

HALAL TOURISM MARKETING STRATEGIES IN 4.0 ERA: A RESEARCH OBJECTIVE IN WEST SUMATERA

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Abstract

There were an estimated about 131 millions of Muslim visitor arrives globally and it is forecasted to grow to 156 million visitors by 2020. Based on the Global Muslim Travel Index 2019, Indonesia's ranking of halal tourism lifts to be the first rank. Meanwhile, Indonesia focuses on the development of 10 National Priority Halal Destination in 2018, includes West Sumatera. Along with this phenomenon, the digital technologies have brought significant transformation to the tourism industry, revolutionizing tourism enterprise, products and experiences, business ecosystem, and destinations. The rise of digital platforms increased and volume of tourism product which able to improve the employment rate and raise economic growth. Halal tourism is starting become popular among any kind of tourism in the world. The development of halal tourism that have been carrying out by various countries. Based on the previous study that conducted in China, South Korea, Japan, and Thailand found that promoting the halal tourism on their government website had significant role for improving the tourism sector in those countries. This paper will explore the marketing strategies of halal tourism in 4.0 era with the research objective in West Sumatera and discuss the chances and challenges as well.

Keywords: Halal Tourism, West Sumatra, Digital Marketing, 4.0 Era

Introduction

Tourism is generally known as people traveling for pleasure, it is nevertheless a complex activity that involves a number of issues that intersect over several branches in the economic and social sector (Peceny, Kuralt, Urbanic, Mokorel, & Ilijas, 2019). According to the World Tourism Organization, tourism is defined as a "social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business or professional purposes". Nowadays, tourism captured as one of the world's largest economic sector, recorded in 2017 it was support more than 313 million jobs in 2017 and generating 10.4% of global GDP. The Muslim travel market continues to grow rapidly and evolve amidst a changing environment. As one of the world's highest spending tourist market, destinations, businesses, and travel-related entities need to proactively develop strategies to engage and attract this segment to their destinations. Muslim travel

market is on course to continue its fast-paced growth to reach US\$220 billion by 2020, and it is expected to grow a further US\$80 billion to reach US\$300 billion by 2020 (CrescentRating, 2018). The Muslim lifestyle is experiencing several dynamic trends. Based on the CrescentRating's Halal Travel Frontier report highlighted 1three main issues which will impact the Muslim travel market trend: [1] Rapidly growing demand for halal travel education and accreditation; [2] Dynamic profiles of muslimtravelers; and [3] Investing in change, innovation and sustainability.

Since 2011, Crescent-rating has analysed the Halal travel market and benchmarked destinations, and its report initially called "Crescent-rating annual ranking" which transformed into the Global Muslim Travel Index(Mastercard-CrescentRating, 2019). According to the report, Indonesia successfully to be the first rank as the world's halal tourist destination after five years focusing on the developing halal tourism along with Malaysia with total score of 78.

Table 1 Top 10 Global Muslim Travel Index 2019 Rankings

Rank	Destination	Score
1	Malaysia	78
1	Indonesia	78
3	Turkey	75
4	Saudi Arabia	72
5	United Arab Emirates	71
6	Qatar	68
7	Morocco	67
8	Bahrain	66
9	Oman	66
10	Brunei	65

Meanwhile, Ministry of Tourism just released the Indonesia Muslim Travel Index 2019 that become a reference in the global standardization of 2019 Indonesia halal tourism destination with reference to GMTI. Indonesia is one of the countries counted in the halal tourism industries of the world. Therefore, as a global player, Indonesia must use global standard, namely the IMTI 2019 which adopts the GMTI standard. IMTI adopted 4 GMTI criteria which include access, communication, environment, and services (ACES), where in each part consist of three components. For Access consist of: visa requirements, water connectivity, transport infrastructure. Communication component consist of: outreach, ease of communication, and digital presence. He environment component consist of; safety and culture, visitor arrivals, and enabling climate, while the service component consist of; core needs (halal food and prayers), core service (hotel and airports), and unique experiences. This year is the second year of GMTI global standard implementation for assessing the performance of leading halal tourism destination in Indonesia. In total, there are 10 leading Indonesian halal tourism destination assessed using this standard. One of them is West Sumatera that become the research objectives from this paper.

