A Survey Study on the Efficacy of a Tourism Website: a Case of Botutonuo Beach in the Province of Gorontalo

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Abstract

Websites play a significant role in the promotion of today's tourism industries. A myriad of studies has shown that its uses, for instance, help tourists access detailed information about their preferred tourism sites and, thus, personalize their visit. In the context of Botutonuo Beach located in the Province of Gorontalo, Indonesia, utilizing a website to promote the beach is of necessity. Yet, to what extent the website provides what tourists need to know for their visit remains under-explored. This study, therefore, aims to examine the efficacy of a website that has been developed as a promotional marketing strategy tool for Botutonuo Beach. To collect data, a survey form was distributed to 100 respondents in Gorontalo. This survey consists of ten questions which are divided into three parts: (1) user personal information; (2) respondent's experience in traveling to Botutonuo Beach; and (3) user satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the current Botutonuo Beach website. The results showed that the majority of the respondents supported the use of the website for a promotional tool for tourism at Botutonuo Beach. Respondents also considered that the Botutonuo Beach website was a reliable source of accurate and valuable information; therefore, they recommended this website for tourists who want to visit Botutonuo Beach.

Keywords: Botutonuo Beach, marketing strategy, tourism, website.

1. Introduction

The tourism industry is experiencing an increase in digital technology usage. Travel industry technology is evolving rapidly; new platforms such as WhatsApp, YouTube, Facebook, and other platforms are becoming more popular as new technologies emerge (Kerdpitak, 2022). Technology utilization in the tourism industry becomes a great opportunity to advance and enhance tourism's reputation and make it more well-known. Tourist attractions are more accessible as a result of the use of technology in marketing, as everyone will be able to obtain information more quickly and simply, no matter where they are.

In order to enhance performance and develop knowledge about a wide variety of attractions, it is necessary to utilize marketing techniques for the tourism industry. This change is crucial since the number of tourists visiting a country is heavily influenced by how simple it is to discover information about that country's tourist destinations (Surentu, Warouw, & Rembang, 2020). Technological advancements in tourism allow visitors to access information sites related

to tourist destinations they plan to visit. As a result, tourists can comprehend the planning process for their vacation (Simanjuntak, et al., 2021). One of the digital media that nowadays is being utilized extensively for information dissemination, as well as a medium for promoting a tourism destination, is a website. Tourists can connect and download information on services, costs, events, customs, weather, special deals, transportation schedules, and other information through the website at any time to make their travels more comfortable (Pencarelli, 2019).

Botutonuo Beach, located in Botutonuo Village, Bone Bolango Regency, is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Gorontalo Province, Indonesia. Given its contribution to the government's efforts to create the Tomini Bay Creative Economic Zone, it is necessary to improve the quality of this beach promotion strategy. It is impossible to effectively market the tourism industry without using any promotional media. As a result, digital information media in the form of the Botutonuo Beach website, which specifically offers information about these tourism objects, has been developed. Botutonuo Beach website is expected to be an effective promotional media in encouraging an increase in the number of tourist visits, both domestic and foreign since the website can be accessed by outsiders in accordance with its purpose and function (Rizaly & Rahman, 2021).

Travelers, especially young generations, are harnessing the potential offered by digital technologies and communication, using them to promote, construct, and interpret specific information (Monaco, 2018),. Therefore, a website should provide relevant information that meets user needs and advances development goals. Numerous studies have been conducted to determine the value of websites based on travelers' perspectives. For instance, Oktaviani and Fatchiya (2019) examined the efficiency of utilizing digital media, such as websites, to promote Umbul Ponggok tourism, Klaten Regency, Central Java, Indonesia. The finding of this study shows that the website helps to promote tourism in Umbul Ponggok. However, it is advised to improve the quality of the content on the website, such as the quality of photos and videos, as well as price-related information.

Lu, Lu, and Zhang (2002) carried out a similar study by analyzing the informational content, usability, and functionality of Chinese tourism websites from the viewpoint of Chinese users. The findings suggest that there are still a number of online service tourism-related issues that need to be resolved. Tourism websites that only provide basic information and display only one language are regarded as less valuable for tourists and lose opportunities to access the global tourism market. In addition, Perdue (2001) presented a conceptual model for assessing websites for North American ski resorts as part of his research. According to the survey, the visual attractiveness of the website, the information on the website, and the pictures of existing resorts are contributed to the total website quality score. With the increased use of digital media, the information needed is also becoming more specific, therefore a website must be able to facilitate visitors gaining access to that specific information.

