

# Analysis of the Influence of Digital Marketing on the Decision to Visit Labuhanbatu Tourist Destinations

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**Abstract.** This study aims to analyze the effect of digital promotion on tourist satisfaction at local tourist destinations. Using a quantitative approach, data was collected through a survey from 150 respondents who had been exposed to digital promotions of tourist destinations and had visited the location. Digital promotion includes social media, website, digital advertising, and email marketing as the main elements. Data analysis using multiple linear regression shows that digital promotion has a significant influence on traveler engagement, especially through interactions on social media and clicks on advertisements. In addition, digital promotion is proven to increase the frequency of tourist visits, especially through interesting information and effective visual promotions. Tourist satisfaction is influenced by the match between expectations formed through digital content and the actual experience at the destination. The results of this study confirm the importance of an integrated and data-driven digital marketing strategy in marketing local tourist destinations. This research provides practical contributions for tourist destination managers to optimize the use of digital platforms, improve content quality, and adopt promotional personalization to enhance the tourist experience. These results are relevant in facing global competition and supporting sustainable tourism development.

**Keywords:** Digital promotion, tourist engagement, visitation rate, tourist satisfaction, local tourism destinations.

## INTRODUCTION

The tourism sector has long been recognized as an important pillar in local economic growth. According to a report from the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), tourism not only contributes to national income, but also creates jobs and improves the welfare of communities in various regions (Atmojo, 2024). In the context of Indonesia, the tourism sector is one of the mainstays in post-COVID-19 economic recovery efforts, with enormous potential to increase regional income and create new business opportunities (WAHYUNI, 2022). Therefore, the development and promotion of tourist destinations is very important to attract more tourists, both domestic and international.

The role of digital marketing in supporting the promotion of tourist destinations is increasingly in the spotlight in today's digital era. With the advancement of information technology, digital marketing has become an effective tool to reach a wider audience and increase the visibility of tourist destinations (Harahap, 2023). Through digital platforms, destinations can convey interesting and relevant information to potential tourists, and build a positive image through creative and innovative content (Sufa, 2024). Digital marketing includes not only online advertising, but also the use of social media, influencers, and content strategies that can attract tourists' attention and interest (Pettersen-Sobczyk, 2023). This shows that the utilization of digital technology in tourism marketing is a must to compete in an increasingly competitive global market.

Recent phenomena and trends in domestic traveler behavior show a significant increase in the use of digital media to plan their trips. Research shows that travelers are now more likely to search for information online, compare options, and make reservations through digital platforms (Chaniago, 2022). This creates both challenges and opportunities for destination managers to adapt their marketing strategies to better suit changing consumer preferences and behaviors (Musliha & Adinugraha, 2022). With more and more travelers relying on the internet for information, it is important for destinations to have a strong and engaging digital presence (Zarrouk, 2023).

In this context, digital infrastructure development and online promotion are key factors in attracting tourists. Research shows that destinations that utilize social media and effective digital marketing campaigns can significantly increase tourists' visit intentions (Sufa, 2024). In addition, the use of social media influencers in promoting tourist destinations has also been proven effective in creating greater appeal for tourists (Pettersen-Sobczyk, 2023). Thus, marketing strategies that integrate digital technology and social media are crucial to achieving tourism marketing goals.

On the other hand, the importance of strengthening human resource capacity in the tourism sector cannot be ignored. Research shows that training and skills development in digital marketing are indispensable to improve the effectiveness of tourism destination promotion (Raharjana & Putra, 2020). Destination managers must be equipped with adequate knowledge and skills to optimally utilize digital tools, so that they can compete in an increasingly complex market (Abidin et al., 2022). Therefore, investment in education and training in digital marketing is a strategic step to improve the competitiveness of the tourism sector.

In addition, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has also changed the way tourists interact with destinations. Research shows that tourists now pay more attention to health and safety aspects in choosing a destination (Wahyuningsih et al., 2022). Therefore, the application of CHSE (Cleanliness, Healthy, Safety, Environment Friendly) principles in destination marketing is very important to build trust and attract tourists (Wahyuningsih et al., 2022). In this context, digital marketing can serve as a tool to convey information related to health and safety protocols implemented in destinations, so that tourists feel safer and more comfortable when visiting.

