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INFORMATION DISTRIBUTION AND CIRCULATION OF NETIZEN PERCEPTIONS IN THE MANDALIKA MOTOGP EVENT THROUGH THE INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT @THEMANDALIKAGP

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ABSTRACT

Digital communication plays a crucial role in organizing international sporting events that require extensive message dissemination and real-time audience engagement. However, the increasing volume of information distributed through social media does not necessarily produce uniform perceptions among audiences. This study aims to analyze the distribution of information and the circulation of netizen perceptions during the 2025 Mandalika MotoGP event through the Instagram account @themandalikagp.

This research employs a qualitative approach using virtual observation, semi-structured interviews, and Social Network Analysis (SNA) with NodeXL and SocialBlade tools. Data validity is ensured through peer debriefing. The study involves 28 informants, consisting of followers and non-followers of the @themandalikagp account.

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The findings reveal that information distribution is highly centralized, following a hub-and-spoke network pattern with the official account acting as the primary information source. This structure effectively generates high audience awareness but does not result in homogeneous perceptions. Instead, netizen perceptions circulate in a heterogeneous and layered manner, forming clusters based on opinion similarity and sentiment (positive, neutral, and negative). The analysis also indicates that while network centralization facilitates rapid dissemination, it limits horizontal interaction among users.

This study concludes that digital communication in social media operates beyond linear information transmission, involving dynamic processes of perception formation and meaning construction within networked environments. The novelty of this research lies in integrating information distribution, audience perception, and social network structure into a unified analytical framework. These findings contribute to the development of digital communication theory and provide practical insights for optimizing communication strategies in international sporting events.

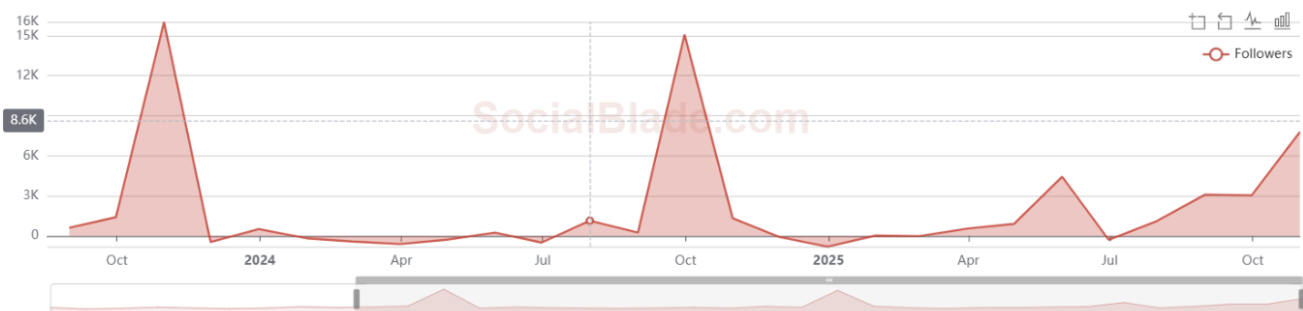
INTRODUCTION

Digital communication has become a central component in the organization of international sporting events, enabling wide message dissemination, rapid information exchange, and real-time audience engagement. The emergence of social media platforms has transformed how information is produced, distributed, and interpreted, particularly in large-scale events such as MotoGP (Syadzwin et al., 2024).

In Indonesia, the Mandalika MotoGP represents not only a global sporting event but also a strategic initiative in sport tourism and digital economy development. As a designated National Strategic Tourism Area, Mandalika has been positioned as a symbol of national progress and global competitiveness. Consequently, digital platforms especially Instagram play a crucial role in shaping public perception, facilitating interaction, and constructing the narrative surrounding the event.

The MotoGP event in 2025 is expected to have a significant impact on the local economy, with increased accommodation and transportation demand and the strengthening of the MSME sector around the event area. Based on data from the West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) Tourism Office, the average hotel occupancy rate on Lombok Island during the 2025 MotoGP event reached 93%, with Mataram City at 90% and the Mandalika area at 100% (Hana, 2025). From these achievements, it can be concluded that the Mandalika area is not only developing as a sports tourism destination but also as an icon of infrastructure modernisation and NTB's competitiveness as a potential area to be included on the national and even international tourism map (Kurniawan, 2024).

