

The Optimization of Digital Marketing Strategy for Tourist Destination in Ciliang Village, Pangandaran

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore how digital marketing, especially marketing through social media, can optimize tourism activities in areas that have potential but have not been fully developed through marketing. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with an interview method that focuses on Ciliang Village, Pangandaran Regency. This village has a strong tourist attraction, but still needs marketing optimization to be able to reach a wider tourism market. The results of the study indicate that the strategic use of social media can increase the effectiveness of promotions, attract more tourist visits, and build closer relationships with visitors. In addition, digital marketing also allows managers to optimize the resources they have in increasing the competitiveness of destinations. This study provides practical implications for practitioners in the tourism industry of the research locus, tourism practitioners in general and policy makers to be able to utilize social media as an effective, efficient, measurable and sustainable marketing tool to help improve marketing performance.

KEYWORDS: *digital marketing, marketing optimization, social media, tourist destination*

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the important sectors in the economy of a region, especially for areas that have rich natural and cultural potential. This natural and cultural potential includes the utilization of natural resources and human resources to be used as tourism. West Java Province is one of the areas that has this potential. With optimal management of natural and human resources, this area can attract tourists, both domestic and international (BPS Jawa Barat, 2025). The growth and potential of the tourism sector can be seen from the development of visiting tourists, one of the things that marks it is the development of hotels/lodgings and the development of other accommodation facilities. The Room Occupancy Rate (TPK) in West Java in December 2024 was recorded at 58.56% or an increase of 10.51 points compared to the TPK in November 2024 which was recorded at only 52.99% (BPS Jawa Barat, 2025). This marks the potential and growth of the tourism sector in West Java.

West Java Province on the island of Java, Indonesia, is one of the provinces that utilizes its southern coast which faces directly onto the Indian Ocean as a natural tourism destination (Rizal et al., 2020). In line with the potential and growth of tourism in West Java, Pangandaran Regency as the youngest regency with the nickname Hawaii van Java, which is located in the southern coastal area of West Java, is one of the areas that has great potential in terms of tourism. In 2023, there are 270 tourist attractions in Pangandaran Regency consisting of natural tourist attractions, artificial tourist attractions, and cultural tourist attractions (BPS Kabupaten Pangandaran, 2024). With its many tourist attractions, Pangandaran is often a destination for local and foreign tourists. According to BPS Pangandaran Regency data in 2024, the tourism potential of Pangandaran Regency is dominated by natural tourist attractions with a percentage of 64%, Cultural Tourist Attractions 27% and Artificial Tourist Attractions 9% which are spread across 10 Districts, Hamlets and Villages in Pangandaran Regency.

Tourism is one of the fields that supports the community's economy. Various studies have consistently shown that tourism is constructive in driving the economy in West Java (Hakim et al., 2021). Because of this, its management requires attention for sustainability and broad development. Tourism object managers need to implement several innovative strategies in an effort to create sustainable activities (Sulistyo, 2020; Q. Zhang C Negus, 2020). One strategy that can be applied is a marketing strategy, the goal is to attract tourists to visit. One of the marketing innovations that can be done in creating a sustainable business is by using digital as its main base. The use of digital media has many types, one of which is social media. Businesses around the world are increasingly leveraging the power of social media marketing to increase visibility, engage customers, and drive growth. Social media marketing offers a unique opportunity for businesses to create, communicate, and deliver value directly to their customers in real time, which drives customer relationships to be more dynamic and interactive (Nuseir et al., 2023; Purnomo, 2023). Using digital-based media for tourism marketing means maintaining the existence of tourist attractions so that they can continue to be known and visited by the public. The use of social media by tourists is one of the ways used in considering and determining the destination of the tourist trip they will take (Nuseir et al., 2023). This indicates that it is important to carry out marketing through social media for the sake of tourism sustainability.

