

OPTIMIZING DIGITAL MARKETING TOWARDS VISITOR INTEREST IN THE AZIZI MOSQUE TANJUNG PURA RELIGIOUS TOURIST ATTRACTION BY THE LANGKAT TOURISM OFFICE

Octavia Devita Sari Ritonga^{1*}, Apriliani Lase²

^{1,2}Program Study Pariwisata Universitas Imelda Medan, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is how to display religious tourism information using digital marketing at the Langkat Tourism and Culture Department. This research uses qualitative descriptive. Data collection techniques use interviews, observation, documentation and literature study. The results of this research are that digital-based optimization can be utilized by tourist attraction managers as a breakthrough marketing strategy. The use of digital marketing tools and presenting interesting content can increase stimulation for tourists. The Langkat Regency Tourism and Culture Office and the local community are still less than optimal in optimizing the use of digital marketing as a media that is no longer foreign today. Increasing capabilities and skills as an effort to create sustainable tourism marketing in the future is very necessary. Partnerships between the academic world and business actors in community-based activities like this are very necessary and have received positive appreciation from program recipients so they need to continue to be fostered and improved.

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Corresponding Author:

*Octavia Devita Sari Ritonga

Program Studi Pariwisata Universitas Imelda Medan, Indonesia

Email: octaviadevitasari@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry is a sector that is worth considering to promote regional economic growth and development. Various research results have shown the correlation and contribution of tourism to improving the economy regions, or at least increasing the economic level of the tourist area community, because successful tourism, especially investment-intensive tourism, will be able to absorb the number of workers, increase the turnover and distribution of money in the tourist area, as well as improve the community's economy. Indonesia is one of the largest archipelagic countries in Indonesia. Based on data from the Directorate General of General Government, Ministry of Home Affairs published by the Central Statistics Agency, Indonesia has 17,504 islands spread across 32 provinces (before the expansion of North Kalimantan and West Sulawesi). However, most people

still don't know how many islands Indonesia has. The province with the most islands is the Riau Islands with 2,408 islands. Then followed by West Papua with 1,945 islands in second place and North Maluku with 1,474 islands in third position. Meanwhile, the province with the fewest islands is the Special Region of Yogyakarta with 19 islands and Jambi with 19 islands. The area of Indonesia reaches 1.91 million square km, stretching from Sabang to Merauke (Rahma, 2020). Especially now, Indonesia has many exotic and stunning destinations. Not only is natural tourism diverse, cultural and historical tourism in Indonesia is also no less interesting. The tourist attraction that is currently developing is a type of special interest tourist attraction. That is, entering into religious tourism destinations which provide a special attraction for tourists so that domestic destinations such as the Istiqlal Mosque and Cathedral Church in Jakarta are one of the largest mosques and churches in Southeast Asia, Borobudur is the largest Buddhist temple, Prambanan Temple and Ratu Boko Temple in Yogyakarta are most visited by tourists. Apart from that, there are also Annai Maria Velangkani Medan, Shri Mariamman Temple in the Little India area in Medan and Uluwatu Temple Bali which experienced significant improvements in 2022.

Religious tourism is often carried out by individuals or groups to holy places, to the tombs of great people or exalted leaders, to hills or mountains that are considered sacred, burial places of figures or leaders as magical people full of legends (Fatimah, 2015). Jackowski (2000) In Olsen and Timothy (2006) estimates that 240 million tourists per year travel religious tourism, with the majority being Christian, Muslim, and Hinduism. Travel with religious motivation and spiritual has spread widely and become popular in the last few decades, and is becoming important segment in international tourism, with very rapid growth in proportional amount. With improvements persistently, religious tourism has great potential as a tourism trend future (Olsen and Timothy, 2006). According to civil results regarding the development of adherents of the Islamic religion, it has increased to 1.7 billion adherents, according to data for 2022, the number of Muslims currently reaches 15% of the world's current population. (dataindonesia.id). The existence of Islamic religious tourist attractions certainly has a good influence on the economy of local communities at tourist attractions as well as cultural development and increasing religious knowledge for tourists who come.

