

Viral Tourism: Utilization of Viral Marketing in Social Media through Destination Brand Quality and Value to Improve Travel Decisions in the Emerging Tourism Area

Asriah Syam*, Yuyun Karystin Meilisa Suade, Novika Ayu Triani, Tony Antonio, Salmah Sharon

Ciputra Makassar College of Economics, indonesia

*asriah.syam@ciputra.ac.id, yuyun.suade@ciputra.ac.id, novika.ayu@ciputra.ac.id,
tonyantonio@ciputra.ac.id, salmah.sharon@ciputra.ac.id*

Abstract. The tourism industry has experienced a significant decline in visitor numbers due to social challenges since late 2019, affecting both international and domestic tourism. In order to effectively tackle this matter, it is imperative to enhance the promotion of creative tourism in targeted locations by implementing social media marketing strategies. Understanding the influence of social media viral marketing campaigns on promoting emerging island tourism in the Takalar Regency region is crucial for gaining a competitive advantage. This research aims to explore how consumers impact viral marketing strategies on social media, with a specific focus on the mediation role of customer-based brand equity (CBBE) on quality and value in the context of tourism planning on Tanakeke Island. This study employed a quantitative research design in the Takalar district, utilizing a viral promotional video content strategy. The strategy was developed and evaluated as a determinant factor influencing individuals' travel decisions concerning Tanakeke Island. Structural equation modeling with partial least squares (SEM-PLS) was used to assess the validity and significance of the proposed model. The dataset comprised 200 online consumer samples who engaged with video content on social media platforms. The findings revealed that the implementation of Viral Marketing Campaigns (VMC) significantly and positively impacted travel decision-making. This influence was mediated by brand quality and value. Notably, VMC did not have a direct effect on travel decisions, emphasizing the importance of mediating factors such as brand quality and value in the context of social media viral marketing campaigns for tourism promotion.

Keywords: viral marketing, destination brand quality, destination brand value, travel decision.

1. Introduction

Tourism is a crucial sector that is boosting the country's economic potential, particularly in the aftermath of the pandemic. Through diverse employment, this industry has the potential to reduce poverty (UNCTAD, 2013). However, system sustainability is required to ensure that ecosystems evolve in concert (Robinson et al., 2020). "Muck Dive" (the art of diving beneath the water) can produce \$150 million USD each year and employ over 2200 people in the Philippines and Indonesia. The benefits of maritime tourism stem from the potential of vacationers, who are often well-educated, experienced, and well-off. Because of their devotion, the maritime tourist segment is willing to pay a high price for initiatives to protect marine habitats (De Brauwert et al., 2017). In terms of the emergence of tourist objects, this means that there is a segmentation of tourists with varying spending capacity.

Tourism has also become a main demand for the upper middle class, as well as a secondary need for nearly every other category (Huijbens & Jóhannesson, 2020). However, since the end of 2019, the tourism industry has suffered a setback, with guests fleeing owing to social restrictions. According to UN World Trade Organization (UNWTO) forecasts, international arrivals at airports declined by 20-30% in 2019 (Gössling et al., 2020). By looking at the salary range and position, the affected aviation industry ranges from 10-100% compensation reduction and paid leave (Foo et al., 2020). Negative economic growth is possible at 0.4%, with a worst-case scenario of only 2.3% (Hoque et al., 2020). As temporary residents and short-term visitors returned to their home countries, international and domestic tourism declined dramatically (Baum & Hai, 2020). This outbound state is equivalent to the universe's life crisis. As a result, the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy devised a strategy to improve the situation by promoting creative tourism in new areas under the slogan "Bangga Berwisata di Indonesia" (CNN Indonesia, 2020).

Sulawesi, a diverse and culturally rich island in Indonesia, had been experiencing growth in its tourism sector. The island was gaining popularity among domestic and international tourists for its natural beauty, unique cultures, and outdoor activities such as diving and trekking. The capital city, Makassar, served as a gateway to the island, with improved transportation infrastructure contributing to increased visitation. However, like many other regions worldwide, Sulawesi was also affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in a significant decline in tourism activities in 2020 and the early part of 2021 due to travel restrictions and health concerns. It is important to note that the situation in Sulawesi's tourism sector may have evolved since then.

Viral content, which is common on social media, is one of the most effective marketing methods. Destination branding initiatives are critical for being competitive, standing out, and different from the competition (Morgan et al., 2012). Consumer Brand Awareness, as embodied by numerous social media celebrities, has been shown to significantly contribute to the positive value of Brand Image and Brand Loyalty (Kim et al., 2018). Social media viral travel content is an efficient communication medium for reaching consumers all over the world (Singh et al., 2012) and can help boost destination brand recognition (Lim et al., 2012). Wikitravel, Travel Blog, Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube, and Instagram are the most often visited inspirational outlets for the most recent vacation information and decision-making (Buhalis, 2000). Even the term "instagrammable spot" has become a social media user's obsession. Customers share video reviews, which affect their opinions of brand awareness and image (Pike, 2020).

As a result, it is critical to understand how social media plays a role in elevating rising island tourism in the Sulawesi region. The purpose of this study is to look into the impact of social media, specifically viral marketing campaigns, on tourist travel decisions, with a focus on destination brand equity in terms of quality and value. The study will focus on Tana Keke Islands, a growing tourist destination in the Takalar Regency. Understanding the relevance of this position is critical for investigating and furthering the development of island tourism in the Sulawesi region, as well as providing insights into, fostering sustainable tourist practices, and facilitating economic growth throughout Indonesia.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Destinations As Brands & Viral Marketing Campaigns

