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Competitive intelligence approach for developing an e-tourism strategy post COVID-19

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ABSTRACT The COVID-19 pandemic has brought many fundamental changes in running a tourism business. Many countries need to reformulate their post-19 strategy so that the tourism sector will revive. This study aims to formulate a strategy for developing e-tourism by utilizing information technology. The method used is a competitive intelligence approach. This research takes samples from tourist destinations in Indonesia. The results of this study indicate that the right strategy can encourage the tourism industry to grow back in the post-COVID-19 period. The resulting strategy is based on campaign, content, community, cooperation, and competitiveness. These five basic strategies are implemented with an e-tourism model and a simple management pattern utilizing information technology. The results of this research can have implications for the formulation of e-tourism policies and produce recommendations for policymakers.

KEYWORDS Competitive intelligence, e-Tourism, post COVID-19

1. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic, which is still endemic, has forced the world to adapt to limited circumstances. This limitation can be seen from the closure of access and exit to countries with high rates of transmission. This majorly impacts countries with a lot of tourism potential, but decreasing foreign tourist arrivals. Measures to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic have been carried out by vaccination in several tourist destination countries. However, the level of tourist visits has not increased significantly. This can be seen from the World Tourism Organization report (UNWTO) which states that there has been a decrease of 74% in tourism globally. This decline occurred in all regions, including Asia Pacific (84%), Middle East and Africa (75%), Europe (70%), and even the Americas (69%)

(Calderwood & Soshkin, 2019). A specific example was in Portugal, where during 2019 tourism contributed 8.7% of GDP with an increase of 7.9% compared to the previous year, but in March 2020 it experienced a decline of 50% and even stopped completely since May 2020 (Camarinha et al., 2021). This also occurred in many European countries which are world tourist destinations (Salehnia et al., 2020).

This decreasing condition has various complex derivative problems such as decreased occupancy rates for hotel rooms, fewer bookings of travel tickets to tourist destinations, selling less merchandise, and increases in unemployment due to layoffs in the tourism business. This has a systematic impact and is very influential on the level of welfare. Although vaccination has been carried

out in tourist destination countries, it has not shown a significant increase in the level of tourist visits. In addition, in several tourist objects, there have been strict applications of health protocols, but this has not been able to encourage an increase in the number of tourists expected. The application of this health protocol actually increases the operational costs of a tourist attraction. Thus, it can be seen that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a systematic impact on the tourism industry.

Solutions to overcome these problems include integrating IT and business processes to address challenges in the tourism industry as a result of COVID-19 (Munas & Arun, 2021). IT and tourism integration that produces smart tourism with products such as AR (augmented reality) and VR (virtual reality) services are believed to be a solution to the challenges of tourism during the COVID-19 pandemic (Lee et al., 2020). In addition, another solution to this problem could be the use of a combination of service-oriented architecture (SOA) and artificial intelligence (AI), which can be created by SONIA, an integrated tourism system (Qomariyah et al., 2020). There is also a model that relies on inbound marketing strategies, for example, the Costa del Sol Planning & Tourism Board can produce a list of loyal and interested customers to come to their tourist attractions (Sánchez-Teba et al., 2020). There is also a solution that includes creating a framework for building tourism industry resilience consisting of a government response, technological innovation, local interests, and customer and employee confidence. This framework is believed to be able to create a resilient tourism industry in the world of the global economy (Sharma et al., 2021). These solutions have drawbacks when applied to a tourism industry that does not have an adequate business strategy. This study will discuss how to build a post-COVID-19 tourism development strategy that has competitiveness based on information technology. This strategy is built using a competitive intelligence approach.

This study aims to produce a strategy for developing e-tourism post-COVID-19. This strategy is produced with a competitive intelligence approach, using the variables of destination, community, promotion, and competitiveness by considering the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities available, and challenges that can threaten the sustainability of the tourism industry.

