

The Effect of Facebook and Online Newspapers on the Tourism Sector

Muhammad Akbar^a, Dwia Aries Tina Pulubuhu^b, Seniwati^{c*},
^aCommunication Department, Social and Political Sciences Faculty, Hasanuddin University, Indonesia, ^bSociology Department, Social and Political Sciences Faculty Hasanuddin University, Indonesia, ^cInternational Relations Department, Social and Political Sciences Faculty Hasanuddin University, Email: ^{c*}seniwatiunhas2016@gmail.com

This research focuses on the role of Facebook and online newspapers in improving the tourism industry. Researchers can explore the marketing effectiveness of tourist areas on the internet through these two online social mediums. This study aims to identify the role of online social media, especially Facebook and online newspapers in promoting Indonesian tourism. The methods used in the study are observation, FGD and interviews. Tourists can carry out interactive dialogues about tourist destinations. Facebook and online newspapers promote interesting content through video, audio, images and text. The results of this study indicate the success of social media in developing the tourism industry in Bone Regency as there has been an increase in the number of domestic tourists visiting. Tourists are interested in visiting Bone Regency because they see promotions carried out on social media. Social media offers an appropriate and fast way to participate in supporting the tourism industry through an online system. Bone Regency has many tourist attractions that are unique to visit. This research concludes that the role of the government in promoting these tourist attractions is very important. This policy can introduce these tourist attractions widely to the public.

Keywords: *Facebook, Online Newspapers, Tourism Industry, Promotions, Government.*



Introduction

The tourism economy is an important agenda for countries in the world, especially the Indonesian government. Sector tourism contributes greatly to the economic growth of a country. The tourism sector is the fastest increasing economy of countries in the world because the tourism sector is experiencing sustainable diversification and also a large and fast sustainable expansion. The growth in the number of tourists continues to increase 0.4 billion on a global scale in 2019 (Investment, 2019). This means the tourism sector continues to grow despite the global crisis. In 1950 the number of tourists amounted to 25 million. In 1980 this had increased to 278 million, in 1995 to 528 million, in 2014 to 1.14 billion and in 2015 to 1.18 billion (Investment, 2019). The Government of Indonesia hopes that the tourism sector can become one of the drivers of the economy along with other sectors such as the development of the cultural sector, the protection of cultural heritage, environmental preservation, adoption of world peace and preservation of social relations. Global economic conditions that are often hit by the economic crisis do not affect the tourism sector because the tourism industry generates US \$80 billion and ranks third in supporting GDP growth (Investment, 2019). This condition illustrates that the tourism sector has significantly contributed to the economy. Tourist destinations in various regions can make an important contribution to the growth of other sectors outside the tourism sector itself.

The President of the Republic of Indonesia Jokowi has developed the tourism sector as one of the important sectors along with other sectors such as the maritime sector, energy, food and industry. Indonesian tourism has contributed to the national GDP and is the highest nominal among ASEAN countries at 10% (Investment, 2019). The growth of Indonesia's tourism sector continues to experience a rapid increase of 6.9% compared to other sectors such as agriculture, mining and automotive manufacturing. Meanwhile, the GDP of the sector at the national level grew by 4.8%. Indonesia's tourism sector generates large foreign exchange earnings of 170% or US \$ 1.7 million. The amount of foreign exchange is the highest when compared to other industries in Indonesia (Investment, 2019). Tourism Minister Arief Yahya said that the tourism industry has an important role in the growth of Indonesia's GDP and foreign exchange (Post, 2017). Therefore, it is very important to improve online tourism services because customer satisfaction is largely determined by the online service provided (Phanpanya, Leelapattana, & Thongma, 2020). The tourism sector has the ability to create jobs, causing the number of unemployed people to decrease. Therefore, the Indonesian government is trying to provide the availability of a viable business environment for investors, policies that favour tourism development, and the interconnectivity available between districts.

