

## **Adapataion of Digital Marketing Activation After the COVID-19 Pandemic at Anantara Seminyak Bali Resort**

Hilda Kosasih<sup>1)</sup>, Gabriela Felicita Putri Kurniadi<sup>2)</sup>, Flavia Maharani Yunazar<sup>3)</sup>  
<sup>1,2,3)</sup>Institut Komunikasi dan Bisnis LSPR, Indonesia

\*Corresponding Author

Email: [22172370009@lspr.edu](mailto:22172370009@lspr.edu)

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### **Abstract**

*This study aims to analyze the digital marketing activation in the hotel industry in Bali as their adaptation to consumer behavior post-COVID-19 pandemic. This study was conducted by qualitative descriptive with a study case approach to know the digital marketing adaptation applied by Anantara Seminyak Bali Resort in dealing with digital consumers. Through this study, the researchers found that Anantara Seminyak Bali Resort has adapted digital marketing to the stages of digital consumer behavior after the COVID-19 pandemic.*

**Keywords :** *Social Media Marketing, Digital Marketing, Consumer Behavior, Hotel*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Pandemic COVID-19 has become one of the conditions that impact in daily activities. The impact of COVID-19 has resulted in diverse responses from individuals globally, also followed by various policies issued by the government. In March 2020, the Indonesian government officially announced the first case of COVID-19 in Indonesia (Nuraini, 2020). Since the announcement of the first confirmed case of COVID-19 in Indonesia on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020, the number of COVID-19 cases has continued increase until March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020, with total of 790 cases reported across various regions in Indonesia (Kementrian Kesehatan Republik Indonesia, 2020). The government implemented policies for handling the spread of COVID-19 through Government Regulation *PP Nomor 21 Tahun 2020* about Large-Scale Social Restrictions in the Context of Accelerating the Handling of COVID-19. This policy includes restrictions on community activities in infected areas, closure of schools and workplaces, limitations on religious activities, as well as restrictions on activities in public places and public facilities as stated in the regulation (Herdiana, 2020). Furthermore, these policies have had a significant impact on the economic activities of society, where many informal sectors have halted their operations, including the tourism sector.

The tourism sector is one of the most severely impacted sector due to COVID-19 (Abbas et al., 2021). Even though the tourism sector has an important role in economic activity and is directly related to customer satisfaction, but the tourism sector is the sector that is most vulnerable to being affected by any events that occur (Ma et al., 2020). The hospitality business is part of the tourism sector which has been directly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and also government policies regarding Large-Scale Social Restrictions. It is caused by citizens' fear of exposure to the virus and also the cessation of people's outdoor activities so as not to carry out non-essential activities. The decrease in citizen activities certainly affects to hotel revenue during the pandemic, which also happens to Anantara Seminyak Bali Resort. The decrease in room occupancy also significantly affects on hotel revenue. This is caused by the Large-Scale Social Restractions policy, which prohibits outdoor activities and intercity travel within specified timeframes. The decrease in hotel room occupancy rates can be observed when compared to the same month in the previous year, March 2019, before the existence of COVID-19.

Table 1. Hotee Room Occupany Data in Bali 2019

Hotel Rating	Hotel Room Occupancy based on Hotel Rating in Bali (%)										
	2019										
	Mar	Apr.	May	Jun	Jul	Ag.	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
Star 5	53.63	61.77	51.56	56.31	59.38	67.53	68.90	67.97	57.61	63.58	
Star 4	58.04	61.11	56.15	66.68	69.45	73.93	64.96	65.02	63.13	66.09	
Star 3	56.90	59.69	48.13	58.31	58.01	63.20	57.82	58.36	57.96	58.43	
Star 2	50.75	60.14	47.18	59.83	55.92	57.48	53.81	60.17	57.22	60.53	
Star 1	42.17	35.44	44.89	42.62	37.62	41.98	55.81	45.10	47.24	46.74	

