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## Empowering Tourism Village Managers through Digital Promotion Training: Evidence from Cibodas Village

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### ABSTRACT

This community service program aimed to strengthen the digital marketing capabilities of tourism managers and local entrepreneurs in Cibodas Village, Bandung Regency, as part of efforts to promote rural tourism and support sustainable development. The initiative addressed the limited digital literacy among stakeholders, which has hindered effective utilization of social media and online platforms for destination promotion. Using a participatory approach, the program involved three stages: preparation, implementation, and evaluation. Training modules covered digital promotion strategies, creative content development, persuasive copywriting using the AIDA framework, and practical design skills through Canva, complemented by sessions on Google Trends and digital ethics. The workshop, held on 29 July 2025, resulted in improved understanding of branding principles and enhanced technical skills for producing visually consistent and persuasive promotional materials. Participants demonstrated increased confidence in managing social media channels and began establishing informal organizational roles for content planning and administration. Despite challenges such as limited internet connectivity and time constraints, adaptive strategies—such as content batching and shared repositories—were introduced. To ensure sustainability, the program recommends continuous mentoring, integration of performance indicators (e.g., engagement rate, reach, conversion), and advanced training on paid advertising and multi-platform optimization. These outcomes indicate that structured capacity-building initiatives can effectively bridge the digital gap in rural tourism, foster community empowerment, and contribute to local economic resilience.



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## 1. Introduction

Village-based tourism in Indonesia has emerged as a strategic pillar for sustainable development, emphasizing community participation as the driving force behind cultural preservation and economic growth. Cibodas Village, located in Bandung Regency, exemplifies this potential with its abundant natural beauty, cultural heritage, and proximity to Soreang, the regency capital. These advantages position Cibodas as a promising destination for rural tourism initiatives.

However, despite these inherent strengths, the village faces significant challenges in leveraging digital platforms for tourism promotion. Limited digital literacy among tourism managers and local entrepreneurs has resulted in underutilization of social media and other online marketing tools. This gap restricts the village's ability to compete in an increasingly digital tourism market, where visibility and engagement are critical for attracting visitors.

Strengthening digital competencies through targeted training programs is therefore essential. By equipping stakeholders with skills in content creation, branding, and online engagement, the initiative aims to enhance brand awareness and improve the overall appeal of Cibodas as a tourist destination. Such efforts align with broader community empowerment objectives, ensuring that tourism development remains inclusive and sustainable.

Moreover, the integration of digital marketing strategies into rural tourism management offers long-term benefits beyond visitor growth. It fosters entrepreneurial innovation among local businesses, encourages creative storytelling of cultural assets, and builds resilience against market fluctuations. In the context of global tourism trends, where digital presence increasingly determines competitiveness, empowering communities like Cibodas with these capabilities is both timely and transformative.

Finally, this program reflects a commitment to advancing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 8 on decent work and economic growth. By promoting digital literacy and marketing skills, the initiative not only strengthens the tourism sector but also contributes to local economic diversification and poverty reduction. These outcomes underscore the strategic importance of community-based digital transformation in rural tourism development.

## 2. Methods

The program was conducted in the Cibodas Village Office Hall, Pasirjambu District, Bandung Regency. This venue was chosen for its strategic accessibility and capacity for interactive sessions. The primary participants included village tourism managers and members of the PKK women's group operating local souvenir businesses, reflecting the core stakeholders responsible for tourism management and local product promotion.

A participatory approach was adopted, emphasizing active engagement of community members in all program phases. This method aligns with best practices in community service, which demonstrate that involving participants in co-creating training activities enhances relevance and ownership of outcomes (Budiarto et al., 2024). The intervention comprised three core stages: (1) Preparation, including situational analysis, training material development, and logistical planning; (2) Implementation, delivering lectures, group discussions, and hands-on practice for digital promotional content creation; and (3) Evaluation, which involved distributing questionnaires and planning follow-up mentoring to ensure sustainability.

Training modules covered digital promotion strategies for tourism, creative content development for social media, and persuasive copywriting using the AIDA framework. The use of Canva was emphasized to enable participants to design visually appealing promotional materials with ease (Savitri

et al., 2024). Additionally, Google Trends was introduced to help tailor content based on visitor interests and trends.

Beyond technical skills, the program highlighted ethical considerations and data privacy in digital marketing. Participants were educated on responsible content sharing, respect for copyright, and protection of personal data in online interactions crucial principles for maintaining professionalism and trust in digital platforms.

To sustain program impact, continued mentoring and performance monitoring were incorporated. Participants were encouraged to apply learning in real-world settings and track key performance indicators such as engagement rates, visitor traffic, and conversion to visits. This aligns with contemporary approaches in digital transformation studies emphasizing outcome tracking and ongoing support (Isbandriyati et al., 2025).

### **3. Results and discussion**

The community service program on 29 July 2025, held in the Cibodas Village Office Hall, received strong engagement from participants—village tourism managers and PKK members responsible for souvenir entrepreneurship. The active involvement in discussions and hands-on activities reflects a clear alignment with local empowerment needs and the relevance of digital marketing skills within the rural tourism sector.

