

Affiliate marketing in Museum Blockbuster Surabaya: A marketing communication perspective

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Abstract The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered an unparalleled crisis in the global tourist sector, demanding swift and imaginative adjustments for survival. This research examines the essential requirement for efficient digital marketing strategies, emphasising the increasing significance of affiliate marketing through E-Commerce and Online Travel Agents (OTA). This study analyses the Surabaya Blockbuster Museum (MBS), focusing on cinema and gaming enthusiasts from Generation X and Generation Y. This prompt analysis utilises a quantitative methodology, examining ticket sales data and MBS visitor surveys to understand the evolving preferences in ticket acquisition through E-Commerce or OTA platforms. Emphasis is placed on the vital elements of pricing and advertising during these uncertain times. Research indicates that Shopee and Goers are the favoured platforms for ticket acquisitions, with cost as the primary factor in platform choice. The study emphasises the efficacy of MBS's planned use of its official Instagram account for conveying price discounts, highlighting the crucial importance of social media in modern marketing initiatives. This study offers essential insights into the significance of pricing and promotional methods in affiliate marketing amid a global health crisis. The findings provide imperative and practical insights for tourist sector stakeholders facing difficulties due to the epidemic. This study elucidates efficient digital marketing techniques and the significance of flexible adaptation to global conditions, contributing to the critical conversation on the recovery and resilience of the tourist sector under unprecedented change.

Keywords: affiliate marketing; e-commerce; online travel agent

INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic has had an impact on the tourism industry. The tourism industry has begun to rearrange strategies to attract tourist visits, one of which is through digital technology. (Susilo & Hui Chen, 2023; Susilo & K. Santos, 2023). Marketing communication in a digital form has become the most powerful tool for maintaining relations with current clients and attracting new ones (Asmoro et al., 2020). Online platforms help businesses expand their brand recognition and offer personalised services that are necessary today. This shift encompasses a wide array of digital marketing strategies, including social media marketing, content marketing, email marketing, search engine optimisation (SEO), influencer partnerships, virtual and augmented reality experiences, and mobile marketing. Mobile marketing, through user-friendly apps and optimised websites, has become essential for creating engaging content, sharing virtual experiences, and interacting directly with potential visitors. Content marketing through informative and entertaining blog posts, videos, and podcasts helps keep destinations top-of-mind and provides value to potential travellers.

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Many experts say that businesses must enhance technological innovation in the event they would like to deal with the digital age. This requires a much more profound insight and change in the internal organisation structure than the mere application of new technologies. Without a doubt, one of the most fundamental digital marketing communications for this evolution is to give firms an ingenious and convincing way of knowing what the consumer wants. Content Digital Marketing Communication is hugely vital (Thrupp & Willmott, 2003). The rationale is that, without using digital marketing communication, the tourism sector would be unable to achieve recovery and expansion. By leveraging data-driven insights, organisations may more effectively tailor their offerings to key clients in the post-pandemic landscape by comprehending the shifts in consumer behaviour resulting from the epidemic. This will undoubtedly enhance client loyalty, yet, more significantly, it fosters long-term success.

As a result, digitalisation in the tourism sector is no longer just another fad more of business that must follow, it has become an essential measure that market leaders must promptly adopt to compete in the market (Casanoves-Boix & Pérez-Sánchez, 2021; Holleran & Notting, 2023; Susilo & K. Santos, 2023). Before the pandemic, tourism industry players still relied on conventional marketing, but with the pandemic, they started looking at marketing through affiliate marketing. (Casanoves-Boix & Pérez-Sánchez, 2021; Kingsnorth, 2022; Susilo, 2023). Affiliate marketing is an important and effective online marketing for the tourism industry and tourists, that provide opportunities for promotion with specific demand segments and reaching a wider consumer market. (Khmiadashvili, 2019; Kotler et al., 2017; Taiminen & Karjaluoto, 2015; Tarigan & Sanjaya, 2013).

Affiliate marketing in the tourism industry through Online Travel Agents and E-Commerce. Online Travel Agents or better known as OTAs cover various travel needs, facilitating users to search for information, plan and make reservations for airline tickets, hotels, transportation, tourist attraction tickets and other travel services. (Katsoni & Segarra-Oña, 2019). Meanwhile, Electronic Commerce or better known as E-commerce is a business activity that involves consumers, manufacturers, service providers and intermediaries using a computer network, such as the internet. (Susilo, 2023).

According to Angeloni & Rosi (2021) OTA charges commission based on products sold. So, partners do not have to pay any fees if no products have been sold (Angeloni & Rossi, 2021). The same thing also applies in E-Commerce, partners only pay commission based on products sold. This is certainly very attractive to partners because it can save marketing budget, besides the brand awareness of some OTAs and E-Commerce is already very well known in the community, such as Traveloka, Tiket.com, and Shopee.

The transition to affiliate marketing in e-commerce and online travel agencies (OTAs) signifies a notable advancement in communication and media studies, especially in digital marketing and consumer behaviour. This commission-based approach, wherein partners compensate solely for actual sales, has transformed the conventional advertising environment and altered the dynamics of consumer-brand relationships (Susilo, 2023).

This model utilises the two-step flow communication theory, initially introduced by Katz and Lazarsfeld. In this context, OTAs and E-Commerce platforms serve as opinion leaders or influencers, facilitating the interaction between businesses and customers. They act as reliable mediators and use their recognised brand equity and customer confidence to affect buying choices (Susilo & K. Santos, 2023). This corresponds with the growing significance of parasocial interactions in digital media, as consumers cultivate a feeling of connection and trust with the platforms they regularly engage with (Doster, 2013).