Figure 1: Monthly Gained Followers @themandalikagp



Source: Socialblade Data, 2025

The data above shows that the Instagram account @themandalikagp experienced a significant increase in October, when the MotoGP race was held in Indonesia, specifically in Mandalika, West Nusa Tenggara (NTB). The presence of the official Instagram account @themandalikagp was crucial in building a positive image and distributing official

information about the Mandalika MotoGP event to the digital public (netizens). Through this account, the organisers were able to manage the narrative, strengthen the region's branding, and leave a strategic, measurable positive impression on thousands of followers and other digital stakeholders. The optimal use of Instagram features such as stories, highlights, reels, and comments is the primary means of promotion, education, and engagement with followers, especially when considering creative aspects such as visuals and copywriting (Nurdiansyah, 2024).

The interactions between the @themandalikagp account and its audience (followers) reflect the dynamics of perception, ranging from support and criticism to expectations and social polemics related to the organisation of events that can impact local, national, and even international communities. In a study conducted by Aldo (2025), entitled "Exploration of Netizen Perspectives on the Implementation of the CoreTax Administration System: (A Netnographic Study)" emphasises that the perceptions of digital-based audiences are influenced by the existence and use of the digital platform itself, so that the circulation of perceptions can be classified into several categories as mentioned in the TAM (Technology Acceptance Model) modelling, including perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. The active participation of the digital community in comment columns is not merely passive conversation but a process of constructing social meaning and collective identity influenced by content uploaded by official accounts. Although the frequency and distribution of information are increasingly widespread through social media, the distribution of information is not necessarily always linear, with consistent understanding and perception formation among netizens (Pinfield *et.al*, 2020).

At the 2025 Mandalika MotoGP event, there was a disparity between the official information provided by the organisers and the opinions of netizens in the comments section, which often reflected the heterogeneity of values, experiences, and expectations. Emotional elements, collective experiences, and online communication shape public opinion and reconstruct the meaning of the event in the minds of the audience. Syadzwin (2024) has highlighted the importance of social media such as Instagram in promoting sporting events, building fan engagement, and strengthening relationships

between organisers, sponsors, and global audiences. However, there are still a few studies that deeply examine the specific distribution of information and the patterns of circulation and transmission of netizens' perceptions in the comment sections of official accounts for global sporting events, especially using a qualitative approach grounded in online community interactions. Previous studies tend to highlight content marketing and engagement strategies, but lack a comprehensive discussion of the impact of interactions and the dynamics of collective perceptions. Like the research conducted by Nunung Prajarto (2018), entitled *Netizens and Infotainment: A Virtual Ethnographic Study of the Instagram Account @lambe_turah*, this research does not specifically examine the circulation of perceptions and distribution of information, focusing instead on a virtual ethnographic study of the Instagram platform and the mix of netizens. But it did not reach a portrait of netizen perceptions as part of two-way interaction and communication.

The research to be conducted will at least be able to present a new perspective by emphasising the dynamics of two-way communication in social media comment sections and explaining the extent to which netizen perceptions can influence the grand narrative of the organisers and the contemporary image of Mandalika as a destination, and enable researchers to gather information directly in the field. Therefore, the researcher formulates a research problem: *how does the distribution of information and circulation of netizen perceptions during the 2025 Mandalika MotoGP event occur through the Instagram account @themandalikagp?*

The research will explore discussion patterns, opinion intensity, and meaning reconstruction in online interaction spaces to reveal strategic communication aspects from the perspectives of both organisers and recipients, namely netizens (followers/audience) of the Instagram account @themandalikagp. The results of this research are expected to make a real contribution to the development of contemporary communication science, particularly by advancing understanding of information distribution on digital platforms and the circulation of netizen perceptions in the new media era.

METHODOLOGY

The research method is descriptive qualitative using virtual observation, semi-structured interviews, and social network analysis (SNA) techniques, namely SocialBlade and NodeXL, to find research data and validate data validity using the peer debriefing method.

