

Influencers in Tourism Digital Marketing: A Comprehensive Literature Review



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ABSTRACT

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Almost all business sectors in various developed and developing countries have realized the importance of transforming conventional marketing to digital marketing, the goal is to increase sales. Many marketing strategies can be applied to increase sales, including utilizing influencers in digital marketing. This study aims to identify digital marketing strategies that have been widely used by researchers in various countries and look for new models or new strategies that are relevant to be applied in developing countries after COVID-19 through a systematic literature review. The author searched for scientific articles on the Scopus database that were in English and fully accessible. This research reviewed 19 articles using a systematic literature review. The results showed that the majority of related research was published in 2018-2022, ten related articles were published in 2022 with three articles published in Spain. All authors proposed various variables, but generally conventional in digital marketing, while not many authors concentrated on the utilization of influencers in carrying out digital marketing. Therefore, this research offers a digital marketing strategy combined with the role of influencers in tourist destinations that have a competitive advantage.

1. INTRODUCTION

Improving businesses' performance and their competitive edge in any sector of industry are the main parts of marketing ventures in developing new strategies and innovation [1, 2]. One of the tools that play a vital role in this improvement is information technology (digitalization) which transforms conventional marketing practices into digital ones, along with sales, and consumers' behaviour [2, 3].

Recently, almost every business sector has undergone transformations toward the digital industry including tourism. In Athens, Greece, for example, the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic are the reason why wine tourism marketing is transforming towards digital [4]. For example, 83% of wine production, which is a leading tourism product in the country, was negatively affected, which resulted in a 53% decrease in local community income [4]. The decline in income can eventually become a serious financial problem [5]. Data by Sheresheva et al. [5] also shows that around 40% of the global tourism market has stopped its activities with the calculation of unemployment caused reaching 75 million people in 2020. So, Alebaki et al. [4] stated, to overcome these problems, technology and even social media seem to play an important role in building customer loyalty in the long term after the outbreak occurs. Thus, digital marketing has inevitably become 'the game changer' that interrupts the world of marketing, sales, including consumer behaviours. Digital marketing advantages have allowed businesses to conveniently place their products/services online, attract potential customers, receive feedback in more accessible ways. It also provides a means to monitor trends in demand, as well

as to direct marketing efforts effectively towards the targeted market segments or niche [2]. According to *World Economic Forum Digital Transformation Initiative*, it is projected that this exponential digitalization and technology development is going to bring positive impact on worldwide economy at a very significant value of USD 305 (billion?) in 2025 [6]. These advancements drive marketing innovation and growth while enabling tourism businesses to replace traditional promotion methods with a more technology-centric and personalized approach [6]. In the case of Vietnam, for example, handicraft products in its tourism villages utilize technology and social media as marketing channels by considering positive aspects such as cost and time efficiency, easier communication, broad target markets, support marketing research, and customer loyalty [1]. So utilizing technology to the explosion of social media, even beyond digitalization allows tourism companies to have maximum performance [6].

Social media and tourism marketing are suitable opportunities for the growth and development of existing activities in answering the future of the tourism business [6]. Because, based on We Are Social and Hootsuite data contained in the databoks.katadata.co.id website, social media users worldwide reached 4.76 billion in January 2023. This means that 59.4% of the world's population are social media users and 31% of users have a willingness to share their tourist trips with the public even with users outside their friend zone [6].

Conducting social media analysis will ultimately impact traveler engagement, gain competitive advantage, and achieve business excellence [6]. Indeed digital marketing plays a significant role in tourism marketing, as shown in a survey

result posted at *www.statista.com* that suggested, for instance, in 2021 as many as 24% of travelers from Spain aged between 18 and 29 said they had seen social media postings to get inspirations of tourist destination, likewise, 21% respondents aged 45 from the Netherland admitted doing the same thing to decide where they wanted to go [6]. This among other facts confirms that social media usage in marketing the tourism services has been proven effective in inspiring the tourists and influencing their decision of travel destinations. Therefore, stakeholders in many countries have begun shifting their marketing efforts from the traditional to the digital forms like those in Portugal and Thailand.

As a good example of this, since 2017, Portugal has chosen tourism as the prioritized business sector for its major contribution to the country's economy, and as a consequence, this demand of transforming the marketing efforts became a necessity. Ever since 1974, the Portuguese government has taken many different measures to promote its tourism with no significant positive trend, so that in 2013 when the transformation demand emerged, digital marketing started to be implemented and eventually it impacted better marketing cost efficiency [7, 8].

Similar initiatives have been taken in Thailand where the tourism industry is prominent and acknowledged worldwide due to its contribution to the country's as well as global economy [9-12]. The tours & travel and hospitality industry is also responsible for the provision of business opportunities, and job openings, as well as the wellbeing of its citizens [13]. Consequently, the performance of the tourism industry has an enormous economic value, even though it has seen a downward trend lately compared to the previous years [14] mainly due to the COVID-19 pandemic breakout [5] which did not only impacted Thailand's economy but also cost USD 3.8 billion to the worldwide economy or equivalent to 4.2% of the global GDP [14, 15].

