



# The Development of Tourist Object and Attraction Digitization in Surakarta, Indonesia

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**Abstract.** Society 5.0 era gives the Indonesian tourism the potency to develop in Indonesia and particularly in Surakarta; therefore, a digital information-based tourist object and attraction developing strategy is required. This research aims to analyze the development of tourism area digitalization in Surakarta, Indonesia using Schwarz's sociological theory for digital society: the codes that bind us together. The data source used in this qualitative research with case study approach is Surakarta City's Culture and Tourism Office, Communication and Informatics Office, Tourism-Conscious Group (Pokdarwis), Tour and Travel Agent, Tourism Business Actor, Domestic and Foreign Tourists, and local people. Sampling technique used was purposive sample, while data collection was conducted through observation, interview, and documentation. Data validation was conducted using data source triangulation and data was analyzed using an interactive model of analysis. The result of research shows that in digital era, cultural, religious, culinary tourisms, etc. keep existent in Surakarta. Some of tourism business actors and local people apply e-tourism principle and management by developing accessible website and social media. Institution and local community partnership are also developed using a platform called Pandu Digital Surakarta to improve the sale volume of tourism product and service online, including processed food, traditional food, local typical accessories, accommodation and transportation. Adequate signal coverage is provided and improved continuously in Surakarta tourism area to broaden digital tourism trend coverage in order to promote the area and to facilitate the transaction among tourism business actors. Tourism and creative economic sector in Surakarta has shifted to cashless payment system, using Quick Response Code Indonesian Standard (QRIS) despite less optimality. Tourism digitalization can strengthen conventional tourism system.

**Keywords:** Tourism Digitalization, Tourism Promotion, Tourism Service, Tourism Business Actor.

## 1 Introduction

The rapid growth of internet and smartphone use affects all sectors, including digital technology-based tourism industry. Digital becomes an inevitable need and the fact shows that through digital everything can be done quickly [1]. Tourism marketing and

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promotion program having used digital mechanism by 50% - 70% is four fold more effective than that using conventional media [2].

Republic of Indonesia's Tourism Ministry states that 70% of tourists have done search and research on the tourist objects to be visited. The marketplace of travel agency online increases up to IDR 3 trillion in 2015 and is projected to grow by 28 percent to IDR 10 trillion in 2020. Tourism digital technology is used to facilitate the tourists to get seamless customer experience with searching for, ordering, and paying tourism services. The Team of Accelerating the Development of 10 Tourist Destinations prioritized by the Republic of Indonesia's Tourism Ministry states that 50% of foreign tourists coming to Indonesia are millennial generations closely related to digital and technology world. Meanwhile, the youngest domestic tourists are on average 28 years old. Thus, millennial generation is the largest tourism market in Indonesia, and therefore, God Digital or Digital Tourism as Top 1 Program.

Tourism development concerns not only a good product but also attractive promotion. The dissemination of brochure or pamphlet to promote tourism is now considered as a conventional method because the cost needed is very large and it is not effective. Therefore, a more effective promotion method is required, internet promotion or digital tourism [2,3]. Digital revolution not only changes various aspects of social life but also offer the way to adjust it with new social reality. Social interaction no longer occurs in limited and continuous situation, but is documented as a durable digital object. The new forms of human association are mediated digitally that bind society's action and life, but they are not merely social network [4].

The society should adopt communication technology without abandoning local cultural value. Technology and communication industry development should be seen critically and in parallel to industry process, including the internal logic accompanying it. It means that the society digitization development should not alienate human beings from a larger structure or even reduce them into technological residue only [5,6,7]. Surakarta as one of tourists' destinations in Central Java, Indonesia with tourism potency and tourist attraction that can attract both domestic and foreign tourists and identify Surakarta as one of Javanese cultural centers in Indonesia or called the spirit of Java [8]. This research discusses the development of tourist object and tourist attraction digitization in Surakarta, Indonesia.