Finally, with the increasing reliance on digital technology, it is important for destination managers to continuously adapt and innovate in their marketing strategies. Research shows that innovations in digital marketing, such as the use of augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) technologies, can enhance travelers' experiences and capture their attention (Özdemir, 2021). By utilizing these technologies, destinations can offer more interactive and engaging experiences, thereby increasing the attractiveness and interest of tourists to visit (Özdemir, 2021). Therefore, the development and implementation of innovative and technology-based marketing strategies are key to achieving success in the tourism sector in the future.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Digital Marketing Concept in Tourism Marketing

Digital marketing in tourism marketing is a strategy that utilizes digital platforms to promote destinations, attract tourists, and increase interaction between destinations and target audiences. The main elements of digital marketing include social media, websites, digital advertising, and email marketing, all of which are designed to increase the awareness and appeal of a destination. Social media, such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok, are important tools to showcase the visual beauty of destinations, build story narratives, and encourage audience engagement through interactive features such as comments and surveys.

Destination websites act as information hubs for potential tourists, offering features such as photo galleries, reviews, and online booking facilities. This allows travelers to virtually explore the destination before deciding on their visit. In addition, digital advertising through platforms such as Google Ads and social media advertising helps destinations target specific markets based on geographic location, age, and traveler preferences. This strategy not only increases the visibility of the destination but also the efficiency in reaching out to specific market segments.

Email marketing, although considered a traditional method in the digital context, remains relevant in building long-term relationships with travelers. Through regular newsletters, destinations can inform travelers of special promotions, events, or seasonal offers. This strategy allows for in-depth personalization, creating a more personalized experience for travelers. In the context of tourism, digital marketing provides a strategic advantage by enabling destinations to leverage technology to create an integrated, engaging and enticing experience for potential visitors.

### AIDA Model (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) in Tourism Marketing

The AIDA model is a very relevant framework in understanding how digital marketing influences the traveler's journey from awareness to visit decision. In the first stage, Attention, destinations can attract travelers' attention through visually appealing campaigns on social media or through digital advertising that highlights the uniqueness of the destination. Professional photos and videos that showcase a destination's natural beauty, culture, or signature activities can capture the attention of potential travelers, especially on wide-reaching platforms such as Instagram and YouTube.

The second stage, Interest, focuses on building the interest of potential travelers by providing in-depth information about the destination's appeal. This can be done through travel blogs, online reviews, or promotional videos featuring real-life experiences of other travelers. This content helps tourists explore the destination further, understand

the advantages and uniqueness of what it has to offer, and visualize their experience in that location. The availability of easily accessible and relevant information increases interest and encourages potential travelers to consider a visit.

At the Desire and Action stages, tourist destinations need to create a strong sense of desire and encourage concrete action. This can be done through special offers, such as seasonal discounts or attractive tour packages. These promotions, if supported by "book now" or "learn more" buttons on digital platforms, can directly lead travelers to the action stage, i.e. ticket booking or in-person visit. The AIDA model helps destinations design a structured digital marketing strategy to guide potential travelers through each decision-making stage.

Social media has become one of the key elements in tourism marketing strategies, allowing destinations to reach a global audience at a relatively low cost. According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2020), social media provides a unique opportunity to build narratives and create virtual experiences that captivate tourists. In the context of local tourism, platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok are often used to showcase the beauty of destinations through engaging visual content. Research by Leung et al. (2021) shows that user reviews, photos, and videos shared on social media can influence tourists' perceptions and decisions to visit a destination.

In addition, interactive features such as *polls*, *live sessions*, and *feature stories* increase traveler engagement with the destination. This strategy not only strengthens brand loyalty but also encourages travelers to become brand ambassadors by sharing their experiences online. Social media also allows destination managers to utilize data analytics to understand audience preferences and refine their marketing strategies.

Tourism destination websites serve as a hub of information for tourists and are often the first point of contact in their journey. A well-designed website not only offers information about attractions, accommodations, and facilities, but also provides an intuitive and pleasant user experience. Research by Xiang et al. (2020) confirms that websites with responsive design, visually appealing content, and easy navigation have a greater chance of attracting and retaining travelers' attention.

Furthermore, features such as online booking, photo galleries, and user reviews help create trust and encourage actions such as bookings or in-person visits. In tourism marketing, websites are also a channel for personalizing the traveler experience by offering recommendations that match their preferences, based on data collected from previous interactions.