Source BPS Bali 2019

Table 2. Hotee Room Occupany Data in Bali 2020

Hotel Rating	Hotel Room Occupancy based on Hotel Rating in Bali (%)										
	2020										
	Mar	Apr.	May	Jun	Jul	Ag.	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
Star 5	22.15	3.97	1.25	1.80	1.67	3.46	5.08	8.64	9.30	23.68	
Star 4	26.55	1.95	2.04	2.41	2.89	3.37	4.81	9.44	8.56	18.72	
Star 3	28.70	2.06	1.06	2.11	3.22	4.27	5.92	11.26	10.40	15.20	
Star 2	23.84	6.78	4.76	1.28	3.29	4.45	6.49	8.95	9.99	15.64	
Star 1	13.79	1.58	4.85	17.48	2.71	0.10	0.00	4.95	3.71	2.83	

Source BPS Bali 2020

Based on the data above, it can be seen that in March 2019 occupancy rate was 53.63%, meanwhile in March 2020 occupancy rate was 22.15%. It means that there was a 31.48% decrease in the occupancy rate of hotel rooms in Bali in the year before the occurrence of COVID-19 and at the time of the occurrence of COVID-19. This decline will continue until the end of 2020.

In this situation, with limited access and declining hotel revenue, Anantara Seminyak Bali Resort utilized other channels to maximize hotel occupancy during the pandemic by using digital marketing. Digital marketing is the way in marketing to customers during COVID-19. The utilization of digital marketing is one form of adaptation carried out by Anantara Seminyak Bali Resort to maintain communication with customers, loyal customers, and potential customers. Digital marketing can be defined as the way of businesses to introduce their brand to the public with the help of digital media (JR & Kritiyono, 2021). On the other side, the pandemic situation has also triggered changes in consumer behavior, particularly in terms of purchase intention, especially for non-essential products.

The changes in consumer behavior drives consumer to be more oriented towards digital activities rather than in-person activities. The research from Arrafi & Ghabban (2021), shows that consumer behavior is now oriented towards digital consumer behavior. This has occurred primarily after the COVID-19 pandemic, where people use digital media for everything, such as shopping online from home, and are highly active in using social media. Online shopping is growing rapidly worldwide due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as digital activities are highly relied upon during these times (Arrafi & Ghabban, 2021).

Digitalization has changed consumer behavior trends. Furthermore, social media plays a significant role in raising public awareness as people can search for information as a pre-purchase stage regarding the products they are looking for (Gujrati & Uygun, 2020). Moreover, hospitality services operating under strict restrictions and transitioning into the new normal era need to develop digital marketing strategies to reposition their brand within the community by offering safe activities in accordance with the current policies. The information needs to be effectively conveyed through the appropriate platforms, as all information on digital media is accessible to potential customers and can influence the consumers' decision journey (Zhou. 2022). Meanwhile, hotels can adapt strategies to be implemented based on customer interactions and build strong relationships with customers to provide a better understanding of the products they offer.

Previous research by Kakkar et al. (2020) shows that the pandemic has influenced consumer behavior and perceptions of the hotel industry. Significant factors that influenced consumer behavior include the impact on consumer financial conditions, changes in shopping patterns, reduced visits to public places due to lockdown measures, and the cancellation of travel plans due to government-imposed travel restrictions, all of which have an impact on consumer behavior toward the hotel industry. The findings also reveal that the majority of consumers are satisfied with hotel services such as mobile check-in and check-out, non-cash transactions, electronic signatures, keyless room entry, and new Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for room cleaning during the pandemic. In terms of that, it is known that consumers are satisfied with the implementation of digital technology in hotel service processes. This is proven by the research by Gursoy (2019), which explains that there are several factors that can influence consumer decision-making in online purchases. These factors can be determined by the influence of internet users, reviews or opinions, experiences shared by close relatives, and interactions on social media. Moreover, there is evidence that customer experience evolves over time as customer behavior is increasingly influenced by digital advertisements and the ease of making purchases in the digital environment. In this context, it becomes crucial to understand how this consumer behavior changes – both from the consumer’s perspective by considering factors related to privacy and data processing, and from the company’s perspective, which needs to adjust its digital strategies to capture and generate opportunities to retain customers online (Grewal & Roggeveen, 2020).