## 2 Method

This qualitative research with case study approach was conducted in Surakarta Indonesia as the cultural tourist destination in April-June 2022. The primary data source included Culture and Tourism Service Office and Communication and Informatics Service Office of Surakarta City, Academicians, Tourism-Conscious Group (Pokdarwis) of Surakarta City, Tour and Travel Agent, tourism industry business actors, domestic and foreign tourists, and local people. Secondary data included archives and documents related to digital tourism development in Surakarta [9]. The sample was selected using

purposive sampling and data collected using observation, interview, and documentation. Data validation was carried out using data source triangulation, and data analysis using an interactive model of analysis [9].

### **3 Result and Discussion**

#### **3.1 Having Tour during and post-Covid Pandemic in Surakarta Indonesia**

Tourism industry was affected very significantly by Covid-19 pandemic. There is a change in tour trend during pandemic such as lockdown in paradise, walking tour video, voluntourism, staycation, glamping, digital nomad, transformative travel, experience tourism, solo travel, wellness travel, bleisure (business leisure) travel, and virtual reality [10,11]. Indonesian government's strategic policy and action plan started with reopening local, domestic, and international tourist destinations. Health and safety protocol tourism industry, education, communication, and marketing are also implemented to grow the tourists' trust and comfort. New investment (touch less and contact less), new business model in product and service are the responsibility of all stakeholders. Certification of Cleanliness, Health, Safety, Environment Sustainability (CHSE) has been implemented by tourism business actors in Surakarta through being the first vaccine to grow the tourism sector quickly.

Some tourist destinations in Surakarta have digitized their profile, and have complete information and tour guide, but some other attractive tourist destinations have not been well-documented or called the hidden paradise. Tourism sector in Surakarta uses social media platform to promote tourist destinations by making Instagramable tourist object. This strategy helps increase the number of tourists. The new requirements specified for traveling during and post-Covid 19 pandemic such as travel restriction, travel bubble, international health certification, behavioral change and purchasing power inhibit some tourists. Surakarta attempts to increase its regional income through tourism sector, but the requirements for the tourists who want to go to other tourist destinations inhibit it.

Covid-19 pandemic affected tourism industry in Surakarta, including hotel industry, transportation, Micro-, Small-, and Medium-scale Enterprises (MSMEs) that have produced souvenir, culinary product, restaurant, tour and travel agent, and tour guide. The loss generated by Covid-19 is [12], of course, very large when valued with rupiah. We should not only count and study its impact, but also take concrete measures to save the tourism industry constituting the most important sector in Surakarta [3].

#### **3.2 Strategy of Developing Tourist Destination Digitization**

The sustainable tourism world appears with new strategy and trend, requiring everything to be digital and contact less. Digital world not only offers big opportunity to tourism purpose, but also gives challenge to the improvement of tourism service quality. Surakarta Government has formulated some policies to support the tourism industry, particularly in the form of financial support or operational cost stimulus. Also, the government has developed standard operating procedure of tourism disaster mitigation

for Covid-19 pandemic by preparing health protocol, particularly in new normal era. It has strengthened information on destination environment's cleanliness and health. In addition, it has strengthened the destination management organization (DMO), particularly in the process of tourism village management operation from information management to getting feedback from the tourists. Some other measures are also have been taken: making innovative product by developing digital tourism program and improving the value chains by managing internal customers to make the employees satisfied and loyal and thereby giving the best service to the tourists, eventually resulting in the satisfied and loyal tourists.

Pentahelix strategy is a collaborating strategy between academician, business, government, customer and media. This strategy will be optimum when each of stakeholders play balanced roles in their own field and thereby can collaborate well and result in extraordinary power. University, particularly the department of tourism destination management, serves to create human resource and to conduct research to meet the need of tourism industry. Business actors do some activities oriented to fulfill the need of tourism industry. The government serves to make policy, particularly in the roadmap of tourism industry development. To be more effective and efficient in digital era, the Culture and Tourism Service Office of Surakarta City invites media to socialize the tourism industry policy and the reinforcement of tourism promotion program by involving customers and tourism-conscious groups.

