



The Role of Social Media as a Digital Marketing Strategy for Hotels in Yogyakarta (Case Study at Sahid Raya Hotel & Convention Center)

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ABSTRACT

The rapid advancement of digital technology has reshaped marketing strategies within the hospitality industry, particularly in Yogyakarta – one of Indonesia’s premier tourist destinations. Social media is no longer merely a communication channel but has evolved into a potent promotional tool for building brand awareness, enhancing engagement, and influencing travelers’ accommodation decisions. This study aims to analyze the role of social media in the digital marketing strategies of four-star hotels in Yogyakarta, with a specific focus on Instagram and TikTok as the most prevalent platforms. Employing a qualitative methodology, the research incorporates engagement metrics analysis (likes, comments, and interaction levels), a survey of 250 hotel guests, and in-depth interviews with eight hotel marketing managers. Findings indicate that Instagram plays a dominant role in crafting a hotel’s visual identity and appealing to aesthetically driven travelers, whereas TikTok is more effective in reaching Generation Z and millennial audiences through concise, creative, and interactive content. The combined leverage of these platforms enhances the hotel’s brand image, market positioning, and visibility, while simultaneously fostering stronger guest relationships. In conclusion, social media-driven marketing strategies effectively bolster hotel performance in Yogyakarta. It is recommended that hotels establish robust digital marketing teams and optimally utilize interactive platform features.

INTRODUCTION

The Indonesian hospitality sector faces significant challenges in the digital era, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, which accelerated the transition from traditional to online marketing strategies (Sigala, 2020). As travelers increasingly rely on digital technologies, hotels are compelled to optimize social media-based marketing approaches. Modern hotel guests frequently seek travel inspiration, accommodation details, and user reviews via digital platforms prior to booking (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014; Darabos & Horváth, 2025).

Social media—particularly Instagram and TikTok—hold strategic value due to their visual and short-video formats. Instagram effectively fosters brand image through aesthetic visual content, while TikTok excels at engaging Generation Z and millennial audiences with creative, interactive short-form videos (Lee & Park, 2024). Recent studies reveal that short-form videos achieve higher engagement rates compared to static content, significantly boosting brand awareness and lodging decisions (Kotler, Kartajaya & Setiawan, 2021; Additive, 2025).

As one of Indonesia's most prominent tourist destinations, Yogyakarta has seen substantial growth in hotels' use of social media for promotional purposes. However, empirical studies on TikTok's effectiveness in tourism remain limited, despite its growing popularity among younger travelers and its potential to shape purchasing decisions (Nugraha & Astuti, 2022).

Therefore, examining social media's role—especially Instagram and TikTok—in shaping digital marketing strategies among Yogyakarta hotels is essential. The findings are expected to yield academic insights and practical recommendations for the hospitality industry in enhancing brand awareness, engagement, and competitiveness in the digital realm.

The advancement of digital technology presents both opportunities and challenges for the hotel industry in Yogyakarta. On one hand, social media serves as an efficient tool for promotion, brand awareness, and engagement with potential guests. On the other hand, not all four-star hotels are fully capitalizing on these platforms. Issues identified include limited digital marketing human resources, inconsistent content production, and the absence of measurable digital performance indicators (Kotler et al., 2021). Moreover, while Instagram is widely utilized, TikTok remains underutilized—even though it holds significant untapped potential in reaching younger market segments (Lee & Park, 2024).



Figure 1. Sahid Raya Hotel

LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital marketing encompasses strategies that leverage digital technologies to create, communicate, and deliver value to consumers (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). Within the hospitality context, digital marketing enables hotels to reach broader audiences at comparatively lower costs than traditional methods.

Social media functions as an interactive platform where travelers share experiences, search for information, and shape destination perceptions. For hotels, it serves as a strategic tool to strengthen brand image and influence lodging decisions (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014).

Instagram's strong visual orientation makes it effective for cultivating an aesthetic brand identity among hotels (Darabos & Horváth, 2025). Conversely, TikTok's short-form video format and interest-driven algorithm provide significant potential to produce viral content that influences behaviors, especially among Generation Z and millennials (Nugraha & Astuti, 2022).

Based on these theoretical insights, this study focuses on analyzing the roles of Instagram and TikTok in the digital marketing strategies of four-star hotels in Yogyakarta, and how their integration contributes to enhanced brand awareness, engagement, and booking intentions.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a quantitative approach through a case study at Sahid Raya Hotel Yogyakarta, aiming to evaluate how social media strategies—especially via Instagram and TikTok—boost brand awareness and guests' booking intentions. Sahid Raya Hotel was selected due to its consistent deployment of social media marketing and its strong internal digital marketing team. The population includes visitors and potential guests who engage with the hotel's social media content; purposive sampling was employed to select respondents familiar with the hotel's official accounts. The target sample size is 150 respondents to ensure adequate representativeness.

