



Village Tourism Promotion Through Virtual Tour

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ABSTRACT: Introduction/Main Objectives: The COVID-19 pandemic has sparked creativity among tourism actors. Tourism villages as one of the tourist attractions, conduct virtual tours to introduce their attractions and facilities. The purpose of this study is to describe the role of virtual tours as a promotional medium in increasing interest in visiting village tourism. Background Problems: with the policy of limiting tourist travel, the tourism industry has experienced a decrease in the number of tourist visits. Digitalization is a way to maintain relationships with consumers and carry out promotions through virtual tours. The formulation of the research problem is what is the role of virtual tours as promotional media in increasing interest in visiting village tourism? Novelty: The novelty of this research lies in the use of virtual tours as a promotional medium to increase millennial tourist interest by involving relevant stakeholders. Research Methods: research was conducted with a qualitative approach. Primary data was obtained through focus group discussions and interviews during the virtual tour. Secondary data was obtained through relevant literature. Finding/Results: a virtual tour of the three tourist villages that became the case studies in this study, namely Nepal Van Java in Central Java and Sade Village in West Nusa Tenggara, succeeded in providing information that attracted millennial tourists to visit. Conclusion: the virtual tour is an effective promotional medium in increasing interest in visiting tourist villages.

Keywords: Intention To Visit, Millennials, Promotion, Village Tourism, Virtual Tour



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INTRODUCTION

Presidential Decree number 12 of 2020 concerning Stipulation of Non-natural Disasters. This is a response to the spread of COVID-19 as a National Disaster. The implication of the designation of COVID-19 as a natural disaster is that the policy for handling COVID-19 is in the hands of the central government along with local governments where every stakeholder must submit and comply with the policy for handling COVID-19. Minister of Transportation Regulation Number 25 of 2020 prohibits international flights for one month in 2020. This legal product was created to control the spread of the COVID-19 virus. However, it has an impact on the tourism industry. The shutdown of tourist areas and attractions has caused businesses related to tourism, such as

retail, accommodation, food and beverage, processing, service and transportation, to stop operating.

Bali as an example of a tourist area in Indonesia which has been affected by COVID-19, has experienced a significant decrease in the number of tourists. The situation in Bali represents other regions in Indonesia that rely on the tourism sector ([Chen et al., 2021](#)). The room occupancy rate in Bali in the first five months of 2020 was 27%, with the number of foreign tourists visiting as many as 36 people in May 2020. As a result, financial losses in the tourism and hospitality business in Bali amounted to IDR 9.7 trillion per month, and in 13 April 2020 as many as 800 hotel employees were laid off ([Subadra, 2020](#)). The Central Bureau of Statistics recorded that before the pandemic, foreign tourist visits per day to Bali in 2019 were 17,192 people, room occupancy was 60%, and hotel and restaurant tax revenues for districts/cities in Bali were high. Sequentially starting from the top level, the Badung Hotel and Restaurant Tax is Rp. 1.488 trillion, second in Gianyar district of Rp. 215.995 billion, the three cities of Denpasar worth Rp. 169.257 billion, the four districts of Karangasem Rp. 20.944 billion, the five districts of Buleleng amounted to Rp. 20.384 billion, the six Klungkung districts amounting to Rp. 15.902 billion, the seven districts of Tabanan amounting to Rp. 11.356 billion, the eight Jembrana districts amounting to Rp. 2.601 billion, and Bangli district Rp. 784.022 million ([Nurudin et al., 2020](#)).

During the tourism recovery period after the COVID-19 pandemic, millennial tourists have an important role to play in driving tourism trips within the country. The important involvement of the younger generation during the pandemic and post-pandemic, because they have more motivation and knowledge about recovery from crises. Through the involvement of young people in tourism activities, it is hoped that it will increase enthusiasm for tourism travel again ([Sibi et al., 2020](#)).

