THE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY OF THE TELEGRAM CHANNEL 'KAZAKHS IN BALI' THE ROLE OF DIGITAL MEDIA IN STRATEGIC CULTURAL COMMUNICATION AMONG DIASPORAS

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Abstract: *This study explores the communication strategy of the 'Kazakh in Bali' Telegram channel using the circular S.O.M.E (Share, Optimize, Manage, Engage) model as its theoretical framework. Through a qualitative approach, including interviews with the channel's founder and content analysis, the research examines how the channel facilitates engagement and interaction within the Kazakhstani diaspora in Indonesia, particularly Bali. The findings reveal that the channel effectively shares relevant content, optimizes Telegram's platform features, maintains organized management, and fosters member-led engagement, resulting in both virtual and real-world impacts. Activities initiated through the channel—such as cultural gatherings, domestic tourism, environmental volunteering, and charity work—not only strengthen community ties but also contribute positively to Indonesia. This research contributes to understanding how digital diaspora communities can serve as agents of cultural exchange and social contribution through strategic communication practices.*

INTRODUCTION

Within final 4 years the geography of tourism flows underwent dramatic trade. In 2020, the first 12 months of the pandemic, handiest 407 million worldwide traveler arrivals (overnight site visitors) were recorded, marking 72% decline from the 1.5 billion of 2019. Years on, and the parent had climbed to 963 million, which is simply 34 percentage below pre-pandemic levels (UNWTO 2023).

Tourism is an essential sector in Indonesia, as one in all the most important archipelago nations within the global. Indonesia has brilliant ability to attract overseas tourists with plenty cultural uniqueness and awesome traveler spot. Among vacationers, Kazakh vacationers stood out extensively, as they commenced actively travelling Indonesia in 2024, pushed via the newly released AirAsia X flight path from Almaty to

Kuala Lumpur. Kazakhstan journey agencies have discovered a brandnew area of interest in tourism, with Indonesia as a vacation spot. This new improvement has substantially boosted the interest of Kazakh tourists in exploring Indonesia's wealthy cultural history, breathtaking landscapes, and precise sights.

Moreover, advancing the tourism industry entails not just acquiring foreign currency but is also perceived as enhancing our nation's image. According to Mcphead (2011), the internet offers distinct advantages, but it is not merely a space for placing print documents online for others to see. Instead, it is a mixture of traditional media that manifests in various forms of those media. The role of the internet extends far beyond just placing information online.

Werthner and Ricci (2004) assert that tourism is a sector leading in internet utilization and online transactions. Social media has elevated the experiences of tourism and travel bookings to a new height. They allow visitors to interact not only with the destinations but also with other visitors who have recently been to the places they are thinking of visiting. Through social media, users can obtain first-hand insights from fellow visitors and make choices regarding the destination or experience. Datacollection can occur via blogging, sharing experiences, and writing stories that may be posted on visitors' personal websites, the destination's site, or a connected platform. Primarily, individuals who have visited the destination create content for blogs, stories, and more, based on their opinions and perceived genuine experiences. Tourism-focused recommendation sites like gogobot.com, trippy.com, wanderfly.com, tripit.com, tripwolf.com, tripadvisor.com, and online content represent crucial sources of information within the tourism sector.

Today, information can be shared not just through websites, but also across social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Telegram, and others. In particular, the channel "Kazakhs in Bali" utilizes Telegram as its communication medium for travelers. Advertisers now focus more on these media because of the large influx of diverse audiences. They utilize this as the perfect platform to convey their brand and establish a strong brand identity through a highly efficient and engaging communication strategy. Many advertisers display their ads in an interactive manner, encouraging people to engage with them and learn a bit about the channel. Different types of brand communication exist on social networking platforms. The primary objective of the study will be to explore the efficient methods of brand communication found on these social networking platforms. The telegram channel 'Kazakh in Bali' is a non-profit association that addressing social needs and promote public benefit without the primary goal of generating profit for individuals. As a vision, this telegram channel centered in promoting Kazakhstani hospitality around Indonesia, especially in Bali; where most of Kazakhstani stay. This telegram channel plays a key role for Kazakhstani in respecting Indonesian culture and law, along with embracing Indonesian travel places also its small and medium enterprises. The founder of 'Kazakh in Bali' telegram channel, Aliya Ten, is a Kazakhstani traveler who was staying in Bali for 3 years. The telegram channel was formed 3 years ago during her stay, where at that moment Kazakhstan was having a hard time which were protests against the rising of fuel prices and nationwide internet shutdowns (Hu, 2022). A deep sense of worry for relatives in their home country is a major factor that led the founder to create a discussion space among fellow citizens of Kazakhstan in Indonesia, based in Bali. Aliya chose Telegram since it is the easiest application to make a group with