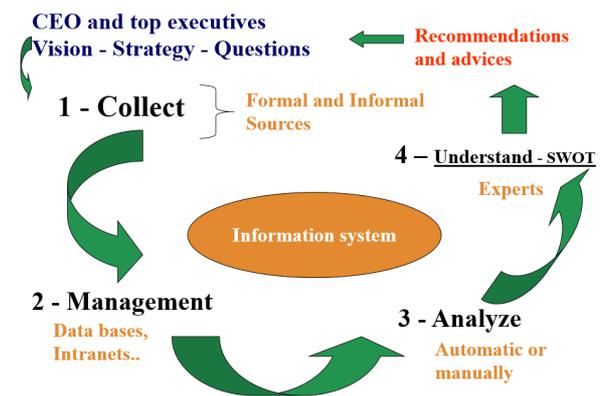


Figure 1 Competitive intelligence cycle.

2. METHOD

This study uses a competitive intelligence approach. This approach can be seen in Figure 1. Figure 1 describes the competitive intelligence approach in the form of a cycle which can be called the competitive intelligence cycle.

The steps in this cycle can be explained in the following steps.

2.1 Collection Strategy

The collection strategy utilizes a literature study. This helps to develop a strategy and formulate an implementation model that will be outlined below. This study is complemented by observations on the implementation of tourism, which were sampled in the city of Manado during the pandemic, late 2019 to mid-2021. As a medium-sized city, Manado tourism has boomed with an increase of 1000% in foreign tourists. The city of Manado is growing in tourism because it has beautiful landscapes that spoil the eyes. The condition of tourism in Manado, which had just begun to be commercialized, fell due to the pandemic. Tourist attractions closed and a prohibition on foreign and domestic visits was implemented.

2.2 Information Gathering

The analysis was carried out based on information obtained from formal and informal information. Formal information was obtained from journals on Google Scholar, Elsevier, Springerlink, ResearchGate, and IEEE concerning e-tourism and competitive intelligence. The study also used tourism publications from the city of Manado. Informal information was drawn from direct observations at tourist destinations, and from travelers, cultural communities, and MSMEs related to tourism with Manado City.

2.3 Evaluation and Analysis

The evaluation that was done went through validity and reliability testing and is deemed worthy of being analyzed in the next stage. This is to get intelligence so that it can be a basis for developing an e-tourism strategy in the post-COVID-19 era.

2.4 Presentation

The presentation was done by analyzing strength, weakness, opportunity, and threats with existing conditions so that we can get a strong opportunity strategy, a strategy of weakness opportunity, a strategy of strength threats, and strategies of weakness threats. Its application is also described in the workflow for the tourist life cycle and suppliers' processes. Using a mind map, the strategies obtained when implemented in e-tourism are also mapped.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study describe the strategy for developing e-tourism. Building a strategy begins by analyzing internal conditions (strengths and weaknesses) and external conditions (opportunities and threats). This internal condition is needed to find an appropriate strategy by utilizing existing strengths so that it can be superior in absolute and comparative terms while identifying weaknesses so that a strategy can be formulated to reduce losses that will arise. Analysis of external conditions is very useful for mapping opportunities that can be exploited so that they can achieve strong

competitiveness by paying attention to emerging threats. Mapping threats is very important to analyze the tourism industry. Internal and external conditions are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 explains that the internal factors in the form of high government support, the abundance of human resources as a driving force, policies and laws made to support tourism, and various tourism destinations are the strength of e-tourism. On the other hand, tourism management and lack of professionalism, coordination, and synchronization between related agencies, financial support and high use of ICT financing, and local tourist culture are still threats to the development of e-tourism. However, the opportunities created by the increasingly widespread use of the internet, the increasing trend of e-tourism, global programs that encourage the development of e-tourism, and the increasingly high growth of social media are supporting external factors. Threats arising from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, economic recession, competition for tourism between countries and even between regions, the uneven distribution of internet infrastructure, and the stability of security in tourist destination areas are external factors that need to be considered as well. These factors are used as the basis for formulating a development strategy for post-COVID-19 e-tourism.

The development strategy for post-COVID-19 e-tourism can be formulated based on the identification of internal and external factors. For this identification, the following strategies are developed.

