

# The Influence of Digital Marketing and Brand Image to Build Interest in Visiting Tourists in the Recovery of the Tourism Sector

Lilis Jayanti<sup>\*1</sup>, Annisa Maharani Bella Pratiwi<sup>2</sup>, Dita Aulia Rahma<sup>3</sup>, Fernanda Kayisa Putri<sup>4</sup>, Intan Shafa Sulisty Aji<sup>5</sup>, Purwita<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1-6</sup>Department of Tourism,  
Politeknik Pariwisata NHI  
Bandung

## **Abstract**

*The tourism sector is currently facing a post-COVID-19 recovery process. Marketing played an essential role in the recovery of this tourism sector. Both tourist attractions and the government have started to move again to find the right strategy in marketing. This study aims to analyze the role of digital marketing and brand image in the interest of visiting tourists as part of the recovery of the tourism sector. Data were collected at The Lodge Maribaya as a research locus by interviewing 123 tourists who visited tourist attractions through a questionnaire instrument. Using scoring and path analysis, it is found that Digital Marketing significantly influences Brand Image. Apart from that, digital marketing and brand image also significantly affect tourist interest in visiting. This shows that digital marketing and brand image can be an effective marketing strategy in the context of recovering the tourism sector*

*Keywords: Digital Marketing, Brand Image, Interest in Visiting, Tourism Sector Recovery*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The COVID-19 pandemic has created an unprecedented large-scale crisis in global tourism. (UNWTO, 2020b). Indonesia noted a drastic decrease of -89.22%, with only 164,970 visits. To overcome this, digital marketing is a strategy for maintaining Indonesian tourism due to limited direct activities (Hidayat, 2021). In recent years, digital marketing has become a key component of destination management and marketing in both normal and crisis times (Avraham, 2021). This is because tourists use digital media when traveling, from planning and doing to sharing their travel experiences (Morrison, 2019).

During the pandemic, the tourism sector experienced a very drastic reduction in the country's foreign exchange. Many tourism business actors feel at a loss in carrying out tourism activities, especially in terms of the economy. This outbreak has created a high level of vulnerability for small and medium enterprises whose conditions will worsen if not treated immediately (Gössling et al., 2020). Besides that, tourism in the modern sense is a phenomenon from time to time based on health needs and motivation for the influence of association that is currently happening to visit a tourist destination (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007). However, during this pandemic, tourism business actors must have a strategy to continue to generate tourism. One is using social media to help increase visit numbers through product marketing (Leung et al., 2013). The existence of regulations to

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Correspondence address:

**Lilis Jayanti**

Email : [lij@stp-bandung.ac.id](mailto:lij@stp-bandung.ac.id)

Address : Department of Tourism, Politeknik Pariwisata NHI Bandung, Indonesia

maintain distance (social distancing) requires people to follow changes in technology to go online. Thus, it is necessary to adapt the method through online promotion and marketing media. More and more online agents can indicate that domestic and foreign tourists are more inclined to choose the online way to make a tourist trip (Farkhondehzadeh et al., 2013).

This study examines how digital marketing and brand image can impact tourist interest in visiting destinations, intending to aid the recovery of the tourism sector. By analyzing the marketing strategies used by destinations during the Covid-19 era, this research contributes to the development of recovery studies in the tourism sector. The study offers a new typology that reflects the characteristics of tourists in the Covid-19 era and other global crises (Andrianto et al., 2021; Hong et al., 2020), as tourist demands and preferences have changed significantly. Additionally, the research explores the use of digital marketing and brand image during the epidemic, which has not been thoroughly examined in previous studies despite its importance during a crisis (Avraham, 2021; Holliman & Rowley, 2014). The findings of this research are expected to benefit tourist destination managers and researchers alike.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### *Tourism Sector Recovery*

In the last decade, there has been a growing recognition of the significant impact of epidemic outbreaks on the tourism industry. These outbreaks can have a negative multiplier effect on other supporting industries. The COVID-19 pandemic, for instance, caused a reduction in inbound and outbound tourism flows as tourists opted not to visit certain destinations or were restricted by government regulations aimed at controlling the spread of the virus. Such epidemic crises can lead to changes in tourism demand, as tourists may choose not to consciously expose themselves to the crisis. Therefore, the perceived risk of epidemic outbreaks can influence tourist behavior and destination choices. Prior studies have noted the importance of risk perception in tourism during epidemic outbreaks (Reichel et al., 2007; Zhang et al., 2020).