Tourism marketing is a management process including forecasting and meeting current and future needs of the tourist. One of the most important applications of information technology, communication and internet is in tourism industry and due to the importance of the role which foreign tourism can play in various dimension such as

the foreign exchange earnings and GDP growth, the source of income for government, the source of job creation and improved social services, so to enter the competitive world market, they have to be equipped with facilities and utilize new technologies (Iamsoo, Niroomand, & Rafsanjani, 2013). With the launch of internet technology, the rules of marketing have been redefined all over the world. The internet has upended how the consumers engage with brands. It is transforming the economics of marketing and making obsolete many function's traditional strategies and structures (Edelman, 2010). Digital marketing today has become the one of the key focus areas for businesses all over the world. It started as a mode of communication and has evolved not just into another source of additional revenue but most importantly, to develop and maintain long-term relationship with the various parties in the market. Interactivity, as the main feature of the internet, has enabled a new dimension of connection between all the participants in the market (Batinic, 2015). Internet users today interact not just with each other but also with their preferred brands, this has opened an opportunity for brands to talk directly with their users and to know them better (Kaur, 2017). In this 4.0 era when digital marketing has the significant role of development, it will contribute to the better achievement of the overall marketing and business goals by enabling digital promotion to gain more traveller into the tourism destination.

Method

This paper combines theoretical background of marketing strategies in 4.0 era and the tourism destination with practical observation. Grounded in the theoretical digital marketing strategies, social media, and tourism destination. The research was focused on the aim of digital marketing strategies using for improving the tourism sector in West Sumatra about how the used of digital marketing, the way, how it was executed, and the benefits as well. The results are summed up in the conclusion.

Result and Discussion

Since tourism is one of the service industries, hence, the income from this industry is considered a part of the host country's GDP and directly affects the country's economic growth. The statistic shows that by increasing the worldwide number of international tourist arrival, the revenue from which also increases. To exemplify, in 1998 international tourism revenues is allocated about eight percent total world income, and 37 percent of the service sectors exports to itself. Also according to the World Tourism Organisation forecast, revenue from tourism in the world by 2020 will be the approximately value of two trillion dollar per year (Iamsoo, Niroomand, and Rafsanjani, 2013). Tourism has also an indirect impact on the economic growth; because it shows the effects of the dynamics of the total economy in form of spill-overs or other externalities (Marin, 1992). In a way of that, if tourism due to interaction with other economic activities, obtain prosperity and progress, other businesses that offer goods or services or the products they use will move with it. It means that, tourism can act as an engine for economic growth that pushes other activities forward. It is clearly seen that economic growth also has an effect due to the development of tourism.

The internet and other new technologies have changed most of the industry from service, industry to business sector on an unprecedented scale. Tourism industry is not an exception, internet information is now one of the important influences to the

customer decisions in may major market. The travellers tend to book travel trips, arrange their air ticket and accommodation as well as find the information of destination in travel forum, online group or social media networking website i the internet(Nguyen & Wang, 2011). Tourism industries must have what kind of strategy but the marketing strategy have more importance, because the last aim for all the industries is to sell their services and products and earn forecasted benefit; and it results good marketing strategy and program performance (Mousavi, 2012).

Digital Marketing

After reviewing few literatures about the subject, there are several definitions about digital marketing:

- Internet marketing and online advertising, also called e-marketing, web marketing, online marketing, or e-marketing, is the advertising of products and services over the internet (Ruzic, D. 2003).
- Internet marketing is the use of the internet and other digital technologies with traditional methods in order to achieve marketing goals. Marketing using electronic media such as the web, email, interactive TV, IPTV, and wireless media in conjunction with digital data about customers characteristics and behaviours (Chaffey, D., Ellis-Chadwick, F., Mayer, R., Johnston, K. 2009).
- Internet marketing (also known as eMarketing, web marketing, or digital marketing) is an all-inclusive term for marketing products and/or services online – and like many all-inclusive terms, internet marketing means different things to different people (Ward, 2016).
- Digital marketing is the promotion of products or brands via one or more forms of electronic media, differs from traditional marketing in that uses channels and methods that enable an organisation to analyse marketing campaigns and understand what is working and what isn't working typically in real time.