The efficacy of this approach also reflects the evolving dynamics of media consumption, and the dispersion of audience focus. In an age of information saturation, prominent sites such as Traveloka, Tiket.com, and Shopee have garnered substantial customer attention. This exemplifies the tenets of Agenda-Setting Theory in media studies, wherein these platforms proficiently establish the 'agenda' for online buying and trip reservations in customers' perceptions (Thrupp & Willmott, 2003).

This transition to performance-based marketing corresponds with the paradigm of uses and gratifications in media studies. Consumers are deliberately engaging with these platforms not only for transactional reasons but also for the satisfaction of convenience,

knowledge, and even amusement. The platforms are customising their communication techniques to address these varied demands, hence enhancing user engagement and personalisation (Angeloni & Rossi, 2021; Moshin et al., 2020).

Owing to its cost-effectiveness, this model's appeal to partners also signifies the evolving economics of media in the digital era. It represents a shift from conventional mass media advertising to more focused, quantifiable, efficient promotional methods. This transition contests traditional communication of mass theories and requires new frameworks to comprehend the dissemination and reception of messages inside the digital environment (Riyadi et al., 2019).

Furthermore, the efficacy of these platforms in enhancing brand recognition underscores the significance of integrated marketing communications in the digital era. They proficiently integrate diverse components of the promotional mix—advertising, sales promotion, public relations, and direct marketing—into a cohesive user experience. This cohesive strategy, enabled by digital technology, facilitates a more unified and effective brand message across several touchpoints (Liu et al., 2023).

Generation Z, who grew up in the digital era, has shown significant changes in purchasing trends, especially in the travel industry (Angeloni & Rossi, 2021; Moshin et al., 2020; Pollock, 2012; Wiganepdo & Dwintanissa, 2019; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). They tend to trust affiliate marketing more than traditional methods, viewing product or service endorsements through influencers, bloggers, and online reviews as more authentic and trustworthy sources of information (Park et al., 2022; Susilo & Hui Chen, 2023). The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated this transformation, with travel restrictions pushing Generation Z to seek virtual alternatives and more personalised experiences online (Cheng et al., 2024; Etmnani-Ghasrodashti et al., 2023; Jia et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2023). This is where affiliate marketing comes as an excellent solution for brands that want to reach the hands of Gen Z which perceives authenticity over false advertising and associates with platforms and personalities they believe in so naturally, this becomes their best friend when it comes to driving more audiences in. Ultimately, the adoption of these fresh digital marketing practices further solidifies brand presence along with resonating from Gen X to Gen Z (Liu et al., 2023). This represents a significant shift from past marketing approaches since Gen Z tends to trust their peers more than they do traditional advertising. Thus, brands must change the way they market in order to create these trust-worthy relationships and engage this demographic (Olivia et al., 2020).

As the world grapples with COVID-19, travel has been among the hardest hit sectors. Most traditional marketing approaches used to entice footfall are less effective due to travel restrictions and health concerns. Instead, brands are flocking to agile and responsive digital marketing communication strategies (Olivia et al., 2020; Singh et al., 2020; Ting et al., 2020). This means that if Gen Z – a generation born with digital in their DNA who grew up on the Internet – is your target market then using social media presence will not be enough, you must actively connect through content participation or personalised experience (Isnaini et al., 2022; Nursanti et al., 2021). In this case, the ability for brands to remain adaptable is important because it keeps them relevant and attractive within a generation that puts immediacy, authenticity in their day-to-day interactions.

The Gen Z prefer something personalised and genuine, so they are switching to other kinds of travel experiences as well. This shift is manifesting in a growing interest in eco-tourism, cultural immersion programs, volunteer travel, and off-the-beaten-path destinations that promise more genuine interactions with local communities and environments. As a result, travel brands and destinations are being compelled to reimagine their offerings and marketing strategies to cater to this generation's quest for real, meaningful, and Instagram-worthy experiences that align with their values and desire for personal growth. Their reluctance to try out new gadgets in the past has made them more likely to embrace platforms that differentiate themselves by responsible, unrepeatable travel experiences – booking eco-friendly trips or experimenting with VR technology-led virtual tourism (Musa et al., 2020). This is a great example of the increasing needs for digital marketing communication and campaigns to promote these innovations in their service offerings. On the other hand, brands that can convey their social and environmental responsibility with authenticity through digital channels will be well on their way to winning the trust and unlocking the wallets of this generation. Ultimately, the adoption of

these fresh digital marketing practices further solidifies brand presence along with resonating to Gen Z value-driven purchase decisions and prepares for long term success in a tough playing field (Cheng et al., 2024). This trend is not only changing the way Gen Z interacts with travel brands, but it is also requiring companies to be more transparent, innovative and responsive to the needs and values of this generation. In the long term, this adaptation could reshape the travel industry, with affiliate marketing at the forefront of reaching and engaging this highly digital generation of consumers. (Cheng et al., 2024; Liu et al., 2023).

Affiliate marketing is the most popular digital marketing because it reaches a wider target market, websites or applications act as intermediaries in offering partner products and services to the target market by taking a commission from the sale of products sold. (Kingsnorth, 2022; Kotler et al., 2017; Rowley, 2008; Saputra & Ardani, 2020). Affiliate marketing holds a strategic key in distributing travel and tourism products due to the increasing sophistication and growth of affiliate networks. (Dung & An, n.d.; Jyotsna et al., 2024; Nasution et al., 2023; Riyadi et al., 2019). Affiliate marketing is integrated with three parties, particularly: affiliate owners, partners and consumers, where partners can market their products and services to consumers via the affiliate owner's website or application. (Suresh et al., 2018).

