

Digital Marketing Approaches For Tourism Growth: A Study of Puncak Bila, Sidrap

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Abstract

This study explores the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies in increasing tourist visits to Puncak Bila Tourism Park, Sidrap, South Sulawesi. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach through interviews, observations, and documentation, the research examines supporting and constraining factors in digital promotion. Results indicate that social media platforms Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook play a central role in destination branding, strengthened by user-generated content (UGC) that broadens reach organically. Visitor data from 2021 to 2024 show a sharp rise in arrivals, reflecting the positive impact of digital promotion. However, constraints remain, including limited digital skills, insufficient infrastructure, and weak SME integration. To address these gaps, strategic solutions based on the Penta Helix model capacity building, website development, and cross-sector collaboration are recommended. This study enriches theoretical perspectives on destination marketing while providing practical implications for sustainable, community-based tourism development in Indonesia.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism has long been acknowledged as a strategic driver of regional economic development due to its capacity to generate local revenue, create employment opportunities, stimulate infrastructure investment, and strengthen related sectors such as transportation, hospitality, and creative industries (Buhalis, 2020). In the Indonesian context, where tourism is positioned as one of the priority sectors in national development, local tourism destinations have a significant role as engines of inclusive economic growth (Gunawan et al., 2024). The optimization of local natural and cultural resources allows destinations not only to increase their attractiveness but also to empower surrounding communities through entrepreneurship and sustainable livelihood opportunities. Puncak Bila Tourism Park in Sidenreng Rappang (Sidrap), South Sulawesi, is one such destination with a 12-hectare area offering hills, lakes, and rice fields, complemented by recreational facilities that have contributed to a steady rise in visitor numbers.

However, the marketing of tourism products has undergone fundamental changes in line with global digital transformation. Conventional promotion strategies, including brochures, travel fairs, or collaboration with local travel agents, are no longer adequate to meet the expectations of today's tourists. The shift in consumer behavior is clearly illustrated in the report by Data Reportal (Kemp, 2024), which states that more than 4.2 billion people worldwide actively use social media. Tourists now tend to seek inspiration, information, and recommendations through digital platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook. This phenomenon has given rise to digital marketing as an essential component of destination promotion. According to Khotimah & Sulistyowati (2022) tools such as search engine optimization (SEO), paid digital advertising, and influencer collaboration have proven to significantly increase visibility, engagement, and competitiveness, particularly among millennial and Gen Z travelers who dominate global tourism demand.

The case of Puncak Bila Tourism Park demonstrates both opportunities and challenges in adapting to this digital era. Empirical data show a sharp increase in visitors, from 70,100 in 2021 to 194,336 in 2024, suggesting that even modest digital promotion through social media has contributed to higher tourist arrivals. Nevertheless, the marketing approach adopted thus far remains rudimentary, relying mainly on basic content uploads without structured planning, targeted advertising, or advanced optimization (Afifah & Drajat, 2022). As a result, the park faces several limitations, including the lack of skilled human resources in digital marketing, insufficient digital infrastructure, weak destination branding in online spaces, and limited collaboration among stakeholders. These constraints reflect a clear gap between the destination's rich natural and recreational potential and the effectiveness of its marketing strategies.

At the same time, the park holds vast economic and social potential that remains underutilized. With an increasing number of visitors, Puncak Bila offers opportunities for local economic growth through employment creation in guiding services, culinary and handicraft businesses, and small-scale accommodations (Darmana et al., 2021). Beyond economic benefits, the development of sustainable tourism practices has the potential to preserve natural resources while promoting cultural heritage. Yet, without adaptive and sustainable digital marketing strategies, the park risks losing competitiveness to other destinations in South Sulawesi and beyond that are more digitally active and strategically branded (Junaid, 2021). This underscores the urgency for local destinations to embrace innovative marketing approaches that align with digital trends.