Indonesia's tourism industry ranks fourth as one of the sectors that generate foreign exchange for the country. Tourism contributed 13% as the highest growth in foreign exchange earnings compared to other industries such as natural gas, coal, oil palm and oil. In addition, the tourism

sector requires a large marketing cost of around 2% of the foreign exchange projection generated (Investment, 2019). The national tourism sector occupies the fourth business as a sector contributing employment, namely 9.8 million or 8.4% in all industrial sectors. The sector grew 30% in 5 years in creating jobs for Indonesia (Investment, 2019).

Figure 1. Number of International Tourists in Indonesia



Source: (Investment, 2019)

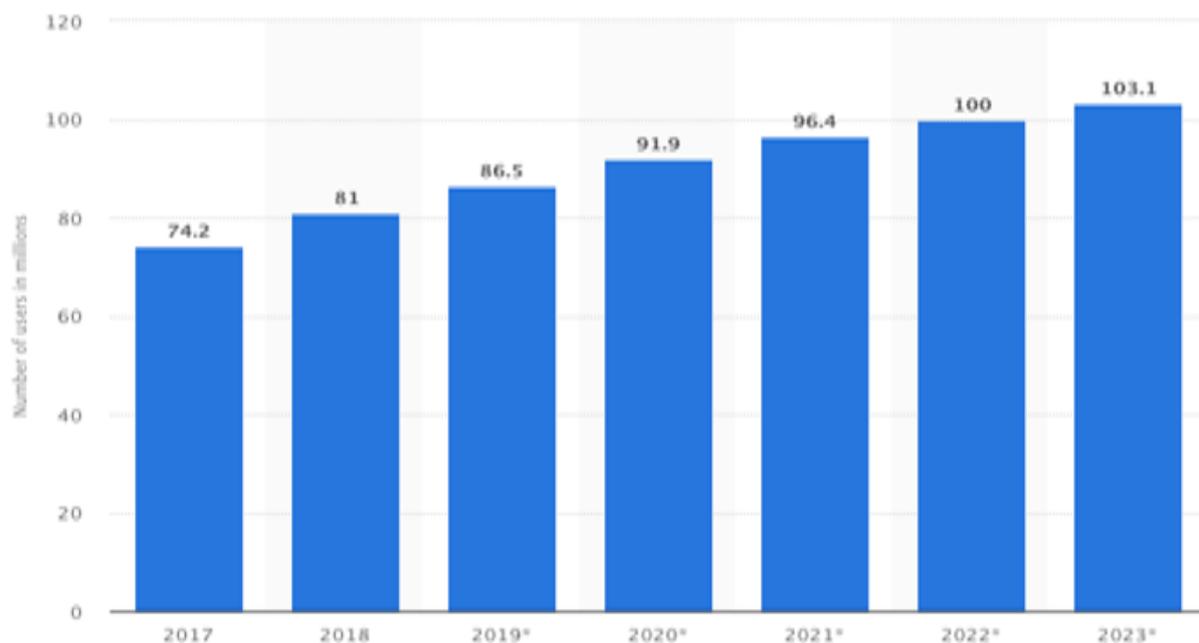
The data above shows that the number of international tourists visiting Indonesia continued to increase from 2015 to 2019. This number reached the Indonesian government's target of increasing domestic tourists. The tourism sector continues to grow because it is supported by the development of communication and information technology (Leung, Bai, & Stahura, 2015). Information and communication technology have various forms, one example being online social media. Online social media can be used as a means to interact and exchange information in a community or between communities. Social media is defined by Merriam-Webster as a form of online communication where users can share their ideas or messages with others through online media (Merriam-Webster, 2019). The social web uses online applications such as internet forums, wikis, blogs, social networking sites (SNSs), microblogs, content community sites (websites), forums/ bulletin boards, content aggregators and location based social media (Alarcón-del-Amo, Lorenzo-Romero, & Gómez-Borja, 2011; Constantinides & Fountain, 2008). Online social media has a large and strong network in the current industrial era 4.0, also known as the fourth industrial revolution. Industry 4.0 includes the internet of hardware, cyber-physical systems, cloud and cognitive computing. The Indonesian tourism industry must be able to compete with other countries, especially in ASEAN in the industrial revolution 4.0.

