

# Examining Gembira Loka Zoo's content marketing in the new TikTok based ticketing system

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## Abstract

The rapid development of technology has transformed traditional marketing systems into digital approaches. This transformation enables various industries to reach consumers more broadly and efficiently. Within this dynamic landscape, TikTok has emerged as a strategic platform for reaching audiences through visual content. TikTok serves as a channel for maintaining digital presence. This approach has also been adopted by Gembira Loka Zoo (GL Zoo) as a tourism destination, by implementing creative digital marketing strategies through TikTok. This study aims to analyze the content strategy of Gembira Loka Zoo in online ticket sales through the TikTok platform. This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach using the AISAS model framework. The research data were obtained from interviews with the Public Relations and Promotion Division of Gembira Loka Zoo, supported by observation and documentation data from the TikTok account @gembiraloka.zoo during the August–December 2025 period. The results of the study indicate that: (1) Gembira Loka Zoo builds awareness through content framed by emotional animal narratives, promotions, and facility information; (2) Gembira Loka Zoo consistently does not provide direct guidance for ticket purchases through TikTok; (3) this is because ticket sales on TikTok are conducted by Gembira Loka Zoo's partner, Tiket.com, which collaborates with TikTok; (4) ticket sales available on the TikTok location page feature are entirely an initiative of Tiket.com as Gembira Loka Zoo's partner; (5) influencers and User Generated Content play an important role in building attention and interest in purchasing tickets through TikTok; and (6) the ticket purchasing process is strongly influenced by discounts provided by Tiket.com.

## Keywords

TikTok, Content marketing, Digital marketing strategy, Online ticketing, Gembira Loka Zoo

## Introduction

The rapid development of technology has driven changes in marketing across various sectors, including the tourism industry. This transformation is marked by a shift from traditional marketing toward digital based strategies [1]. Such a shift has brought substantial changes to tourism marketing practices, where many destinations now rely

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on digital marketing approaches. One of the primary tools used in digital marketing is social media, which is considered effective in creating interaction and engagement with audiences [2]. TikTok as an audiovisual based social media, has emerged a strategic medium for disseminating information through creative and interactive videos supported by algorithmic distribution [3]. TikTok is a platform that effectively reach audience by enabling creative and innovative marketing strategies and based on TikTok characteristics includes strong visual orientation, trend driven content, and extensive organic reach [4]. TikTok also provides users with an immersive experience of travel destinations for strengthening its role in influencing visitor's interest.

Previous studies have examined content strategies and digital marketing within the scope of social media and e-commerce. [5] Aulia & Hatro (2024) investigated live streaming as a strategy to enhance audience interaction and purchasing decision. Meanwhile [6] Pandriantoro & Sukendro (2018) highlighted the importance of content in maintaining brand engagement. Another study by [7] Fithriya (2022) focused on the performance of Gembira Loka Zoo's Instagram content during the Covid-19 pandemic. Previous studies have enriched the understanding of digital studies but only focusing to Instagram and E-Commerce platforms. To date, no research has specifically examined tourism destination content strategies in relation to ticket sales through TikTok. This condition reveals a substantial research gap, particularly in addressing the disconnect between TikTok function as an entertainment oriented platform and its potential role as driver business transactions.

The limitations of previous studies reveal an important gap where there has been no research examining how tourism destinations develop content strategies to optimize TikTok Location Page purchasing feature. In fact, this feature has the potential to shift consumer behavior from awareness to actual purchase decisions within the application. Most existing studies focus primarily on engagement and awareness, rather than on how content can be directed to drive sales. This gap underscores the urgency of investigating content strategies that go beyond promotional efforts toward the full utilization of TikTok's integrated features.

Gembira Loka Zoo is one of the destinations that demonstrates a more advanced approach to leveraging TikTok. Unlike other destinations such as D'Las Lembah Asri Serang Purbalingga and The Lost World Farm, which predominantly uses TikTok only for sharing basic informational content. Gembira Loka Zoo integrates creative content, location features, users reviews, and the ticket purchase feature through TikTok location page. This Approach reflects a more strategic marketing concept which content is designed to guide audiences from viewing the content to making a purchase decision. This study is grounded in the need to analyze how Gembira Loka Zoo's content strategy utilizes TikTok features to facilitate ticket sales.

