

Innovation in MSME Digital Promotion Strategies as a Catalyst for Enhancing Tourist Visits in the Digital Economy Era

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Article Info

Article history:

Received: 20 October 2025

Publish: 1 November 2025

Keywords:

MSMEs;

Innovation Digital Promotion Strategy;

Tourist Visits.

Abstract

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a crucial role in strengthening local economies and supporting the development of sustainable tourism. This study aims to analyze the forms and effects of MSME digital promotion strategy innovations on the increase of tourist visits in the digital economy era. The research employed a mixed method approach with a sequential explanatory design. The findings indicate that MSME digital promotion strategies have a positive and significant effect on tourist visits, as reflected in the regression equation $Y = 23.744 + 0.339X$, with a significance value of 0.018 (< 0.05). The most effective forms of digital promotion innovation include visual storytelling content and collaboration among tourism stakeholders through the use of social media platforms. The main supporting factors consist of human resource capabilities, product quality, tourist experience, and government support. The study concludes that digital promotion innovation plays a vital role in enhancing MSME competitiveness and stimulating local economic growth.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) represent one of the main pillars of Indonesia's national economy. They play a strategic role not only as major providers of employment opportunities but also as key drivers of inclusive and equitable economic growth. According to data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS), MSMEs contribute more than 60% to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and absorb around 97% of the workforce across both formal and informal sectors (Alatawi et al., 2025).

This dominant role highlights that strengthening the capacity and competitiveness of MSMEs is a strategic effort to reinforce the structure of the national economy and promote equitable community welfare. In the tourism sector, MSMEs play a vital role in enriching tourists' experiences through local products, traditional culinary offerings, handicrafts, and various tourism-supporting services. Innovation and creativity within MSMEs provide added value in strengthening both the attractiveness and competitiveness of tourism destinations. This is in line with Yang et al. (2021), who stated that tourism and MSMEs function as key drivers of national economic development through the expansion of local economic activities across various sectors. In practice, the success of the tourism sector heavily depends on the contribution of MSMEs, which supply diverse tourism-related products and services such as local cuisine, souvenirs, accommodation, and transportation (Lubis et al., 2025). Similarly, Handayani et al. (2022) emphasize that tourism-based MSMEs play a crucial role in creating authentic and culturally rich tourism experiences

while promoting destination sustainability through local community empowerment and the optimal utilization of regional potential.

With the rapid advancement of digital technology, MSME actors are increasingly required to develop strong adaptability to information and communication technology developments. This situation encourages MSMEs to transform their business promotion strategies through the utilization of digital tools. Digital promotion can be carried out through social media platforms, online marketplaces, and various other forms of digital marketing, which can ultimately enhance business visibility, attract tourist attention, and foster stronger interactive relationships with consumers.

West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) Province, as one of Indonesia's rapidly developing tourism regions, possesses diverse tourism potential encompassing natural beauty, cultural richness, and authentic, competitive ecotourism. In line with the growth of its tourism sector, the number of tourist arrivals in NTB continues to increase each year. By mid-2025, the total number of domestic and international tourist visits had exceeded 1.1 million, reflecting the region's strong tourism appeal and success in developing both MSMEs and sustainable tourism simultaneously.

Table 1: Number of domestic tourist trips by destination province in 2025

Province Name	Month					
	January	February	March	April	May	June
West Nusa Tenggara (people)	1,230,718	1,038,329	1,051,980	1,427,974	1,177,046	1,294,792

Sorce: bps.go.id

This study was conducted in Sukarara Village, located in Central Lombok Regency, one of the leading creative economy based tourism destinations in West Nusa Tenggara (NTB). The village possesses significant potential through its signature product traditional handwoven fabric (tenun) which not only represents the local cultural identity but also holds high economic value for the tourism sector. Despite the vast opportunities offered by social media and digital platforms, most MSMEs in this area have yet to fully optimize their potential. Promotional activities are still predominantly conducted through conventional means, such as participating in local exhibitions, tourism events, and relying on social networks through word of mouth marketing (Junaedi, 2020). Although these traditional approaches foster personal connections and social closeness, they remain limited in reaching wider audiences and are less effective in attracting both domestic and international tourists.