Methods

This research was conducted in Cenrana Village, Kahu Subdistrict, Bone District, South Sulawesi Province. This research was carried out from July to November 2019. Bone Regency is located east of the provincial capital of South Sulawesi. The area of Bone Regency is 4,559 km². The Regency has 27 districts, 44 villages and 328 villages. The method carried out was in the form of a field survey for three months, interviews for three months, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) for three months week, three days workshops and assistance to women for three months from 2018 to 2019. Interviews were conducted with several community leaders, women and young women who were directly involved with entrepreneurial activities, and the village head. The FGD involved women and young women who were directly involved in entrepreneurial activities, village officials and community leaders. The people involved in the workshop activities are the implementation team from campus, village women who are active in entrepreneurial activities, village officials, and community leaders.

The implementation team gave a lecture on the importance of entrepreneurial activities, leveraging natural resources and improvement of skills in processing and utilising bananas, pineapple and black rice. Cenrana village was chosen as a research site because many villages have natural resources that are not properly treated. The village head has created women's groups. Village funds from the central government are not well managed due to lack of community skills and knowledge, especially women in processing natural products.

Figure 2. Online social media users in Indonesia from 2017 to 2023



Source: (Statista, 2019)

The second figure above illustrates an increase in the number of Indonesian people who use online social media from 2017. By 2023 it is estimated to reach around 103.1 million (Statista, 2019). This condition gives the view that social media is very influential in changing the attitude of tourists to choose tourist destinations. Therefore, decision makers and travel companies in industrial tourism must have a strategy in promoting the beauty of a tourist place and the services they will provide to customers. This study aims to identify the role of online social media, especially Facebook and online newspapers in promoting Indonesian tourism. Researchers can explore the marketing effectiveness of tourist areas on the internet through these two online social mediums. Facebook is one of the most favoured social media sites among its users (Leung et al., 2015). Social media in the form of online media is one form of a website that is one of the network-intensive technologies that are important for business (Thongpapani & Ashraf, 2011). This is the reason the authors choose Facebook and online newspapers in this study.

This study adopted a qualitative method, namely in-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The parties interviewed were regional leaders, officials who are related to the tourism industry and tourists who came to the tourist attractions. This study interviewed domestic and foreign tourists from various countries. Some of these tourists visit Indonesia because they get information from online media such as Facebook and online news. This research uses two social media sites, Facebook and online newspapers. Tourist attractions visited by tourists are located in Indonesia's South Sulawesi Province. These tourist attractions are favourite tourist attractions in the region.

Facebook and online newspapers are the most widely used social media platforms by the decision maker in making decisions related to tourism industry. Both of these social media platforms are also widely used by international and domestic tourists in visiting tourist attractions in Bone Regency. Facebook and online newspapers have different functions. Research on Facebook focuses on marketing sites that are listed by governments and industry tourism entrepreneurs. Research on online newspapers focuses on the advantages of a tourist place.