## Method

This study employs a descriptive qualitative method to gain an in depth understanding of Gembira Loka Zoo's content marketing processes. This approach allows the researcher to describe content strategies and audience responses as they occur in the field without manipulating any variables. Data was collected through interviews, observations, and documentation. Semi structured interviews was used to select three informants from the Public Relations and Promotion team of Gembira Loka Zoo. Observations were specifically focused on by examining the official TikTok @gembiraloka.zoo during August to December 2025 with 73 video uploads, focusing on content formats, content styles, and user responses in the comment section. Documentation involved gathering video archives, screenshot collections of user comments, and other supporting materials to strengthen observational findings.

The data collected using Miles & Huberman model, which involves data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. This model provides a systematic analytical process that can be replicated by other researchers. Data validation was ensured through technique triangulation by comparing the result of interviews, observations, and documentation to maintain consistency and credibility. This research was conducted at Gembira Loka Zoo during August till December 2025

## Results and discussion

### Results

The marketing strategy of Gembira Loka Zoo is generally carried out through digital media, such as websites and social media platforms. Although the zoo still utilizes print media and radio for promotional purposes, the primary focus remains on digital chanel. The social media platforms used for marketing are quite diverse, including Instagram, Facebook, X, and Tiktok. Each platform targets different audience segments, with Facebook primarily targeting adult audiences, while TikTok and Instagram focus on Gen Z users aged 16-21 years. The Public Relations and Promotion team ecplidly stated that this segmentation strategy aims to “reach all available market segments”, with the expctation that audiences will be encouraged to invite friends, family members, or partners to visit Gembira Loka Zoo. In its operations, the TikTok account @gembiraloka.zoo is managed by the Public Relations and Promotion Division of Gembira Loka Zoo, which consists of three staff members.

Based on observations conducted during the August–December 2025 period, Gembira Loka Zoo's TikTok content strategy is divided into four categories: information, promotion, education, and activity documentation. The researcher identified differences in audience response patterns toward these categories, as presented in the following table. There are noticeable differences in responses between Gen Z and millennial audiences. This can be seen in the way audiences' comment, where Gen Z tends to respond in a more relaxed and playful manner, while older audiences usually

ask more practical questions, such as ticket prices or available facilities. In managing its social media accounts, three employees are fully responsible for the monitoring and content production processes.

Gembira Loka Zoo's content is managed through internal guidelines and a structured research process. The content is tailored to the 16–21 age group by integrating trending audio and color elements. Based on interviews with the Public Relations and Promotion Team, branding strategies are also implemented by presenting content related to the daily lives of animals, such as Arinta the baby elephant. This strategy aims to build an emotional bond between the audience and the animals. Observational results show a level of audience familiarity with the elephant Arinta, as reflected in the emergence of visitor-generated content or User-Generated Content (UGC) featuring Arinta, as well as interactions in the comment section that mention the name "Arinta." All content uploaded to the @gembiraloka.zoo account that is related to animals must be submitted to the Conservation Department for factual verification. This policy also includes the discontinuation of elephant riding attractions as part of the zoo's commitment to animal welfare.

Content performance based on observational data shows that promotional content offering special discounts for visitors celebrating their birthdays on November 10 achieved high engagement, with 54,300 views and 245 shares. This finding is in line with a statement from one of the informants, Ms. Levina, Head of Public Relations & Promotion, who explained:

"Usually it is more about promotions. Promotions definitely receive many comments, perhaps asking again how the promotion works, what the procedure is, and where to purchase it."

*(Biasanya memang konten promosi. Konten promosi cenderung mendapatkan banyak komentar, sering kali berupa pertanyaan mengenai detail promo, cara kerjanya, dan di mana membelinya.)*

Based on observational and interview data, promotional content and fun oriented content demonstrate more diverse patterns of audience interaction compared to educational content. In educational content, audience interaction tends to be limited and does not develop into further conversation. As stated by Ms. Wina: "For educational content, the comments are very few." According to the Public Relations & Promotion Team, content effectiveness is measured by the extent to which the message is successfully delivered to the audience. This statement is reflected in the active engagement of netizens who also help answer questions in the comment section.