Table 1 Identification of strength, weakness, opportunity, threats in e-tourism.

| | Internal Factors | | External Factors | |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| | Strength | Weakness | Opportunity | Threats |
| e-tourism helps make promotion more global | Poor management, especially e-tourism | High cost of using ICT mastery level | The increasing trend of tourism development | Increasing competition in world tourism |
| Government support for tourism is high | The level of mastery and professionalism in implementing e-tourism is still low | Coordination, integration, and synchronization between agencies in carrying out promotions through e-tourism have not yet been implemented | The development of ICT technology to support e-tourism is getting better | Internet network limitations |
| Human resources in large quantity | | | The growing number of internet users | Inflation and global recession |
| Supporting policies and laws for tourism | | | e-tourism in Indonesia is increasingly showing its stretch | Stability and security of tourist destination areas |
| Tourist destinations in the form of natural potential and high cultural diversity | e-readiness that hasn't materialized yet | Low financial support | some programs can be processed globally into support, especially in the application of e-tourism | Digital e-tourism security. |
| | The culture of local tourists who are still not aware of the sustainability of a tourist destination | The culture of local tourists who are still not aware of the sustainability of a tourist destination | The growth of social media increases tourism promotion with photo and video content from users | The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic |
| | Management of a tourist destination that does not yet have hygienic standards, especially in the face of a pandemic | | | |

SO – Strategy

- Develop a brand that is based on local wisdom uniquely and attractively, so that it is easily recognized and easily associated as a characteristic of Manado city tourism.
- Build a strong image of a tourist destination thereby increasing attractiveness. Building this image is done by offering tourist attractions that can stimulate the arrival of foreign tourists. In building this image, all tourism actors from upstream to downstream will collaborate to actively establish communication to develop the image that has been developed.
- Build synergy of e-tourism networks between tourism websites and communities.

ST – Strategy

- Sustainable global promotion while building synergies between tourist destinations and surrounding areas. In this case, Manado City, which is the provincial capital as a hub, can increase or promote tourist destinations in other regencies/cities in North Sulawesi Province.
- Support from the government that encourages communities to build and support tourism activities in the city of Manado. This community is based on local wisdom, such as religious celebrations which are used as annual events, and tourist attractions organized by the government and supported by Manado City residents, such as e.g., Thanksgiving.
- Enforce law enforcement for lawbreakers who infiltrate internet sites.
- Conducting comparative studies with other tourist areas to increase the competitiveness of tourism in the city of Manado.
- Ensure the implementation of vaccinations primarily for tourism actors from upstream to downstream to be carried out carefully.

WO – Strategy

- Encouraging and strengthening local tourism (community-based tourism, CBT) so that people can attract investors

and use the internet as a promotional medium (e-CBT).

- Collaborate with academic practitioners to increase e-readiness and enhance local tourism culture using various instruments such as village funds, village funds, CSR funds, and community service.
- Implementing standardization of management of tourism destination areas, especially regarding the implementation of hygienic levels that must be maintained.

WT – Strategy

- Empowering the community with the development of CBT, to generate competitive local products to be promoted via the internet.
- Achieve a common vision, especially at the Culture and Tourism Office as a bridge with other agencies, to increase the competitiveness and professionalism of tourism, especially e-tourism in Manado City.
- Ensure that the health protocol is still implemented by deploying a COVID-19 task force to continue to advise and warn all tourism actors to comply with existing regulations until COVID-19 cases around the world become zero.

3.1 Strategy e-tourism (5C)

The strategies that have been formulated can be developed for derivative strategies that are implemented in e-tourism, focusing on the 5Cs. In Figure 2 it can be seen that the resulting strategy can be in line with utilizing suppliers' processes. This shows that the 5C strategy can encourage demand, namely customers (users of tourism services) to grow so that they can move service providers to increase the supply of goods and services to ensure the best service is available.

The 5C strategy can be described in the following.

3.1.1 Campaign / Promotion

The campaign plays an important role in the promotion of a tourism destination, this involves branding tourist spots in order to strengthen the image for tourists who are interested in visiting the area. This can be done through various media to build brand awareness to help improve the destination's image globally. It is suggested to advertise on

the internet on well-known websites that have links to e-tourism sites that they wish to develop. When this attracts visitors to a tourism website, it can increase the number of hits on the developed site. Increasing the number of hits will help search engine optimization (SEO) so that the site will appear among the top in search keywords on the internet. The ranking obtained in search engines will be improved because the search engine search method will rank the sites that are referred to the most alongside the most relevant keywords desired by users.

