



Analysis of Brand Awareness and Brand Image Strategies on Lake Toba Tourists' Interest through the F1H20 Power Boat Digital Marketing Strategy in Balige, North Tapanuli

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Abstract

The main objective of this study is to analyze the effect of brand awareness and brand image on the interest of Lake Toba tourists through digital marketing strategies. The approach used in this research is associative and quantitative, using path analysis. The population and sample of this study were micro, small, and medium enterprises around the location of the Lake Toba Powerboat F1H20 event in Sibola Hotang Village, Balige District, Samosir Regency, North Sumatra Province, totaling 93 people. The sampling technique used is quota sampling. The sample size in this study consisted of 93 respondents. The results showed that the effect of brand awareness on visitor interest had an original sample size of 0.550, P-Value $0.000 < P\text{-Table } 0.05$, and T-value $4.374 > T\text{-Table } 1.196$. The effect of brand image on visitor interest has an original sample size of 0.507, a P-value of 0.036, a P-table of 0.05, and a T-value of 3.666. T-Table 1.196. The effect of brand awareness through digital marketing on visitor interest has an original sample of 0.235 with a P-Value of $0.040 < P\text{-Table } 0.05$ and a T-value of $2.051 > T\text{-Table } 1.196$. The influence of brand image through digital marketing on visitor interest has an original sample of 0.435 with a P-Value of 0.040 (P-Table 0.05) and a T-Value of 3.051. T-Table 1.196. Finally, the effect of digital marketing on visitor interest has an original sample size of 0.435, a P-Value of 0.040, a P-table of 0.05, and a T-value of 3.051. T-Table 1.196.

Keywords: Brand Awareness, Brand Image, Digital Marketing, Tourists' Interest, F1H20 Power Boat

Introduction

The F1H20 Power Boat event in the Lake Toba region has attracted significant attention from the people of North Sumatra as well as visitors from outside Sumatra, including the international community. It is expected to bring positive impacts to the economy in all sectors. F1H20 is expected to increase the interest of tourists, both local and international, in visiting the Lake Toba tourist destination and elevate the brand of Lake Toba to the international stage (Widianingsih et al., 2023b) (Sinaga & Simanjuntak, 2023).

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The F1H20 Powerboat event in Lake Toba is estimated to attract 25,000 local and international tourists, and it is planned to become an annual event at Lake Toba(Sumutprov.go.id, 2022).

Literature Review

In the post-Covid-19 economic recovery period in North Sumatra, especially in Samosir Regency and other areas around Lake Toba, the economic slowdown has been strongly felt, particularly for communities dependent on the tourism industry. The organization of F1H20 by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, along with the inherent brand awareness of Lake Toba and the brand image of its beauty, supported by effective digital marketing, is expected to accelerate economic growth in the Lake Toba region (Widianingsih et al., 2023a).

However, based on direct observations by the researcher, the level of tourist visits to the Lake Toba area has not reached the expected level.

a. Brand Awareness

Brand awareness refers to the extent to which consumers are familiar with a brand, often referred to as "brand awareness." Generally, it reflects how customers recognize a brand or product. The way customers react whenever they encounter related products also indicates their level of brand awareness. In the tourism context, brand awareness refers to the level of recognition and knowledge the public has about a brand, destination, or country within the tourism industry. This is important because the more well-known a brand or tourist destination becomes, the greater the opportunity to attract tourists and achieve greater economic benefits(Konecnik & Go, 2008).

Philip Kotler stated that brand awareness is the first step in building a strong tourism brand. According to him, tourism destinations must strengthen their brand identity, communicate their unique values, and target relevant markets to increase brand awareness (Kotler & Gertner, 2002). Simon Anholt argues that tourism brand awareness does not only include the direct promotion of destinations but also involves the global reputation and perceptions of the country (Anholt, 2005). According to him, good tourism brand awareness requires collaboration between the government, the tourism sector, and the community to build a positive and attractive image for tourists (Kotler & Gertner, 2002). Tourism brand awareness involves the recognition and knowledge of tourism brands and destinations at the local, national, and international levels. Continuous marketing efforts, improving service quality, and developing unique and different tourism products are the keys to building strong brand awareness (Latif et al., 2014).

b. Brand Image

Brand image refers to the overall impression or perception formed in the minds of consumers about a brand. It encompasses the perceptions, evaluations, and associations associated with the brand. Brand image reflects how the brand is viewed by consumers, including its attributes, personality, values, and the overall impression attached to the brand. In the tourism industry, brand image refers to the image formed in the minds of consumers about a tourism destination or tourism brand. It includes the perceptions, evaluations, and associations associated with that particular tourism destination(Wijaya, 2013).

