

Local Government Social Media Strategy for Public Awareness and Heritage Preservation

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Abstract. The Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta, designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, embodies Javanese cosmological and philosophical significance, prioritizing its preservation. This study analyzes the local government's social media communication strategy for raising public awareness and preserving this cultural heritage site. The research utilizes qualitative methodologies, including in-depth interviews, observations, and focus group discussions with the local government's Balai Pengelola Kawasan Sumbu Filosofi (BKSF) under the Department of Culture in Yogyakarta. The local government's social media strategy for the Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta effectively raising public awareness audiences in heritage preservation by segmenting content for residents, tourists, and cultural enthusiasts. Using the Instagram platform, the strategy combines visually engaging narratives, infographics, and live event coverage to showcase the Axis's cultural significance. The approach demonstrates how social media can bridge traditional cultural values with modern engagement techniques, creating a replicable model for preserving heritage sites in the digital era.

Keywords: Local Government, Communication Strategy, Social Media, Public Awareness, Cultural Preservation, Heritage Site, The Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta

1 Introduction

UNESCO has recognized the Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta as a World Heritage Site in Indonesia. This axis, also known as the Philosophy Axis, represents a culturally and historically important landmark stretching from Tugu in the north to Panggung Krapyak in the south. [1]. The Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta is profoundly rooted in Javanese cosmology and philosophy, symbolizing the journey of human life and the creation of the universe [2]. Javanese philosophical views on human life encompass ideas of the microcosmic and macrocosmic worlds, the unity between humans and the Creator

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(*Manunggaling Kawula Gusti*), the ideal of harmonious living (*Hamemayu Hayuning Bawana*), and the cyclical journey of life (*Sangkan Paraning Dumadi*). These concepts were envisioned to be embodied in a physical form, with the axis's orientation and landmarks' placement along its path designed to reflect these philosophical principles [3]. Sri Sultan Hamengkubuwono I's Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta has been acknowledged as a cultural heritage and was proposed to UNESCO for designation as a world heritage site in 2017 [4]. This UNESCO heritage site designation recognizes the axis as a significant representation of Javanese philosophy and contributes to the preservation of cultural heritage.

Cultural preservation is the process of safeguarding buildings, monuments, customs, languages, and intangible legacy features [5]. Often carried out through international treaties, national legislation, and local rules, legal measures and policy frameworks are vital in balancing public and private interests within attempts at cultural preservation [6]. Good preservation techniques call for a collection of stakeholders local communities, cultural specialists, and government officials. This comprehensive participation guarantees that preservation initiatives complement the values and requirements of the society, thereby encouraging a more vital respect of cultural legacy [7]. Also crucial in this endeavor are public outreach campaigns and educational projects since they raise knowledge and foster respect of cultural legacy [8].

The challenges in preserving the cultural heritage of the Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta include fostering collaboration stakeholder, managing mass tourism, sustainable tourism issue, and enhancing public awareness of cultural heritage preservation. Effective collaboration requires coordinated efforts among various stakeholders, such as government agencies, academic institutions, and local communities, to ensure alignment in objectives and methodologies [9]. The rise of mass tourism presents considerable threats to cultural sites, frequently resulting in their deterioration [10]. This challenge highlights the necessity for strategic management that reconciles site accessibility with preservation. Integrating tourism into sustainable development frameworks is crucial for mitigating its potentially negative impacts on cultural heritage, ensuring that tourism positively influences both the economy and artistic preservation [11]. Raising public awareness and engagement is essential, as educating the public about the value and vulnerability of these sites cultivates a sense of responsibility and participation in their preservation [12].

Social media significantly improves the educational distribution of cultural assets, increasing public awareness and interest in historic tourism sites [13]. In this setting, social media communication functions as a vital tool for cultural preservation and augmenting public awareness of the cultural heritage of the Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta. Strategic social media communication may inform, engage, and motivate local and global audiences to appreciate and support the preservation of the Cosmological Axis. Social media may convey the cultural significance of the Axis through visual narratives, interactive content, and digital initiatives, thereby safeguarding and preserving the cultural and philosophical attributes of this heritage site for modern audiences. This study aims to analyze the Local Government Communication Strategy through Social Media to improve Public Awareness and Cultural Heritage Preservation: The Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta. This research provides insights that can promote sustainable cultural preservation for the Cosmological Axis and other heritage sites facing similar challenges in the digital era.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Social Media Communication Strategy

