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Antecedents of smart tourism destination perceived attractiveness and behavioral intention for digital natives

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ABSTRACT

In order to achieve high levels of satisfaction from the digital native generation, tourism destinations must adapt to how they interact and present content that matches their technological preferences. This study aims to measure the perception of STD attractiveness for digital natives by exploring antecedent factors and their impact on intentional behavior. This study uses a quantitative approach. The data was collected by distributing online questionnaires with sample aged 18 to 41 years who have traveled by involving the process of transactions, bookings, and searching for information digitally in the last 1 year. 318 responses were collected that were considered adequate for further processing in the analysis process. Measurements were made using the SEM-PLS technique. The study has found that digital natives view of interactivity and digital security can influence their assessment of STD attractiveness. This study model partially explains some of the factors that make up STD values and their relationship to intentional behavior. This study can consider strategies for strengthening digital interaction and security in the context of STDs for DMOs to build the attractiveness of destinations to attract tourist visits. This study provides a more specialized perspective by focusing on assessing digital natives as the main opinion.

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Introduction

Tourism has become one of the largest industries in the world, and it has become part of industry 4.0, where information-communication technology plays an important role in changing the way tourism destinations interact with tourists (Bilotta et al., 2021; Novianti et al., 2022). This experience-based industry has contributed to transforming from an analog to a digital society, providing an important impetus for adopting travelers' technology (M. F. A. Prawira et al., 2022). The industry is giving color to changes in host-community behavior, providers, and travelers interacting within the digital ecosystem like never before. As a result, the digitalization of tourism has brought this industry into competition between service providers and destinations to present unique and creative digital technology (Kusdibyo et al., 2023).

Technological developments have provided endless opportunities for tourism destinations to improve service quality and operational efficiency and create a more engaging experience for visitors (Ferreira et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2016). The competitive landscape of destinations has shifted from destination tangible attractiveness competition to destination attractiveness that is intangible and closely related to digital norms. Competition on hygiene standards and physical and aesthetic uniqueness has been enhanced into competition

for marketing through social media, information quality, provision of transaction security, integration of ordering systems, digital interaction, and co-creation models of destination services. The concept of the visitor journey has now been empirically found to be more in digital reality (Shen et al., 2020; Suryana et al., 2023), Where smart tourism is the umbrella of this kind of research.

The trend of studies in smart tourism continued to emerge in the last decade, with the understanding of industrial concepts that combine artificial intelligence (A.I.), Internet of Things (IoT), augmented reality (A.R.), and virtual reality (V.R.) technologies to improve interactions between tourism destinations, tourists, and the surrounding environment (Kusdibyo et al., 2023; Shen et al., 2020; Susanto et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2016). Smart tourism provides a more personalized, easy, and interactive visiting experience for tourists (Susanto et al., 2020), especially for the segment of tourists with a lifestyle closely related to digital technology. There have been many studies that pay attention to smart tourism destinations, focusing on changing conventional traveler behavior towards smart travelers driven by the existence of smart business (Ballina, 2020; Kadam & Sen, 2023), DMO decision-making model (Femenia-Serra et al., 2019), on-site provision of smart technology (Shen et al., 2020), and visual design (Gretzel & Mendonça, 2019; N. G. Prawira et al., 2020). The study specifically postulates the effect of smart tourism destination (STD) marketing management on market behavior; however, there has been no deepening of STD marketing features on the perception of destination attractiveness in more specific market niches.

Considering the gap, this study argues that the development of STDs in the future will be more aimed at and enjoyed by millennials and Z generations, who are digital natives. Data from the Central Statistics Agency show that the number of millennials and Generation Z in 2020 is 53.27% of Indonesia's 270.2 million population (Antara, 2023). It is predicted that in the next 2 decades, these two generations will become tourist travelers who dominate visits to tourist destinations with a model of needs closely related to smartness. STD marketing patterns for digital natives need to pay attention to social media channels and presence, information quality, interactivity, and transaction security.

The digital native generation (Prensky Marc, 2001), also known as millennials and generation Z, is a group that grew up in the digitally connected age online. They have intense access to smart devices and the internet and interact with technology as a natural part of everyday life (Selwyn, 2009). This market segment has different assessment models for building the attractiveness construction of a tourist destination. In order to achieve high levels of satisfaction from this generation, tourism destinations must adapt to how they interact and present content that matches their technological preferences.

This study aims to measure the perception of STD attractiveness for digital natives by exploring antecedent factors and their impact on intentional behavior. By constructing digital attributes of STD in the form of marketing norms for digital destinations, social media presences, information quality, interactivity, and digital security associated with the perception of STD attractiveness, this study is expected to make theoretical and practical contributions to the STD strengthening model. The relationship construction was also extended to examine the impact of the actual visitation phase on intentional behavior. This study is presented in four parts, namely 1) introduction as presented in this section; 2) literature review by presenting a review of previous theories and research; 3) methods; and 4) results and conclusions.