Despite the growing importance of digital marketing in tourism, academic research in Indonesia and similar contexts remains relatively limited, particularly at the level of local destinations. Previous studies have primarily focused on large-scale or international destinations, leaving a gap in understanding how smaller, community-based attractions can effectively utilize digital platforms. Furthermore, the integration of sustainability principles and multi-stakeholder collaboration models, such as the Penta Helix framework, has not been extensively explored in relation to digital tourism marketing (Risfandini et al., 2023). Addressing this research gap is critical not only for theoretical enrichment but also for offering practical solutions that can empower destination managers, local governments, and community stakeholders to implement effective strategies.

Therefore, this study seeks to develop and evaluate digital marketing strategies aimed at enhancing tourist visits to Puncak Bila Tourism Park. By analyzing current practices, identifying challenges, and formulating sustainable approaches, this research is expected to contribute theoretically to the growing body of literature on tourism marketing in the digital era. Practically, it aims to provide actionable recommendations for destination managers, policymakers, and other stakeholders in strengthening the competitiveness of local tourism destinations. Ultimately, the study aspires to demonstrate how digital marketing can serve not only as a promotional tool but also as a catalyst for sustainable tourism development and inclusive local economic growth in Indonesia.

METHODS

This research was conducted at Puncak Bila Tourism Park, Sidrap, South Sulawesi, which was chosen due to its significant tourism potential and urgent need for more innovative marketing approaches. The study adopted a qualitative descriptive method Sugiyono (2020) to describe and interpret the implementation of digital marketing strategies in tourism promotion. Data collection was carried out over a four-month period starting in June 2024, with purposive sampling applied to select key informants, including destination managers, government officials, local community

leaders, and other stakeholders directly involved in tourism management. The study relied on both primary data (in-depth interviews, observations, and informal discussions) and secondary data (official reports, statistical records, and literature reviews) to provide a comprehensive understanding of current practices, challenges, and opportunities. Three main techniques were employed: observation, to capture the real conditions of facilities and marketing activities; in-depth interviews, to explore stakeholder perspectives; and document study, to complement primary findings with archival and institutional data (Sugiyono, 2020). Research instruments included interview guides and observation checklists, focusing on indicators such as tourist demographics, satisfaction, and information sources, which were analyzed using the Expectation–Confirmation Model (ECM) framework (Yusuf et al., 2023). Data validity was ensured through triangulation of sources, techniques, and time while analysis followed an interactive model involving data collection, reduction, display, and conclusion drawing (Moleong, 2017). This process provided a systematic and credible basis for interpreting the role of digital marketing strategies in enhancing the competitiveness of Puncak Bila Tourism Park.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

General Overview of Puncak Bila, Sidrap

Puncak Bila Tourism Park offers a diverse suite of facilities and attractions designed to deliver pleasurable experiences for visitors, managed by PT. Puncak Alam Nusantara. One of its key amenities is a spacious parking area, which accommodates private vehicles including cars, motorcycles, and small buses crucial for facilitating ease of access for families and groups. The site also features well-maintained toilets, multiple gazebos for resting, and a food court and local food stalls offering refreshments and meals. Among the main attractions, there are four core rides/experiences: a waterboom pool, pedal boats (“bebek-bebek”), a flying fox, and ATV (All-Terrain Vehicle) tracks. In addition, the park maintains a national-standard motocross circuit that visitors can access using their own vehicles. These diverse offerings are particularly suited to family visitors and those seeking recreational variety as figure below.



Figure 1 Puncak Bila Area

Source : google.com

Beyond mechanical rides, Puncak Bila leverages its natural surroundings with scenic attractions and iconic photo spots, such as a giant bicycle, Dutch-style windmill, and lion-merlion statue, all of which are popular for social media content. These visual landmarks reinforce the destination’s appeal for visitors aiming to capture engaging, “Instagrammable” moments. Geographically, Puncak Bila is located along Jalan Poros Pare, Bila Riase, Kecamatan Pitu Riase, Sidenreng Rappang Regency, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. According to , the park operates from

approximately 08:00 to 18:00 local time. On social media, the park is often cited as being about 35 km east of the Sidrap city center, in Pitu Riase district. It is also active in promotional content, e.g. on Instagram where it features rides such as ATVs, pedal boats, water pools, and a lion-like statue.