Langkat is a district located in the province of North Sumatra, Indonesia. The capital city is Stabat. Langkat Regency consists of 23 sub-districts with an area of 6,273.29 km and a population of 1,030,202 people. The name Langkat is taken from the name of the Langkat Sultanate which once existed in what is now a small town called Tanjung Pura. (langkatkab.go.id). This area has quite good tourism development potential and has various dimensions, namely historical value, religious rituals and distinctive culture. There are many strategies that can be used to introduce, market or promote regional tourism potential. According to Gretzel et al., (2020) that technology plays an important role in the recovery of world tourism. Digital in tourism activities is one effort which is carried out to achieve 20 million foreign tourist visits in 2019 and encourage promotions in Indonesian tourism (Sihombing & Hariyanto, 2019). Current conditions force tourism industry players to market through digital marketing.

Digital marketing is a method that can be used to introduce, promote or sell the advantages of a company using digital media (Abdul Aziz, 2020) (Soelton et al., 2023). The application of digital-based marketing is an attractive way that tourist attraction managers can use to provide new experiences for tourists (Pratika & Sutikno, 2017). According to Chaffey & Chadwick (2019), digital marketing or digital marketing has almost the same meaning as electronic marketing (e-marketing), both of which describe the management and implementation of marketing using electronic media, so they finally conclude that digital marketing is the application of digital technology that forms online channels to the market in website media, e-mail, YouTube, Instagram, Facebook and other networks that contribute to marketing activities aimed at gaining profits and building and developing relationships with customers.

New knowledge about tourist attractions and stimulating motivation to visit is one of the goals of digital-based marketing activities (Remus-ion et al., 2018). Based on surveys conducted, digital marketing is very effective in informing and marketing a product for consumers, especially for generation y and generation z (Robinson & Schänzel, 2019). They represent an active generation

who wants to look for new things to gather the experiences they want to gain (Gotardi et al., 2015). The various experiences they gain will then be shared with friends and other people via their social media. This experience will be a motivation for other people to carry out similar activities and visit tourist attractions (Şchiopu et al., 2016). By accelerating technological development through digital marketing, it is hoped that it can trigger regional economic growth by optimally utilizing the potential of regional tourism products (Dethan & Komala, 2023).

Optimizing the use of digital marketing provides attractive visual effects for tourists who want to visit this tourist attraction, so that consumers can see the latest information about the products or services offered. However, it is realized that the Langkat Regency Tourism and Culture Department and the local community are still less than optimal in optimizing the use of digital marketing as a media that is no longer foreign at this time. What can be seen from the appearance of the Digital Marketing promotional media used by the Langkat Regency Tourism and Culture Office to promote and introduce religious tourism objects. Based on the problems related above so that it is more efficient, effective, planned and studied more deeply, the focus of this research is How does the religious tourism information presented in the Langkat Disparbud Digital Marketing look like?

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses descriptive qualitative. according to Sugiono (2019) concluded that qualitative research is naturalistic research because the research is carried out in natural conditions. It makes it easier for the researcher to obtain objective information in order to recognize and master the digital marketing promotion of religious tourism objects carried out by the Langkat Tourism and Culture Office. data collection techniques using interviews, observation, documentation and literature study.

The location of this research was carried out at the Langkat Tourism and Culture Office and the second research location was the Azizi Tanjung Pura Mosque. In this researcher use data analysis by describing or explaining phenomena with words or sentences, then the data is analyzed and conclusions are drawn. According to Sugiyono (2018: 482) explains that data analysis is the process of systematically searching for and supporting data obtained from interviews, field notes and documentation, by organizing data into categories, describing it into units, synthesizing it, compiling it into patterns, choosing what is important and what to study, and making conclusions so that they are easy to understand by yourself and others. According to Miles and Huberman (in Sugiyono's Book, 2018: 246) state that there are three activities carried out in analyzing data, namely Data Reduction, Data Presentation and Conclusion Drawing.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A Analysis of Tourist Responses to Digital Marketing owned by the Langkat Tourism Office