Method

In order to achieve its goal, this study uses a quantitative approach (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) to measure the influence between variables of social media presence, information quality, interactivity, and digital security on perceived STD Attractiveness and its effect on the intention to visit. The construction of this model adopts Stimulus-Organism-Response (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974), social presence theory (Garrison et al., 2010), social richness theory (Daft & Lengel, 1986) dan destination attractiveness concept (Yangzhou Hu & Ritchie, 1993). In the context of perceived attractiveness of STD for digital native tourists, external stimulus represents external factors or stimulus provided by the Digital Transaction System (STD) to digital native tourists. Then the internal process shows how digital native tourists process and respond to the stimulus received. It involves subjective perception, interpretation and evaluation by the individual. Meanwhile, the behavioral response is a representation of how digital native tourists respond behaviorally to the stimulus and internal processes that occur (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974).

The data was collected by distributing online questionnaires in May-June 2023 in Indonesia with a sample frame of tourists aged 18 to 41 years who have traveled by involving the process of transactions, bookings, and/or searching for information digitally in the last 1 year. From these activities, 318 responses were collected that were considered adequate for further processing in the analysis process, as per opinion (J. Hair et al., 2017), where the sample size can be met at least 10 times the number of paths found in a variable. This

study model has 4 directional patches on the perceived STD attractiveness variable, so the amount of data collected has exceeded these provisions.

Measurements were made using the Structural Equation Model-Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS) technique (J. F. Hair et al., 2018), An analytical technique widely known for its ability to perform predictive measurements of a model with high variable complexity with a limited number of samples. The stages of analysis are divided into 2, namely the measurement model stage, which contains testing of loadings, validity, and reliability of each construct. While the second stage, the structural model, is the process of testing the predictive capabilities of the model and testing hypotheses.

Results and Discussions

Respondent Profile

Based on the data that has been processed, it is known that 60% of respondents involved in this study are women, and 40% are men. Of these, respondents aged 28-41 years were 33.2%, and the remaining 63.8% were aged <28 years. Regarding the educational background of respondents, as many as 76.8% stated that they had a Diploma / Bachelor's education, 11.6% were postgraduate, and 11.6% were postgraduate. Respondents stated that 65.2% had an income of <Rp. 5 million per month, 20.3% earned Rp. 5-10 million per month, 8.7% > 20 million, and 5.8% earned Rp. 10-20 million per month. The respondents' work background is 63.8% students; 21.7% professionals; 8.7% self-employed; 4.3% government employees, and 1.4% freelancers.

Measurement Model

A convergent and discriminant validity test was carried out to evaluate the measurement model, which refers to opinions (Chin & Newsted, 1998). In testing convergent validity, each construct's composite reliability and Cronbach'α values should be > 0.7. At the same time, the AVE value is required to be > 0.5 (Sarstedt et al., 2017). From this condition, it is known that the antecedent construct of perceived attractiveness of STD consisting of social media presence, information quality, interactivity, and digital security meets the requirements. Such is the case with perceived attractiveness STD and intention to visit. These data are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Reflective Measurement Model

Construct	Loadings	Cronbach α	CR	AVE
Social Media Presence (SMP)		0.945	0.958	0.820
1. I choose a destination that has content on social media	0.866			
2. I choose destinations based on their presence on several social media platforms	0.906			
3. I plan my itinerary based on destination content on social media	0.916 0.941			
4. I am interested in visiting destinations that are viral on social media	0.895			
5. I follow the destination's social media accounts and affiliates				
Information Quality (I.Q.)		0.897	0.924	0.708
1. I like the destination information content with good visual quality	0.797 0.855			
2. I like the complete destination information	0.863			
3. I chose a destination that has complete information	0.877			
4. I compared destination information from several digital sources	0.810			
5. I store informational content that is useful during actual visits to destinations				
Interactivity (INT)		0.924	0.952	0.868
1. I love interacting with destination content providers	0.915			
2. I provide feedback on the content presented by the destination content manager	0.955			
3. I choose a destination that actively interacts on social media	0.924			
Digital Security (DIS)		0.946	0.965	0.902
1. I chose a destination that has an official digital channel	0.965			
2. I choose a destination capable of providing personal data protection	0.956 0.927			
3. The quality of destination services is determined by the				

Construct	Loadings	Cronbach α	CR	AVE
protection of personal data				
Perceived Attractiveness (ATT)		0.837	0.902	0.755
1. Destinations with smart technology features are better able to reflect the value of the price I pay	0.871			
2. Destinations with smart technology features reflect my personality as a digital traveler.	0.904			
3. Destinations with smart technology features provide better value experiences.	0.830			
Visiting Intention (VIT)		0.891	0.932	0.822
1. I am planning to visit a destination with smart technology features	0.928 0.927			
2. I make destinations with smart technology features my top choice	0.863			
3. Destinations with smart technology are one of my favorite choices in my mind				