The Public Relations & Promotion Team of Gembira Loka Zoo stated that they rarely directly encourage audiences to purchase tickets through TikTok. Mr. Devan explained:

"We collaborate with several influencers, and they often want to visit here. We facilitate them, and then they help with the promotion. One of those is ticket sales through

TikTok.”

*(Kami bekerja sama dengan beberapa influencer, dan banyak dari mereka ingin berkunjung ke kebun binatang. Kami memfasilitasi kunjungan mereka, dan sebagai gantinya mereka membantu mempromosikan. Salah satu hasilnya adalah penjualan tiket melalui TikTok.)*

Despite generating high levels of engagement, in the context of ticket sales on TikTok, the official account of Gembira Loka Zoo tends to play a passive role.

Based on the analysis, this passive stance is not an operational failure, but rather a strategic management decision. The absence of a partnership between Gembira Loka Zoo and TikTok has led management to position the official account as a digital showcase and branding channel. Management deliberately delegates the role of sales conversion (Action stage) to external parties that possess a more established sales ecosystem, namely influencers and User Generated Content.

Management strategically chooses not to include a call to action for ticket purchases through TikTok. This condition is influenced by the collaboration mechanism applied in ticket sales through the TikTok platform. Based on the research findings, Gembira Loka Zoo does not establish a direct partnership with TikTok in ticket sales. Ticket sales displayed on the Gembira Loka Zoo location page on TikTok are managed by a third party, namely Tiket.com, which collaborates with TikTok as the provider of the location page.

This shift creates a clear division of roles within the TikTok content strategy. Official Gembira Loka Zoo content functions as an initial trigger, while content from external parties assumes the sales role through personal reviews and discount promotions. These findings indicate that the primary driver of ticket sales on TikTok originates from content created by influencers rather than from the zoo's direct promotional efforts. This limitation is reflected in sales performance, where online ticket sales have not yet been able to compete with offline sales. The increase in TikTok-based ticket purchases is highly dependent on discount programs provided by Tiket.com. This indicates that price remains the dominant factor influencing conversion.

### *Discussion*

Based on findings, the implementation of the AISAS model within the TikTok ecosystem of Gembira Loka Zoo does not operate as a complete and integrated cycle. The official Gembira Loka Zoo account strategically functions as a digital showcase that triggers the Attention and Interest stages. The Action stage (purchase), however, is disconnected from Gembira Loka Zoo's control due to the absence of an official sales partnership with TikTok. Instead, this gap is taken over by user generated content (UGC) and influencers as third party actors who direct audiences to purchase links owned by Tiket.com [8]. Differences in responses between Gen Z audiences and adult audiences indicate the presence of the search stage. Adult (millennial) audiences tend to raise questions regarding prices, facilities, and promotions in the comment section of the Gembira Loka Zoo TikTok account.

The action stage is most frequently triggered by discounts offered by Tiket.com, where price reductions accelerate purchase decision-making. This finding is in line with the AISAS model, which explains that consumers tend to take action after passing through the information search stage [9]. The findings regarding the active involvement of netizens who help answer questions in the comment section and share their visit experiences, also serve as a strong indicator of the share stage in the AISAS model.

The priority of Gembira Loka Zoo in using TikTok for Gen Z audiences and Facebook for adult audiences reflects the application of the AISAS model. TikTok @gembiraloka.zoo functions as a medium for building awareness and engagement, which are associated with the attention and interest stages. Fun and trend-based content is able to attract the attention of Gen Z as the primary segment in stimulating interest and sharing behavior. This indicates that Gembira Loka Zoo has leveraged the power of social media to create attention and interest, which are essential elements in digital advertising [10].