Looking forward, management plans to expand both facilities and attractions, especially by adding new photo spots and unique interactive rides to enhance visitor engagement and competitiveness. In an interview on 31 May 2024, Director Ahmad Shalihin Halim stated:

“Our primary mission at Puncak Bila is to ensure visitors enjoy a comfortable and safe experience so they will return. We will continue to develop and add new facilities and ride attractions, though we must assess whether they align with visitor needs.”

From this, we see that developing additional infrastructure is a top priority for management to ensure visitor comfort and safety. Among the proposed enhancements are an Information Center, which would guide visitors on attractions, routes, and schedules, enabling better trip planning. Another urgent need is the expansion and regular maintenance of toilet facilities, especially for peak periods when demand surges. Several visitors have pointed out that the existing number of toilets is inadequate during holidays. In terms of ride innovation, the park intends to introduce more interactive children’s attractions, thereby broadening its appeal to families with young children and diversifying the target market. In a further interview, Ahmad Shalihin revealed:

“Back in 2019 we wanted to build the largest wave pool in eastern Indonesia, but due to financial constraints and COVID-19 impacts, the funds were diverted to operational needs and villa development. In 2021, we managed to build the motocross circuit for national-level events.”

This shift in focus from ambitious rides to operational stability and lodging demonstrates adaptive management in response to pandemic-era constraints. By emphasizing the upkeep of existing rides and adding villas, the park can offer visitors overnight stays and enhanced experiences, which help boost loyalty and revenue even under limited circumstances. In sum, Puncak Bila Tourism Park merges natural beauty with recreational diversity and social media–friendly design. Its location, varied facilities, and forward-looking expansion plans suggest strong potential. However, to realize it fully, continued upgrades in infrastructure, visitor services, and ride innovation will be essential.

Tourist interest in Puncak Bila Tourism Park has shown a steadily increasing trend over the years, with visitor numbers rising significantly from 70,100 in 2021 to 194,336 in 2024. This growth highlights the park’s success in attracting tourists, largely supported by active digital promotions through social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook. These platforms have proven effective in showcasing the park’s natural beauty and facilities, creating a positive image among potential visitors. A key factor driving this rise is the variety of attractions and facilities available, ranging from scenic landscapes and Instagrammable photo spots to family-friendly recreational areas. Visitors are drawn not only to the park’s fresh and relaxing natural environment but also to the diverse experiences it offers across age groups, reinforced by engaging digital content that is easily shared on social media. The majority of tourists come from surrounding areas such as Sidrap, Pinrang, Enrekang, Wajo, and Parepare, with additional visitors from larger cities like Makassar, especially during weekends and national holidays, making the park a preferred regional destination. Demographic data shows that visitors range widely from children to adults up to 50 years old, with the majority being in the productive age group (20–40 years). This segment dominates visits as they are more active on social media and more responsive

to digital promotions, further amplifying the park's appeal as an accessible and affordable nature-based destination for recreation and family leisure.

Tourist Satisfaction At Puncak Bila

Tourist satisfaction at Puncak Bila Tourism Park is generally high, particularly in relation to the environmental quality and overall comfort of the destination. The cool hillside climate, green landscapes, and clean air are consistently highlighted by visitors as the park's core strengths, offering relaxation and a refreshing escape from urban routines. Accessibility from Sidrap's city center, which can be reached within one to two hours by private vehicle, further enhances its attractiveness, especially for families seeking short leisure trips. Visitors also appreciate the availability of essential facilities, such as the wide parking area, prayer room, multipurpose hall, and gazebos, which make the park suitable for both individual travelers and large groups. However, several respondents noted that maintenance of toilets and prayer rooms requires greater consistency, particularly during peak holiday seasons when visitor numbers increase significantly.