In order to boost the business performance of the tourism industry, some researchers in this field have proposed a range of strategies required to meet the challenges, including [12] who suggested the combination of competitive advantages, digital utilization, and Supply Chain Management (SCM) which are considered to be most significant in achieving the targeted business performance. This has also been proven by other scholars who applied competitive advantage as a means to improve businesses' achievement in various industries [12, 16, 17]. Whereas according to Vrontis et al [18], to meet the challenges in the tourism industry, strategies that include implementing influencer marketing are needed. Other studies revealed that utilizing influencers significantly brings positive effects on customers' perception, attitude, and even their buying behaviour, especially in relation to customer trust [19].

Taking all these matters into consideration, it is important to review the digital marketing strategies that are still relevant and currently being implemented in business practices. Therefore, this research aims to identify selections of digital marketing strategies that have been implemented by scholars in many different countries and to find new models and innovative approaches to be adopted in developing countries post-COVID19 through systematic literature review (SLR) method, with the research question posed is what digital marketing strategies are generally carried out in improving business performance in the tourism industry?

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In an increasingly competitive business world, digital marketing, competitive advantage, and the role of influencers are intertwined with each other. Digital marketing offers many benefits to companies in its application [20] and can easily find direct communication channels with consumers. Therefore, companies can collect various valuable information and reviews through social media to improve their superior products [20, 21].

Planning a promotional strategy with social media will be effective in increasing product sales [20, 22], this is due to the company's continued connection with customers [23]. This has been proven by Casaló et al., [24] in revealing why Athens as a favorite tourist destination is more due to the influence of social media [20], especially [20] also emphasized that attracting social media audiences will be more effective if balanced with the use of social media influencers.

2.1 Digital marketing

Nowadays digital marketing has become the main focus of businesses around the world. It started out as a rapidly developing mode of communication which has not only generated extra revenue but also most importantly become a way to describe and maintain sustainable relationships among various entities in the market [25]. Internet users do not only interact with each other, but more specifically they also interact with specific brands selected from certain businesses/industries [25]. Hence, digital marketing is recognized as a process to promote brands, which connects with potential consumers online; It includes not only email, social media, web-based advertisement, and also text and multimedia messaging services as channels of marketing [13].

In this regard, Kaur et al. [25] classified various criteria for digital marketing effectiveness based on their context (as indicated in Table 1).

Table 1. Criteria for digital marketing effectiveness

No	Criteria	Contexts
1	Website Quality	Captivating; determining customers' experience; concise yet valuable contents; including clearly defined and relevant products/services
2	Strong Social Media	Utilizing relevant social media platform such as Facebook; Instagram; Twitter; LinkedIn; YouTube
3	Search Engine Optimization (SEO)	SEO is optimized by planning long but relevant keywords to be used in search engines towards tourism website contents
4	Marketing Email	Re-offering or reselling new tour/travel packages to customers
5	Interesting Contents	High quality; interesting; offering added-value to audiences; including soft selling in the contents; interactive contents (videos and infographics)
6	Mobile-Friendly	Website, applications, social media, email, and other platforms used must be mobile-friendly and updated.

Source: Kaur [25]

Digital marketing is considered to be a more successful method of doing promotion compared to the traditional one. This claim is based on the fact that digital marketing has enabled business owners to track its users' behavior in real-time manner. Moreover, the reach and scope of every campaign conducted digitally can be conveniently tracked [25]. Consequently, the need to proliferate digital marketing into the general business marketing strategies will contribute to improvements in the achievement of overall marketing and business targets by empowering the brands to gain valuable insight into consumer behaviors and how to meet them better [25].

In light of the promising advantages provided by digital marketing, the majority of business enterprises are currently trying to promote their products and services online, subsequently, the demand for digital marketing (tools and techniques) and its implementation has risen significantly over the past two years [13]. Nevertheless, there are criteria for a digital marketing campaign to be considered effective according to [25].

2.2 Competitive advantage

Conceptually, competitive advantages are initiated from various activities related to product design, processes, marketing, distribution, and market reception [26]. They are absolutely essential for any company in every sector of industry, especially to ensure the survival of the product/service [23, 24]. These cutting edges are unique selling points that are not possessed by other similar companies (competitors) in the industry [11, 16, 25]. This means that having competitive advantages based on its unique strength, which is not possessed by its competitors, is also profoundly crucial for a tourism agent/company to benefit its business performance [12].

In the dynamic market of tourism industry, a business firm's innovation management strategy in the form of collaborative networking with other stakeholders like the government, suppliers, and society is a very important aspect in developing competitive edges for the tourism business in the long term [12]. As the development involves the government as policy maker, it should be conducted while considering the four attributes of *The Diamond of National Advantages* [27, 28]. The first pillar is the *Factor Conditions*, which include the conditions of the production/operational factors of an industry that influence its flow. The second pillar, the *Demand Conditions*, is the circumstance where the market's demand for certain industry's products/services varies according to customers' expectations; thus, the businesses strive to innovate and focus on different (chosen) market segments [28]. The third pillar, *Related and Supporting Industry*, is the condition of complementary services that support the performance, innovation, and upgrading processes of the main industry in order to gain global competitiveness. The last pillar, *Firm Strategy, Structure, and Rivalry*, is the condition where the business firm determines its organization structure, strategies to innovate and operate/perform better, as well as its tendency to compete with other rivals in the market [28].