The tourism industry operation management system designed by considering input, process, output, and outcome elements becomes a long-term strategy. Viewed from input element, quality of destination and human resource aspects are reformed by applying standard competency and providing adequate supporting facilities fulfilling the standard safety and comfort of tourism industry. Viewed from process element, the governmental policy should support tourism. It includes the good quality of internal service for the workers, the good external service to tourists, the improvement of marketing program by involving stakeholders. Having implemented the process, the output is tourists' satisfaction and loyalty and thus, the outcome expected is the tourist revisit by bringing much more rupiah (money). To get optimum outcome, the good management implementation with total quality management approach is required [13,14].

### **3.3 Digital Tourism: Challenge and Opportunity**

Traditional, cultural, and culinary wealth of Surakarta becomes a distinctive attraction to tourists. Surakarta Government uses an alternative branding channel, corresponding to technological development. mCity application functions as the entrance of tourists who want to visit Surakarta provides various facilities related to information service equipped with many interesting features that help tourists acquire information related to tourist object, event, and promotion running, real time weather information, and etc. [15,16]. Viewed from content element, the government has provided a platform that can be customized easily according to Surakarta City brand as a cultural city. The Culture and Tourism Service Office of Surakarta City provides content wanted, according to the tourism agenda of Surakarta City. mCity is also integrated into server-based electronic money and smartcard payment system to facilitate the tourist transaction in store,

transportation mode, and parking lot. The tourists who will visit Surakarta can download mCity application first for free from Google Play Store or App Store. The mCity application is adjusted with Surakarta City branding, also called Solo city. Solo Destination is mCity application for Solo city, the design of which is dominated with red color with Solo Palace-typical ethnic touch and equipped with CCTV feature for monitoring the traffic in some points in Solo. Surakarta Government always updates mCity feature or content and gets an opportunity of customizing it as needed. In addition, there is an additional service to develop the number of mCity application users and content management to achieve the expected objective [17].

Many tourism business organizations in Surakarta have used such features as sign in with or pay with in collaboration with other digital media. Digital transition is also followed with data security, e.g. the use of password meeting the need for security. The main advantage of digital identity application to tourism industry is the appearance of chance for contactless travel. All processes, from booking to check-in hotel, can be done remotely or from long distance. These have been implemented by a number of tourism service providers in Surakarta. In addition, many tourism and creative economic sectors in Surakarta have switched to cashless environment payment system using Quick Response Code Indonesian Standard (QRIS). A large number of merchants have been integrated with QRIS service with about 8 million users up to the mid of July 2021. The number of merchants integrated with QRIS service will keep increasing and thereby will facilitate the tourists to do cashless transaction [18].

Digital identity and biometric technology can cut the process of booking to check-in hotel, particularly amid Covid-19 pandemic. Many tourists worry about the virus transmission, but in the presence of contactless system using digital identity, the tourists can do tour more confidently [19]. Digital identity offers Work From Hotel (WFH) facility option that makes accommodation sector survive in Surakarta, as it is utilized maximally by professional workers who need refreshing amid their busy work [20].

Tourism industry digitization is inevitable, involving cloud technology use, transaction process automation, and digital identity appearance. Digital identity is the key to encourage the inclusiveness of all society aspects, to provide security through introducing unique biometric such as finger print and face identification, and to create easy online experience to consumers [4]. Tourism sector offering all-digital access should, of course, be followed with the easy access to accommodation through smartphone. Without equal trust and confidence between consumers and tourism sector online service, the digital transformation needed to improve the service will not be achieved [14].

## 4 Conclusion

Digital era requires tourism industry sector to provide quick, easy, and safe service while keeping the service quality. Social transformation should be done in balanced way according to the society's social power involving the integration of industry optimism, communication technology, community participation empowerment, state authority, and private power to take action and to be responsible socially.

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