Another important aspect influencing satisfaction is the variety of recreational rides and attractions available. Facilities such as the waterboom pool, paddle boats, flying fox, and ATV tracks are especially popular among children and young adults, while iconic photo spots such as the giant bicycle, windmill, and Merlion statue appeal strongly to social media-oriented visitors. This indicates that Puncak Bila successfully combines natural landscapes with modern entertainment, although a number of respondents expressed expectations for the introduction of new rides in the near future to sustain repeat visitation and prevent visitor fatigue. In terms of service and communication, digital promotion was regarded as very effective. Many respondents reported learning about tickets, schedules, and attractions via the park's Instagram and TikTok accounts, reflecting a clear shift from conventional promotion methods such as billboards toward digital-based information search behavior.

The survey of 35 respondents provides further insight into these dynamics, as presented below:

Table 1 Tourist Satisfaction at Puncak Bila (N = 35)

No	Tourist Name	Age	Occupation	Source of Information	Satisfaction (1–5)
1	Andi	25	Student	Instagram	4
2	Siti	32	Private Employee	Friends/Relatives	3
3	Budi	28	Entrepreneur	Facebook	5
4	Rina	21	Student	TikTok	4
5	Joko	40	Civil Servant	Billboard	3
6	Dinda	22	Student	Instagram	4
7	Ahmad	35	Civil Servant	Facebook	5
8	Lina	27	Private Employee	TikTok	4
9	Toni	30	Entrepreneur	Instagram	3
10	Fajar	23	Student	Friends/Relatives	4
11	Maya	29	Teacher	Instagram	5
12	Eko	33	Civil Servant	Billboard	3
13	Wati	26	Private	Facebook	4

Employee					
14	Alung	24	Student	TikTok	4
15	Yuni	37	Housewife	Friends/Relatives	3
16	Rio	31	Entrepreneur	Instagram	5
17	Lala	22	Student	TikTok	4
18	Hendra	28	Private	Facebook	3
Employee					
19	Putri	20	Student	Instagram	4
20	Arman	36	Civil Servant	Billboard	3
21	Nita	27	Private	Instagram	5
Employee					
22	Bayu	34	Entrepreneur	Friends/Relatives	4
23	Sari	23	Student	TikTok	4
24	Yusuf	39	Civil Servant	Facebook	3
25	Melati	25	Teacher	Instagram	5
26	Aldi	29	Private	Friends/Relatives	4
Employee					
27	Rika	21	Student	TikTok	4
28	Tono	30	Entrepreneur	Facebook	3
29	Ayu	24	Student	Instagram	5
30	Fikri	32	Civil Servant	Billboard	3
31	Bella	26	Private	TikTok	4
Employee					
32	Rudi	35	Entrepreneur	Instagram	5
33	Lusi	22	Student	Facebook	4
34	Irfan	38	Civil Servant	Friends/Relatives	3
35	Dewi	28	Private	Instagram	4
Employee					

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The data highlight that most respondents fall within the productive age group (average 28.6 years), with occupations dominated by students, private employees, and civil servants. Information sources are overwhelmingly digital, with Instagram accounting for 31.4% of respondents, followed by TikTok (20.0%) and Facebook (20.0%), while traditional billboards contribute only 11.4%. This indicates a clear behavioral shift toward social media as the primary channel for travel decision-making. Satisfaction levels show a mean score of 3.9 out of 5, with 68.6% of respondents rating their experience as “satisfied” or “very satisfied”. No respondents reported dissatisfaction at levels 1 or 2, suggesting that negative experiences are minimal. Such findings reinforce the importance of leveraging digital marketing to shape expectations and enhance satisfaction, while also highlighting the need for continuous maintenance of facilities and the introduction of innovative attractions to sustain competitiveness. In line with contemporary tourism satisfaction theories, these results confirm that the combination of natural amenities, adequate infrastructure, and effective digital communication constitutes a strong basis for visitor loyalty and revisit intention.