All methods used are appropriate choices, as the research employs a qualitative approach grounded in the post-positivist paradigm. The book entitled 'Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches' (Neuman, 2014), explains that qualitative research is research that refers to the ability of research to explain findings based on the perspective of data sources taken from the process of observation, interviews, and analysis using certain tools and the position of the researcher as an interpreter.

Observation consists of participant and non-participant observation, meaning that participant observation is when the researcher participates in the research space, becoming part of the research object, while non-participant observation is when the researcher observes from outside the research object, focusing on collecting data (Leavy, 2017). The observation technique used in this study is non-participant virtual observation, which involves observing and collecting data in the digital (virtual) world. Researchers often use digital platforms to access and observe research subjects (Nurdiansyah, 2024). To address the research gap, the researcher used a semi-structured interview method in the field during the event. Semi-structured interviews, according to Creswell (2018), are a method or technique of data collection in qualitative research that involves a direct question-and-answer process with research subjects, yielding data that are real, based on phenomena in the field.

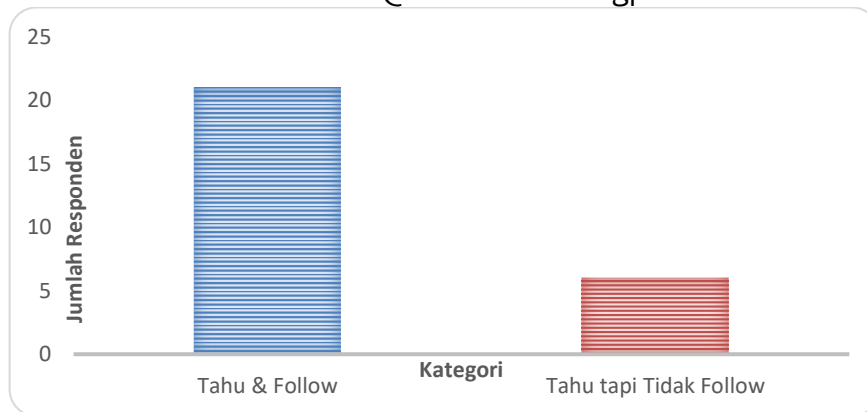
FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

Information Distribution

Regarding the distribution and circulation of information on the @themandalika Instagram account about the MotoGP event, the researcher observed the interaction process of followers in the form of comments on each content posted by the

administrator. Based on direct and virtual observations, data was compiled in an observation table presented in a simple graph.

Figure 2: Distribution of Audience Awareness and Actions towards the Instagram Account @themandalikagp



Source: Researcher's Processed Data, 2026

The results of the above observation show that all informants (28 People) are familiar with the account, so it can be concluded that the level of trust/awareness can be categorised as 100% achievement (80% know and follow, while 20% do not know and do not follow in the table graph), meaning that this pattern represents that the @themandalika account has successfully gained the attention of the audience, but there are still some who have not taken action to become followers of the account. The researcher suspects that netizens/informants who are not followers may become followers of the account or even become obstacles, for example, netizens posting negative comments in an attempt to lower awareness. Research by Wardhana (2024), explains that social media audience awareness is created through the unique visual and informative messages presented in content. The presentation and distribution of content to the audience indirectly became information consumption related to the MotoGP Mandalika event.

People who did not know about this international event became aware of it because the information was well distributed and well planned, and the repeated dissemination of information (circulation) by the @themandalika admin helped the audience obtain

accurate information and become interested in the event. The perspective on information circulation ultimately emphasises the repeated circulation of information embedded in the audience's daily lives, as they are accustomed to it (Griffin, 2012). Researchers observed that this concept of information distribution and circulation led audiences (netizens) who accidentally clicked on the @themandalika account to receive regular updates about the MotoGP event or the @themandalika Instagram account profile at other times, due to the algorithm. The algorithm itself automatically saves, shares, or searches for the same account when users use the search tool. This is where the 22.2% group of 'aware but not following' becomes an important indicator, showing that they have been exposed to the distribution (they have been exposed), but the account has not yet become a permanent node in their personal circulation. All symbols that have been used in the equations should be defined in the following text. Regarding the distribution and circulation of information on the @themandalika Instagram account about the MotoGP event, the researcher observed the interaction process of followers in the form of comments on each content posted by the administrator. Based on direct and virtual observations, data was compiled in an observation table presented in a simple graph.