The previous research from Kakkar et al. (2020) and Gursoy (2019), have the same findings that focus on the impact of COVID-19 and its influence on hotel readiness to adapt to COVID-19 policy procedures. However, this research will describe the implementation of digital marketing as one of the adaptation strategies influenced by the changing consumer behavior toward becoming more digitally oriented. The utilization of digital marketing can be considered as a solution in facing the COVID-19 pandemic during the Large-Scale Social Restrictions, Community Activity Restrictions, and the new normal era in the process of hotel revenue recovery. This is due to government regulations and policies that do not allow hotel and resort businesses to conduct direct or offline marketing. Digital marketing can assist hotels in convincing guests to stay by providing assurance of cleanliness, comfort, and safety. The objective of this research is to understand the activities of digital marketing in response to changes in consumer behavior during the pandemic.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This research uses a descriptive qualitative method with a case study approach to determine Anantara Seminyak Bali Resort's digital marketing adaptations in dealing with digital consumer behavior. Data was gathered through interviews with key informants from Anantara Seminyak Bali Resort's marketing and sales staff. Data collection, data reduction, data display, data verification, and conclusion were all used in data analysis.

Data Collection was carried out by conducting interviews with predetermined informants and collecting supporting data from BPS regarding the number of occupancy of hotel rooms during the pandemic. Data reduction is done by reducing the data from the interviews and re-sorting the main explanations so that they focus on the themes and important things that are being sought so that the data is clearer in providing an overview. Data display is done by developing reduced data into a narrative form. The next process is verification and conclusion which is carried out by explaining the findings in the research that have been obtained on the data display and compared or compared with the theory and literature used to then conclude

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of interviews with Anantara Seminyak Bali Resort Bali, several analyzes were obtained regarding digital consumer behavior that influenced Anantara Seminyak Bali Resort's marketing activities, which are:

- a) Search of Information: At this stage, Anantara tries to provide relevant information through the website and also social media. During a pandemic like today, the average customer who comes to Anantara will inquire about check-in and check-out procedures, Room Services, and Spa products. To convince customers, through the website and Instagram social media, Anantara informs that it is already CHSE Certified which is the answer for carrying out services with due regard to cleanliness, health, safety, and environmental sustainability. Anantara uploads the CHSE Certificate on his Instagram account and keeps it in the highlight bar as proof of his commitment to providing services that pay attention to hygiene and health aspects.
- b) Alternative Evaluation: As another consideration for customers during a pandemic, Anantara always pays attention to reviews given by customers to online partners who work with Anantara such as Online Travel Agents. Anantara recognized that the shift in consumer behavior to become more digitally oriented required Anantara to pay particular attention to all online reviews provided in the Instagram comments column, as well as OTA reviews.
- c) Selection and Purchase: At this stage, Anantara always tries to communicate with customers openly. This communication and interaction are carried out online through the Anantara Seminyak Bali Resort Instagram account. Anantara, through social media admins, especially Instagram, provides a question box to summarize customer questions and then answer them one by one. Activities like this are one of the strategies that can influence customers to choose Anantara Seminyak Bali Resort as their first choice. Furthermore, Anantara recognizes that people's online behaviors in the modern era have compelled Anantara to develop to allow payments via contactless and cashless means. Customers can use this approach to make payments online through a variety of channels. In addition to assuring brand presence amid a pandemic, Anantara is collaborating with radio to carry out marketing and product positioning.
- d) Post Purchase: Anantara Hotel constantly asks customers for reviews when checking out of the hotel. In addition, Anantara also always tries to build good relationships with customers while maintaining interaction via Whatsapp, because the FO team keeps contact with loyal Anantara customers for recall so that customers make a revisit to stay at Anantara.