OTA is a sales channel that has the highest reservation (booking) rate, users can book tickets, hotels, tourism products from service providers through OTA with online or offline payment systems (Prasetyo, 2021). The main factors that influence consumers in using OTA are price, accessibility, customer service and accountability of reviews. (Albayrak et al., 2020; Kumar & Shankar, 2023; Talwar et al., 2020). Selling using OTA has more advantages than disadvantages, because the market reach is wider and can be accessed 24 hours wherever you are as long as there is an internet network (Albayrak et al., 2020).

Online Travel Agency (OTA) have won a lot of grounds, thanks to the increased trust by users who are now familiar with these platforms that offer quick services. That trust is one of the most important aspects that encourages users to book via OTAs rather than their regular means. Tourism destinations and tourism objects in East Java, Indonesia use the advantages of marketing through OTAs and e-commerce to inform their product or service (tourism attractions) to a broader market. One of the selling points for these platforms is that they are usually much more affordable as many charge a percentage or transactional fee on sales which allows businesses to better manage their budgets. On top of that, the western-prominent promotions by OTAs make it even more tempting for potential visitors to flock. The use of digital marketing communication in this strategic sense through OTAs will not only increase visibility, but the growth of the sector. A remarkable case for the use of OTAs and led by e-commerce using affiliate marketing is Blockbuster Museum Surabaya (MBS)—a paradise especially for film and gaming enthusiasts. Generation Z and Y, who are generally tech-savvy and frequently visit the museum, represent a large part of its audience. The alignment of MBS offerings with digitally savvy generations underscores the criticality in digital marketing communication strategies. This aspect includes examining the MBS affiliate program and its arrangements, as well as the share from OTA and e-commerce platforms which account for so much traffic to buy a ticket. Insight into these dynamics can provide a case for consumer behaviour and insight into how digital marketing strategies are working, which will then enable the attractions to improve engagement with their target audience to step up their own marketing.

Considering these developments, a relevant research question arises: How do Online Travel Agencies (OTAs) and e-commerce platforms via affiliate marketing influence digital marketing communication strategies and consumer behaviour regarding tourism attractions in East Java, Indonesia particularly the Blockbuster Museum Surabaya (MBS)? This fundamental question includes numerous significant features of the phenomena. It aims to understand the determinants that affect the ticket purchase preferences of Generation Z and Y on various digital platforms. The objective is to examine how MBS's affiliate marketing program, in partnership with OTAs and e-commerce platforms, enhances its exposure and ticket sales. Moreover, the study examines the ramifications of these digital marketing methods on the expansion of the tourist industry in East Java, Indonesia. This necessitates an inquiry into the applicability of the insights derived from MBS's methodology to enhance interaction with target demographics for alternative tourist sites. An essential aspect of this investigation is the significance of confidence in the efficacy of OTAs and e-commerce platforms within tourist marketing, especially for

attractions aimed toward technologically proficient generations. Comprehending this relationship may yield significant insights into customer behaviour and the efficacy of digital marketing initiatives. This research analyses these characteristics to elucidate the influence of digital platforms on tourist marketing. The results may provide actionable insights for tourism attractions aiming to enhance their digital marketing strategies and more effectively interact with their target customers in a progressively digital economy.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive qualitative methodology to examine the intricate dynamics of consumer behaviour and affiliate marketing in the context of tourism attractions, with a specific emphasis on the Blockbuster Museum Surabaya (MBS). To obtain a comprehensive understanding of the intricate experiences and perspectives of stakeholders engaged in consumer decision-making processes and digital marketing strategies, it is imperative to employ a qualitative methodology (Gonçalves, 2009; Neuman, 2003, 2014). This is due to the need to acquire these insights. In contrast to quantitative methods, which generate broad data trends, qualitative research enables the acquisition of a more profound understanding of the fundamental motivations, attitudes, and contextual factors that influence the utilisation of online travel agencies (OTAs) and e-commerce platforms in the context of tourist marketing.

Data collecting methodologies encompass field observations, examination of MBS admission ticket sales via OTA and E-Commerce platforms, and semi-structured interviews. The study intentionally selected two key informants from the museum's administration: Febri Putra, the Marketing and Event Coordinator, and Mrs. Yaory, a management team member (Gonçalves, 2009; Neuman, 2003, 2014). These individuals were selected for their direct engagement and extensive understanding of MBS's marketing strategy and operations. However, the sample size is constrained, it emphasises depth over breadth, enabling an in-depth examination of the museum's experiences with digital marketing and affiliate programs.

Triangulation is used to ensure the data quality in the study, which makes the methodology more rigid. As part of this process, information from several different sources is checked. These include interview transcripts, notes taken during observations, and paperwork such as sales records and marketing materials. The study aims to find patterns and differences in data from different sources by comparing them. This will give a fuller and more accurate picture of the thing being studied.

