

DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY FOR NATURE BASED SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ON KABAENA ISLAND: GOOGLE MAPS ANALYSIS APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

Kabaena Island in Southeast Sulawesi has biodiversity, coastal landscapes, mountains and mineral content as the strength of sustainable development goals number 15 (SDGs 15). Currently, mining activities have had a negative impact on local communities in the economic, social, environmental, sanitation and health sectors due to natural degradation. The key challenge for Kabaena Island is sustaining its tourism appeal amid the environmental threats from mining, making this research vital in utilizing digital platforms like Google Maps to promote eco-friendly tourism while safeguarding natural resources. This research aims to identify the tourism potential of Kabaena Island which can be promoted through digital strategies and design innovative digital marketing strategies to increase exposure of Kabaena Island tourism and support environmental sustainability. This research uses a qualitative descriptive analysis method to collect data using Google Maps analysis. A previous literature review shows that there is still minimal discussion regarding biodiversity and mineral content on Kabaena Island, which discusses the development of tourism destinations. Kabaena Island tourism development requires collaboration between government, academics and local communities to create sustainable development based on SDGs. The focus includes mining governance, creative economy, conservation and education, with digital marketing via Google Maps, destination branding and social media content. Collaboration with travel agents and business partners will support the local economy. Seminars or dissemination on sustainable development are important to strengthen governance and policies that support the community and preserve the environment.

Keywords: Kabaena Island; SDGs 15; biodiversity; digital marketing; google maps

INTRODUCTION

Ecosystems provide various needs for human life such as food, energy, carbon absorption, maintaining soil quality, maintaining water quality, controlling erosion and maintaining biodiversity (Singh, Kaunert, & Jermisittiparsert, 2024). To maintain biodiversity, efforts are needed that aim to preserve, restore and encourage conservation and sustainable use and support Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 15 (Gulseven & Ahmed, 2022). This ecosystem needs to be protected so that it can mitigate and adapt well to climate change.

Sustainable tourism has become a crucial issue in maintaining the balance between economic growth and environmental conservation. The incremental consumption has placed significant pressure on natural resources, leading to water and air pollution, climate change, and biodiversity loss (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018). Therefore, environmental conservation in the tourism sector is not just a responsibility but a necessity to ensure the sustainability of tourist destinations. Well-managed sustainable destinations can support the local economy while

preserving nature, thereby enhancing their appeal to tourists (Cavalcante, Coelho, & Bairrada, 2021). Sustainable tourism provide an alternative to environmentally economic activities by mitigating negative impacts, supporting conservation, and enhancing tourists' perceptions as well as local communities' social, economic, and cultural sustainability (Dantzler, Gering, Straka, & Yarrow, 2008). Moreover, growing awareness of sustainability in the tourism business has driven various studies to understand how conservation strategies can be effectively implemented.

Recognizing the significance of sustainability in tourism is crucial for shaping effective destination marketing strategies (Cavalcante et al., 2021). Sustainable tourism destinations have a competitive advantage in attracting environmentally conscious travelers, enhance a positive image, strengthen tourist commitment to conservation, and deepen the relationship between tourists and local communities. Several studies have linked sustainable tourism practices with destination marketing and branding strategies, demonstrating that nature conservation can positively impact tourist perceptions and the socio-economic sustainability of local communities (Komossa, Wartmann, Kienast, & Verburg, 2020).

The Kabaena Island, known as "The Island of the Land in the Clouds", has unique and beautiful natural landscape with rich in natural resources. In Google search in the past 1 year, the news on Kabaena Island is dominated by natural damage due to mining activities. The big challenge facing Kabaena Island is how to maintain its tourist attraction while facing the negative impacts of mining activities that threaten the ecosystem, biodiversity and quality of life of local communities. This research is crucial in identifying how digital platforms, particularly Google Maps, can be leveraged to improve the promotion of eco-friendly tourism practices and to balance tourism development with the protection of natural resources. This research aims to identify the tourism potential of Kabaena Island which can be promoted through digital strategies and design innovative digital marketing strategies focus on Google Maps optimization to increase exposure of Kabaena Island tourism and support environmental sustainability.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative descriptive analysis method for data collection. The qualitative method is implemented through four stages, namely research design, data collection, data analysis and report writing. Qualitative content analysis aims to describe certain phenomena systematically in verbal, visual and data objects. This content analysis is a versatile method for conducting qualitative systematic reviews (Phuangsuwan, Siripipatthanakul, Limna, & Pariwongkhuntorn, 2024).