According to Anderson & Sanga. (2019), destinations play a crucial role in the tourism system as they serve as the central stage for various tourism activities. The 2010s saw a notable emphasis on the utmost significance of safety and security in the lives of humans, notably in the decision-making of tourists. The significance of this emphasis was reinforced by the extensive implications of the COVID-19 pandemic, which aligned with principles derived from chaos theory, the butterfly effect, cosmology, bifurcation events, and behavioral changes. Consequently, this prompted self-organizational reactions motivated by health and safety considerations, ultimately fostering the endeavor to achieve exceptional outcomes (Altinay & Kozak, 2021). It is crucial to acknowledge that sustainable tourism has a significant impact on the preservation of the ecosystem and socio-cultural aspects of developing destinations, as well as enhancing their competitive advantage (Goffi et al., 2019). The prior state of research in this field was primarily limited to a theoretical framework. However, there has been a recent shift towards the development of new research paths that specifically explore the various aspects of tourist excellence. Therefore, it is increasingly necessary to explore the creation of novel frameworks and surveillance systems for achieving excellence in tourism. This entails aligning these frameworks and systems with current concepts and incorporating a range of perspectives, including those of suppliers, consumers, tourists, and local inhabitants. Additionally, it is crucial to consider the economic aspects while also acknowledging the social dimension (Altinay & Kozak, 2021)

According to Bassols & Leicht. (2021), tourism destinations possess a range of complex attributes, with regional destinations assuming a prominent role within this heterogeneous environment. The core geographical elements of tourism facilitate linkages between locations that generate tourists and the destinations they visit via transportation routes (Zyrianov & Semiglazova, 2021). Tourist destinations can be characterized as locations that attract visitors for temporary stays, with inherent qualities that enhance their appeal. Tourism, therefore, encompasses more than just location and puts a commercial dimension into the mix. Destinations are not solely confined to their physical locations, but are instead perceived as entities that offer tourism products and services. These entities consist of essential elements including lodging, gastronomic offerings, public transit, visitor guidance, leisure facilities, and both natural and cultural points of interest. The combination of these factors results in the provision of comprehensive and unified experiences for consumers (Azmi et al., 2023).

The notion of destination branding, as expounded by Kumar and Panda (2019), functions as a strategy to articulate the unique attributes that differentiate a specific tourist destination from its rivals. Tourists do not engage in fragmented acquisition of tourist products, such as the discrete procurement of plane tickets, hotel rooms, and guided tours. Conversely, travelers prioritize the holistic encounter during their visits to a particular location (Pike, 2020). The level of satisfaction received from the visitor experience has the potential to impact the likelihood of visitors returning, as well as their inclination to suggest the destination to others through positive word-of-mouth. Additionally, it can contribute to the overall competitive position of the destination (Pike et al., 2018). Branding's ultimate purpose is to instill brand loyalty in visitors. The most potent marketing tools accessible to today's marketers, who confront increased competition, are destination branding and social media strategy. Destination branding is an important research area and a powerful instrument for building the positioning of tourist destinations. It is identifying trends focused along different lines: strategy, experience, customer-based brand equity, place attachment, destination loyalty, word-of mouth, and social media(Ruiz-Real et al., 2020). To create strong loyalty, successful branding is measured by improving brand awareness, physical quality, staff behavior, and brand image (Sürücü et al., 2019).

Viral marketing is a marketing technique that uses social media platforms, email, and other online channels to promote a product or service. In the context of the tourism industry, viral marketing can be an effective tool to promote products (Erwin et al., 2023; Susanti & Firman Kurniawan, 2020). The

measurement of efficacy in viral marketing campaigns or communications encompasses seven sub-elements derived from the 7I idea. These sub-elements are Invisibility, Identity, Innovation, Insight, Instantaneity, Integration, and Interactivity (Puriwat & Tripopsakul, 2021). While discussions and considerations regarding viral marketing have seen increased attention in recent times, its practical application has predominantly been observed within specific sectors, including small and medium-sized enterprises and established tourism destinations. However, the untapped potential of viral marketing in the context of emerging destination tourism remains an intriguing area for exploration. Therefore, an initial research hypothesis emerges to establish a linkage between social media and visitor loyalty, particularly within the realm of travel decisions in emerging destination tourism. The initial study hypothesis can be stated as follows:

H1: Viral Marketing Campaigns (VMC) has a positive and significant impact on Travel Decisions (TD).

2.2. Brand Equity Dimension

As a fundamental dimension, brand salience refers to the strength of a location's presence in the minds of consumers while assessing travel options (Pike, 2020). Except for a few popular places, consumers will not recognize numerous destinations (Jiang et al., 2020). Brand goals that emerge in customers' minds (top-of-mind) play an important effect in eliciting consumer decisions.

Destination brand association is an important component of brand equity. The degree of conformity between the destination image and the consumer's self-image (personal and social image) influences consumer attitudes toward a destination (Yang et al., 2022). Consumers today make decisions based on their lifestyle, self-image, or the representation of their desired experiences (Huang, 2021).

Brand quality refers to the comprehensive view of the excellence of a destination's goods, as well as the perceived features of quality associated with that destination (Travar et al., 2022). The destination qualities are categorized and organized according to the 6A framework, which includes attractions, accessibility, facilities, available packages, activities, and supplementary services (Sorokina et al., 2022). The concept of quality is inherently subjective; nonetheless, it can be operationalized using various scale measurements, similar to the other dimensions of brand equity (Reisinger & Crotts, 2022). Due to the inherent subjectivity of quality, it is frequently seen as an integral component of the picture dimension. Murphy. (2000) were among the pioneering scholars in the field of tourism who undertook investigations into quality as an independent variable. The concept of quality may present challenges in terms of its precise definition; yet, individuals consistently engage in internal evaluations of quality. The assessment of quality may undergo modifications throughout time due to the accumulation of experience (Dedeoğlu et al., 2020; Sürücü et al., 2019; Travar et al., 2022), which enables the establishment of reference points for comparison. Ensuring the maintenance or improvement of quality standards is a fundamental requirement for augmenting the brand equity of a product. Nevertheless, the lack of control over service quality by destinations is a significant challenge in managing this duty.

Brand value can be conceptualized as the monetary worth attributed to a brand, which is determined by factors such as the price associated with it, the perceived advantages consumers derive from it in relation to the costs incurred, and consumers' subjective evaluations of the brand's price appropriateness and overall experience (Harrigan et al., 2020).