The rapid development of information and communication technology has transformed the paradigm of modern marketing, particularly among MSMEs. By leveraging various digital platforms such as social media, e-commerce, and online-based promotional content MSMEs can expand market reach and enhance communication effectiveness with consumers. Such strategies have proven effective in increasing sales performance and strengthening brand image amid intensifying business competition. Novita (2025) highlights that platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok offer opportunities for MSMEs to build brand awareness more efficiently and at lower costs compared to conventional marketing methods. This argument is further supported by Ikhbar et al. (2025), who emphasize that appropriate implementation of digital marketing strategies can significantly enhance customer interaction and engagement, leading to improved customer loyalty, purchase intention, and overall MSME competitiveness within a dynamic digital business ecosystem.

Due to their flexibility and extensive reach, social media platforms have become one of the most commonly utilized tools in developing digital marketing strategies. This aligns with the findings of Syukri and Sunrawali (2022), who explained that the use of social and distribution media has become increasingly popular among consumers in the Industry 4.0 era. Innovation in MSME promotion strategies encompasses not only creativity but also the strategic formulation and presentation of promotional messages, which involve the use of customer data, market trend analysis, and collaboration with various tourism stakeholders.

However, the effectiveness of MSME digital promotion strategies cannot be achieved optimally without strong and efficient internal management. Operational optimization through the integration of technologies such as digital inventory systems, financial applications, and online-based logistics has been proven to enhance productivity while reducing operational costs (Purnama & Wibisono, 2024). Several studies indicate that the synergy between digital marketing strategies and operational efficiency significantly improves MSME competitiveness. Purnama and Wibisono (2024) revealed that MSMEs adopting digital systems in production and distribution processes experience sustainable increases in sales volume and profitability. Similarly, Aryanti and Ali (2025) emphasized that employee training and product innovation serve as key supporting factors that reinforce the effectiveness of MSME digital promotion strategies.

Based on these challenges, an in depth study is required to explore the forms of innovation in MSME digital promotion strategies as a catalyst for increasing tourist visits. The results of this research are expected to contribute both theoretically and practically to MSME practitioners, local governments, and tourism stakeholders in optimizing the role of MSMEs as key drivers of tourism attractiveness.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a mixed-methods approach using a Sequential Explanatory Design. The research was conducted in two main stages: (a) quantitative phase, aimed at measuring the influence of digital promotional strategy innovation on the increase in tourist visits; and (b) a qualitative phase, designed to deepen and explain the quantitative findings through interviews and field observations. This approach was chosen to provide a more comprehensive understanding that integrates both numerical (quantitative) and empirical (qualitative) data, thereby ensuring a holistic interpretation of the research results.

Population and Sample

The population of this study consists of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) engaged in the tourism sector in Sukarara Village, Central Lombok Regency. The sampling technique applied is purposive sampling, with criteria as follows: (a) MSMEs that have implemented digital promotional strategies (through social media, marketplaces, websites, and other platforms), and (b) MSMEs that directly interact with tourists through online channels.

The quantitative phase involved 50 respondents, representing active MSMEs utilizing digital marketing platforms. Meanwhile, the qualitative phase included six key informants selected based on their comprehensive understanding of promotional strategies and innovation practices within the tourism MSME ecosystem.

Types and Sources of Data

The research utilizes both quantitative and qualitative data sources.

1. Quantitative data were collected through structured questionnaires distributed to MSME owners and managers to measure the level of innovation in digital promotional strategies, the extent of digital media utilization, and its impact on tourist visits.