There are 37 locations as tourist attractions based on searching on Google Maps in December 2024. Descriptive analysis is aimed at top 10 rating destinations data on the tourism potential of Kabaena Island *Google Maps* (Table 1). Application utilization *Google maps* can have an impact on the economy, tourism development and digital marketing (Delamontano, Dienaputra, & Rakhman, 2024). This has increased efficient transportation and logistics with the support of accurate mapping and real-time traffic density conditions. Local businesses get visit information, visitor reviews of experiences, business product services (Phuangsuwan et al., 2024).

Table 1. Kabaena Island Natural Tourism Potential on Google Maps

No	Tourism Potency	Link on <i>Google Maps</i>	Rating <i>Google Maps</i>	Number of photo
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1	Air Terjun Eemeroro	https://maps.app.goo.gl/3HZ2apYDYWaK6iji6	5.0	21
2	Landuli	https://maps.app.goo.gl/L9KZGsJwKjDcqwHYA	5.0	9
3	Desa Bungi-Bungi	https://maps.app.goo.gl/WkJqj9GxaXYaHBPq7	5.0	0
4	Pemandian Vatu Meleve Lakambula	https://maps.app.goo.gl/9inrMVLEcXAesfMt7	5.0	6
5	Fishing Bridge Baronang	https://maps.app.goo.gl/c5Ke1TY19wYEuLYE8	5.0	10
6	Pantai Bontu-bontu	https://maps.app.goo.gl/h8wcc1Ns3Gq45PFN6	5.0	2
7	Gerbang Desa Wisata Tangkeno	https://maps.app.goo.gl/3RDddkVtoDbuqqhB7	4.7	12
8	Goa Watuburi	https://maps.app.goo.gl/3BhmENYDauPakoZW6	4.6	57
9	Gunung Sambapolulu	https://maps.app.goo.gl/ofe8LKMcaENtWRe19	4.5	164
10	Tanjung Beach	https://maps.app.goo.gl/ZXBe55YKhYReKmtCA	4.4	157

Locations were selected based on their relevance to nature-based tourism on Kabaena Island. The selection criteria included popular tourist attractions, areas with significant ecological value, and locations frequently visited by travelers, as indicated by the number of reviews and user engagement on Google Maps.

Images were assessed based on their relevance to nature-based tourism, quality, and representation of the natural environment, cultural heritage, and tourism activities. Reviews were analyzed using sentiment analysis, focusing on keywords related to sustainability, visitor satisfaction, environmental concerns, and infrastructure quality. The frequency of mentions regarding conservation efforts, accessibility, and tourist experiences was also considered to gauge perceptions of sustainable tourism practices.

RESULT and DISCUSSION

Kabaena Island is located in Bombana Regency, Southeast Sulawesi, and is part of the Sulawesi Islands which are famous for their breathtaking nature. To reach Kabaena from Jakarta, the journey begins with a flight to Kendari, the capital of Southeast Sulawesi Province, which takes around 2.5 hours. From Kendari, the journey continues to Kasipute, the government center of Bombana Regency, by land which takes around 6-7 hours. After that, tourists must cross to Kabaena Island using a ferry or motorboat, with a travel time of around 2-3 hours, depending on weather conditions. This quite long journey gives its own impression, making Kabaena a destination that offers an authentic natural and cultural exploration experience.

Kabaena Island, known as "The Island of the Land in the Clouds" has unique natural and cultural beauty, such as mountains shrouded in mist, traditional rituals, and promising nature-based tourism potential. On the official website of the Southeast Sulawesi Tourism Service (Dinas Pariwisata Sulawesi Tenggara, 2022), here are four natural tourist attractions, namely Tangkeno Village, Batuawu Village, Teletubies Hill and Sagori Island. Sagori Island in the Kabaena Island area, Bombana Regency, offers a stunning natural panorama with its unique curved land facing south. Sagori Island has underwater beauty which is suitable for diving and snorkeling activities, attracting local and foreign tourists. Other activities such as sunbathing on the clean white sand or enjoying views of the clear water add to the island's appeal. The uniqueness and beauty of Sagori Island makes it one of the favourite destinations in the Kabaena Island area (Dinas Pariwisata Sulawesi Tenggara, 2023).