3.1.2 Content

Content includes interactive and informative tourism destination information. With informative content, tourists who want to know a tourist destination can easily find out which places they want to visit. You can also update information on the online encyclopedia site so that users who want to find information about these keywords can be helped by their explanations there. Regular updates on the website further enhance the existing content. e-Community Base Tourism (e-CBT) can also be added here. Community lifestyles, local wisdom, promotion of local products belonging to the surrounding community, and handicrafts from small and medium enterprises owned by the community can be promoted through this tourism website. This existing content comprehensively raises all the potential that can be the main key to increasing local tourism. Interactively the use of 360 video technology, virtual reality, and

augmented reality can also be raised in content to sell a tourist destination. After all these things are discussed, the health protocol should still be applied regularly, in the form of interesting videos and infographics.

3.1.3 Community

Community can be built through blogs, social media, e-CBT, forums, or social travel sites. Maintaining these sites can be done by providing comments with various additional information or other things that can raise the image of a destination area. Regular publishing of an e-newsletter can provide additional information about a tourist spot. Word of mouth with the help of social media sites, blogs, vlogs, and podcasts will provide additional positive information that will increase the attractiveness of tourist areas. Meanwhile, developing e-CBT can develop local cultural events, such as festival activities that have taken root in local communities.

3.1.4 Cooperation

It is important to establish cooperative relationships with external tourism service providers, such as travel agents, hotels, resorts, dive operators, transportation, local governments and tourist destinations, and telecommunications operators (cellular or internet service providers). Universities can also provide various sources or activities that can support tourism, such as seminars or activities related to tourism. Local governments can work together to build

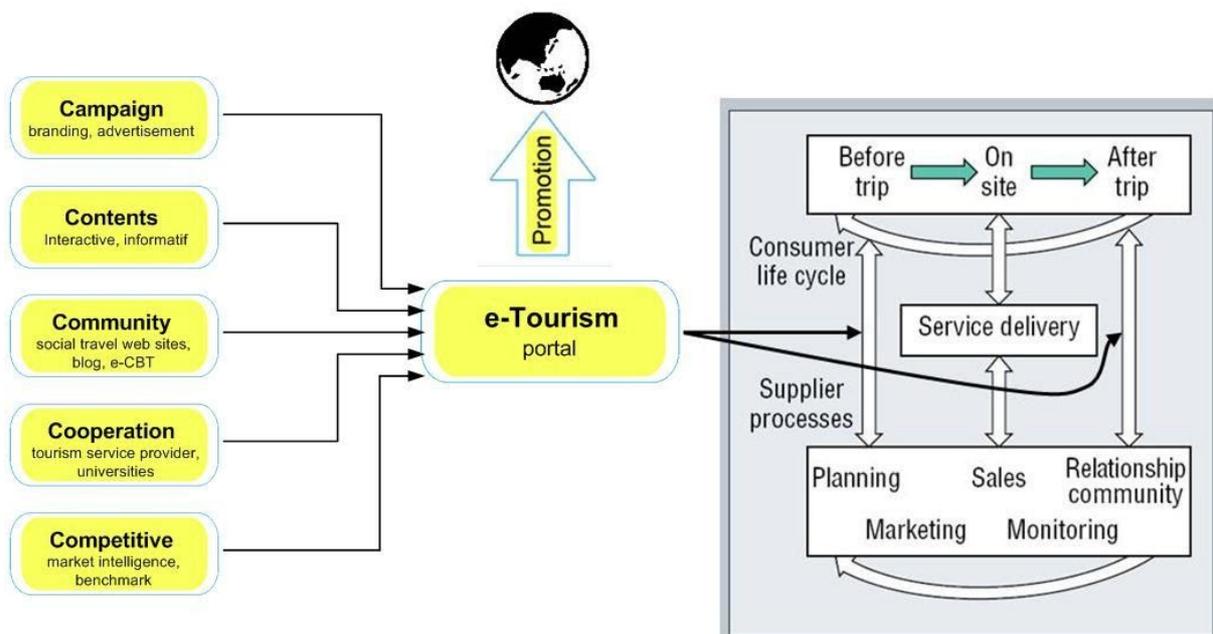


Figure 2 Implementing an e-tourism strategy in the tourist life cycle and suppliers' processes.

