

Social Media Marketing Activities, Destination Image, and Visiting Intention in Rural Tourism Destinations: Insights from Petung Park, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

The increasing use of social media has transformed the marketing practices of tourism destinations, particularly in promoting attractions and engaging potential visitors. Social Media Marketing Activities (SMMA) have been recognized as an important factor influencing tourists' perceptions and behavioral intentions. However, limited attention has been given to understanding how specific dimensions of SMMA contribute to destination image and visiting intention within rural tourism destinations. This conceptual paper develops a framework explaining the relationships among Social Media Marketing Activities, Destination Image, and Visiting Intention in the context of Petung Park, Indonesia. Drawing upon the Social Media Marketing Activities framework, this study incorporates interactivity, informativeness, word of mouth, personalization, and trendiness as key dimensions influencing tourists' perceptions and intentions. Based on previous literature, the proposed framework suggests that Social Media Marketing Activities positively influence destination image and visiting intention, while destination image further enhances visiting intention. A total of eleven propositions are developed for future empirical investigation. The proposed framework contributes to the tourism marketing literature by providing a conceptual explanation of how social media marketing activities may strengthen destination competitiveness through the development of positive destination image and increased visiting intention.

Keywords: *Social Media Marketing Activities; Destination Image; Visiting Intention; Rural Tourism; Petung Park*

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of social media has transformed the way tourism destinations communicate with potential visitors. Through platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube, destination managers can promote attractions, provide information, and interact directly with tourists. As social media usage continues to grow, tourism destinations increasingly rely on digital platforms to enhance destination visibility and attract visitors (Harrigan et al., 2017; Gaffar et al., 2022).

The growing importance of social media has also influenced tourists' decision-making processes. Previous studies suggest that Social Media Marketing Activities (SMMA) can shape tourists' perceptions and behavioral intentions through interactive communication, informative content, personalized experiences, positive word of mouth, and trendy information (Yadav & Rahman, 2018). Consequently, social media has become an important marketing tool for tourism destinations seeking to strengthen their competitiveness and appeal.

Petung Park is one of the rural tourism destinations in Indonesia that actively utilizes social media to promote its attractions and engage potential visitors. Through various social media platforms, Petung Park shares destination-related information, visitor experiences, and promotional content to increase public awareness. However, despite the increasing adoption of social media marketing, limited attention has been given to understanding how specific dimensions of Social Media Marketing Activities contribute to destination image and visiting intention within rural tourism destinations.

This conceptual paper addresses this issue by developing a framework that explains the relationships among Social Media Marketing Activities, Destination Image, and Visiting Intention in the context of Petung Park. Drawing upon the Social Media Marketing Activities framework proposed by Yadav and Rahman (2018), this study proposes that interactivity, informativeness, word of mouth, personalization, and trendiness influence destination image and visiting intention. In addition, destination image is proposed to enhance tourists' visiting intention. Previous studies suggest that destination image plays an important role in shaping tourists' behavioral intentions and destination choice (Baloglu &

McCleary, 1999; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991). Based on these relationships, a set of propositions is developed for future empirical investigation.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study develops a conceptual framework explaining the relationships among Social Media Marketing Activities (SMMA), Destination Image, and Visiting Intention in rural tourism destinations. The discussion is based on previous studies related to social media marketing, destination image, and tourist behavioral intentions. Relevant literature was identified through academic journals, books, and scholarly databases, with particular emphasis on the Social Media Marketing Activities framework proposed by Yadav and Rahman (2018).

Previous studies were reviewed to identify recurring relationships among the proposed constructs and their relevance to tourism destinations. Findings from the literature were then synthesized to explain how the dimensions of Social Media Marketing Activities, namely interactivity, informativeness, word of mouth, personalization, and trendiness, may influence destination image and visiting intention. Based on these theoretical relationships, a set of propositions is developed for future empirical investigation in the context of Petung Park, Indonesia.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The increasing use of social media has changed how tourism destinations communicate and interact with potential visitors. Through social media platforms, destination managers can share information, promote attractions, and encourage engagement among tourists. For rural tourism destinations such as Petung Park, social media represents an important marketing tool for enhancing destination visibility and attracting potential visitors.

According to Yadav and Rahman (2018), Social Media Marketing Activities (SMMA) consist of five dimensions: interactivity, informativeness, word of mouth, personalization, and trendiness. These dimensions enable tourism destinations to provide relevant information, facilitate communication, and create positive online experiences. Consequently, tourists may develop favorable perceptions regarding a destination.

P1: Interactivity positively influences Destination Image.