Source: research data, 2023

This study measures discriminant validity by evaluating the AVE ratio of each construct against all constructs included in the study. Conditions (Fornell, C., & Larcker, 1981) imply that each construct's AVE root must be higher than the correlation with other latent variables. In addition, cross-loading must show a higher item loading value than the cross-loading construct on other items (Chin & Newsted, 1998). The measurement model in this study has met the discriminant validity requirements, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Discriminant Validity

	ATT	DIS	IQ	INT	SMP	VIT
ATT	0.869					
DIS	0.818	0.950				
IQ	0.783	0.786	0.841			
INY	0.847	0.800	0.829	0.932		
SMP	0.793	0.828	0.841	0.824	0.905	
VIT	0.823	0.771	0.801	0.865	0.804	0.906

Source: research data, 2023

Structural Model

Based on the inner model analysis (J. Hair et al., 2017), To assess the strength of structural models, coefficients of determination (R^2), cross-validated redundancy (Q^2), as well as path coefficients are used. Sequentially, R^2 is valued substantially if it is valued at >0.75, moderate if it is worth >0.50; and weak if it is >0.25. Based on calculations, it is known that the R^2 value for the perceived STD attractiveness construct is 0.775 (strong), and the visiting intention construct is 0.676 (moderate). Furthermore, the Q^2 value in the STD attractiveness construct is 0.583, and the visiting intention construct is 0.552. This shows that the phenomenon of STD attractiveness in this study can be explained by 58.3% by the constructs of social media presence, information quality, interactivity, and digital security; While the combination of all constructs can explain the phenomenon of visiting intention by 55.2%. Furthermore, from testing the path coefficient value, it is known that there is a weak type of influence (>0.02), namely on information quality (0.092) on STD perceived attractiveness and the influence of social media presence on STD perceived attractiveness (0.081). The moderate effect (>0.15) is known to be found in the influence of digital security on STD perceived attractiveness (0.320). Strong influence (>0.35) is known to be found in the effect of interactivity on STD perceived attractiveness (0.449) and the effect of STD perceived attractiveness on visiting intention (0.832).

In structural model testing, an approach to measuring the influence of latent variables on other latent variables has been offered in research hypotheses. The measurement results show that social media presence (β=0.081, t=1.578, p=0.114) and information quality *(*β=0.092, t=1.607, p=0.109) were found to have no significant effect on STD perceived attractiveness. This means that H1 and H2 are rejected. At the same time, digital security (β=*0.320, t=6.874, p=0.000)* and interactivity (*β=0.449, t=8.509, p=0.000*) were found to have a significant effect on STD perceived attractiveness, so that H3 and H4 were declared acceptable. Similarly, H5

was declared accepted after the effect of STD perceived attractiveness (*β=0.823, t=41.448, p=0.000*) was found to have a significant effect on visiting intention. The calculation of this hypothesis test is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. The Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hipotesis	*β*	t-value	*p*	Decision
H1: Social media presence → Perceived STD Attractiveness	*0.081*	1.585	0.114	Rejected
H2: Information Quality -> Attractiveness	*0.092*	1.607	0.109	Rejected
H3: Interactivity -> Attractiveness	*0.449*	8.509	0.000	Accepted
H4: Digital Security -> Attractiveness	*0.320*	6.874	0.000	Accepted
H5: Attractiveness -> Visiting Intention	*0.823*	41.448	0.000	Accepted

*Notes: *Significance at (ρ=0.05); **Significance at (ρ=0.01).*
Source: research data, 2023