The triangulation process involved comparing interview responses from two management representatives to identify common themes and potential discrepancies in perspectives, cross-referencing interview data with observational notes from museum field visits and analysis of its online presence, validating claims made in interviews against documented sales data and marketing performance metrics from OTA and e-commerce platforms, and examining the alignment between the museum's stated marketing strategies and their actual implementation as observed in digital channels. This extensive approach to data collection and validation allows a more in-depth analysis of MBS's digital marketing strategies, consumer behaviour patterns, and the broader ramifications for tourism marketing in the region (Harden & Thomas, 2005; Moleong, 2013; Patton, 2014). The study aims to provide a comprehensive and accurate analysis of the impact of OTAs and e-commerce platforms on tourist marketing strategy and customer experiences by integrating diverse data sources and perspectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As it turns out, the Blockbuster Museum Surabaya (MBS) has made an effective move by marketing through Online Travel Agents (OTAs). By promoting on those platforms, MBS will not only reach a more extensive audience but can also get greater effectiveness in reducing promotional costs. The deal with multiple OTAs and e-commerce platforms as its strategic partners has also succeeded in making MBS become better known by Indonesian consumers who quite often use the applications for travel plans. This exposure is very important in a competitive tourism market, it tells new tourists that MBS is worth stopping to see more of their interest and foot traffic increase at the museum.

Besides, MBS is also very cautious when selecting collaboration partners for affiliate marketing systems. Carefully selecting the partners to collaborate within e-commerce or OTA

can lead to significant uplift in sales, as it highlights quality and aligns with brand values, rather than cosmetic boosts in visibility. When it comes to marketing, all these relationships pave the way for MBS by correlating those areas with measurable opportunities and ROI. The affiliate marketing model in which commissions are paid when products and services result from the sale is also paying off for both sides: Through this, MBS notes that its partners bear no financial risk – they only have a share of costs proportionately to the success achieved. This model must be associated with a performance-driven way of doing marketing because it helps to make more efficient use of the resources in an environment as digital.

Furthermore, MBS works with OTAs and e-commerce platforms on joint marketing campaigns – many of which offer deep discounts over certain periods. MBS would equally go halves (subsidising the discount) should an OTA like Traveloka provide entrance tickets at 80% off, as to appeal more on potential visitors' side. While these promotions are aimed at making visits more accessible, they doubled as a marketing launch campaign for MBS which helped onboard the application to a large user-base. MBS attracts the interest of potential visitors by appearing on the main homepage in these apps, especially when they make searches for tourist attractions in Surabaya, Indonesia. His paradigm shifting tactic of fervently participating in promotional campaigns illustrates the importance of digital marketing communication to grow MBS and attract new customers by reinforcing its status as a destination to be visited within the region.

Data on the Number of Visits to the Surabaya Blockbuster Museum

All promo programs offered by the applicator are always communicated by MBS through MBS's Instagram account, this is done so that visitors can buy cheaper entrance tickets compared to buying directly from MBS. MBS also includes applicator links in the MBS Instagram bio link, so that Instagram users can directly click on the applicator link if they want to buy entrance tickets to MBS at promo prices offered by E-Commerce or OTA. MBS collaborates with several OTAs, namely Traveloka, Tiket.com and Goers, while the E-Commerce that collaborates are Shopee and JD.ID. The following are the results of sales analysis through OTA and E-Commerce.

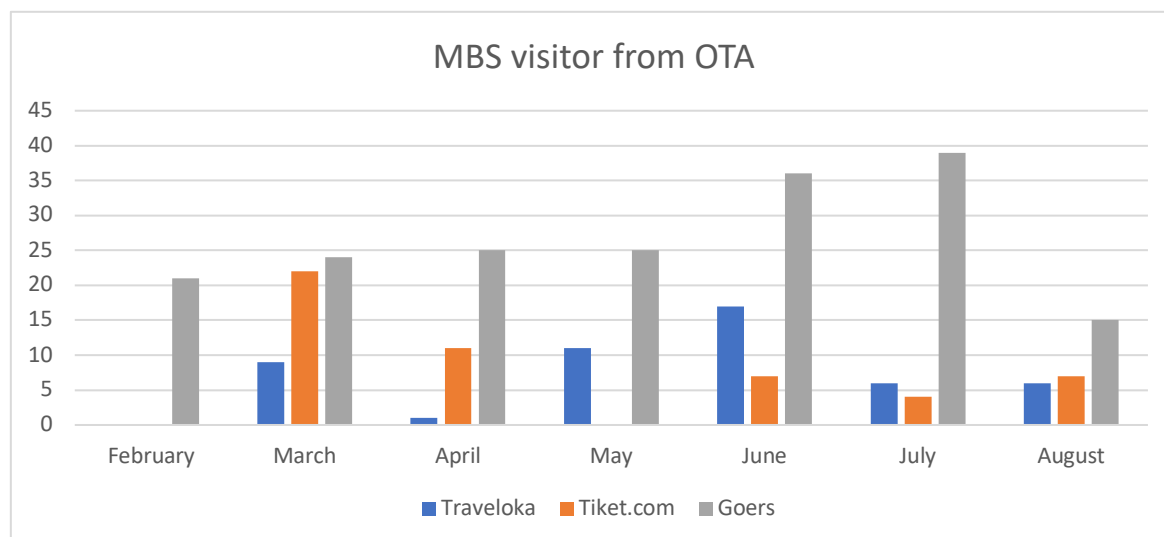


Figure 1. MBS Visitor from OTA
Source: MBS Visitor Data (2023)

Based on the data in Figure 1, it shows that most visitors buy tickets through Online Travel Agents (OTA), most of them buy through the Goers application, which is 185 people, then Traveloka as many as 50 people and Tiket.com as many as 50 people. Traveloka's sales are highest in June, which is 17 people, Tiket.com's highest in March, which is 22 people, while Goers' sales are highest in July, which is 39 people. The lowest sales of Traveloka and Tiket.com are in February, which is 0 people or in other words there are no ticket purchases either through Traveloka or Tiket.com in that month, while Goers' lowest sales are in August, which is 15 people.

