Digital Marketing as a Tourism Village Marketing Strategy in East Java’s Horseshoe Region

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Abstract

If supported by digital marketing, tourism villages can be a major economic driver in rural communities. Because through digital marketing, the tourism industry is able to expand its market and attract more tourists. This study intends to map the need for information technology for digital marketing as a strategy to enhance the marketing of tourism villages. This study employs a qualitative case study methodology. Tourism villages of Kemiren in Banyuwangi Regency, Lombok Kulon in Bondowoso Regency, and Kampung Blekok in Situbondo Regency served as research sites. Observation, interviews, and documentation techniques were utilized to collect research data. The data analysis employed qualitative descriptive analysis. According to the findings of the survey, the marketing of tourist villages in the Horseshoe region has been conducted using information technology. However, the use of digital marketing through websites and social media is still limited. Therefore, digital marketing must be supported in accordance with the requirements of the tourist village and the segmentation of the target market. This research's information technology requirements mapping methodology for digital marketing can be utilized to support the marketing of tourist villages in East Java’s Horseshoe region.

Keywords: Tourism Village; Horseshoe; Information Technology; Digital Marketing; Business; Qualitative

Abstrak


Kata kunci: Desa Wisata; Tapal Kuda; Teknologi Informasi; Digital Marketing; Business; Kualitatif

1. Introduction

The development of information and communication technologies has altered the social structure of a country, including that of the people of Indonesia. As part of the industrial revolution that emphasizes the digital content industry, the Indonesian population is currently moving toward the Society 5.0 era (Fukuyama, 2023). The industrial sector will undergo a digital transformation as a result of society 5.0's industrial revolution. Digital transformation is an unavoidable phenomenon; therefore, organizations must embrace digital transformation effectively in order to survive and compete (Hadiono and Santi, 2020). This condition creates opportunities for competition between business actors or between organizations and businesses in the digital marketing of products and services (Kosasih, 2020). Digital marketing is a form of marketing that utilizes electronic devices with various marketing techniques and digital platforms to communicate with consumers (Rahmawati and Hidayati, 2023). Digital marketing has very influential and advantageous effects on both consumers and producers. In the context of marketing, digital marketing is used not only to support marketing, but also to develop brand recognition through the use of various media, such as blogs, websites, adwords, and other networks (Yanti,
Through digital marketing, business actors must have the fortitude to engage in promotions or partnerships that can result in new innovations (Santoso, 2020). Obviously, the utilization of digital marketing requires the availability of information technology and internet networks.

In the tourism industry, digital marketing can be used to promote numerous Indonesian tourist attractions. Due to the electronic services provided to visitors before, during, and after a tour, digital tourism marketing is the best method to save money and time (Ernawati and Hananto, 2023). In accordance with the growth of internet use in Indonesia, digital marketing serves as the primary portal for visitors to discover information about tourist attractions in various regions via the internet. According to the Indonesian Internet Providers Association, 210 million persons will be connected to the internet between 2021 and 2022, for a penetration rate of 77.02 percent (Firmansyah, 2023). The number of active social media users in Indonesia increased by 12.35% from 2021 to 2022, reaching 191 million in January 2022 (Bayu, 2023).

Compared to traditional (non-digital) marketing, the use of digital marketing can result in an increase in the number of domestic and international visitor visits. According to research, the use of digital marketing has increased visitor visits to Lake Toba by 59.8 percent. This is due to the high usage rate of digital marketing content/websites, which is 84. According to the findings of another study, the use of suboptimal digital marketing had an effect on visitors' interest in visiting a tourist attraction (Arofah and Achsa, 2020). According to the findings of this study, digital marketing in the tourism industry correlates with an increase in the number of visitors visiting tourist attractions.

In recent years, various regions have seen the development of numerous tourist villages. Tourism villages are based on rural potential that possesses uniqueness and appeal and can be developed as tourism products to attract tourists (Sudibya, 2019). The number of tourist villages throughout Indonesia has reached 7,275 (Kemenko Maritim dan Investasi, 2021). Utilizing digital marketing for advertising and promotion is one of the measures taken to help tourist villages compete with other tourist attractions and adapt to advances in information technology. In addition, tourism villages must collaborate with tourism stakeholders in order to become more optimal and capable of attracting more tourists (Sumarto et al., 2020), as well as receive policy support from local governments (Yuniati et al., 2023). Therefore, innovation and creativity are required to develop the most effective marketing strategy using digital technology (Harahap et al., 2021).