The importance of marketing through social media also still needs attention in Ciliang Village. As an area with great tourism potential, Ciliang Village still experiences obstacles in terms of marketing. This marketing strategy can be a competitive advantage. Competitive advantage is obtained from unique resources and capabilities that are difficult for competitors to imitate (Gabajová et al., 2021; Karuppiah et al., 2023). Unfortunately, this competitive advantage still needs to be built and considered. The lack of effective promotional strategies and minimal use of digital media are some of the main obstacles faced. Digital media, currently, is not only a place for formal and official promotion from tourism providers. However, it becomes a tool and a container in building trust through tourist reviews. Due to the intangible nature of tourism products, viewers rely on reviews from reviewers, namely tourists, to evaluate tourism products and avoid uncertainty. Reviewer satisfaction, reflected in the rating, serves as a quantitative assessment of the product (Pashchenko et al., 2022). How tourists describe their tourism experiences has a significant impact on audience assessments, which can then influence the effectiveness of marketing efforts.

The lack of marketing and utilization of digital media has an impact on the implementation of tourism which is less effective in attracting tourists. Thus, this study aims to analyze the tourism potential of Ciliang Village and formulate an effective promotional strategy to increase tourist appeal, through digital marketing. With the results of this study, it is expected to provide a real contribution to the development of tourism in Ciliang Village, especially in terms of more effective and digital-based promotional strategies, and can be a reference for the development of similar tourist destinations in other areas.

METHODOLOGY

This research related to Optimizing Digital Marketing Strategy of Tourist Destinations in Ciliang Village, Pangandaran uses a qualitative design method to deeply understand the practices, obstacles, and potential for optimizing digital marketing strategies in Ciliang Village obtained from observation and interview data. The descriptive qualitative approach is considered appropriate because it allows researchers to explore complex social phenomena holistically, in a natural context, without manipulation of variables (Creswell, 2014). This approach is very effective in obtaining information from the perspective of tourists who are the target of tourism marketing, especially in digital marketing. This study adopts a specific approach to explore how optimizing competitive advantages through digital marketing can effectively improve marketing performance. Through digital marketing, tourism in Ciliang Village can optimize its tourism activities, so that more consumers or tourists can visit to see the beauty of Tanah Lot West Java and other tourist locations in Ciliang Village.

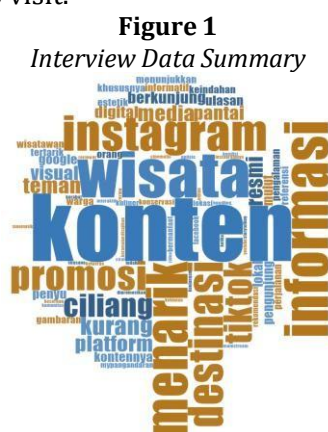
This research will focus on tourist destinations in Ciliang Village. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 Batu Hiu Beach tourists. Before conducting the interview, the researcher had

complied with the code of ethics by not forcing information and conducting the interview according to the consent of the informant.

In a more applied context, researchers also combine various methods and data sources to strengthen the validity of research findings. This is important to ensure the reliability, validity, and accuracy of the findings and provide a more holistic picture of the complex reality of the research subject. The research was conducted with various data collection, such as interviews, direct observation and documentation studies of published promotional content, such as social media content, or village websites. Interview data was then processed using NVIVO15 software with the aim of analyzing all data. Interview data was transcribed in a structured manner so that it could be accessed again, and facilitate data processing in a structured and systematic manner.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The overall data results were processed using NVIVO 15 to see the most discussed words by respondents, with a minimum of 5 letters. All words were made related, to see the urgency of the problem and the urgency of the discussion topic. From the entire data, the 5 most appropriate and actual words were taken that were in accordance with the discussion and urgency of the problem. The results showed that promotion through social media made in the form of content, provided information and attracted tourists to visit.



The word cloud image above displays the words that appear most often and are considered important by respondents, this applies in the context of digital marketing, especially through social media at tourist destinations in Ciliang Village. Words such as "Content", "Tourism", "Information", "Interesting", "Promotion", and "Instagram" show that respondents highly emphasize the importance of delivering interesting and relevant information through digital platforms, to increase the appeal and visits to local tourist destinations. In addition, the emergence of the words "Tiktok" and "visual" also indicates that video and visual-based content formats are considered effective in reaching a wider audience.

