

Digital marketing based on social media marketing in marine tourism destinations

Rosida P. Adam^{a*}

^aFaculty of Economics and Business, Tadulako University, Jl. Soekarno Hatta No. KM. 9, Tondo, Mantikulore Palu City, Central Sulawesi, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to empirically test a new marketing model from a digital marketing perspective based on social media marketing, which is a crucial factor for consumers in the digital era when making decisions (especially tourists) to visit the Togean Islands marine tourism destination in Tojo Una-Una Regency. Social media marketing comprises three dimensions known as 4C: context, communication, collaboration, and connection. This type of research employs exploratory or confirmatory research methods. The data analysis method utilizes the PLS-SEM version 4 approach, and the research sample consists of 160 respondents, including both foreign tourists and Indonesian tourists. The research results indicate that the communication dimension has the highest loading factor value of 0.813, followed by collaboration with 0.770, connection with 0.745, and context with 0.703. Furthermore, the path coefficient value for the collaboration dimension is the highest compared to the other three dimensions, at 0.813. These findings imply that decision-makers can derive meaningful insights for redesigning new marketing models in the tourism sector amidst the digitalization era.

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1. Introduction

The tourism sector is starting to recover after slumping during the Covid-19 pandemic, including marine tourism. The revival of the tourism sector cannot be separated from advances in information technology which are rapidly changing consumer behavior in making decisions about visiting tourist attractions. According to Schiffman and Kanuk (2015) consumer behavior is a process where consumers search for information, make purchases, use, evaluate and act after consuming products or services that are expected to provide satisfaction. Previous research conducted by Purwanto, (2022) shows that the implementation of marketing performance through the implementation of e-commerce by utilizing digital marketing has an impact on the behavior of customers who visit modern markets which are popular especially with millennials, because they are considered practical, effective and efficient. Thus, it can be concluded that marketing performance can be improved through tourist satisfaction by using digital marketing such as social media marketing.

One strategy that can be carried out by tourism destination businesses is by utilizing digital marketing. Utilization of digital marketing based on social media marketing to promote products or services, which is considered more effective and efficient as well as transferring wider information and attracting consumer attention (Keke, 2022; Jiang et al., 2023; and Jaya et al. (2022). Use The internet is becoming increasingly popular nowadays, so the choice of using digital marketing in the business world is becoming increasingly popular. Based on survey results from the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII), internet users in Indonesia reached 215.63 million people in the 2022-2023 period. This number has increased by 2, 67% compared to the previous period which was 210.03 million users. Most millennials use social media for 3 hours/day to search for information and communicate (Mude & Undale, 2023). Therefore, the use of social media marketing is an option for destination businesses to use it as a means of E-Promotion for tourist destinations. According to the results of a survey

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address rpadam.untad@gmail.com (R.P. Adam)

conducted by Bala & Verma, (2018) of 275 marketing professionals throughout the world in 2016, the preferred Internet marketing was E-mail (61%), Website (59%), SEO (59%), and finally Social Media (50%). However, along with the development of digital marketing, social media has become the main choice as a significant marketing tool for businesses through digital channels because it can influence the digital environment in which they are located as part of consumers' daily lives. (Stephen, 2016; Khoa & Huynh, 2023). Furthermore, it was explained that in social media marketing, context has the highest impact on the company's business, through the message content conveyed that attracts consumers' attention and the simple format of the message content. Additionally, there is a significant positive relationship between social media marketing factors, rewards, brand image, electronic word of mouth, customer engagement, trust and customer satisfaction. (Bala & Verma, 2018; Shafiq et al., 2023).