Research on website quality assessment was also conducted by Jeong and Lambert (2001) who evaluated the information quality of lodging websites in Northeastern US based on consumer perceptions. In this study, perceived usefulness, perceived usability, perceived accessibility, and user attitudes were employed as four indicators of information quality. The findings of this study support other studies' findings that the four information quality metrics are reliable

indicators of the information's quality on the created lodging website. However, few studies have examined the usefulness of tourism object websites in the Province of Gorontalo, Indonesia. It is essential, therefore, to demonstrate the responses of stakeholders to Botutonuo Beach's website as a digital promotional media through this research. It is expected that the study promotes the sustainable development of Botutonuo Beach by improving the website content that enhances the reputation of Botutonuo Beach as a tourist destination.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Digital Information as a Business Promotion Media

In today's modern economy, digital marketing has become a vital instrument for promoting goods and services. The main objective of digital marketing is to promote a brand, build preference, and increase sales through various digital marketing techniques (Riyadi, Susilo, Sufa, & Putranto, 2019). According to Samodra & Herwanto (2019), current advances in information and communication technology have brought beneficial changes in various aspects of people's daily lives, for example the increased use of web-based media as a source of information and communication. Likewise with tourism, digital technology is seen as the most effective way to promote tourism destinations and to achieve the goals of sustainable tourism development in the future (Natocheeva, Shayakhmetova, Bekkhozhaeva, Khamikhan, & Pshembayeva, 2020).

Technology innovations in the travel and tourism industry can increase the industry's competitiveness in the digital world by taking advantage of new opportunities (Natocheeva, Shayakhmetova, Bekkhozhaeva, Khamikhan, & Pshembayeva, 2020). Among the forms of digital information used in tourism marketing is a website. A website is a domain-based collection of information (Kuryanti & Indriani, 2018). With 73.7% of Indonesia's population using the internet in 2019–2020, there is a great chance for the government to disseminate information and advance important industry sectors, including tourism (Puspawati & Ristanto, 2018).

2.2 The tourism sector's stakeholders

In order to encourage the development of sustainable tourism, stakeholders, namely, tourists, potential tourists, and local communities should be involved in the development of a tourism object (Byrd, 2007). The concept of stakeholder was first proposed by Freeman (2010) who defined a stakeholder as "all of those groups and individuals that can affect, or are effected by, the accomplishment of organizational prupose". Studies such as by Björk (2000); Fennell & Malloy (1999); Miller & Twining-Ward (2005); as cited in Roxas, Rivera, & Gutierrez (2020) identify various stakeholders in the world of tourism including tourists, industry, residents, government, and non-governmental organizations.

There is a need for stakeholder involvement on the value creation process of a tourism object since the involvement of stakeholders is crucial for the achievement of sustainability objectives (Waligo, Clarke, & Hawkins, 2013). According to Bramwell and Lane (2000), tourism is a multi-stakeholder business and it consists of stakeholders with various goals and interests.

Therefore, active participation of the stakeholders involved in the process of constructing a tourism item is particularly important to its success.

3. Research Method

A survey was the research design chosen in this study. The survey was conducted to measure public's responses to the benefits and quality of the website being developed. This survey consists of 10 questions which are divided into three parts: (1) user personal information; (2) respondent's experience in traveling to Botutonuo Beach; and (3) user satisfaction and dissatisfaction for the current Botutonuo Beach website. Data were collected from100 respondents who resided in Gorontalo during May-June 2022. Prior to collecting data, the survey form was piloted to ensure that its components correctly addressed the research objectives of the study.

4. Result and Discussion

The findings showed that the majority of the respondents had positive opinions of the Botutonuo Beach website. The following sections outline the results, along with the discussion.

4.1 Tourist visitation frequency

The result shows that 83.3% of respondents had been to this beach and 16.7% have never been there. 85.4% of those who have visited Botutonuo Beach have returned multiple times, while 14.6% have only visited once. This demonstrates that Botutonuo Beach has attractions that can encourage tourists to make a return visit as they are pleased with their prior travelling experiences. A tourist's perception of their trip experiences is likely to affect their satisfaction with the trip and their intentions to return (Moon & Han, 2018).
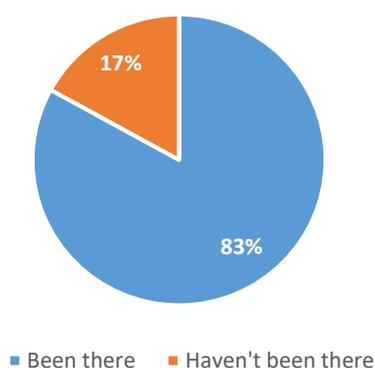