very large of members. Anyone can join the group as it is open to public by only clicking the invite link (Thomas & Bhat, 2022). Starting from a discussion to provide mutual assistance, Aliya is further developing the discussion space into something deeper that benefits for Indonesia as the diasporas' current stay; which are holding meetings and events for Kazakhstani that beneficial for Indonesia to support the future of Kazakhstan-Indonesia cooperation. These initiatives then became the reason why the telegram channel maintain their communication strategies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Circular Model of Some, proposed by Regina Luttrell in 2019 used in this research. It is comprehensive framework for strategic communication in the digital age, particularly through the use of new media. It is structured around four key stages: Share, Optimize, Manage, and Engage, each playing a crucial role in shaping the relationship between an organization and its audience (Luttrell, 2019). Luttrell's Circular Model emphasizes a strategic, cyclical approach to communication, where organizations continually share, optimize, manage, and engage with their audience. By focusing on building trust, optimizing content, managing interactions efficiently, and engaging authentically with their audience, organizations can foster long-term relationships, enhance their credibility, and maintain a strong, active presence in the media. The model provides a robust framework for organizations to adapt to the evolving digital communication landscape, ensuring their messages are effectively communicated and their audience remains engaged and loyal (Luttrell, 2019).

RESEARCH METHOD

Qualitative research is aresearch that investigates natural places, where the researcher is also a key instrument, data collection techniques are combined, and the results of qualitative research emphasize meaning rather than generalization (Prasanti, 2018).

In this study, researchers used descriptive qualitative method with primary and secondary data collection techniques. The primary data is obtained from direct interviews, surveys or observations of informants. And the secondary data, namely data that is not self-collected by researchers and the data used by researchers are
files related to the role of public relations. This research focuses on Telegram management with informants Aliya Ten as the channel's owner and founder as well as a social media admin and the members. Additional informants were selected from the "Kazakhs in Bali" chat — Raina Masakova and Elizaveta Fonyakova. Both are active members of the group and had the opportunity to visit Indonesia thanks to the channel.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the identification conducted by the researcher from in-depth interviews and literature sources, it can be described how the communication strategy carried out by the 'Kazakh in Bali' channel using the Telegram application to provide benefits for Indonesia through its activities in seeing from the share, optimize, manage, and engage dimensions with a focus on discussing intercultural communication practices critically, name as follows:

Share dimension

Various activities that have been organized by 'Kazakh in Bali' telegram channel as acts for giving benefits to Indonesia assuredly has been adjusted for how is the distribution method to create an effective sharing. Their distribution method is in accordance with the share dimension under The Circular Model of S.O.M.E by Luttrell (2019) where the sharing carried out has been disseminated strategically through social media platform with an emphasis on the type of content shared, the platform used, and the relevance of the messages to the audiences. According to the interview results, the 'Kazakh In Bali' channel uses Telegram as its primary platform to share a wide range of content tailored for Kazakhstani diasporas. This includes information on local events, travel tips, cultural celebrations, volunteer initiatives, and community gathering. The founder of 'Kazakh in Bali' telegram channel, Aliya Ten, thought it is a strategic way due to Telegram application's ability to host large groups and offer structured messaging tools. They are showing that there is participate component in the share dimension of 'Kazakh in Bali' telegram channel's communication strategy. These two essential components of share dimension then foster a credible status for the 'Kazakh in Bali' telegram channel itself, which makes the trust component perceptible. Reaching over 7,000+ members demonstrates the channel's ability to build trust through value-driven communication.