Brand loyalty may be described as the degree of loyalty exhibited towards a particular destination. This loyalty is contingent upon the CBBE model, as stated in the source (Travar et al., 2022). The final step of brand development in this model is considered to be the most robust indication of brand resonance. Brand loyalty can be conceptualized as an individual's emotional and behavioral connection to a particular brand, encompassing their attitudes and actions towards the brand (Pike, 2020; Pike et al., 2021). The topic of brand loyalty continues to be a subject of academic debate, with scholars discussing various dimensions and metrics, such as attitude or behavior approaches. Behavioral loyalty refers to the extent to which consumers repeatedly purchase the same brand (Hardy et al., 2020). On

the other hand, attitudinal loyalty pertains to the psychological commitment of consumers, including their purchasing intentions and recommendations, without necessarily reflecting actual repeat purchase behavior (Dedeoğlu et al., 2019, 2020). Thus, to establish a connection between viral marketing campaigns and the improvement of brand equity, especially in brand quality and value, we propose the following hypothesis:

H2: Viral Marketing Campaigns (VMC) has a positive and significant impact on destination brand quality (DBQ).

H3: Viral Marketing Campaigns (VMC) has a positive and significant impact on destination brand value (DBV).

2.3. Viral Marketing Through the Mediation of Destination Brand Quality and Destination Brand Value

The impact of social media on consumer behavior in trip planning has been extensively discussed in the tourist literature. Additionally, scholarly attention has been directed towards the utilization of social media by tourism organizations for marketing purposes (Zhang & Huang, 2022). The predominant body of research centers on the utilization of social media platforms as a means of accessing travel-related information (Cheung et al., 2021). This includes activities such as sharing personal travel experiences and seeking specific service features such as restaurants, accommodations, and attractions (Fjelldal et al., 2022).

Social media provides a competitive edge through quick real-time answers to consumers, brand monitoring, and price and consumer preference comparisons between companies and competitors (Cheung et al., 2021). Viral marketing seeks to encourage and capitalize on word-of-mouth activity, as well as to encourage customers to swiftly share and spread marketing-related information. The phenomena that occur in social media circles have a considerable impact on the general public. Consumers will get knowledge about the types of companies and commodities being discussed by the broader public, increasing brand recognition. Thus, branding is a function of not just identification and distinctiveness, but also of the consumer's experience, general thoughts and attitudes, and emotional attachment to the destination (Arasli et al., 2021). Branding's ultimate purpose is to instill brand loyalty in visitors. According to Pike. (2020) The most potent marketing tools accessible to today's marketers, who confront increased competition, are destination branding and social media strategy. To create strong loyalty, successful branding is measured by improving brand awareness, favorable perceived quality, associations, and brand value (Sürücü et al., 2019).

Consumer involvement with social media involves customers' active participation as well as the ramifications for marketing and brand performance (McClure & Seock, 2020). The empowerment of social media is a fantastic chance to boost consumer decisions in selecting tourist places, which can ensure sustainable tourism and the creative economy in Indonesia. Hence, in order to examine the impact of a viral marketing campaigns on enhancing travel decision-making, with a particular focus on the role of destination brand equity, specifically in terms of quality and value, we put forth the following hypothesis:

H4: Viral Marketing Campaigns (VMC) has a direct positive and significant effect on Travel Decision (TD) through the mediation of Destination Brand Quality (DBQ)

H5: Viral Marketing Campaigns (VMC) has a direct positive and significant effect on Travel Decision (TD) through the mediation of Destination Brand Value (DBV).

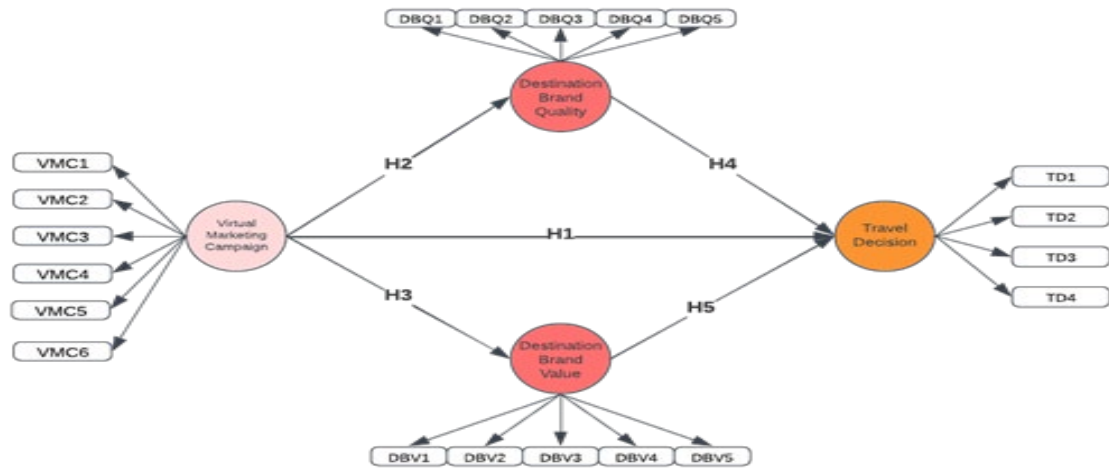


Fig.1: Proposed Research Model

3. Research Method

The research steps are organized as follows:

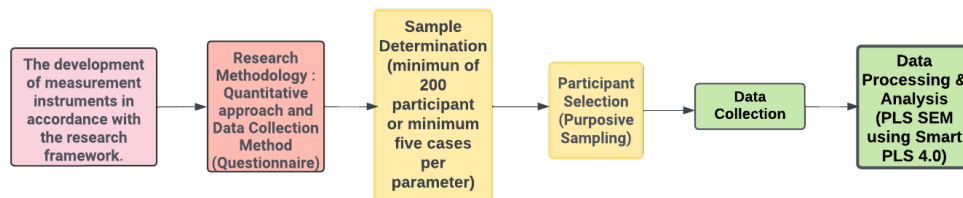


Fig.2: Flowchart of Methodology Steps

3.1. Respondent

This study employed a quantitative approach, utilizing primary data derived from questionnaires with a Likert scale (5 scales) from 1, strongly disagree, to 5, strongly agree. questionnaires distributed to participants who were selected through purposive sampling. The inclusion criteria for participants were as follows: being 18 years of age or older, having previously undertaken a tourist trip to destinations in South Sulawesi, and utilizing social media as a primary means of communication and reference for determining tourist destinations. The object of this study's analysis was Tanakeke Island tourist sites in Takalar Regency. The research was held during the months of June and August in the year 2023. Minimum of five cases per parameter is considered appropriate for basic SEM models (J. C. Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Hence, the sample size for this study will be set at ten times the aggregate number of factors identified during the questionnaire creation phase, resulting in a total of 200 participants.

3.2. Measurement and Analysis

Each statement in this study was formed based on indicators obtained from various adaptations of previous studies. The variables in this study were; independent variables viral marketing campaigns and the dependent variable includes destination brand quality, destination brand value, and travel decisions. The research indicators used are:

Table 1. Measurement

NO	Items
1	<p>Viral Marketing Campaigns (VMC) (Erwin et al., 2023)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invisibility - This content has a subtle tone to it, and it does not directly promote tourist places, in my opinion (VMC1) • Identity - The material represents the character and identity of the promoted tourist location (VMC2) • Innovative - I'm interested in sharing this content because the campaigns is unique (VMC3) • Insight - This campaigns exposes new facts about tourism sites that I was previously unaware of (VMC4) • Instantaneity - This campaigns drew a lot of attention and generated a lot of buzz on social media (VMC5) • Instantaneity - This campaigns employs frequently discussed public content (music, visual effects, etc.) to make tourist locations viral (VMC6).
2	<p>Destination Brand Quality (DBQ) (Dedeoğlu et al., 2020; Gartner & Ruzzier, 2011)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conformity - This viral content makes me believe that this tourist destination provides a quality experience (DBQ1) • Services and Facilities - This tourist destination's amenities and facilities are effectively described in the viral content (DBQ2) • Trust - This viral material convinces me that this tourist spot is a good one to visit (DBQ3) • Conformity - This viral content depicts real-life experiences that correspond to my expectations of this tourist spot (DBQ4) • Testimonials and Reviews - This viral content persuaded me to choose this holiday destination based on the experiences of others (DBQ5).
3	<p>Destination Brand Value (DBV) (Dedeoğlu et al., 2020; Gartner & Ruzzier, 2011)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceptions Value of Experiences - This viral content effectively communicates the value of the experience I will have at this tourist attraction (DBV1) • Personal Preferences - This viral content matches my vacation style and ideals (DBV2) • Perceived Value - This viral material, in my opinion, presents this tourist spot as a "worth the money" choice to visit (DBV3) • Unique - This viral content provides information about unique experiences that may be difficult to find in other tourist destinations (DBV4) • Social Currency - This viral content piques my interest in sharing it with friends, family, and social media followers (DBV5).
4	<p>Travel Decisions (TD) (Dedeoğlu et al., 2020; Gartner & Ruzzier, 2011)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intention to visit - Because of the viral content I've seen, I'm more willing to recommend this tourist spot as a travel option (TD1) • Interest to Revisit - This viral content makes me want to visit this tourist location again in the future (TD2) • Trust in the Quality and Services - This viral content influenced my trust in the quality and services offered by this tourist destination (TD3) • Loyalty - I would recommend this tourist destination (TD4).

The Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Model (PLS SEM) was employed in this study, and the data was analyzed using Smart PLS 4.0.

4. Result

4.1. Detail Respondent

The respondent who met the criteria of purposive sampling in this research was present in the following table:

Table 2. Detail Respondent

No	Detail	Total	Percentage
1.	Gender	Male	94
		Female	106
2.	Age	18-24	72
		25-30	60
		31-35	38
		36-50	30
3.	Social Economic Status	Upper	82
		Middle	78
		Lower	40
4.	Occupation	Freelance	66
		Pemilik Usaha	58
		Full Time	47
		Pelajar	29
			14%

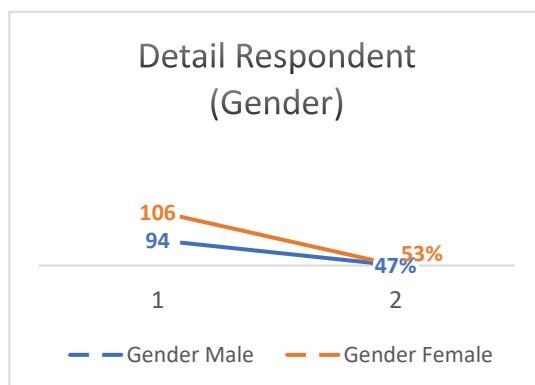


Fig.3: Detail Respondent (Gender)

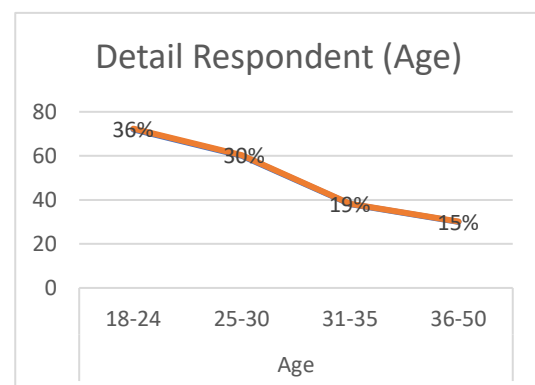


Fig.4: Detail Respondent (Age)