However, the existence of the nickel mining industry has posed a serious threat to environmental sustainability and the cultural identity of local communities. The nickel mining industry, although it has an economic impact in the form of jobs and increased regional income, has caused significant environmental damage on Kabaena Island. On Kabaena Island there is land degradation, decreased water quality and loss of biodiversity as a direct impact of mining activities. This impact not only threatens the sustainability of the natural ecosystem, but also reduces the natural tourist attraction which is one of the island's main advantages. 80 percent of Kabaena Island has quite a lot of nickel content and the nickel content is quite high (Ahmad, 2010).

Furthermore, nickel mining activities also cause social conflict in the community. Most local communities feel that they do not receive equal benefits from mining activities, while they have to bear the negative impacts, such as pollution and limited access to natural resources that were previously part of their daily lives. Many coastal communities in Lambale sub-district and Dongkala village have lost their livelihoods as seaweed farmers and fishermen due to water pollution originating from seepage of excavated land (Ahmad, 2010). This tension is exacerbated by the lack of effective regulations to ensure mining activities run sustainably. The phenomenon of sea water turning red or brown in Kabaena waters is another problem that requires serious attention. This phenomenon not only threatens the sustainability of seaweed cultivation but also has the potential to damage the attractiveness of marine tourism which is one of the local tourism magnets.

Researchers searched for references to previous research on Kabaena Island via Scopus with the keyword "Kabaena" in the last 10 years (2015-2024) and found 17 articles and 13 articles had citations (Table 1). The findings show discussions about biodiversity and mineral content.

Biodiversity

Sulawesi has an extensive biodiversity of endemic species, attracting the attention of evolutionary biologists for a long time (Ó Marcaigh et al., 2021). The southeastern peninsula of Sulawesi and the islands of Kabaena, Muna and Buton have a unique geological history and were connected to the mainland around 20,000 years ago and are part of the Wallacea biogeographic region. The mountainous landscape of Kabaena Island with uneven forest cover (Martin et al., 2019) has endemic bird species *Sulawesi Babbler* (Ó Marcaigh et al., 2021) and marsupial mammals such as *Bear Cuscus* (Martin et al., 2019). Biodiversity in the area reflects environmental aspects and is a component of educational tourism and a natural attraction (Bhuiyan, Islam, Siwar, & Ismail, 2010). Biodiversity alongside geological diversity is an important element for geotourism in understanding sustainable geotourism (Dowling, 2013). Geotourism activities involve communities, local businesses and community groups to create unique experiences for visitors, while building pride and skills in demonstrating local character (Winarno et al., 2023).

Mineral and Mining

In Indonesia, laterite nickel deposits are spread across various regions, with the greatest potential being on Sulawesi Island due to the presence of ultramafic rocks from the East Sulawesi Ophiolite (ESO) (Ruliansyah, Awadh, Azzaman, & Okto, 2024). Kabaena Island is part of the East Sulawesi Ophiolite belt which is dominated by Cretaceous to Middle Miocene ultramafic rocks and Kabaena peridotite has a coarse to fine texture and is often covered in Tertiary sediments, making it an area rich in geological history and endemic rocks (Idrus, Septiana, Zaccarini, Garuti, & Hasria, 2022). The nickel potential on Kabaena Island has attracted the attention of mining companies to carry out exploration and exploitation.

Table 2. Paper with the keyword “Kabaena” in Scopus 2015-2024

No	Title	Author	Number of Citation	Keywords	Year
1	Distribution and status of threatened and endemic marsupials on the offshore islands of south-east Sulawesi, Indonesia	Martin T.E.; et al	6	cuscus; Indonesia; marsupial; Phalangeridae; population	2019
2	Cryptic sexual dimorphism reveals differing selection pressures on continental islands	Ó Marcaigh F.; et al	4	babblers; density-dependent evolution; Indonesia; intersexual competition; Pellorneidae; size dimorphism; Sulawesi; Wallacea	2021
3	The Odonata of Sulawesi and adjacent islands. Part 8. Revision of the genus <i>Rhinocypha</i> Rambur, 1842 (Chlorocyphidae)	Van Toi J.; Günther A.	4	Buton; Kabaena; Malay archipelago; New Guinea; New species; New subspecies; Salayar; Sangihe Is.; Togian (Togean) Is.	2018
4	Identification of growth genes diversity of swamp buffalo using rflp in Kabaena Island, Bombana District, Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia	Nafiu L.O.; et al	3	GH/Mspl; GHRH/HaeIII; Growth genes	2020
5	Mineralogical, Textural and Chemical Characteristics of Ophiolitic Chromitite and Platinum Group Minerals from Kabaena Island (Indonesia): Their Petrogenetic Nature and Geodynamic Setting	Idrus A.; et al	3	chromitite; clinopyroxene; Indonesiaz; Kabaena Island; olivine; ophiolite; platinum group minerals	2022
6	Atoll reef geomorphology of Sagori Island, SE Sulawesi: A reconnaissance study	Solihuddin T.	3	Atoll; Geomorphology; Habitats; Reef; Sagori	2017