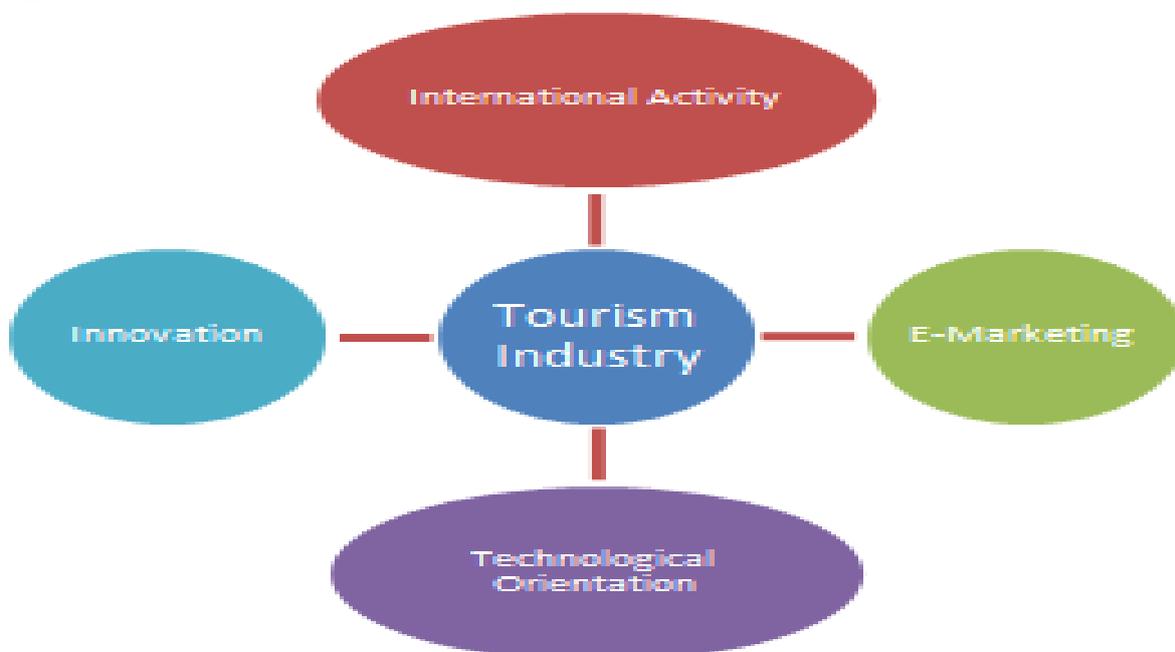
The number of people interviewed by researchers was 23 people consisting of foreign tourists, domestic tourists, sub-district heads from the Kahu region, sub-district secretaries, village heads and village secretaries, village officials who handle the tourism industry and media. The number of people participating in the FGD was 15 people. FGD was conducted twice. First, the FGD was conducted with the sub-district government officials who were attended by the sub-district head, sub-district secretary, sub-district staff who were directly related to the tourism industry. Second, the FGD was attended by village government officials and staff at the village government office directly related to tourist visits.. These people have used

Facebook for about 3 months and have used social media news for around six months. This research was conducted from May to November 2018.

Discussion

Some of the studies related to marketing through social media and tourism include research carried out by Tsotsou and Vlachopoulou. Their results show that tourism services need to be supported by performance, e-marketing and market orientation (Tsotsou & Vlachopoulou, 2011). Research by Vrana and Zafiropoulos focuses on travel agents in using internet technology. They found that tourism agents use online media in support of improving their performance in the era of globalization including improvements relating to internet usage facilities (Vrana & Zafiropoulos, 2006). Other researchers include Ying et al. who focus on patterns of hyperlinked tourism stakeholder networks. They also examine tourism stakeholder networking behaviours in cyberspace (Ying, Norman, & Zhou, 2016). Research conducted by Xi Y. Leeung *et.al.* focuses on the effectiveness of Facebook and Twitter in the hospitality industry. The results of their research show the social media that is used or is owned by hotels influence customers' attitudes in choosing hotel brands (Ying et al., 2016). Research that focuses on social media and the tourism industry has been done a lot, but further research to improve industrial tourism that has given a large foreign exchange to the GDP of a country is very necessary.

Figure 3. The Research Framework





The picture above explains how e-marketing, international activity, technological orientation and innovation can support the growth of industrial tourism. The use of the internet is very useful in tourism growth (Jonathan & Tarigan, 2016). Based on interview data for Facebook users and online newspapers, users are helped by the presence of both media. For rural areas, online newspapers have a greater influence in conveying information to the public. In general, Facebook users and online newspapers argue that the benefits of the tourism potential of an area both nationally and locally can be easily accessed. They can be facilitators in supporting the comfort of tourists' stay when visiting Indonesia for hotels, resorts, estate rentals, inns, campgrounds, resorts, bed-and-breakfasts (B & Bs), motels, apartments. Facebook users can also tell their friends and family about restaurants that have interesting cuisine.

