

The Influence of Local Wisdom-Based Tourism on Increasing MSME Income Through Digital Marketing Mediation

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Abstract

Tourism based on local wisdom has great potential in encouraging regional economic growth, especially for MSMEs. However, there are still many MSMEs that face obstacles in increasing revenue due to limited market access, ineffective marketing strategies, and low adoption of digitalization. This study aims to analyze the influence of tourism based on local wisdom on MSME income by mediating marketing digitalization. Using quantitative methods with explanatory research design. Data was collected through questionnaires distributed to MSMEs in the Kajang Bulukumba tourist area. The analysis technique used is Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). The results of the study show that tourism based on local wisdom has a positive and insignificant effect on the income of MSMEs. Tourism variables based on local wisdom have a significant negative effect on marketing digitalization, as well as marketing digitalization has a significant negative effect on MSME income. This shows that the role of digitalization as a mediator is not optimal. These findings imply the need for local governments and stakeholders to strengthen the digital capacity of MSMEs through training, mentoring, and facilitation so that the potential of tourism based on local wisdom can be maximized in increasing MSME income .

Keywords: *Local wisdom-based tourism; MSME income; digital marketing.*

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INTRODUCTION

Local wisdom-based tourism is increasingly attracting both domestic and international tourists (Saputri & Junianto, 2022) . Cultural values, customs, culinary delights, and handicrafts are the main attractions of tourist destinations (Adinugraha, 2022; Dou et al., 2024; Zali et al., 2014) . However, many MSMEs in this sector still face obstacles in increasing revenue (Fafurida et al., 2024; Latif et al., 2023) . The main challenges include limited market access , lack of marketing strategies , and low adoption of digital technology (Garg et al., 2022; Murtagh et al., 2016) . In the digital era, the role of marketing digitalization supports MSME performance. (Denga & Rakshit, 2022; Zang et al., 2025) . Many MSMEs have not yet utilized social media, marketplaces, and websites for promotion and sales (Novieyanti et al., 2023) . In fact, marketing digitalization can increase product visibility, expand customer reach, and strengthen MSME competitiveness in the wider market (Gündüzyeli, 2025; Ramdan et al., 2022) .

Local wisdom-based tourism is increasingly becoming a focus of regional economic development because it strengthens cultural identity and improves welfare (Boripis et al., 2024; Faridha, 2022; Widyaningsih et al., 2024). The success of this sector is highly dependent on the role of MSMEs in increasing income. In addition, empowering community-owned MSMEs as attractions for tourists can actually significantly increase the income of MSME owners, as well as increase tourist interest in visits and length of stay (Fafurida et al., 2024; Widyaningsih et al., 2024). However, many MSMEs, such as snake fruit farmers in Tapanuli (Sutrisno Sutrisno, 2022) and MSMEs in Petanang Village (Yaqin et al., 2023), still face marketing constraints.

Despite recognizing the importance of branding, they struggle to build a strong brand identity and implement digital marketing (Amin et al., 2025). Traditional marketing still dominates (Yaqin et al., 2023), while the utilization of digital technologies, such as social media and e-commerce, is suboptimal. As a result, MSMEs struggle to reach a wider market and adapt to the digital era. Optimizing digital marketing is crucial for increasing the competitiveness and sustainability of MSMEs in the local wisdom-based tourism sector (Rusyaida, 2024).

Marketing digitalization is a key strategy for enhancing the competitiveness of MSMEs, particularly in the local wisdom-based tourism sector (Gonçalves et al., 2022; Jaelani et al., 2025). Through digital platforms, MSMEs can more effectively promote their products (Andriani et al., 2019; Dou et al., 2024), reach potential customers (Andriani et al., 2019; Satriadi et al., 2022; Sisay et al., 2025), and increase their revenue (Mitsa & Lyakh, 2023). However, there are not many studies that comprehensively examine the role of marketing digitalization as a mediating variable in the relationship between local wisdom-based tourism and increased MSME revenue.