To strengthen the analysis, this study incorporates key Social Network Analysis (SNA) metrics, namely degree centrality, network density, and modularity, based on NodeXL dataset processing. First, degree centrality analysis shows that the Instagram account @themandalikagp has the highest degree value in the network, reaching 27 connections out of 28 nodes in the Mandalika dataset. This indicates that almost all nodes are directly connected to the central account, confirming its role as the dominant hub. Such a high degree centrality reflects a highly centralized hub-and-spoke structure, where information dissemination is controlled by a single primary source.

Second, the network density in the main Mandalika network is 0.071, indicating a sparse network structure with limited interconnections among nodes. This suggests that interactions between netizens are relatively low, and communication is predominantly vertical (from the official account to users), rather than horizontal (between users). This

finding reinforces the interpretation that the network prioritizes information distribution over interactive engagement. However, in the respondent-based and sentiment-based networks, the density reaches 0.846, indicating a highly interconnected structure among nodes after relational filtering. This contrast demonstrates that while the initial communication structure is centralized, deeper layers of interaction reveal stronger relational ties among netizens. Third, modularity analysis shows a value close to 0.000 in the main network, indicating minimal community segmentation due to the dominance of the central node. In contrast, the respondent and sentiment networks show a modularity value of approximately 0.020, suggesting the emergence of small clusters based on shared perceptions or sentiments, although the clustering strength remains relatively weak.

Overall, the combination of high degree centrality (27), low initial density (0.071), and low modularity (-0.000–0.020) confirms that the communication model of @themandalikagp is structurally centralized but interpretatively diverse. While information dissemination is highly efficient and controlled by a central actor, the circulation of netizen perceptions occurs in fragmented and layered forms, influenced by individual interpretation and emerging relational clusters.

This finding highlights a dual-layer communication structure, where surface-level networks are centralized, but deeper interaction layers reveal emerging relational complexity among netizens.

Perception, Sentiment of Instagram Audience @themandalika

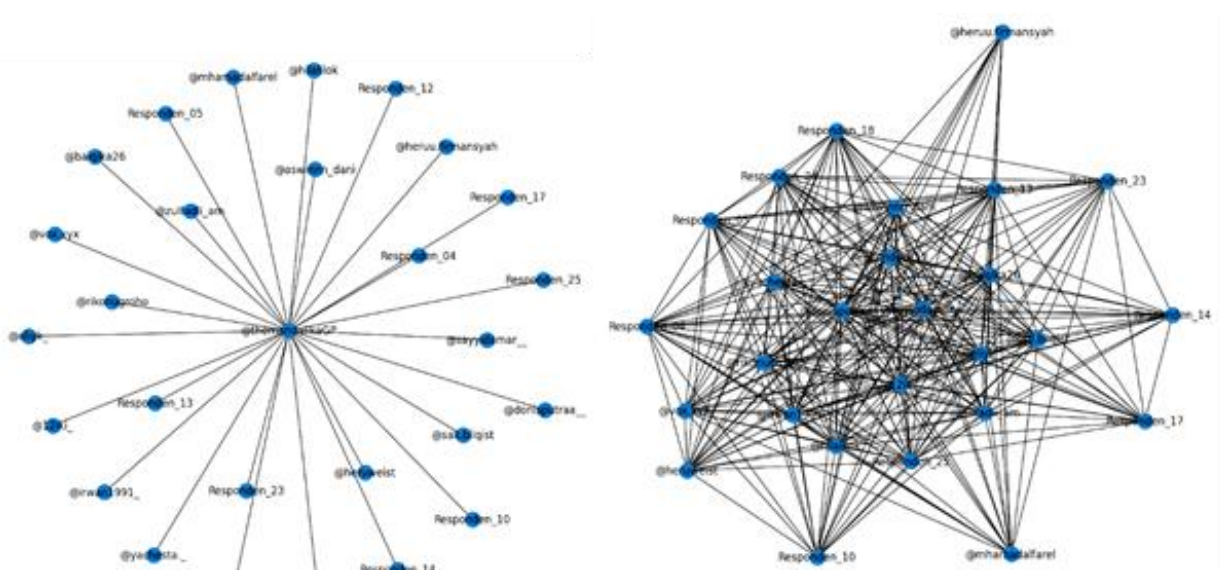
The presence of comments indicates that the @themandalika account is perceived as a source of information, especially for international events such as the Mandalika MotoGP. This condition shapes the utility value of a communication channel or media. Logically, when an account is used as a source of relevant information, awareness levels can be maintained because netizens have functional reasons for fulfilling their daily information needs. Fahira's (2023), research findings indicate that information conveyed through social media-based communication (digital communication) is flexible and evolving, depending on whether the content created meets users' information needs

and the comments made by netizens on the uploaded content.