A tourist is a person or tourist who travels for recreational purposes and to fulfill their personal needs. In a tourist attraction, tourist response is the most important part of a tourist attraction, this aims to achieve growth in the business they are running. Apart from that, through tourist responses, tourist attractions can find out what aspects the tourist attraction needs to improve regarding the products or services they offer to tourists. Whether the response is negative or positive, this is very important for business people to evaluate the tourist attraction. Digital Marketing of the Langkat Tourism Department has a very important role and is needed by potential tourists, but the information obtained is only an explanation of the tourist objects managed by the Langkat Tourism Department. Based on this, it can be analyzed that the information contained in the Digital Marketing of the Langkat Tourism Office is not optimal, so the information really influences tourists' assessments of Digital Marketing. Digital content can also attract tourists to visit and grow the community's economy. Visual objects will attract tourists who increasingly want to visit. The role of digital helps managers to analyze travelers and make decisions based on information obtained from tourists directly so community involvement is needed in efforts to implement digital marketing (Oka

& Darmayanti 2021;) For adoption of digital marketing, it is important for managers to understand digital market developments, and how technology greatly influences business development. The Azizi Mosque tourist attraction requires continuous development efforts, and it is hoped that this will improve the facilities and attractions it has and be able to compete with other tourist destinations, both in terms of services, facilities and digital marketing information services that can attract the attention of tourists with the products offered.

B Analysis of the Obstacles Faced When Carrying Out Digital Marketing Promotions by the Langkat Tourism Office

According to Manafe, Setyorini, and Alang (2016) Media in tourism promotion plays an important role in conveying information to tourists. planning and selecting media in promotional activities are important aspects so that promotional activities produce the expected results. The tourism department has several social media, namely Facebook and Instagram, to market and promote tourism products. Apart from marketing and promoting Langkat tourism, the tourism agency's social media also explains about information about Masjid Azizi such as the customs and culture of the surrounding community, superior foods that are much sought after by people the people there, as well as immortalizing tour activities carried out by tourists. In accordance with research by Hadi & Zakiah (2021) and Saifuddin (2021) which states that digital marketing is an effective strategy to attract consumers. The benefits obtained are not only limited to a place to promote products and the completeness of the information obtained, but also make it possible to expand more interactive information, creating awareness of the products offered.

The promotions carried out through digital marketing are no longer something strange in the current digital era, because digital marketing is considered a medium that is quite effective in increasing brand awareness within the business being run. However, there are also several obstacles that often occur in implementing digital marketing techniques themselves. This obstacle should be known from the start so that it can be anticipated later. The obstacles that often occur are: Failure to understand digital marketing, the slow digital marketing internet network which requires an internet network to access it is sometimes a problem in itself. There is no one to manage digital marketing. Very often the job of managing digital marketing is considered trivial so that in the end there is no special person to handle it and the data is not up to date. As a result of interviews conducted by tourism service employees, there are several obstacles they face, such as the unstable internet network when they are at a tourist attraction, which makes them unable to immediately update events when they are at the tourist attraction. So this becomes an obstacle they face when they are there. in tourist attractions where the internet network is unstable, therefore it is their duty to minimize these obstacles.

C Lack of updating information on digital marketing at the Langkat Tourism Office

The Digital Marketing, should be certain time period to change the information that the company presents in Digital Marketing because this affects tourists who visit the company's Digital Marketing. To find out the time period used by the company in presenting information through the company's Digital Marketing, here are the responses of tourism promotion and marketing section employees regarding the time period for updating the information presented through Digital Marketing:

"We don't have a certain time period for updating the information presented in the digital marketing that we manage, because we still rarely carry out promotions through Digital Marketing because we don't have a creative team specifically managing digital marketing."

From the statement of the tourism promotion and marketing section employee of the Langkat Tourism Service, it can be seen that the Langkat Tourism Department does not have a time period to update the content contained in the Langkat Tourism Department's Digital Marketing, because they still rarely carry out promotions through Digital Marketing. Updating the content in

Digital Marketing is very necessary when changes occur in general information or regarding the company profile and regarding the conditions or types of products that will be offered to customers. According to good information theory, information is provided at the right time and is not out of date.

Based on the responses above, it can be analyzed that the information contained in the Digital Marketing of the Langkat Tourism Office is still not optimal because the information displayed is not updated enough because there is no schedule for regularly updating information on digital marketing. The regional government is expected to be able to plan tourism development and market existing tourist attractions, especially in Langkat Regency, due to the lack of updated information regarding tourism in this area, a good promotional strategy is needed so that the vision and mission of regional tourism can be realized.

