



# Tourism Business and Creative Economy: The Post Pandemic Recovery Efforts Through Online Platform Case Study in Kupang City

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**Abstract**—The pandemic has had a negative impact on all sectors including business, especially tourism industry and creative economy sector. Recovery efforts are needed for managers of tourism business units and the creative economy by using application of online platform for marketing tourism products. However, the effectiveness of online platform is not yet measured. Currently, the majority of consumers are starting to engage to online platforms and it leads opportunity for the tourism and creative economy business units to revive their businesses. This research used qualitative research through a research instrument approach, namely interview guidelines conducted on the manager of the tourism business unit in Kupang City. The result of this research shows that about 460 tourism business in Kupang City have the same negative impact due to COVID-19 outbreak. However, they learn how to operate online platform such as Instagram, facebook, website, and marketplace such as shopee, Lazada, and Tokopedia to survive in pandemic situation.

**Keywords:** *Tourism Business; Creative Economy; COVID-19 Pandemic; Online Platform*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry, which consists of tourism businesses and the creative economy, was reported as the sector most affected during the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic that has lasted for more than 2 years since first entering Indonesia in 2020 until the beginning of 2022 has had a negative impact on all sectors including business, especially tourism and the creative economy.

Based on data from the *Satuan Angkatan Kerja Nasional* (SAKERNAS), before the pandemic, the number of workers absorbed in the tourism industry continued to increase. This shows that the tourism industry is one of the potential areas to reduce the unemployment rate in a region (Anggarini, 2021). There are several institutions that have recorded a decrease in the number of tourist visits. First, BPS stated that the number

of foreign tourist arrivals in February 2020 decreased by more than 30.42%, UNWTO even reported that 80% of SMEs and thousands of workers lost their livelihoods (Solemede, et al. 2020). Furthermore, the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy also issued similar data describing the decline in the number of tourist visits. During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the number of tourist visits decreased drastically, it was reported that in August 2020 the number of tourist visits was 163,185 or equivalent to a decrease of 89.22% compared to the same month the previous year with 1,530,268 visits. The data describes the condition of the Indonesian Tourism Industry which is experiencing a slump. Additionally, tourism business and the creative economy take various forms, some of which are classified as sub-sectors of the creative economy, namely design services, craft, fashion, and film. In addition, the tourism business according to Indonesian Law No. 10 of 2009 also states that apart from hotels and travel businesses, there is also a souvenir business.

East Nusa Tenggara Province is one of the priority destinations for tourism development, especially in Labuan Bajo which is a super-premium tourist destination (Akhrani, et al. 2021). With the pinning of super premium destinations in Labuan Bajo, in general NTT is a location where tourism is growing and becomes a business field for tourism actors. Along after developing, many tourism businesses and the creative economy emerged in East Nusa Tenggara Province, as in previous research it was stated that NTT's creative economy focuses on the weaving industry and also the culinary industry that contributes to the economic development of NTT. However, this development has decreased due to the COVID-19 pandemic which has prevented tourists from visiting NTT directly. Therefore, many business actors suffer losses and their businesses do not develop because of decreased sales or even no sales at all. One example is the Kupang City Weaving Ikat SMEs which experienced a decline in turnover of 85% compared to the month before the COVID-19 pandemic. The absence of MICE implementation, aircraft cancellations, and

PSBB further aggravated the condition of MSMEs and the Tourism Business in NTT during the pandemic.

Facing this, the tourism industry must be able to adapt to the situation, one of which is by relying on online marketing media, (Atiko, et al 2016). Online marketing has begun to be chosen by tourists, which indicates that tourists tend to prefer online marketing (Pitanatri, et al. 2016). Online marketing is the key to increasing and restoring tourist visits (Puspawati, et al. 2018). However, in practice, not all tourism businesses and the creative economy of Kupang City have started using online platforms as an alternative opportunity to market businesses to generate post-pandemic businesses. Therefore, this study aims to: (1) determine the characteristics of the tourism business and the creative economy affected by the pandemic; (2) Reviewing the impact of the pandemic on the tourism business unit; (3) Analyzing the survival efforts of the tourism business unit managers; (4) Feasibility study of the use of online platforms for managers of tourism business units and the creative economy.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Creative Economy in Tourism

The creative economy contributes to GDP by 7.2% and to exports by 9%. Creative industries are also able to absorb a workforce of around  $\pm$  7.5 million people (Statistics Indonesia and Global Business Guide, 2011). Some of the scopes of the creative economy that are often carried out are: (1). Fashion, (2) Crafts, (3) Advertising, (4) Design, (5) Architecture, (6) Broadcasting, (7) Publishing, (8) Music, (9) Software Development. Creative economy sector is essential and become one of purpose of Indonesia Development 2025. (Saksono, 2012).