In East Java’s horseshoe region, 39 tourist villages are dispersed throughout the districts of Jember, Bondowoso, Situbondo, and Banyuwangi. Nonetheless, the administration and development of tourist villages in this region continue to encounter numerous obstacles. The results of a 2018 survey conducted by the provincial government of East Java on domestic tourism in the Horseshoe region revealed that tourists had negative opinions regarding infrastructure, transportation, and supporting facilities. Due to a dearth of promotion and marketing, the number of tourist visits to tourist villages is lower than that of other tourist attractions. To surmount these obstacles, a suitable marketing strategy is required to attract tourists to tourist villages.

This study seeks to investigate the use of digital marketing in tourist villages and construct a model of the information technology requirements for digital marketing as a marketing strategy for tourist villages. The results of this research are anticipated to serve as a guide for marketing tourism villages in East Java’s Horseshoe region.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Tourism Village

Tourism is an activity that involves various sectors and institutions. In which several aspects are in it, namely economic, environmental, political and socio-cultural (Febriandiha and Kurniawan, 2020). In order to increase tourism in the regions, the government is developing tourist villages. A tourist village is an area rural area which has several characteristics that make it an area for tourist destinations. Tourism villages offer beauty from a social perspective culture, customs, daily life, special food, and nature that is still original and preserved (Fasa et al., 2022). The tourist village is a form of integration involving attractions, accommodation and supporting facilities which are then presented in the structure of community life, where tourist villages have an attraction in the form of uniqueness that is packaged naturally for attract tourists to visit the village. In the development of a tourist village there are several important components that are necessary to be considered, namely the tourism industry to be developed, forms of marketing, objectives tourism and tourism agencies (Fajri, 2020).

2.2. Digital Marketing

Digital marketing is one of the media used for marketing which is currently in great demand by the public, because it has an impact where marketing communications and transactions can be done at any time (real time). Digital marketing is a form of marketing efforts using electronic devices with a variety of marketing techniques and utilizing digital platforms to communicate with consumers. The role of digital marketing is for attract consumer interest by directing communication using electronic media. Media that can be used include websites, blogs, adwords, and various types of information technology networks.
Digital marketing has several digital marketing channels, namely: (1) marketing affiliation; (2) display marketing; (3) e-mail marketing; (4) search engine marketing; (5) social media marketing; and (6) online public relations. Digital Marketing has a very influential and beneficial effect on consumers and consumers producers. The use of digital marketing can increase customer loyalty (Grací et al., 2019). Another benefit of digital marketing is product and service information to be transparent, easy to do product information updating, comparative analysis with more competitors easy, and cheaper in cost because the promotion is through digital media (Amalina, 2019).

Business owners must be able to build digital marketing to build relationship with consumers, this will create consumer awareness through interest, then there is confidence in consumers to try the product or service and the last is the action on the product or service to be purchased.

2.3. Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is a type of research that produces discoveries that cannot be achieved using statistical procedures or other methods of quantification (Murdianto, 2020). Qualitative research aims to obtain an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon (Sudaryono, 2019). The objects in qualitative research are natural objects, so qualitative research methods are often referred to as naturalistic research (Sugiyono, 2019).

There are five types of approaches to qualitative research, namely phenomenology, ethnography, grounded theory, narrative/historical, and case studies (Creswell, 2018). Qualitative research comes from various data sources, not just relying on one data source. Qualitative research creates a complex picture of a problem or issue being studied, therefore qualitative researchers are expected to be able to create a visual model of various aspects of the main process or phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 2018). In qualitative research, data is analyzed inductively (Sugiyono, 2019).

3. Research Methods

This research employs qualitative research approach. Without intending to test hypotheses, qualitative researchers seek to develop concepts and collect data (Sugiyono, 2019). The methodology employed is a case study. This research uses case studies to illustrate digital marketing as a strategy for increasing the marketing of tourist villages in East Java’s Horseshoe region. This investigation was conducted in Kemiren, Banyuwangi Regency, Lombok Kulon, Bondowoso Regency, and Kampung Blekok, Situbondo Regency, all of which are tourist villages. The selection of this research site was based on the fact that the three tourist villages are distinct in terms of culture, agriculture, and environment, allowing for in-depth studies on the use of digital marketing in tourist villages.

3.1. Problem Identification and Research Stages

In this research, problem identification was carried out by investigating the use of digital marketing and building a model of information technology needs for digital marketing of tourist villages in the horseshoe region, East Java. Meanwhile, the research stages consist of several steps, namely: literature study, data collection, data analysis, data validity, and conclusions. More clearly the stages of this research are described in the flowchart in Figure 1.