### **Consumer Behavior Theory in the Digital Context of Tourism Marketing**

Consumer behavior in the digital context influences the way tourists search, evaluate, and decide to visit tourist destinations. In tourism marketing, consumers tend to rely on digital resources such as online reviews, promotional videos and social media recommendations to evaluate their choices. This theory suggests that travelers' decisions

are often influenced by both emotional and rational factors, triggered by informative and engaging digital content. Social media is becoming a very effective tool in building positive perceptions and creating trust through user-generated content or traveler testimonials.

Psychological factors such as the need for new experiences or seeking social recognition are often key motivations for travelers. Destinations can capitalize on this by creating campaigns that highlight unique experiences or show how a visit to the destination can improve social status on social media. In addition, interactive elements such as commenting or sharing experiences directly help travelers feel more connected to the destination, creating a strong emotional connection.

On the other hand, consumer behavior is also influenced by external factors such as recommendations from friends or family, trends, and digital promotions. In this context, destinations that are able to leverage data analytics to understand their consumers' preferences and behaviors have a greater chance of attracting travelers. By using technologies such as content personalization, destinations can offer promotions that match individual needs and preferences, increasing the likelihood of visits and customer satisfaction. Consumer behavior theory provides an important foundation for designing more effective digital marketing strategies focused on travelers' needs.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study uses a quantitative approach to measure the effectiveness of digital promotion of local tourist destinations based on the variables of engagement, visitation rate, and tourist satisfaction. This approach enables statistical analysis to understand the relationship between digital promotion and its influence on tourist behavior. The study population is domestic tourists who have visited local tourist destinations that use digital promotion as their main marketing strategy. The sample was drawn using a purposive sampling technique, with the criteria that respondents had been exposed to a tourist destination's digital campaign, either through social media, website, digital advertising, or email marketing, and had visited the destination. The sample size was determined using the Slovin formula to ensure adequate representation.

Data was collected through online and offline surveys. For online surveys, questionnaire links were distributed via social media or email, while offline surveys were conducted by giving questionnaires to tourists directly at destination locations. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were used to describe respondent profiles and variable distributions. Inferential analysis was conducted using multiple linear regression to test the relationship between digital promotion (independent variable) and tourist engagement, visitation rate, and satisfaction (dependent variable). Data processing was done with the help of statistical software such as SPSS or SmartPLS.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The validity test is used to measure the validity or validity of a questionnaire. To measure validity, it can be done by comparing the correlation value of each question with measuring the variables studied in the study. To find out whether the score of each question item is valid or not, the following statistical criteria are determined:

1. If the results of  $r_{count} > r_{table}$  and are positive, then the variable is valid
2. If the result of  $r_{count} < r_{table}$  and is negative, then the variable is invalid

### Validity Test

**Table 1.** Validity test results

Item	Significance	Description
X1.1	0,000	Valid
X1.2	0,003	Valid
X1.3	0,000	Valid
X1.4	0,000	Valid
X1.5	0,000	Valid
X1.6	0,000	Valid
X1.7	0,000	Valid
X1.8	0,000	Valid
X1.9	0,000	Valid

Source: Primary data (Questionnaire) processed, 2024

Based on the table above, it can be seen that all items used as measuring instruments in this study are valid based on a significance value smaller than 0.05. So it can be concluded that all question items are valid and can be analyzed further.

### Reliability Test

An instrument is reliable as a data collection tool if it gives the same results against a symptom at different times. According to Singarimbun, the instrument is said to be reliable, if the alpha crobach value is equal to or above 0.7 or more.

**Table 2.** Reliability Test Results

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Description
Digital Marketing	0,842	Reliable
Intention to Visit	0,832	Reliable

Source: Primary data (Questionnaire) processed, 2024

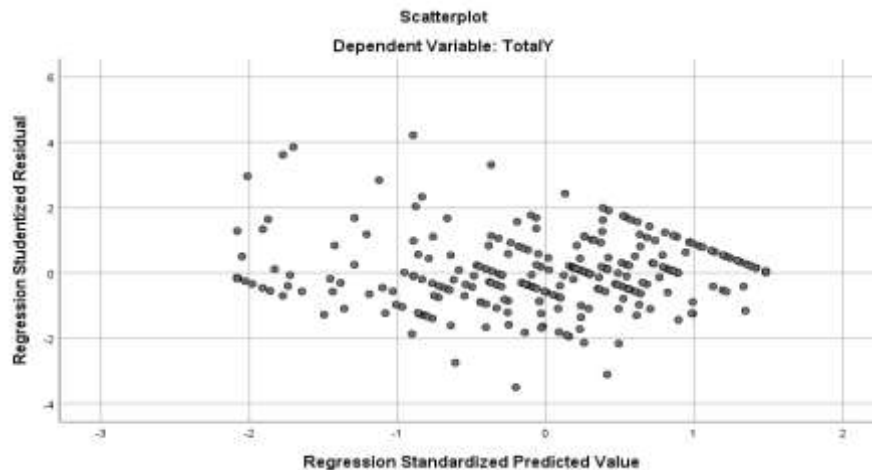
Based on the table, it is known that the Crobach alpha value on the dependent and independent variables is above 0.7 so it can be concluded that these variables are reliable and can be analyzed further.