Creative economy sector is important to empower the community in rural area. The home industry both carried out by individuals and local community has been quite successful in the creative economy (Hasan, 2018). Studies on the creative economy show that this business can increase people's income, increase job opportunities, and improve people's living standards. Some of the most successful creative economy businesses and are in demand by the public are the culinary field, the second is the fashion field, and the third is the craft sector (Daulay, 2018 in Habib, 2021).

The United Kingdom (UK) government provides a definition of the creative industry as: "*The development and discovery of intellectual property and content has the potential to create income and jobs in those businesses that have their roots in individual creativity, skill, and talent. through the development and application of the individual's creative and creative capacity, welfare and employment.*" (Creative Industries Mapping Document, DCMS, 2001).

### B. The Impact of the Pandemic on Tourism

Khan et al., (2020) who carried out a review of 15 publications from various publications and reports covering studies on related topics to determine how Covid-19 affected the Chinese economy. The study's findings showed that due to Covid-19, which was followed by Wuhan City's lockdown policy and other cities and provinces' quarantines, many community activities, including those involving students, workers in public spaces, manufacturing, land transportation,

and flight routes, as well as those involving the banking, financial, and export-import sectors, had been reduced or even stopped.

Baldwin et al., (2020) discovered a pattern that the Covid-19 pandemic, which began with the lock down incident in the city of Wuhan and was associated with a number of reported events, had a detrimental effect on news and business interactions for local residents and networks in the city of Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, as well as when the virus spread throughout the world. China's mainland. Likewise, Baldwin et al., (2020) noted that Covid-19 is connected to the economic value chain, its further development will not only have a detrimental influence on the regions and nations already afflicted by Covid-19, but will also have an additional impact on other nations. When the virus spreads out of mainland China (Mainland China), the effects are even more widespread. Particularly when victimized nations continue to expand, particularly economically powerful nations like China, the United States, Germany, Italy, Japan, and South Korea. According to Koshle, et al. (2020), who studied the Corona virus' effects on Indian firms, the trade sector suffered losses totaling at least USD 348 million as a result of the policy fallout and slowdown in the economy.

### C. Business Innovation in Online Platform

The main reason of contraction in economy exchange between business units is the declining transactions. Some business models, such as MSMEs that switch production to health products like masks and hand sanitizers, are considered to be relatively resilient and able to grow in the COVID-19 pandemic conditions. This is seen as being in line with efforts to gain a competitive advantage through product innovation and orientation to the dynamics of market needs and wants Alwi et al., (2018). In the business world, interaction can take the form of a B2B (Business to Business) model, where transactions take place between business people, a B2C (Business to Consumer) model, where producers conduct business directly with consumers, a C2C (Consumer to Consumer) model, where consumers (individuals) conduct business directly with other consumers, or a C2B (Consumer to Business) model, where consumers (individuals) create a business (Sandhusen, 2008).

This research brings newness to the practical realm of implementing online platforms in helping to increase the volume of tourism product business. As explained in the background, where online marketing is a key way to adapt and adjust to consumer demand in this case tourists (Atiko, et al., 2016; Pitanatri et al., 2016). The business units that are the subject of research in this study are entrepreneurs who are specialized in tourism such as ikat weaving, traditional food, tour package businesses, and local accommodation. Identifying the use of online platforms in the tourism creative economy business is one of the novelties in this research which will be investigated comprehensively starting from the selection of online marketing types to the online marketing process carried out. Some examples of online platforms that are most often used are websites, search engine marketing, online advertising, email marketing, and social media marketing.