Formulating a proficient social media communication strategy is imperative for organizations, especially within the tourism industry, where engagement and establishing audience connections are of utmost importance. A meticulously crafted strategy commences with a comprehensive understanding of the target audience, necessitating extensive audience research to discern their preferences and behaviors across various social media platforms. Identifying the target audience and selecting suitable channels are critical foundational steps in the preliminary phase of a social media strategy [14]. The explicit delineation of goals and the judicious allocation of resources are vital during the diffusion phase, ensuring that the plan is congruent with the overarching organizational objectives [15]. An efficacious social media communication strategy incorporates trending topics, interactive components, and precisely targeted content to captivate audiences and enhance awareness and responsiveness to marketing campaigns and initiatives [16]. Social media communication encompasses the deployment of electronic platforms for creating and disseminating content, ideas, and messages within digital communities. This communication modality is distinguished by its interactive and multidirectional characteristics, which set it apart from traditional mass media that predominantly facilitate one-way communication [17].

2.2 Social Media and Raising Public Awareness

Raising Public Awareness involves various strategies and methods to inform and educate the general public about specific issues, aiming to increase knowledge, change attitudes, and influence behaviors. Public awareness involves educating people about specific issues, such as environmental protection, health conditions, or invasive species. For instance, awareness campaigns about environmental pollution aim to inform the public about the importance of environmental protection and the consequences of pollution [18].

The importance of public awareness in protecting the environment and promoting sustainable development is emphasized [19]. Developing a public awareness strategy often involves identifying stakeholders and establishing effective communication flows. This can include the use of various media channels to reach a broad audience and ensure the dissemination of accurate information [20]. Communication tools and various awareness meetings are identified as effective strategies for implementing public awareness programs [21].

Social media platforms enable participatory culture, allowing communities to create and discuss heritage independently of official narratives. This can be particularly effective for engaging diverse audiences and fostering collective memories [22]. Social media can significantly expand the educational reach of cultural heritage, increasing public awareness and interest in heritage tourism sites and museums [23].

2.3 Communication Strategy and Cultural Preservation

Cultural preservation refers to the processes and activities aimed at safeguarding the cultural heritage of a community, region, or nation. This includes tangible heritage such as buildings, monuments, and artifacts, as well as intangible heritage like traditions, languages, and practices. Preservation efforts focus on extending the life of cultural assets by preventing damage from accidents, natural disasters, or human activities [24]. Effective cultural preservation often requires robust governance frameworks and policies. For instance,

Indonesia's cultural preservation laws highlight the importance of community engagement and international collaboration for successful preservation efforts [25]. Effective communication strategies are crucial for the preservation of cultural heritage, as they facilitate the transfer of values associated with both tangible and intangible elements from one generation to the next [26]. Social media platforms are powerful tools for community engagement and cultural preservation. They enable local communities to control their narratives, showcase cultural heritage, and promote sustainable initiatives. Strategic digital storytelling and inclusive communication strategies are essential for maximizing the impact of social media in cultural preservation [27].

3 Method

Qualitative research methodologies are imperative for comprehensively analyzing intricate social and behavioral phenomena that resist quantitative measurement. These methodologies emphasize the systematic gathering, examination, and interpretation of non-statistical data through interactive engagements between researchers and participants and through observations conducted in authentic contexts [28]. Techniques such as personal interviews, focus groups, observation-based methods, and inquiry-focused approaches, including dyadic and triadic discussions, are frequently employed within qualitative research frameworks [28]. This particular research approach is executed through extensive interviews, observational studies, and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with the Philosophy Axis Area Management Center/Balai Pengelola Kawasan Sumbu Filosofi (BKSF) within the Department of Culture (*Dinas Kebudayaan/Kundha Kabudayan*) in the Special Region of Yogyakarta (or Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta/DIY).

4 Result and Discussion

4.1 The Local Government's Social Media Communication Strategy for Raising Public Awareness and Cultural Preservation at the Heritage Site: The Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta

Social media provides a platform for local governments to engage with citizens, encouraging participation in public policy decision-making processes [29]. Social media can expand the educational scope of cultural heritage, increase public awareness and interest in cultural heritage tourism sites and museums, and support constructivist learning by promoting reciprocal learning and shaping visitors' perceptions before visiting heritage sites [30]. The local government's social media communication strategy for raising public awareness and cultural preservation at the heritage site The Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta can leverage targeted audience segmentation to enhance its impact. The results of an interview with an informant the Philosophy Axis Area Management Center/Balai Pengelola Kawasan Sumbu Filosofi (BKSF) the Department of Culture (*Dinas Kebudayaan/Kundha Kabudayan*) in the Special Region of Yogyakarta (or Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta/DIY). related to the Social Media Communication Strategy for Raising Public Awareness and Cultural Preservation at the Heritage Site "The Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta" are as follows:

