

## THE INFLUENCE OF DIGITAL MARKETING ON TOURISM DESTINATION PROMOTION

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this study is to examine how digital marketing affects tourism destination promotion. In the increasingly developing digital era, traditional marketing has shifted, where digital marketing plays an increasingly important role in attracting tourists and building the image of tourist destinations. The study's findings demonstrate the substantial impact that digital marketing impact on increasing the exposure and reach of tourism destination promotion. Through social media, sponsored advertising, graphic content, and search engine optimization (SEO), tourist destinations are able to reach a wider and more targeted audience. In addition, digital marketing has also been proven to be able to improve the positive image of destinations through user reviews, influencer involvement, and interesting content. The application of technological tools like augmented reality and virtual tours provides a more interactive experience for potential tourists, thereby increasing the attractiveness of the destination. This study's conclusion is that digital marketing is a very effective tool in promoting tourist destinations, both in terms of costs and results obtained. The implementation of the right digital marketing strategy can help tourist destinations increase the number of visits, strengthen their image, and maintain competitiveness in the global tourism market.

**Keywords:** Influence, digital marketing, promotion, tourist destinations

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## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the development of digital technology has changed many aspects of life, including the way people interact, shop, and access information. In the tourism sector, this change is very pronounced in the way tourism destination promotion is carried out. Previously, tourism destination promotion relied heavily on traditional methods such as print advertising, television, and tourism exhibitions. However, with the advent of the internet and digital technology, these traditional promotion methods have begun to be replaced by digital marketing strategies (Raji et al., 2024).

Digital marketing offers various advantages that conventional promotion methods do not have. One of its main advantages is its ability to reach a wider audience at a relatively lower cost (Rodrigues et al., 2021). In addition, digital marketing allows for more measurable promotions and can be adjusted in real-time based on audience responses and behavior. Platforms such as social media, search engines, and tourism websites allow destinations to reach potential tourists from all over the world, attract their interest through attractive visual content, and even interact directly with them.

According to Parlov et al., (2016) in the rapidly developing digital era, digital marketing has become one of the main tools used by various industries, including tourism, to reach a wider audience and increase awareness of the products or services offered. The tourism sector, in particular, has seen significant changes in the way destinations are promoted and how tourists make their decisions. Before the digital era, tourism destination promotion relied on traditional media such as brochures, magazine advertisements, and tourism exhibitions. However, Information and communication technology development has brought about substantial changes in the way that tourism destination promotion is carried out. Digital marketing tactics, such as content marketing, social media marketing, SEO, and digital advertising, has made tourism destination promotion more effective and efficient. Social media, for example, allows tourism destinations to interact directly with potential tourists, share attractive visual content, and build online communities that can strengthen the brand awareness of the destination (Birkic et al., 2020). In addition, SEO helps tourism destinations to be more easily found by potential tourists who search for information through search engines such as Google. With the increasing use of the internet and social media among the public, potential tourists are now more likely to search for information about tourist destinations online before deciding to visit. This makes digital marketing a very

important tool in building awareness, interest, and ultimately the decision to visit a tourist destination (Adinugraha, 2022).

However, despite the great potential offered by digital marketing, there are still challenges in its implementation. According to Jaya et al., (2020) some tourist destinations, especially those located in remote areas or with limited resources, may face difficulties in maximizing digital marketing. In addition, measuring the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies in increasing the number of tourist visits and strengthening the destination's image is also an area that needs attention. Not all tourist destinations, especially those in remote areas or with inadequate digital infrastructure, are able to optimally utilize digital marketing (Armutcu et al., 2023).