Table 1
Word Clouds Percentage Summary

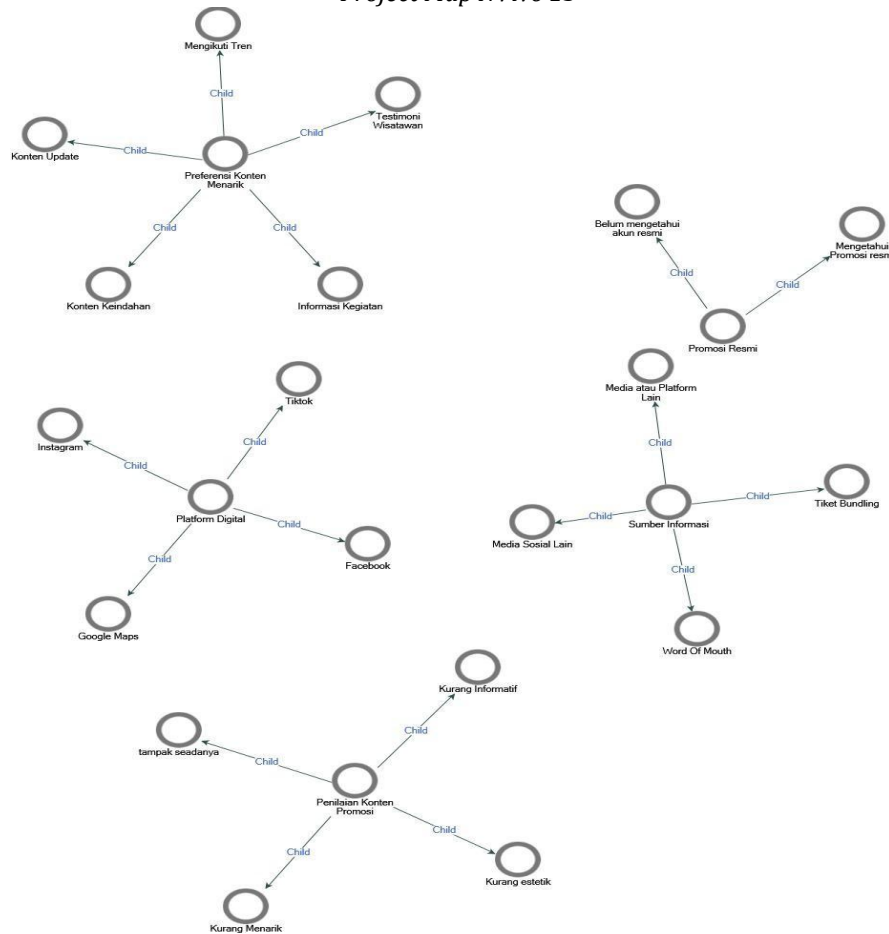
Word	Count	Percentage
Promotion	7	9,21
Destination	6	7,89
Content	5	6,58
Interesting	5	6,58
Media	4	5,26

Data Source: Data Processing

Based on Table 1, the five most frequently occurring words that are relevant to digital marketing strategies through social media are Promotion, Destination, Content, Interesting, and Media. The word Promotion has the highest frequency, indicating that promotional efforts are the main focus in delivering tourist destination information to tourists. Followed by the word Destination which represents tourist attractions as the center of the marketing strategy. Meanwhile, the words Content and Interesting emphasize the importance of presenting visual and narrative materials that can

captivate audiences on social media. Finally, the word Media refers to the platform used, where Instagram and TikTok are the most dominant social media used by tourists, indicating the great potential of both platforms in supporting the effectiveness of digital promotion.