7	The Potential of Blue Carbon Stocks and Carbon Dioxide Absorption in Mangrove Forests to Support Low Carbon Emission Development in Southeast Sulawesi Province, Indonesia	Indriyani L.; et al	2	blue carbon stocks; carbon dioxide absorption; Kabaena; mangrove forests	2020
8	Origin of high-Cr podiform chromitites from Kabaena Island, Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia: constraints from mineralogy and geochemistry	Yao J.; et al	2	Chromite; High-Cr chromitites; PGM; Silicate inclusions; Sulawesi	2023
9	Study of local-based excellent potencyin bombana district	Iswandi R.M.; et al	2	Excellent potency; Local-based	2016
10	Hybrid renewable energy generation planning for isolated microgrid in indonesia with metaheuristic approach	Mansur; et al	1	BSG-Starcraft PSO algorithm; Microgrid; Renewable energy	2021
11	Identification of Lateritic Nickel Deposits Potential in the Kokoe Area, Kabaena Island, Central Buton Regency, Southeast Sulawesi Province, Indonesia	Hasria; Ruliansyah L.M.; et al	1	Exploration; Kabaena; Laterite; Nickel; Potential	2024
12	Identification Of Potential Mineral In A Mining Area Plan Using Geoelectrical Investigation	Ali M.I.; et al	1	geological structure; limonite layer; nickel laterite; resistivity meter; schlumberger method	2021
13	Analysis of the Potential for Acid Mine Drainage of the Nickel Mining Area in the Ultramafic Formation	Syaf H.; et al	0	Acid mine drainage; Kabaena Timur; Nickel mine	2021

Nature and culture-based tourism on Kabaena Island offers a great opportunity to support local economic sustainability without damaging the ecosystem. However, minimal promotion and a lack of digital marketing strategies make it difficult for this potential to become widely known. This situation creates an urgency to design a digital marketing strategy that not only promotes tourism potential, but also raises the narrative of sustainability and the struggle of local communities in facing the threat of mineral mining.

The majority of residents on Kabaena Island carry out agricultural, livestock and fishing activities. They cultivate cattle, goats, poultry and seaweed (Aldin, Rela, & Budiyanto, 2024). The community also has a source of livelihood for coconut sugar with creative economy products such as regular coconut sugar, super coconut sugar, dodol coconut sugar and sticky coconut sugar (Malasari, Mustakim, & Nurjannah, 2020). This coconut sugar business is quite promising for farmers' income and assistance from the government is needed to improve the quality of coconut sugar products by improving the quality of farmer education (Nur et al., 2024). Coconut sugar production activities and seaweed cultivation, which are the livelihoods of local communities, have both economic and cultural value. However, the contribution of this

activity to tourism has not been maximized. It is important to examine how these two activities can be utilized as part of ecotourism which can increase community income while attracting tourists. This includes community-based management that considers economic and ecological sustainability. Ecotourism is a form of tourist travel to enjoy the beauty of the environment without destroying the existing ecosystem and currently this type of natural ecotourism is increasingly in demand by the public (Muthmainnah -, Saleh, Sribianti, & Ilham, 2024).

Kabaena Island's natural tourism potential includes coastal tourism and mountain tourism if we look inside *google maps*, the information displayed is still minimal and there is minimal interesting image material. Coastal tourist spots are also still limited so they need support from the local government in terms of location points *google maps* and also photo material. From data obtained by researchers through processing Google Maps, it was found that the majority of destinations did not have photos from local governments or tourist attraction managers, including promotional materials. The majority of photos come from visitors to tourist attractions with varying quality and photo angles that do not represent the tourist attraction.

The development of natural tourism on Kabaena Island can be started by updating tourist locations on Google Maps, making it easier for tourists to find superior destinations. From the top 10 destination on table 2, 5 destinations have photo less than or equal to 10 photos. The number of reviews is very limited too, 35 reviews are added within last one year from total 100 reviews. There are 4 of 10 destination have more than 10 reviews. All of top 10 spots mentioned about breathtaking nature destination for both coastal and highland area with 2 reviews said about the natural degradation and need further preservation action.