In addition, the increasingly fierce competition in the digital world requires tourist destinations to be more creative and innovative in their marketing strategies. This background is what drives research on the influence of digital marketing on the promotion of tourist destinations. This study aims to understand the extent to which digital marketing can influence tourist decisions, how digital marketing strategies can be optimized, and its impact on increasing the number of visits and the image of tourist destinations. Through this study, it is hoped that deeper insights can be obtained into the role that digital marketing plays in propelling the travel and tourism sector forward in the digital age. The purpose of this study was to investigate how digital marketing influences the promotion of tourist destinations, with a focus on specific strategies implemented, and their influence on the quantity of tourists who visit and their knowledge of the location. The study's findings should give managers of tourism destinations deeper understanding for creating more successful marketing plans in this digital age.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study uses a descriptive method by collecting data from various reliable sources, including literature studies and recent publications. A descriptive approach is used to describe the influence of digital marketing on tourism destination promotion. The first stage in this research method is collecting literature relevant to the research topic. A literature search is conducted through academic databases, scientific journals, and related publications that discuss the influence of digital marketing on tourism destination promotion. The selected literature must be of good quality and relevant to the research objectives. After collecting the literature, an analysis and synthesis of the information found is carried out. Relevant data and details

regarding how digital marketing affects tourism destinations' perception and volume of visitors, how crucial it is to the advancement of the tourism sector in the digital age, and how it influences tourism destinations promotion related to the research topic.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **The Impact of Digital Marketing on Increasing the Number of Visits and the Image of Tourist Destinations**

Hartanto et al., (2022) stated that digital marketing has become one of the most effective tools in increasing the number of visits to tourist destinations. Through the use of social media sites like Instagram, tourism locations may expand their audience and attract the attention of potential tourists. Research by de Amorim et al., (2022) shows that the use of social media has a significant influence on destination image and tourist visiting decisions. One concrete example is in Lake Toba, where digital marketing contributed to an increase in tourist visits by 59.8%. This shows that the right digital marketing strategy can attract more tourists, both domestic and foreign. Destination image is also greatly influenced by digital marketing efforts. Destinations that are able to create a positive image through interesting and informative content on social media tend to be more successful in attracting visitors. Research by Suryaningsih et al., (2020) shows that a good image can increase tourists' interest in returning. In addition, tourist attraction managers who understand and apply digital marketing techniques well can improve relationships with tourists. This not only helps in attracting new visitors but also in creating loyalty among existing tourists.

Here are some of the impacts on increasing the number of visits and the image of a tourist destination according to Fiona et al., (2022):

#### **1. Increased Number of Visits**

**Wide Reach:** Through digital platforms such as social media, websites, and search engines, tourist destinations can reach tourists from all over the world. Interesting content can be spread virally, so that more people are interested in visiting the destination.

**Effective and Targeted Promotion:** Digital marketing allows tourist destination owners to target audiences based on preferences, demographics, and location. Personalized advertising is more effective in attracting the interest of potential tourists.

**Ease of Access to Information:** With an informative website, interactive social media, and reviews from other users, potential tourists can more

easily get information related to tourist destinations, such as ticket prices, facilities, routes, and attractions available. This encourages interest in visiting.

**Search Engine Optimization (SEO):** With SEO optimization, tourist destinations can appear at the top of Google searches, making them easier to find by potential visitors who are looking for information.

## 2. Improving the Image of Tourist Destinations

**Attractive Visual Content:** Through digital media, tourist destinations can display visual content, such as photos and videos, that are attractive. This provides a positive image and attracts tourists to visit. The positive image of these visuals is very influential in promoting the appeal of a location.

**Positive Interaction and Reviews on Social Media:** Tourists often share their experiences on social media, either through photos, reviews, or recommendations. If their experiences are positive, this will build a good image for the destination. Positive reviews on platforms such as TripAdvisor, Google Reviews, or Facebook can improve the reputation and trust of potential tourists.

**Influencers and Digital Campaigns:** Collaborating with influencers or celebrities on social media can also strengthen the image of a tourist destination. Influencers who have many followers can provide great exposure, as well as build a more relevant and attractive image for younger audiences or certain segments.

**Branding Enhancement:** With a well-planned digital campaign, tourist destinations can build strong branding. Consistent, creative, and targeted branding will give a professional and quality impression, which in turn increases tourist appeal.