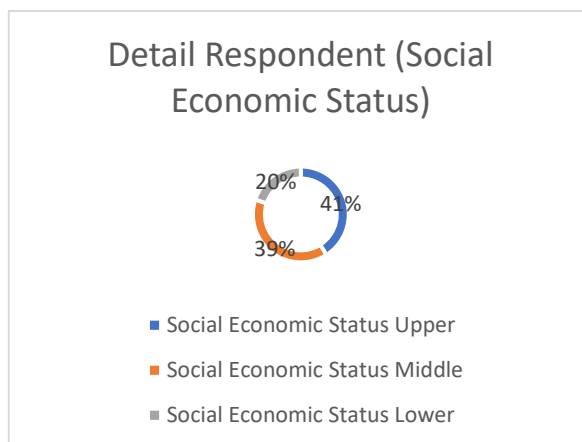


Fig.5: Detail Respondent (Socioeconomic Status)



Fig.6: Detail Respondent (Occupation)

The research was conducted in such a way that a virtually equal representation of female (53%) and male (47%) participants was achieved, according to the data in the table. Demographic data play a significant part in this questionnaire, almost winning the majority. Individuals successfully responded to the need of relying only on social media for tourism destination selection. They had also previously enjoyed a trip to a tourism destination in south Sulawesi, with a focus on an island.

4.2. Data Analysis

Validity and Reliability Result:

Table 3. Loading Factor

Variable	Indicator	Outer Loadings
Viral Marketing Campaigns	VMC1	0.517
	VMC2	0.820
	VMC3	0.853
	VMC4	0.835
	VMC5	0.840
	VMC6	0.782
Destination Brand Quality	DBQ1	0.858
	DBQ2	0.859
	DBQ3	0.904
	DBQ4	0.824
	DBQ5	0.871
Destination Brand Value	DBV1	0.841
	DBV2	0.847
	DBV3	0.822
	DBV4	0.248
	DBV5	0.861
Travel Decision	TD1	0.876
	TD2	0.893
	TD3	0.823
	TD4	0.884

Table 4. Reliability and Validity

Variable	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
DBQ	0.936	0.746
DBV	0.862	0.581
VMC	0.925	0.756
Travel Decisions	0.903	0.614

Based on the data shown in Table 3, almost all of the constructs that comprise the operational indicators of the research questionnaire's variables are valid and reliable. Therefore, in this study, no indicators are excluded because the average variance extracted (AVE) value for each variable is greater than 0.50.

Path Coefficients

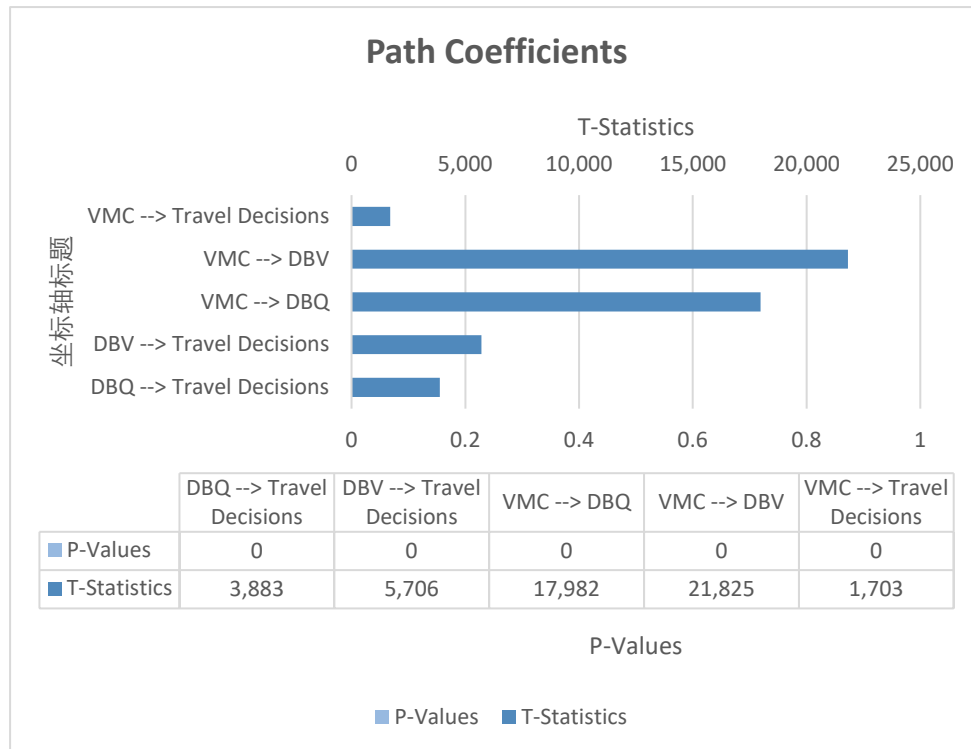


Fig.7: Path Coefficients

Table 5. Path Coefficients

Variable	T-Statistics	P-Values
DBQ → Travel Decisions	3.883	0.000
DBV → Travel Decisions	5.706	0.000
VMC → DBQ	17.982	0.000
VMC → DBV	21.825	0.000
VMC → Travel Decisions	1.703	0.089

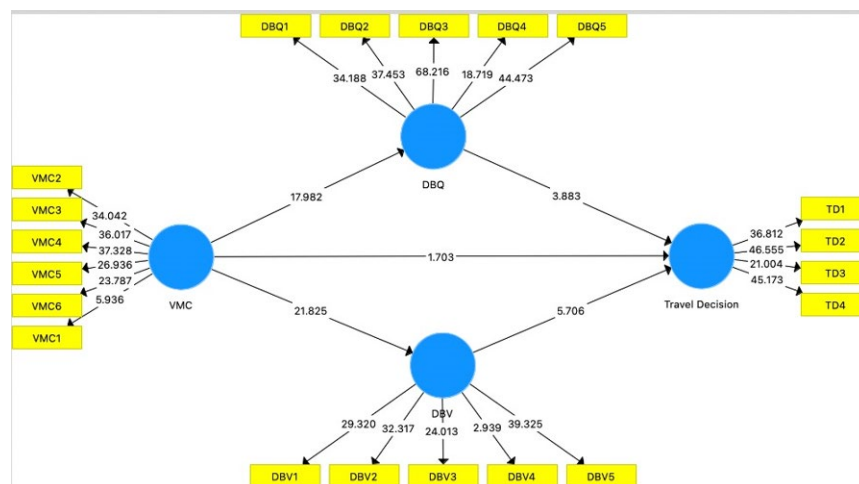


Fig.8: Conceptual Framework

Based on the findings shown in Table 5, the t-statistic value regarding the relationship among VMC,

