

Analysis impact of marketing communications tourist digital based on Papuan MSMEs

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the impact of digital-based tourism marketing communication on micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Papua, particularly Rumah Etnik Papua, which has adopted digital strategies since 2023. The research background is rooted in the strategic contribution of the tourism sector as a major source of foreign exchange, a driver of local economic development, and an enabler of the 2030 SDGs, especially goals 1 (poverty eradication) and 8 (decent work and economic growth). However, previous studies have mostly focused on developed regions such as Java, Yogyakarta, and Bali, leaving a research gap in the context of Papua, which presents unique social, geographical, and infrastructural challenges. This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through literature review, semi-structured interviews, observations of digital activities, and documentation of online platforms, and validated using data triangulation. The findings reveal that digital marketing communication strategies are implemented through multi-channel platforms, including the website (rumahetnikpapua.com), Instagram, TikTok, TikTok Shop, and Airbnb. These strategies combine cultural storytelling with digital technology to effectively expand promotional reach, enhance awareness, and strengthen Papua's cultural image as a unique tourism destination. Nonetheless, MSMEs still face challenges such as technical limitations in website management, inconsistent visual branding across social media, limited product content on e-commerce, and constraints in digital marketing skills as well as infrastructure. Despite these challenges, the adoption of digital strategies has brought positive impacts, including broader exposure at local, national, and global levels; increased tourist visits; the opening of new online sales channels; and stronger credibility through positive reviews, testimonials, and external collaborations. This study contributes academically by filling the literature gap on digital tourism marketing communication in the Papuan context while also providing practical recommendations for developing culture-based MSMEs through integrated digital marketing strategies.

Keywords

Digital, Communication, Marketing, Tourism, MSMEs

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Introduction

In 2024, the tourism sector managed to record foreign exchange earnings of 12.63 billion dollars. US. Achievements This beyond target Which set, that is 7.38–13.08 billion US dollar. Next, the *travel ranking and tourism development index (TTDI)* Indonesian tourism is in 22nd position out of 119 countries, this makes Indonesia the second best in ASEAN, up 10 ranks from 2021. The following is the increase in the number of foreign tourist trips and domestic tourists for the 2020-2024 period presented in [Table 1](#).

Table 1. Journey tourist year 2020 – 2024

Year	Internasional tourists	Domestic tourists
2020	4.1 million	524.6 million
2021	1.6 million	613.3 million
2022	5.9 million	734.9 million
2023	11.6 million	825.8 million
2024	13.90 million	1 billion

Source: BPS

The tourism sector ranks third among the largest contributors to the country's foreign exchange. This is reflected in its contribution to GDP, employment, and foreign exchange contributions. Tourism has a positive impact on the village economy because it can create jobs, benefit local businesses, generate taxes for improving public facilities and increase community income. In addition, it has an impact on increasing the number of tourists, MSME income, and creating new jobs. The creative industry sector recorded a performance achievement of IDR 1,050 trillion, equivalent to 82.1% of the established target. According to the 2023 Expert Survey conducted by the Ministry of Creative Economy, 84 experts from academic, industrial, and government sectors assessed the potential of the creative economy. The development of the creative and tourism industries can be accelerated through effective promotion and marketing strategies. Promotion serves as a communication process between sellers and buyers, aimed at transforming consumers from being unfamiliar with a product to becoming interested in purchasing it. In communication studies, promotional strategy encompasses various activities, including advertising, publicity, and direct marketing.

The use of digital media in tourism promotion activities continues to grow in line with the increase in digital media users. There are 175.4 million people in Indonesia have access to internet. Utilization media digital makes it easier manager tour conveying information to consumers. Marketing communication is an important part of sustainability tourist, wrong the only one do marketing through social media. Instagram capable give awareness, understanding, interesting interest, build intention to visit tourist locations. Digitalization has played an effective role in increasing the attractiveness and development of tourist destinations.

Southwest Papua Province, as the youngest province in Indonesia, faces many challenges, including extreme poverty of 25.71 percent. Therefore, starting from the 2024 Sorong Regency Regional Development Plan, tourism has been designated as a leading sector for economic recovery through a tourism marketing communications

strategy. Papuan Ethnic MSME managers have implemented digital-based tourism marketing communications since 2023 with the hope of boosting tourist engagement. expand range promotion, increase mark sale and tourist visits like Which has more formerly done by destination tour in cities other. This research strengthens the strategic role of the tourism sector as a key driver in accelerating the achievement of the 2030 SDGs, particularly Goal 1 (poverty eradication) and Goal 8 (decent work and economic growth).