Previous research has highlighted the role of digitalization in the development of MSMEs. Studies by (Fibrianti et al., 2023; Yu et al., 2025) show that marketing digitalization significantly influences MSME sales growth. Meanwhile, research by (Yu et al., 2025) found that culture-based tourism can drive local economic growth if supported by appropriate digital marketing strategies. However, digital literacy does not always significantly impact social welfare, even though business opportunities have a significant impact on community well-being.

Extensive research has been conducted on digitalization and MSME performance. For example, Anshari & Almunawar (2022) found that digitalization has a significant impact on MSME growth in the Industry 4.0 era, while Vuspitasari & Atlantika (2022) found that digitalization has a significant impact on MSME growth in the Industry 4.0 era. (2024) highlighted the role of local wisdom-based tourism in enhancing tourist appeal and regional economies. However, previous research has not extensively examined the role of digital marketing as a mediating variable in the relationship between local wisdom-based tourism and MSME income. Previous studies tended to discuss tourism and MSMEs separately or only highlighted the impact of digitalization on marketing.

This research offers novelty in two main aspects. In terms of conceptual integration, this study combines local wisdom-based tourism with digital marketing as a strategy to increase MSME revenue and positions digitalization as a mediating variable. From a methodological approach, this study uses quantitative and qualitative methods to understand the relationships between variables in depth. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is applied to analyze the complex relationship between local wisdom-based tourism, digital marketing, and MSME revenue. Validation of the results is carried out through a combination of primary data from MSME surveys and secondary data from government reports and academic publications.

The strength of this research lies in its holistic approach that integrates tourism, marketing digitalization, and increasing MSME revenue. Furthermore, this study is more

relevant to digital transformation, offering a new perspective by focusing on MSMEs as the primary target, and adopting an interdisciplinary approach that encompasses tourism, digital marketing, and public sector accounting.

This research is expected to provide academic contributions in the theory of local wisdom-based tourism and digital marketing as well as practical recommendations for MSMEs and the government in developing technology-based marketing strategies in the digital era .

METHODOLOGY

This research method uses a quantitative approach with a survey method using a questionnaire distributed to MSME actors in Tana Towa Kajang Village, Bulukumba Regency. This study uses the Structural Equation Modeling - Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) method because it is able to analyze complex relationships between latent variables. The research model is Independent variable (X): Local wisdom-based tourism, Mediating variable (Z): Digitalization of marketing, Dependent variable (Y): Increasing MSME income. Population is a term used to refer to a general group of projects or subjects that have certain qualities and characteristics that have been determined by researchers to be studied and analyzed before reaching conclusions (Sugiyono., 2017). According to Hardani et al. (2020), population is a collection of research objects consisting of humans, objects, animals, plants, symptoms, test scores, or events as data sources that have special characteristics in a study. The population in this study is all Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) operating in the local wisdom-based tourism sector in Tana Towa Kajang Village, Bulukumba Regency, South Sulawesi. The MSMEs in question include: Traditional handicraft businesses, such as weaving, weaving, and Kajang-style crafts; Local culinary businesses, which sell food and beverages based on traditional recipes; Tourism service providers, such as tour guides, homestays, and local transportation; and Local culture-based products, which utilize local wisdom values as the main attraction for tourists. This population was chosen because they are the main actors who play a role in supporting local wisdom-based tourism, as well as being directly impacted by marketing digitalization efforts to increase revenue. The sample is a representation of the number and characteristics of the population (Sugiyono., 2016). The determination of this number takes into account the general rules of SEM-PLS which recommend a minimum sample size of 5-10 times the number of indicators analyzed. The research instrument is a questionnaire with a Likert scale of 1-5 (strongly disagree to strongly agree). The questionnaire is designed based on the indicators of each research variable. This is based on the assumption that the population is normally distributed so that the sample used as respondents is 126 people.