Traditional marketing involves collecting data through the process of market research and then analysing the same to help understand the audiences better. The digital nature of the internet technology provides a comprehensive and detailed insight into the characteristic of consumers and their behaviour in the electronic environment (Batinic, 2015). This information has transformed the way business decisions are being made. The impact of each and every marketing initiative can be studied in real-time along with being customized for each and every customer.

Characteristics of a Successful Digital Marketing Campaign

Post understanding what digital marketing is all about, it is also important to understand the top six characteristic of successful digital marketing campaigns:

- **Quality Website**
A quality website today is a prerequisite before establishing a business online. It not only helps the business transcend geographical boundaries to reach newer prospects, but also work as digital destinations for the audiences or the users.
- **Strong Social Media Presence**
Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram enable businesses to reach out and talk directly to their users. Presence on these

platforms not only helps brands to establish credibility, improve customer services but also provides insights on what your customers are up to.

- **Search Engine Optimization**
SEO is an integral part of digital marketing today. The only ranking of a business on various search engines determines the only popularity and helps increase website visits. There is a lot of misconception that SEO efforts would lead to immediate results. It is important to understand that SEO is an ongoing process and takes time to show results. Businesses need to ensure that a dedicated team works on ensuring that both on-page and off-page SEO initiatives are undertaken.
- **Email Marketing**
It isn't about bombarding the inbox of the users with emails. It needs to be planned and executed well to ensure maximum returns. Sending personalised emails to the users increases the chances of getting instant replies along with showing that a business care. Customise offers and communication for various user groups based on where they lie in the business relationship cycle.
- **Engaging Content**
Content used across various online platforms should lead to increased engagement rates. Businesses need to ensure that they post relevant content across various platforms at the right time. Blogging is an excellent way to engage with the audiences and move beyond than just selling products.
- **Mobile Friendly**
Everything that a business does digitally today should be more friendly. Majority of online users access the internet on their mobile phones and this should reflect in every aspect of online marketing consideration.

Digital Marketing and Tourism Industry

The tourism industry includes all the people, activities, and organisations involved in providing services for people on holiday, for example hotels, restaurants, and tour guides. Before the launch of digital marketing, the role of people who rendered these services was indispensable to the success of the business. With the launch of the internet, newer modes of marketing the various services to the target audiences have evolved. The tourism industry, in particular has been disrupted as a whole with the rapid development of the internet. Users purchase services related to tourism online at the click of a button while comparing amongst business from all over the world.

Halal Tourism in West Sumatra Marketing Strategies

Halal tourism has been started to be one of most studied subjects related to tourism as one of academic subject, since halal tourism has many prospects that could be discovered by country that have Muslim-majority as their population. Based on the regulation that published by Ministry of Tourism, the Regulation of the Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy Number 2/2014 on Guidelines for Implementation of Shariah Hotel Business have been decided 3 provinces that will be the pilot project of halal tourism. Those are West Nusa Tenggara, Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam, and West Sumatra. Global recognition for West Sumatra in halal tourism comes from the local government of West Sumatra that received an Award in World Halal Tourism Award 2016 in Abu Dhabi. West Sumatra's local government received the award consist of Best Halal Tourism Destination, Best Culinary, Best Halal Restaurant, and Best Travel

Agent. At first, West Sumatera are capable to conduct various international event, such as bicycle race named “Tour de Singkarak”, paragliding event “Fly for Fun” in Maninjau Lake, and surfing competition called “International Pro Surf Competition which held in Mentawai.