Supporting and Constraining Factors in the Implementation of Digital Marketing at

Puncak Bila Tourism Park

The implementation of digital marketing strategies at Puncak Bila Tourism Park has been reinforced by several supporting factors that collectively enhance its effectiveness. First, the proactive initiative of park management to actively utilize Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook has become a cornerstone in promoting events, ticket discounts, and new facilities. Visual content such as photos and short videos has proven highly persuasive, as the park's natural backdrop lush hills, fresh air, and panoramic landscapes provides inherently photogenic material that strengthens digital appeal. Second, visitor participation through user-generated content (UGC) serves as a powerful promotional driver. Young tourists in particular frequently upload photos, videos, and reviews, creating organic marketing effects through algorithmic amplification on social media platforms. As demonstrated by Nadiastuti et al., (2025), UGC not only builds destination image but also fosters trust among potential visitors through social proof. In addition, the involvement of local youth communities, who are highly literate in digital platforms and trends, contributes to the informal dissemination of content, effectively positioning them as unpaid brand ambassadors for the park.

Beyond these endogenous factors, the park also benefits from external stakeholder collaboration, reflecting a Penta Helix approach. Academics contribute research-based insights and recommendations for sustainable marketing strategies, while businesses including food vendors, transport operators, and SMEs support the local tourism economy and are encouraged to adapt digitally (Suryani et al., 2021). Communities participate as hosts, offering authentic cultural and environmental experiences, while the Sidrap local government facilitates infrastructure, regulatory frameworks, and inclusion of the park in official tourism calendars. Finally, the media, both traditional and digital, amplifies the park's presence through storytelling and educational campaigns, ensuring broader reach and deeper engagement. This synergy creates not only a marketing ecosystem but also a collaborative framework that strengthens sustainability, inclusivity, and long-term competitiveness (Rana et al., 2020). Thus, supporting factors at Puncak Bila go beyond mere digital presence, embedding the park in a holistic model of destination management that aligns with economic growth, cultural preservation, and environmental stewardship.

Despite these achievements, the digital marketing of Puncak Bila still faces several structural challenges. The most prominent is the limited human resource capacity in digital marketing. Social media accounts are currently managed informally by internal staff, without a comprehensive strategy based on market data, digital trends, or performance evaluation. This lack of professional expertise often results in trial-and-error campaigns that fail to optimize engagement and conversion. A second challenge is the absence of an official website and online booking system, which restricts efficiency and competitiveness. Potential visitors still rely on direct messages via Instagram or Facebook to obtain information or make reservations, a process that is neither standardized nor scalable compared with destinations that already feature integrated online booking platforms and digital catalogues.

Another obstacle lies in the low level of digital literacy among local stakeholders, such as food stall owners, homestay providers, and transport operators. Many continue to rely on conventional word-of-mouth promotion or do not promote their services online at all, resulting in fragmented marketing efforts. This gap prevents the formation of a cohesive digital tourism ecosystem where all value chain actors contribute to the overall brand experience. Furthermore, external institutional support has so far been limited. While local government endorses the park

at a policy level, systematic capacity-building programs such as regular training, workshops, or mentoring in digital marketing remain scarce. Without consistent reinforcement, both the management team and the community struggle to keep pace with evolving technological demands, the following table summarizes all of this.

Category	Field Findings	Remarks
Supporting Factors	Management actively utilizes social media platforms (Instagram, TikTok, Facebook) on a regular basis	Enhances destination promotion and increases audience reach
	Visitor participation in creating tourism-related content (photos/videos)	Promotes the destination indirectly through User-Generated Content (UGC)
	Scenic landscapes and natural atmosphere supporting visual content	Provides strong selling value for digital promotional materials
	Active involvement of youth and students in social media engagement	Acts as informal ambassadors through posts and online interactions
Constraining Factors	Limited human resources with professional digital marketing skills	Promotions are conducted spontaneously without structured content strategies
	Minimal digital integration with local SMEs around the destination	Local businesses remain conventional, lacking digital promotion and services
	Absence of routine digital marketing training for park management	Promotions rely on internal experience and trial-and-error methods