By focusing on its competitive advantages, a business will have a better chance to survive and a better capability to compete in the market. Since these competitive edges play a prominent role in enhancing the business performance [13]; hence, better achievements in the tourism industry also can be reached by utilizing this strategy while also affecting the supply chain activities [11, 27].

2.3 Influencer

Over the last few decades, digital marketing campaigns that endorse celebrities such as movie stars, have become a recognized strategy in improving the business' marketing communication [19, 28]. Similarly, the presence of influencers in social media has turned them into very relevant marketing media and has continuously increased their utilization [19]. Studies have shown that using a local or national influencer can serve as a valuable inspiration for food products, restaurants, as well as tourism destinations [29]. Digital Marketing Institute data from 2019 also showed that 50% of internet users follow prominent influencers in decision-making and adhere to their recommendations, whereas 40% of the users buy promoted products after browsing Instagram pages or watching YouTube videos [19].

Moreover, Fink et al. [30] cited by Vrontis et al. [19] also provided evidence that influencers' credibility strengthens a customer's buying intention of a product, this effect can last for quite a long time, at least for a period of 4 years. Another study [31] also suggested at least ten companies utilize influencers in their marketing efforts with an emphasis on the communication model being implemented.

At the moment, implementing influencers' strength in promoting business' products is well-known to be very effective and efficient. However, in adopting this strategy their efficacy must be well assessed in order to achieve the intended targets. Their strength or influence is generally measured by using quantitative parameters such as the number of fans, followers, liked posts, comments, and various variables on their personal profiles on social media [29].

3. METHOD

Since this research aims to review and discuss various scientific articles related to digital marketing strategies and influencers that have been published in reputable international journals (Scopus), the method used is Systematic Literature Review (SLR), SLR allows the identification and synthesis of diverse literature sources that include current trends, research gaps, evaluation of research quality, and challenges and opportunities that exist in adopting influencer strategies in tourism digital marketing. The SLR method is not the same as a traditional literature review (such as a narrative), as it treats the procedure for reviewing literature scientifically and incorporates empirical research ideas to ensure greater clarity and replicability in the process [32]. As such, SLR provides a solid foundation for developing an in-depth understanding of the topic and generating valuable practical recommendations for practitioners and researchers in the industry.

In addition, this study utilizes VOSviewer in determining research gaps. By definition, VOSviewer is software used to analyze and visualize the relationships between keywords, authors, articles, and journals [33-37] in scientific literature datasets, making it crucial in determining research gaps. VOSviewer allows researchers to visually identify potential research gaps in the scientific literature, direct research to more relevant and significant areas, and prevent redundant research. With VOSviewer, researchers can make more informed and efficient research decisions, ensure meaningful contributions to the scientific literature, and enrich understanding in the field of tourism digital marketing.

The reporting of this research follows the reporting advice

from the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) flow chart. PRISMA is a tool and guide used to conduct research on systematic literature reviews [38] which assists authors in presenting findings from all forms of published research. Based on PRISMA reporting guidelines, there are five steps that must be taken in conducting systematic literature review research.

3.1 Article inclusion criteria

In this study, articles selection guide is set based on Inclusion Criteria as follows:

IC 1: Primary research paper written in English in the form of article, published between 2018-2022, can be accessed in full paper that includes keywords: *digital marketing* and *tourism*.

IC 2: Researches that aimed to analyze digital marketing strategies in tourism sector.

Inclusion Criteria 1 (IC 1) has been applied in order to limit the articles to research from 2018-2022. This aims to ensure that the literature used is current and relevant in the context of recent developments in digital marketing in the tourism industry. Meanwhile, the second IC (IC 2) focuses the research on articles that have the purpose of analyzing digital marketing strategies in the tourism sector, thus ensuring that the articles used are truly relevant to the research topic and can make a significant contribution to the understanding of digital marketing strategies in the tourism industry. Thus, these eligibility criteria provide a clear framework for selecting literature that fits the purpose and scope of the study.

3.2 Sources of articles

Firstly, the authors conducted article database searches on the online Scopus database. Following this, article selection is carried out to pick the ones that can be accessed in full paper. On top of that, bibliographical reviews were also performed on the selected articles to find related research articles to be used as additional or supporting references.

3.3 Study selections

In the selection stage, three sorting stages were conducted: firstly, keywords related to the research interest (digital marketing strategies in the relevant tourism sector) were entered. The keywords include (“*Digital Marketing*” AND “*Tourism*”); secondly, the inclusion criteria guided the authors to explore the identified articles by reviewing the title, its abstract, and relevant keywords; thirdly, a thorough review was performed of all articles so that articles not focused on discussing digital marketing and tourism are eliminated whether they meet the IC criteria or not. The process of article review as intended can be seen in Figure 1.