3.2. Literature Review

A literature review is an essential activity that cannot be separated from research. It is conducted by gathering supporting data from books or journals concerning theories that underpin the relevant research and the methods commonly used as references in this study (Sugiyono, 2019). The results of the literature review are utilized to shape the research design and identify the determining factors related to the research object.

3.3. Data collection

Observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation were employed to collect information for this study. Observations and interviews will generate primary data, whereas documentation techniques will yield secondary data. The interview uses a structured interview where the researcher has
prepared an interview guide according to the research problem. The research informants were identified using a technique for selecting informants based on specific criteria: purposive sampling. As research subjects, the managers of tourist villages, visitors, and affiliated Tourism Office personnel serve as research informants. In addition to textbooks and scholarly articles, secondary sources of information include documents from agencies associated with this research.

3.4. Data analysis
In this study, descriptive qualitative analysis with an interactive model by Miles and Huberman was used to analyze the data, including data reduction, data presentation, verification, and conclusion drawing (Jaya, 2020). Data reduction includes the selection process, focusing on simplifying, abstracting and transforming rough data that emerges from written notes obtained in the field, in the form of interviews and field notes. The next step is presenting the data to make it easier for researchers to understand what is happening and what should be done regarding their research. In this research, a collection of information that has been compiled through data presentation provides the possibility of taking action and drawing conclusions as well as verifying the validity of the data. Before, during, and after data collection, these three phases are interdependent until the collected data reaches a saturation point or data saturation.

3.5. Validity Data
To ensure the validity of the data obtained in this research, the triangulation method was used. Triangulation is intended to carry out assessments by categorizing data using a recording system. In this case, a search is carried out on the data obtained by cross-checking and confirming the research findings so that complete and unbiased data is obtained. In this research, data credibility testing was carried out using source triangulation techniques by comparing and re-examining the degree of trustworthiness of information obtained from sources over different times.

3.6. Conclusion
The conclusion is the final stage of the research, where the researcher explains the final results of the analysis carried out in the previous stage, and provides recommendations or suggestions regarding the results of this research to other parties, both related agencies and other researchers who wish to continue other research.

4. Result and Discussion
4.1. Overview of Tourism Villages in the Horseshoe Region
Horseshoe is the designation of a region in East Java Province’s eastern area. The Horseshoe region includes the Jember, Situbondo, Bondowoso, and Banyuwangi regencies. The majority of the population is Madurese, Javanese, and Osing. This region has natural tourism, cultural tourism, and manufactured tourism potential.

The tourist village is one of the Horseshoe region’s tourism landmarks. A tourism village is an area with a specific area and the potential to be a distinct tourist attraction, with a community of people able to establish a combination of various tourist attractions and their supporting infrastructure (Provinsi Jawa Timur, 2019). Tourism Awareness Groups are involved in the administration of tourist villages. Their membership is comprised of tourism actors who support the establishment of an environment conducive to the growth and development of tourism (Purnawati, 2021).

The following data shows the number of tourist villages in East Java’s Horseshoe region, especially in the 3 regencies that are the object of this study with a total 35 tourist villages consisting of Banyuwangi with 22, Bondowoso with 8, and Situbondo with 5 (East Java Province, 2019).

With 22 villages, Banyuwangi Regency contains the majority of tourist villages. The tourism in these villages is based on environmental protection, agriculture, culture, history, nature, and human creations. As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the number of visitors visiting tourist attractions in the region has decreased since 2020 compared to previous years. The increasing dissemination of the Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in the imposition of social restrictions in public places and the closure of a number of tourist attractions, leading to a decline in domestic and international tourist visits. Even though the number of tourists has decreased, Banyuwangi Regency still registers the most tourist visits compared to the other two regions, with a total of 1,432,342 in 2021 (Pemerintah Kabupaten Banyuwangi, 2023).

The development of the number of tourist visits is below shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Total of tourism in 3 regencies in the horseshoe region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regency</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Banyuwangi</td>
<td>5,408,676</td>
<td>2,594,977</td>
<td>1,432,342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bondowoso</td>
<td>504,370</td>
<td>263,186</td>
<td>188,360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situbondo</td>
<td>353,574</td>
<td>327,806</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Banyuwangi, Bondowoso, Situbondo

The potential of tourism villages in the Horseshoe Region, especially in Bondowoso, Situbondo and Banyuwangi districts in general can be grouped into 4 A as follows:

1. Accessibility. Generally speaking, the infrastructure in the Horseshoe region’s tourist towns is fairly solid. The road to the tourist village
is passable by two-wheeled and four-wheeled vehicles, though the lack of road signs in some tourist villages can make it difficult for out-of-town visitors. Access to information and communication technologies is not yet complete in tourist villages, which causes visitors some inconvenience.