In order to increase attractiveness, each location should be equipped with the best images and attractive promotional posters. This photo update needs to be submitted regularly as a form of communication and marketing for the development of tourist attractions. Tourists see this updated content as a guarantee that the tourist attraction is still active and continues to be developed. The local government or tourism operator can collaborate with local educational institutions, tourism activists and travel agents to updates the content on *google maps*.

The development of a creative economy-based home industry for palm sugar and seaweed cultivation on Kabaena Island can be carried out through the formation of cooperatives which act as simple supply chain aggregators. Branding of palm sugar products needs to be strengthened to create an attractive identity, accompanied by the opening of online shop services to expand market reach. Collaboration with large agents in strategic Sulawesi cities to expand product distribution. Digital marketing uses *google maps* and social media with educational and creative economy content can increase market awareness. These palm sugar processing locations and sales shops need to be displayed on *google maps* with informative and attractive branding. Cooperatives can also lead market expansion by participating in exhibitions and holding national seminars, involving academics and local government to support improving product quality and competitiveness.

Content *google maps* can be strengthened by creating educational and ecotourism tour packages in collaboration with regional travel agents or big cities in Sulawesi. Digital marketing strategies for tourist attractions and tour packages can be carried out through social media based on entertainment content to attract the attention of more visitors. Apart from that, video content showing the breathtaking nature of Kabaena Island is created and managed professionally through a consistent YouTube channel. This step aims to expand the reach of promotion and improve the image of regional tourism while increasing the participation of educational institutions in conducting research.

Digital marketing needs to encourage local communities and visitors to share their experiences on social media using special hashtags. User-Generated Content (UGC) can

expand the reach of promotions at low cost while increasing the trust of potential tourists. Digital interactive content takes the form of travel videos (vlogs), infographics or virtual tours that showcase the natural and cultural charm of Kabaena Island. Publish via platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok to reach millennials and international travellers.

When people realize the benefits of geotourism, they tend to take responsibility for the sustainability of the destination, while local stakeholders gain economic benefits that encourage the preservation of the value of tourism assets. Local community participation in managing natural resources and forests really needs to be increased. Injustice in the use of natural resources and forests can cause degradation and marginalization of local communities, so sustainable forest management is needed that involves conservation partnerships to empower local communities according to sustainability principles (Safitri et al., 2023). Regional development needs to be worked on carefully, comprehensively and sustainably so that economic aspects can be felt by the community to be prosperous, people who care about environmental conservation, people with a high level of education in good governance.

CONCLUSIONS

The Developing tourism potential on Kabaena Island requires local policies that balance community agriculture, environmental conservation and mining activities. Policies should put sustainable development (SDGs) forward in managing community-based economy programs including mining management. The collaboration with academics is essential to research the socio-cultural dynamics of society and strengthening the creative economy. By starting dialogue among the government, academics and local stakeholders, sustainable development can be aligned with Indonesia's SDGs, ensuring that economic growth support the society in order to prioritize environmental preservation.

Active participation from local communities is important in the sustainable development and tourism in Kabaena Island. Local communities should be involved in various sector including tourism management, creative economy initiatives, education, environmental conservation and marketing activities. Empowering the local community as tourism stakeholders will not only enhance their economic opportunities but also ensure that local wisdom, cultural and environmental values are preserved. Organizing seminars or public discussions on sustainable tourism can further strengthen collaboration between the government, academia, and the local community, fostering better governance and policy-making. Technical workshop are needed to improve the community capabilities in the sector of agriculture, tourism (tour guide, hospitality), product development and promotion.

Google maps optimization is becoming the initial strategies of digital marketing by enriching tourist attractions. This includes updating location data, adding high-quality images, and encouraging visitors to leave reviews. User-generated content (UGC) can generate content in various channel such as social media, travel vlogs, blog posts and reviews that can enhance Kabaena online presence. Collaborating with influencers or eco-tourism activist can further amplify reach and credibility. Building a strong digital identity for Kabaena Island is key to attracting visitors by showcasing its natural beauty, culture, and eco-tourism experiences. Engaging content on social media, like storytelling and videos, can boost awareness and interest. A solid digital presence also helps businesses connect with travel agents and customers, supporting the local economy. Maintaining that Kabaena Island is accurately represented on Google Maps can enhance the island's accessibility for potential tourists.

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