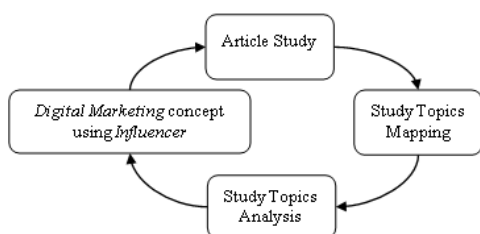


Figure 1. Article review process

3.4 Info gathering process on articles

Information is collected manually and an in-depth review is conducted with options such as author, title, year, journal name, topic, country, abstract, keywords, research methods, and research variables. During the in-depth review, dispute resolution between authors can be addressed with several systematic steps.

First, each author manually collects information with parameters such as author, title, year, journal name, topic, country, abstract, keywords, research methods, and research variables. Second, each author reads the article in full to determine whether the article is relevant to the research objectives. Third, when differences in views or opinions arose, an important step was discussion. Any differences in views between authors were discussed openly and constructively by rereading the article in its entirety. The discussion allows the authors to understand each other's perspectives and reach a common understanding.

If the discussion is fruitless, the authors engage other resources such as a mediator or an expert in the relevant field to help resolve the differences. With this approach, disagreements between authors can be resolved in a transparent and collaborative way, ensuring that the outcome of the in-depth review is consistent and accurate.

3.5 Information item selection from articles

The author cites information from each of the selected articles consisting of: Demographics of the selected studies and factors that influence digital marketing in the tourism sector. In the context of demographics, the information specified included the year of distribution and the country of origin in which the study was published.

The important underlying reason behind the selection of these information items is to provide context that is essential for a holistic understanding in order to present relevant data and research findings. The demographic information, which includes the year of distribution and country of origin of the research, is used to highlight the accuracy, actuality, and possible variations in the analyzed data. This provides clarity to the reader regarding the relevance of the data to the current context and allows for careful evaluation of possible geographical differences. Including study demographics in the citation of information aims to strengthen the validity and trustworthiness of the research and provide a solid basis for a comprehensive understanding of these aspects in the context of the study.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Article selection

Article selection was carried out based on research interest, which is digital marketing in tourism industry. The search was performed based on relevant keywords relevant to the chosen topic, the search result from Scopus online database discovered 232 relevant articles that were published over the period between 2018 and 2022.

Based on the above flow chart (Figure 1), guidance for the reporting of selection and literature study processes is obtained from the PRISMA tool (Figure 2). In the first stage, article selection was performed using the prepared keywords and

resulted in 232 articles. In the second stage, the authors made some adjustments to the article search settings following the criteria set in IC 1, e.g., published between 2018 and 2022, the article is written in English, can be accessed in the full paper, in the form of article, and includes the set keywords (*digital marketing, tourism, social media, tourism sector, and tourism marketing*). This sorting resulted in 24 articles that matched with IC 1, and 208 that did not match (excluded).

In the third stage, study identification and selection were conducted through the exploration of article titles, abstracts, and article keywords. Based on IC 2 set of criteria, from the selected study of 24 articles, 5 of them were eliminated due to their failure to match the criteria, or in other words, they were not (directly) related to the topic of interest – digital marketing in the tourism sector. Finally, after performing manual table data extraction while doing a thorough review and discussion with IC 2 in mind, an ultimate selection of 19 articles was decided.

4.2 Selected article demography

In this section, the publication years of the selected articles and the origin country distribution are illustrated. In the years

of the results 19 articles were not well-distributed over the period of 2018-2022, more specifically most of them were published in 2022. Notably, there were only two articles published in 2019 [39, 40]. Whereas in 2020, as few as four articles were published by [1, 41-43], to be more specific can be seen in Figure 3.

As illustrated in the chart, the selected 19 articles were distributed between 2019 and 2022, where none of the initially sorted published articles in 2018 focused on the topic of interest of this study. This might be caused by some factors, for instance: the concentrated topic of research on different subject areas or trends besides digital marketing or the tourism sector. However, in 2019 there were 2 studies with matching topics, presumably the reason for this was the effect of the rise in topics related to COVID-19. Overall, the next two years saw no significant change in the number of (directly) related studies on the topic, but the number rose significantly in 2022 when the need to meet the challenge in the advancement of technology and the post-COVID recovery faced by tourism sectors both in the developed and developing countries were well recognized by businesses around the globe (as shown in Figure 4).