D The Role of Digital Marketing in Conveying Information to Tourists

"The role of digital marketing as a medium for disseminating information has a very important role at this time. "Because with social media, everyone can access information quickly, easily and can do it anywhere and at any time." From the statement of the tourism promotion and marketing section employee, it can be seen that the Langkat Tourism Office stated that digital marketing has a very important role in conveying information, because through digital marketing the delivery of information can be quickly received by tourists and is very effective and can be accessed anywhere and anytime. . According to social media theory, it is an information system in the form of (text, images, sound, video, etc.).

Based on the data above, it can be analyzed that digital marketing has a very important role in conveying information at the Langkat Tourism and Culture Department because through digital marketing everyone can access information quickly, easily and can be done anywhere.

E Socialization carried out by the Langkat Tourism Department to attract tourist interest

One of the company's activities in providing information to the public to gain public support and trust is media relations activities. Media relations is a public relations communication or socialization activity to establish understanding and good relations with the mass media in order to achieve publication optimal and balanced organization (Wardhani, 2008). The role and function of public relations is very necessary. This aims to ensure that the public continues to know and feel about the existence of the tourism object.

The author received information that the outreach carried out by the Langkat Tourism Department to attract tourists to visit was the Azizi Festival Event. The following are the responses of tourism culture section employees to the socialization they carry out to attract tourists to visit:

"The last socialization was carried out by the Langkat Tourism and Culture Department in 2020. Namely, the socialization carried out was by holding the Azizi festival which was located at the Azizi Langkat Mosque with the aim of introducing the public to the glory of the Langkat Sultanate during its time as proof of this is the Azizi Mosque building."

From the statement of the tourism culture section employee, it can be seen that apart from carrying out promotions through digital marketing and conventional promotions, the Langkat Tourism Office also carries out outreach to increase tourist visits to the Azizi Mosque, namely by holding the Azizi festival which is located at the Azizi Langkat Mosque. In preserving tourist attractions, of course you need the help of the community who participates in preserving these places. In preserving the Azizi Mosque, local residents are quite concerned about the Azizi Mosque, as residents often pray in congregation at the Azizi Mosque. Residents are busy with their own activities so only a few residents sometimes have time to help if there are activities such as mutual cooperation for cleaning. "But for now the cleanliness problem has been managed by BKM, apart from that, the sultan's heirs have also paid dues for this problem. Innovation is needed such as promotion through social media and creativity in carrying out tourism promotions so that various tourism advantages can be highlighted and able to attract more tourists to visit the Azizi Mosque

and should be to foster effective communication such as carrying out continuous evaluations between parties related to the tourism sector, especially tourism business actors.

4. CONCLUSION

The Azizi Mosque has the potential to be a tourist attraction and could become a favorite destination to visit. Langkat tourism has excellent potential, namely historical tourism. Digital-based optimization can be used by tourist attraction managers as a breakthrough marketing strategy. Using digital marketing tools and presenting interesting content can increase stimulation for tourists. Improving abilities and skills as an effort to create sustainable tourism marketing in the future is very much needed. Partnerships between the academic world and business actors in community-based activities like this are very necessary and have received positive appreciation from program recipients so they need to continue to be fostered and improved.

Based on the research results, the researcher recommends that the Tourism Department take steps to increase the use of digital marketing. The optimizing digital marketing on tourist interest in visiting the Azizi Mosque tourist attraction, the researchers found that there were stages in digital marketing that also determine the results of selecting digital media platforms, content planning, and content production. Creating awareness, paying attention to update patterns, caption writing strategies, and interactions with followers. The lack of awareness from the public, especially the managers, and the government at tourist attractions regarding the importance of digital marketing, can bring many visitors to the Azizi Mosque tourist attraction. Especially the government tourism service is not fast enough in implementing digital media and there has been no serious effort in educating residents to understand digital media.

In this research, it is also hoped that the government can synergize with the community or management and support digital marketing which has not been actively involved as a forum for increasing progress at the Azizi Mosque tourist attraction. Maintaining cooperation between stakeholders in the tourism sector and management in order to disseminate tourism information through digital marketing with an image that is well maintained in conveying the information. Langkat tourism government and related tourism agencies can build, provide interesting and accurate and fast information in digital tourism, beautiful information about the Azizi Mosque tourist attraction that tourists can enjoy when visiting the area

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