Tourism brand image is closely linked to the global perception and image of a country or tourism destination. Efforts to enhance the tourism brand image should focus on establishing

a positive, authentic, and appealing image in the eyes of international tourists (Anholt, 2005). Tourism brand image entails creating a consistent and relevant brand image that resonates with the target market. Tourism destinations need to identify and reinforce the desired attributes and values sought by tourists and effectively communicate them to establish a positive brand image and differentiate themselves from competitors (Chalip & Costa, 2012). Managing and actualizing the desired image of tourism destinations are key aspects of tourism brand image. A strong brand image reflects the quality, uniqueness, and experience offered by tourism destinations (Tarigan et al., 2022)(Suroso et al., 2021).

c. Digital Marketing

Digital marketing is a marketing strategy that utilizes digital media and online platforms to promote products, services, or brands. It involves leveraging the internet, mobile devices, social media, search engines, websites, email, and various other digital channels to reach target audiences and create interactions with consumers.

Stephen Dann emphasizes the importance of digital marketing in promoting tourist destinations (Hemsley & Dann, 2014). He states that digital marketing can enhance the visibility and attractiveness of destinations by utilizing various online channels, such as websites, social media, and digital advertising campaigns. Engaging visual and narrative content on social media and other online platforms can influence the interests and intentions of travelers (Sigala et al., 2012). Digital marketing can assist tourist destinations in establishing a strong and consistent brand image, building relationships with audiences, and promoting the unique attractiveness of the destinations. The significance of digital marketing in promoting tourist destinations in this digital era must be effectively harnessed by utilizing media sharing and online platforms to increase visibility, build a strong brand image, attract tourists, and create an unforgettable experience for visitors. Tourist destinations must ensure that the online image presented aligns with the reality that tourists encounter when they visit the destination. This highlights the importance of integrating digital marketing strategies with the actual tourist experience (Heron & Calvert, 2005).

d. Visitor Interests

Tourist visitor interest refers to an individual's interest in or desire to visit a tourist destination and engage in tourism-related activities. It is influenced by three main factors: destination attributes, visitor motivation attributes, and market attributes. Visitors have diverse needs, interests, and preferences, and it is crucial for tourist destinations to understand these factors in order to meet visitor expectations (Ap & Crompton, 2012). Tourist visitor interest can be influenced by various factors, including destination attractiveness, destination image, service quality, price, accessibility, and previous visitor experiences. These factors can shape visitor perceptions and their interest in visiting a particular tourist destination. Alan Fyall and D. Bruce Weaver emphasize the significance of visitor motivation in influencing their interest in visiting specific tourist destinations. Motivations can vary, ranging from intrinsic motivations such as exploration, relaxation, and seeking unique experiences to extrinsic motivations such as culture, history, and tourist attractions (Ritchie et al., 2005).

Tourist visitor interest is influenced by a multitude of factors, including destination attributes, visitor motivations, previous experiences, attractiveness, image, service quality, and price. The interest of tourism visitors is often associated with their desire for a distinctive and authentic experience. Visitors are increasingly drawn to tourist destinations that offer experiences that differ from their daily routines (Student et al., 2021)(Student et al., 2021).

Research Method

This study aims to analyze whether there is a direct and indirect influence between the independent variables on the dependent variable. The initial steps are qualitative and general, followed by quantitative and specific steps. The population and sample in this study were MSME actors in the vicinity of the F1H20 Powerboat implementation in Sibola Hotang Village, Balige Subdistrict, Samosir Regency, North Sumatra Province, totaling 93 business actors. The sampling technique used was quota sampling. The sample in this study consisted of 93 respondents.

The t-test aims to determine the partial influence of each independent variable (one unit) on the dependent variable (Meredith & Kruschke, 2021). The test results were obtained from the Smart PLS output in the coefficient table (Meredith & Kruschke, 2021). The criteria for decision making are as follows:

- A. If the p-value is > 0.05 , then there is no effect.
- B. If the p-value is < 0.05 , then there is an influence.