## 3. Long-Term Impact

**Brand Awareness:** Digital marketing helps tourist destinations stay in the minds of tourists. Consistency in digital campaigns will strengthen public awareness of the destination, even when they have no plans to visit.

**Expanding the International Market:** With digital marketing, tourist destinations can attract tourists from abroad more easily, so that the international market becomes more open and the potential for visits increases.

Overall, digital marketing not only increases the number of visits but also plays an important role in strengthening the image and reputation of a tourist destination. Implementing the right digital marketing strategy can have a major

influence on the growth of the travel and tourism sector (Sumantri, D., & Rahmat, 2023).

### **Digital Marketing's Critical Role in Promoting the Travel and Tourism Sector in the Digital Era**

In the digital era, digital marketing has become one of the most powerful tools to advance the tourism industry. Changes in consumer behavior and technological developments require industry players to adapt more effective and efficient marketing strategies (Mallick, 2023). Digital marketing plays a very important role in advancing the tourism industry in the digital era. By utilizing various digital marketing tools and strategies, tourist destinations can reach more tourists, build a positive image, increase engagement, and manage reputation effectively. According to Darma, G. S., & Noviana (2020) in the midst of increasingly fierce global competition, the implementation of smart and innovative digital marketing is the key to success in maintaining the growth of the tourism industry in the future.

The following is a description of the importance of digital marketing in advancing the tourism industry according to Xia et al., (2023):

1. Expanding Global Reach

Among digital marketing's greatest benefits is its capacity to reach audiences worldwide. Tourism is an industry that relies heavily on the attractiveness of destinations to local and international tourists. Through email marketing, social media, websites, and search engines are examples of digital marketing tourism actors can target tourists from various countries. This opens up wider opportunities to attract foreign tourists, increase visit volume, and diversify revenue sources.

2. Cost Effectiveness and High Return on Investment (ROI)

When it comes to marketing strategies, digital marketing is more economical than traditional ones such as print, television, or radio advertising. With a relatively small budget, companies or tourism destinations can reach thousands to millions of potential tourists. Digital advertising also allows for deeper measurement and analysis, so tourism industry players can adjust their campaigns to achieve higher ROI. Techniques such as pay-per-click (PPC) and search engine optimization (SEO) can also be adjusted to optimize campaign results.

3. More Precise Targeting Capabilities

One of the significant advantages of digital marketing is its ability to carry out very specific targeting based on demographics, behavior, and

preferences of tourists. This allows industry players to create targeted campaigns, so that the content created is relevant to a specific audience. For example, ads can be targeted to people who are looking for a vacation spot or those who have just read an article about a particular tourist destination. This increases the chances of conversion and drives interest from potential tourists.

4. Real-Time Information Provision

Digital marketing allows for instant, real-time information dissemination. For example, a tourist destination can announce special promotions, tour packages, or certain events quickly through email marketing, social media, or websites. Potential tourists can get accurate and up-to-date information about the destination or available activities, without having to wait for print media or other sources.

5. Building Interaction and Engagement

In the digital age, potential travelers are not only relying on one-way information, but also seeking two-way engagement. Through social media, tourist destinations can interact directly with potential travelers, answer questions, and provide recommendations. This creates a more personal relationship with the audience, increases loyalty, and builds community. In addition, social media allows passengers to directly share their experiences, which may have an impact on other potential visitors.

6. Use of Reviews and User Experience

Online reviews and user-generated content have a huge influence on traveler decisions. Platforms such as TripAdvisor, Google Reviews, Instagram, and Facebook give travelers the opportunity to share their experiences of a destination, hotel, or restaurant. Digital marketing encourages destinations to embrace these reviews, both positive and negative, as part of their promotional strategy. Positive reviews build trust and a positive image, while a professional response to negative reviews can improve public perception.