2. Attractions. Tourism villages in the Horseshoe region are dominated by natural, cultural, and man-made tourism. The Lombok Kulon tourist village in Bondowoso Regency is based on organic farming, the Patemon tourist village and the Blekok village tourism village in Situbondo Regency are based on historical tourism and environmental conservation tourism, the Kemiren tourism village in Banyuwangi Regency is based on cultural tourism, and so on.

3. Amenities. Facilities and infrastructure in tourist villages in the Horseshoe region include pure water sources, electricity, telecommunications systems, homestay accommodations, parking lots, bathrooms/toilets, places to dine, souvenir stalls, entrances, and others.

4. Institutional (ancillary). Some of the management of tourist villages in the Horseshoe Region have formed institutions/organizations as managers such as Tourism Awareness Groups or Village Business Entities. These two institutions generally manage tourist villages, interdependent until the collected data reaches a saturation point or data saturation.

4.2. Digital Marketing Use as a Tourism Village Marketing Strategy

The era of information technology requires every business to use a digital-based marketing model, including tourist villages. To attract tourist visits, tourist villages need to carry out promotions by utilizing various digital platforms, considering the current tendency of people to access more information through digital media. This condition is facilitated by the presence of the internet which has reached various regions and villages. In the tourist village which is the location of this research, internet access is no longer a problem because it is readily available and easy to reach.

Digital media can be used to increase the promotion and marketing of tourist villages (Kemenparekraf, 2019). Marketing and promotion of tourist villages in this research object have been carried out using digital marketing. The Kemiren tourist village in Banyuwangi has utilized information technology through websites and social media.

Promotion through the website using the Banyuwangi Regency Culture and Tourism Office website, namely https://www.banyuwangitourism.com/ and the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy go.id/ and the website Kemiren village which can be accessed at https://kemiren.com/. While the social media owned is Instagram with the tag name @desa_kemiren, TikTok with the tag name @desakemiren, and YouTube village Kemiren, besides that it uses the linkTree application as a marketing medium.

Like the village of Kemiren, the marketing of the Lombok Kulon Bondowoso tourism village has used digital media. The purpose of using digital marketing is intended to attract tourists by using electronic media (Najmussahar and Yuliana, 2023), in addition to making it easier to reach consumers widely. The use of digital media for the promotion of tourist villages can be facilitated by the regional government or at the initiative of the village government or tourism village managers.

In the Lombok tourist village of Kulon Bondowoso, promotion is carried out through a digital magazine on the website https://www.bondosotourism.com/ which is managed by the Bondowoso District Tourism, Culture and Sports Office. The management does not yet have their own website, due to limited budget and ability to manage websites. However, they already have social media as a marketing medium, namely Instagram with the tag name @wisata.organik, TikTok with the tag name @wisata.organik, Youtube Organic Tourism Village, and the linkTree application.

Kampung Blekok Situbondo, a tourist settlement, is promoted and marketed through online and social media channels. Kampung Blekok's tourist promotion website is still hosted on the servers of the Situbondo Regency tourism Office (http://situbondotourism.com) and the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (https://jadesta.Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy.go.id/). Kampung Blekok has not yet launched its own website, but you can find its administration on social media under the handles @kampungblekok.official on Instagram and @kampungblekok1 on TikTok.

Thus, digital marketing has been used in the marketing of tourist villages in the Horseshoe Region, although its use has not been fully managed independently and sustainably. Website-based digital marketing is still managed by local government agencies. Therefore the website has not been fully utilized as a promotional media for tourism villages. Social media has been managed independently, but not all social media are updated due to constraints on human resource factors.

The average tourist village manager has resources that have less information technology knowledge. Specifically, the use of digital marketing based on paid applications has not been carried out due to limited financial capabilities, which has an impact on the choice of using digital marketing.
4.3. The Digital Marketing Model of the Horseshoe Tourism Village

In order to map information technology needs for digital marketing of tourist villages in the Horseshoe Region, the following steps are taken:

1. Analyzing the market target, namely determining who is the target market for the tourist village whether domestic tourists, foreign tourists, or both. In carrying out this identification, it is also based on the preferences and needs of tourists.

2. Analyzing competitors. It is intended to understand what is unique about this tourist village so that it is different from other tourist villages, especially in the same area or area.

3. Defining marketing goals. It is the marketing objective to increase the number of tourists, increase the length of visit, or increase tourist spending. Thus it will be easier to determine what information technology needs to be provided by a tourism village.

4. Analyzing the information needs of visitors through a survey of tourists who come to the tourist village. It can help tourist villages determine what information technology needs to be provided for tourists.