The use of TikTok has, introduced specific challenges for the identity of GL Zoo. In the content production process, strict procedures are applied whereby all content containing information about animals must undergo verification by the Conservation Department. This ethical reinforcement underscores the zoo's commitment to applicable operational standards [11]. However, this formal and cautious mode of presentation ultimately struggles to compete with the TikTok algorithm speed. This is evident in the lower level of interaction with educational content compared to fun oriented content, aligning with the definition of sharing on social media, which prioritizes the interactive communication of experiences [12]. There are differences in audience engagement across content types, where promotional content with a fun concept achieves the highest engagement, reaching up to 30,000 views. In contrast, educational content as one of the zoo's core pillars, shows the lowest level of engagement with around 7,000 views. This difference in audience engagement indicates that promotional content with a fun concept is more capable of achieving the highest engagement [13].

The finding that fun and trend based content attracts greater attention from Gen Z is consistent with scholarly perspectives suggesting that younger audiences are more strongly influenced by interactive forms of content [14]. This phenomenon highlights differences in response patterns across generations, which further supports the implementation of a multiplatform strategy. Adult audiences tend to predominantly raise questions regarding facilities and ticket prices, indicating that they have entered the Search stage. This finding reinforces the view that generational differences influence variations in audience responses [14]. The active presence of netizens who assist in answering questions in the comment section indicates that the audience has reached the share stage, or digital word of mouth. This finding is consistent with studies suggesting that the AISAS model in the tourism sector is capable of predicting tourist behavior in social media use, particularly at the search and share stages [9].

The share stage aligns with the definition of sharing as the process of communicating experiences to others through social media, whether in the form of content, comments, or reviews [12]. Digital word of mouth occurring at this stage has the potential to enhance audience trust in the company [15]. This stage also opens opportunities for the formation of a continuous cycle, in which sharing activities can reactivate the digital customer journey [16].

While the share stage in the AISAS model operates effectively and encourages the formation of digital word of mouth, the action stage demonstrates a high dependence on discounts offered by Tiket.com. This indicates that attention does not necessarily lead to action, as additional factors specifically price play a dominant role [17]. These findings reaffirm that price sensitivity remains the most dominant and critical element in consumer decision-making within the tourism sector [18].

The content strategy of Gembira Loka Zoo is shown to play an active role in increasing attention and interest, yet it does not independently direct audiences toward the action stage. This finding provides a critical insight that creative and entertainment-oriented content primarily functions as an attention driver, and not sufficiently strong to trigger purchase decisions at normal price levels. The involvement of external factors such as influencers and User Generated Content instead emerges as a key factor linking audiences from the information search stage to transactions. This process occurs through the collaborative ecosystem between TikTok and Tiket.com. This reliance on third party discounts suggests that interactions on TikTok are largely dominated by discount oriented and price sensitive audiences. These findings confirm that within the digital tourism ecosystem, content strategies require rational triggers particularly pricing to effectively convert attention into purchasing action.

## Conclusion

This study concludes that the content strategy of Gembira Loka Zoo through TikTok is effective in building the attention and interest stages by aligning content with the target audience; however, it remains passive in executing independent ticket sales. Gembira Loka Zoo does not direct ticket purchases through TikTok because the ticket sales mechanism is not included in the collaboration between the zoo and TikTok. Instead, Tiket.com, as the official partner of Gembira Loka Zoo, collaborates with TikTok to sell tickets through the Gembira Loka Zoo location page.

The findings also indicate that influencers and user-generated content (UGC) play a significant role in driving the interest and search stages. Meanwhile, at the action stage, ticket purchase decisions are influenced more by the availability of discounts from Tiket.com than by content strategy alone. This suggests that TikTok audiences tend to be price sensitive. The active presence of netizens who share information further reinforces the share stage and strengthens digital word of mouth.

Theoretically, this study contributes by demonstrating that the action stage in the AISAS model can be influenced by external factors, such as pricing. Future research is recommended to explore this phenomenon more comprehensively, not only from the perspective of destination managers but also through the lens of Tiket.com as the ticketing system provider and influencers as promotional actors. This approach is important to examine how multi-actor synergy and pricing strategies can overcome audience price sensitivity barriers in fostering genuine visitor loyalty.

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