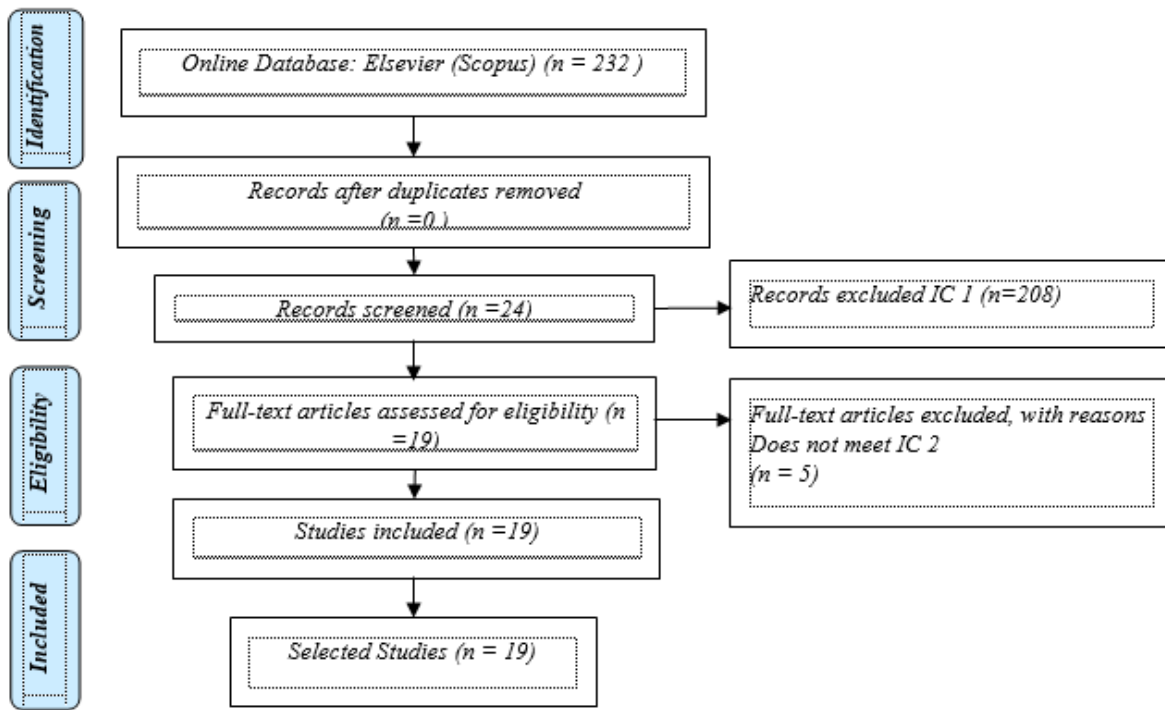


Figure 2. Flow chart based PRISMA guide

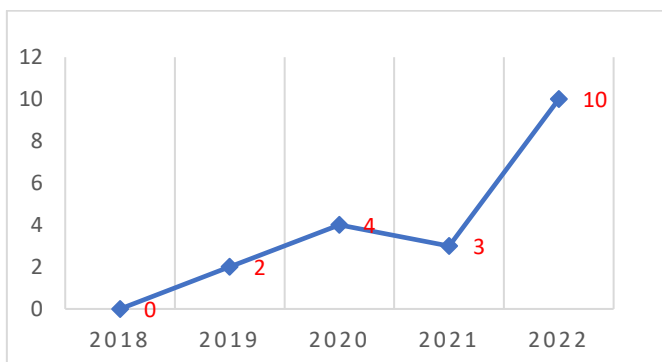


Figure 3. Article (publication) year distribution



Figure 4. Article publication based on country

Table 2. Selected article source

No	Format	Publication (Jurnal)	Number of Article
1	Article	<i>Innovative Marketing</i>	1
2	Article	<i>Tourism and Hospitality Research</i>	1
3	Article	<i>Journal of Theoretical and Applied Electronic Commerce Research</i>	1
4	Article	<i>Humanities and Social Sciences Reviews</i>	1
5	Article	<i>International Journal of Tourism Research</i>	1
6	Article	<i>International Journal for Quality Research</i>	1
7	Article	<i>International Journal of Emerging Technology and Advanced Engineering</i>	1
8	Article	<i>Uncertain Supply Chain Management</i>	2
9	Article	<i>Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity</i>	1
10	Article	<i>Journal of Cultural Heritage Management and Sustainable Development</i>	1
11	Article	<i>International Journal of Innovative Technology and Exploring Engineering</i>	1
12	Article	<i>Tourism Management</i>	1
13	Article	<i>Sustainability (Switzerland)</i>	6
Total			19

Source: prepared and compiled by the authors

Figure 4 above depicts that many of the selected articles were published in developed countries such as Russia [15, 44], Spain [41, 43], Portugal [7, 8, 40, 45], Finland [46], Italy [29], and also United Kingdom [42]. On the other hand, relevant

researches on digital marketing and the tourism industry were also conducted in developing countries such as Ukraine [1, 40], Greece [6, 47], Indonesia [39], Serbia [48], Pakistan [49], and Thailand [12].

From the list of countries, Spain is the country where the most researches on this topic were carried out, with as many as three articles by Tarazona-Montoya et al. [43], Sánchez-Teba et al. [41], and Michael and Fusté-Forné [50]. Whereas in Finland [46], Indonesia [39], Serbia [48], Pakistan [49], Italia [29] and the United Kingdom [42] only one article was published in this subject area. Similarly, the distribution of articles based on the journal where they were published was also varied. As many as six articles were published in *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, two articles in the *Uncertain Supply Chain Management* journal, and only a single article each was published in other journals (Table 2).

