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Leverage Social Media Marketing to Increase Tourism: A Case Study of Lombok, Indonesia

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Abstract: The rapid development of internet technology has had a significant impact impact on various sectors, including tourism. Social media, in particular, has emerged as a powerful one networking tools that bridge social and economic activities globally. This research examine the role of social media marketing activities (SMMA) in shaping tourists' intentions to visit Lombok, Indonesia, a popular destination known for its stunning views and rich cultural heritage. This research identify the main elements of SMMA such as interaction, trends, electronic word of word of mouth (e-WOM), and customization, and their impact on brand image and tourist visit intentions. Through a quantitative approach with survey from domestic and international tourists, this research reveals that SMMA significantly improve Lombok brand image and influences tourist intentions positively. These findings provide valuable insights for tourism stakeholders to develop effective marketing strategies by utilizing social media attract more visitors and promote Lombok as a must-visit destination.

Keyword: Social media marketing, Tourism, Brand image, Interest in tourists visits, e-WOM, Social media interaction, Customization, Marketing strategy, Tourist destinations.

INTRODUCTION

The development of Internet technology and its capabilities have become increasingly important in providing information in various sectors and industries (Kim et al., 2019). Social media, in particular, has emerged as a powerful tool known for its worldwide networking capabilities, both socially and economically (Appel et al., 2020; Dutt, 2023). Many studies have attempted to identify the functions of social media (Dutt, 2023). With the continuous evolution and development of social media, the emergence of intelligent applications with

sophisticated tools and methods has made human life easier and created a more conducive environment for businesses to operate. Social media and its associated tools also provide a valuable means of communication between individuals, enabling interactive content and facilitating Internet-based interactions and collaboration between network participants (Pekkala & van Zoonen, 2022).

The use of social media has been widely recognized as a significant adaptation tool and a universal pathway between individuals, organizations, and related communities (Li et al., 2021). Research has shown that social media activities can significantly influence the behavior and lifestyle of individuals, as well as their connectedness to society through increased use of the platform. The tourism industry in particular has been affected by the growth and widespread use of social media in the latest media technology and marketing. Social media platforms have played a significant role in guiding tourists in determining their desired destinations by providing valuable information (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014). Research has also shown the role of social media in various aspects of tourism activities, such as the reservation process, information exchange, and development of tourism marketing strategies (Shin & Xiang, 2020).

Lombok, an island in West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia, is renowned for its stunning scenery, pristine beaches, and rich cultural heritage. The island has become an increasingly popular tourist destination, attracting visitors from all over the world. As tourism is a vital component of Lombok's economy, understanding the factors that influence tourists' intention to visit the island is critical for stakeholders in the tourism industry. Social media marketing has emerged as an important tool in promoting destinations such as Lombok, offering a dynamic and engaging way to reach potential travelers.

Social media networking activities have effectively surpassed the traditional role of websites in information dissemination and exchange between individuals and tourists. The use of modern technology in social media also allows for increased promotional activities and engagement strategies in the tourism sector. Social media marketing activities (SMMA), such as interactive content, trends, word of Electronic word of mouth (e-WOM), and customization, play a significant role in shaping traveler perceptions and decisions. Interactive content allows travelers to interact with brands and destinations, creating a sense of engagement and connection. Trends, reflected in the latest travel trends and popular destinations shared on social media, influence traveler choices by highlighting interesting and current travel experiences. e-WOM, through reviews, testimonials, and recommendations, builds credibility and trust among potential travelers. Customization , which offers tailored travel experiences, caters to travelers' specific preferences and needs, increasing their satisfaction and likelihood to visit.

Lombok's diverse attractions, from the majestic Mount Rinjani to the tranquil Gili Islands, are ideal subjects for social media marketing campaigns. These campaigns can showcase the island's natural beauty, adventure opportunities and unique cultural experiences, effectively reaching and resonating with a global audience. Additionally, the visual appeal of Lombok's scenery makes it a natural fit for platforms like Instagram, where visually appealing content can grab the attention of potential travelers.

Despite the increasing importance of social media in tourism marketing, there is still a need for a more comprehensive study that specifically focuses on the impact of social media marketing activities on tourists' intention to visit Lombok. This study aims to fill this gap by examining the influence of SMMA on Lombok's brand image and how this, in turn, influences tourists' purchase intentions. By understanding how social media influences

tourists behavior and decision-making, this study provides valuable insights for tourism practitioners and policy makers in Lombok. It helps in the development of effective marketing strategies that utilize social media platforms to attract visitors and promote the region as a prime tourism destination.