The application of social media marketing as a means of e-promotion in the tourism sector in the Togeian Islands, Tojo Una-Una Regency, has been carried out to reach tourists, both Indonesian and foreign tourists. However, the use of Social Media Marketing is not optimal, especially since there are still weaknesses in the application of dimensions (4C). In 2022, the number of tourists visiting the Togeian Islands will be 15,149 tourists (BPS, Tojo Una-Una Regency, 2023). According to Chris Heuer, in the book "Engage: The Complete Guide for Brands and Businesses to Build Cultivate and Measure Success on The Web, there are four dimensions (4C) in the use of social media marketing, namely context, communication, collaboration and connection (Solis, 2010). This is confirmed by Bazi et al., (2023) that content in social media can increase loyalty. Likewise in the tourism sector, content in social media marketing about tourism destinations influences engagement. consumers in digital communications of a tourism brand. (Wang et al., 2023). In addition, Santos et al., (2023) found that audience-related variables and real-time marketing content can predictably influence social media engagement. Likewise, research results Khoa & Huynh, (2023) show that social media marketing tools have a significant influence on consumer trust and commitment to businesses through digital channels. Based on the research results above, it is important to measure the 4C dimensions which provide information on the determining factors for the success of social media marketing strategies that are applied to tourism destinations. According to Preko et al., (2023) digital marketing in the tourism sector has attracted the attention of tourists around the world, to assess the digital tourism experience for revisiting tourist locations.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis

2.1 Digital Marketing

Digital marketing is the marketing of products or services using digital technology, especially on the Internet, including mobile phones, display advertising, and other digital media. Current marketing developments have changed the way brands and businesses use technology for marketing. It was further explained that the role of a digital platform is a forum or means to bring together individuals or groups to exchange information, trade, or offer a service. Where digital platforms have been incorporated into marketing plans and daily life, this is because consumers use digital devices instead of visiting physical stores. The use of digital marketing has the advantage of being effective and efficient (Desai, 2019; Masrianto et al., 2022). Measuring the success of digital marketing can be seen from online sales trends via Google Analytics or other web analytics platforms. This is in accordance with the research results of Hamzah et al. (2021), explaining that the use of digital marketing has several advantages, including: Targets can be set according to demographics, domicile, lifestyle, and even habits; these results are quickly visible so marketers can take action corrections or changes if it is felt that something is not appropriate; the costs are much cheaper than conventional marketing; the reach is wider because it is not geographically limited and can be accessed at any time without time limits. Apart from that, digital marketing can build, improve, and maintain the reputation of a business online, on all digital platforms.

The research results of Chamboko-Mpotaringa & Tichaawa (2023) explain that the success of digital marketing strategies used by tourism marketers depends on the use and adoption of digital tourism by tourists, effective and efficient digital marketing tools and platforms that meet tourists' needs and expectations. In addition, Veseli-Kurtishi & Ruci (2023) found that 102 travel agents responded that digital marketing plays an important role in improving the image of Albanian tourism throughout the world. Digital marketing has created facilities for marketing and reduced business costs. Through digital marketing, travel agencies have succeeded in promoting online, personalizing services and, most importantly, getting closer to customers. Furthermore, Veseli-Kurtishi & Ruci (2023) stated that the most effective digital marketing tools used by agencies are Instagram and Facebook. Thus, it can be concluded that tourists' considerations in choosing social media for communication depend on the level of effectiveness and efficiency of the benefits felt by tourists.

2.2 Social Media Marketing

According to Kotler and Keller (2016), Social Media Marketing is a marketing communication activity that utilizes electronic media to attract consumers in various ways, aiming to build awareness, enhance company image, and increase sales of goods or services. Marketing activities employ social media to achieve diverse goals, spanning from customer service to advertising. Therefore, Social Media Marketing represents the utilization of social media technology, channels, and software to create, communicate, deliver, and exchange offers that hold value for an organization and its stakeholders. This is enabled by the digital infrastructure of the web, facilitated by social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, empowered