The data analysis method used is a quantitative method. Quantitative methods are used to research specific populations or samples, with data collection using research instruments. Data analysis is quantitative in nature, with the aim of testing predetermined hypotheses. (Sugiyono, 2020) . Using the Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS) analysis method using a Likert scale, which is a scale used to measure the attitudes, opinions, and perceptions of an individual or group of people about social phenomena. The answers to each instrument item using a Likert scale have several levels from very positive to very negative, and for quantitative analysis purposes, these answers can be scored (Sugiyono, 2020). There are two sub-models in the Partial Least Square (PLS) test, namely the measurement model, commonly called the outer model, and the structural model, commonly called the inner model. (Hair Jr et al., 2021) .

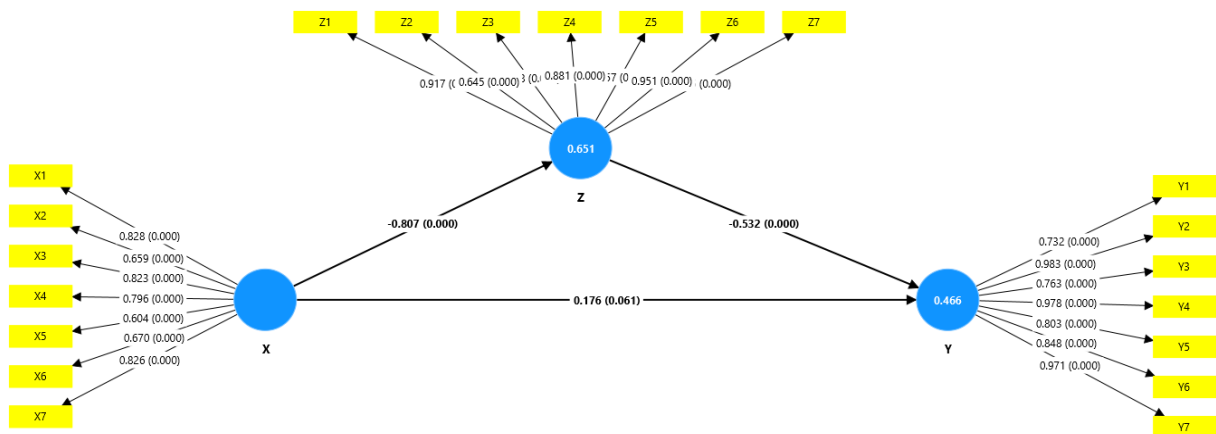
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Analysis of Variables

The research variables consist of 3 variables, namely one independent variable, Local Wisdom-Based Tourism (X), the Mediating Variable, Digital Marketing (Z), and the dependent variable, Income Increase (Y).

Evaluation of Measurement Model

The measurement model evaluation aims to ensure that the instruments used in this study are valid and reliable in measuring the variables studied. This evaluation includes validity and reliability tests .



The results of the measurement model evaluation in Figure 1 include the relationship between the indicators and the latent variables studied. Each indicator has a loading factor value indicating its level of contribution to the measured variable. These results are used to assess the construct's validity and reliability before testing the structural model .

Table 1 Validity of Research Variables

Variables	Indicator	Outer Loading	Information
Local wisdom-based tourism (X)	X1	0.826	Valid
	X2	0.826	Valid
	X3	0.826	Valid
	X4	0.826	Valid
	X5	0.826	Valid
	X6	0.826	Valid
	X7	0.826	Valid
Increase in MSME Income (Y)	Y1.1	0.732	Valid
	Y1.2	0.983	Valid
	Y1.3	0.763	Valid
	Y1.4	0.978	Valid
	Y1.5	0.803	Valid
	Y1.6	0.848	Valid
	Y1.7	0.971	Valid
Marketing Digitalization (Z)	Z1.1	0.917	Valid
	Z1.2	0.645	Valid
	Z1.3	0.628	Valid
	Z1.4	0.881	Valid
	Z1.5	0.957	Valid
	Z1.6	0.951	Valid
	Z1.7	0.935	Valid

Source: *Data management with SmartPLS, 2025*

Based on the results of the first stage of outer loading, it can be seen that the indicators for each variable in this study have an outer loading of more than 0.5 and are considered valid. This indicates that variable indicators with an outer loading value greater than 0.5 have a high or sufficient level of validation, thus meeting convergent validity.