The important point for developing countries is that the digital marketing can play an important role in attracting tourism. By a lower cost it will result in the highest profitability. In fact, the main customers, the developed countries, widely use the internet to trade and travel and high percentages of its population are familiar with and connected to the internet. By using the information technology, people in the tourism industry can have a good choice for transferring their data and able to be beneficial from its marketing in the tourism industry. In order to compete and succeed digitally for promoting West Sumatra tourism, the most relevant digital marketing activities include:

Quality Website

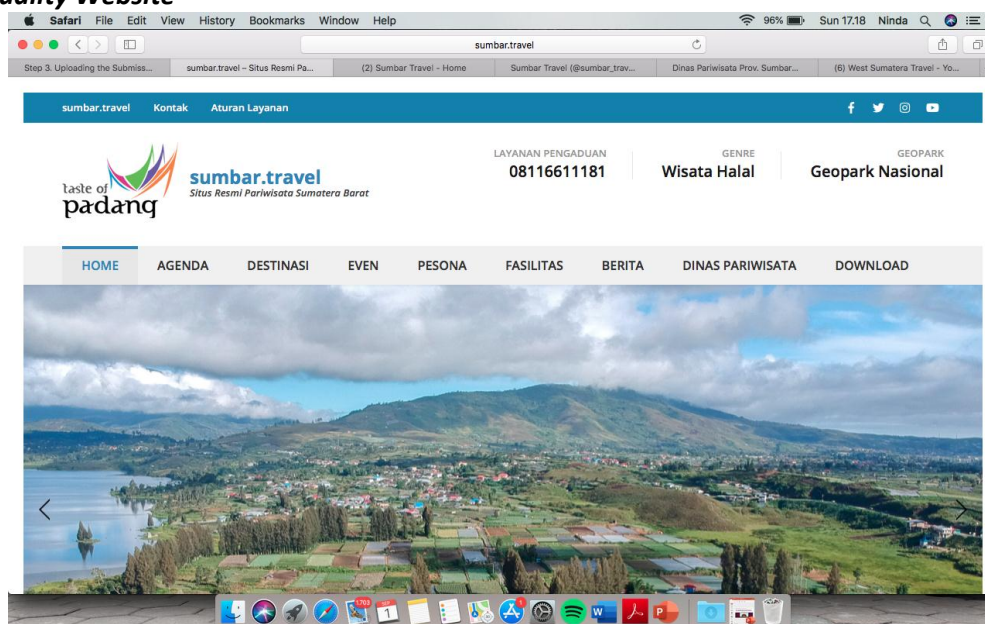


Figure 1. The West Sumatra's Tourism Official Website

Marketing experts must come up with attractive websites, find a way to attract customer to visit the website, keep them there for a while and make them frequently come back to their website (Kotler and Bowen, 2010). This is especially true for businesses which are only present online like the tourism industry. Websites work as digital destinations for the audiences wherein a business scan define their brand's experience. A good website should have all the services clearly listed down along with the relevant information.

The government of West Sumatra has been built the official website that can be accessed on <https://sumbar.travel>. Based on the website appeared, the website clearly gives the relevant information about West Sumatera tourism. With adding high resolution images of various services being offered like hotel rooms and recommendation destination. From the Figure 1, it can be ensured that there is enough space around the various images, texts, and buttons on the website. The adequate spacing between elements on a page allows for a more enjoyable reading experience

and allows time to focus on the individual pieces of a page without being overwhelmed by everything else around it. On the other hand, there are several improvements that need to do for giving the best experience to the users who visiting the website, such as: [1] It must be updated regularly to keep in view the changing customer needs and preferences; [2] Branding of West Sumatra tourism known as “Taste of Padang”, in contrary, West Sumatra not merely does about Padang, but also have lot of wonderful destination outside Padang. The government of West Sumatra might have another branding name that able to cover West Sumatra tourism overall; and [3] The website haven’t provide the English translation, it will caused the difficulties for the foreign tourist for looking for any information about West Sumatra.