by software and social algorithms (Tuten & Mintu-Wimsatt, 2018). In addition, as stated by Hoang & Khoa (2022), in the context of advertising, social media marketing involves sharing content across various social media platforms to promote a business and its products. On the relational front, the emphasis lies on building and nurturing mutually beneficial relationships with customers through social media communication channels. An effective social media marketing strategy aims to create content that users find interesting, enjoyable, or useful to encourage sharing (Hanaysha, 2022). This dual approach highlights the versatility and depth of social media marketing as a tool for engagement and connection with target audiences. Moreover, social media marketing operates on four fundamental components, known as the 4Cs: context, communication, collaboration, and connection (Solis, 2010; Felix et al., 2017). Context involves crafting messages in easily understandable language, with attention to presentation, design, delivery time, and content appeal. Communication encompasses the effective conveyance, listening, responding, and distribution of messages to ensure they resonate well with the intended audience. Collaboration emphasizes cooperative efforts to enhance efficiency and effectiveness, fostering engagement between social media users. Finally, connection focuses on maintaining sustainable relationships between the company or message sender and recipients, nurturing partnerships and reciprocal interactions for long-term success.

3. Research Methods

This research falls under the category of quantitative research. The sample comprised 160 tourists, including 49 foreign tourists and 111 domestic tourists, all visiting the Togeian Islands tourist destination. The analysis utilized Smart PLS-SEM Version 4 as the tool. Operational research variables required for constructing research models are detailed in Table 1 to facilitate the process.

Table 1
Variable Operationalization Matrix

Variable	Dimensions	Symbol	Indicator
Social Media Marketing (SMM) 4C. (Solis, 2010 and Felix et al., (2017).	Context (SMM-Ct)	SMMCt-1	Simple format design
		SMMCt-2	The content of the message is easy to understand
		SMMCt-3	Interesting presentation
		SMMCt-4	Timeliness of delivery
	Communication (SMM-Com)	SMMCom-5	Delivery method
		SMMCom-6	Listening ability
		SMMCom-7	Respond to information
		SMMCom-8	Message effectiveness
	Collaboration (SMM-Col)	SMMCol-9	Building collaboration
		SMMCol-10	Efficient in collaboration
		SMMCol-11	Effective in common goals
		SMMCol-12	Sustainable collaboration
	Connection (SMM-Con)	SMMCon-13	Maintain relationships with fellow business people
		SMMCon-14	Maintain relationships with consumers
		SMMCon-15	A reciprocal relationship is established that benefits both parties
		SMMCon-16	Internet network stability

4. Research Results

The study surveyed 160 tourists, comprising 49 foreigners and 111 locals. Findings revealed that female tourists constituted 58% of respondents, while males comprised 42%. This aligns with previous research indicating women's propensity to travel, often accompanied by children or female friends, motivated by perceived destination security. Regarding age distribution, individuals aged >37-47 years formed the largest group at 44%, while the lowest percentage fell within the 17-27 age range at 11%. This suggests a desire for travel among financially stable youth, leveraging social media for destination information. Tourists with bachelor's degrees accounted for 73%, emphasizing the role of education in destination knowledge. Predominantly, tourists were self-employed (32%), while students represented the smallest group (8%). Most visitors hailed from Sulawesi (39%) and Java (30%), showcasing the global recognition of Togeian Islands Marine Tourism. The majority traveled with work colleagues (47%), relying heavily on social media (72%) for information. Speed boats were the primary mode of transportation (57%), necessitating improved scheduling for enhanced tourist experiences.

Testing the Outer Model of Social Media Marketing Variables comprises four dimensions: Context (SMM-Ct), Communication (SMM-Com), Collaboration (SMM-Col), and Connection (SMM-Con). Data analysis employs Partial Least Square (PLS) analysis techniques using the SmartPLS 4.0 program. Figure 1 depicts the scheme of the PLS Outer Model program being tested. The measurement model, or Outer Model, determines the association of each indicator with latent variables. The Outer Model with reflexive indicators is assessed for convergent and discriminant validity, and composite reliability for the indicators. Convergent validity assesses the validity of each relationship between the indicator and its latent construct. An indicator's reflexive measure is deemed high if it exceeds 0.70, signifying that it can be reliably measured (Ghozali, 2015). Based on these criteria, indicators with loading values less than 0.70 are excluded from the analysis and re-estimated. However, for research in the initial stages of developing a measurement scale, loading values of 0.50 to 0.60 suffice (Chin & Newsted, 1999).