Dealing with crises, whether sudden and unexpected events that seriously threaten citizens or public health crises that affect individuals across multiple geographic areas, is a significant challenge. In the case of global health crises like the current COVID-19 pandemic, tourists' perceptions of safety and security (Yang & Nair, 2014) and the media's portrayal of the crisis can significantly impact their decisions to travel and visit certain destinations. Negative media coverage can further exacerbate the situation, making it more challenging for the tourism industry to manage the crisis (Jonas & Mansfeld, 2015).

According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2020a), the tourism, hospitality, and related industries will likely experience gradual post-COVID-19 adjustments as part of the recovery process. Reopening tourism as part of the post-crisis recovery presents many challenges, and it is unlikely that the same profit levels as in the pre-COVID-19 period will be achieved immediately. Based on the UNWTO's findings, reopening at around 33% capacity could lead to similar profit levels. However, lower capacity may require government support, which could differ substantially. Lim (2021) warns that the COVID-19 crisis has been the most damaging crisis for the tourism industry to date, and the industry's future will be different from before the pandemic. Therefore, the tourism industry and governments have a crucial role in recovery efforts (Avraham, 2021).

### *Digital Marketing*

Recently, tourism marketing messages have been delivered through digital channels (Kartajaya et al., 2019). According to Morrison (2019), travelers use digital media throughout their travel cycle, from dreaming and planning to book, traveling, and sharing their experiences. The online space provides numerous marketing options for the tourism industry, such as online advertising, search engine marketing, social media marketing, e-commerce, online public relations, hiring bloggers and influencers, and using mobile apps (Khamis et al., 2017; Ki et al., 2020). Among these options, successful tourism destinations often use social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube (Magno & Cassia, 2018). Social media platforms enable

destination image management, engagement and collaboration with tourists, and the capturing of unprecedented growth opportunities (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010).

In addition, social media networks in tourism disseminate news and information about destinations, showcase local events and activities, build and maintain communities, gather user-generated content, encourage word-of-mouth referrals, and carry out promotional campaigns (Morrison, 2019). Among these platforms, YouTube is a particularly popular and significant one. As a free video-sharing platform, YouTube allows users and organizations to share content online. Tourism destinations and organizations increasingly utilize YouTube to share information, advertise products and experiences, and communicate directly with travelers.

### *Brand Image*

Tourists' perception and memory of a brand are called its brand image. This image is created through a network of interconnected concepts, contributing to beliefs influencing tourists' decision-making process (Armstrong et al., 2017). A brand's image results from how tourists interpret its value and the symbols it uses (Kotler & Keller, 2012). The brand image consists of functional, effective, and reputation dimensions used to evaluate different products (Kotler & Keller, 2012). This study conceptualizes brand image as multidimensional, including functional, effective, and reputation. Functional image pertains to the quality requirements that create value, while the affective dimension relates to intangible elements such as personality or positive associations. Reputation is the overall attitude towards a brand that includes the evaluation of tourist attractions.

### *Visiting Intention*

Interest in visiting a tourist destination is a key measure of tourists' evaluation of a brand. This construct relates to tourists' attitudes, but it can also refer to their plans to visit a place or destination (Nowacki, 2009; Žabkar et al., 2010). Interest and attitude differ because attitude involves evaluative judgments, while interest expresses an individual's motivation or plan to engage in behavior with the brand. In tourism recovery, interest in visiting implies a desire to visit new attractions, revisit previous ones, and potentially recommend them to others.

## **METHODS**

The research method used in this study is quantitative. The quantitative method can be interpreted as a research method based on the philosophy of positivism, which is used to examine a particular population or sample. Data collection uses research instruments. Data analysis is quantitative to test the hypotheses set. This study uses a quantitative approach because the observed phenomena are converted into numbers analyzed using statistics. This research was conducted at The Lodge Maribaya, a tourist attraction that has applied digital marketing to its marketing. The Lodge Maribaya is also a popular tourist attraction ready to welcome tourists back in this pandemic era. Responses from tourists to the assessment of digital marketing and brand image of The Lodge Maribaya were obtained using a simple random sampling technique. Questionnaires were distributed to 123 tourists visiting the attraction, The Lodge Maribaya. The data analysis technique used in this study is scoring analysis to describe each variable and path analysis to determine the effect of each variable. The data analysis tool used is SPSS.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### *Respondent Profile*

Eighty-two women and 41 men dominated respondents, then birth years from 1965 to Gen Z with birth years 1997-2012 dominated. Most respondents are students/students who mostly live in West Java, then continue with Banten, the Bangka Belitung Islands, to DKI Jakarta and reside in Bandung. Of the 123

respondents, 43 chose an Individual Mass Tourist, where 33 respondents were Explorers, and 17 were Organized Mass Tourists.