### III. METHODOLOGY

This study has several methods carried out ranging from types to research techniques. This type of research is qualitative, where this research seeks to understand the meaning of an event or situation according to the researcher's own perspective and prioritizes appreciation. Qualitative research seeks to understand the object being studied in depth. The data collected in qualitative research is called informants who were developed using the snowball method starting when looking for initial information to developing and continuing with purposive with a specific purpose until the data collected is considered satisfactory (Gunawan, 2013).

The data collection technique in this study is participatory observation, namely the manager of the business unit providing information to researchers about the ongoing phenomena related to the impact of the pandemic and efforts to maintain business by utilizing online platforms during the pandemic. The second technique used in this research is interviews and the third technique is documentation according to interview guidelines and available documentation tools. Data analysis techniques in this study are: data collection, data display, triangulation, data reduction, and drawing conclusions.

The research subjects were selected with an informant selection technique, namely snowball sampling with the aim of obtaining accurate information about the tourism business and creative economy business units that were affected by the pandemic and still persisted with the use of online platforms. In addition, using snowball sampling will make it easier for researchers to obtain further information in order to develop research results regarding efforts to revive tourism businesses affected by the pandemic, especially using online platforms. In addition to snowball, this research also uses purposive sampling to achieve the objectives of this study. The purposive technique in this study requires 460 tourism ventures in Kupang City.

The research instrument in this study was the researcher himself, considering that this study used a qualitative type of research. In addition, other important instruments in the research are observation guidelines, interview guidelines, and supporting devices in the form of writing instruments, voice recorders, and cameras. Data analysis techniques in this study used data collection, display data, triangulation, data reduction, and drawing conclusions. Triangulation is an analytical technique that is added to purify data on several sources to obtain more valid interview results.

### IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### A. Characteristics of Tourism Business and Creative Economy in Kupang City

This study focuses on analyzing the recovery efforts of the tourism business by using an online platform that is believed to be able to revive economic conditions that have long been sluggish due to the pandemic. In this study, referring to the Indonesia Tourism Law Number 10 of 2009 which states that there are 13 tourism business fields, namely: 1) tourist attractions, 2) tourism areas, 3) tourism transportation services, 4) travel services, 5) tourism services. food and beverages, 6) providing accommodation, 7) organizing entertainment and

recreational activities, 8) organizing meetings, incentive trips, conferences, and exhibitions, 9) tourism information services, 10) tourism consulting services, 11) tour guide services, 12) marine tourism, and 13) spa. This research initially had a research limitation, namely by involving 10 tourism business owners in Kupang City, but in the process of finding information and collecting data, this study was able to collect data from a number of 460 tourism business units in the service industry such as restaurants, spas, accommodation providers, owners of entertainment venues, and creative economic services in the form of ikat and souvenirs that support tourism activities in Kupang City. Based on the results obtained, the tourism business units are classified based on the information they want to obtain, namely regarding the field of business, legality permits owned, average number of sales per week, number of workers, and how to market products, which in detail can be seen as follows:

Table 1. Creative Economy Characteristics

No	Unit Business Classification	Total	Percentages
1	Culinary	265	58%
2	Fashion	35	8%
3	Product Design dan Interior, Architect	46	11%
4	Performing Art, Music, and Entertainment	20	4%
5	Publisher and Advertisement	10	2%
7	Photography	23	5%
8	Souvenir	39	8%
9	Application Developer, Animation	22	5%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>460</b>	<b>100%</b>

Data obtained from Tourism Government, 2022

#### a) Business Field

Of the several tourism business sectors mentioned, the culinary sector dominates the business characteristics equal to 58%, followed by design services business by 11%. Subsequently, fashion and souvenirs business come after with 8% percentages respectively. The participation of tourism business owners in this study shows that the tourism business in Kupang City has a high concern for the topic of research, namely to provide information about the impacts that occur on each tourism business and find out recovery efforts, especially through online platforms. As the most dominant business sector, the culinary sector, was the business sector that experienced the worst downturn during the pandemic. This was conveyed in a focused interview during a discussion session with the informants.

