



The Change of Millennial Tourist Interests in Sam Poo Kong Temple, Semarang

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Abstract

The advent of the fourth industrial revolution signifies not only significant technological progress compared to earlier eras, but also the ability to revolutionize traditional business practices. The Sam Poo Kong Temple, which was once intended as a site of prayer for Confucian adherents, has transformed into a well-liked tourist destination where people engage in selfie activities, thereby enhancing their social standing. This research aims to understand the factors influencing the change in millennial tourists' interest towards Sam Poo Kong Temple. To evaluate the impact of social media usage and digital technology on the interests and behaviors of millennial tourists. To identify the preferences and motivations of millennial tourists in choosing tourist destinations such as Sam Poo Kong Temple. This study employs a qualitative methodology using a case study technique. Data is gathered via extensive interviews with relevant individuals, including temple administrators, tour guides, and tourists, with a particular focus on millennial. The findings indicate that social media plays a key role in marketing Sam Poo Kong Temple and attracting millennial tourists' interest. The dissemination of engaging content such as photos, videos, and narratives on social media has increased the visibility of the temple and sparked significant interest from tech-savvy millennial. Sam Poo Kong Temple has transformed from a traditional place of worship into a highly sought-after tourist destination, especially for photo opportunities and showcasing social status on social media. This impacts the preferences and motivations of millennial tourists in selecting tourist locations, with a primary focus on architectural beauty, unique experiences, and visibility on social media.

Keywords: Social Media, Interest, Tourism, Tourists

Introduction

The advent of the fourth industrial revolution represents a significant leap in technology compared to earlier periods and holds the potential to revolutionize conventional business paradigms. This period is defined by the advancement of technology, including the internet, big data, artificial intelligence, and robotics, which are progressively getting more advanced (Abdullahi et al., 2021; Pai et al., 2020). These advancements facilitate the development of more cohesive and effective systems in many sectors, such as the tourism industry (Adamış & Pınarbaşı, 2022).

An important consequence of the fourth industrial revolution is the reduction in the geographical separation between manufacturers and their intended consumer markets (Buhalis & Inversini, 2014). This facilitates enhanced and intimate engagements between enterprises and customers. Within the tourism sector, the internet provides convenient access to information and communication, allowing tourists to acquire extensive and readily available details on different tourist sites (Chu et al., 2020).

Conversely, the millennial generation, who were born between 1981 and 1996, has emerged as a highly significant section in the tourism market (Crossley, 2020). This generation is renowned for its dynamism, ingenuity, and penchant for exploration (Yuza Sari & Trinanda, 2020). They are also familiar with utilizing digital technology in their everyday life, which includes searching for information and making vacation reservations.

The Sam Poo Kong Temple, situated in Semarang, has gained popularity among tourists from both within the country and outside, thanks to its advantageous location. Nevertheless, there has been a substantial transformation in the role and significance attributed to Sam Poo Kong Temple, which was initially regarded as a sacred site for adherents of Confucianism. Currently, the temple has gained popularity as a sought-after tourist attraction where people engage in selfie activities to boost their social standing. This shift has emerged as a distinctive draw for tourists in the era of digitalization 4.0.

The recent surge in visitor visits to Sam Poo Kong Temple can be attributed, in part, to the advancement of social media. Social networking has emerged as the most efficient marketing strategy for rapidly boosting website traffic. An effective marketing approach on social media platforms can captivate the attention of travelers, particularly millennial, to visit Sam Poo Kong Temple with new motivations, such as capturing selfies and enhancing their social media presence. The evolving importance and significance of Sam Poo Kong Temple have generated fresh appeal among tourists who prioritize lifestyle and self-presentation in the digital realm.

This study will investigate the impact of using social media as the primary marketing medium on the visiting patterns of tourists, particularly millennial, to the Sam Poo Kong Temple in Semarang. The research will address the following questions: How does social media usage influence tourist visits to the temple? Specifically, what effects does it have on millennial? Additional inquiries pertain to the transformation of Sam Poo Kong Temple from a conventional religious site to a trendy tourist spot where people engage in selfie activities and seek to elevate their social standing. This shift in purpose and appeal raises questions about the

preferences and motivations of tourists, particularly millennial, when selecting their travel destinations. In addition to leveraging the opportunities presented by the digital era and the widespread use of social media, Sam Poo Kong Temple aims to enhance its appeal as a tourist spot. This involves developing effective marketing strategies to attract the interest of tourists, particularly millennial, who are more inclined towards lifestyle and social media popularity

Literature Review

Tourism

Tourism, often known as travel, refers to the act of individuals or groups journeying to locations outside of their regular surroundings for the purpose of leisure, vacation, research, or other temporary objectives (Golinvaux & Evagelou, 2017). Tourism refers to the act of individuals traveling to and residing in locations outside of their typical surroundings for a duration of no longer than one continuous year, for purposes such as leisure, business, and other objectives (Nadda et al., 2018).