Figure 2
Project Map NVivo 15



The project map was designed to provide a visualization of the relationship between the main themes that emerged from the interview data and to strengthen the results of the previous word cloud. This project map shows that preferences for interesting content such as tourist testimonials, activity information, and beauty content are key to attracting the interest of social media users. In addition, the mapping shows that digital platforms such as Instagram and TikTok are the main media used, reinforcing the importance of optimizing content on both platforms. Tourist information sources for finding out about tourist destinations in Ciliang Village are diverse, including official promotions and word of mouth, indicating that digital marketing strategies need to be integrated and through several platforms at once. Negative assessments of promotional content that has been carried out in Ciliang Village, considered less informative and aesthetic, are important notes in improving the visual and narrative strategies for promoting tourist destinations in Ciliang Village.

Table 2
Node then Child Node

Node	Child Node
Interesting Content Preferences	Updated content, Tourist testimonials, Aesthetic content, Activity information, Trend-following content
Utilization of Digital Platforms	Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, Google Maps
Official Promotion Accessibility	Know the official account, Don't know the official account, Other media or platforms
Resources	Word of mouth, Social media, Bundling tickets
Evaluation of Promotional Content	Less informative, Less aesthetic, Less interesting, Looks mediocre

Data Source: Data Processing

Based on the results of data processing using NVivo, five main themes were obtained that represent the digital marketing strategy of tourist destinations in Ciliang Village, namely preferences for interesting content, utilization of digital platforms, accessibility of official promotions, sources of information, and assessment of promotional content, this is described in table 2 which is connected to sub-themes based on the perspective of tourists.

Interesting Content Preferences

One of the main themes that emerged from the analysis results was the audience's preference for content that is visually appealing and relevant to their needs. "In my opinion, interesting content is content that displays the beauty of nature with eye-pleasing shots." (Respondent H), in another interview, respondents also said that regularly updated content, testimonials from previous tourists, and visualizations of the beauty of nature and activities at the location greatly influenced their interest. In addition, content that follows trends and presents information on activities is a special attraction on social media, the presence of information like this, fosters a sense of trust in tourists as consumers. Then, this creates consumer trust because they can see the product in more detail, thus increasing consumer trust in product quality; this can strengthen relationships with consumers, which has an impact on increasing sales (Tan et al., 2022; Voicu et al., 2023). These findings show that the success of digital campaigns in promoting tourist destinations such as Ciliang Village is highly dependent on the quality, visual appeal, and emotional connection of the content presented. This success can later support a close relationship with tourists as consumers.

Utilization of Digital Platforms

The interview results show that digital platforms also play an important role in disseminating information about tourist destinations in Ciliang Village. Respondents stated that social media such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube are the media most often used to search for tourist references. "The platforms I use to search for tourist destinations are usually Instagram and TikTok for visual content and short reviews, YouTube for travel vlogs, and TripAdvisor and Google Maps to see visitor reviews and ratings." (Respondent PN). The use of this digital platform is considered effective because it is able to present visual content that immediately attracts attention and is easy to share. The use of social media applications is considered effective in increasing the number of visits. This is beneficial because many internet users use the application (Chan et al., 2024). In addition, some respondents also rely on the location feature on Google Maps and reviews on Google Reviews as considerations before visiting a destination. Online reviews are recognized as an important source of information, which significantly influences consumer purchasing decisions (J. J. Zhang et al., 2024). This shows that the presence of a destination on various digital channels not only increases visibility, but also builds the trust of potential tourists through digital footprints and content that can be verified quickly and in real-time.

Official Promotion Accessibility

The analysis shows that there are still limitations in access to official promotions for the Ciliang Village tourist destination. Several respondents said that they had difficulty finding accounts, content, or official sites that provide official tourism information. "So far, I haven't often seen promotional content from Ciliang Village. It seems that if there is, it may not be very prominent or not viral." (Respondent P). This shows that the existence of official promotional channels for the Ciliang Village tourist destination has not been optimally managed. The lack of activity and information updates on official platforms is an obstacle to building trust and reaching potential tourists. Promotions that are carried out officially can describe the delivery of more relevant information, where in the use of digital technology today, it is necessary to consider trust in media, messages, and sources (Hakobyan, 2024).