Reliability

This method is used to assess *discriminant validity* using the *Average Variance Extracted* (AVE) value. Next, construct reliability is tested by measuring composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha. If the composite reliability value for a variable is >0.7 , then the variable is declared reliable. Furthermore, if the Cronbach's alpha value is more than >0.6 , the variable is reliable.

Table 2 Reliability of Research Variables

Construct		Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Composite Reliability (CR)	Cronbach's Alpha
Local wisdom-based tourism		0.561	0.875	0.867
Increased Income		0.764	0.999	0.950
Digitalization of Marketing		0.561	0.954	0.935

Source: *Data processed with SmartPLS, 2025*

The results of the reliability testing of local wisdom-based tourism variables, increased income and digital marketing show that all constructs meet reliability requirements .

Path Coefficients or Path Coefficients

Path coefficients are values that indicate the magnitude and direction of influence between latent variables in a structural model (inner model). This value reflects how strongly an exogenous (independent) variable influences the endogenous (dependent) variable. A positive path coefficient indicates a unidirectional relationship, meaning that if the value of the exogenous variable increases, the endogenous variable will also increase. Conversely, a negative path coefficient indicates a reverse relationship, where an increase in the exogenous variable will cause a decrease in the endogenous variable. To test the significance of the relationship between these variables, the bootstrapping method is used, a resampling technique used in SEM-PLS to address the problem of non-normally distributed data. Bootstrapping allows for inferential statistical calculations of path coefficient values by generating T-statistics and P-values. The T-statistic value is compared with the T-table value (usually at a significance level of 5% = 1.96). If the T-statistic > 1.96 , then the relationship between the variables is declared statistically significant. Furthermore, a P-value < 0.05 also indicates that the influence between the latent variables is significant, so the proposed hypothesis is accepted. Thus, the analysis of path coefficients through bootstrapping provides a basis for concluding whether the hypotheses formulated in the study are empirically proven or not. The explanation of the results of the path coefficients obtained in this study is based on Bootstrapping (T-Statistic & P-Value) from the results of data processing that can be described:

Table. 3 Tests Coefficient Track

Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistic (O/STDEV)	Mark P (P values)

X → Y	0.176	0.193	0.094	1,872	0.061
Z → Y	-0.532	-0.525	0.083	6,446	0,000
X → Z → Y	0.429	0.426	0.070	6,113	0,000

Source: SEM-PLS output, processed 2025

The results of the structural model analysis (inner model) using SmartPLS obtained path coefficients that indicate the relationship between research variables. Bootstrapping results were used to test the significance level of each path by considering the T-Statistic and P-Value. The path $X \rightarrow Y$ shows a coefficient value of 0.176 with a T-Statistic of 1.872 and a P-Value of 0.063 (> 0.05). This indicates that the influence of variable X on Y is positive but not significant. Thus, variable X cannot directly increase variable Y in this research model, but has a small positive effect, but is not significant. The results of the analysis show that local wisdom-based tourism (X) has a positive but not significant effect on increasing MSME income (Y). This means that although the development of tourism based on culture, tradition, and local wisdom can increase tourist attraction, its impact on increasing MSME turnover and profits does not occur directly. In other words, the potential of local wisdom as a new economic force cannot be fully translated into increased income if it is not accompanied by an appropriate marketing strategy.

The path $X \rightarrow Z$ produces a coefficient of -0.807 with a T-Statistic of 32.964 and a P-Value of 0.000 (< 0.01). These results indicate that variable X has a significant negative effect on Z. This means that the higher the value of X, the stronger and consistent the Z value tends to be. Local wisdom-based tourism (X) has a significant negative effect on Marketing Digitalization (Z). This finding indicates a gap in technological adaptation among MSMEs involved in local culture-based tourism. Many MSMEs still rely on traditional marketing strategies and have not yet utilized digital technology optimally. The strong business orientation towards traditional practices actually hinders the use of social media, marketplaces, and other digital platforms.