### Classical Assumption Test

#### Heteroscedasticity Test

Heteroscedasticity test is used to see if there is an inequality of variance from one residual to another observation. Heteroscedasticity detection test can also be done by graphical method, namely by looking at the plot graph between the predicted value of the dependent variable, ZPRED with the residual SRESID. The test results using the graph method are as follows:

Scatter plot of heteroscedasticity test



### Multicollinearity Test

Multicollinearity occurs in regression analysis when two or more predictor variables are highly correlated, meaning that one can be predicted linearly from the other with a high degree of accuracy. This situation can cause problems in estimating predictor coefficients, resulting in unreliable and unstable results. (Ghozali, 2016).

**Table 3.** Multicollinearity Assumption Test

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Coefficients <sup>a</sup>		Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance VIF
1 (Constant)	.534	.469		1.138	.256	
Digital Marketing	.251	.042	.326	6.013	.000	.278 3.598

a. Dependent Variable: total y

Source: Primary data (Questionnaire) processed, 2024

Based on the table above, it can be seen that the independent variables in this study have a Variance Inflation Factor smaller than 10, so it can be said that there are no symptoms of multicollinearity between the independent variables in this study.

### Normality Test

The method used to test normality is to use the Kolmogorov Smirnov test on the residual value of the regression equation results. If the probability of the Kolmogorov Smirnov test results is greater than 0.05 then the normality assumption is met.

**Table 4.** Normality Assumption Test

Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z	Sig value.	Description
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2,859	0,194	Normal Spread
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Source: Primary data (Questionnaire) processed, 2022

Based on the normality test results in the table above, it is known that the significance value of the regression residuals formed is greater than the 5% real level.

### Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

The results of multiple linear regression analysis can be seen in the following table:

**Table 5.** Summary of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

		<b>Coefficients<sup>a</sup></b>			
		Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t
1	(Constant)	.642	.469		1.138
	Digital Marketing	.239	.042	.326	6.932

a. Dependent Variable: Y

Source: Primary data (Questionnaire) processed, 2024

The dependent variable in this regression is visiting intention (Y) while the independent variable is digital marketing (X1) The regression model based on the analysis results above is:

$$Y = 0.642 + 0.239X_1 + e$$

### Coefficient of determination

<b>Model Summary<sup>b</sup></b>				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.869 <sup>a</sup>	.856	.807	2.805

a. Predictors: (Constant), X1, X2, X3, X4

b. Dependent Variable: Y

Source: Primary data (Questionnaire) processed, 2024

Based on the table above, it can be seen that the R square value is 0.856, which means that the independent variables used in this study can affect the dependent variable by 85%, the remaining 15% is influenced by other variables not used in this study.

### CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that digital promotion has a significant influence on tourist engagement, visitation, and satisfaction in local tourist destinations. Using a quantitative approach through a survey of domestic tourists, it was found that social media, websites, digital advertising, and email marketing are important elements in attracting tourists' attention and building active interactions. The level of traveler engagement, such as



comments, content sharing, and clicks on advertisements, proved to be an early indicator of the effectiveness of digital promotions. In addition, strategically designed digital promotions increase traveler visitation rates to local destinations. Attractive visual campaigns and relevant information help potential travelers make the decision to visit a destination. Tourist satisfaction is also influenced by expectations formed from the quality of promotional content. Travelers who feel that the information and on-the-ground experience match what is promised through digital promotions tend to show high levels of satisfaction.

Overall, this study confirms the importance of integrating a structured and data-driven digital marketing strategy in tourism marketing. Local tourism destinations are advised to continuously improve the quality of digital content, leverage data analytics to understand tourist behavior, and adopt a personalized approach to create more relevant and engaging experiences. The results of this study provide practical contributions in improving the effectiveness of digital promotion and building long-term relationships with tourists.

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