Ibrahim, as a leader of Kahu subdistrict, said that the arrival of domestic and foreign tourists to our region can encourage the tourism industry which will positively impact the economic sector. The tourism industry is the second sector after agriculture sector. Both sectors are on the important agenda for the government in making policy. One way to develop a communication system in our region is to use an online system through online newspapers and Facebook. Both of these systems can develop information and communication technology more easily. One of the actions taken by our government is to allocate a larger budget than the year before in the tourism sector (Ibrahim, 2018). This budget is used for human resource development, such as training in the use of online media in managing tourist destinations and how to implement the technology. The output of this training is increasing skills in using Facebook to support tourism in the area.

In addition, the Secretary of Kahu subdistrict said that the role of youth in the success of e-marketing is substantial and that they can support an innovative technology at a lower cost whilst providing satisfaction to consumers. In the last five years, The village and sub-district governments have made regulations that aim to increase the number of tourists visiting the region such as empowering the community in the field of entrepreneurship and online media utilization (Nur, 2018). Entrepreneurship is one of the supporting sectors in developing tourism. In the subdistrict of Kahu, generally those involved in entrepreneurship activities are women. Women's membership is a form of empowerment. Therefore, women must have education and skills in improving or supporting this empowerment activity (Seniwati, et.al., 2019). The government has provided training in the use of online media to support the tourism sector for women. Since the tourism sector is active in the Kahu District area, the community, government, business people, academics and the media have collaborated to develop this sector through online communication technology. This collaboration is very effective because the management of a tourist destination cannot be carried out by only one community group.

One of the strategies carried out by the government is to conduct partnerships with various parties in supporting tourism activities. These partnerships will provide financial support and



various facilities to support events held at tourist sites through the online system. One of the festivals that was held was a cultural festival in welcoming the Republic of Indonesia's Independence Day. This cultural festival is one of the strategies for the local government in attracting tourists. The cultural festival features a dance competition using traditional costumes. In addition, this festival also holds a fashion show using traditional clothing. Various typical Bugis art performances are also displayed in the activities of this festival. All of these activities will be featured on Facebook and in online newspapers as one of the actions in supporting the tourism industry.

Governments and entrepreneurs focused on the tourism sector can also make and provide cheaper advertising through Facebook. The government can also introduce local culture to their area such as traditional dances and arts. Travel promotions through Facebook and online newspapers also make it easier for users to order or book hotels. Users find it easier to search for hotels according to their tastes. People are also more likely to choose hotels because the hotel brand is more familiar to them (Leung et al., 2015). This condition motivated hotel entrepreneurs to be more detailed and more active in promoting their hotels through Facebook and online newspapers. Local government support has been carried out, such as making policies aimed at developing and supporting the tourism sector, improving human resource skills through workshops, training and mentoring, collaborating with other parties by inviting investors to invest such as Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), supporting and developing micro-small businesses and micro-medium enterprises that support tourism, and by providing easy access in obtaining business licenses.

Other benefits obtained by Facebook users are based on data from Focus Group Discussion (FGD), namely users can search for locations of tourist destinations with the help of maps on Facebook. They can also choose tourist destinations according to their wishes. Users can also communicate quickly through Facebook. They can ask family or friends or tourism entrepreneurs directly about the price of entrance tickets and the types of facilities owned by the tourist attractions. Based on interview data, users can find out tourist destinations that are far away or located in locations that are difficult to reach by transportation.

Promotional activities through Facebook and online newspapers can erase distance and time. Therefore, the government is increasingly and actively promoting by inviting young people to operate the online media. The programs created through online media are very much loved by the younger generation. Since the use of Facebook and online newspapers, the number of tourists coming to this area has increased. One reason is that Facebook brings lots of interesting features and content that isn't boring for readers. On a regular basis, the government conducts training in which instructors are brought in from various departments or universities.



Conclusions

Facebook and online newspapers have a big role in increasing the dissemination of information related to tourism. Users can share communication quickly and more easily through Facebook. Users can also find out the tourism potential of an area even though the area is in an area that is difficult to reach by transportation. The limitation of this study is that the data was limited to Facebook and online newspapers. Future research should use more than two social mediums and not be limited to just one region. This research is very useful for decision makers who are directly related to industrial tourism and also useful for entrepreneurs who are active in the tourism industry.