The research instrument is a Likert-scale questionnaire (1-5), encompassing key indicators:

- 1) visual content and design quality managed by the graphic designer (Yusam, 2022);
- 2) social media distribution strategy and engagement managed by Digital Marketing (Sanni, 2024);
- 3) marketing orientation and sales targeting managed by the Director of Sales (Aghiel, 2024).

Reliability and validity tests were conducted prior to data analysis. Data collection involved both online surveys (via Google Forms) targeting the hotel's social media audiences and direct distribution to hotel guests. Additionally, short interviews with Aghiel, Sanni, and Yusam helped contextualize the digital marketing strategy employed.

Data analysis utilized multiple linear regression to assess the influence of content quality, digital marketing strategy, and branding on guests' booking intentions. The analysis also included validity, reliability, and classical

assumption testing prior to interpreting results. This methodology is designed to provide empirical insights into the efficacy of social media marketing strategies at Sahid Raya Hotel.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Visual Content Quality

The visual content produced by the design team (Yusam) was identified as a dominant factor in the effectiveness of hotel digital marketing. The majority of respondents rated both photos and videos as “excellent,” attributing this to consistent aesthetics, professional cinematography, and strategic framing that accentuates hotel amenities. While visuals act as informative channels, they also serve persuasive functions in shaping positive guest perceptions. Some respondents noted occasional design clutter, indicating room for refinement – suggesting a shift toward minimalistic, message-focused visuals would be beneficial.

From a marketing communications perspective, high-quality visual content reinforces brand image and enhances recall. Thus, aesthetically appealing and informative visuals are essential in capturing attention and fostering consumer loyalty.

Digital Marketing Strategy

Sanni’s digital marketing strategy received ratings between “good” and “excellent.” Respondents appreciated the consistency of postings, topical relevance, and clarity in messaging. Rapid responses from social media admins enhanced trust and emotional connection. Additionally, features like Instagram Reels, interactive polls, and creative content effectively boosted engagement – consistent with two-way communication theories in digital marketing.

Nevertheless, some respondents criticized paid ads for lacking precision in targeting. This highlights the need to utilize audience analytics for more data-driven marketing, ensuring promotional messages reach intended targets.

Academically, creative content, consistent posting, and interactivity enhance customer engagement. However, sustained success requires coupling creativity with analytics tools to monitor campaign performance.



Figure 2. Sahid Raya Hotel Yogyakarta & Convention social media.

Marketing & Sales Orientation

The Director of Sales-led marketing orientation received a “good” rating. Promotion of packages like weddings and meeting arrangements enhanced the hotel’s professional image. Segment-based messaging delivered value, yet promotional content fell short in compelling immediate bookings – pointing to a need for stronger value propositions and urgency (e.g., limited-time offers). Effective marketing orientation should inform and also motivate purchase intentions.

The findings imply that while the hotel projects professionalism in its marketing, connections between digital marketing and sales strategies –for instance, persuasion elements– must be reinforced for enhanced conversion outcomes.

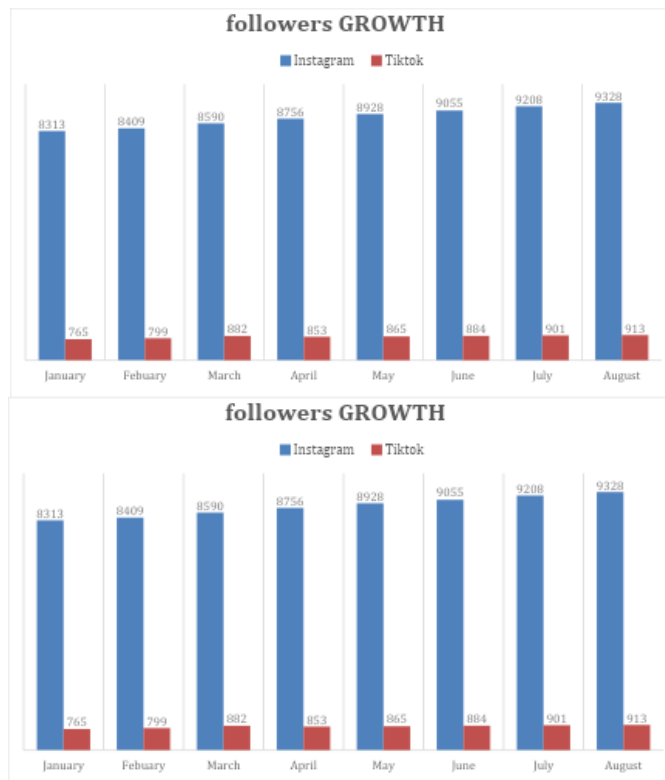


Figure 3. Year-to-date sales report of Sahid Raya Hotel Yogyakarta.