In addition, this study contributes to the broader literature on social media marketing by developing a research model that links social media usage to tourists' brand image and purchase intention. The findings of this study have practical implications for improving tourism marketing efforts, ultimately contributing to the sustainable growth of Lombok's tourism industry. By leveraging the power of social media, Lombok can strengthen its brand image, attract a larger audience, and enhance its appeal as a must-visit destination in Indonesia.

METHOD

Research Design

This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey design to collect data from respondents. This approach was chosen because it allows for extensive data collection from a large number of respondents, which is useful for identifying patterns and relationships between variables (Hartarto & Azizurrohman, 2022). This study focuses on the impact of social media marketing activities on tourists' intention to visit Lombok, as well as the mediating role of brand image in the relationship.

Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of domestic and international tourists who had visited or planned to visit Lombok. The sample was taken using a purposive sampling method, where respondents were selected based on certain criteria, namely those who actively use social media and have experience or intention to visit Lombok. The sample size was determined based on the Slovin formula, with a margin of error 5%, resulting in a sample of 400 respondents.

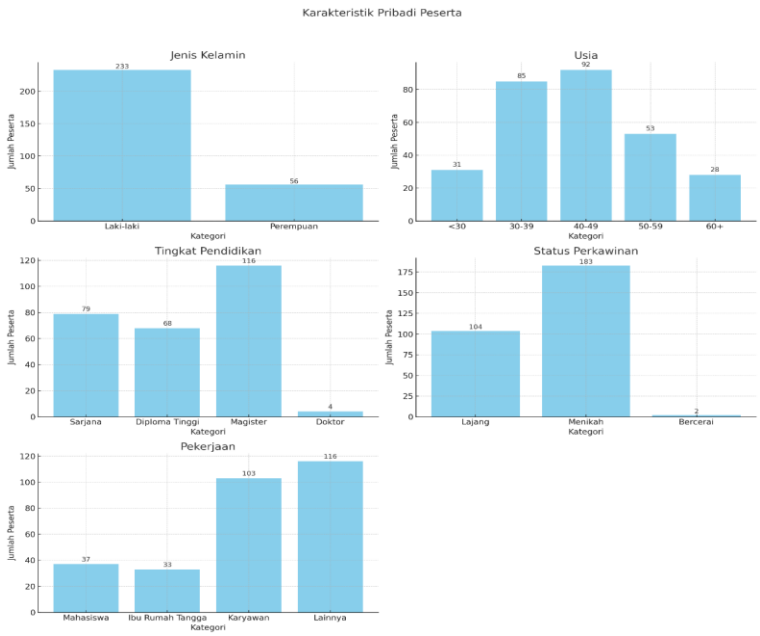

Figure 1. Respondent Characteristics

The majority of participants in this study were male, totaling 233 people or around 81% of the total participants, while female participants were only 56 people or 19%. Based on age, the largest age group was those aged 40-49 years with a total of 92 people (32%), followed by the 30-39 age group with 85 people (29%). Participants aged 50-59 years numbered 53 people (18%), under 30 years numbered 31 people (11%), and those aged 60 years or older numbered 28 people (10%).

In terms of education level, most participants have a Master's degree with a total of 116 people (40%), followed by participants who have a Bachelor's degree with a total of 79 people (27%). Participants with a High Diploma numbered 68 people (24%), and only 4 people (9%) had a Doctorate. Regarding marital status, the majority of participants were married with a total of 183 people (63%), while those who were single numbered 104 people (36%) and only 2 people were divorced (1%).

Finally, in terms of occupation, the "Other" category includes 116 people (40%), indicating that many participants work in fields that are not included in the categories of students, housewives, or employees. Employees are the second largest group with 103 people (36%), followed by students with 37 people (13%), and housewives with 33 people (11%). This interpretation provides a clear demographic picture of the research participants, showing male dominance, productive age group, high education level, marital status which is mostly married, and various types of jobs.

Data collection

Data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed through various social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. The questionnaire consisted of several sections covering respondents' demographics, social media usage, perceptions of social media marketing activities, Lombok's brand image, and intention to visit Lombok. A 5-point Likert scale was used to measure these variables, with 1 indicating "strongly disagree" and 5 indicating "strongly agree".