#### b) Legality permit

Referring to the results of interviews with each informant, 100% of tourism MSME business actors in Kupang City already have a business license with the issuance of the legality of the NIB (Enterprise Identification Number). This is a natural thing because this study uses limitations, namely the informants interviewed are informants who come from the guidance of the Kupang City Tourism Office, making it easier for research to find out the legality of business permits for tourism business people. In addition, 80% of businesses have P-IRT, 20% IUMK, 19% HO, and 40% Halal Certification. According to the informant's confession, the current business license management tends to be safe, but at first the legality permit process was very difficult and tiered. Sometimes this causes the number of MSMEs to be difficult to grow due to complicated procedures, high costs and lack of information.

c) Average number of sales per week

During the pandemic, almost all MSMEs and business managers admitted that they did not have a definite income. Once in a day the business manager did not get any income at all. Especially from culinary services, where during the COVID-19 social restrictions, the number of guests decreased drastically to 0 visits for several days. The business units' managers reveals that they change the business strategy by providing take away services instead of dine in services. Sales of souvenirs and food have also decreased, but with the use of online platforms, sales in these two business fields tend to survive and generate sales of a number of production costs and are sufficient to support operational activities.

d) Number of workers

As many as 80% of MSME actors and tourism business unit managers recruit workers from their own families. So that business unit managers can make efficiency in labor operational costs. Especially during the pandemic, where the number of production and sales decreased drastically because there was no human movement. This causes the number of workers recruited to average 5 people per business unit, except for the hotel business which is a large-scale business so that it can recruit up to 100 workers. However, most of the informants in this study were MSMEs, so the number of workers tended to be small, namely 5-10 workers per business unit.

e) How to market the product

Product marketing depends on the type of business being carried out. In the culinary sectors business, more marketing is carried out professionally using sales personnel and online platforms so that product marketing has been transformed into digital. Product marketing is carried out by utilizing online services such as google reviews but still actively uses a word-of-mouth approach to reach consumers. In contrast to spas and food and beverage businesses that still use manual efforts, so during a pandemic these businesses seek to transform using digital marketing even though they still have difficulty using it. Previously conventional marketing also used word of mouth as the most effective method when searching for customers.

## B. Reviewing the impact of the pandemic on the tourism business unit

Based on the results of the Katadata Insight Center (KIC) survey conducted on 460 tourism MSME actors, the majority of MSMEs of 82.9% felt the negative impact of this pandemic and only 5.9% experienced positive growth. The KIC survey also reveals that MSMEs are working hard to keep their current business circumstances. They implement a variety of efficiency methods, including cutting back on production of goods and services, staffing levels, working hours, and sales and marketing channels. However, some MSMEs choose the opposite method as part of their survival plan, namely adding marketing channels (Katadata.co.id, 2020). According to survey data from a number of organizations, including BPS, BAPPENAS, and the World Bank, many MSMEs are currently having trouble repaying loans, as well as paying for gas, electricity, and employee salaries. Even some of them had to make layoffs.

Obtaining raw materials, financing, dwindling client demand, distribution and production delays are a few more

challenges MSMEs face. Due to activity limits, corporate actors must also anticipate changes in consumer behavior and the business competition. Because of digital technology, consumers spend more time at home. Meanwhile, four business traits—hygiene, low-touch, less crowding, and low-mobility—are indicative of changes in the industrial landscape and new competitors (CNBC Indonesia, 28 April 2021).

It is clear that the lower middle class, which has been severely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, makes up the majority of MSMEs. Businesses that can adapt to these four traits will succeed in the pandemic era. MSMEs must innovate in order to produce goods and services that meet the needs of the market. Due to the pandemic's effects, business actors can also create a variety of new company concepts and concepts that can help with alleviating the socioeconomic issues in the community. However, the MSME sector's business activity and development prospects typically improve in the first quarter of 2021. The expansion of MSMEs is a sign that the nation's economy, which was suffering from the Covid-19 pandemic, is on the mend. The Business Activity Index (IAB), the Business Activity Expectation Index (IEAB), and the Business Sentiment Index (ISB) all showed considerable increases as of the first quarter of this year compared to the fourth quarter of 2020, according to the most recent BRI Micro & SME Index (BMSI). The research shows an increase in BMSI to 93.0 from the previous 81.5 in the fourth quarter of 2020. The optimism reflected in the research results is caused by several things. First, the increase in community activity because the number of new infections and active cases of Covid-19 continues to decline amid the increasingly widespread vaccination program. Second, the increase in the production of goods to meet the needs of the community caused by major holidays such as Chinese New Year and Eid al-Fitr. Third, the harvest season in a number of areas which pushed up commodity prices. Fourth, relaxation from the government to property sector entrepreneurs and relaxation of new home purchases.