Strong Social Media Presence

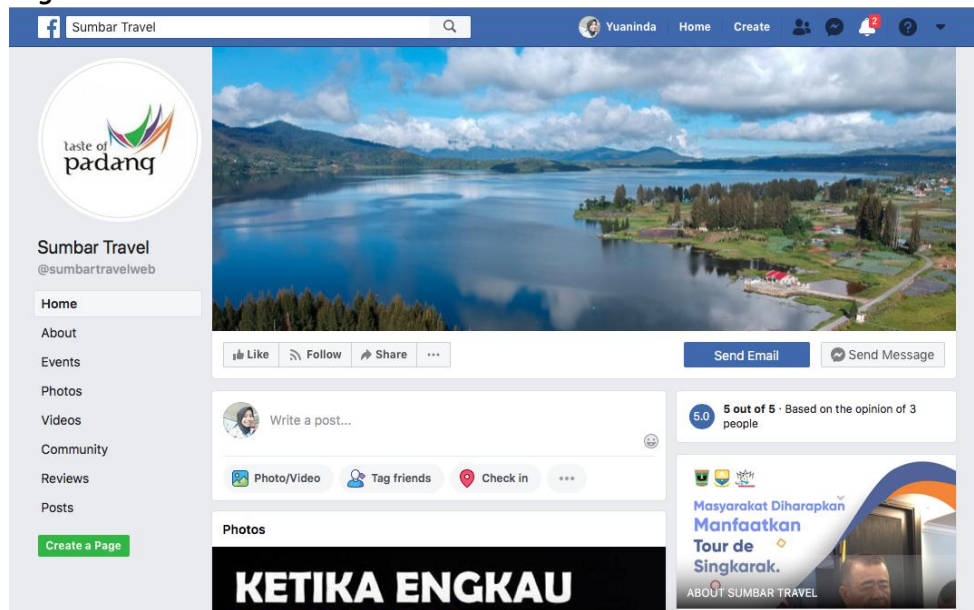


Figure 2. Official Facebook Page of West Sumatra Tourism



Figure 3. Official Twitter Account of West Sumatra Tourism

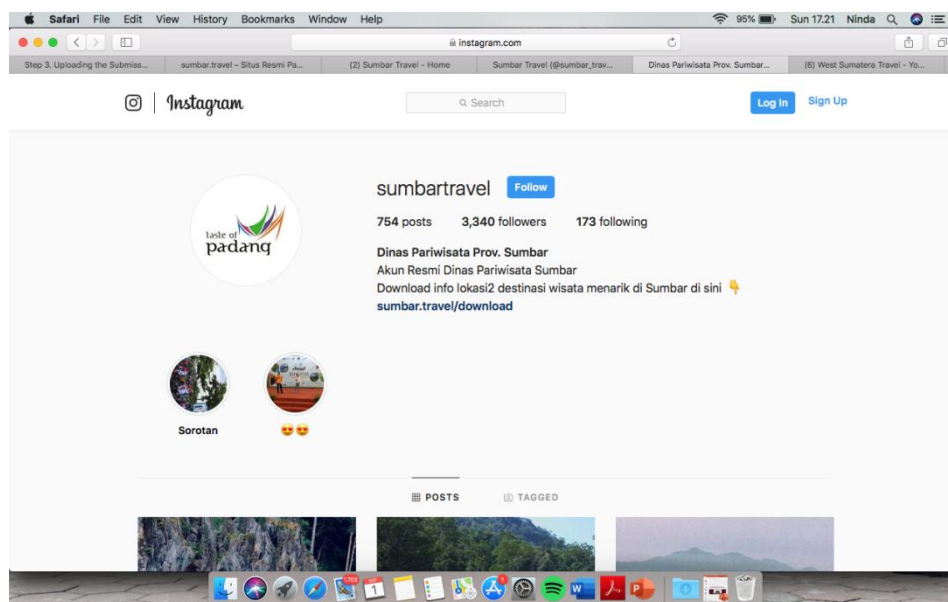


Figure 4. Official Instagram Account of West Sumatra Tourism

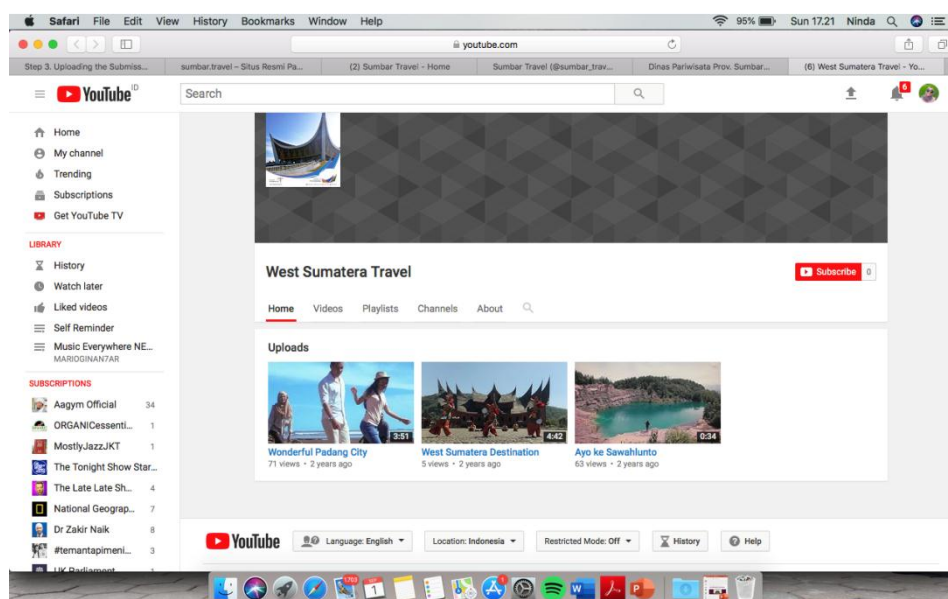


Figure 5. Official YouTube account of West Sumatra Tourism

Social media allow destinations to contact visitors at relatively low cost and higher levels of efficiency that can be achieved with more traditional communication tools (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). If the destination wants to enforce on the highly competitive global tourism market, it must be distinguishable from the competition (Porter, 1996). The destination will be successfully discernible with a well-developed communication strategy with the focus on social media. Since the social media are overcrowded and oversaturated with information, it is very difficult to attract the attention – however some schemes seem to work better than others. Graham (2005) states that social media are anything where users can participate, create and share content. Social media also include forums, ratings, reviews, social networking sites,

micro-blogging sites, pod-casts and video-casts and photo sharing sites (FPRM, 2009). In the last years, social media functionally was commonly incorporated into mobile applications. It is not the unique function of web anymore; Smartphones are becoming the most important social media devices. The benefit of social media and their effectiveness to destinations can be seen especially in an increase in brand awareness, brand engagement, word of mouth, friends and liking, trust and social validation (Pergolino, Rothman, Miller & Miller, 2012).

The most relevant social media platforms for a tourism business include: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube. Facebook and Instagram should be the top two platforms a tourism business due to the high number of users in the world. For improving those social media, it needs Search Engine Optimisation that plays a very important role in determining the website traffic. Moreover, to improve those social media, the using of "Keyword Planner" to find the most relevant keywords for the tourism business is the first step towards effective SEO. Thus, when the travellers are looking for information about halal tourism in West Sumatra. Presence of those platforms is not only about promoting the latest packages and facilities. Focussing on posting content which adds value to the audiences will improve the engagement rate.