Restoring the confidence of the tourist market is work together that must be fought for in the era of the new normal era. Foreign tourists are more difficult to bring in amidst the pandemic issue, they are typical citizens who are easily directed by the government, are diligent in exploring their need for detailed information and of course have high hopes for something. It is in this realm that the role of domestic tourists, especially the millennial generation, is central. Millennials are the generation born in 1980-2000, have the power to change trends and lifestyles, are connected to the internet and are all digital, and have a very high interest in nature. Apart from being a driving force for the economy in general, the movement of domestic tourists after the pandemic is clearly needed. They are the ones who will broadcast news about the security and implementation of the new normal in Indonesia to citizens of the world. In fellow nations the implementation of new standards is also tested and trained to reach a point of perfection, while showing the world that Indonesia is ready to receive guests again.

The situation in Bali also occurs in other regional tourism. Nepal Van Java in Central Java and Sade Village in West Nusa Tenggara, which are the case studies in this study, also experienced the impact of travel restrictions. Village tourism is one of the tourist destinations affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Restrictions on tourist travel led to a decrease in the number of tourist visits. One of the ways taken is to maintain relationships with consumers and carry out promotions through virtual tours.

Nepal Van Java in Central Java and Sade village in West Nusa Tenggara, conduct a virtual tour to promote the potential of a tourist village to a predetermined group of millennial tourists. The virtual tour session was carried out ten times, with the participation of different participants. Several sessions were also attended by representatives from the government, mass media, and NGOs. The first session began with an explanation of the aims and objectives of the virtual tour, which was also a moment for the research team to explain the noble values inherent in each tourist village. The next session is a virtual tour hosted by a local guide. The last session was a focus group discussion with questions prepared by the research team.

The concept of wealth-created tourism is real by reflecting itself as a nation that is not complacent with inherited wealth tourism (historic buildings, dances, art, temples, etc. In this context, tourism is a strategic sector for improving the quality of life of the community, especially people in rural areas. They should be touched first to strengthen the positioning, bargaining power, and competitiveness of tourist villages as superior tourism products in the country.

Most of the distribution of tourist objects and attractions is in rural areas ([I. D. G. Satrya, 2017](#)); ([I. D. G. Satrya et al., 2019](#)). Because of this, it is very ironic when the target of foreign tourist arrivals and the country's foreign exchange earnings and spending by domestic tourists are included in certain calculations which are classified as fantastic, but on the other hand residents around tourist attractions do not feel the positive impact. The goals set by Law 10/2009 for tourism emphasize the positive impact it can have on the economy, society, and environment. These objectives include promoting economic growth, reducing poverty and unemployment, preserving nature and resources, advancing culture, improving national identity and unity, and fostering international friendships. Without improving the economy of rural communities, the progress of tourism feels porous and does not touch the essence of life for most of our society.

The formulation of the problem in this research is, what is the role of virtual tours as promotional media in increasing interest in visiting tourist villages? The purpose of this study is to describe the role of virtual tours as a promotional medium in increasing interest in visiting tourist villages.

METHOD

The research was conducted with a qualitative approach. Primary data was obtained through focus group discussions and interviews during the virtual tour. Secondary data was obtained through relevant literature. After obtaining the data and information obtained from the informants, data analysis will then be carried out. The data analysis technique used in this study uses analysis of qualitative data with stages: 1. data collection; 2. data reduction; 3. data presentation; 4. conclusion.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The lockdown rules implemented by various countries are seen as detrimental to the development of tourism because the industry relies on both domestic and international travel ([Ncube et al., 2021](#)). [Risdawati AP et al. \(2020\)](#) stated tourism is a major source of foreign exchange for Indonesia, with tourism villages being one of the activities that bring economic benefits to rural communities. The concept of tourism villages involves the local community in the development

of tourism, making them the main drivers of this sector. However, the COVID-19 pandemic and social distancing measures have affected the economic sectors of rural areas. The government is trying to adapt rural tourism to the 'new normal' era, and there are varying opportunities and challenges in this area. Efforts have been made to develop protocols for tourism villages, virtual tourism strategies, and government economic stimulus packages for those who depend on tourism. Related to that statement, [Sianipar & Bernedeta Sitorus \(2022\)](#) stated, marketing for tourism can be achieved through various social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, and Tiktok, tailored to different age groups.