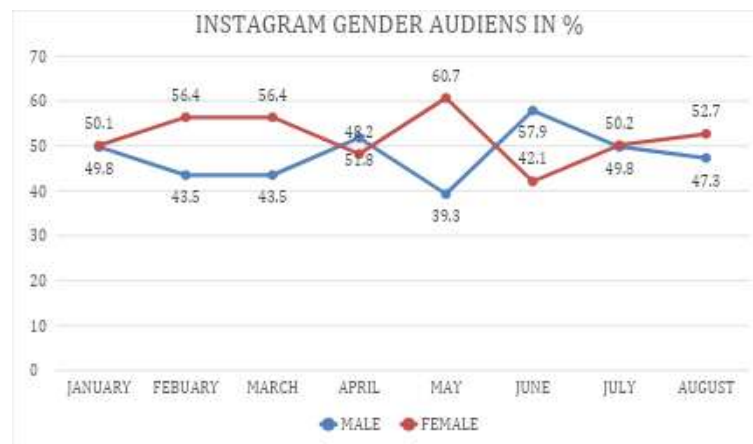


Figure 4. Year-to-date sales report of Sahid Raya Hotel Yogyakarta.

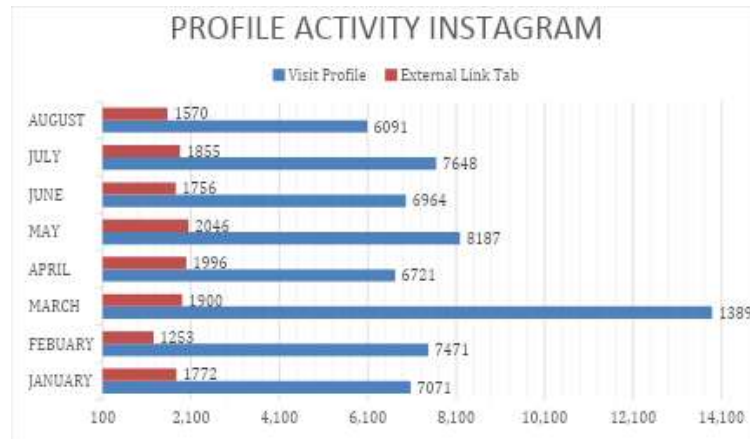


Figure 5. Year-to-date sales report of Sahid Raya Hotel Yogyakarta.

Booking Intention (Outcome)

Booking intention, as an outcome of digital marketing, was rated “good” to “excellent.” Most respondents expressed interest in seeking further information and making future reservations after exposure to the hotel’s digital content. Social media thus significantly impacts purchase intentions via consistent visual stimuli and messaging.

From a consumer behavior standpoint, booking intention lies between information search and purchase behavior. Creative content showcasing facilities, ambiance, and guest testimonials foster confidence and emotional resonance. Active hotel engagement on social media enhances perceived service quality.

Still, some respondents remained hesitant to book immediately – often due to external factors like price sensitivity, competitor preference, or travel uncertainty. This aligns with the Theory of Planned Behavior, which maintains that behavioral intention is influenced not only by attitudes but also by subjective norms and perceived behavioral control.

Academically, social media proves effective in advancing consumers to the consideration stage. To boost actual bookings, hotels should incorporate exclusive promotions, persuasive call-to-actions, and integrated reservation systems. These measures will aid conversion, occupancy, and long-term competitiveness in Yogyakarta’s hospitality market.

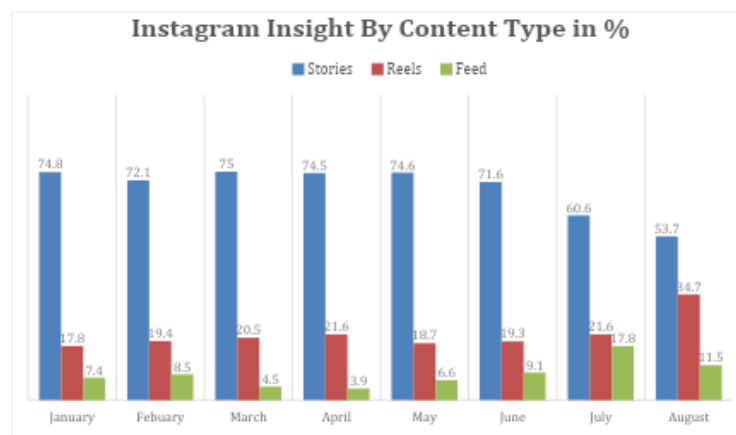


Figure 6. Year-to-date sales report of Sahid Raya Hotel Yogyakarta.