Online advertising and promotion

Digital marketing as defined by Fiona et al., (2022), refers to the use of digital technology to promote and raise consumer awareness of a company's products or services. Digital marketing refers to the strategic promotion of products or services using various digital platforms, including search engines, websites, social media, email, and mobile applications (Mistriani et al., 2021; Putra et al., 2020). Digital marketing refers to the use of internet, social media, and mobile applications to reach and engage with clients. Digital marketing is a strategy that use digital technology to advertise and promote products, services, or brands (Olson & Ro, 2021).

Tourist attraction

Tourist interest refers to a strong inclination or desire to travel, as described by Saputra & Ambiyar (2019). Interest is a consumer behavior that arises when an individual expresses a desire to possess or engage with an object (Hassan et al., 2023; Seyfi et al., 2020). Tourist demand refers to the inclination or proclivity of tourists to visit a particular destination or participate in tourist-related activities. Factors influencing tourists' selection of a destination.

Generation Y

The Millennial Generation, or Generation Y, refers to a specific demographic cohort born from the 1980s to the early 2000s (Jusuf, 2023). A cohort that came of age alongside digital technologies and the internet. This generation is characterized by their proficiency in digital technology, internet access, engagement on social media, and ideals such as autonomy, transparency, and adaptability (Entas & Rianto, 2020).

Research Method

This study employs a qualitative methodology, specifically utilizing the case study approach (Pratama & Palupiningtyas, 2021). Data will be collected by conducting comprehensive interviews with relevant individuals, such as temple officials and tourists, with a particular focus on those belonging to the millennial generation. Furthermore, the research will involve the method of participant observation at Sam Poo Kong Temple to directly witness and analyze the interaction between travelers and the tourist attraction. Additionally, an examination of correlated documents, including brochures, pamphlets, and the Sam Poo Kong Temple website, will be carried out to supplement the information gathered from interviews and observations. By integrating these methodologies, it is anticipated that a thorough comprehension of the transformations in the role and significance of Sam Poo Kong Temple, as well as their influence on the motivation and conduct of tourists, particularly millennial, in their selection and visitation of tourist destinations, would be achieved.

Result/Findings

The use of social media as a marketing tool has clearly affected the patterns of tourist visits, particularly among the millennial age, to Sam Poo Kong Temple in Semarang, as evidenced by the interviews conducted with a number of key informants, mainly the administrators of the temple. Enhanced Awareness and Interest: Tourists, especially millennial who are active on social media, can become more aware of and interested in Sam Poo Kong Temple by seeing captivating information on social media, like images, videos, and narratives about the temple. Travel social media and influencers can advertise the temple and encourage their followers to attend.

Important informants also mentioned that visitor behavior is changing as a result of social media; instead of just going to tourist destinations, travelers are now looking for unique experiences and engaging content to post on social media. Changing Preferences and Trends: Social media has the power to create new tourist trends, such as Instagrammable religious tourism at Sam Poo Kong Temple and selfie tourism. Millennial travelers favor destinations that are well-liked on social media and provide distinctive experiences that can be shared.

Informants also shared details on Sam Poo Kong Temple's changing roles and values in light of the study's findings. The temple is now a well-liked tourist destination rather than a place of worship. This is evident from the growing number of tourists who are not there for religious reasons, their attention being drawn to the building's visual appeal for social media posts, and their possible commercialization and exploitation of cultural values for financial benefit. Sam Poo Kong Temple's purpose has likewise evolved over time. It began as a site of religious rites and worship and later evolved into a cultural, historical, and artistic tourist attraction. Later, it became a popular location for selfies and a way to boost one's social media status.

Traveler tastes and motives, particularly those of millennial, can be influenced by the changing roles and ideals of Sam Poo Kong Temple when it comes to trip selection. Travelers

are more drawn to the temple's visual appeal and exquisite architecture for pictures and movies. Travel experiences that are distinctive and different to post on social media. Possibilities to improve social standing through showing travel to well-known tourist destinations.

Sam Poo Kong Temple's marketing plan for the digital era 4.0 makes use of the technology to increase the temple's appeal as a travel destination. Some examples of this include creating interesting and dynamic social media material. Virtual tours, captivating narratives about the history and culture of the temple, excellent images and films, and other interactive materials. partnering with travel bloggers and social media influencers to broaden the temple's appeal and establish its reputation with visitors. establishing a mobile application and website (<https://www.sampookong.co.id>) with interactive elements, online ticket purchasing, and detailed information about the temple.

Additionally, providing appealing trip packages that blend historical, cultural, religious, and artistic travel with one-of-a-kind encounters and captivating social media material. Sam Poo Kong Temple's marketing plan should concentrate on engaging millennial through influencer marketing, modern social media content, and tour packages that cater to their tastes and way of life. stressing the temple's ideals and distinctive qualities—such as its architecture, culture, history, and religious significance—as ways to set it apart from other tourist attractions. delivering top-notch travel experiences, sufficient amenities, amiable service, and assurance of safety.