[Darmayanti et al. \(2022\)](#) stated, to adapt to the new normal era, a virtual tour of the historical Pecinan in Jamblang Cirebon is being offered. This approach aims to link, reconnect, exchange, and enhance people's cultural knowledge and experiences across different locations and periods. Research on the use of virtual tours has been done before and has a variety of research objectives. Among other things, to find out the motivation of virtual tour participants or potential tourists ([Irwan et al., 2020](#)), as a medium of information and tourism promotion in the cultural ([Roradi & Mutiaz, 2022](#)), the village as an information medium using the multimedia development life cycle method ([Nicolas et al., 2022](#)), as a medium of information, promotion, and marketing in the thematic village ([Vadreas et al., 2022](#)), to train communities about digital marketing and product development for a tourist attraction ([Putri et al., 2023](#)).

[De Luca et al. \(2022\)](#) using computers and technology to share information about important historical places and things helps more people learn about and appreciate them. This can make our communities stronger and better in many ways. stated virtual tourism can be a solution to the sluggish tourism industry in Indonesia and the world. virtual tourism offers the ability to enjoy virtual attractions from home or anywhere without the need to visit the place in person. [El-Said & Aziz \(2022\)](#) stated a virtual tour is like a game that lets you visit a cool place without actually going there. It's important that everyone can play the game and that it's easy to move around in. The game should also teach you how to play before you start.

[Cho et al. \(2002\)](#) stated virtual tourism is a way to explore a place using a computer or phone. It feels like you are there because it is interactive and colorful. It helps people find what they are looking for and choose what they want to do. It also lets people try out a place before they go there in person. People who create these virtual tours should be careful not to change things too much because it could make visitors unhappy. Fatma et al. (2019) stated, one way to promote tourist attractions is by using technology like a virtual tour app. This app uses special pictures to make it seem like you're there. This can make people more interested in visiting the place.

[Khalili & Ghanei \(2017\)](#) stated, virtual tours are like a special way to learn about cool places you can go to, or just have fun looking at neat stuff when you want a break from regular stuff. [Chiao et al. \(2018\)](#) stated, using new technology in tourism helps make vacations even better. When people use technology during their trip, it can affect how much they want to use it and how well they use it. This shows how important it is for people to have a good experience with their devices while on a digital tour. [Verma et al. \(2022\)](#) stated people are trying to make tourism more fun by using technology like virtual and augmented reality. But there's not a lot of information about it.

So, some researchers looked at a bunch of articles about it from the past 20 years to learn more. They found that different types of technology, like smartphones and virtual reality, are making this type of tourism better.

[Cho & Fesenmaier \(2000\)](#) stated, to make a pretend place feel real, we need to make it like a game where you can play and do things. This will help you remember it better and have your special adventure. It also helps you understand what the place is really like so you're not scared or confused when you go there in real life.

[Nata et al. \(2020\)](#) stated a computer program can show you what the environment is like in a place you want to visit. It will suggest things to see based on where you're from. You can see pictures all around so you can see what it looks like. Virtual Reality Photography or Immersive Photography is when pictures are taken in a special way that lets you feel like you are there. It's used to show people what cool places they might want to visit. The pictures are really big and show everything around you as if you're standing there. [De Luca et al. \(2022\)](#) stated a pretend world was made by taking pictures of the city from all angles and adding different kinds of information. People were asked how much they liked it and if it was easy to use, and they said they enjoyed it and felt like they were there. The pictures looked really good too!