2. Qualitative data were obtained through in-depth interviews, field observations, and document analysis to explore the nature of innovation, creative promotional strategies, as well as the challenges and opportunities encountered in implementing digital marketing practices within the tourism context

Research Variables and Indicators

The variables examined in this study consist of two main constructs:

1. Innovation of MSME Promotional Strategy (X) Indicators:
 - a. Utilization of digital technology
 - b. Creativity in promotional content
 - c. Collaboration with tourism stakeholders
 - d. Frequency and consistency of digital promotion
2. Increase in Tourist Visits (Y) Indicators:
 - a. Number of visitors before and after digital promotion
 - b. Tourists' interest in MSME products
 - c. Feedback and engagement through social media platforms

Quantitative Data Analysis Techniques

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS software through several statistical stages, including:

1. Validity and Reliability Tests to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the research instruments.
2. Descriptive Statistical Analysis to describe respondents' profiles and summarize variable characteristics.
3. Simple Linear Regression Analysis to determine the influence of MSME promotional strategy innovation (X) on the increase in tourist visits (Y). The basic regression equation is formulated as follows:

$$Y=a+bX+e$$

Qualitative Data Analysis

The qualitative data in this study were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman (2020) interactive model, which consists of three main stages:

1. Data Reduction, selecting, simplifying, and organizing relevant information obtained from interviews and observations to focus on significant themes related to MSME digital promotion strategies.
2. Data Display, presenting the reduced data in descriptive narrative form, supported by tables, matrices, or visual diagrams to facilitate interpretation and pattern recognition.
3. Conclusion Drawing and Verification, interpreting the emerging patterns to identify relationships, meanings, and insights, followed by verification through continuous comparison with the raw data to ensure validity and consistency.

Data Validity Test

To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the data, several validation techniques were applied, including:

1. Source Triangulation, comparing and cross-checking information obtained from different stakeholders, such as MSME owners, tourists, and tourism managers, to ensure data consistency.
2. Method Triangulation, integrating findings from multiple data collection methods, including questionnaires, in depth interviews, and direct observations, to strengthen the validity of the interpretations.
3. Member Checking, confirming the interview results and interpretations with key informants to validate the accuracy of the researcher's understanding and minimize potential bias.

Research Procedure

The research procedure was carried out through three main stages in accordance with the Sequential Explanatory Mixed Methods design:

1. Quantitative Phase
 - a. Developing the research instruments.
 - b. Distributing questionnaires to MSME respondents.
 - c. Processing and statistically analyzing the collected quantitative data.
2. Qualitative Phase
 - a. Selecting key informants based on the quantitative findings.
 - b. Conducting in depth interviews and field observations.
 - c. Interpreting qualitative insights to enrich and explain the quantitative results.
3. Integration Phase
 - a. Integrating quantitative and qualitative findings to draw comprehensive conclusions and formulate meaningful implications.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Profile

A total of 50 MSME owners in Sukarara Village participated as respondents in this study. All respondents were actively engaged in promoting traditional woven products through various digital media platforms. The majority of participants were between 25 and 55 years old, with more than 10 years of business experience in the handicraft and tourism sectors. Furthermore, approximately 90% of respondents reported using digital media platforms such as Instagram, WhatsApp Business, TikTok, and online marketplaces as their primary promotional tools. These findings indicate that MSME actors in Sukarara Village have successfully adapted to technological advancements by utilizing various online platforms to enhance product visibility and reach wider audiences. The increasing adoption of digital marketing practices demonstrates a positive shift toward technological literacy and digital transformation among local entrepreneurs. This adaptation is not only essential for business continuity but also serves as a critical driver in strengthening the competitiveness of creative-based tourism destinations.