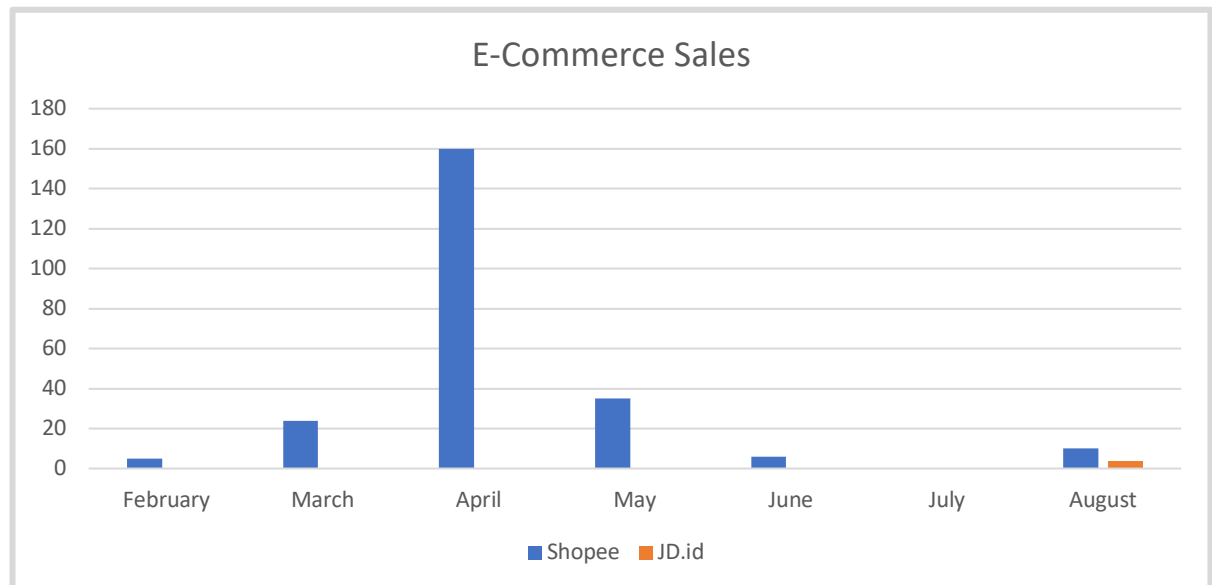


Figure 2. E-Commerce Sales
Source: MBS Visitor Data (2023)

Based on the data in Figure 2, it shows that most visitors buy tickets through E-Commerce, the most through the Shopee application, as many as 240 people, while JD.ID only four people. Shopee's sales were the most in April, which was 160 people, while JD.ID was the most in August, which was four people. Shopee's lowest sales were in July, which was 0 people, while JD.ID itself had only collaborated with MBS in June, so sales in June and July were still 0.

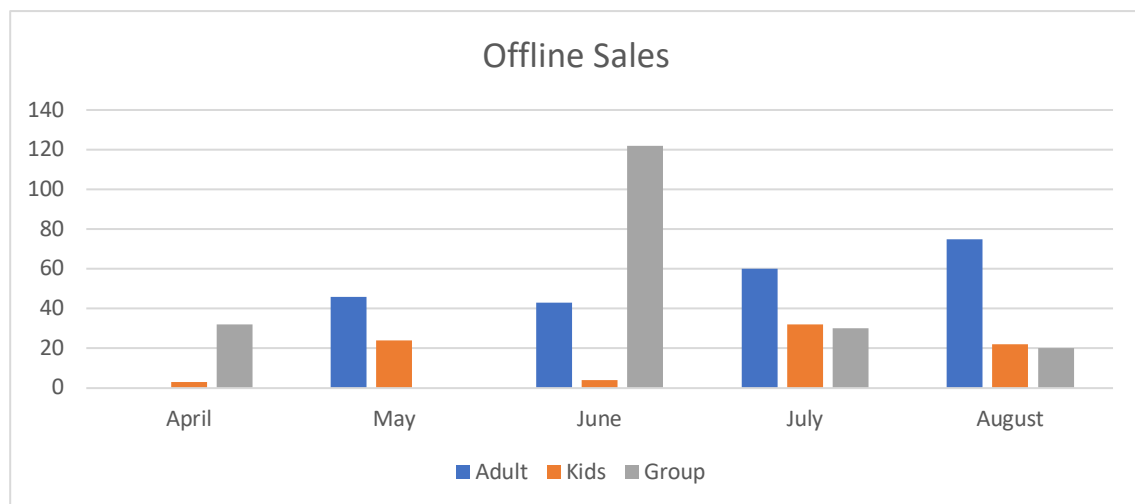


Figure 3. Offline Sales and Special Price Ticketing
Source: MBS Visitor Data (2023)

Based on the tourist visit data that purchased tickets without going through OTA and E-Commerce, there were 250 adult visitors and 93 child visitors. While the number of visits through group bookings with special prices or discounts was 226 people (See Figure 3). The total number of visits through offline was 569 tickets, while through OTA and E-Commerce the total was 529 tickets. Only a difference of 40 people. Without group price offers for offline tickets, the total offline visits were only 343 visitors, so sales through OTA and E-Commerce contributed more than direct or offline visits.