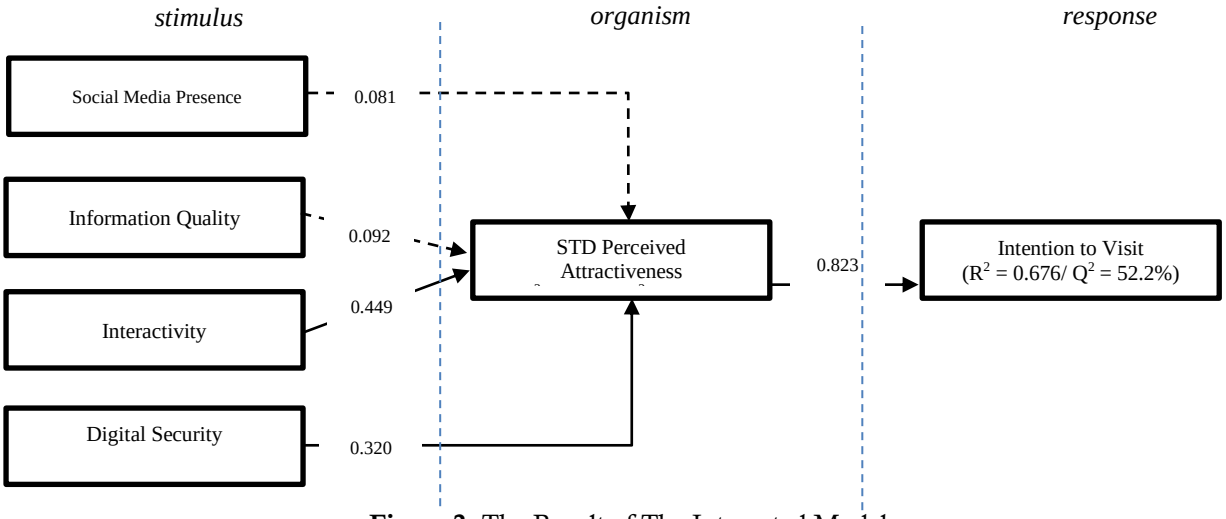

Figure 2. The Result of The Integrated Model

These studies have confirmed the stimulus-organism-response model (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974) in the context of STD antecedents, perceived attractiveness in the form of social media presence, information quality, and interactivity digital security can influence the response in the form of intentional visits. By using the perspective of digital native travelers, this study found that social media presence and information quality did not have a significant effect on STD perceived attractiveness. This can be interpreted that digital native, even though they are native citizens of the internet, in terms of assessment of smart tourist destinations, do not consider the existence of destinations on social media. Similarly, regarding information quality, this segment has not yet made this factor the main assessment of the attractiveness of STDs.

There are several possible reasons why social media presence does not have a significant influence on the perceived attractiveness of STDs, such as the focus of digital native travelers being scattered due to the abundance of information on social media, making STDs less prominent. In addition, the quality of the content presented may not be in accordance with the tastes of digital native tourists, resulting in a lack of user interest. Changes in digital native consumer behavior or shifts in consumption trends may lead to changes in the factors that influence perceived attractiveness. The quality of information has no effect on perceived attractiveness, it needs to be reviewed whether the information is clear, easy to understand, and relevant to user needs and delivered in accordance with the communication styles and preferences of digital native users. Information security and user privacy may be more dominant factors in shaping perceived attractiveness than just information quality.

Interestingly, the study supports the findings (Matikiti-Manyevere et al., 2020), where stimulus interactivity becomes important in building the perception of STD attractiveness. Young travelers are eager to interact with smart destination managers in their trip-planning process. If connected with the rejected hypothesis about social media presence, it can be assumed that interactions made by young travelers can be carried out on a wider platform than social media, namely web-based or conversational applications. This, in different contexts, supports the findings (Upadhyay, 2020), where the interaction of tourists with internal parties of

tourist destinations can build positive assessments and influence their visit experience. Digital security is an antecedent factor that influences STD perceived attractiveness. This provides an understanding that for digital natives, security precautions for personal data, finance, and privacy are their main concerns in assessing STDs. As per a study (Ellison & Venter, 2016), Internet users have high demands on the belief that their counterpart in the digital ecosystem has the ability and capacity to prevent the risk of data breaches. Similarly, in the context of the relationship between STD and its tourists, the higher STD's efforts and investment in building digital security, the higher the perception of attractiveness towards STD.

This study also found that STD-perceived attractiveness can encourage intentional behavior in the form of interest in visiting destinations in the future as the study (Ćulić et al., 2021; Thio et al., 2022). This study confirms that an organization's success in building a positive perception will lead to a linear response in the form of a call to action and the choice of products and services. Future research is expected to follow up this research by combining tangible STD features and intangible STD attributes in building attractiveness. It can also be expanded into a study of interaction models or DMO efforts in building STD attributes in the digital ecosystem.

Conclusions

Smart tourism destinations have become an issue of future tourism development, so the study seeks to align studies in this setting with the behavior of its key market segments. The study has found that digital natives view of interactivity and digital security can influence their assessment of STD attractiveness. This study model partially explains some of the factors that make up STD values and their relationship to intentional behavior. Theoretically, this study can consider strategies for strengthening digital interaction and security in the context of STDs for DMOs to build the attractiveness of destinations to attract tourist visits. This study provides a more specialized perspective by focusing on assessing digital natives as the main opinion. The limitation of this study is that it has not involved the physical aspects of STD in the measurement model, so it appears that the model built has not been able to explain the phenomenon optimally. The research agenda to follow up this research can be expanded by combining tangible STD features and other intangible STD attributes in building attractiveness. Likewise, it can be expanded into a study of interaction models or DMO efforts in building STD attributes in the digital ecosystem.

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