7. The Importance of Visual Content

Visual content, such as photos and videos, is very effective in attracting travelers in the digital age. Digital marketing allows tourist destinations to showcase their beauty and appeal through high-quality images and videos that can be shared across multiple platforms. An eye-catching photo of a beach, mountain, or iconic landmark can inspire people to visit. Promotional videos, travel vlogs, and virtual tours are some forms of visual content that are very effective in increasing interest in a destination.

#### 8. The Importance of Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

SEO is very important in the world of digital marketing, especially for the tourism industry. By optimizing content for search engines like Google, a destination's website can be more easily found by potential travelers looking for travel-related information. SEO helps destinations appear at the top of search results, increasing visibility and website traffic. This is especially important because most internet users tend to click on links that are on the first page of search results.

#### 9. Using Influencers in Promotion

Digital marketing allows for collaboration with influencers to promote a destination. Influencers, especially on platforms like Instagram, YouTube, or TikTok, have a huge influence on their followers, who often make travel decisions based on their recommendations. By using influencers, destinations can reach a wider audience and improve their image in a more authentic and creative way.

#### 10. Adapting to New Trends and Technologies

The tourism industry in the digital era must continue to adapt to new trends and technologies. This includes the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for personalization, chatbots for 24/7 customer service, and Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) to provide virtual experiences to potential tourists. Digital marketing allows tourism destinations to stay abreast of these developments and implement them in their strategies to attract tourists.

#### 11. Managing Crisis and Reputation

Digital marketing is also important in managing crises and maintaining the reputation of tourism destinations. In the digital era, news and information spreads quickly, including negative information. Through a good digital marketing strategy, tourism industry players can respond quickly and professionally to crisis issues, such as natural disasters, epidemics, or negative reviews. Fast and transparent communication through digital channels can help minimize the negative impact on the image of the tourism destination.

### **Digital Marketing in Influencing Tourism Destination Promotion**

Digital marketing plays a central role in influencing how tourist destinations are promoted (Castro et al., 2017). By utilizing various digital

platforms, tourism industry players can reach a wider and more diverse audience, increase brand awareness, and attract more visitors. Digital marketing influences the promotion of tourist destinations in a much more effective and dynamic way than traditional methods (Chamboko-Mpotaringa, M., & Tichaawa, 2021). Through the use of social media, paid advertising, SEO, email marketing, and advanced technologies such as AR or virtual tours, tourist destinations can increase visibility, attract visitors, and build a positive reputation among tourists (Sinha et al., 2020). In this digital era, the right application of digital marketing is the key to success in introducing tourist destinations to the world and driving the growth of the tourism industry (Haedar, 2023).

The following is a description of how digital marketing influences the promotion of tourist destinations (Deb et al., 2024):

1. Increased Promotion Reach

**Global Access:** Digital marketing allows tourist destinations to reach potential tourists from all over the world without geographical boundaries. With digital tools such as social media, websites, and online advertising, destinations can reach international markets easily.

**Precise Targeting:** Digital platforms allow destinations to target potential tourists based on demographics, interests, behaviors, and geographic location. For example, ads can be configured to be displayed only to people who are interested in nature tourism or culinary tourism in a particular area.

2. The Influence of Social Media in Building Destination Image

**Attractive Visual Content:** Social media such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube leverage the power of images and videos to attract tourists. Beautiful landscape photos, travel videos, and testimonials from other visitors can make a destination look attractive and interesting.

**User-Generated Content:** Traveler experiences shared on social media in the form of photos, videos, and reviews have a big influence on destination promotion. Positive reviews or testimonials from visitors can improve the reputation and positive image of a tourist destination among other potential tourists.

**Use of Influencers:** Destinations that collaborate with influencers or travel bloggers can increase their exposure. Influencers who have loyal followers can provide authentic experiences that make the destination feel more personal and interesting.

3. Utilizing Paid Advertising

**Google Ads and Social Media Ads:** Paid advertisements on social media and Google Ads enable for effective and efficient promotion of tourist destinations. Google Ads can be used to display destinations in the first search results, while ads on platforms like Facebook and Instagram help promote destinations directly to relevant audiences.