The $Z \rightarrow Y$ path has a coefficient of -0.532 with a T-Statistic of 6.446 and a P-Value of 0.000 (< 0.01). This finding confirms that Z has a significant negative effect on Y, so that an increase in Z actually has an impact on a significant decrease in the Y variable. $Z \rightarrow Y$ has a fairly strong and significant negative effect. The results of this analysis indicate that Marketing Digitalization (Z) has a significant negative effect on the Increase in MSME Income (Y). This finding is quite in contrast to the literature which generally states that digitalization expands market access and increases sales. The interpretation of this negative result is that MSMEs in local wisdom-based tourism areas have not been able to utilize digitalization effectively. In many cases, digitalization is limited to the use of social media for simple promotions, without a strong content strategy or professional digital marketing management. As a result, the costs and efforts spent on digitalization are not commensurate with sales results, so the impact on MSME income is actually negative. These results illustrate that the relationship between variables in the model is not entirely in line with the proposed hypothesis. Variable X plays a significant role in influencing Z with a significant negative direction, and Z subsequently also influences Y in a significant negative direction. Meanwhile, the direct influence of X on Y is not proven to be significant. This finding suggests the possibility of Z's role as a mediating variable in explaining the relationship between X and Y, although the direction of the influence tends to be negative.

Determinant Coefficient Test (R Square)

R Square (R^2) or coefficient of determination is a statistical measure that shows how much of the variation in the endogenous (dependent) variable can be explained by the exogenous (independent) variables in a model. The R^2 value is used to determine the contribution of the influence of independent variables simultaneously on the dependent

variable. In other words, R^2 shows the extent to which the independent variables in the model are able to explain the variation in the value of the dependent variable. The higher the R^2 value, the greater the model's ability to explain the relationship, so the structural model is said to be better. Conversely, a low R^2 value indicates that the independent variables only explain a small portion of the dependent variable, so there are other factors outside the model that may have an influence. In the context of SEM-PLS, the R^2 value is used to assess the predictive power of the structural model and is one of the main indicators in evaluating the inner model. The R-Square test is to determine how strong the effect or influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable is, the value of the coefficient of determination is shown in Table 5.10.

Table 4 R-Square Values

Dependent Variable	R-Square Value	R-Square Adjusted
Increase in Income (Y)	0.466	0.457
Marketing Digitalization (Z)	0.651	0.648

Source: Data processed with SmartPLS, 2025

The R^2 value of 0.651 for the Marketing Digitalization variable indicates that the combination of Local Wisdom-Based Tourism and Income Increase variables can explain approximately 65.1% of the variation in the use of digitalization in marketing. This digitalization is categorized as moderate, meaning the model has fairly good predictive power for Marketing Digitalization.

Meanwhile, the R^2 value of 0.466 for the Income Increase variable indicates that local wisdom-based tourism and marketing digitalization together explain 46.6% of the variation in MSME income increase. This value falls into the strong category, thus concluding that the model has excellent ability to explain MSME income increase.

The Influence of Local Wisdom-Based Tourism on Increasing MSME Income

The results of the study indicate that local wisdom-based tourism (X) has a direct but insignificant effect on increasing MSME revenue (Y). This finding indicates that although local wisdom can be a tourist attraction, its influence on increasing MSME revenue does not occur automatically without the support of other factors. This condition is in line with previous research which states that although local wisdom can increase tourist interest, its impact on MSME financial performance is still limited when the marketing strategies used are still traditional (Latif et al., 2023; Yaqin et al., 2023). Thus, the direct effect of local wisdom-based tourism on MSME revenue tends to be weak if it is not accompanied by an effective marketing strategy.