Based on a literature review of various reputable journals, it was found that research on digital marketing communications and tourism is still focused on developed regions such as Java, Yogyakarta, and Bali. However, the social, geographic, and infrastructure contexts in Papua are very different. Therefore, the urgency of this research is expected to fill the research gap in the scientific literature and contribute to providing relevant practical recommendations for MSMEs in Papua. Overall, this research not only addresses academic needs but also provides a real contribution to the development of regional policies, empowerment of local economies, and acceleration of development in underdeveloped regions through a digital tourism marketing communications approach. Based on the description above, the researcher is interested in analyzing the Impact of Digital-Based Tourism Marketing Communications on MSMEs in Papua, which is detailed through the following problem formulation:

1. How are digital-based tourism marketing communication strategies implemented by MSMEs in Papua?
2. What challenges do Papuan MSME managers face in managing digital marketing communications?
3. What impacts have MSMEs in Papua experienced in terms of increased promotional reach, tourist visits, and sales volume since adopting a digital marketing communication strategy?

Method

This one-year design-based study aims to analyze the impact of digital-based tourism marketing communication strategies on promotional reach, tourist visits, and sales volume, as well as the challenges faced in their implementation. The study adopts a problem-solving approach using an integrated marketing communication (IMC) framework in accordance with the Technology Readiness Level (TKT) 3 target. The stages implemented to achieve the objectives and outputs are presented in [Figure 1](#).



Figure 2. Diagram flow study

Results and discussion

Digital-based tourism marketing communication strategy

MSMEs in Papua, particularly Rumah Etnik Papua, have adopted a digital-based tourism marketing communication strategy by utilizing various online platforms. *rumahetnikpapua.com* serves as an information center featuring cultural tourism packages, homestays, culinary specialties, traditional clothing rentals, and craft products. This website serves not only as a digital catalog but also as a means of cultural education through blogs and articles that boost search engine visibility [1].

In addition, the Instagram account is used as a visual showcase to showcase the homestay atmosphere, cultural highlights, and visitor activities. Instagram also includes highlights. Stories that represent cultural richness, such as Papuan dances, mini museums, and craft galleries. Meanwhile, TikTok is used to reach younger generations through short videos showcasing ethnic settings, visitor interactions, and event promotions. This strategy is effective because the audience TikTok prefers authentic, lighthearted, and entertaining content [2].

Rumah Etnik Papua also utilizes TikTok Shop to sell Papuan specialty products, including traditional oils, red fruit juice, and handicrafts. This social media-based e-commerce platform strengthens its sales pipeline by making it easier for consumers to conduct transactions directly within the app [3]. For the international segment, Airbnb (Rumsram Homestay) is used as the main marketing platform. Here, accommodation is positioned as a cultural homestay with an authentic experience, tourists not only stay overnight, but also can learn about Papuan culture directly [4].

Multi-channel strategy demonstrates how Papuan MSMEs are able to combine cultural storytelling with digital technology. As a result, marketing communications serve not only as promotion but also as a means of brand building. Papua's image as a unique cultural tourism destination [5]. Digital strategy analysis of Papuan Ethnic House MSMEs presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Digital strategy analysis of Papuan Ethnic House MSMEs

Aspect	Data	Analysis	External Achievements
Website	<i>rumahetnikpapua.com</i> featuring tour packages, homestays, culinary delights, souvenirs	Functions as a catalog & branding, but there are still placeholders & SEO is not optimal	Identify web development needs
Instagram	3,585 followers, 393 posts, cultural highlights & crafts	Good content variety, inconsistent branding, low engagement	Storytelling content strategy is developed
TikTok	6,047 followers, 93.5K likes, cultural videos reach 41K views	Cultural content in demand; CTA & live shopping has not been utilized	TikTok's potential as a primary promotional channel
TikTok Shop	Herbal products & traditional crafts Papua (Rp. 40–250 thousand)	Limited products, minimal descriptions, few reviews	bundling & promotional video recommendations
Airbnb	Rumsram Homestay rating 5.0/5, reviews positive about friendliness & cultural experiences	Effective marketing to global travelers, but reviews are still few	Positive image as a culture-based homestay