Online website sales, through digital marketing communication alone hugely manage in helping to increase the sale of total revenue for places like Blockbuster Museum Surabaya (MBS). MBS can access a larger customer base outside its local market by using online platforms like Online Travel Agents (OTAs) and e-commerce web sites. So, basically these platforms not just

increase the reachability, but even help in making transactions easier for consumers as they are able to buy tickets through their devices effectively. The trend towards online sales reflects broader consumer demand for digital solutions; Generation Z and Millennials are tech-savvy generations that value convenience and ease during the purchasing process. This has driven increased ticket sales for MBS during promotional periods when prospective visitors have been enticed and enacted by the digital marketing campaigns (Dunas & Vartanov, 2020; Kanbach et al., 2023; Nasution et al., 2023; Rue, 2018).

There has of course been a more significant shift in consumer behaviour, with the majority of visitors to be looking into planning their trips and making purchases online. It dovetails with the broader move among consumers towards digital engagement, using reviews, social media and promotions to guide their choices. Beyond these new changes and things MBS did not have to pay for before, it still allows visitors during this time when there is obviously less demand but people need an escape from the quarantines. This provides a win-win situation where more will be lured by online promotions through affiliate marketing strategies now than ever before as cannot go especially since most options are still closed and inaccessible. As consumers have grown more accustomed to shopping digitally, they also show a greater preference for attractions that readily can be booked online and where their visit will not disappear either after visiting. As a result, not only will MBS's strategic use of digital marketing communication induce sales in the short term; it can also morph to factor shifting consumer preferences and continuously bring fresh consumers through its doors who are anxious for whatever experiences the museum has on offer (Djafarova & Fouts, 2022; Doster, 2013; Nagadeepa et al., 2015).

Performance of Affiliate Marketing on OTA and E-Commerce

Traveloka is one of the OTA platforms that is quite well-known among the Indonesian people. Marketing through this application is considered appropriate for museum managers because the application has been downloaded more than 100 million times and has more than 40 million active users each month based on data per January 2022. (Nurchayani, 2022). Based on the data on tourist visits to MBS via Traveloka from February to August 2022, there were 51 people. When compared to Goers, the number of visitors who purchased through Traveloka is still far below Goers. This is because the promos offered are not as many as through the Goers application. According to Shiffa (2022), Traveloka has various innovations such as conducting live streaming Flash Sale, Epic Sale discounts of up to 80%, Buy Now Stay Later, and many other programs to attract users to purchase through the Traveloka application. Although Traveloka is holding a Traveloka Epic Sale promo for MBS tickets starting from 31 May to 6 June 2022, with discount offers of up to 80% plus up to 50% for bookings at Epic Hour at 07:00 - 11:59 Morning and 19:00 - 23:59, visitors who purchased MBS tickets during the Traveloka Epic Sale period were only able to attract two visitors. This is because the promo period offered is very short, which is only 7 days, so tourists are less interested in making purchases, in contrast to Shopee which provides the Bertiga program with a longer period of one month. Based on the opinion of Hesti et al. (2021), the advertisements offered by Traveloka have succeeded in attracting consumer interest and as the OTA of choice for travel needs, this is different from ticket sales at MBS, where Traveloka sales are less than optimal when compared to Goers, although Traveloka is more active in marketing its application through various advertisements compared to the Goers application, visitors prefer the Goers application for price reasons.

In digital marketing communication, the findings show price sensitivity plays an important role specifically for the tourism sector, as consumers are usually looking around to get their best deals (Khmiadashvili, 2019; Rowley, 2008; Taiminen & Karjaluto, 2015). This is an advantage for online platforms such as Online Travel Agents (OTAs) like Traveloka, they give a transparent environment that the user can easily compare price and promotions. This transparency only serves to increase the awareness of price on the part of consumers even more, and it makes them all the more likely to seek out discounts or special deals. For attractions like the Blockbuster Museum Surabaya (MBS), any pricing deviation or promotional strategy that is used can see visitor spikes and troughs. Price sensitive consumers seeking value-for-money or price-sensitive buyers looking to avail discounts due to competitive prices can be attracted with digital marketing campaigns highlighting that specific selling point (via promotional pricing / limited time offers).

Traveloka has been shown to be an important sales provider for MBS, especially among those who demand lower ticket prices. Card-paying customers of Traveloka, with discounts and promo packages make trips more affordable to budget travellers who might think twice before going. An example of this is when Traveloka runs a promotion where an admission ticket can be discounted up to 80% off, it gives the urgency that will increase demand in purchasing last minute. This not only drives ticket sales when offers are launched, but also allows MBS to reach audiences which may never have thought about coming if their title wasn't in the app. This means that when it comes to using price as a value proposition in digital marketing communication, MBS is learning – from its partnership with Traveloka and other affiliate partners like Agoda – about the importance of saving money for consumers while making sure that its products are priced correctly to sell more per an average cart.

Meanwhile, the Tiket.com application owned by the Djarum Group is also one of the leading OTAs in Indonesia. This application was launched on June 6, 2014, with more than 10 million application downloads. The features offered by Tiket.com are transportation ticket reservations (planes, trains), accommodation, event tickets and tourist entrance tickets. Tiket.com is the second choice for users to buy plane tickets after Traveloka. Based on visit data at MBS, the number of visitors who bought tickets through this application from February to August 2022 was 50 people. The number of visitors through this application is only one person, different from the Traveloka application, but it is still far when compared to the Goers application. The promos offered by Tiket.com are considered not optimal in attracting MBS visitors to buy tickets through the application. Almost the same as Traveloka which often advertises in various media, but its sales are still far when compared to the Goers application.