The Influence of Local Wisdom-Based Tourism on Marketing Digitalization

The analysis results show that local wisdom-based tourism (X) has a significant negative effect on marketing digitalization (Z). This indicates a gap in the adoption of digital technology among MSMEs operating in the local culture-based tourism sector. Limited digital literacy, limited access to technology training, and a business orientation still focused on traditional values are factors inhibiting the adoption of digitalization (Novieyanti et al., 2023; Ramdan et al., 2022). This finding strengthens the argument that although local wisdom has cultural appeal, MSMEs' attachment to traditional practices can actually slow down the digital transformation that should support their business development (Alfarizi et al., 2024). Indonesian MSMEs still face resistance to e-commerce adoption due to traditional preferences and low digital literacy. (Megawati et al., 2025).

The Impact of Marketing Digitalization on Increasing MSME Revenue

The analysis results show that the marketing digitalization variable (Z) has a significant negative effect on MSME revenue (Y). This contrasts with the majority of literature, which asserts that marketing digitalization can expand market access, improve promotion, and strengthen MSME competitiveness (Liu et al., 2025; Xu et al., 2025). One possible explanation for this finding is the suboptimal implementation of digitalization. Many MSMEs in local wisdom-based tourism areas still use digital media only for basic promotions without a targeted content strategy, thus failing to significantly increase revenue. In fact, in some cases, the costs incurred for digitalization (e.g., paid advertising or digital account management) are not commensurate with the sales results obtained. This finding is consistent with research (Yogan Daru Prabowo, Nurbaeti, 2023) who stated that digital literacy is not always directly proportional to increased social welfare if it is not balanced with the right business strategy.

Indirect Impact of Digital Marketing Mediation on Increasing MSME Income

The mediation effect analysis shows that Marketing Digitalization is unable to significantly mediate the influence of local wisdom-based tourism on increasing MSME income (P-Value > 0.05). This reinforces previous findings that local wisdom-based tourism has a weak role in driving behavior directly or indirectly, so that other approaches to increase income are strengthened. The results of this study show that the relationship between variables is not entirely in line with the initial hypothesis. Local wisdom-based tourism does have the potential to increase tourist attraction, but in the context of MSMEs in the Kajang area, this influence has not been able to directly increase income without optimizing marketing digitalization. Marketing digitalization, which is expected to be a mediator, actually plays a negative role on income, which indicates the need for more intensive policy interventions, training, and mentoring. These findings have important implications for local governments and stakeholders to not only encourage the promotion of local wisdom, but also strengthen the digital capacity of MSMEs so that the use of technology truly has a positive impact on increasing income.

Research Gaps

Most previous studies emphasize the positive effects of digitalization on MSMEs. However, this study's results show a significant negative impact, both on digitalization and on MSME revenue, of local wisdom-based tourism. This opens up new research opportunities to understand the factors inhibiting digitalization adoption, such as low digital literacy, limited infrastructure, and minimal local policy support. Therefore, this study fills this gap in the literature by emphasizing the importance of non-technical interventions (training, mentoring, and regulation) for digitalization to truly contribute positively.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results and discussion, it can be concluded that local wisdom-based tourism has a positive but insignificant effect on increasing MSME income. This indicates that although local wisdom is able to attract tourists, its impact on MSME income cannot be felt significantly without the support of other factors. Furthermore, local wisdom-based tourism has a significant negative effect on marketing digitalization. This means that MSME actors are attached to traditional practices and limited digital literacy hinders the use of modern marketing technology in the local culture-based tourism sector. Similarly, digital marketing has a significant negative impact on increasing MSME revenue. These results indicate that the adoption of digital technology by MSMEs in tourism areas has not been effective and tends to incur additional costs without optimally increasing sales. Digital marketing has not yet optimally played a mediating role between local wisdom-based tourism and increased MSME income. Therefore, strengthening digital capacity, providing marketing strategy assistance, and supporting government policies are key factors in ensuring that the potential of local wisdom truly supports MSME income growth.

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