In this next section, the common variables used by the researchers in their studies from the selected articles when implementing digital marketing in the tourism industry are laid out. The authors managed to identify, classify and compare the 19 articles based on the view of digital marketing concepts [25] and most commonly used research variables as follows (Table 3).

Based on the comparison in Table 3, there are at least seven common variables being used in the studies of the implementation of digital marketing strategies in the tourism sector as proposed in the views of [25] including a common emphasis on the utilization of social media. However, not many of the selected articles discussed the role of influencers to support the digital marketing campaign particularly to promote tourism products/services, as contrasted to the roles of tourism related websites, social media, and interesting and unique content that occurred more frequently. Therefore, in the next section, this gap between the occurrence of marketing strategies involving *influencers* and other common keywords is visualized in the context of selected articles (Figure 5).

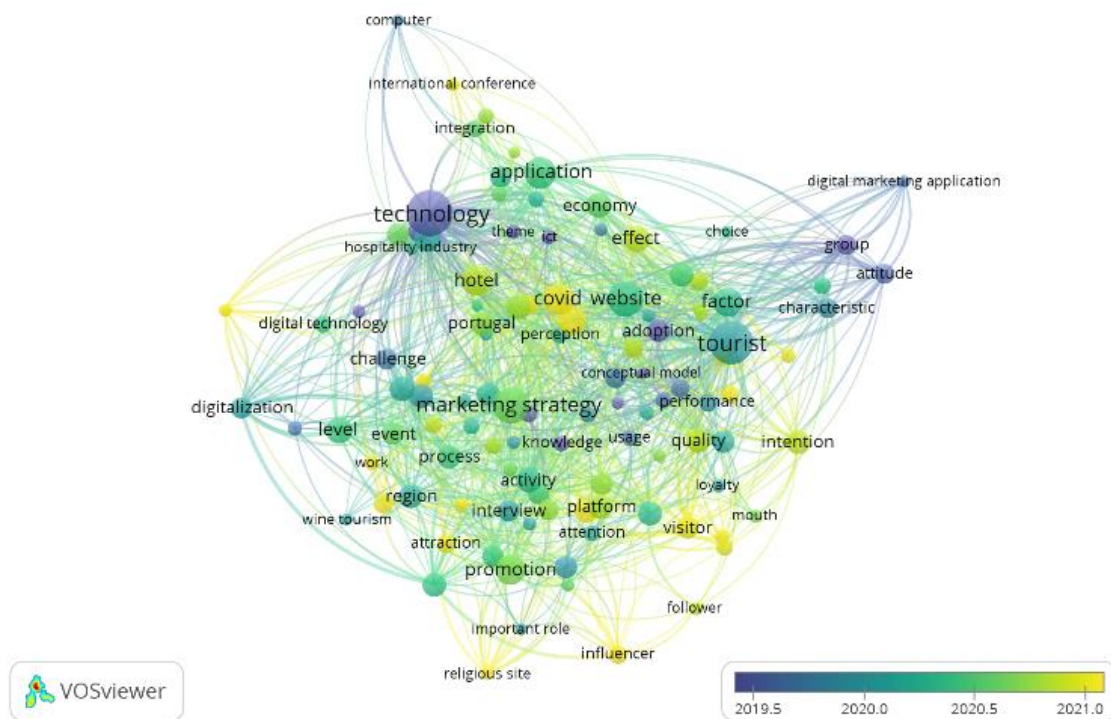


Figure 5. Network visualization (mapping) of the 232 chosen articles

Table 3. Digital marketing variable

Digital Marketing Variables	No. of Variable	Reference
Website	6	[1, 13, 27, 40, 41]
Social Media (Instagram, Facebook, dan Youtube, Twitter, LinkedIn)	10	[1, 8, 13, 27, 40, 41, 45, 48, 49]
SEO	4	[1, 8, 40, 47, 49]
Email	3	[1, 13, 41]
Interesting and/or Unique Contents (Tourist destination campaign, storytelling)	5	[1, 8, 13, 40]
Blog	4	[27, 40, 49]
Advertisement	3	[1, 40, 41]

Source: Prepared and compiled by the authors

In the network visualization mapped in the above diagram, each node represents a keyword or research variable extracted from articles' titles and abstracts. The size of the nodes indicates the word's occurrence in the publications in relation to other keywords, taken from the content of the journal articles, titles, abstracts, and the provided keywords. The bigger the size of the node the more articles contain relevant keywords related to this particular word vice versa. In addition, the lighter the color of the node means the word occurred in more recent (over the period between 2019 – 2022) publications. In this case, the *influencer* keyword occurred in quite a low frequency compared to other keywords/variables, yet it was published in more recent articles. This occurrence is quite low compared to other variables in the selected articles, including those that specifically discuss the role of (individual) influencers and their followers towards someone's rating and comment, attitude, behavior and one's decision in the tourism sector [29].