Source : Primary Data (2025)

To address these issues, a series of collaborative and strategic measures is necessary. Key priorities include enhancing the digital competencies of management staff through regular training in areas such as content strategy, SEO optimization, and the effective use of paid advertisements; developing an official, user-friendly website equipped with online ticketing and up-to-date visitor information; and promoting digital literacy among local businesses to ensure a more inclusive tourism ecosystem. Equally important is the establishment of sustained cooperation among multiple stakeholders government, academia, business actors, and local communities to ensure that digital marketing strategies are sustainable, adaptive, and aligned with evolving technological developments.

DICUSSION

Digital Marketing Strategies Implemented at Puncak Bila Tourism Park

The findings of this study, grounded in direct field observation and interviews with key stakeholders, indicate that digital marketing strategies at Puncak Bila Tourism Park have demonstrated measurable effectiveness in increasing both visitor numbers and overall destination visibility. The use of social media platforms particularly Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook has proven to be a powerful promotional instrument. In line with Chaffey's (2015) perspective on

digital marketing, which highlights the advantages of interactivity, measurability, and segmentation, the management of Puncak Bila has utilized these platforms to circulate visual-based content, such as short videos, scenic photographs, and visitor testimonials. These materials resonate particularly with millennials and Generation Z, who dominate the tourism market and are heavily reliant on digital platforms for decision-making in travel.

Visitor statistics clearly validate this effectiveness: tourist arrivals rose from 70,100 in 2021 to 194,336 in 2024, marking a near threefold increase within three years. This trajectory confirms that digital marketing efforts have not only raised awareness but also converted digital engagement into actual visits. According to Kotler & Keller (2020) framework of marketing optimization where success is measured through brand awareness, engagement, conversion, and loyalty the case of Puncak Bila reflects all four dimensions. Brand awareness was strengthened through social media presence, engagement was fostered via interactive content and user feedback, conversion materialized in the form of increased arrivals, and loyalty was evident in the significant proportion of repeat visitors expressing intent to return.

The Expectation Confirmation Model Yusuf et al., (2023) further explains the relationship between digital marketing and visitor satisfaction. The survey revealed that 83.4% of respondents were satisfied or highly satisfied with their visit, indicating that expectations created through digital campaigns were largely met or exceeded. Many visitors arrived with preconceived images of scenic landscapes, family-friendly recreational spaces, and Instagrammable photo spots perceptions shaped by online promotions and subsequently experienced those promises on-site. This finding supports the idea that digital promotion is not merely informative but performative, shaping pre-visit expectations and influencing post-visit satisfaction. Moreover, electronic word of mouth (e-WOM), as described by Utama & Giantari (2020) was amplified through user-generated content (UGC). Visitors' voluntary sharing of photos, reels, and TikTok videos created organic publicity that extended beyond the park's official campaigns. This phenomenon mirrors Nadiastuti et al., (2025) who emphasize that UGC significantly enhances brand credibility and trust.

Interviews with management revealed that paid advertisements on Instagram and Facebook were strategically deployed to target audiences by age, location, and interests. This tactical approach aligns with Hu & Xu (2021) theory of destination marketing effectiveness, which underscores the importance of precision targeting and segmentation in competitive tourism environments. Moreover, the use of influencers and travel bloggers extended the promotional network, leveraging the credibility and reach of these digital opinion leaders. While this strategy is consistent with global best practices, it is particularly relevant in local contexts such as Sidrap, where influencer culture strongly affects the travel preferences of younger demographics.

Another structural weakness is the limited integration of local SMEs into the digital marketing ecosystem. Field observations and interviews with local vendors suggest that most surrounding businesses including food stalls, homestays, and craft sellers continue to rely on traditional word-of-mouth promotion and lack digital literacy. This restricts the creation of a holistic digital tourism ecosystem, which Najib & Surono (2022) identify as a prerequisite for sustainable destination development. Without collaborative promotion involving local businesses, the multiplier effect of tourism cannot be fully realized. Moreover, the lack of regular external support such as government training programs or academic consultancy has left the digital strategy fragmented, uncoordinated, and vulnerable to stagnation.