Discussion

Social media's role as a key marketing tool has impacted the visiting patterns of tourists, namely millennial, to Sam Poo Kong Temple in Semarang. Social media has greatly contributed to the rise in awareness and attraction among travelers towards this temple. The dissemination of captivating content, including photographs, videos, and narratives, featuring Sam Poo Kong Temple on diverse social media platforms, has effectively augmented the visibility of the temple and garnered significant interest, particularly from the technologically-engaged millennial demographic (Moro & Rita, 2018; Pop et al., 2022).

The temple's promotion reach has been expanded through collaboration with influencers and travel social media, which has also attracted their followers to visit the temple. Temple promotion has grown increasingly effective in reaching appropriate target markets due to the substantial influence and enormous followings of influencers and travel social media among the millennial generation.

Therefore, employing social media as a key marketing technique has effectively enhanced the brand recognition of Sam Poo Kong Temple and heightened tourists' inclination to visit this attraction. This highlights the significance of social media's influence in the tourist sector, particularly in appealing to millennial, who are a highly promising and engaged market demographic in the current digital age (Pramudhita, 2021; Renjith et al., 2021).

The Sam Poo Kong Temple has seen a transformation in its ideals and purposes, transitioning from a conventional place of worship to a highly sought-after tourist destination.

This is evident via the growing influx of secular tourists who prioritize visiting tourist destinations and appreciating the architectural splendor of the building for the purpose of creating content for social media. Additionally, there is a concern about the potential exploitation of cultural assets for financial profit. The temple's purpose has evolved from being solely a site for worship and religious ceremonies to now serving as a cultural, historical, and visually pleasing attraction for tourists. Furthermore, it has also gained popularity as a location for taking selfies and showcasing one's social status on social media platforms (Achmad et al., 2022; Adeola et al., 2023; Agyapong & Yuan, 2022).

This trend impacts the tastes and motivations of tourists, particularly millennial, when selecting tourist locations. Their primary focus lies in the temple's architectural splendor and visual appeal, which they capture through images and films. They seek distinctive and unconventional tourism experiences to post on social media, aiming to elevate their social standing by showcasing visits to renowned tourist destinations. Sam Poo Kong Temple has transformed into a multifaceted tourist destination that caters to the cultural, historical, and aesthetic interests of the millennial age, in addition to its primary function as a place of prayer.

In order to fully utilize the opportunities presented by the digital era 4.0, it is advisable for Sam Poo Kong Temple to concentrate its marketing efforts on creating captivating and interactive content for social media platforms. This entails producing exceptional photographs and movies that highlight the temple's magnificence and distinctiveness, presenting captivating narratives about the temple's historical and cultural significance, and employing advanced technologies like virtual tours to offer potential visitors virtual exploring opportunities.

Additionally, partnering with influencers and leveraging travel social media platforms is an essential component of this marketing plan. This alliance seeks to enhance the temple's promotional credibility and expand its reach to a broader audience, particularly millennial who are highly engaged on social media platforms. It is important to consider giving appealing and appropriate trip packages that are specifically designed to cater to the interests of millennial. These packages should include new and distinctive experiences, as well as a combination of cultural components and contemporary lifestyles.

Marketing tactics should prioritize highlighting the temple's ideals and distinctiveness as a unique tourist attraction, while also ensuring high-quality tourism experiences and welcoming services for visitors. Through the strategic utilization of social media and technology, coupled with the provision of distinctive and pertinent tourism offerings, Sam Poo Kong Temple has the ability to captivate the attention of millennial, who represent a promising market sector in the current digital age, thereby resulting in a substantial surge in tourist footfall.

Conclusion

Social media plays a key role in marketing Sam Poo Kong Temple and attracting millennial tourists' interest. The dissemination of engaging content such as photos, videos, and narratives on social media has increased the visibility of the temple and sparked significant

interest from tech-savvy millennial. Sam Poo Kong Temple has transformed from a traditional place of worship into a highly sought-after tourist destination, especially for photo opportunities and showcasing social status on social media. This impacts the preferences and motivations of millennial tourists in selecting tourist locations, with a primary focus on architectural beauty, unique experiences, and visibility on social media.

To capitalize on the opportunities of the digital era 4.0, Sam Poo Kong Temple is advised to focus marketing strategies on creating engaging and interactive content on social media, such as photos and videos showcasing the temple's beauty, historical and cultural narratives, and virtual tours. Additionally, partnerships with influencers and travel social media are crucial to enhancing promotional credibility and reaching a wider audience, especially millennial. Appealing tour packages tailored to millennial interests should also be offered, combining cultural elements and modern lifestyle. By strategically leveraging social media and technology, and providing unique and relevant tourism experiences, Sam Poo Kong Temple can attract millennial tourists' interest, which is a promising market segment in the current digital era.

Declaration of conflicting interest

The author explicitly states that there are no conflicting interests present in this work.

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