Acknowledgments

The author would like to thank the Chancellor of the University of Hasanuddin, Prof. Dr. Dwia Aries Tina Pulubuhu, M.A. and the chairman of the Institute for Research and Community Service of the University of Hasanuddin Prof. Dr. Ani Alimuddin Unde, M.Sc. who have created a program of "community service" that brings great benefits to the community. This research was funded by Hasanuddin University in 2018 in the program "Community Service Unhas-Community Partnership Program (PPMU-PKM) 2018".



REFERENCES

- Alarcón-del-Amo, M.-C., Lorenzo-Romero, C., & Gómez-Borja, M.-Á. (2011). Classifying and Profiling Social Networking Site Users: A Latent Segmentation Approach. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 14(9), 547–553. <https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2010.0346>
- Constantinides, E., & Fountain, S. J. (2008). Web 2.0: Conceptual foundations and marketing issues. *Journal of Direct, Data and Digital Marketing Practice*, 9(3), 231–244. <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.ddmp.4350098>
- Ibrahim. (2018). Interview, Bone District, South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia
- Investment, I. T. (2019). Tourism Overview. Retrieved 18 June 2019, from <http://indonesia-tourism-investment.com/?page=tourism-overview>
- Jonathan, C. J., & Tarigan, R. (2016). The Effects of E-Tourism to The Development of Tourism Sector in Indonesia. *CommIT (Communication and Information Technology) Journal*, 10(2), 59. <https://doi.org/10.21512/commit.v10i2.1669>
- Leung, X. Y., Bai, B., & Stahura, K. A. (2015). The Marketing Effectiveness of Social Media in the Hotel Industry: A Comparison of Facebook and Twitter. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research*, 39(2), 147–169. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1096348012471381>
- Merriam-Webster. (2019). Social Media. Retrieved 19 June 2019, from [https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/social media](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/social%20media)
- Nur, Muhammad I. (2018). Interview, Bone District, South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia
- Phanpanya, K., Leelapattana, W., & Thongma, W. (2020). Tourism Service Factors Affecting Health Tourism Service Innovation in Mae Hong Son Province, 11(7), 34–51.
- Post, J. (2017). Tourism Becomes New Star of Indonesia's Economy: Report. Retrieved 19 June 2019, from <https://www.thejakartapost.com/travel/2017/10/18/tourism-becomes-new-star-of-indonesias-economy-report.html>
- Seniwati, Pulubuhu, D.A.P., Unde, A.A., and Alhaqqi, M.S. (2019). Women and Entrepreneurship: Lesson and Implications for Empowerment of Women in Combatting Terrorism. *Academy of Entrepreneurship Journal*, 25(4), 1-7. <https://www.abacademies.org/articles/women-and-entrepreneurship-lesson-and-implications-for-empowerment-of-women-in-combatting-terrorism-8772.html>
- Statista. (2019). Number of Social Network Users in Indonesia from 2017 to 2023 (in millions).



Retrieved 19 June 2019, from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/489233/number-of-social-network-users-in-malaysia/>

Thongpapani, N., & Ashraf, A. R. (2011). Enhancing Online Performance through Website Content and Personalization. *Journal of Computer Information Systems*, 52(1), 3–14. Retrieved from <http://iacis.org/jcis/articles/JOCIS V52 N1 - Article 1.pdf>

Tsiotsou, R. H., & Vlachopoulou, M. (2011). Understanding the effects of market orientation and e-marketing on service performance. *Marketing Intelligence and Planning*, 29(2), 141–155. <https://doi.org/10.1108/02634501111117593>

Vrana, V., & Zafiropoulos, C. (2006). Tourism Agents' Attitudes on Internet Adoption: an Analysis from Greece. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 18(7), 601–608. <https://doi.org/doi.org/10.1108/09596110610703039>

Ying, T., Norman, W. C., & Zhou, Y. (2016). Online Networking in the Tourism Industry: A Webometrics and Hyperlink Network Analysis. *Journal of Travel Research*, 55(1), 16–33. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287514532371>