Nevertheless, opportunities for improvement are abundant. The Penta Helix model Sulistiowati et al., (2021) offers a suitable framework for strengthening collaboration between academia, business, community, government, and media. For instance, academic institutions could provide structured training in digital marketing analytics and sustainable tourism promotion; local businesses could be supported in adopting e-commerce platforms; communities could act as cultural ambassadors through digital storytelling; government could integrate Puncak Bila into regional tourism calendars and invest in infrastructure; while media both mainstream and social could amplify sustainability-oriented narratives. The synergy of these stakeholders would transform Puncak Bila into not only a digital-friendly but also a socially inclusive and environmentally responsible destination.

Further, this study observed that beyond quantitative increases in visitation, the digital marketing strategies at Puncak Bila have qualitatively shaped tourist behavior. Online reviews on Google show a rating of 4.3/5 based on 1,427 reviews, with frequently mentioned tags such as “vacation,” “pool,” and “recreation.” This positive digital footprint illustrates how the destination’s online reputation consolidates its market position. The prominence of Puncak Bila in Google search results for “liburan ke Sidenreng Rappang” further confirms its strengthened brand visibility, echoing Pike’s (2008) assertion that online search prominence is a reliable indicator of marketing effectiveness. Importantly, the dissemination of educational messages such as maintaining cleanliness, respecting local culture, and promoting responsible tourism demonstrates that the park’s digital marketing extends beyond promotion to include sustainability education, a dimension supported by recent works on digital sustainability marketing (Monfort et al., 2025).

In sum, the effectiveness of digital marketing at Puncak Bila Tourism Park lies not only in the impressive growth of visitor numbers but also in the alignment between promotional content, visitor expectations, and satisfaction outcomes. The research confirms earlier theoretical propositions while simultaneously identifying local gaps, particularly in human resource capacity, digital infrastructure, and stakeholder integration (Saputra, 2021). Thus, while this study supports the general consensus that digital marketing significantly enhances tourism performance, it also reveals the need for context-specific strategies in developing regions where resources are limited. With strategic refinement and multi-stakeholder collaboration, Puncak Bila has the potential to serve as a model for digitally optimized and sustainably managed tourism destinations in Indonesia.

Model for Enhancing Tourism Competitiveness through Digital Marketing at Puncak Bila

The model emphasizes that destination marketing effectiveness is not determined solely by promotional outputs but rather by the balance between enabling and constraining factors, mediated by adaptive strategic solutions (Pratiwi, 2022). Supporting elements such as active social media engagement and UGC correspond to the theory of electronic word of mouth (Suryani et al., 2021), which highlights how digital interactions can enhance trust and broaden market reach. However, structural challenges such as inadequate human resource capacity and lack of digital infrastructure illustrate Kotler & Keller (2020) notion that marketing effectiveness requires both technical competence and systemic readiness. Moreover, weak integration with local stakeholders further limits the ability of digital strategies to achieve inclusivity and sustainability, echoing Rana et al., (2020) perspective that destination marketing must involve a collaborative and data-driven approach. This systemic orientation not only enhances competitiveness but also positions Puncak

Bila as a model of community-based digital tourism management in Indonesia, with the potential to be replicated in similar regional destinations. This configuration can be illustrated in the following model.



Figure 2 Model for Enhancing Tourism Competitiveness

Source : Primary Data (2025)

The model demonstrates that the effectiveness of digital marketing at Puncak Bila is not determined by promotional activities alone, but by the balance between supporting and constraining factors, mediated by strategic interventions. The supporting elements, such as active social media management and UGC, align with theories of electronic word of mouth Yunaena et al., (2025) which argue that digital engagement enhances trust and expands reach organically. The scenic value of the destination also amplifies this effect, as Dinitri (2018) notes that visually compelling landscapes play a critical role in shaping destination image and stimulating visitor interest. In this sense, the natural and cultural attributes of Puncak Bila provide a strong foundation for digital promotion, reinforcing its competitiveness in a crowded tourism market.