In relation, Shopee was first released on June 4, 2015. This application offers convenience and a pleasant shopping experience with low prices and attractive promos and free shipping in Indonesia. Shopee always holds promos to attract more users. So far, people are very familiar with this application. Shopee, which has been known as an online shopping centre for all daily needs, has begun to expand into tourist tickets. This is considered an opportunity for MBS managers to be better known by the wider community. According to Kompas.com regarding data from Ipsos research on competition in the e-commerce industry in Indonesia at the end of 2021, it shows that Shopee is in first place with 33.7 million daily active visitors in December 2021.

One of the promotions held by Shopee is a discount of up to 50% for purchasing MBS tickets. In April, Shopee sold the Three-Package ticket for IDR 100,000, this package is valid for both adult and child visitors, this certainly attracts visitors to visit the MBS Museum with the promo tickets offered. Based on MBS ticket sales data, 160 visitors bought this package. The number of tourist visitors who bought entrance tickets through the Shopee application from February to August 2022 was 240 people, or around 98% of total sales through E-Commerce. The management also installed a Shopee pay barcode at the museum entrance counter, so that visitors who come to the museum can get a 30% discount on the ticket price. Shopee contributed the most ticket sales when compared to JD.ID and OTA (Traveloka, Tiket.com and Goers). This is because the Three-Pack promo offer was offered in April, namely April 1 to 30, 2022, where this month is the fasting period, but visitors' interest in buying Three-Pack tickets from Shopee is very high. Tourists take advantage of the promo program offered by Shopee because the prices are cheap and can also be used on both weekdays and holidays, compared to Pak Mamat offered by Goers, because this package is only offered on Thursdays.

Meanwhile, JD.ID is an E-Commerce company from China. This application was released on October 25, 2015, offering household needs and tourist attraction tickets. This application is not yet widely known by the Indonesian people, so not many visitors have used it to buy tickets.

In 2022, MBS is participating in a promo program in collaboration with the application by providing a Buy 1 Get 1 promo. This promo started from February 1 to August 31, 2022. The Buy 1 Get 1 promo is specifically for Sundays with a promo price of IDR 80,000 for children's entrance tickets while adult entrance tickets are offered at a price of IDR 100,000. While on other days JD.ID sells at normal prices. Ticket sales through JD.ID are also lacking when compared to other OTAs.

The interest of visitors who buy tickets through the JD.ID application is still lacking, apart from the fact that the application brand is still not widely known by the public, the discounts offered are also less attractive, because they are only valid on certain days, so visitors will buy

tickets through this application if the application provides a bigger discount compared to other applications.

Based on the description of tourist visits and affiliate marketing partners that have been explained, the most important thing is the price factor; visitors tend to choose applicators that offer the cheapest prices when compared to other applicators. Most OTA buyers choose OTAs because of the price considerations offered, so OTAs must implement strategies in effective pricing by involving partners (suppliers) (Prasetyo, 2021). Price promotions provided by OTAs are the reason why most prospective tourists buy tourism products from OTA. The most important factor for travellers in choosing an OTA is price, then the order of other factors after price is promotion, photos and visitor reviews. Visitors will compare prices from one application to another, because price is the main factor that attracts interest in making a purchase when compared to other factors, such as promotions (advertisements), photos or visitor reviews. Traveloka and Tiket.com, which routinely carry out promotions or advertisements, are still inferior when compared to the Goers application which is less well-known to the public, this is because Goers offers cheaper prices even though it is only on Thursdays, but the Goers promo price period is valid from February to August 2022. While other applications only offer promos during certain periods, such as Traveloka which offers Epic Sale but only for seven days, so it is less interesting for visitors to buy tickets through Traveloka, in contrast to Shopee which provides the Bertiga program with a longer period span, such as one month. The price is indeed the main factor, but it does not mean that MBS only considers the price as a factor, but the manager must also consider other factors that make tourists not feel disappointed when visiting MBS. According to Fatimah et al. (2022), OTAs that provide products according to consumer needs and expectations and maintain trust by providing security and comfort are the keys to OTA's success, so consumers will recommend the OTA to their friends and family. MBS must prioritise service factors other than price, so that visitors give the best reviews about MBS on OTA applications and E-Commerce.

This study's findings about affiliate marketing via Online Travel Agencies (OTAs) and e-commerce platforms by the Blockbuster Museum Surabaya (MBS) have significant theoretical implications for comprehending the function of digital marketing methods within the tourist sector. This research enhances the existing literature on the performance and efficacy of affiliate marketing programs in the tourist and hospitality sectors. This report analyses the case of MBS and its collaborations with OTAs and e-commerce platforms. It offers insights into how these partnerships might improve the exposure and accessibility of tourism attractions for target customers and significantly younger demographics. Examining the museum's affiliate marketing strategies and their effect on ticket sales and visitor numbers provides a detailed understanding of how various digital marketing methods might enhance engagement and conversion rates. This information enhances the theoretical understanding of affiliate marketing as a strategic instrument for tourist operators aiming to broaden their reach and use the trust and credibility built by prominent online platforms (Susilo, 2023).