Content

Content is the most essentials part of digital marketing. Good quality content must be engaging and add value to the everyday lives of the audiences. According to socialmedia.com "There's no secret formula to successfully engaging with the audience on social media, but applying 'The 80/20 Rule' should always be a big part of social media strategy. It simply comes down to this: use just 20% of your content to promote the brand, and dedicate 80% to content that really interest the audience and engages them in conversations.". In the tourism industry, videos and infographics are an interactive content type to get noticed and engage the users. (Kaur, 2017)

Conclusion

West Sumatra's halal tourism is supported by two factors, natural scenery and the fuse factor between Minangkabau and Islamic value. Digital marketing today is all about using the internet technologies to reach out to existing and newer audiences and engage with them. The digital marketing media that been used by the government of West Sumatra are able to improve the tourism sector in West Sumatra. But, still there are several improvements for making the digital media better and able to be understand easily.

For recommendations in order to improve the digital media marketing or West Sumatra tourism: [1] It must be updated regularly to keep in view the changing customer needs and preferences; [2] Branding of West Sumatra tourism known as "Taste of Padang", in contrary, West Sumatra not merely does about Padang, but also have lot of wonderful destination outside Padang. The government of West Sumatra might have another branding name that able to cover West Sumatra tourism overall; and [3] The website haven't provide the English translation, it will caused the difficulties for the foreign tourist for looking for any information about West Sumatra. [4] A separately designed for travel and culinary guide for the Travelers is an essentials marketing strategy element to create an impression of a destination.

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