Indicators are considered to meet convergent validity in the good category if their outer loading value exceeds 0.7. The four dimensions of Social Media Marketing are Context (SMM-Ct), Communication (SMM-Com), Collaboration (SMM-Col), and Connection (SMM-Con), comprising 16 indicators. Fourteen research variable indicators exhibit outer loading values exceeding 0.7. However, two indicators, namely SMMCon-13 and SMMCon-14, have outer loading values below 0.7. According to Chin and Newsted (1999), loading values of 0.50 to 0.60 meet the Convergent Validity requirements for further analysis. Moreover, based on Fig. 1, displaying the Outer Loading value of the four dimensions, it is evident that the Communication dimension makes the largest contribution of 0.813 to the Social Media Marketing value. The indicator with the highest contribution to the Communication dimension is the one responding to information (0.889). This implies that tourists highly respond to all information about marine tourism destinations in the Togeian Islands presented via social media marketing, whether through Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, or the official website from the Tourism Office. The cross-loading value of each construct is evaluated to ensure that the correlation of the construct with the measurement items exceeds that of other constructs. Discriminant validity is determined by examining cross-loading values; if the loading value of each indicator item on the construct exceeds the cross-loading value, namely 0.7, it satisfies the discriminant validity requirements (Ghozali & Latan, 2015).

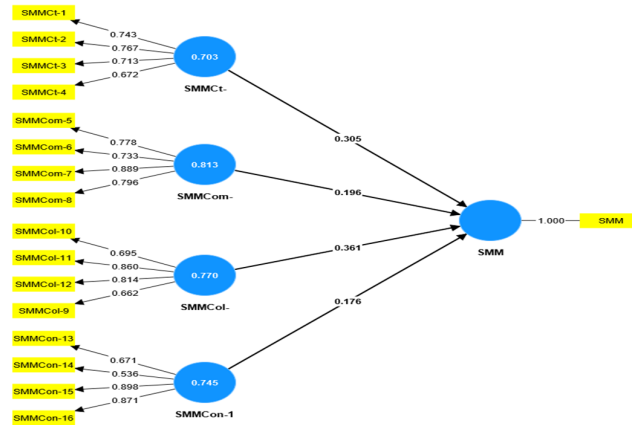


Fig. 1. Outer Model Scheme

Table 2
Cross Loading Values

Indicator	SMMCol	SMMCom	SMMCon	SMMCt
SMMCol-10	0.695	0.301	0.474	0.278
SMMCol-11	0.860	0.883	0.878	0.558
SMMCol-12	0.814	0.805	0.855	0.610
SMMCol-9	0.662	0.277	0.408	0.194
SMMCom-5	0.668	0.778	0.674	0.378
SMMCom-6	0.508	0.733	0.473	0.153
SMMCom-7	0.706	0.889	0.694	0.431
SMMCom-8	0.700	0.796	0.714	0.585
SMMCon-13	0.598	0.326	0.671	0.463
SMMCon-14	0.315	0.225	0.536	0.471
SMMCon-15	0.871	0.889	0.898	0.586
SMMCon-16	0.830	0.811	0.871	0.597
SMMCt-1	0.301	0.248	0.382	0.743
SMMCt-2	0.343	0.245	0.449	0.767
SMMCt-3	0.298	0.217	0.422	0.713
SMMCt-4	0.644	0.637	0.681	0.672

Table 3
Construct Reliability

Dimensions	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho a)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
SMMCol	0.770	0.806	0.581
SMMCom	0.813	0.825	0.642
SMMCon	0.745	0.807	0.576
SMMCt	0.703	0.700	0.525