Optimize Dimension

Telegram as the chosen daily communication strategy's tool for 'Kazakh in Bali' channel has been considered for how useful the features is to deliver messages. The more accessible the message is, the more impactful the message will be for all the Kazakh diasporas who stays in Indonesia, especially Bali. This positive impact of message delivered is in accordance with the optimize dimension under The Circular Model

of S.O.M.E by Luttrell (2019) where the use of Telegram features has a big influence on the channel's content reach. Reviewing the results, Aliya Ten who is the founder as well as the administrator of 'Kazakh in Bali' telegram channel strategically utilizes some of Telegram features such as:

• Search by keywords – for content discovery or to get easy information retrieval
• Pinned messages – for prioritizing important announcement or to highlight important updates
• Bots – for blocking spam and scam messages
• User mentions – for targeted communication reply or to foster direct engagement
• Scroll history – for content accessibility and continuity or to ensuring the message

Manage Dimension

In executing daily contents, the 'Kazakh in Bali' channel has to manage the content planning, moderation, and the channel's guidelines as the crucial part of their communication strategy to ensure a well-organized, consistent, and monitored manner messages. In the case of 'Kazakh in Bali' telegram channel, the founder acts as the sole administrator which enables a centralized and consistent approach to content delivery. This communication style is in accordance with the manage dimension under The Circular Model of S.O.M.E by Luttrell (2019) where the channel maintain its community standard with media monitoring, quick response, and real-time interaction. Interpreted from the interview results, Aliya underlined

that all the shared contents in the 'Kazakh in Bali' telegram channel are already reviewed within a two-day period to ensure accuracy for Kazakh diasporas.

She chose a short time frame to reflect an agile and responsive content strategy, so the Kazakh diasporas canstay informed about trends or public issues. It is clearly indicates the media monitoring component by showing the well-organized shared contents. In addition, citing from her statement, she also operates a set of predefined rules that guide the channel members to not share inappropriate contents and to maintain a safe and respectful communication space, which also indicates the media-monitoring component.

Engage Dimension

As a digital association, the 'Kazakh in Bali' channel needs to attest its existence both virtually and through real-life interactions by making efforts to involve the Kazakh diasporas as the audience target in active participation. The efforts' goal is deepening the relationship between the channel and the diasporas. Referring the founder of 'Kazakh in Bali' telegram channel, Aliya Ten, organizing various activities including: cultural events, regular meets, domestic travel across Indonesia, environment volunteerism, charitable fund raising, and animal welfare initiatives are examples of efforts that 'Kazakh in Bali' channel has been doing as their communication strategy in engagement. These style of engagements are what later on reflects 'Kazakh in Bali' channel's unique identity and

values, which is in accordance with the engage dimension under The Circular Model of S.O.M.E by Luttrell (2019) where the channel ensures the public recognize their presence and role. Regarding to the interview results, the 'Kazakh in Bali' telegram channel focusing its engagement process by growing larger from the Kazakh diasporas' referral and word-of-mouth recommendations, which it is reflecting a bottom-up engagement model. Although no influencers were used for engagement, however

the founder itself considers the members themselves are the influencers.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to determine the communication strategy of the 'Kazakh in Bali' channel via Telegram. The founder leverage Telegram's capabilities not just for information dissemination, but also for community-building and impactful activities. By effectively implementing the principles of the S.O.M.E framework model, this channel implements a highly organic and mission-driven communication strategy that fostering mutual benefit between the Kazakh diasporas and the local Indonesian environment and society.

The implementation of the communication strategy shows how the 'Kazakh in Bali' channel itself shares, optimizes, manages, and engages their content via Telegram in order to have a positive impact on its surroundings.

a. Suggestions

Further Application and Development of the S.O.M.E Framework Subsequent research could apply the framework for analyzing communication strategies in niche Telegram channels to other non-commercial or mission-driven platforms, with the potential to refine or expand its dimensions based on specific platform characteristics.

b. Exploration of Diaspora Digital Communities

Future researchers are encouraged to explore the communication strategy of similar digital communities within other diaspora groups using platforms like Telegram (e.g. Kazakh diasporas in different countries). Comparative studies involving different cultural or regional contexts may provide broader insights into how digital media fosters identity, value, and transnational networks through digital community-building.

Based on the data sources that researchers have studied regarding the communication strategy of the 'Kazakh in Bai' telegram channel using virtual interviews, most of the data may be subjective. So it would be better if further research was conducted with direct observation and by providing questionnaires to channel members.

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