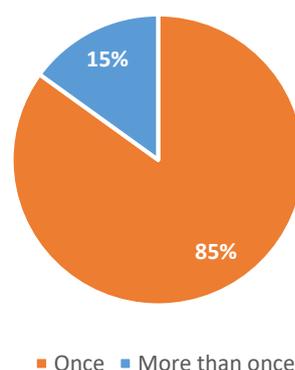|	
Figure 1 Percentage of respondents who have visited Botutonuo Beach	*Figure 2 Percentage of visitation frequency to Botutonuo Beach*

4.2 Tourist information sources

Tourists are currently becoming more critical when deciding where to go on vacation. Before choosing to visit a particular site, tourists are more vigilant about gathering sufficient information about that location (Aprilia & Kusumawati, 2021). As a result, the amount of

information that tourists may quickly access will have a big impact on this situation. The survey result suggests that the vast majority of visitors, as many as 91.3%, learned about Botutonuo Beachfrom friends or relatives. Only 17.4% of respondents obtained information about the beach from social media, as shown on figure 3 below.
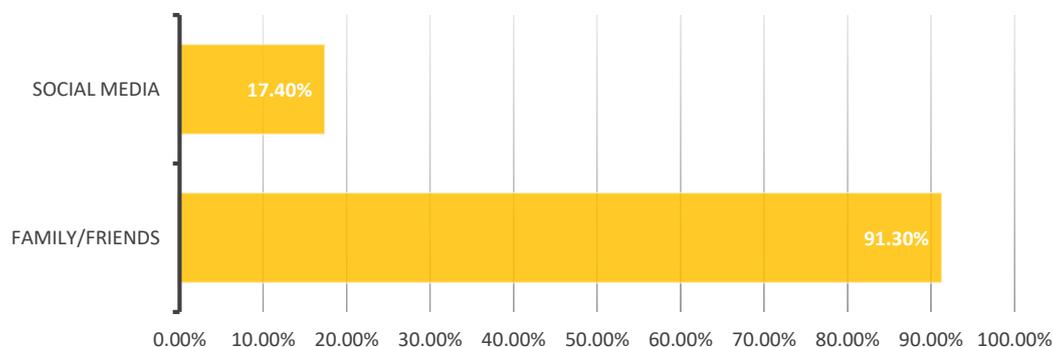
This finding shows that there is still relatively little information of Botutonuo Beach attractions on social media and other digital platforms. In fact, there is none of the digital platforms that exclusively contains information about Botutonuo Beach. Both the local government and the community that manages the beach have not used any systematic marketing strategies to highlight the facilities and tourist-drawing potential of this beach.

4.3 Website information

Wu (2018), state that tourism websites should be able to help visitors gather relevant information, navigate through various texts and graphic elements, and create a first impression of the virtual world. In this survey, the information quality pertaining to accessibility, facilities, and visiting policies is evaluated. Botutonuo Beach website was rated as being good by 87.5% of respondents, with specific comments on each component as follows:

Accessibility
Up to 79.2% of participants thought the accessibility data provided on the Botutonuo Beach website was comprehensive. Only 14.6% of respondents thought the accessibility-related information was lacking.
Facility
As many as 83.3% of repondents thought the information on the Botutonuo Beach website's facililites was comprehensive, whereas 20.8% thought it was incomplete.
Visiting rules
The majority of respondents (87.5%) thought the visiting rules on the Botutonuo Beach website were informative, while 16.7% thought that the information about visiting policies was lacking.

Figure 4 Quality of Botutonuo Beach website content information (%)

In order to improve the information quality on the Botutonuo Beach website, additional confirmation from respondents is required given the volume of evaluation responses to incomplete information related to accessibility, facilities, and visiting customs.