4.3 Discussion

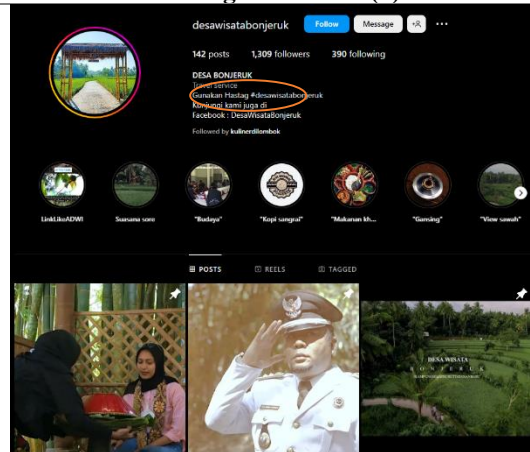
The importance of digital media in marketing strategies for the tourism industry has made its utilization an inevitable necessity. Almost every business activities in other sectors outside the tourism industry also utilize similar strategies, although they apply different approaches, criteria, and measurement standards. Alebaki et al. [4] for instance, found out that wine tourism destinations in Greece utilize websites and social media like Facebook and Instagram to communicate their services. Even though the intensity of social media use is very high, a careful selection of communication strategies is required to bring a significant positive impact to the destination's performance [4], as contrasted to merely choosing popular social media to be used.

In the case of a study conducted by Vaculčíková et al. [1], it suggested the implementation of a combination of several strategies, such as interesting website contents creation, SEO, social media marketing, and using email for marketing. These strategies according to Vaculčíková et al. [1] should be complemented by the more interactive content creation that includes captivating photos and videos on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and the company's website. In line with the importance of producing interesting content, Sánchez-Teba et al. [41] discovered that there was a notable increase in traffic of 55% (that indicates a positive surge in engagement) in the first quarter of the 2018-2019 period, this trend was caused by interesting contents and SEO implementation

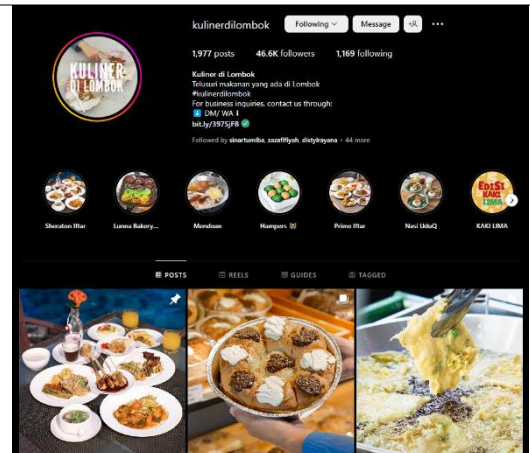
(Figure 6).

The findings show the importance of engaging content, SEO implementation, social media marketing, and the use of email as digital marketing strategies, suggesting that content-based approaches and search engine optimization are critical in increasing the visibility and attractiveness of tourism destinations. This indicates that businesses in the tourism industry need to focus on quality content creation and website optimization to improve their ranking in search results.

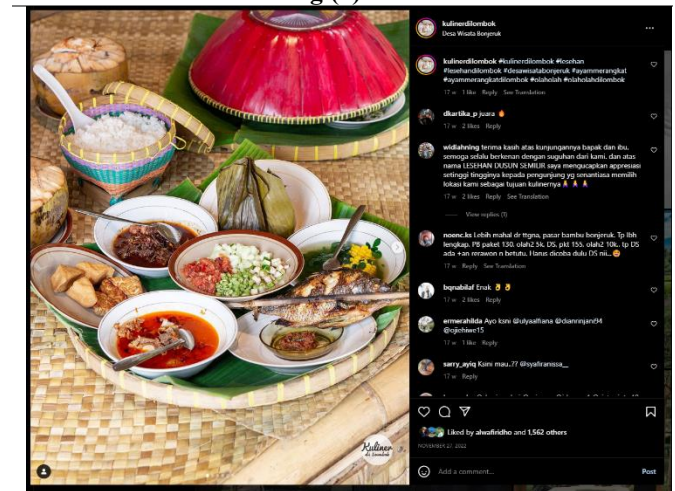
Bonjeruk Tourism Village Instagram Account and Hashtag Utilization (#)



Utilization of F&B influencers



Communication occurred when using influencer and hashtag (#) feature



Source: desa wisata Bonjeruk Instagram

Figure 6. Digital marketing strategies implementation

Moreover, adopting these strategies is claimed to be relatively easy and cost effective [1]. However, the use of social media free services do not always have a significant effect on customer's decision to buy the tourism product/service and an increase in the number of visits, instead, this strategy needs to be accompanied by posting (paid) ads on that social media platform [6], which will also enable the tourism company to easily reach the international-scale market.

Along with the rapid development of new digital technology that support digital marketing, using social media from mainstream platform developers like WhatsApp, YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram become a common tool for travelers/tourists to do research to plan their travels to certain destinations [12]. Looking at this phenomenon, in order to improve its achievement a tourism company requires marketing communication techniques and innovation which is channeled through suitable social media channels. There are various ways to communicate effectively with potential customers, these include hashtag (#) feature on Instagram, and participations via "like" and "comment" features [39].