#### **3.1 Improved Understanding of Digital Marketing**

Participants demonstrated enhanced comprehension of core digital marketing principles, particularly regarding the role of creative content. This aligns with findings that digital engagement in rural tourism improves brand image and tourists' intention to visit (Rodrigues et al., 2023). The structuring of marketing narratives based on target segments—families, millennials, infotainment travelers is consistent with community-based marketing frameworks emphasizing relevance for rural destinations (Mora Forero et al., 2024).

#### **3.2 Practical Gains: Canva & AIDA Framework**

Hands-on sessions using Canva led to the creation of promotional posters and social media visuals displaying consistent brand identity, improved typography, and coherent color palettes. This supports empirical evidence of Canva's effectiveness in enhancing digital literacy and promoting entrepreneurship among rural women (Savitri, Khotimah, & Rusmawati, 2024). Additionally, participants applied the AIDA model for copywriting, producing more structured, persuasive messaging a method similarly effective in rural tourism marketing such as coffee-farmer villages (Erfinda et al., 2023).

#### **3.3 Increased Capability and Organizational Arrangements**

A notable outcome was participants' impetus to self-manage their social media channels. Group members began assigning roles content planning, design, copywriting, and engagement monitoring reflecting the emergence of a grassroots organizational structure. This empowerment aligns with RBV and dynamic capabilities theory, where internal role clarity strengthens adaptive capacity (Kosasih & Sulaiman, 2024).

#### **3.4 Identified Barriers and Mitigation Strategies**

Participants highlighted barriers such as unstable internet, limited quality assets, and time constraints. Literature on digital technology adoption in community-based tourism underscores similar

challenges, where connectivity and digital infrastructure significantly affect implementation success (Abdul Samad et al., 2024). In response, recommended strategies included content batching, shared visual repositories, and scheduled posting practical steps often proposed in community-tech models.

### **3.5 Towards Monitoring and Sustainability**

The introduction of performance metrics engagement rate, reach, click-through rate, and visit conversion formed a basis for data-driven content evaluation. This aligns with research advocating KPI integration to improve marketing performance and rural tourism sustainability (Isbandriyati et al., 2025). Participants planned to track these metrics and conduct monthly reviews, reflecting best practices in digital transformation and community empowerment (Kosasih & Sulaiman, 2024; Kumar, 2024).

## **4. Conclusions**

The implementation of this community service program has demonstrated significant progress in enhancing the digital marketing competencies of village tourism managers and local entrepreneurs in Cibodas Village. Through participatory workshops and practical exercises, participants acquired essential skills in content creation, visual design, and persuasive messaging, which are fundamental for promoting rural tourism in the digital era. These achievements indicate that structured training combined with mentoring can effectively bridge the digital literacy gap in community-based tourism settings.

From a strategic perspective, the program's outcomes align with empowerment principles and the Resource-Based View (RBV), as the newly acquired capabilities such as proficiency in Canva, application of the AIDA framework, and understanding of social media analytics constitute valuable intangible resources. These resources, if maintained and continuously developed, can serve as a source of competitive advantage for the village tourism sector. Furthermore, the emergence of informal organizational roles among participants suggests an initial step toward institutionalizing digital marketing practices within the community.

Despite these positive results, sustainability remains a critical concern. Without systematic follow-up, the skills gained may diminish over time, and the momentum for digital transformation could weaken. Therefore, continuous mentoring is strongly recommended to reinforce technical competencies and address evolving challenges, such as algorithm changes and shifting consumer preferences. Mentoring should include periodic performance reviews, troubleshooting sessions, and advanced training modules to deepen participants' expertise.

Strengthening promotional networks is another priority. Collaboration with local government, creative communities, and academic institutions can expand the reach and credibility of promotional efforts. Such partnerships can facilitate resource sharing, joint campaigns, and knowledge exchange, thereby amplifying the impact of individual initiatives. Additionally, integrating promotional activities into regional tourism calendars can enhance visibility and attract a broader audience.

The adoption of measurable performance indicators is essential for evaluating the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies. Metrics such as engagement rate, reach, click-through rate, and conversion to visits should be systematically monitored to inform decision-making and optimize content strategies. Establishing a simple dashboard for tracking these indicators will enable evidence-based improvements and foster accountability among stakeholders.

Looking ahead, the integration of advanced topics such as paid advertising management, content calendar optimization, and multi-platform strategy will be crucial for scaling promotional efforts. Paid campaigns, even with modest budgets, can significantly increase visibility when combined with organic content strategies. Similarly, a structured content calendar will ensure consistency and thematic coherence, while multi-platform optimization will allow the village to tap into diverse audience segments.

In conclusion, this program has laid a strong foundation for digital empowerment in Cibodas Village. To sustain and expand its impact, a multi-pronged approach involving continuous capacity building, collaborative networking, and data-driven evaluation is imperative. These measures will not only enhance the competitiveness of Cibodas as a tourism destination but also contribute to broader socio-economic development by fostering entrepreneurship and community resilience.

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## 6. Authors Note

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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