DBQ, DBV, and travel decisions indicates the level of significance associated with this relationship. The p-value of 0.000 demonstrates a significant level of statistical significance for the observed relationship. This suggests that the probability of this association arising randomly is exceedingly improbable. The ongoing analysis reveals that the correlation between the variables VMC, DBQ, and DBV exhibits a substantial t-statistic value and a significantly low p-value. These findings imply a strong and statistically significant association between the variables under investigation. It also suggests that there is high statistical significance in the relationship between the variables VMC, DBQ, and DBV. The final t-statistic value of 1.703 suggests a significant association between the VMC and travel choices. Nevertheless, the p-value of 0.089, which is slightly above the conventional significance level of 0.05, implies that there may be some uncertainty regarding the strength of the relationship between VMC and travel decisions based on statistical analysis. The observed high p-value suggests that there is a potential for these results to have occurred due to random chance.

Table 6. Mediating Effect

Variable	T-Statistics	P-Values
VMC → DBQ → Travel	3.997	0.000
VMC → DBV → Travel	5.647	0.000

The analysis of tables 5 and 6 reveals that viral marketing campaigns exert a notable impact on travel choices by means of the mediating role played by the CBBE construct, that is, destination brand quality (DBQ) and destination brand value (DBV). Therefore, the study's hypotheses (H2, H3, H4, and H5) have been validated. However, it is important to note that according to the findings presented in Table 5, the T-statistics and P-value of the VMC effect on travel decisions failed to show statistical significance. As a result, it can be inferred that the decisions made cannot be directly attributed to the impact of the viral marketing campaigns (VMC). Therefore, the first hypothesis (H1) in this study has been shown to be rejected. This study presents a novel discovery wherein the variables of quality and value, which constitute the CBBE construct, are identified as fully mediating variables.

5. Discussion

Based on the data that has gone through the analysis process, it can be concluded that all the variables used in this study can affect travelers' decisions to travel, which are viral marketing campaigns, destination brand quality, and destination brand value.

Viral marketing campaigns emerge as the key factor that can influence travel decisions through the mediation of destination brand quality and value. The strong relationship between viral marketing campaigns (VMC) and destination brand quality (DBQ) is evident. These findings indicate that viral marketing campaigns have a significant impact on shaping the perception of the quality of a travel destination among potential tourists. This aligns with the concept that well-executed viral marketing campaigns can enhance the image and reputation of a destination. Travelers often rely on brand quality perceptions when making decisions about their travel destinations; this is in line with Amagsila et al., (2022) finding that travelers tend to rely on and trust information from actual consumer experiences, user-generated content websites, and travel reviews. Destination brand awareness also positively influences tourist perceptions of destination service quality and destination natural quality (Dedeoğlu et al., 2020). All that research shows that VMC can play a crucial role in influencing these perceptions.

This study also shows that vmc has the highest effect on destination brand value inline with Stojanovic et al. (2022) social media communication, which includes viral marketing campaigns, can strongly influence destination brand equity. These findings emphasize that viral marketing campaigns not only affect the perception of the quality of a destination but also significantly contribute to the overall brand value of that destination. Destination brand value involves various factors, including emotional appeal, uniqueness, and positive associations, which can be positively influenced by effective

VMC (Ashton, 2015; Kusumawati et al., 2023). Consequently, travelers are more likely to view the destination as valuable, which can have a significant impact on their travel decisions. Perceptions of quality and brand value are crucial factors in influencing travel decisions. Destination marketers should focus on efforts to strengthen their brand quality and value through effective marketing campaigns. Further research can explore how VMC can be designed and implemented more effectively to achieve optimal results.

The study's final finding is important because it shows that the relationship between viral marketing campaigns (VMC) and travel decisions indicates that VMC has a more complex influence through the mediation of destination brand quality (DBQ) and destination brand value (DBV). This research is significant because it uncovers deeper dynamics in the influence of viral marketing efforts on travel decisions, demonstrating that the impact of VMC is more visible when mediated by destination brand quality (DBQ) and destination brand value (DBV). In this context, VMC may not directly affect travel decisions but rather influences perceptions of the destination brand's quality and value. This suggests that travelers may pay more attention to the destination brand's image and value when deciding on their travel destination (Sigala, 2020). The important role of DBQ and DBV in understanding how the destination brand's image and value can shape travel decisions (Chi et al., 2020). This research indicates that strengthening the quality and brand value of the destination can be crucial factors in influencing travel decisions. The implications of this finding are that in designing destination marketing campaigns, the focus should be on how VMC can be used to strengthen DBQ and DBV. This may include strategies to better communicate the quality and brand value of the destination through viral campaigns. Furthermore, further research can identify specific elements that are important in mediating this relationship.

6. Conclusion

This study investigates the correlation between viral marketing campaigns, destination brand quality, destination brand value, and the decision-making process of travel, with a specific focus on the mediating role of Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) within the context of tourism. It aims to fill gaps in the existing literature by examining the influence of social media, particularly viral marketing efforts, on the construct of CBBE, contributing to the field of destination management and tourism organizations.

The findings reveal that in the context of viral tourism, the impact of Viral Marketing Campaigns (VMC) on Travel Decisions is not straightforward. Instead, it operates through a more intricate mechanism involving Destination Brand Quality (DBQ) and Destination Brand Value (DBV). This underscores the importance of destination marketers paying attention to the quality and value of the destination brand. Effective communication of these elements through viral marketing campaigns can positively impact travelers' decisions and perceptions.