**Scoring Analysis**

**Table 1. Scoring Results of The Lodge Maribaya Digital Marketing Variables**

Indicators	Scores
Marketing content in digital marketing (YouTube/Facebook/Instagram) featuring tourist attractions of The Lodge Maribaya).	422
The digital marketing content of The Lodge Maribaya is interesting to me.	410
Submission of online promotions at The Lodge Maribaya through digital marketing is easy to understand.	408
Information about tourist attractions in The Lodge Maribaya area can be easily found on search sites.	423
Tourists know The Lodge Maribaya through advertisements on social media.	382
The Lodge Maribaya is a tourist destination that I will visit when traveling in Bandung	393
<b>Total Score</b>	<b>2438</b>

Source: Research Processed Results, 2021

The table above shows that The Lodge Maribaya has maximized its marketing strategy through digital marketing. This can be seen from the indicator of ease of information on tourist attractions achieving the highest score. This ease of information is supported using several social media platforms, including YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram.

**Table 2. The Scoring Results of The Lodge Maribaya Brand Image Variable**

Indicators	Scores
Seeing the logo of The Lodge Maribaya makes me think that this destination has a good reputation.	427
The Maribaya Lodge logo makes me have high expectations regarding its tourist attractions.	417
The Maribaya Lodge logo makes me expect good employee performance in serving visitors.	404
The Lodge Maribaya is a famous and great destination.	395
The Maribaya Lodge logo creates a good image for its fellow sectors (Tourism).	409
The Maribaya Lodge Destination provided a satisfying experience for me.	397
The Lodge Maribaya is a destination that prioritizes my satisfaction and pleasure as a visitor.	397
The characteristics of the image on the logo of The Lodge Maribaya are very memorable in my mind.	393
I can quickly remember The Lodge Maribaya Logo.	387
I can recognize the Logo of The Lodge Maribaya even though I have not done a tour for a long time.	386
I can find out the image characteristics of the tourist attraction The Lodge Maribaya compared to other tourist destinations.	400
The Lodge Maribaya is a destination that meets my expectations because I enjoy the activities during my trip.	396
The Maribaya Lodge presents a variety of unique tourist attractions in harmony with the image on the logo.	411
<b>Total Score</b>	<b>5219</b>

Source: Research Processed Results, 2021

From the table above, tourists consider The Lodge Maribaya to have a good brand image. The logo, one of the elements in this brand image, has described the reputation, quality, and image of the tourist attraction,

The Lodge Maribaya. In addition, tourists also consider that The Lodge Maribaya has a good reputation as a popular attraction in West Bandung Regency.

**Table 3. Results of Interest in Visiting The Lodge Maribaya Scoring Variables**

Indicators	Scores
I am interested in visiting the attraction of The Lodge Maribaya.	414
The digital media provided contains accurate and efficient information about The Lodge Maribaya so that one can imagine.	416
I prefer visiting The Lodge Maribaya over other similar tourist attractions.	363
The Lodge Maribaya gave me a high sense of pleasure before visiting.	387
I will recommend The Lodge Maribaya to my colleagues near The Lodge Maribaya.	392
I will be returning to The Lodge Maribaya in the future.	400
<b>Total Score</b>	<b>2372</b>

Source: Research Processed Results, 2021

From the table above, it is known that tourists have a fairly high interest in visiting The Lodge Maribaya compared to other similar attractions. The traveler also intends to recommend The Lodge Maribaya to his colleagues and family and revisit it.

**Table 4. Model Summary 1**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. The error in the Estimate
<b>1</b>	.685 <sup>a</sup>	0,470	0,464	5,657

**a. Predictors: (Constant), Digital Marketing (X)**

Source: Research Processed Results, 2021

In the Summary Model table, the correlation value (R) of the variable X (Digital Marketing) to Y (Brand Image) is 68%. In contrast, the adjusted correlation is the percentage of the independent variable (Digital Marketing) to the related variable (Brand Image) to be lower, equal to 47%. As for the other side, which is more accurate, it shows a correlation of 46%. Next, regarding the final level of accuracy of model 1, it shows 5.657, whereas this value gets closer to 0 (zero) the more accurate it is; with a number that big, it can be said that the model formed is accurate at 5.657% (5.657 x 100%). The conclusion in this table is that the effect of Digital Marketing on Brand Image is 46%, while other variables influence the rest.

**Table 5. ANOVA**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
<b>1</b>	Regression	2720,444	1	2720,444	85,009	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	3072,179	96	32,002		
	Total	5792,622	97			

**a. Dependent Variable: Brand Image (Y)**  
**b. Predictors: (Constant), Digital Marketing (X)**

Source: Research Processed Results, 2021

The ANOVA table shows whether the variable X has a real or significant effect on Y. If we look at the Sig. The value column shows that the Digital Marketing variable affects a Brand Image. All indicators contained in X significantly affect Brand Image.