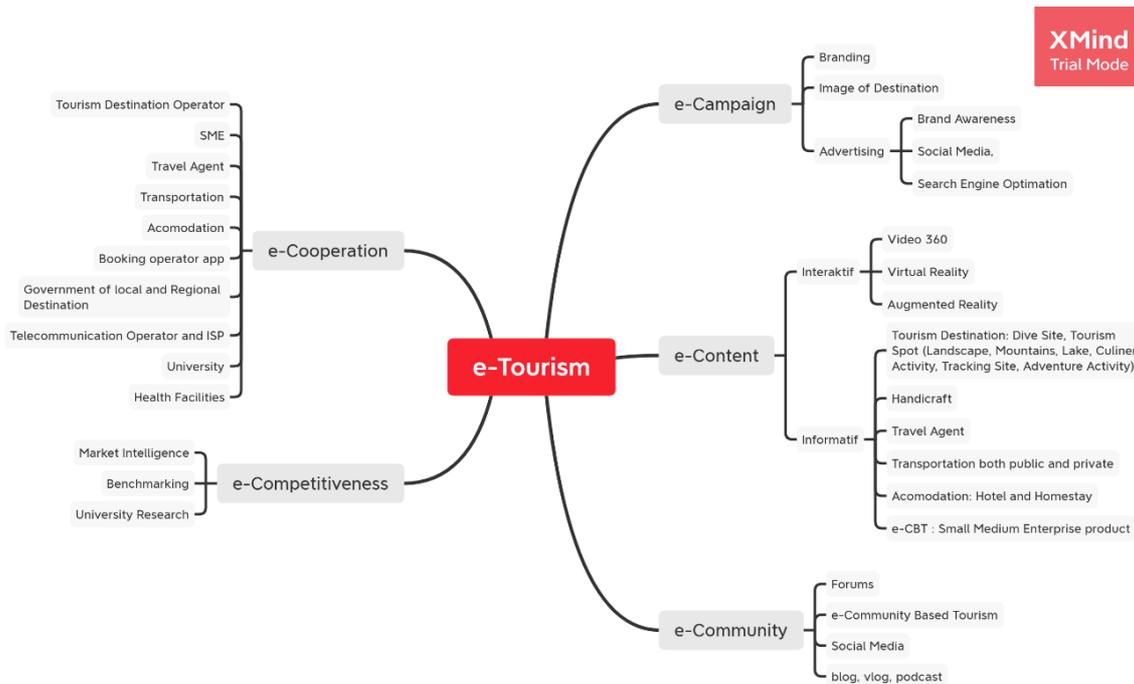


Figure 3 Mind map strategy e-tourism.

destination packages that have the same theme or different themes but are geographically close to each other. The cooperation should establish intense communication and interaction with health facilities in the area. This can help stop a pandemic and keep a tourism site hygienic. This is important to do because in this pandemic, many people are more aware of the implementation of health procedures.

3.1.5 Competitiveness

For competitiveness, it is key to know and understand the market by implementing various strategies obtained by benchmarking extensively with other tourism sites, or with annual reports of various tourist destinations in other countries. The state of the tourism market, especially e-tourism, can also be known by periodical reports from the United Nations Worlds Tourism Organization (UNWTO) website or the official websites of other organizations. Through this benchmarking, knowledge can be obtained to increase the competitiveness of the quality of local tourism products. This competitiveness can also be enhanced by industrial cooperation with universities to build or develop tourism products through joint research. The results of this research analysis will be input for decision makers, especially for marketing tourism products via the internet to make them more competitive.