These results offer valuable insights for tourism planning in emerging destinations like Tanakeke Island, suggesting that a comprehensive approach considering both viral marketing and the enhancement of brand quality and value can be instrumental in attracting tourists and improving the tourism industry. Destination marketers should strategically utilize viral marketing campaigns not only to create awareness but also to shape the destination's brand image and perceived value, contributing to more effective marketing strategies.

7. Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

There are certain limitations inherent in the current investigation. Firstly, the employment of self-reported data obtained from passengers may introduce response bias and raise difficulties regarding memory recall. Subsequent inquiries may explore further quantitative assessments to validate the self-reported results. Another constraint pertains to the chosen research methodology. The current investigation employed a quantitative research methodology. According to Boo et al. (2009), it is

recommended to conduct in-depth qualitative interviews in order to measure destination branding. Qualitative research has the potential to mitigate the occurrence of misperceptions among tourists. Moreover, it has been noted that the literature has numerous criticisms pertaining to the sample. (Bianchi et al., 2014) argue that the existing research on destination studies pertaining to consumer-based brand equity (CBBE) mostly focuses on customers residing in the destination's proximate target market. Furthermore, the contextual framework of the study is limited to a specific geographic region, potentially limiting its generalizability to other geographical areas. Further research efforts may encompass a broader range of locations to attain a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between viral marketing campaigns and individuals' decisions regarding travel. The primary focus of this study revolves around the advantageous attributes of viral marketing methods. It is imperative for future investigations to consider the potential negative consequences or limitations associated with these activities, in order to provide a more thorough understanding of their impact on travel decision-making.

When considering the future, there exist interesting prospects for further research in this particular field. Further exploration into the distinct factors that mediate the correlation between viral marketing efforts and travel choices could yield a more intricate comprehension. Furthermore, the investigation into the design and implementation of viral marketing initiatives with the aim of attaining optimal outcomes continues to be a crucial subject of study. Moreover, it is recommended that next research endeavors should be focused on investigating the fluid characteristics of social media platforms and their influence on the domain of destination marketing. The present work provides a significant contribution to the current corpus of knowledge by delineating the constraints and prospective areas for further exploration. The research outcomes make significant contributions to destination marketing professionals, providing vital information on effectively influencing tourists' decision-making processes in an era marked by digitization and interconnection. Additionally, there is potential for doing further study to investigate potential enhancements in the design and implementation of visitor management systems (VMS) in order to attain optimal outcomes within the tourist sector.

Acknowledgment

The research team expresses gratitude to the Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education Indonesia for their generous financing support in the Higher Education Excellence Basic Research initiative for this study.

References

- Altinay, L., & Kozak, M. (2021). Revisiting destination competitiveness through chaos theory: The butterfly competitiveness model. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 49, 331–340. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2021.10.004>
- Anderson, W., & Sanga, J. J. (2019). Academia–Industry Partnerships for Hospitality and Tourism Education in Tanzania. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10963758.2018.1480959>
- Arasli, H., Abdullahi, M., & Gunay, T. (2021). Social Media as a Destination Marketing Tool for a Sustainable Heritage Festival in Nigeria: A Moderated Mediation Study. *Sustainability*, 13(11), 6191. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13116191>
- Azmi, E., Che Rose, R. A., Awang, A., & Abas, A. (2023). Innovative and Competitive: A Systematic Literature Review on New Tourism Destinations and Products for Tourism Supply. *Sustainability*, 15(2), 1187. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15021187>

- Bassols, N., & Leicht, T. (2021). Place marketing, evolutionary theories, and the management of multifaceted destinations: Cartagena, Colombia, as a study case. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 21(2), 169–182. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1467358420966044>
- Baum, T., & Hai, N. T. T. (2020). Hospitality, tourism, human rights, and the impact of COVID-19. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-03-2020-0242>
- Bianchi, C., Pike, S., & Lings, I. (2014). Investigating attitudes towards three South American destinations in an emerging long haul market using a model of consumer-based brand equity (CBBE). *Tourism Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2013.11.014>
- Boo, S., Busser, J., & Baloglu, S. (2009). A model of customer-based brand equity and its application to multiple destinations. *Tourism Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2008.06.003>
- Buhalis, D. (2000). Marketing the competitive destination of the future. *Tourism Management*, 21(1), 97–116. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177\(99\)00095-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177(99)00095-3)
- Cheung, M. L., Ting, H., Cheah, J. H., & Sharipudin, M. N. S. (2021). Examining the role of social media-based destination brand community in evoking tourists' emotions and intention to co-create and visit. *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 30(1), 28–43. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-09-2019-2554>
- CNN Indonesia. (2020). *Sandiaga Uno Ungkap Strategi Genjot Pariwisata 2021*.
- De Brauwier, M., Harvey, E. S., McIlwain, J. L., Hobbs, J.-P. A., Jompa, J., & Burton, M. (2017). The economic contribution of the muck dive industry to tourism in Southeast Asia. *Marine Policy*, 83, 92–99. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2017.05.033>
- Dedeoğlu, B. B., van Niekerk, M., Küçükergin, K. G., De Martino, M., & Okumuş, F. (2020). Effect of social media sharing on destination brand awareness and destination quality. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 26(1), 33–56. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1356766719858644>
- Dedeoğlu, B. B., Van Niekerk, M., Weinland, J., & Celuch, K. (2019). Re-conceptualizing customer-based destination brand equity. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 11, 211–230. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2018.04.003>
- Erwin, E., Suade, Y. K. M., & Alam, N. (2023). *Social Media Micro-enterprise: Utilizing Social Media Influencers, Marketing Contents and Viral Marketing Campaigns to Increase Customer Engagement* (pp. 578–593). https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-064-0_58
- Fjellidal, I. K., Kralj, A., & Moyle, B. (2022). Profanity in viral tourism marketing: A conceptual model of destination image reinforcement. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 28(1), 52–63. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13567667211020497>
- Foo, L. P., Chin, M. Y., Tan, K. L., & Phuah, K. T. (2020). The impact of COVID-19 on tourism industry in Malaysia. *Current Issues in Tourism*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2020.1777951>
- Gartner, W. C., & Ruzzier, M. K. (2011). Tourism Destination Brand Equity Dimensions. *Journal of Travel Research*, 50(5), 471–481. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287510379157>
- Goffi, G., Cucculelli, M., & Masiero, L. (2019). Fostering tourism destination competitiveness in developing countries: The role of sustainability. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 209, 101–115. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2018.10.208>
- Gössling, S., Scott, D., & Hall, C. M. (2020). Pandemics, tourism and global change: a rapid assessment of COVID-19. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2020.1758708>