The distribution of information certainly shapes the circulation of netizens' perceptions, one of which is marked by the emergence of various comments as responses (a form of communication) on the Instagram account @themandalika. Ramadhan (2014), explains that social media users' perceptions are formed from their own individual experiences based on social interactions, technology utilisation (technology adaptation), and phenomena or trendsetters in the virtual world. These conditions transform perceptions into unique dynamics, such as the emergence of viral effects and the building of credibility.

Research conducted on the Instagram account @themandalika found data on the distribution and circulation of netizen perceptions, as demonstrated by their responses during interviews, field observations, and virtual observations. Specifically regarding observations on the circulation of netizen perceptions, the researchers agreed with previous studies that comments on content can reveal the dynamics of netizen responses (sentiment), which can be positive, neutral, or negative. The researchers conducted an experiment by combining research findings (data) obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation into a single unit using the SNA (Social Network Analysis) tool, NodeXL. As a result, the researchers were able to construct a unique visual graph based on previous research data (Hansen, 2010).

Figure 3: Star Network (Hub-and-Spoke) Information Distribution



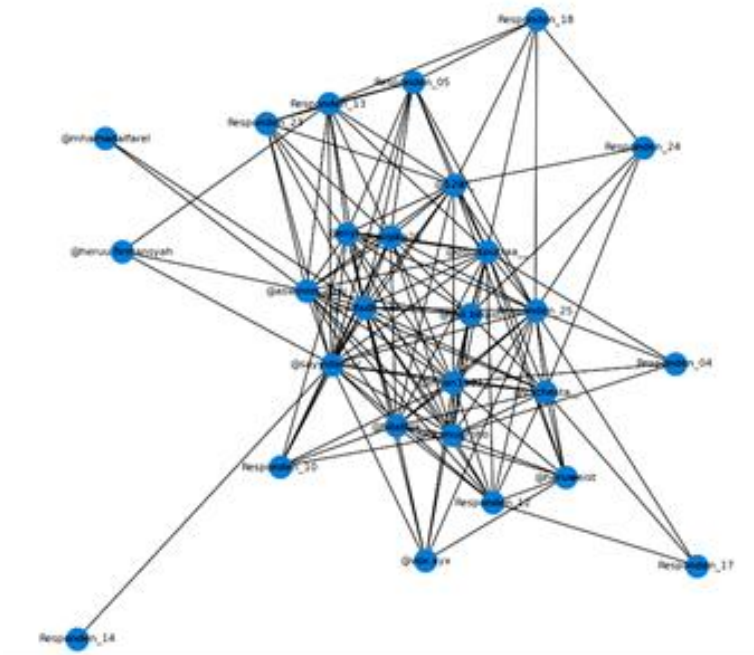
Source: Analysis Results Based on NodeXL

Figure 3 shows a star (hub-and-spoke) pattern, with the official account @themandalikagp positioned as the central node, meaning that almost all respondents are directly connected to this account, while connections between respondents are relatively minimal. This pattern is the result of the researcher's modification of the @themandalika account user data set to see how the research findings can represent a highly centralised network, where the distribution of information and circulation of netizen perspectives are visualised as flowing directly from one central source to many recipients, rather than through intense peer-to-peer channels. Centralisation analysis and degree centrality measures in the social network analysis (SNA) literature indicate that star-shaped graphs represent network centralisation and are often interpreted as a broadcast pattern or centralised information dissemination (Noviriani, 2025).

The @themandalikagp account serves as a source (broadcaster), producing content, announcements, and clarifications that directly shape the initial exposure of all nodes (respondents). Due to the weak relationships between respondents, the process of meaning-making (the formation of shared meaning through horizontal discussion) is relatively limited.