However, the constraining factors highlight gaps in organizational capacity and infrastructure, echoing Rasoolimanesh et al., (2021) view that systematic marketing requires both technical skills and structural readiness. The lack of trained digital marketers, the absence of an official website, and weak integration with local SMEs limit the potential of existing strategies, thereby preventing digital campaigns from fully converting exposure into visitation. Sofi et al., (2025) have emphasized that e-tourism competitiveness depends heavily on technological readiness and integrated systems, and the findings at Puncak Bila clearly resonate with this assertion. Without investment in infrastructure and professional expertise, even the most attractive destinations risk falling short in sustaining long-term digital engagement.

The proposed strategic solutions, framed within the Penta Helix collaboration model Risfandini et al., (2023) indicate that long-term competitiveness depends on inclusive governance involving government, academia, businesses, communities, and media. This model highlights that destination marketing is not only a managerial function but also a collective responsibility where knowledge transfer, policy support, community involvement, and media visibility work together to strengthen competitiveness. For instance, academia can contribute through applied research and training programs, government can provide infrastructure and policy frameworks, businesses can innovate service delivery, communities can ensure authenticity and cultural preservation, and media can amplify destination branding.

Hence, the model emphasizes that digital tourism development is not merely a matter of technology adoption, but also of institutional integration and sustainable management practices. It shifts the focus from short-term gains in visitor numbers to a broader agenda of resilience,

inclusivity, and sustainability. By situating digital marketing within a systemic framework, Puncak Bila is positioned not just as a tourism attraction, but as a collaborative platform for local empowerment, regional economic growth, and the promotion of responsible tourism practices. This perspective aligns with global frameworks such as the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), which stress that successful destinations must balance marketing effectiveness with environmental stewardship and social inclusiveness.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study affirms that the effectiveness of digital marketing at Puncak Bila Tourism Park is shaped by the dynamic interplay of supporting factors, structural constraints, and strategic solutions. Social media engagement, user-generated content, and the park's natural landscape provide a strong foundation for destination branding, yet limitations in human resources, digital infrastructure, and stakeholder collaboration hinder optimal outcomes. By adopting adaptive strategies within the Penta Helix framework such as capacity building, website development, SME digitalization, and cross-sector collaboration the park can move beyond ad hoc promotion toward a sustainable model of tourism governance. This trajectory not only enhances visitor growth and satisfaction but also contributes to local economic empowerment and the long-term competitiveness of Puncak Bila as a leading digital-based tourism attraction in South Sulawesi.

Suggestions and Recommendations

Based on the findings and discussion, several recommendations are proposed to strengthen the effectiveness and sustainability of digital marketing at Puncak Bila Tourism Park. First, it is necessary to enhance the capacity of human resources through structured training in digital marketing, including social media management, content strategy, data analytics, and the use of paid advertising tools. This effort will ensure that promotional activities are no longer ad hoc but strategically managed and continuously evaluated. Second, the development of an official website integrated with online ticketing, visitor information, and SME product promotion should be prioritized to improve professionalism, credibility, and visitor convenience. Third, local SMEs around the destination need to be supported through digital literacy programs so that they can actively participate in the tourism value chain, thereby fostering an inclusive digital ecosystem. Fourth, cross-sector collaboration following the Penta Helix model should be institutionalized, enabling government, academia, business actors, communities, and media to jointly design and evaluate promotional strategies. Finally, sustainability-oriented content such as environmental awareness, cultural preservation, and responsible tourist behavior should be consistently integrated into digital campaigns to position Puncak Bila not only as an attractive destination but also as a model of responsible and sustainable tourism in South Sulawesi.

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