Interactivity allows tourists to communicate directly with destination managers and other visitors through social media platforms. Higher levels of interaction may strengthen tourists' engagement and contribute to positive destination perceptions. Higher levels of interaction may strengthen tourists' engagement and contribute to positive destination perceptions (Harrigan et al., 2017).

P2: Informativeness positively influences Destination Image.

Informativeness refers to the extent to which social media provides useful, accurate, and relevant information. Tourists who receive sufficient information through social media are more likely to develop favorable evaluations of a destination. Tourists who receive sufficient information through social media are more likely to develop favorable evaluations of a destination (Ambarwati & Munawaroh, 2023).

P3: Word of Mouth positively influences Destination Image.

Word of mouth through social media enables tourists to share experiences and recommendations with others. Positive recommendations may improve destination credibility and strengthen destination image. Positive recommendations may improve destination credibility and strengthen destination image (Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Berger & Schwartz, 2011).

P4: Personalization positively influences Destination Image.

Personalization allows tourism destinations to deliver content that matches tourists' preferences and interests. Personalized communication may increase the relevance of destination information and enhance destination image. Personalized communication may increase the relevance of destination information and enhance destination image (Bleier & Eisenbeiss, 2015).

P5: Trendiness positively influences Destination Image.

Trendiness reflects the extent to which social media content is current and up-to-date. Trendy content may attract tourists' attention and contribute to favorable destination perceptions (Yadav & Rahman, 2018; Gaffar et al., 2022).

P6: Interactivity positively influences Visiting Intention.

Social Media Marketing Activities may also directly influence tourists' visiting intention. Through social media platforms, destinations can attract attention, stimulate interest, and encourage potential tourists to consider visiting a destination. Interactivity enables two-way communication between destinations and tourists. Active interaction may strengthen tourists' engagement and increase their willingness to visit the destination. Active interaction may strengthen tourists' engagement and increase their willingness to visit the destination (Harrigan et al., 2017).

P7: Informativeness positively influences Visiting Intention.

Informativeness provides tourists with useful and relevant information regarding destination attractions, facilities, and accessibility. Adequate information may reduce uncertainty and encourage travel decisions. Adequate information may reduce uncertainty and encourage travel decisions (Gaffar et al., 2022).

P8: Word of Mouth positively influences Visiting Intention.

Word of mouth allows tourists to access recommendations and experiences shared by other visitors. Positive recommendations may increase trust and motivate potential tourists to visit the destination. Positive recommendations may increase trust and motivate potential tourists to visit the destination (Abubakar & Ilkan, 2016).

P9: Personalization positively influences Visiting Intention.

Personalization enables destinations to provide content that matches tourists' preferences and interests. Personalized content may increase tourists' perceived relevance of the destination and strengthen their intention to visit. Personalized content may increase tourists' perceived relevance of the destination and strengthen their intention to visit (Bleier & Eisenbeiss, 2015).

P10: Trendiness positively influences Visiting Intention.

Trendiness reflects the ability of social media content to provide current and up-to-date information. Trendy and attractive content may stimulate tourists' curiosity and encourage future visitation (Yadav & Rahman, 2018).

P11: Destination Image positively influences Visiting Intention.

Destination Image represents tourists' overall perceptions and evaluations of a destination. A positive destination image may increase tourists' confidence and interest in visiting a destination. Previous tourism studies suggest that tourists are more likely to visit destinations that possess favorable images and positive associations. Previous tourism studies suggest that tourists are more likely to visit destinations that possess favorable images and positive associations (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991).

4. CONCLUSION

The increasing use of social media has transformed the way tourism destinations communicate with potential visitors and promote their attractions. This conceptual paper proposes a framework explaining how Social Media Marketing Activities influence Destination Image and Visiting Intention in the context of Petung Park, Indonesia. Drawing upon the framework of Yadav and Rahman (2018), five dimensions of Social Media Marketing Activities, namely interactivity, informativeness, word of mouth, personalization, and trendiness, are proposed as important determinants of tourists' perceptions and behavioral intentions.

The proposed framework suggests that Social Media Marketing Activities positively influence Destination Image and Visiting Intention, while Destination Image further enhances Visiting Intention. A total of eleven propositions are developed for future empirical investigation. The framework contributes to tourism marketing literature by providing a conceptual explanation of how social media marketing may strengthen destination competitiveness through the development of favorable destination image and increased visiting intention. Future studies are encouraged to empirically examine the proposed relationships in rural tourism destinations.

From a practical perspective, the proposed framework may provide valuable insights for tourism destination managers in developing effective social media marketing strategies to strengthen destination image and increase tourists' visiting intentions. For rural tourism destinations such as Petung Park, leveraging social media marketing activities effectively may contribute to enhancing destination competitiveness, attracting potential visitors, and supporting sustainable tourism development in the digital era.

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