City government for tourism marketing in Medan City. Other platforms are currently

being developed, such as TikTok, that need to be taken advantage of (Haenlein et al., 2020; Mou, 2020).

## CONCLUSION

Digital media for tourism marketing in Medan City is categorized as effective. However, there is a significant gap in measuring effectiveness between platforms, where Instagram is in a very effective category, followed by YouTube, Facebook and Website in the effective category. The ineffective category consists of Application and Twitter. For future analysis, the management of every digital marketing media should be carried out more seriously, especially by placing human resources that fulfill the criteria needed by each HR. Finally, there is awareness of the research's limitations, mainly because the focus is the Medan City government, hence the generalization of the result needs to be considered.

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