Data analysis

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical analysis. Descriptive analysis was used to describe the demographic characteristics of respondents and the distribution of their answers. Inferential analysis, especially Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), is used to test the relationship between independent variables (social media marketing activities) and dependent variables (tourists' intention to visit Lombok), as well as the mediating role of brand image. SEM is chosen because of its ability to test complex relationships between variables and the proposed theoretical model.

Research Variables

This study identified four main variables in social media marketing activities: interactions, trends, word of mouth, and social media. of electronic word of mouth (e-WOM), and customization . In addition, brand image is identified as a mediating variable, and tourists' intention to visit Lombok as the dependent variable. The operational definition of each variable is as follows:

Table 1. Operational Definition of Variables

Variables	Information
Interaction	The level of participation and engagement of social media users in Lombok-related content.
Trends	The popularity and appeal of the latest trends related to Lombok tourism on social media.
e-WOM	Reviews, testimonials and recommendations shared by social media users about Lombok.
Customization	The level of customization of content and experiences provided to social media users according to their preferences.
Brand Image	Tourist perceptions of Lombok as a tourist destination.
Tourist Intentions	Tourist tendencies and desires to visit Lombok in the future.

Validity and Reliability Test

Before the main analysis, validity and reliability tests were conducted to ensure that the research instruments used met scientific standards. Validity was tested using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to ensure that each item in the questionnaire accurately measured the intended construct . Reliability was measured by Cronbach's coefficient. Alpha , with values above 0.7 is considered acceptable.

Research Ethics

This study complies with ethical research standards by maintaining the confidentiality and privacy of respondents. All respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and their consent was obtained before completing the questionnaire. The data collected were used only for the purpose of this study and stored securely.

With this method, the study aims to provide an in-depth understanding of how social media marketing activities affect tourists' intention to visit Lombok, as well as the role of brand image in the relationship. The results of the study are expected to provide valuable insights for marketing practitioners and policy makers in developing effective marketing strategies to improve tourism in Lombok.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The table below shows the results of validity testing of the six variables.

Table 2. Reliability & Validity Test

Variables	Item	Loading	Cron . Alpha	Rho_A	AVE
e-WOM	WOM1	0.860	0.845	0.847	0.761
	WOM2	0.879			
	WOM3	0.878			
Interaction	IT1	0.833	0.828	0.832	0.745
	IT2	0.879			
	IT3	0.867			
Trends	TR1	0.840	0.832	0.835	0.748
	TR2	0.822			
	TR3	0.844			
Customization	KS1	0.857	0.863	0.867	0.783
	KS2	0.863			
	KS3	0.848			
Brand Image	CM1	0.875	0.785	0.835	0.721
	CM2	0.936			
	CM3	0.758			
Intention to Visit	NB1	0.763			

Variables	Item	Loading	Cron . Alpha	Rho_A	AVE
	NB2	0.912	0.814	0.819	0.733
	NB3	0.871			

Source: data analyzed, 2024

This study measures several variables using a Likert scale and assesses the reliability and validity of the constructs used. The e-WOM (Electronic Word of Mouth) was measured using three items (WOM1, WOM2, WOM3) with loading values of 0.860, 0.879, and 0.878 respectively. Cronbach's α value The alpha for e-WOM is 0.845, indicating good internal reliability, while the Composite value Reliability (Rho_A) of 0.847 indicates strong internal consistency. The Average value Variance Extracted (AVE) for e-WOM was 0.761, indicating that more than 76% of the variance in the items was measured by this construct.

The Interaction Variable was measured using three items (IT1, IT2, IT3) with loading values of 0.833, 0.879, and 0.867 respectively. Cronbach's α values The Alpha for Interaction is 0.828, indicating good internal reliability, and the Composite value Reliability (Rho_A) of 0.832 indicates strong internal consistency. The AVE value for Interaction is 0.745, indicating that 74.5% of the variance in the items is measured by this construct .

The Trend variable is measured using three items (TR1, TR2, TR3) with loading values of 0.840, 0.822, and 0.844 respectively. Cronbach's α values Alpha for Trend is 0.832, indicating good internal reliability, and the Composite value Reliability (Rho_A) of 0.835 indicates strong internal consistency. The AVE value for Trend is 0.748, indicating that 74.8% of the variance in the items is measured by this construct .