To reinforce these findings, the researchers conducted a validation process involving peer debriefing with one of the academics, concluding that centralised information distribution will lead to heterogeneous individual perceptions, resulting in variations in sentiment (positive/neutral/negative) towards the same content. Specific and measurable evidence is needed on how information can develop despite centralised conditions. The effectiveness of official account communication depends not only on how widely the message is disseminated but also on its ability to overcome saturation effects and address the audience's information needs (Priadana, 2021).

Figure 4: Filtered Graph (Strong Ties Network)



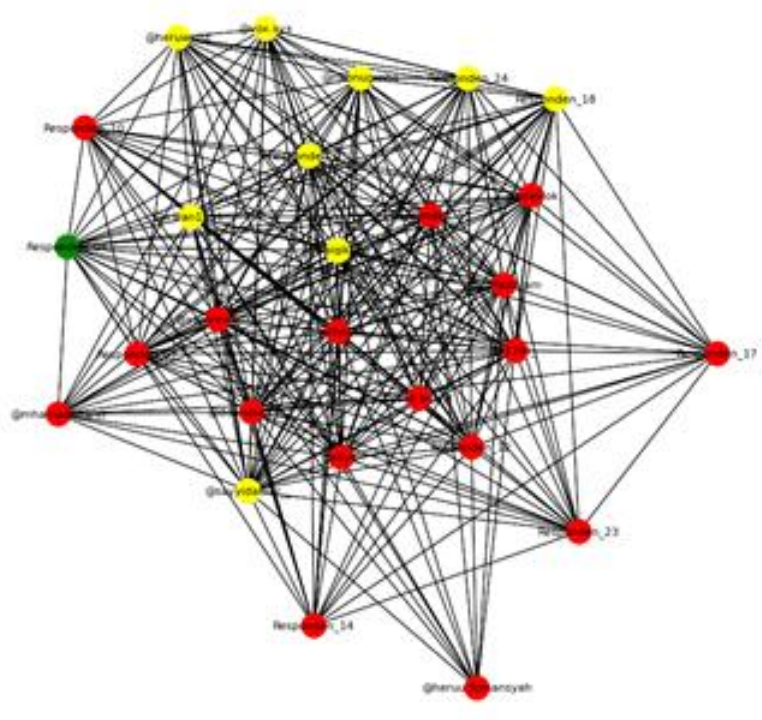
Source: Analysis Results Based on NodeXL

The Filtered Graph (Strong Ties Network) or Filtered Strong-Tie Network Based on Opinion Similarity is the result of further analysis of social networks (Social Network Analysis) using NodeXL tools that focus on the strongest perceived relationships between netizens regarding the 2025 Mandalika MotoGP event through the Instagram account @themandalikagp. In Krnč's (2020) research, strong ties are defined as bonds formed from shared views, experiences, or high-intensity interactions. Because the graph above was constructed by filtering the initial network, only relationships between nodes (edges) with a high level of opinion similarity and shared opinion keywords (shared words ≥ 4) were retained.

The result is a visualisation showing that, after weak connections are filtered out, the network still forms a dense structure and connects nodes, even though the number of nodes and connections has decreased compared to the initial network. This finding

indicates that there is a core network of netizens who not only receive information from official accounts but also share relatively similar patterns of interpreting the content presented. In other words, this graph reveals the deepest layer of netizen perception circulation, namely the part of the network where the strongest similarities in views and interpretations of information occur. The graph produced by this study reinforces Livingstone's (2022), argument that social media is not only a channel for information distribution but also an arena for collective meaning-making, Research conducted on the Instagram account @themandalika found data on the distribution and circulation of netizen perceptions, as demonstrated by their responses during interviews, field observations, and virtual observations. Specifically regarding observations on especially when audiences share similar interpretative frameworks for an event.