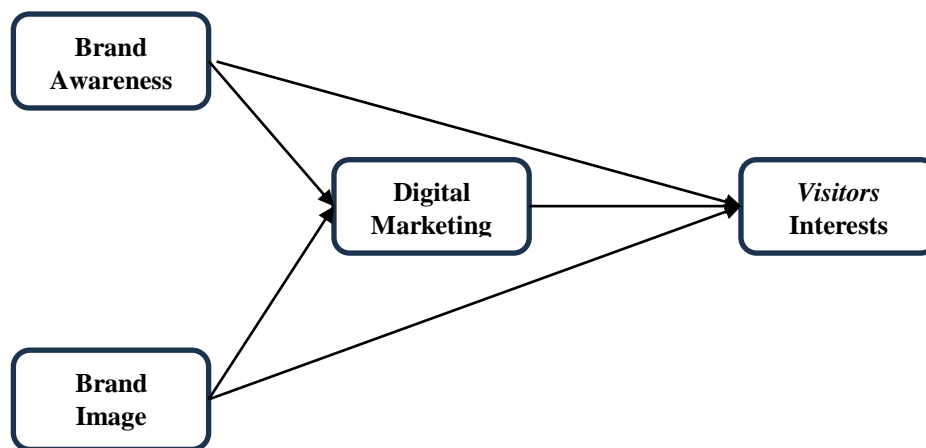


Figure 1. Research Model

The coefficient of determination indicates the magnitude of the contribution of the independent variable (X) to the dependent variable (Y). A higher value of determination indicates a better ability of the independent variable to explain the dependent variable. If the coefficient of determination (D) is larger (close to one), it means that the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable is significant. This indicates that the model used is strong in explaining the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable (Almasaeid et al., 2022). Conversely, if the determination (D) is smaller (close to zero), it means that the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable is weaker (Almasaeid et al., 2022). This suggests that the model used is not strong enough to explain the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable.

$$D = R^2 \times 100\%$$

Information:

D = Determinant Coefficient.

R^2 = Squared Correlation Coefficient.