## C. Analyzing the survival efforts of the tourism business unit managers

One of the important solutions for the recovery of MSMEs in the tourism business is incentives for MSMEs through the central government's National Economic Recovery (PEN) program in 2020 and continued in 2021. As for these sectors, namely health of IDR 24.90 trillion or 14.2% of the IDR 175.22 trillion ceiling, social protection absorbed by IDR 56.79 trillion or 37.8% of the IDR 150.28 trillion ceiling, priority programs of IDR 21.8 trillion. or 17.6% of the Rp123.67 trillion ceiling, support for MSMEs and corporations of Rp42.03 trillion or 21.7% of the Rp193.53 trillion ceiling, and business incentives of Rp26.83 trillion or 47.3% of the Rp56.72 trillion ceiling.

In the distribution of PEN funds or MSME support in particular, the government must ensure that the support funds can be distributed quickly and on target. The problem faced today is the lack of integration of existing MSME data. In addition, the MSME support scheme through interest subsidies for people's business loans (KUR) also needs more attention considering that there are still many MSMEs that are still untouched by banking services. Until May 11, 2021, it was recorded that the realization of the distribution of assistance for

the Family Hope Program (PKH) was Rp. 13.83 trillion or 48.19% of the Rp. 28.71 trillion budgets. Then, the realization of basic food cards reached Rp. 17.24 trillion or 38.20% of the Rp. 45.12 trillion budgets. Then, the realization of the distribution of cash social assistance (BST) reached Rp11.81 trillion or 98.39% of the Rp12.0 trillion budget and the village fund direct cash assistance (BLT) program reached Rp2.51 trillion or 17.41% of the Rp14 budget. 4 trillion (Media Indonesia, 18 May 2021). Meanwhile, specifically for the MSME Support program, Rp40.23 trillion or 20.8% of the Rp191.13 trillion ceiling has been realized. The realization for the Banpres program for Productive Micro Enterprises (BPUM) was Rp. 12.8 trillion or 88.11% of the ceiling of 15.36 trillion (Kemenkeu, 6 May 2021). The government also continues to encourage MSME actors to go on board to digital platforms through the Proudly Made in Indonesia National Movement Program (Gernas BBI), where by the end of 2020 there have been 11.7 million MSMEs on board.

Acceleration of vaccination is also encouraged to restore confidence in public consumption, including for employees and SMEs throughout Indonesia. Vaccinations have been and will be given free of charge to achieve herd immunity from 181.55 million people (kemenkeu.go.id, 6 May 2021). However, the funding for the Mutual Cooperation Vaccination program is borne by legal entities or business entities that can afford it. However, the MSME association stated that the ability of MSME companies to participate in the Mutual Cooperation Vaccination program was far below the nominal set by the Government and considered the price set by the government to be too expensive (Bisnis Indonesia, 17 May 2021). This has the potential to make many companies, especially MSMEs reluctant to participate in the program so that the acceleration of vaccination implementation is hampered. In relation to this problem, the government should consider providing special subsidies for the Mutual Cooperation Vaccination program for business entities that cannot afford it. In addition, the government will support the Hotel, Restaurant, Cafe (HOREKA) sector through credit restructuring and credit guarantees.

Without holding, the movement of these three state companies in developing MSMEs and micro-enterprises will run independently (Beritasatu, 7 May 2021). The establishment of an ultra-micro SOE holding is expected to ensure the creation of micro-credit financing disbursements more focused, with lower interest rates, and easy and able to reach many potential customers. The expected benefits will be able to support MSME players to get a wider market and marketing opportunities than before. With this SOE holding, it is also expected to be able to overcome the problem of MSME data which is currently still not integrated.