Resources

The sources of information used by tourists to find out about destinations in Ciliang Village are very diverse. Most respondents obtain information through social media and recommendations from others. "I first learned about tourism in Ciliang Village, especially Batu Hiu Beach, from an invitation from a close friend." (Respondent H). This means that the source of information for tourists is

dominated by Word Of Mouth (WOM), Information obtained through WOM has indeed become a marketing tool that can influence the intentions of tourists as consumers. This is in line with other studies which state that among the factors that influence consumer intentions, word of mouth recommendations have the greatest impact, followed by perceived enjoyment, COVID-19 risk, attribution of responsibility, subjective norms, attitudes, and perceived behavioral control (Ju C Wang, 2025). In addition, videos on platforms such as YouTube and TikTok are also mentioned as primary references, especially because the content is easier to understand and visually appealing. This finding confirms that digital promotion strategies need to accommodate information consumption patterns that tend to be visual, fast, and based on direct experiences from fellow tourists. This is in line with the use of digital platforms utilized by tourists who show more use of information visually.

Evaluation of Promotional Content

Respondents gave varying assessments of the promotional content that had been carried out by tourist destinations in Ciliang Village. In this case, respondents highlighted the lack of consistency and practical information in the content. "After I found out that there was an official account, I felt that the content presented was still less interesting, not aesthetic, not inviting, and not well structured." (Respondent NA). Promotional content was considered to be more effective if it was able to present complete information, including directions, ticket prices, activity schedules, and available facilities "In my opinion, interesting and effective content for visiting a place is content that displays beautiful and attractive visuals, presents practical and relevant information, such as travel routes, facilities, and cost estimates, and has a narrative that can arouse curiosity or curiosity about the place. The combination of visual aesthetics and informative content is very important in attracting visitors' interest" (Respondent RH). From these results, it was found that creative marketing campaigns can attract the attention of new consumers in innovative ways (Mardatillah et al., 2024).

CONCLUSION

The conclusions of the findings of this study center on three main themes: increasing the effectiveness of promotion, strengthening the competitiveness of the destination, and improving relations with tourists. This study shows that digital marketing strategies, especially through social media such as Instagram and TikTok, have a significant role in shaping positive perceptions of tourists towards the Ciliang Village tourist destination. The findings also show that tourists' preferences for visually appealing, informative, and relevant content are the main factors in attracting interest in visits and building emotional attachment.

The study also highlights the importance of accessibility to official and structured promotional information. The limited ability to find official accounts or consistent promotional content indicates the need to improve the professional management of digital communication channels. By strategically leveraging the power of social media, destination managers can not only expand the reach of promotions but also strengthen relationships with potential tourists through deeper digital interactions. This is key to creating a positive pre-visit experience and building visitor loyalty.

Thus, digital marketing is not just a promotional tool, but also an important part of a sustainable destination development strategy. The results of this study provide practical recommendations for local tourism managers to improve the quality and continuity of digital content, as well as build a strong and trusted digital identity. Optimizing integrated digital marketing strategies is believed to be able to improve tourism performance, strengthen the position of destinations amidst competition, and encourage more inclusive and sustainable local economic growth.

This research provides academic and practical contributions in the field of digital-based tourism marketing, especially in the context of local tourist destinations such as Ciliang Village. Theoretically, this research enriches the understanding of how digital-based tourism marketing strategies *digital marketing* can play a role in shaping tourist perceptions and decisions, as well as strengthening the destination's position in a competitive market. With a qualitative approach and interview-based data analysis, this study also provides a holistic picture of the interaction between consumer preferences,

the effectiveness of digital content, and the use of social media platforms as a means of strategic communication. In practice, the results of this study provide direct implications for tourism managers, creative industry players, and local stakeholders in designing more relevant, attractive, and impactful promotional strategies.

Strengthening digital identity through quality visual content, utilizing tourist testimonials, and consistency of promotional information are important to increase tourist appeal and trust. In addition, this study opens up space for further studies that can examine the effectiveness of digital campaigns in the long term, explore the influence of social media algorithms on destination exposure, and develop promotional models based on collaboration between local communities, government, and tourism business actors. Future research is expected to be able to create digital marketing strategies that are not only adaptive to technological developments, but also responsive to the needs and behavior of tourists that continue to evolve.

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