[Lu et al. \(2022\)](#) found that virtual tourism can be a fun way to see different places without leaving home, and it can also help people stay safe from the virus. Even after the pandemic is over, people might still want to use virtual tourism for different reasons. Virtual tourism can also be good for the environment because it doesn't involve traveling, and it can help people who can't move around easily because of their age or disabilities.

People are using virtual tours to help preserve important cultural places ([Mah et al., 2019](#)). [Tavakoli & Mura \(2015\)](#) found that in virtual tourist spaces, gender-based stereotypes about Muslim women's bodies in Iran were rejected. Iranian women found virtual tourism to be a meaningful experience, allowing them to explore their gender identities and feel free outside of their usual routines. The study emphasizes the importance of virtual tourism and hyperreality as sustainable forms of mobility. [Wang et al. \(2002\)](#) stated virtual tourism communities will be important for facilitating communication between travelers and the tourism industry due to the experiential nature of tourism.

Related to this study which uses millennials as informants, the criteria for millennial tourists who became informants in this study were those born between 1982-2000 (Gen Y) and those born between 2000-2012 (Gen Z). [Veiga et al. \(2017\)](#) stated millennials who are highly skilled in using digital technology, constantly connected, seeking unique experiences, and exhibiting altruistic behavior have the potential to disrupt the tourism industry. They engage in volunteer tourism, seek non-touristy destinations, and embrace new technologies. However, these behaviors can have negative consequences such as harming local communities and degrading tourist experiences. The adoption of immediate response technologies also reduces human interactions valued by millennials and needs to be monitored closely.

[Cavagnaro et al. \(2018\)](#) stated, it is important for tourism organizations to understand that millennials are not all the same and have varied values and motivations for traveling. In order to cater to the needs of millennial tourists, tourism organizations should take these differences into account. A study has shown that some millennials are driven by self-transcending values and view travel as a means to gain knowledge about other cultures and make a positive impact on the world. This group is receptive to sustainable tourism and presents an opportunity for the industry to expand while also preserving its future. [Sofronov \(2018\)](#) stated travel industry needs to understand that millennial travelers prioritize authenticity, fulfillment, and sustainability.

The results of this study were recorded in the focus group discussion that was held after the virtual tour. Each session consisted of 10 millennials as virtual tour participants, whereas Nepal Van Java and Sade Village carried out 5 virtual tour sessions each. The results of the virtual tour can be a means for Nepal Van Java and Sade Village to promote and increase millennial tourist interest in traveling to these two destinations.

Impressions of tourists to Nepal Van Java:

1. Every visitor still obeys the health protocol, because mostly when they are at the location many violate it
2. The need for more exposure to increase awareness for us millennials to know about ecotourism.
3. It is better to promote Nepal Van Java ecotourism so that more and more tourists know the location and visit the place.
4. Hopefully, it will be even better and attract more attention from local and foreign tourists
5. Community culture must be maintained by local wisdom
6. Improvement of road access to the location
7. There are more spots for photos
8. Planting lots of trees, especially those that can flower simultaneously in one season; for example, tabebuia. Besides being more beautiful with natural colors, trees also prevent landslides
9. Added objects for photos
10. Need more information on lodging and halal food
11. Map or route access is provided for Nepal Van Java ecotourism, as well as other facilities that need to be developed to make it easier for tourists to visit
12. Added attractions for more experiences
13. The aesthetic aspect is adjusted to current trends so that people are interested in taking pictures there. Don't be too colorful, keep it sustainable. Because it is still in the introduction and development stage, it may be possible to cooperate with the government in terms of support and guidance, also pay attention to the completeness of disaster management points considering the condition of Nepal Van Java is in a mountainous area which is very prone to landslides. The existence of an even distribution of disaster-prone areas is very necessary for warning visitors and the public.
14. Homestay needs to be added with the concept of nomadic tourism

Impressions of tourists to Sade Village:

1. Another hope is in the future Sade Village can make regulations so that visitors also wear local cultural attributes when entering the village. For example, when entering a temple in Bali, visitors are required to wear a minimum of cloth and Balinese traditional clothes which can be rented at the entrance. This will certainly leave a stronger impression on visitors because they have not only seen Sade Village but also have documentation of themselves dressed in the Sasak Sade style.
2. When entering Sade Village, the community activities and the existence of all the traditional houses there always manage to amaze the visitors. However, the energy and cultural nuances are lacking when seeing many residents wearing modern clothes paired with sarongs as seen in the video presentation.
3. Adding green elements in the Sade Village complex by placing tree plants that can be potted so they can look cooler. Of course, many types of plants can be placed on narrow land.
4. The manager should prepare facilities and infrastructure to manage visits that are integrated online like those in Gunung Rinjani national park.
5. For tourists or visitors to Sade Village, it is better to limit or give a quota per day, so that visitors can enjoy the cultures in Sade Village.
6. It is hoped that there will be education about English for children and adolescents in the village of Sade which aims to facilitate communication between foreign visitors
7. Sade Village can invite millennials to contribute to developing Sade Village in terms of storytelling, marketing, and attractions. So that visitors from the millennial generation can feel more relatable when traveling to Sade Village.
8. Not selling artificial songket cloth and prioritizing conservation
9. Improve the digitalization system
10. Maybe in the future Sade Village will not only sell or display handicrafts, but there will also be good traditional food and snacks too
11. It is proposed to invite visitors to play traditional games in the Sade Village.
12. The original regional language is introduced more to tourists who come to become knowledge and habit for newcomers visiting Lombok.
13. If possible, every house of the villagers of Sade Village not only provides free coffee for visiting guests but also has 1 or 2 of the most typical snacks from Sade Village.
14. Keeping the traditional side and providing uniqueness, both merchandise and works that can only be found in Sade Village, so that millennials are increasingly interested in visiting
15. Make a path for directions so that all places in the village can be explored by tourists. Can use a Map in the form of a brochure.
16. Created a special team to introduce Sade village to the wider public (on social media, for example) because it would be a loss if the wider community did not know about such a unique and beautiful village or other security teams.
17. Make a documentary video on each local story.
18. Make attractive promotions through social media. Sade Village's official accounts on social media can contain information such as history, updates on the state of the environment there, interesting spots there, and Q&A about these tours so they can treat millennials so they are aware and interested in traveling there.

19. Introduce it from an early age in schools, campuses, and other places of education. As a suggestion, please teach it to other areas. The stage of Sade Village becoming a tourist village, providing education to many other places.
20. Create 1-2 houses as homestays specifically for tourists. Then invite other hamlets in Rembitan village to collaborate, the ancient mosque in the next hamlet is also okay to make it a tourist destination, then Sade village must be more open, tourism villages and traveling to villages are different.

As there are no current laws governing virtual tours, it is necessary to establish regulations at the district level regarding licensing (Pakpahan, 2020). Based on the focus group discussion, it can be concluded that the impact of virtual tours on the tourism industry and local communities in Nepal Van Java and Sade Village is, first, increasing the interest of millennial tourists to visit. Second, increasing knowledge and understanding of local culture, so that millennial tourists have a sense of belonging and respect.

CONCLUSION

The conclusions of this study are as follows:

1. Virtual tours are an effective promotional medium to increase interest in visiting millennial tourists. This was recorded in several virtual tour sessions, where virtual tour participants showed high enthusiasm and curiosity to visit. This is shown by the opinions of informants who asked technically how to get to Nepal Van Java and Sade Village, where to stay, local food, and ticket prices.
2. For tourists who have visited, virtual tours are a means to build relationships with tourist attractions. Many memories and suggestions conveyed by virtual tour participants who have visited tourist villages show that virtual tours are effective in maintaining tourists desire to travel and in time will travel directly to tourist villages. The informant's concern was evident in the suggestions for improvement for Nepal Van Java and Sade Village.

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