- Hardy, A., Birenboim, A., & Wells, M. (2020). Using geoinformatics to assess tourist dispersal at the state level. *Annals of Tourism Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2020.102903>
- Harrigan, P., Roy, S. K., & Chen, T. (2020). Do value cocreation and engagement drive brand evangelism? *Marketing Intelligence and Planning*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/MIP-10-2019-0492>
- Hoque, A., Shikha, F. A., Hasanat, M. W., Arif, I., & Abu Bakar Abdul Hamid. (2020). The Effect of Coronavirus (COVID-19) in the Tourism Industry in. *Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*.
- Huang, T.-L. (2021). Restorative experiences and online tourists' willingness to pay a price premium in an augmented reality environment. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 58, 102256. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2020.102256>
- Huijbens, E. H., & Jóhannesson, G. T. (2020). Urban tourism. In *Handbook of Urban Mobilities*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351058759-32>
- Jiang, H., Tan, H., Liu, Y., Wan, F., & Gursoy, D. (2020). The impact of power on destination advertising effectiveness: The moderating role of arousal in advertising. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 83, 102926. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2020.102926>
- Kim, S. (Sam), Choe, J. Y. (Jacey), & Petrick, J. F. (2018). The effect of celebrity on brand awareness, perceived quality, brand image, brand loyalty, and destination attachment to a literary festival. *Journal of Destination Marketing and Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2018.03.006>
- Lim, Y., Chung, Y., & Weaver, P. A. (2012). The impact of social media on destination branding: Consumer-generated videos versus destination marketer-generated videos. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1356766712449366>
- McClure, C., & Seock, Y.-K. (2020). The role of involvement: Investigating the effect of brand's social media pages on consumer purchase intention. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 53, 101975. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2019.101975>
- Morgan, N., Hastings, E., & Pritchard, A. (2012). Developing a new DMO marketing evaluation framework: The case of visit wales. In *Journal of Vacation Marketing*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1356766711432225>
- Murphy, P., Pritchard, M. P., & Smith, B. (2000). The destination product and its impact on traveller perceptions. *Tourism Management*, 21(1), 43–52. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177\(99\)00080-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177(99)00080-1)
- Pike, S. (2020). Destination marketing: Essentials. In *Destination Marketing: Essentials*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003032205>
- Pike, S., Kotsi, F., Mathmann, F., & Wang, D. (2021). Making the right stopover destination choice: The effect of assessment orientation on attitudinal stopover destination loyalty. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 47, 462–467. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2021.04.008>
- Puriwat, W., & Tripopsakul, S. (2021). The Role of Viral Marketing in Social Media on Brand Recognition and Preference. *Emerging Science Journal*, 5(6), 855–867. <https://doi.org/10.28991/esj-2021-01315>
- Reisinger, Y., & Crofts, J. C. (2022). An empirical analysis of young adult Kuwaiti nationals' intention to travel to non-Muslim countries. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, 20(1–2), 241–272. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14766825.2021.1883635>
- Robinson, P., Lück, M., & Smith, S. (2020). An introduction to tourism. *Tourism*, 3–31. <https://doi.org/10.1079/9781789241488.0003>

- Ruiz-Real, J. L., Uribe-Toril, J., & Gázquez-Abad, J. C. (2020). Destination branding: Opportunities and new challenges. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 17, 100453. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2020.100453>
- Singh, N., Lehnert, K., & Bostick, K. (2012). Global Social Media Usage: Insights Into Reaching Consumers Worldwide. *Thunderbird International Business Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tie.21493>
- Sorokina, E., Wang, Y., Fyall, A., Lugosi, P., Torres, E., & Jung, T. (2022). Constructing a smart destination framework: A destination marketing organization perspective. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 23, 100688. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2021.100688>
- Sürücü, Ö., Öztürk, Y., Okumus, F., & Bilgihan, A. (2019). Brand awareness, image, physical quality and employee behavior as building blocks of customer-based brand equity: Consequences in the hotel context. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 40, 114–124. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2019.07.002>
- Susanti, I., & Firman Kurniawan, S. (2020). Viral Marketing in Tourism: A Creative Tool to Promote Rest Area as a Tourist Destination (Case Study on Banjaratma Rest Area Km 260B). *Proceedings of the 2nd Jogjakarta Communication Conference (JCC 2020)*. <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.200818.037>
- Travar, I., Todorović, N., Pavlović, S., & Parra-López, E. (2022). Are Image and Quality of Tourist Services Strategic Determinants of Satisfaction? Millennials' Perspective in Emerging Destinations. *Administrative Sciences*, 12(3), 88. <https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci12030088>
- UNCTAD. (2013). Sustainable tourism: Contribution to economic growth and sustainable development. *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*.
- Yang, J., Zhang, D., Liu, X., Hua, C., & Li, Z. (2022). Destination endorsers raising on short-form travel videos: Self-image construction and endorsement effect measurement. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 52, 101–112. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2022.06.003>
- Zhang, T., & Huang, X. (2022). Viral marketing: influencer marketing pivots in tourism – a case study of meme influencer instigated travel interest surge. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 25(4), 508–515. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2021.1910214>
- Zyrianov, A. I., & Semiglazova, V. A. (2021). Rural Tourism: From Geographical Constructs to Models of Development. *Geography and Natural Resources*, 42(1), 24–31. <https://doi.org/10.1134/S1875372821010145>