5. Determining the required information technology. There are several information technologies that can be used, including websites, social media, mobile applications, digital payment systems, and others. The information technology used needs to be adjusted to the needs and marketing objectives of the tourism village.

The results of this analysis are then used as the basis for compiling a conceptual framework model for information technology requirements for digital marketing of tourist villages East Java’s horseshoe region. This model was prepared based on the results of interviews with research informants. The model is below shown in Figure 2.

![Figure 2. IT needs mapping model for digital marketing tourism villages](image-url)

Referring to Figure 2, the use of information technology for digital marketing can be mapped into two, namely free information technology and paid information technology (Umami and Darma, 2021). Some of the information technology needs to support digital marketing for tourist villages in the Horseshoe Region can be mapped as follows:

1. **Google Analytics**
   - Google Analytics is a free website analysis platform that enables village tourism managers to monitor website visitors, determine the duration of visits, the most visited pages, etc. This information can assist the tourism village in increasing the efficacy of its current promotions.

2. **Google My Business**
   - This platform enables tourist villages to register their businesses or tourist destinations on Google, allowing visitors to discover information about tourist villages on Google Maps, Google Search, and Google+. Google My Business enables tourist villages to add details such as business hours, phone numbers, photographs, locations, and visitor reviews.

3. **Social Media**
   - Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and Twitter can be used for free to promote and market tourism villages. Tourism villages can establish accounts on the platform and post content (images, text, and videos) about tourism villages, as well as advertise and engage with visitors.

4. **Email Marketing**
   - Email marketing is an efficient information technology for promoting tourist destinations. Tourism villages can acquire the email addresses of travelers and visitors in order to send them information about the most recent promotions, events, and other village-related news. When using email marketing, the mailchimp platform can be used to create, send, administer, and monitor promotions.

5. **LinkTree**
   - LinkTree is a digital marketing tool used to optimize links by creating a single link containing multiple essential links that are easily accessible and shareable on social media. Through LinkTree, tourism villages can effectively and efficiently promote their various products and services.

6. **Canva**
   - Canva is a free online platform for graphic design that can be used to create promotional materials for tourism villages in the form of posters, brochures, and business cards.

7. **Tourism Village Website Profile**
   - A significant digital platform for introducing tourism villages, offering information about lodging, maps, travel guides, and online ticket reservation systems.

8. **Mobile Applications (Buffer and Taboola)**
Buffer is included in the digital marketing category because it helps businesses manage social media by arranging publishing schedules, managing content, and analyzing content performance. Taboola is a platform that enables advertisements to be displayed on prominent websites and online media.

9. Social Media Ads

Social media advertisements can be tailored to the intended target audience, such as displaying advertisements to tourists interested in cultural or natural tourism. Through social media advertisements, tourist villages can increase their visibility on social media and reach a broader audience, thereby increasing the number of tourists who visit.

To optimize information technology needs to support digital marketing, it needs to be adjusted to marketing objectives and market segmentation (Wardhana, 2022). The objective of marketing tourism villages in the Horseshoe Region is to increase the number of tourists who visit, with segmentation or with domestic tourists or local tourists as the primary target market. To achieve this objective, the effective use of information technology to support the digital marketing of tourism villages must be tailored to meet the requirements of domestic visitors. The majority of the informational requirements of domestic visitors relate to tourist destinations, transportation to tourist villages, accommodations, and auxiliary services.

Through this paradigm of mapping information technology requirements, tourism villages in the Horseshoe region will be able to determine the most effective information technology to promote tourism villages. The target market and the village's financial and human resources will determine which of these several information technologies a tourist village will employ. Because the use of information technology necessitates the knowledge and skills of human resources in information technology management and application. Additionally, financial/financial support from various parties is required to assure the sustained use of information technology.

5. Conclusion

This research succeeded in identifying challenges that hinder the effectiveness of digital marketing in tourist villages in the Horseshoe area and proposed a comprehensive framework for utilizing information technology to meet marketing objectives and fulfill tourist village market segmentation. By emphasizing the use of customized tools such as Google Analytics, Google My Business, Social Media, Email Marketing, Canva, LinkTree, Websites, Mobile Apps (Buffer and Taboola), and Social Media Advertising, this model ensures a strategic approach. Selecting a particular information technology should be based on factors such as target market, financial resources, and human resources. To realize the maximum potential of digital marketing in tourist villages, collaboration and support from various stakeholders, including village governments, regional governments, private companies and other related parties is very necessary. This framework provides a roadmap for optimizing the use of information technology in digital marketing, paving the way for improved promotional and marketing strategies that align with the unique characteristics of the East Java horseshoe region.

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