Descriptive Analysis of Research Variables

a. Innovation in Digital Promotion Strategy (X)

The descriptive analysis results indicate that the level of innovation in MSME digital promotion strategies achieved an average score of 4.21, categorized as high. Among the indicators, creativity in promotional content recorded the highest mean score of 4.35, while collaboration with tourism stakeholders had the lowest mean of 3.98. These findings suggest that creativity in content development is the most prominent aspect of digital marketing activities among MSMEs in Sukarara Village. The ability to design visually appealing and culturally embedded content has been a key driver in attracting audience attention and increasing engagement levels on digital platforms

b. Increase in Tourist Visits (Y)

The variable representing the increase in tourist visits obtained an average score of 4.08, which also falls within the high category. The most significant indicator was the number of visitors after digital promotion, with a mean value of 4.25. This result demonstrates that the implementation of digital marketing strategies has contributed significantly to the growth of tourist interest and visitation rates in Sukarara Village. The effective use of social media campaigns and digital storytelling techniques has enhanced the visibility of the village as a cultural tourism destination, leading to increased traveler awareness and visit intention

Simple Linear Regression Test

The results of the simple linear regression test of the MSME digital promotion strategy innovation variable (X) on the increase in tourist visits (Y) are shown in the following table.

Table 2. Linear Regression Results

Coefficients ^a								
Model		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	23.744	4,807		4,939	.000		
	Total ISP	.339	.138	.322	2,450	.018	1,000	1,000
a. Dependent Variable: Total PKW								

Source: Processed primary data, 2025

4. CONCLUSIONS

Provide a statement that what is expected, as stated in the "Introduction" chapter, can ultimately result in the "Results and Discussion" chapter, so that there is a match. In addition, prospects for the development of research results and prospects for the application of further research (based on the results and discussion) can also be added.

Based on the table above, the simple linear regression equation formed from this study is as follows:

$$Y=23.744+0.339X$$

Simple Linear Regression Analysis

Based on the results of the simple linear regression analysis, the constant value was found to be 23.744, indicating that when the variable *innovation in digital marketing strategies among MSMEs* is equal to zero, the *increase in tourist visits* is predicted to be 23.744 units. The regression coefficient value of 0.339 suggests that for every one-unit increase in *innovation in digital marketing strategies*, the *number of tourist visits* increases by 0.339 units, assuming other variables remain constant. The *t*-test result shows a calculated *t*-value of 2.450 with a significance level of $0.018 < 0.05$, indicating that *innovation in digital marketing strategies* has a statistically significant effect on the *increase in tourist visits*. This finding implies that the higher the level of innovation in digital marketing strategies implemented by MSMEs, the greater the increase in the number of tourists visiting Sukarara Village. Furthermore, the tolerance value of 1.000 and the VIF value of 1.000 indicate the absence of multicollinearity problems in the regression model, as both values are well below the commonly accepted threshold ($VIF < 10$).

In other words, the findings of this study indicate that innovation in digital marketing strategies (ISP) has a positive and significant effect on the increase in tourist visits (PKW). This implies that improvements in digital marketing strategies have a tangible impact on performance outcomes, as reflected in the increased number of tourist arrivals. The more innovative the digital marketing strategies implemented by MSMEs, the greater the potential increase in tourist visits. These findings are consistent with the study by Sigala (2018), which highlights that digitalization enhances visibility and real time interaction between businesses and consumers, thereby strengthening market engagement and promoting destination attractiveness.

Qualitative Findings: Forms and Implementation of Digital Marketing Innovation

Strategies

Based on in-depth interviews with MSME actors, tourism destination managers, and relevant institutional stakeholders, the study identified that the effectiveness of digital marketing innovation strategies among MSMEs in attracting tourist visits is influenced by several interrelated factors.

1. **Creativity and Content Consistency.** This factor serves as a key determinant in shaping tourist attraction. Authentic, visually appealing, and regularly published content has been proven to enhance engagement and build trust among potential tourists. The use of *visual storytelling* and the integration of local cultural values were found to be more effective than generic promotional approaches (Wang & Ritchie, 2019).
2. **Human Resource Capacity.** Most MSME actors still face limitations in managing digital media effectively. Therefore, training in creative content production, social media analytics, and digital marketing strategy development is urgently required to improve digital literacy and marketing competence (World Bank, 2019).
3. **Product Quality and Tourist Experience.** Digital promotion efforts will have limited impact unless supported by high-quality products and satisfactory tourism services. Tourists who experience positive interactions and memorable visits are more likely to engage in *electronic Word Of Mouth (e-WOM)*, thereby amplifying organic promotion and destination credibility (Kim & Hardcastle, 2018; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004).
4. **Digital Ecosystem Support and Government Policy.** The availability of reliable internet infrastructure, MSME digitalization programs, and collaborative promotional initiatives facilitated by local governments play a crucial role in strengthening the competitiveness of tourism-based MSMEs (OECD, 2020)