D. Utilization of online platforms for managers of tourism business units and the creative economy.

This study seeks to analyze the online platforms of choice for MSMEs and tourism businesses that are most often used and can help restore business during the pandemic. There are several choices of online platforms that are favorites for managers of tourism business units in Kupang City. The selection of this online platform is adjusted to the capabilities

of each business unit manager. Because each business unit has different experience in human resources and different financial and capital conditions.

There are several online platforms chosen by 460 tourism business management units, namely websites and several market places such as (Shopee, Lazada, Tokopedia). At the beginning of using the online platform, the majority of business unit managers handed over the business to human resources who were able to do graphic design to create business labels. Making a business label is one part of the product in the form of information, both pictures and words that function as a source of product and seller information. The label is part of a product that conveys information about the product and the seller. Labels are not only a means of conveying information, but also function as advertising and branding of a product.

The first platform that is most in demand by managers of tourism business units is Instagram. Instagram is a photo and video sharing application that can be downloaded for all smartphone-based mobile phone users. This Instagram social media has several features and appearances that have attractive advantages for its users. This application makes it very easy for MSMEs and tourism business unit managers to share photos and videos with their followers. Photos and videos can also be added with product descriptions so that MSME products are attractive and in demand. In addition, the Instagram feature has services to create video and photo content and display hashtags, namely as a category marker for a photo or photo. During the pandemic, the Instagram account of the tourism management business unit is always active and makes pick-up and drop-off sales by actively offering personalized products to help clients solve their problems, such as spa treatments at home, food and drinks delivered to their homes, and others. Marketing using Instagram still persists until the post-pandemic so that the business continues even though the number of product requests is not as much as before the pandemic.

The second is Facebook which is one of the postmodern containers in daily life that we can see is social media in the form of Facebook. The more Facebook users, the more people are getting to know the virtual world through the internet. No matter old or young, almost everyone from various backgrounds and backgrounds has this social networking account. Facebook is one of the trusted means of communication, where we don't need to send letters and wait for a reply to find out how our relatives are far out of town. Facebook is arguably more sophisticated than messenger. The use of Facebook in marketing products during the pandemic is quite strong because there are so many Facebook users in Kupang City. By offering vacation packages or spa packages, people can know that the tourism business unit is still operating during the pandemic.

The third online platform is through website creation. This website that was built provides wider information to the public about the profile and product content of SMEs. In addition, the website promotes various available products and updates information on news and activities carried out by the manager of the tourism business unit. For example, a hotel business that always promotes its products through hotels and bookings through the website to reduce contact with employees and provide a contactless experience.

Making Market Places At this time of the Covid-19 pandemic, all people are required to stay at home. With the existence of e-commerce marketing through market places in buying and selling online to make it easier for sellers and buyers to make transactions online, the public or consumers do not have to leave the house to transact or buy products, just transact online, this research activity has produced several market places. namely Shopee, Lazada and Tokopedia so that it can make it easier for MSMEs to sell their products. The following are the market places used by MSMEs:

1. Shopee The advantage of using a Shopee account is that it can be accessed only by using a cellphone and is very socially oriented. Sellers care about their store's reputation and how to gather customers, so that shoppers have a better shopping experience. No commission fees, no registration fees, but sellers can buy paid ads at their own pace

2. Lazada. people have the desire to buy the product. Target Lazada customers in various countries through social media. This strategy has benefits for Lazada and can target them with customized private messages, which makes it very efficient for marketing.

3. Tokopedia Tokopedia has encouraged the distribution of the digital economy by motivating Indonesians to start selling online. This initiative is done by building a platform that allows anyone to start and discover anything, anywhere. So, it is hoped that with this Tokopedia account, MSMEs can maximize and take advantage of selling their products online

## V. CONCLUSION

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a major impact on the decline in the national economy, including the MSME sector. After all activities have been carried out to assist MSMEs in making various e-commerce platforms, it is hoped that MSMEs can take advantage of this online platform with e-commerce digital marketing to survive, increase and expand sales reach during the Covid-19 pandemic. As well as actively using social media in marketing MSME products from MSME in Kupang and in creating content on e-commerce, both social media, websites and market places, it is hoped that they will be more creative in creating content ideas so that they can attract consumers.

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