Customization variable was measured using three items (KS1, KS2, KS3) with loading values of 0.857, 0.863, and 0.848 respectively. The Cronbach's α value The Alpha for Customization was 0.863, indicating excellent internal reliability, and the Composite value Reliability (Rho_A) of 0.867 indicates very strong internal consistency. The AVE value for Customization is 0.783, indicating that 78.3% of the variance in the items is measured by this construct .

The Brand Image variable is measured using three items (CM1, CM2, CM3) with loading values of 0.875, 0.936, and 0.758 respectively. The Cronbach's Alpha for Brand Image is 0.785, indicating good internal reliability, and the Composite value Reliability (Rho_A) of 0.835 indicates strong internal consistency. The AVE value for Brand Image is 0.721, indicating that 72.1% of the variance in the items is measured by this construct .

The Visit Intention variable was measured using three items (NB1, NB2, NB3) with loading values of 0.763, 0.912, and 0.871 respectively. The Cronbach's α value Alpha for Visit Intention is 0.814, indicating good internal reliability, and the Composite value Reliability (Rho_A) of 0.819 indicates strong internal consistency. The AVE value for Visit Intention is 0.733, indicating that 73.3% of the variance in the items is measured by this construct .

Overall, all measured constructs have good reliability and validity values, with Cronbach's α values Alpha above 0.7 indicates good internal reliability, Composite value Reliability (Rho_A) above 0.7 indicates strong internal consistency, and AVE value above 0.5 indicates good convergent validity. This indicates that the items used in measuring these variables have good quality and are reliable in this study.

Table 3. Validity Test

Scale	E-WOM	CM	KS	Note:	IT	TR
E-WOM	0.878					
CM	0.780	0.853				
KS	0.839	0.737	0.898			
Note:	0.775	0.719	0.764	0.858		
IT	0.748	0.768	0.755	0.724	0.859	
TR	0.799	0.737	0.843	0.785	0.776	0.879

Source : data analyzed, 2024

Fornell-Larcker validity test table provided, it can be concluded that each construct measured in this study has good discriminant validity. The diagonal value in this table is the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct, while off-diagonal values represent the correlation between constructs .

Construct has an AVE square root of 0.878, which is higher than its correlation with other constructs, which range from 0.748 to 0.839. This indicates that the e-WOM construct has good discriminant validity.

Construct has a square root of AVE of 0.853, which is higher compared to its correlation with other constructs, which range from 0.719 to 0.780. Similarly, the construct Customization (KS) has a square root AVE of 0.898, which indicates good discriminant validity because this value is higher than its correlations with other constructs, which range from 0.737 to 0.839.

For the Visit Intention (NB) construct, the AVE square root is 0.858, which is higher than its correlation values with other constructs, which range from 0.719 to 0.775. The Interaction (IT) construct has an AVE square root of 0.859, which is higher than its correlations with other constructs , which range from 0.724 to 0.768. Finally, the Trend (TR) construct has an AVE square root of 0.879, which also indicates good discriminant validity because this value is higher than its correlations with other constructs, which range from 0.737 to 0.799.

Overall, the AVE square root value for each construct is higher than its correlation value with other constructs. This indicates that each construct is more closely related to its own indicators than to indicators of other constructs, indicating strong discriminant validity in this study. In other words, the constructs in this study have good discriminant validity according to the Fornell-Larcker criteria.

Table 4. Collinearity Test

Items	CM	MB
e- WoM	3.966	4,589
CM		2,994
KS	4.274	4.292
IT	3,091	3.161
TR	4.052	4.147

Source: analyzed data, 2024

The collinearity test show that all independent variables in the two models, namely CM (Brand Image) and MB (Visiting Interest), have VIF (Variance Inflation Factor) is below 10. This indicates that there are no serious collinearity problems among the variables.

For the e-WoM (Electronic Word of Mouth), the VIF value in the CM model is 3.966 and in the MB model is 4.589, both are below the threshold of 10. This indicates that there is no significant collinearity problem for the e- WoM variable . The CM (Brand Image) variable

has a VIF value of 2.994 in the CM model, which also indicates that collinearity is not a problem for this variable. Unfortunately, data for the CM variable in the MB model is not available.

Next, the KS (Customization) variable shows a VIF value of 4,274 in the CM model and 4,292 in the MB model. Both of these values are below the threshold of 10, indicating that collinearity is not a significant problem for this variable in both models. The IT (Interaction) variable has a VIF value of 3,091 in the CM model and 3,161 in the MB model, which is also below 10, so collinearity is not a problem.