4.4 Website's feasibility as a promotional tool

A majority of respondents (95.8%) express the view that Botutonuo Beach's website serves as a useful reference tool for tourists who wish to visit Botutonuo Beach, while it was ruled unfeasible by the remaining 4.2%. In response to this question, respondents indicate that they find Botutonuo Beach to be a reliable source of accurate and valuable information.
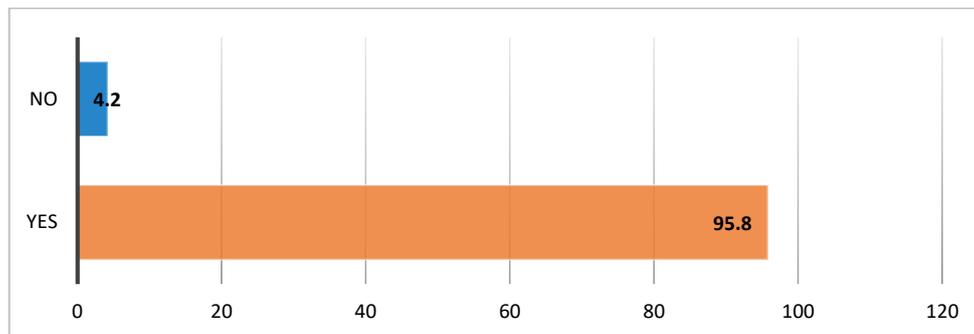

Figure 5 Botutonuo Beach website's feasibility as a promotion tool (%)

Digital media users who feel that the information they receive from a website is true and reliable will be encouraged to recommend the site to others as a source of reference in finding the required information (Alhabsyi & Mardhiyah, 2018). Providing recommendations is expected to increase public interest in accessing this website as a source of information for tourists who want to visit. According to the results of the survey, 91.7% of respondents would recommend this website as a reference to tourists looking to visit Botutonuo Beach.
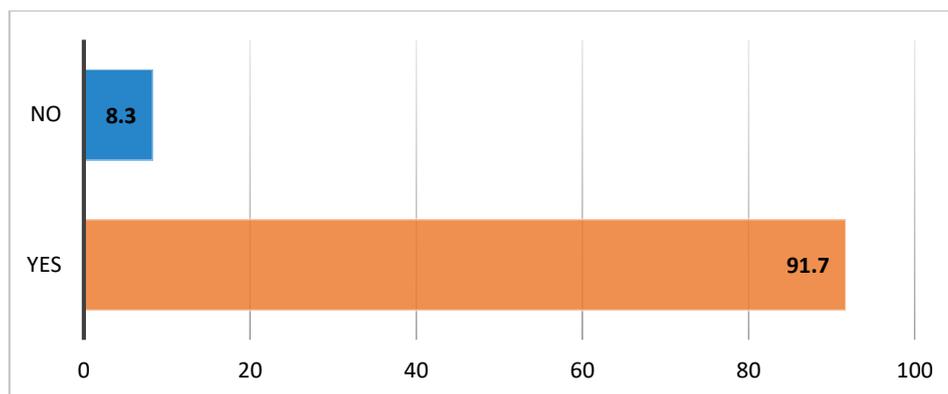
Figure 6 A measure of public interest in recommending Botutonuo Beach website (%)

Overall, this survey indicates that the existence of a website containing complete and up-to-date information about a tourist destination is beneficial not only for tourists but also beneficial to the community and government. An adequate amount of information on the website will assist tourists in determining their travel destinations and preparing for their trips. A website such as this is expected to serve as an effective promotional tool for the community and government, particularly those in charge of the local tourism destination, to introduce Botutonuo Beach regionally, nationally, and internationally.

` **5. Conclusion**

This study has shown that the majority of the respondents had positive responses towards the development of Botutonuo Beach website. The development of the website can be a marketing solution for Botutonuo Beach's manager and be a benefit for the tourist area. An effective tourism website will bring Botutonuo Beach to the forefront. Regarding to the survey result of this study, a good rating was given to the quality of the Botutonuo Beach website's development. It contains comprehensive information related to accessibility, facility and visiting rules. The prototype of this website was deemed viable to be used as a promotional tool for tourism at Botutonuo Beach. Moreover, the survey result also shows that respondents consider that the Botutonuo Beach website is a reliable source of accurate and valuable information; therefore, they ought to recommend this website as a reference for tourists who want to visit Botutonuo Beach.

To ensure the sustainability of this promotional effort, it is necessary to share responsibility for managing and updating the information contained on the website by the local community and the government. To attract tourist visitors, the local authority must be able to develop a special program or event at Botutonuo Beach. Local communities can also serve as informants in order to expand the information on the website. A more effective Botutonuo Beach management system is projected to come from effective coordination among all stakeholders in the future. The creation of the website for the Botutonuo Beach tourism destination is also anticipated to have a multiplier impact by boosting the number of visitors to the Province of Gorontalo, which will support the growth of the local and regional economies. The effectiveness of this website's development on the number of tourists visiting it and the efficiency of stakeholder participation are prospective future research subjects to undertake.

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