Challenges in managing digital marketing communications

Despite the progressive strategies implemented, Papuan MSMEs still face several challenges. First, technical limitations in website management, such as the presence of placeholder displays, inconsistent design, and a booking feature that is not yet fully automated. This reduces the website's effectiveness as a direct transaction channel [6]. Second, on social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok, visual branding is not yet uniform. Color tones, filters, and caption styles vary, so messages aren't always consistent. Engagement is also relatively low compared to the number of posts. One reason is the minimal use of calls-to-action (CTAs) and collaboration with influencers [7]. Commerce platforms like TikTok Shop, the number of uploaded products is still limited, product descriptions are not detailed, and buyer reviews are minimal. Yet, reviews and

testimonials are important factors in building consumer trust [8]. Furthermore, MSMEs are still highly dependent on certain platforms (e.g., Airbnb for homestays). If the platform's algorithm or policies change, promotional reach could be significantly affected [9].

Another, more fundamental challenge is limited human resources and infrastructure. MSME managers are still limited in digital marketing skills, creative content creation, and digital data analysis [10]. Furthermore, internet connectivity in Papua is not yet stable in all areas, so digital marketing activities do not always run smoothly [11].

The impact of adopting digital marketing communications

Despite the challenges, adopting digital strategies has had a significant impact. First, in terms of promotional reach, Papuan MSMEs are now recognized not only locally but also nationally and internationally. TikTok has successfully penetrated the youth market, with some videos reaching over 40,000 views [12]. Airbnb is opening up global market access with foreign tourists starting to stay at Rumsram Homestay [13]. Second, in terms of tourist visits, digital platforms have contributed to increasing awareness and interest in visiting. Promotions through Instagram and TikTok have helped attract domestic tourists, while Airbnb has been effective in attracting international tourists [14]. Third, in terms of sales volume, TikTok Shop is starting to provide new opportunities for marketing Papuan specialty products. Herbal products, crafts, and souvenirs are gaining additional distribution channels, previously limited to offline sales [15].

In addition to quantitative impacts, digital strategies also produce qualitative ones, such as improved image and trust. Five-star reviews on Airbnb, visitor testimonials, and collaborative publications with external institutions (such as Bank Indonesia) strengthen Rumah Etnik Papua's position as an authentic and trusted tourist destination [16].

Table 2. Strategies, challenges, and impacts of digital marketing for Papuan Ethnic Houses

Aspect	Strategy	Challenge	Impact
Digital Platform	Website , Instagram, TikTok , TikTok Shop, Airbnb	The website is not optimal, visual branding is not consistent	Increase local, national, international exposure
Content & Branding	<i>storytelling</i> , ethnic visuals, visitor activities	Minimal CTA, limited influencer collaboration	Viral cultural content (10K–40K views), attracting a young audience
E- commerce	Product sales via TikTok Shop	minimal descriptions & reviews	Papuan specialty products are becoming more widely known and sold online.
Homestay (Airbnb)	Rumsram Homestay → authentic cultural experience	Platform dependency & few reviews	Rating 5.0, attracting foreign tourists
Human Resources & Infrastructure	Internal team manages digital marketing	Limited digital knowledge & internet access	Strengthening human resource capacity is a strategic need
Image & Trust	Reviews, testimonials, institutional collaborations	Promotion is not continuous & diversification is limited	Positive image increases, Papua's cultural brand becomes stronger

Conclusion

This study concludes that digital-based tourism marketing communication has played a significant role in strengthening the development of MSMEs in Papua, particularly Rumah Etnik Papua, through the use of integrated digital platforms such as websites, Instagram, TikTok, TikTok Shop, and Airbnb. The findings show that the adoption of these platforms has expanded promotional reach, increased tourist awareness and visits, opened new online sales opportunities, and enhanced the credibility of the business through reviews, testimonials, and collaborations. At the same time, the study also reveals several challenges, including technical limitations in website management, inconsistent visual branding, limited e-commerce optimization, inadequate digital marketing skills, and unstable internet infrastructure. Despite these constraints, the overall impact of digital marketing communication remains positive, demonstrating that culture-based digital promotion can be an effective strategy for improving the visibility, competitiveness, and sustainability of Papuan MSMEs. Therefore, strengthening digital capacity, improving content consistency, and optimizing integrated digital platforms are essential to support the long-term growth of tourism-based MSMEs in Papua.

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