The digital marketing indicators that have been fulfilled by Anantara Seminyak Bali Resort are:

- a) Accessibility, Anantara Seminyak Bali Resort is committed to bringing its products closer to its clients by giving clear, detailed, and long-term product information. As a result, Anantara Group dedicated this information via its website, [www.anantara.com](http://www.anantara.com). According to the majority of Anantara's consumers, the website is also available in multiple languages. The languages that can be selected on the Anantara Seminyak Bali

Resort website are Thai, Mandarin, Japanese, Arabic, Dutch, Spanish, French, Russian, Italian, Korean, Portuguese, and Vietnamese. The website also provides various kinds of information regarding products owned by Anantara Seminyak Bali Resort such as private jets, dining, meeting rooms, wedding rooms, spa and wellness, and loyalty. At the bottom of the website, there is information about travel agents and call centers through various channels such as telephone, email, Facebook Messenger, Whatsapp, Line, and Telegram. In addition, the website contains several Anantara social media that can be visited as additional information, namely Facebook, Youtube, Instagram, and Twitter. Customers will easily find information about Anantara on the website, besides that, the website can be a link between social media and Anantara's customer service.

- b) Interactivity, Anantara Seminyak Bali Resort also improves connectivity, making it easier for clients to communicate with employees. This engagement is demonstrated via mutual input between Anantara and customers, as well as responses to all reviews received. Anantara Seminyak Bali Resort typically does this on social media, most frequently on Instagram. This is due to the increased intensity with which people use Instagram. This interactivity is shown through the comments given by customers on Ananta Resort Bali's Instagram posts and as a form of feedback, Anantara will reply to these comments. In addition, Anantara Seminyak Bali Resort also showed interactivity by re-uploading Insta Stories of customers who stayed or visited Anantara Seminyak Bali Resort on Anantara's Instagram social media.
- c) Entertainment, Anantara Seminyak Bali Resort achieves this signal by posting adverts on social media, particularly Instagram. The advertising is designed to pique the fans of the Anantara Seminyak Bali Resort Instagram social media account curiosity and interest. The presentation of informative and eye-catching advertisements is a form of entertainment created by Anantara. One example is Indonesia's Cuisine cooking activity at Anantara Resort Uluwatu Bali. This activity is part of a promotion as well as entertainment for customers who want to visit.
- d) Credibility, Anantara Seminyak Bali Resort is committed to maintaining customer trust as evidenced by the existence of a loyalty program for loyal customers. This is done as proof that all products, promotions, and services owned by Anantara Seminyak Bali Resort are not self-proclaimed but based on the experiences of other customers. In addition, to create credible information, Anantara Seminyak Bali Resort will upload it on the Press Release page via the Hotel Website and also the Hotel's social media.
- e) Irritation, customer service-related disruptions have never occurred in the past. This is part of Anantara Seminyak Bali Resort's dedication to providing a relaxing atmosphere and high-quality services. Furthermore, Anantara has never offered items through shady websites; all product booking processes can be completed on Anantara's official website or through Anantara-affiliated online and offline travel agents. This is done to reduce the impact of unanticipated activities.
- f) Informativeness, Anantara Seminyak Bali Resort always tries to provide information as accurately and clearly as possible to customers so as not to cause misunderstandings. One of the clear information regarding the ongoing promo along with the terms and conditions that apply. Anantara is obliged to explain the terms and conditions in every promo that

takes place to avoid complaints from customers after buying Anantara Seminyak Bali Resort products, such as rooms, services, and spas.

The indicators that are fulfilled are digital marketing indicators as stated (Iqbal, 2021). According to the research findings, Anantara Seminyak Bali Resort's digital marketing strategy focuses primarily on websites and social media marketing. The website owned by Anantara Resort is a digital page where all information about the company and also the products owned are loaded with complete and clear information (Alfi & Avia, 2021).

In addition, Social Media Marketing is part of the digital marketing channel used by Anantara by maximizing social media owned by Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn, this is done because social media can be used as a tool that can create and distribute content to provide clear information that reaches many groups (Grubor & Attorney, 2018).

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research and discussion, it can be concluded that the adaptation carried out by Anantara Seminyak Bali Resort is based on the stages of digital consumer behavior. The fulfillment of the stages of digital consumer behavior by Anantara Seminyak Bali Resort is based on digital marketing indicators, which were already implemented before the COVID-19 pandemic. The digital marketing channels used by Anantara Seminyak Bali Resort include the website and social media marketing through Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter

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