Finally, the TR (Trend) variable shows a VIF value of 4.052 in the CM model and 4.147 in the MB model. Both of these values are below the threshold of 10, indicating that there is no significant collinearity problem for this variable in both models.

Overall, all variables in both models (CM and MB) have VIF values indicating that there is no serious collinearity problem . Therefore, no special mitigation measures are needed regarding collinearity in this model.

Table 5. Path Analysis

Path	T- stat	pv
e- WoM → Brand Image	5,528	0.000
e- WoM → Interest in Visiting	0.342	0.566
Brand Image → Visiting Interest	5.327	0.000
Customization → Brand Image	0.949	0.234
Customization → Visiting Interests	2.106	0.035
Interaction → Brand Image	2.075	0.037
Interaction → Interest in Visiting	1,946	0.058
Trends → Brand Image	2,066	0.034
Trends → Interactions	3.489	0.000

Source: data analyzed, 2024

The results of the path analysis presented in Table 5 show the influence of various independent variables on the dependent variable, by measuring the T-statistic (T-stat) and p-value (p-value) for each path tested.

First, the path from Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WoM) to Brand Image shows significant results with a T-stat of 5.528 and a p-value of 0.000. This indicates that e-WoM has a significant positive effect on Brand Image. On the other hand, the path from e-WoM to Visiting Intention is not significant, with a T-stat of 0.342 and a p-value of 0.566, indicating that e-WoM does not have a significant effect on Visiting Intention.

Furthermore, Brand Image has a significant influence on Visiting Intention with a T-stat of 5.327 and a p-value of 0.000. This indicates that Brand Image has a significant positive influence on Visiting Intention. Meanwhile, the path from Customization to Brand Image is not significant, with a T-stat of 0.949 and a p-value of 0.234, which means that Customization does not have a significant influence on Brand Image.

However, Customization has a significant effect on Visiting Intention with a T-stat of 2.106 and a p-value of 0.035. This indicates that Customization has a significant positive effect on Visiting Intention. The path from Interaction to Brand Image is also significant, with a T-stat of 2.075 and a p-value of 0.037, indicating that Interaction has a significant positive effect on Brand Image.

In addition, the path from Interaction to Visiting Intention approaches significance with a T-stat of 1.946 and a p-value of 0.058, indicating that Interaction has almost a significant effect on Visiting Intention. The path from Trend to Brand Image is also significant with a T-stat of 2.066 and a p-value of 0.034, indicating that Trend has a significant positive effect on Brand Image.

Finally, the path from Trend to Interaction is highly significant with a T-stat of 3.489 and a p-value of 0.000, indicating that Trend has a highly significant positive effect on Interaction.

Overall, the results of this analysis indicate that e-WoM , Brand Image, Customization , Interaction, and Trend have varying degrees of influence on the other variables in this model, with several paths showing strong statistical significance. These significant paths provide important insights into the relationships between the variables in the context of this study.

Table 6. Indirect Influence

Indirect path	T-STAT	pv
e- WoM → MB	3.812	0.000
KS → MB	0.942	0.361
IT → MB	1,929	0.065
TR → MB	1,913	0.067

Source: analyzed data, 2024

The results of the analysis in Table 6 show the indirect influence of several variables on Visiting Interest (MB) using the T-statistic value (T-STAT) and p-value (p-value) for each path tested.

First, the indirect path from Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WoM) to Visiting Interest (MB) shows significant results with a T-STAT of 3.812 and a p-value of 0.000. This indicates that e-WoM has a significant indirect effect on MB.

Furthermore, the indirect path from Customization (KS) to Visiting Intention (MB) is not significant, with a T-STAT of 0.942 and a p-value of 0.361. This indicates that KS does not have a significant indirect effect on MB.

For the indirect path from Interaction (IT) to Visiting Interest (MB), the results are almost significant with a T-STAT of 1.929 and a p-value of 0.065. This indicates that IT has an indirect effect that approaches significance on MB.

Finally, the indirect path from Trend (TR) to Visiting Interest (MB) is also nearly significant with a T-STAT of 1.913 and a p-value of 0.067. This indicates that TR has an indirect effect that is approaching significance on MB.

Overall, these results indicate that e-WoM has a significant indirect effect on MB, while KS does not show a significant indirect effect. The paths from IT and TR to MB show results that are close to significance, which means that there is a possibility of an indirect effect of these variables on MB. These results provide further insight into the indirect relationship between the variables in the context of this study.

