



Omni Channel's Preferences to Strengthen Tourism Villages as Ecotourism Destinations

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Abstract. Tourist villages are currently one of the attractive choices for domestic and foreign tourists. This is supported by the Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy, Sandiaga Salahuddin Uno, who encourages the development of the potential of tourism villages in Indonesia to improve the creative economy sector. The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy/Agency for Tourism and Creative Economy (Kemenparekraf/Baparekraf) held the 2021 Indonesian Tourism Village Award (ADWI) event. At the ADWI event, Alamendah tourism village, located in Rancabali District, Bandung Regency, West Java Province, won 2nd place in the category digital village. With a variety of potential tourist attractions owned by the Alamendah tourist village, Alamendah village is attractive for tourists to visit. In addition to being a tourist attraction, the Alamendah Tourism Village is already one step ahead in digital terms, where the Alamendah Tourism Village has implemented virtual tours and also an omnichannel marketing strategy to market Alamendah digitally. The purpose of this study was to provide assistance to managers and as an effort to improve omnichannel marketing strategies in the Alamendah tourism village. This research used a case study qualitative approach, where the data were taken from direct observations and in-depth interviews with managers and local communities from the Alamendah tourism village. Based on the results of interviews and observations that have been employed, it showed that the Alamendah tourism village has implemented omnichannel marketing even though there were still some obstacles experienced by the manager. With that, it is expected that this research can help the manager of Alamendah Tourism Village in maximizing its digital marketing strategy.

Keywords: digital marketing · omni channel · tourism destination · tourism village

1 Introduction

Academic research on omnichannel marketing in the last decade has continued to grow [1] although omnichannel research in the business field is still very limited. Therefore, this study seeks to adopt an omnichannel strategy in the tourism sector. Omnichannel marketing is one of the modern marketing strategies by providing experiences to customers and establishing good relationships through both online and offline media. This strategy is also expected to continue to grow, including in the tourism sector [2].

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Tourist villages are currently one of the attractive choices for domestic and foreign tourists. Tourists will tend to avoid crowded places and choose natural attractions. Through tourism activities, villages can provide a place to learn many things, especially about environmental and cultural conservation [3]. Based on the potential of tourism resources, tourist villages develop many types of tourism activities based on the uniqueness and conditions of the region by implementing the concept of ecological tourism (ecotourism). The implementation of eco-friendly tourism development adapted to the uniqueness and local conditions success can be measured through a sustainable socio-cultural process and involvement of the identity of the local community; sustainable natural resource and environmental cycles; and economic processes that can provide sustainable benefits. Ecotourism is a recognized concept that can describe all forms of tourism activities that do not disturb and protect nature which is the goal of education [4]. Therefore ecotourism is a term that links ecological or natural sustainability with tourism [5].

Ecotourism is a term that connects ecological or natural sustainability with tourism, which is believed to provide high expectations as a solution to the conflict between economic development and environmental conservation [6]. The concept of ecotourism is recognized to be able to describe all forms of tourism activities that do not interfere and can protect nature [4]. [7] suggests that e-marketing, internet marketing or also called digital marketing is the core of e-business, which can make it closer to consumers. [8] explains that digital marketing is all efforts made in marketing by using internet-connected devices with various strategies and digital media, which aims to communicate with potential consumers through online communication channels. Different digital marketing access can be tried with the aim that potential consumers can see our offers, namely: websites, blogs, social media (Instagram, WhatsApp, Line), interactive audio video (Youtube, Video), interactive audio (Podcast, Soundcloud, Spotify), display Ads. [9] stated that currently, organizations are more suitable to use a more assertive approach, namely the customer driven approach. A customer-driven approach not only knows each other with customers, but also are able to respond dynamically to what consumers need and where they want to buy it. Managers of tourist destinations must also be able to identify new expectations from potential tourists. Steps that can be taken by service providers are to meet consumers where they are, for example on selected channels or channels that consumers usually use.

Digital marketing must be optimized by tourism managers as a means for visitors to find information ranging from information related to tourist attractions to details of costs. Digital marketing must be actively used by tourism destination managers because currently, digital marketing media is the most widely used for marketing, including tourism activists [10]. Based on this background, it is necessary to build efforts in order to revive the tourism sector in Tourism Villages through digital marketing. The right digital marketing strategy can increase the number of tourist visits after the Covid-19 pandemic which at the same time has an impact on the economy of the community around the village. The study examined the importance of omnichannel that can be applied in tourist villages and the benefits of being a marketing medium in tourist villages.

2 Methods

This research was conducted in Alamendah Tourism Village using a qualitative approach, the research which reveals the meaning of the research results. The data collection technique was carried out by participatory observation, namely a way of observing the behavior of a community by being directly involved in activities and interviews. Interviews were conducted with tourism village managers, local government, communities, and tourists. Information was obtained by conducting direct interviews regarding the implementation of digital marketing in the management and development of ecotourism. Respondents were selected using a combination of purposive sampling and snowball sampling techniques.

3 Results and Discussion

Previously, the Alamendah Tourism Village had held a virtual tour, which it became one of the activities that added village assessment indicators in winning the ADWI event. It is hoped that in the future, these activities can be further developed in terms of artificial intelligence based on the village's potential categorization system as the basis. With the collaboration from a digital perspective, Tourism Villages can expand market segments not only in real-world tourism, but also integrated virtual world tours.

Until now, although Alamendah Tourism Village has won the ADWI event in the digital marketing category, it turns out that the digital promotion channels used are still far from the expectations of many parties. The tourist village manager only relies on the Instagram platform as the main publication page and WhatsApp to send broadcasts to the network of visitors who have come to the tourist village.

Alamendah Tourism Village not only has potential in the field of ecotourism, but also cultural potential. This is one of the concerns of the extinction of Sundanese culture which should be preserved and shown to visitors. Cultural conservation such as traditional arts, ceremonial or ritual arts, and handicrafts are considered necessary to develop cultural potential in tourist villages.

Some of the obstacles presented by the Alamendah Tourism Village are the difficulty in developing human resources, lack of understanding of tourist villages, measuring the capacity of tourists who can visit, and lack of effectiveness of digital promotions.

4 Conclusions

Based on the results of the Focus Group Discussion, it was concluded that Alamendah Tourism Village still has some potential to be developed, especially in terms of digital marketing such as utilizing artificial intelligence, optimizing social media, and maximizing cultural potential. However, in developing this potential, there are several obstacles that must be overcome, especially in terms of the quality of human resources owned by the Alamendah Tourism Village. This is important to do to maximize the opportunities owned by the Alamendah Tourism Village coupled with the achievements of the Alamendah Tourism Village as one of the winners of the 2021 Indonesian Tourism Village Award (ADWI) for the digital village category.

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