Result/Findings

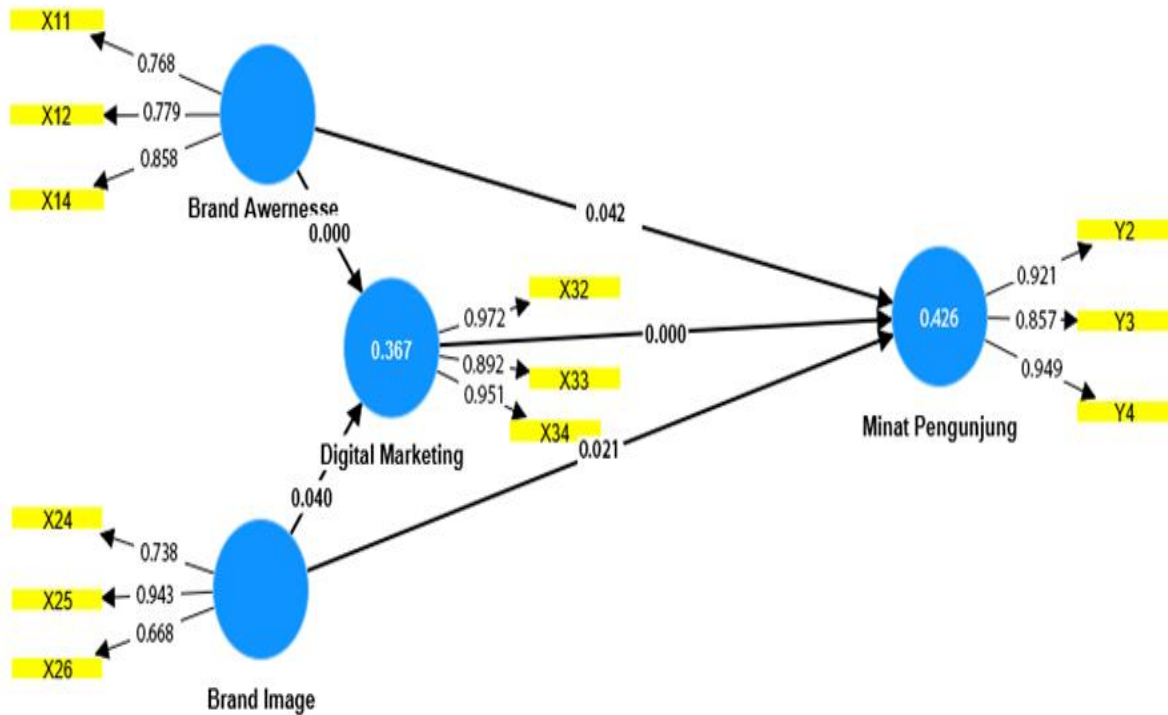


Figure 2. Model Testing Results

a. Factor Loading

The loading factor value in Figure 6 shows the correlation between the indicator and the construct > 0.7 is valid and acceptable except for the x26 indicator < 70, which indicates the indicator is invalid (Almasaeid et al., 2022) (Norvadewi et al., 2023). The results of Factor Loading can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Outerloading Result

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ((O/STDEV))	P values
X11 <- Brand Awernesse	0.768	0.766	0.015	65.153	0
X12 <- Brand Awernesse	0.779	0.761	0.204	0.248	0.53
X14 <- Brand Awernesse	0.858	0.859	0.207	1.963	0.05
X24 <- Brand Image	0.738	0.738	0.016	60.27	0.36
X25 <- Brand Image	0.943	0.956	0.185	0.898	0.36
X26 <- Brand Image	0.668	0.669	0.156	2.482	0
X32 <- Digital Marketing	0.972	0.974	0.068	11.176	0
X33 <- Digital Marketing	0.892	0.892	0.054	15.979	0
X34 <- Digital Marketing	0.951	0.979	0.032	28.416	0
Y2 <- Visitor Interest	0.921	0.935	0.014	72.101	0
Y3 <- Visitor Interest	0.857	0.871	0.003	376.703	0
Y4 <- Visitor Interest	0.949	0.949	0.003	376.703	0

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Based on Table 2, the Cronbach's alpha value for each variable based on the data table above is > 0.70. Thus, it can be concluded that the variables used in this study are reliable.

b. Reliability Test

Table 2. Reliability Test

	Reliability Value	Result
Brand Awareness	0.769	<i>Reliable</i>
Brand Image	0.829	<i>Reliable</i>
Digital Marketing	0.978	<i>Reliable</i>
Visitor Interest	0.987	<i>Reliable</i>

Based on Table 2, the Cronbach's alpha value for each variable based on the data table above is > 0.70. Thus, it can be concluded that the variables used in this study are reliable.

c. T- Test

Table 3 T-Test

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	t Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Brand Awareness -> Visitor Interest	0.550	0.559	0.126	4.374	0.000
Brand Image -> Visitor Interest	0.507	0.525	0.124	3.666	0.036
Brand Awareness -> Digital Marketing -> Visitor Interest	0.235	0.222	0.115	2.051	0.040
Brand Image -> Digital Marketing -> Visitor Interest	0.435	0.352	0.115	3.051	0.046
Digital Marketing -> Visitor Interest	0.765	0.746	0.119	6.441	0.000

Based on Table 3, the Cronbach's alpha value is > 0.70. Thus, it can be concluded that the variables used in this study are reliable. T-test (Bootstrap) in this study, hypothesis testing is a test of direct and indirect effects.

Discussion

a. The Effect of Brand Awareness on Visitor Interests.

The test results above show that brand awareness has a positive and significant influence on the interest of Lake Toba tourism visitors. There is an original sample of 0.550 with a P-value of 0.000, P-Table 0.05, and a T-value of 4.374 > T-Table 1.196. The test results are also supported by previous research, which says that there is a correlation between brand awareness and the interest of tourists. (Huerta-Álvarez et al., 2020). Other research that also supports the test results shows that when consumers have a high level of awareness and understanding of a brand, they tend to be more interested in visiting or buying products or services from that brand (Sartori et al., 2012)(Huerta-Álvarez et al., 2020).

b. The Effect of Brand Image on Visitor Interests.

The test results above show that brand image has a positive and significant influence on the interest of Lake Toba tourism visitors. There is an original sample size of 0.507 with a P-value of 0.036 (P-Table 0.05) and a T-value of 3.666 > T-Table 1.196. The test results are also supported by several previous studies, which say that there is a positive and significant influence between brand image and the interest of tourist visitors. A positive brand image that reflects the beauty and attractiveness of Lake Toba can increase visitor interest in visiting the destination (Huerta-Álvarez et al., 2020). A positive brand image can also affect consumer perceptions of the quality and reliability of tourism destinations if Lake Toba is seen as a trusted and comfortable destination (Sibarani et al., n.d.) (Dutha, 2023).

c. The Effect of Brand Awareness through Digital Marketing on Visitor Interests.