Second, the study's findings have significance for understanding customer behaviour and decision-making in the tourist industry, particularly among technologically aware populations such as Generation Z and Y. The study investigates the elements that impact these consumers' choices for purchasing tickets through OTAs and e-commerce, highlighting the importance of these platforms of convenience, cost, and perceived trustworthiness. By investigating how the alignment of MBS's offerings with the interests and habits of these tech-savvy generations shapes their engagement and purchasing patterns, the study contributes to a theoretical understanding of the evolving dynamics between tourism providers, digital intermediaries, and modern consumer expectations. These insights can help to design more effective consumer-centric marketing strategies that take advantage of the rising importance of internet platforms in the tourist decision-making process.

The theoretical implications of this research highlight the need to incorporate digital marketing tactics, particularly affiliate programs, into the strategic planning of tourist attractions and destinations (Dunas & Vartanov, 2020; Kanbach et al., 2023; Nasution et al., 2023; Rue, 2018).. The study's findings imply that successfully integrating OTAs and e-commerce platforms into the marketing mix may increase exposure, accessibility, and engagement with target audiences, eventually supporting tourism sector development and sustainability. These findings add to the continuing theoretical discussion about the change in tourist marketing in the digital age and

establish the groundwork for future research into the interactions between rising technology, consumer behaviour, and tourism providers' shifting strategies.

Future of Digital Marketing Communication: Sustainability on the Intersection

Sustainability and digital marketing communication are also becoming more intertwined (Susilo, 2023), reflecting a demonstrable longer-term trend as consumers continue to pressure businesses for environmentally responsible practices – further shaping our future (Al-Shimari et al., 2019; Vanhove, 2002). Consumers increasingly consider sustainability when making purchases; therefore, tourist attractions such as Blockbuster Museum Surabaya (MBS) must adjust their marketing orientation to be in tune with this social ethos. However, this change goes beyond just green initiatives and rather includes the mainstreaming of sustainable practices at the core level within museum operations. As a result, MBS can draw-in ethical audiences who actively visit the sites vowing to lower their carbon footprint and thereby bring increased brand loyalty and drive new footfalls.

MBS can strategically use digital marketing tools for this purpose and demonstrate its commitment to sustainability (Dash et al., 2021; Faßmann & Moss, 2016). This may involve showcasing the actions that include waste cutting down, adoption of renewable energy sources and sustainable sourcing (actions on the material used in exhibits), among others. Videos and social media campaigns documenting these efforts, for example, can provide engaging content that in turn may further inspire visitors to get excited about the museum. MBS might also think about teaming up with green non-profit organisations to launch joint projects, demonstrating a stronger commitment to sustainability. Becoming a pioneer in sustainable tourism will also attract continued market interest and by effectively communicating these efforts through digital channels, MBS can tap into an exclusive superset of visitors that not only participates with the resort but intentionally remains conscious to focus on quality over quantity immensely.

Additionally, MBS could introduce a feedback loop for visitors to provide comments on the sustainability measures and ideas for improved ones. It not only creates a community and adds participation, but it also gives us insights into what the market behaviour/preferences are. Through actively listening to its audience and adjusting how MBS presents their sustainability efforts, it can tailor their communication based on the feedback given. The promotion of sustainable practices can be reinforced using vouchers that are given to concertgoers who arrive on public transport or promoting purchasing tickets digitally rather than physically in order to shave down paper consumption. Finally, by adopting these variations in consumer behaviour and their attitudes toward sustainability, MBS will provide a social consciousness within the affiliation of a sustainable future.

CONCLUSION

While the purchasing behaviour of Blockbuster Museum Surabaya (MBS) visitors indicates that most prefer to purchase entrance tickets via Online Travel Agents (OTAs) and e-commerce platforms, mainly due to promotional offerings available. Analysis of tourist visit data found these channels to be increasing notably in ticket sales when a significant discount is offered. The performance of Traveloka, Tiket. – three partnered OTAs also reflect this trend. and Goers. While Traveloka and Tiket. Although the effects of these two platforms are often one step ahead in the market, since most buyers go to Goers due to its lower price MBS ticket sales flow is little. This highlights the importance of price sensitivity among MBS visitors, and even less-popular sites can be successful if they offer cost-efficient alternatives.

By prompting Goers over links on its Instagram account or informing the public of ongoing promotions, MBS are actively creating consumer behaviour towards platforms that offer better rates—a strategic move we couldn't overlook. Not only does this strategy go to bolster the marketing efforts of OTAs, but it also additionally generates more footfall by driving new ticket sales. With the ease in which consumers can look up ticket prices on many different apps, this helps to push even more people toward the service for whichever one is going to give you that economic advantage. This promotional pricing is a useful marketing tool and works well with affiliate selling techniques, demonstrating further how critical competitive prices have become in today's digital age.

These results offer important insights for theoretical research towards consumer behaviour in the digital marketing and tourism literature. It would be of interest for future studies

to investigate the lasting effects on brand loyalty and consumer trust following price promotions, especially among lesser-known brands such as Goers. Also, examining which components affect the decision-making process of group visitors – who mainly prefer direct tickets offering cost cutting arrangements could offer significant insights in market segmentation. Overall, this research highlights the vital need for MBS and other similar experiences to remain flexible in their marketing approach as digital marketplace consumer preferences continue to change. Future research may investigate the enduring impacts on brand loyalty and customer trust after price promotions, particularly with lesser-known companies such as Goers. Furthermore, analysing the factors influencing the decision-making process of group visitors—who predominantly choose direct tickets that provide cost-saving options—could yield valuable information regarding market segmentation. This research underscores the essential necessity for MBS and analogous entities to maintain adaptability in their marketing strategies as customer tastes in the digital marketplace persist in evolving.

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