To illustrate the adoption of these digital marketing strategies, two Instagram accounts were chosen and analyzed, they exhibit examples of the implementation of competitive advantage initiation by Bonjeruk, a tourism village in the Central Lombok district of West Nusa Tenggara Province and a culinary business on the island who utilized influencer strategies to promote its products.

The adoption of influencer and utilization of hashtag feature: #desawisatabonjeruk provide an important connecting (communication) link between the destination operator and the users of Instagram that can help potential customers/visitors search for specific information about certain tourist destinations [39].

The results of this study can change the way businesses in the tourism industry approach digital marketing by focusing on quality content, search engine optimization, investment in social media advertising, collaboration with influencers, and integrating consumer participation. Tourism businesses need to create engaging content, optimize their social media, and consider advertising on social media platforms to reach a wider international market. Collaboration with influencers who have an engaged audience and utilizing direct interaction with consumers through social media can help build strong relationships and provide more accessible information. Thus, digital marketing approaches in the tourism industry can become more efficient and relevant in this digital age.

Based on this practice, this study attempts to propose a new digital marketing concept that combines the use of social media and influencer adoption in campaigning for a tourism destination. With these initiatives as the competitive advantages which also become the novelty of this research, it is expected that the implementation will benefit the business performance of the tourism village and other tourist destinations in general.

The results of this study provide suggestions for future research in this area by considering and exploring the use of influencers and consumer participation in the context of tourism digital marketing and identifying the most effective strategies to utilize them. In addition, future research could focus on developing a framework that integrates content-based content, SEO, social media, and email in tourism digital marketing strategies (refer to Figure 7). Further research on the influence of new technologies such as WhatsApp and YouTube in travel decision-making can also provide further

insights into the role of social media in travel planning of tourists. Furthermore, this research can pave the way for more innovations in the use of social media and influencers as relevant digital marketing strategies in the tourism industry.

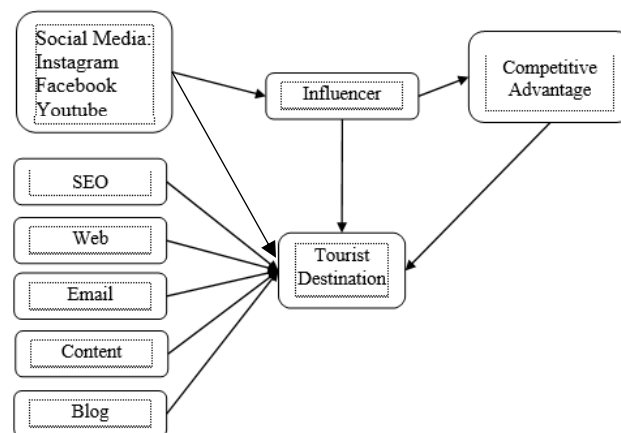


Figure 7. Digital marketing strategy
Source: prepared and summarized by the authors

5. CONCLUSION

In this era of digitalization, in almost every business sector both small and big scale companies are in need of digital marketing strategies, including those in tourism destination operator companies. To develop effective strategies, they need to consider various aspects in the implementation which include the initiation of competitive advantages and suitable digital marketing techniques that will support these cutting edges in order to not only survive but enhance the business performance, such as the use of influencers. In general, all the selected articles from this SLR study reveal that the researchers commonly recommend strategies as suggested by Kaur [25], such as high-quality websites, strong social media, SEO implementation, the use of email for marketing, and creating interesting and interactive content.

Furthermore, the practical implication of this study is that in real practice, innovation in the communication of value-added products and services is needed, as the way of communicating about the product is much more important than the selection of media for the campaign. Therefore, it is important to note that the use of influencers (on social media) and features such as hashtags (#) as a way to communicate more effectively to potential customers needs to be considered in order to increase the reach and effectiveness of campaigns. In this perspective, based on the VOSviewer mapping, it was revealed that there is a considerable gap between the variables of digital marketing and influencers, which was chosen by the researcher as a novelty in the study conducted in Bonjeruk Tourism Village in West Nusa Tenggara Province, Indonesia.

Limitations and Future Research

The limitations of this study involve data and timeframe limitations. First, this study is based on information available in relevant literature from 2018 to 2022. As the tourism industry and digital marketing are constantly changing and evolving, the latest information after 2022 may not be included in this analysis. Therefore, recent changes in digital marketing trends and practices may not have been reflected in the results of this study. Secondly, data limitations also relate to the

availability of literature in English, which may result in research focusing on literature in other languages being overlooked. In this context, it is possible that relevant research available only in other languages could not be accessed or evaluated in this analysis. As a consequence, the results of this study may not cover the entire spectrum of existing research in different languages. Future research should therefore consider recent changes in the tourism industry and digital marketing, as well as expand the scope of languages in the analysis to gain a more comprehensive understanding of this topic.

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