"We create an Instagram account, @sumbufilesofi, and the website jogjaworldheritage.com, which are available for public access to explore detailed information about The Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta, including its history,

significance, cultural events, and preservation efforts. These platforms also provide insights into both tangible assets, such as historical landmarks and physical structures, and intangible assets, such as traditions, rituals, and cultural values, that form the essence of the heritage site. Both platforms serve as digital tools to promote the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site and engage with a global audience, fostering awareness and appreciation of this unique cultural landmark. “

This statement highlights the role of digital platforms as integral components of the local government's communication strategy to enhance public awareness and cultural preservation efforts. Through Instagram (@sumbufilesofi), the beauty, history, and cultural significance of the site are brought to life using visual storytelling with engaging photos, videos, and infographics. The platform highlights iconic landmarks such as the Panggung Krapyak Monument, Kraton Complex, and Tugu Monument, alongside cultural rituals and events. Interactive features like stories, live sessions, and comment sections encourage real-time audience participation, fostering a sense of connection and community engagement. Complementing Instagram, the website jogjaworldheritage.com serves as a comprehensive resource hub, offering detailed historical narratives, maps, event calendars, and downloadable materials. It delves into the site's 144 attributes that define its Outstanding Universal Value and explains philosophical concepts like *Sangkan Paraning Dumadi* (the cycle of life) and *Manunggaling Kawula Gusti* (unity between humans and the divine). These platforms work in harmony to make The Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta accessible to a global audience while supporting educational efforts, public awareness, and cultural conservation.

In selecting social media platforms to promote the Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta, the Yogyakarta government has strategically prioritized Instagram as its core platform. This decision leverages Instagram's visual-centric features, making it an ideal medium to highlight the rich historical and cultural elements of the site. The Instagram account, @sumbufilesofi, plays a vital role in fostering public awareness by consistently sharing educational content that emphasizes the cultural and historical significance of the Cosmological Axis. The primary goal of using social media in this context is not to boost tourism but to preserve and celebrate cultural heritage. According to an informant from the Philosophy Axis Area Management Center (Balai Pengelola Kawasan Sumbu Filosofi/BKSF) under the Department of Culture (*Dinas Kebudayaan/Kundha Kabudayan*) in the Special Region of Yogyakarta (Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta/DIY):

"The purpose of social media is not primarily tourism-focused; that's merely a side effect. The main focus is on the preservation of cultural heritage."

The local government's strategic use of Instagram to promote the Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta demonstrates a focused commitment to cultural preservation rather than tourism promotion. By leveraging Instagram's visual-centric platform, the account @sumbufilesofi effectively highlights the historical and cultural significance of the site, fostering public awareness and appreciation. The primary objective, as emphasized by the Philosophy Axis Area Management Center (BKSF), is to celebrate and safeguard the cultural heritage of the Cosmological Axis, with tourism viewed as a secondary outcome. This approach underscores the government's dedication to preserving Yogyakarta's cultural identity while utilizing digital tools to engage a wider audience.

The local government's social media strategy for promoting the Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta is grounded in creating engaging and informative content that fosters cultural appreciation and public involvement. The aim is to raise awareness and encourage cultural preservation by crafting narratives that educate and emotionally resonate with audiences,

emphasizing Yogyakarta's heritage's philosophical and historical significance. Narrative development plays a pivotal role in engaging audiences on an emotional level with the Cosmological Axis. The government's storytelling strategy blends historical context with visually captivating media to illustrate the philosophical and cultural importance of landmarks along the Axis, such as Plengkung Wijilan and rituals like Garebeg Sawal. This approach educates the audience about the site's heritage while instilling a sense of pride and belonging that inspires active participation in cultural preservation efforts. By leveraging social media platforms like Instagram, the government extends its reach across diverse audience segments through images, short videos, and informational posts. Hashtags like #SumbuFilosofi, #SobatFilosofier, and #Jogjalstimewa add continuity, ensuring the narrative's visibility.