Based on Table 2, it is evident that 16 indicators possess loading values exceeding the cross-loading values, indicating that this model satisfies the requirements for discriminant validity. Additionally, analysis can proceed to evaluate Construct Reliability. Construct Reliability assesses the reliability of latent variable constructs, with values above 0.70 considered reliable. Construct reliability is analogous to Cronbach's alpha, which can be detailed in Table 3. Internal Consistency Reliability evaluates the indicator's capability to measure its latent construct (Bashir Memon et al., 2017). Composite

reliability and Cronbach's alpha are utilized for this assessment. A composite reliability value ranging from 0.6 to 0.7 signifies good reliability (Sarstedt et al., 2017), with Cronbach's alpha expected to exceed 0.7 (Ghozali & Latan, 2015). As shown in Table 4, all constructs exhibit Cronbach's Alpha values exceeding 0.7, indicating their reliability. For instance, the Cronbach's Alpha of the SMMCol latent dimension is 0.770, surpassing 0.7, thereby confirming the reliability of the SMMCol latent dimension. Similarly, all other dimensions possess values above 0.7, signifying their reliability. The recommended minimum Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value is 0.5. If the AVE value exceeds 0.5, it confirms that the indicators in the model effectively measure the latent construct. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), a latent construct demonstrates satisfactory discriminant validity when its AVE value surpasses the squared correlation with other latent constructs. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values exceed 0.5, indicating a substantial variance or diversity of manifest variables associated with the latent construct, namely the Social Media Marketing dimension. Greater variance or diversity of manifest variables suggests a more comprehensive representation of the manifest variable to the latent construct. Thus, the indicators developed within the four-dimensional model of Collaboration (0.581), Communication (0.642), Connection (0.576), and Context (0.525) effectively measure the latent construct.

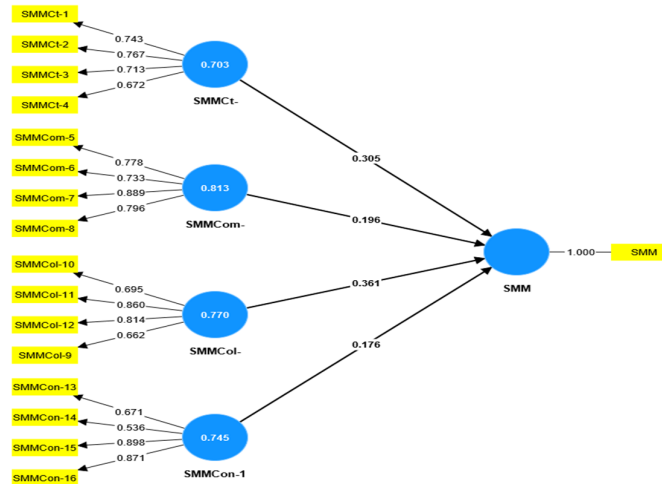


Fig. 2. Inner Model

Path coefficient evaluation is utilized to demonstrate the strength of the effect or influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable. Meanwhile, the Coefficient of Determination (R-Square) is employed to examine the extent to which endogenous variables are influenced by other variables. Chin and Newsted (1999) asserted that R^2 results of 0.67 and above for endogenous latent variables in the structural model signify that the influence of exogenous variables (those that influence) on endogenous variables (those that are influenced) falls within the good category. Meanwhile, if the result ranges from 0.33 to 0.67, it is categorized as moderate, and if it falls between 0.19 and 0.33, it is considered weak (Gozali, 2015). Based on the inner model scheme depicted, it can be elucidated that the Path Coefficient values in this study, from largest to smallest, are presented in Table 4.

Table 4
Path Coefficient Value

Dimensions	Path Coefficients
Context is one of the dimensions of measuring Social Media Marketing.	0.305
Communication is one of the dimensions of measuring Social Media Marketing.	0.196
Collaboration is one form of dimension of measuring Social Media Marketing.	0.361
Connection is one form of dimension of measuring Social Media Marketing.	0.176