**Remarketing:** Remarketing techniques help tourist destinations retarget users who have already shown interest in the destination (for example, those who have visited the destination's website). This increases the chances of attracting returning travelers who may be considering the destination.

#### 4. Search Engine Optimization (SEO) to Increase Visibility

**Search Engine Optimization (SEO):** SEO is a technique that allows tourist destination websites to appear on the first page of search engine results like Google. By optimizing content for specific keywords, such as "Bali tourism" or "best beach holidays", tourist destinations can be more easily found by potential travelers who conduct related searches.

**Blog and Article Content:** Creating informative blog content and articles is also an important part of an SEO strategy. By providing travel guides, tips, or reviews about tourist destinations, destination websites can attract more organic traffic and help build a reputation as a credible source of information.

#### 5. Interactive and Personal Experiences through Email Marketing

**Promotional Personalization:** Email marketing allows for more personalized promotions. Through the use of customer data, destinations can send promotions or special offers that are tailored to an individual's interests. For example, travelers who have searched about nature tourism may receive special offers related to mountain or forest travel packages.

**Use of Newsletters:** Through regular newsletters, destinations can maintain relationships with previous customers and inform them about the latest events, festivals, or promotions that may interest them.

#### 6. Use of Technology for Virtual Experiences

**Virtual Tours:** In the digital age, travelers can be given the opportunity to virtually see a destination before deciding to visit. These virtual tours allow potential visitors to explore the attractions in a 360-degree experience, which can increase interest in taking a real trip to the destination.

**Augmented Reality (AR):** AR technology allows destinations to provide a more immersive experience through mobile applications. Travelers can use

AR to view attractions from a different perspective, such as seeing a historical depiction of the place through their devices.

7. Using Data for Better Decision Making

**Visitor Data Analysis:** Digital marketing allows tourism industry players to collect data about visitor behavior online. By analyzing this data, such as the most visited pages or the most popular promotions, destinations can adjust their marketing strategies to more effectively attract visitors.

**Campaign Effectiveness Measurement:** Through digital tools such as Google Analytics or ad management platforms, destinations can measure the effectiveness of their marketing campaigns. This allows for real-time performance monitoring and campaign adjustments to be more efficient and have maximum impact.

8. Reputation and Crisis Management

**Online Review Management:** Online reviews on platforms such as TripAdvisor, Google, or Booking.com greatly influence traveler decisions. Destinations can monitor these reviews, respond quickly, and provide solutions to maintain their reputation. Good review management shows that destinations care about traveler feedback and are committed to providing the best service.

**Digital Crisis Management:** In times of crisis, such as a natural disaster or pandemic, a good digital marketing strategy can help destinations manage their communications and reputation. The latest information on safety, preventive measures, and new policies can be disseminated quickly through digital channels.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of research on the influence of digital marketing on tourism destination promotion, it can be concluded that digital marketing has a significant role in increasing the effectiveness of promotion and the attractiveness of tourism destinations. The following are the points of conclusion that were produced:

1. Increased Reach and Exposure
2. Precise Targeting and Personalization
3. Improving Destination Image and Reputation
4. Use of Technology for Visitor Experience
5. Cost Effectiveness

Research on the influence of digital marketing on tourism destination promotion shows that digital marketing strategies have a significant impact on

increasing the visibility and attractiveness of destinations. Through the use of various digital platforms, such as social media, websites, and mobile applications, tourist destinations can reach a wider and more diverse audience. The results of the study show that social media, in particular, plays an important role in building a positive image of the destination. Interesting and interactive content on these platforms not only increases awareness of the destination but also creates deeper engagement with potential tourists. This contributes to their decision to visit the destination. In addition, digital marketing allows destination managers to understand tourist behavior and preferences through data analysis. Digital marketing not only functions as a promotional tool, but also as a means to build better relationships between destinations and tourists. By optimally utilizing digital technology, tourist destinations can increase the number of visits and strengthen their image in the global market.

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