Figure 5: Sentiment-Based Network Visualization of Netizen Perceptions



Source: Analysis Results Based on NodeXL

Filtered Strong-Tie Network perceptions do not spread randomly, but rather cluster around nodes that share similar opinions, thereby potentially reinforcing certain sentiments, whether positive, neutral, or negative. To confirm these sentiments,

researchers processed the data and constructed an Attribute-Based Graph (Vertex Colour by Sentiment) or Sentiment-Based Network Visualisation of Netizen Perceptions (Figure 5) using NodeXL tools. The graph visualisation shows that netizen sentiment is distributed heterogeneously across the network. Nodes with positive, neutral, and negative sentiments are not clearly separated into completely independent clusters; rather, they intersect within a relatively dense network. This finding shows that netizens with different sentiments can exist in the same perception environment, sharing similar topics and opinion keywords, but interpreting the information differently. Thus, the circulation of perceptions is not only determined by the similarity of information received, but also by subjective experiences and individual expectations of the content presented by official accounts. From an information distribution perspective, sentiment-based graphs show that although MotoGP 2025 Mandalika information is distributed centrally through the @themandalikagp account, netizens' emotional responses to this information vary and spread through networks of similar opinions. Netizens are not only passive recipients of information but also actors in interpreting meaning through personal assessments. This condition can create patterns of emotional resonance and prolong the duration of content in a narrative, because interactions between different sentiments encourage discussion, comparison, and repeated evaluation of the information circulating (Atienza, 2025). Therefore, sentiment-based graphs provide an important insight: managing communication for major events requires not only message consistency but also sensitivity to the dynamics of public emotions that develop within a network or ecosystem on Instagram (Carey, 2009).

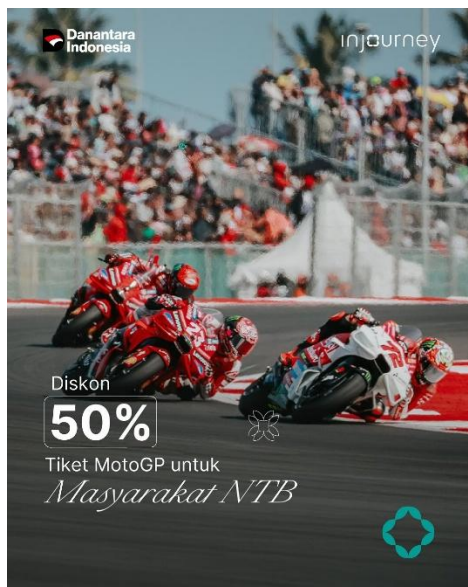
The findings regarding the achievement of attention related to awareness, which was 100% divided into 80% of informants who knew and followed the Instagram account @themandalikagp and 20% of informants who did not know and did not follow the account, provide an important context for understanding the patterns of information distribution and circulation of netizen perceptions as depicted in a graph of the research data. These findings lead to the conclusion that the @themandalikagp account successfully reached all respondents as part of the MotoGP 2025 Mandalika

communication ecosystem, either directly or indirectly. In other words, even though not all respondents followed the account, all respondents were still aware of the event and its communication channels (Castronovo, 2012). Other opinions agree with the study's findings that a centralised network structure directly contributes to 100% awareness, meaning that all informants are aware of the Mandalika MotoGP event and its communication channel, namely Instagram. The high level of network centralisation allows information to spread efficiently, be distributed quickly, and be circulated to other netizens, thereby increasing the likelihood that it will be responded to by informants who are exposed to and circulate the same message. The 100% awareness achievement shows that the @themandalikagp Instagram account has successfully fulfilled its role in disseminating information widely and effectively, but netizens' perceptions remain diverse. This finding contributes to understanding that, in the context of international sporting events such as MotoGP 2025 Mandalika, the success of digital communication is not only measured by the level of awareness, but also by the ability to manage perceptions and engagement among followers (netizens) after awareness has been achieved.

Semiotic Analysis of Instagram Content

To deepen the understanding of how meaning is constructed within digital communication, this study incorporates a semiotic analysis of selected visual and textual content from the Instagram account @themandalikagp. This approach draws on semiotic perspectives that view media content as a system of signs, where meaning is produced through the interaction between symbols, representations, and audience interpretation.

Figure 6: Promotional Content of MotoGP Mandalika on Instagram @themandalikagp



Source: Instagram @themandalikagp (2025)

Figure 6 presents a promotional visual from the Instagram account @themandalikagp, featuring MotoGP riders in a high-speed racing moment combined with a textual message offering a “50% discount for NTB residents.” From a semiotic perspective, this content operates as a complex system of signs that integrates visual, textual, and symbolic elements.