Table 4 reveals that the path coefficients values determine the levels from highest to lowest. The Collaboration dimension emerges as the highest determining dimension of social media marketing measurement, with a path coefficients value of 0.361. This underscores the imperative for destination business actors to prioritize building collaboration, emphasizing indicators such as stakeholder collaboration (through the Pentax Helix), balancing efficiency and effectiveness in collaboration, and sustaining collaboration in the long term with the benefits of a win-win solution. Next, the Context dimension, with a path coefficients value of 0.305, stands out as the second highest in value. This highlights the significance of aspects related to format design within the context dimension, focusing on making maritime destination information easy to comprehend, presenting clear and attractive content, and ensuring timely and effective delivery. The Communication dimension, with a path coefficients value of 0.196, represents another crucial dimension for measuring Social Media Marketing. This indicates the importance of destination business actors paying attention to various indicators such as delivery method, listening ability, responsiveness to information, and the effectiveness of the conveyed message. Lastly, the Connection dimension, with a path coefficients value of 0.176, emerges as the lowest dimension. This suggests that business

actors can enhance marketing strategies by considering the Connection dimension, including maintaining relationships with fellow business actors operating in the destination sector, fostering consumer relationships centered on satisfaction-oriented service quality, establishing mutually beneficial reciprocal relationships, and ensuring the availability and stability of internet networks at destination locations.

5. Discussion

Based on the findings of this research, the Path Coefficients value for the Collaboration dimension surpasses that of the other three dimensions in the Social Media Marketing Variable. Collaborative marketing involves combining the resources and marketing power of a company with other companies sharing the same goals to achieve outcomes superior to what they could accomplish individually. Indicators for building stakeholder collaboration (through the Pentax Helix), balancing efficiency and effectiveness in collaboration, and maintaining the sustainability of collaboration in the long term with the benefits of a Win-Win Solution are essential. According to the research results of Zainal-Abidin et al. (2023), Li & Huang (2023), and Islahuddin et al. (2022), empirical evidence highlights the significance of digital collaboration for micro-DMOs (Destination Management Organizations), necessitating the transformation of “websites” into digital platforms serving as hubs for active engagement among business stakeholders. Successful digital collaboration entails a sense of mutual benefit, trust, control, and leadership, which may manifest differently compared to non-digital collaboration.

Context plays a significant role in the effectiveness of applying Social Media Marketing, particularly concerning indicators that contribute most to its application in the Togeian Islands Maritime tourism destination, Tojo Una-Una Regency. Therefore, business actors should implement new marketing strategies through Social Media Marketing, emphasizing aspects of format design for nautical destinations that are simple and easy to understand. This includes ensuring message content is clear, attractive, and presented with descriptions of its advantages, along with timely delivery. The findings of this research align with Alsoud et al.'s (2023) insights on the importance of social media marketing and its impact on the tourism industry in Jordan, offering valuable insights for practitioners and policymakers. Additionally, it was noted that in social media marketing, context has the greatest impact on a company's business, as evident in the message content that captures consumers' attention and the simplicity of message format. Moreover, a significant positive relationship exists between social media marketing factors, such as rewards, brand image, electronic word of mouth, customer engagement, trust, and customer satisfaction (Bala & Verma, 2018; Shafiq et al., 2023).

Communication factors profoundly influence the success of Social Media Marketing strategies, empirically proven through indicators such as listening ability, responsiveness to information, and message effectiveness. This corresponds with Chaker et al.'s (2022) framework describing the strategic use of social media in selling products and services. Additionally, it was noted that robust digital technology resources act as an empowering factor shaping the impact of social media strategies used to redefine marketing models. Conversely, the findings of this research are consistent with Duffett (2017), who explained that social media marketing communications positively influence each component of attitude among teenagers, albeit on a decreasing scale correlating with purchasing channels. Furthermore, the Connection dimension factor influences consumer relationships, fostering reciprocal relationships that benefit both parties, while the stability of the internet network impacts the effectiveness of Social Media Marketing. These findings align with Martínez-Navalón et al.'s (2020) observation of a positive relationship between environmental sustainability, satisfaction, and trust generated by tourism companies through their social media publications, irrespective of user gender.

6. Conclusion

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the results of the Outer Loading of the Social Media Marketing Variable, the largest Loading Factor value is the Communication dimension, followed by collaboration, Connection, and Context. Furthermore, the Path Coefficients value for the Collaboration dimension has the highest value compared to the other three dimensions in the Social Media Marketing Variable.

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