The test results above show that brand awareness through digital marketing has a positive and significant influence on the interests of Lake Toba tourism visitors. There is an original sample of 0.235 with a P-value of 0.040 (P-Table 0.05) and a T-value of 2.051 > T-Table 1.196. This is in line with previous research, which revealed that digital marketing had a significant impact on increasing tourist visits to Lake Toba with a percentage of 59.8%. (Dutha, 2023) (Hanifah, 2022). Digital marketing plays an important role in promoting tourism and increasing visitors' purchase intentions. Instagram is the digital marketing tool most used by tourists (Hanifah, 2022). Smart governance is also important for success, as shown in the study on the impact of local economic development at the Lake Toba F1H20 event (Hanifah, 2022)

d. The Effect of Brand Image through Digital Marketing on Visitor Interests.

The test results above show that brand image through digital marketing has a positive and significant influence on the interests of Lake Toba tourism visitors. There is an original sample size of 0.435 with a P-Value of 0.040 (PTable 0.05) and a T-Value of 3.051 > TTable 1.196. The test results are also supported by several previous studies, which say that there is a positive and significant influence between brand image and the interest of tourist visitors. The influence of brand image carried out through digital marketing has a significant impact on increasing tourist visits to destinations such as Lake Toba (Segara et al., 2023). This is also in line with the government's communication strategy for reviving Indonesian tourism after the pandemic (Aditi et al., 2023) (Omorogbe, 2023)

e. The Influence of Digital Marketing on Visitor Interests.

The test results above show that digital marketing on visitor interests has a positive and significant influence on the interest of Lake Toba tourism visitors. There is an original sample size of 0.765 with a P-value of 0.000 < PTable 0.05 and a T-value of 6.441 > Ttable 1.196. The test results above are also supported by several previous studies. Digital marketing has a positive and significant impact on increasing tourist visits to Lake Toba (Yanti, 2020). There is an influence of digital marketing on improving the marketing performance of tourism MSMEs in Toba Regency, and managerial implications can be taken as an alternative policy for improving the marketing performance of tourism MSMEs in Toba Regency (Marbun &

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Simanjuntak, 2021). One of the efforts to boost the pace of the tourism sector is digital marketing and paying attention to the store atmosphere aspect so that it can encourage tourists to visit (Marbun & Simanjuntak, 2021).

Conclusion

The conclusion from the results of this research is that the attractiveness of Lake Toba as a tourist destination for tourists is still very high, especially after the F1H20 Power Boat international event was held in Balige. Based on field observations, the F1H20 Power Boat has also given new enthusiasm to rebuilding the post-pandemic economy. The results of this study also show that the value of Cronbach's alpha for each data point is > 0.70 . The effect of brand awareness on visitor interest has an original sample size of 0.550, a P-value of 0.000 P-Table 0.05, and a T-value of $4.374 > T\text{-Table } 1.196$. The effect of brand image on visitor interest with an original sample value of 0.507, a P-Value of 0.036, a P-Value of 0.05, and a T-Value of $3.666 > T\text{-Table } 1.196$. The effect of brand awareness through digital marketing on visitor interest with an original sample of 0.235, a P-value of $0.040 < P\text{-Table } 0.05$, and a T Value of $2.051 > T\text{-Table } 1.196$. The effect of brand image through digital marketing on visitor interest with an original sample of 0.435, a P-Value of $0.040 < P\text{-Table } 0.05$, and a T-Value of $3.051 > T\text{-Table } 1.196$. And the effect of digital marketing on visitor interest with an original sample of 0.435, a P-Value of $0.040 < P\text{-Table } 0.05$, and a T-Value of $3.051 > T\text{-Table } 1.196$.

Declaration of conflicting interest

Efforts to revive the regional tourism economy after the COVID-19 pandemic through international-level events are urgently needed; however, It is important to coordinate digital marketing strategy efforts with related parties, such as local governments, tourism authorities, and local community groups. Strong collaboration and effective communication will ensure that MSME-based economic growth in the Lake Toba Outskirts area continues to grow.

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