**Table 6. Coefisient**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	16,415	4,036		4,067	0,000
	Digital Marketing (X)	1,481	0,161	0,685	9,220	0,000

**a. Dependent Variable: Brand Image (Y)**

Source: Research Processed Results, 2021

In the coefficient table section, column B Constant gets a value of 16,415, while X (Digital Marketing) is 1,481. Therefore, the regression equation appears as follows:

$$Y = 16.415 + 1.481X$$

The coefficient B represents the change in variable Y for each change in variable X by one unit. This change is significant; if B is positive, there will be an increase, whereas if B is negative, there will be a decrease. A constant of 16,415 states that if there is no Digital Marketing value, the Brand Image value will be 16,415. Meanwhile, the X coefficient is 1,481, which means that for every addition of 1 Digital Marketing value, the Brand Image value increases by 1,481. The significance test table with the t-test states a real significant influence of the Digital Marketing variable on the Brand Image variable, as seen from the significance value of 0.000 and the t-count value of 9.220.

**Table 7. Model Summary 2**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. The error in the Estimate
1	.763 <sup>a</sup>	0,583	0,574	2,692

**a. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Image (Y), Digital Marketing (X)**

Source: Research Processed Results, 2021

In the Summary Model table, the correlation value (R) of the X (Digital Marketing) and Y (Brand Image) variables on Visiting interest is 0.763. Meanwhile, the adjusted correlation, namely the percentage influence of the independent variables (Digital Marketing) and (Brand Image) on the dependent variable (Intention to visit), is lower, namely 58%. This table concludes that the effect of Digital Marketing and Brand Image on Visiting Interest is 58%, while other variables influence the rest.

**Tabel 8. ANOVA**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	961,369	2	480,685	66,321	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	688,549	95	7,248		
	Total	1649,918	97			

**a. Dependent Variable: Visiting Intention (Z)**

**b. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Image (Y), Digital Marketing (X)**

Source: Research Processed Results, 2021

The ANOVA table explains that, when viewed from the calculated F value of 66.321 with a significance level of 0.000 < 0.05, it can be stated that the X and Y variables significantly influence the Z variable. The regression model can automatically be used to predict the Visit Interest variable.

**Table 9. Coefficient**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0,777	2,080		0,374	0,710
	Digital Marketing (X)	0,304	0,105	0,264	2,898	0,005

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
	Brand Image (Y)	0,298	0,049	0,558	6,131	0,000

**a. Dependent Variable: Visiting Intention (Z)**

Source: Research Processed Results, 2021

The final result of calculating this coefficient table shows that column B Constant has a value of 0.777, while the value of X (Digital Marketing) is 0.304 and Y (Brand Image) is 0.298. Therefore, the regression equation appears as follows:

$$Y = 0,777 + 0,304 + 0,298$$

The coefficient B represents the change in the variable Z for each change in the X and Y variables by one unit. This change is significant; if B is positive, there will be an increase, whereas if B is negative, there will be a decrease. A constant of 0.777 states that if there is no Digital Marketing and Brand Image value, then the value of Visiting interest will be 0.777. Meanwhile, the X coefficient is 0.304, and Y is 0.298, which means that for every addition of 1 Digital Marketing value and Brand Image value, the value of Visiting interest increases by 0.602. The significance test table with the t-test states a real significant influence from the Digital Marketing variable and the Brand Image variable on the Visiting Interest variable, as seen from the significance value of 0.005 and the t-count value of 9,029.

## CONCLUSION

The final result of the discussion in the table above provides a statement that Digital Marketing influences the Brand Image of a destination; besides that, the calculation results also provide a statement that Brand Image influences the desire of tourists to visit a destination. The next thing that is no less important is that Digital Marketing affects an interest in visiting a tourist. Therefore, in the context of recovering the tourism sector, cooperation and cooperation are needed at every level of stakeholders. Stakeholders need to redefine, or even overhaul, the tourism paradigm of each region. The planning must also include implementing health protocols, not just tourist promotion slogans. So far, not only in the tourism sector, the rhetoric of 'implementing health protocols' is often contradictory to the reality in society, where simple protocols such as wearing masks or providing a place to wash hands are even difficult to implement in some tourist destinations located in rural areas. Therefore, destinations need to intensify digital marketing communications, build a unique and lasting image, and provide an unforgettable experience for tourists so that tourists will be interested in visiting destinations in the future.

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