Complementing this storytelling, educational content offers a structured understanding of the Axis's symbolic significance within Yogyakarta's royal cosmology. Such content includes infographics, brief historical documentaries, and easily accessible facts through stories or carousel posts. To enhance interactivity, the government integrates quizzes and virtual workshops focused on Yogyakarta's unique traditions, allowing followers to participate in a more engaged learning process. Detailed content on local celebrations like Plengkung Tarunosuro (Wijilan) and the historical evolution of street names surrounding the Axis draws users into Yogyakarta's cultural richness, transforming followers from passive viewers into active participants in heritage preservation. Campaigns like #SumbuFilosofi encourage followers to share personal visits and reflections, building community involvement and reinforcing shared identity. Additionally, interactive quizzes and social media challenges, such as wearing traditional attire during events, bring participants together, creating a communal platform for cultural discourse through initiatives like the #SobatFilosofier campaign.

The local government of Yogyakarta has implemented an innovative social media communication strategy to raise public awareness and preserve the cultural heritage of the Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta, a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site. Through the Instagram account (@sumbufilesofi) and the website jogjaworldheritage.com [31], this strategy emphasizes visual and educational narratives that highlight the beauty, history, and philosophical significance of the site. Instagram is used to share engaging photos, videos, and infographics, as well as host interactive sessions such as quizzes and challenges, actively involving the community. Meanwhile, the website serves as a comprehensive information hub, offering historical narratives, maps, and downloadable materials. The primary focus of this strategy is cultural preservation, highlighting philosophies such as *Sangkan Paraning Dumadi* and *Manunggaling Kawula Gusti*, fostering pride and a sense of belonging among the public. This approach effectively reaches both local and global audiences, inspiring active participation in preserving Yogyakarta's cultural identity.

4.2 The Importance Social Media Communication Strategy for Raising Public Awareness and Cultural Preservation at the Heritage Site

The findings highlight the critical role of social media communication strategies in raising public awareness and fostering cultural preservation at heritage sites, using the Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta as a case study. The local government, through platforms like Instagram (@sumbufilesofi) and the website jogjaworldheritage.com [31], has successfully utilized social media to amplify the visibility of this UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site. These platforms offer visually rich content, such as photos, videos, and infographics, that make the site's tangible and intangible heritage accessible to a broad audience. Interactive features, including live sessions, quizzes, and community challenges, have further enhanced public

engagement, encouraging active participation in cultural preservation efforts. This approach demonstrates how social media can transform heritage promotion from a static informational process into a dynamic, interactive experience.

Discussion around the strategy reveals its emphasis on cultural preservation over tourism promotion, aligning with the site's deeper philosophical and cultural significance. By leveraging visual storytelling, the local government has effectively communicated the essence of Yogyakarta's cultural identity. Content shared on Instagram and the website emphasizes the philosophical and historical narratives of the Cosmological Axis, such as the principles of *Sangkan Paraning Dumadi* (the cycle of life) and *Manunggaling Kawula Gusti* (unity between humans and the divine). These narratives resonate with audiences on an emotional level, fostering pride, understanding, and a sense of responsibility for cultural preservation. Campaigns like #SumbuFilosofi encourage individuals to share their own experiences and reflections, fostering a sense of shared identity and collective ownership of Yogyakarta's cultural heritage.

The integration of social media platforms underscores their importance as tools for connecting heritage sites with diverse audiences while balancing accessibility with educational depth. Instagram serves as a visual-first platform that appeals to younger, tech-savvy demographics, while the website provides a repository of comprehensive information for cultural enthusiasts and scholars. This multifaceted strategy ensures that the communication approach is inclusive, reaching local communities, domestic visitors, and global audiences. Social media not only raises public awareness but also serves as a means to preserve cultural narratives, engage communities, and build a sustainable framework for heritage conservation. By highlighting the importance of digital tools, the local government demonstrates how strategic social media communication can successfully bridge the gap between heritage preservation and public participation.

5 Conclusion

The local government's social media communication strategy for raising public awareness and preserving the cultural heritage of the Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta is a model of how digital platforms can be leveraged effectively to engage diverse audiences. By employing targeted audience segmentation, the strategy tailors its content to three main groups: local residents, tourists, and cultural enthusiasts. Using Instagram as a core platform, the government has crafted visually compelling and interactive content, such as narratives, infographics, and real-time event coverage to emphasize the Axis's philosophical and cultural significance. This comprehensive and multidirectional approach not only builds public awareness but also fosters a participatory culture, transforming audiences into active stakeholders in preserving Yogyakarta's cultural legacy. In conclusion, this strategy underscores the critical role of a well-structured social media presence in heritage preservation. Demonstrating how social media can bridge traditional cultural values with contemporary communication techniques, ultimately creating a sustainable model for cultural conservation in the digital age.

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