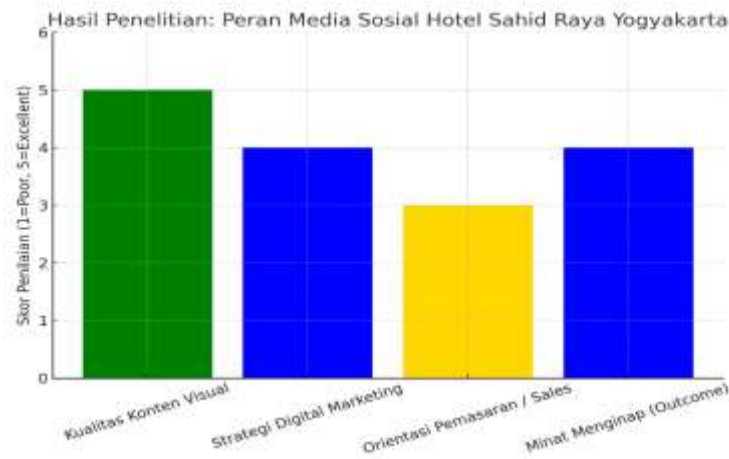


Figure 7. The chart illustrates the research findings on the role of social media at Sahid Raya Hotel Yogyakarta

The chart illustrates the research findings on the **role of social media at Sahid Raya Hotel Yogyakarta** based on four assessment criteria, rated on a scale of **1 (Poor) to 5 (Excellent)**.

The highest score, **5**, was achieved in **Visual Content Quality**, indicating that the hotel's social media excels in delivering appealing, high-quality images and videos that effectively engage audiences. Both **Digital Marketing Strategy** and **Guest Interest in Booking (Outcome)** scored **4**, showing solid but improvable performance in campaign execution and in translating engagement into tangible booking interest. The lowest score, **3**, was recorded for **Marketing and Sales Orientation**, suggesting a need for stronger alignment between social media promotions and direct sales strategies to maximize conversions.

Overall, the analysis indicates that while Sahid Raya Hotel Yogyakarta has successfully built a strong visual identity and a reasonably effective digital presence, there is room for improvement in integrating sales efforts with marketing strategies and optimizing social media content for higher conversion rates.

CONCLUSION

This study analyzed the role of social media as a digital marketing strategy at Sahid Raya Hotel Yogyakarta, focusing on visual content quality, digital marketing strategy, sales orientation, and booking intention. Results confirm that social media significantly enhances branding, customer interaction, and conversion potential.

High-quality visual content reflects the design team's competency in delivering consistent, aesthetic, and brand-aligned visuals, which draw attention, build positive perception, and generate interest. However, simplifying visuals could improve clarity and impact.

The digital marketing strategy performed well, with strengths in posting consistency, caption relevance, and admin responsiveness. Interactive features broadened audience engagement—yet targeting for paid ads requires refinement, highlighting the value of analytics.

Marketing & sales alignment contributed to a professional brand image, though further improvement in persuasive messaging is needed to motivate bookings effectively.

Booking intention achieved strong results, with many respondents' seeking further engagement and recommending the hotel. Social media thus serves not only as a branding and communication tool but also as a catalyst for purchase decisions.

RECOMMENDATION

Sahid Raya Hotel Yogyakarta is advised to maintain high-quality visual content through professional photography and videography while simplifying design elements to ensure clearer and more effective messaging. Strengthening visual storytelling that highlights guest experiences and the hotel's ambience will help build a deeper emotional connection with the audience. The digital marketing strategy should also expand by leveraging emerging features on Instagram and TikTok, such as live streaming and collaborative content, while optimizing paid advertising based on demographic and behavioral data to achieve more precise targeting. Regular performance monitoring through analytics tools is essential to continuously improve the effectiveness of these campaigns.

Stronger integration between the digital marketing and sales teams is also crucial, ensuring that every promotional content includes clear calls-to-action, such as direct booking links or limited-time offers, to drive higher conversion rates. To further optimize booking conversions, the hotel's reservation system should be integrated with social media platforms by using features like "Book Now" links on Instagram and TikTok, making the booking process more seamless and encouraging direct transactions. In the long term, investing in internal social media capacity building through regular training and strategic planning will be key. This approach will not only enhance Sahid Raya Hotel Yogyakarta's brand image but also optimize the effectiveness of its digital marketing efforts and secure a sustainable competitive advantage.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

Future studies on social media as a digital marketing strategy in the hospitality sector could examine the long-term impact of visual content and engagement strategies on customer loyalty and repeat bookings. Comparative research across different hotels or regions would provide broader insights into best practices and scalability. In addition, deeper analysis of paid advertising effectiveness and the role of data-driven personalization could strengthen understanding of how to optimize targeting. Exploring the integration of emerging platforms, such as TikTok or AI-driven chatbots, may also reveal new opportunities for enhancing customer interaction and conversion in the digital era.

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