Discussion

The results of this study highlight the significant impact of Social Media Marketing Activities (SMMA) on tourists' intention to visit Lombok. The findings show that the four elements of SMMA—interaction, trends, word of electronic word of mouth (e-WOM), and customization—positively influence tourists’ intentions. Among these elements, e-WOM and interaction emerged as highly influential factors, emphasizing the importance of user-generated content and engagement in shaping tourists’ perceptions.

This study also reveals the mediating role of brand image in the relationship between SMMA and tourists' intention to visit. It shows that although SMMA directly influences tourists' intention, its effectiveness increases when it also strengthens Lombok's brand image. A strong brand image acts as a catalyst, transforming social media interactions and content into compelling narratives that can attract tourists' interest.

Implications

Practical Implications

1. Enhanced Engagement Strategy: Tourism stakeholders in Lombok should prioritize the creation of interactive content on social media platforms. This can include live videos, broadcasts of cultural events, interactive maps, and Q&A sessions with local guides. This type of content can foster a sense of connection and engagement among potential tourists.
2. Leveraging Trends: Following and leveraging the latest travel trends on social media can help attract travelers looking for new and unique experiences. This includes promoting trending activities and destinations in Lombok to stay relevant and engaging.
3. Encourage Positive e-WOM: Encouraging satisfied travelers to share their experiences online can increase Lombok's appeal. This can be achieved through campaigns that incentivize reviews, testimonials, and recommendations on platforms such as TripAdvisor, Instagram, and travel blogs.
4. Customize Marketing Efforts: Tailoring social media marketing content to meet the preferences and interests of different traveler segments can increase the effectiveness of promotions. Personalized travel itineraries, targeted promotions, and tailored travel experiences can meet the specific needs of different traveler demographics.
5. Building and Maintaining a Strong Brand Image: Consistent and strategic use of social media to highlight Lombok's unique strengths—such as its natural beauty, cultural heritage, and adventure opportunities—can build a strong brand image. A strong brand image not only attracts new travelers but also fosters loyalty among returning travelers.

Theoretical Implications

1. SMMA Framework Expansion: This study contributes to the literature by validating the SMMA framework in the context of tourism, particularly for a destination like Lombok. Future studies can extend this framework to other destinations to generalize the findings.
2. The Role of Brand Image: This study emphasizes the importance of brand image as a mediating variable in the relationship between SMMA and tourist intentions. It highlights the need for further research on how brand image can be effectively built and utilized in various tourism contexts.
3. Integrative Approach to Tourist Behavior: These findings suggest an integrative approach to understanding tourist behavior, combining elements of marketing, psychology, and branding . Future research could explore this holistic perspective further, by examining other potential mediators and moderators in the relationship between SMMA and tourist behavior.

CONCLUSION

This study found that all elements of social media marketing activities (SMMA), namely interactions, trends, word of electronic word of mouth (e-WOM), and customization, have a significant influence on tourists' intention to visit Lombok. This shows that an effective social media marketing strategy can increase tourists' interest in the destination. In addition, brand image is proven to mediate the relationship between SMMA and tourists' intention, which means that social media marketing activities not only affect tourists' intention directly but also through the formation of a positive brand image. A strong brand image can help attract more tourists by portraying Lombok as an attractive and worth-visiting destination.

Based on these findings, stakeholders in the Lombok tourism industry are advised to increase engagement with potential tourists through interactive content, follow and utilize the latest trends, encourage positive e-WOM, and provide experiences tailored to tourists' preferences. These strategies are expected to improve Lombok's brand image and attract more tourists. The results of this study provide practical insights for marketers and tourism policymakers in Lombok. By leveraging the power of social media, Lombok can strengthen its brand image, attract a larger audience, and increase its appeal as a major tourist destination in Indonesia.

However, this study has several limitations, such as the use of purposive sampling that may not fully represent the population of Lombok tourists and the use of quantitative data only. Future studies are recommended to expand the sample size, use more random sampling methods, and consider qualitative approaches to gain deeper insights. In addition, longitudinal studies can be conducted to observe changes in tourist perceptions and intentions over time, as well as explore the impact of specific social media platforms such as Instagram or TikTok on tourist intentions. By implementing the findings of this study, Lombok can leverage the power of social media to improve its brand image, attract more tourists, and strengthen its position as a top tourist destination in Indonesia. Marketing strategies that focus on effective social media activities can help Lombok compete with other tourist destinations and promote its uniqueness and appeal to a global audience.

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