Thus, digital marketing innovation among MSMEs plays a crucial role as a primary driver in increasing tourist visits, particularly in the digital economy era that demands creativity, adaptability, and cross-sector collaboration. Findings from in-depth interviews with six key informants revealed that MSME actors in Sukarara Village have transitioned from conventional promotional methods to the utilization of modern social media platforms such as Instagram Reels and TikTok. Through *storytelling videos* that highlight the production process and authentic tourist experiences, these MSMEs effectively enhance audience engagement and emotional connection with their products and destination. The informants emphasized that the most impactful forms of innovation involve creative video content and cross-sector collaborations among tourism stakeholders. Moreover, the establishment of collective promotional communities that integrate local products with nearby tourism attractions has successfully strengthened Sukarara's brand identity as a cultural tourism destination. However, technical skills and time constraints remain significant challenges in maintaining consistent digital promotion. On the other hand, institutional support, particularly through digital marketing training programs, has been shown to improve MSME actors' capacity and confidence in leveraging technology. The study concludes that the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies depends not only on technological competence but also on the quality of human resources, the level of collaboration, product quality, and the presence of supportive policy and business environments.

Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

Based on both quantitative and qualitative analyses, the study demonstrates that digital marketing innovation among MSMEs makes a substantial contribution to the increasing number of tourist visits to Sukarara Village. Effective forms of digital promotion innovation that attract tourists include interactive creative content and collaborative initiatives between

MSME actors and destination managers. These findings reinforce Open Innovation Theory (Chesbrough, 2003), which emphasizes the significance of external collaboration in generating added value within promotional strategies. Furthermore, the results support Digital Transformation Theory (Bharadwaj et al., 2013), which posits that the utilization of digital technologies can accelerate business growth and expand markets, particularly within community-based tourism contexts. Consequently, digital marketing innovation serves as a key driver in enhancing tourist engagement and visitation in the digital economy era an era characterized by the need for creativity, adaptability, and cross-sectoral synergy. The integration of empirical findings confirms that the sustainability and competitiveness of MSMEs in tourism depend not only on technological adoption but also on the ability to innovate collaboratively and align with the dynamics of digital ecosystems

5. CONCLUSIONS

1. The study concludes that digital marketing innovation has a positive and significant impact on the increase in tourist arrivals to Sukarara Village. This finding underscores the crucial role of digital transformation in strengthening the competitiveness of community-based MSMEs within the tourism sector.
2. Creative promotional content and the utilization of digital platforms such as Instagram Reels and TikTok emerge as the most effective forms of innovation in attracting tourist interest. These platforms enable MSMEs to communicate authenticity and cultural values through engaging storytelling techniques.
3. Collaborative efforts and joint branding between MSMEs and tourism destination managers effectively reinforce Sukarara Village's image as a cultural tourism destination, enhancing both recognition and market reach.
4. Human resource capacity and governmental support through digital marketing training programs play a vital role in improving MSMEs' digital promotional competencies. Strengthening these aspects ensures sustainable digital engagement and strategic use of online media.
5. Product quality and memorable tourist experiences amplify the impact of digital promotion through electronic word of mouth (e-WOM), further driving visitor interest and loyalty.

6. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author expresses his sincere gratitude to all parties who have provided support, both directly and indirectly, so that this research can be successfully implemented. This support includes contributions in the form of information, insights, and collaboration throughout the data collection, analysis, and preparation of this article. It is hoped that the findings of this research will provide a meaningful contribution to the development of more effective and sustainable MSMEs.

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