3.2 Development

The development of an e-tourism strategy that has been formulated with content development is filled in interactively and informatively. This is done interactively with the use of technology and informative by utilizing information about e-tourism, especially regarding information on local tourism destinations. The idea of post-COVID-19 tourism content is better if a tourism organization has entered the new age of communication with its users, which is more flexible, complex, and is no longer entangled with existing bureaucracies (Camarinha et al., 2021). Digital tourism content must also be supported by an adequate education process so that it can achieve optimum results (Çınar, 2020). Tourism content is very important to build while adhering to post COVID-19 rules according to regulations set by local authorities and the COVID-19 pandemic guidelines (Islam, 2021). This is important to ensure visitors have adequate knowledge when visiting a tourist destination. Content must be built using available information technology in a friendly manner so that smart technology-based content is produced (Hamid et al., 2021) which makes visitors have a satisfying experience when visiting tourist destinations (Stankov & Gretzel, 2020). Smart tourism must be built on strong knowledge by paying attention to the development of science from the results of previous research (Shafiee et al., 2019). To be able to run this smart technology, it is very

important to have workers who have sufficient technological skills to run various e-tourism technologies used in the tourism industry (Carlisle et al., 2021). Smart technology can also be used to build smart ways of choosing tourist destinations (Ivars-Baidal et al., 2021) (Lee et al., 2020) by building measurement indicators precisely and quickly so that a new habit is built in planning tourism for potential visitors. This method can of course be done if smart tourism is built based on information technology which is used in smart e-tourism. It is necessary to establish clear boundaries (Stankov & Gretzel, 2021) to accurately explain the role of humans and the role of technology in presenting an e-tourism model that builds a comprehensive and strong tourism experience.

Communities in the development of e-tourism have an inseparable role. Community is a tourism product based on local culture, has its local wisdom, is unique, and is interesting to become a tourist object that is different from destinations in other parts of the world. Community-based ideas must pay attention to culture which is the fastest growing segment of the tourism industry (Vena-Oya et al., 2021). It is very important to build a community that pays attention to cultural symbols so that it does not conflict with local wisdom in the tourist destination area (Vinodan & Meera, 2020).

The e-tourism development strategy can have a positive impact by taking into account the growing trends in society, which have changed the process in the tourism industry (Okwemba & Nambiro, 2020). The tourism industry is expected to be more flexible in building business models, and provide faster change management so that it can adapt to ongoing trends. Through the e-tourism strategy that was developed previously, it can be a necessary driver, especially after COVID-19.

It is very important to transform the post-COVID-19 tourism business model so that a formula is found to answer the challenges of post-COVID tourism (Gretzel et al., 2020). This can be answered with the results of this research which suggest a strategy for dealing with the post-COVID-19 situation. The management model that existed before COVID-19 needs to be rearranged contextually according to post-COVID needs without leaving the basic principles of tourism industry management (Elida Mahriani, Purwanti Dyah Pramanik, 2020).

Various strategies have been put forward, it is very important to also pay attention to the competitiveness of the available tourism industry and put forward various ways to improve the competitiveness of the industry (Grančay, 2020). On the other hand, in a COVID-19 pandemic situation, many countries close their borders to foreign arrivals it will cause the flow of tourists from abroad to stop. Then, the way to adjust the tourism industry is to take advantage of domestic tourism (local tourists) (Woyo, 2021). An adequate strategy is needed to bring in domestic tourists. The strategy built into this research can be a good solution to overcome it. Various strategies that have been produced need to calculate the business value so that it can produce measurable economic value so that it can generate economic returns, especially in the tourism sector. This calculation is to see the extent to which the tourism industry is competitive from a business point of view (Michael et al., 2019). The strategy in this research has implications for tourism management based on intelligent information technology e-tourism, which is implemented in various tourist destinations based on this 5C strategy.

4. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the competitive intelligence approach can produce a development strategy for post-COVID-19 e-tourism. This is done by mapping the strengths and weaknesses in detail and identifying opportunities and threats in detail. Then a strategy is built that can be implemented easily in the post COVID-19 period. These strategies are in the form of campaigns, content, community, cooperation and competitiveness. The implication is that it can encourage an e-tourism-based industry to develop in the post-COVID-19 period.

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