At the level of signifier, the image displays racing motorcycles in a leaning position, sharp turns on the circuit, and a blurred background of spectators. These visual elements signify speed, intensity, and competitive performance, which are strongly associated with global motorsport culture. The dominance of red racing visuals further reinforces the impression of energy, power, and urgency. At the level of signified meaning, the image constructs Mandalika as a modern, dynamic, and internationally competitive sporting venue. The presence of a large audience in the background signifies mass participation and public enthusiasm, positioning the event as socially significant and widely accepted.

The textual element “Diskon 50% Tiket MotoGP untuk Masyarakat NTB” functions as a symbol of inclusivity and accessibility. It signifies that the event is not only targeted at global audiences but also accommodates local communities. This creates a dual narrative: Mandalika as a global event space and as a locally embedded socio-economic

initiative.

From a broader semiotic perspective, this content constructs a layered meaning system in which speed and global prestige are combined with local inclusion and economic accessibility. This finding aligns with the semiotic tradition which views media content as a site of meaning production rather than mere message transmission.

Figure 7: Aerial View of Mandalika Circuit and Surrounding Landscape



Source: Instagram @themandalikagp (2025)

Figure 7 presents an aerial view of the Mandalika International Circuit integrated with the surrounding coastal landscape. From a semiotic perspective, this visual functions as a powerful representation of spatial identity, combining elements of infrastructure, nature, and national symbolism. At the level of signifier, the image displays a modern racing circuit with clearly defined track lines, grandstands, and supporting facilities, surrounded by green landscapes and a coastal environment. The visible “INDONESIA” marking on the track further reinforces national identity, on elements signify order, technological advancement, and environmental integration.

Wide aerial perspective also functions as a symbol of scale and legitimacy, suggesting that the event is not merely local but part of an international ecosystem. This reinforces the narrative of Mandalika as a globally recognized venue, supported by national investment and long-term development planning.

From a semiotic standpoint, this content emphasizes a different layer of meaning

compared to action-based visuals. While racing images highlight speed and competition, this aerial image communicates stability, infrastructure readiness, and destination branding. It constructs a macro-level narrative in which Mandalika is framed as both a sporting venue and a national tourism icon. The combination of action-based and spatial visual representations demonstrates that meaning construction occurs at both micro (event experience) and macro (destination branding) levels.

Contributes from result of research develop of communication theory by integrating information distribution, audience perception, and social network structure into a unified analytical framework within the context of digital communication. Unlike traditional models that emphasize linear message transmission, this research demonstrates that communication in social media operates through a multi-layered and networked process, where meaning is dynamically constructed and circulated among users.

The inclusion of a semiotic perspective strengthens the theoretical contribution by demonstrating that communication on social media is not merely about transmitting information, but also about constructing symbolic meanings through visual and textual representations. This supports the view of communication as a process of meaning-making, where audiences actively interpret and negotiate messages.

Overall, this study proposes that digital communication should be understood as an interaction between structural forces (network patterns), technological mediation (platform affordances), and interpretive processes (audience meaning-making). This integrative perspective provides a more comprehensive framework for analyzing contemporary communication phenomena, particularly in the context of large-scale events and social media environments.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that information distribution through the @themandalikagp Instagram account follows a centralized communication pattern, which effectively generates high audience awareness. However, centralized dissemination does not result in uniform perception. Instead, netizen perceptions are heterogeneous and shaped by

individual interpretation, network structures, and symbolic representations. The findings highlight that digital communication operates as a multi-layered process involving transmission, interaction, and meaning construction. Social media functions not only as a communication channel but also as a dynamic space where meanings are continuously negotiated.

From a practical perspective, these results suggest that event organizers should move beyond information dissemination strategies toward more dialogical and adaptive communication approaches that respond to audience sentiment and engagement patterns. This study has limitations, including a limited data-collection period, a focus on a single social media platform, and limitations in directly assessing the influence of Instagram's algorithm. These limitations may affect the generalisation and interpretation of the research findings. Therefore, further research is recommended to use a longitudinal approach to observe the dynamics of information distribution and netizen perceptions over a longer period.

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