

Digital Economy and Tourism marketing: A Systematic Literature Review of Strategies, Challenges, and Opportunities

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Article History

Received on 12 May 2026

1st Revision on 13 June 2026

2nd Revision on 15 June 2026

3rd Revision on 17 June 2026

Accepted on 26 June 2026

Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to systematically examine the relationship between the digital economy and tourism marketing by identifying dominant digital strategies, implementation challenges, and emerging opportunities in tourism industries.

Research Methodology: This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach using the PRISMA protocol. Scientific articles published between 2021 and 2026 were collected from Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, Springer Nature Link, and ResearchGate. The review process included identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion stages using keywords related to digital economy, tourism marketing, digital marketing, and tourism technology.

Results: The findings indicate that the digital economy has fundamentally transformed tourism marketing from conventional promotion into integrated digital ecosystems characterized by AI-based personalization, smart tourism systems, digital storytelling, social media engagement, immersive tourism experiences, digital finance, and data-driven marketing strategies. The review also identified major challenges, including digital infrastructure gaps, low digital literacy, platform dependency, sustainability issues, and organizational capability limitations. Furthermore, the digital economy creates opportunities for sustainable tourism development, customer experience enhancement, tourism innovation, and global tourism market expansion.

Conclusions: Tourism marketing in the digital economy era requires integrated strategies combining technological innovation, organizational agility, digital literacy, sustainability orientation, and customer-centered experiences.

Limitations: This study relied only on secondary data from scientific literature and did not include empirical validation through primary data collection.

Contributions: This study contributes theoretically by providing a comprehensive conceptual mapping of digital economy implementation in tourism marketing and by offering insights for tourism practitioners, SMEs, destination managers, and policymakers.

Keywords: *Digital Economy, Digital Transformation, Systematic Literature Review, Tourism Marketing, Tourism Technology*

How to Cite: Iswati, S., Budiman, D., & Sakum, S. (2025). Digital Economy and Tourism marketing: A Systematic Literature Review of Strategies, Challenges, and Opportunities. *Jurnal Bisnis dan Pemasaran Digital (JBPD)*, 6(1), 1-18

1. Introduction

Digital transformation in the era of globalization has become increasingly evident over the last decade. This transformation encourages businesses to adopt the digital economy in order to respond to the increasingly dynamic business environment ([Rasyid et al., 2026](#)). Such transformation is marked by the accelerated development of the digital economy. The digital economy refers to an economic system driven by digital technologies, in which digital information becomes the primary factor of production ([Rifa'i & Arifin, 2025](#)). The emergence of the digital economy is no longer merely interpreted as economic transactions conducted digitally; rather, it has evolved into a structural force that transforms business models, consumer behavior, marketing mechanisms, and competitive patterns across various industries. In this context, the tourism industry has become one of the sectors most affected and simultaneously most benefited by the penetration of the digital economy. Digitalization in tourism is not a new phenomenon. Tourism was among the earliest sectors globally to implement digitalized business processes, such as pioneering online airline tickets and hotel booking systems. The sector also became one of the earliest adopters of new information and communication technologies, as well as two-sided or multi-sided digital platforms serving as marketplaces for tourism services and product ([Succurro, 2026](#)). The digitalization characteristics of the tourism industry are highly dependent on information, experiences, product visualization, consumer trust, and communication across space and time. Recent studies indicate that the development of the digital economy has significantly improved tourism development quality through information efficiency, service innovation, platform integration, and data-based optimization of tourist experiences ([Cheng, 2025](#)).

Tourism that is still operated conventionally relies heavily on physical promotions, traditional travel agents, and one-way communication from service providers to tourists. However, in the era of the digital economy, tourism marketing has undergone fundamental changes. Marketing has shifted from merely promotional activities to becoming an interactive, intelligent, and digitally experience-based marketing ecosystem. Several digital technologies facilitate tourism businesses in promoting tourism in Indonesia, including e-commerce technology, marketplace technology, social media technology, chat application technology, virtual reality technology, cloud technology, parallel computing technology, and geographic information systems ([Ichsan, Laratmase, Novedliani, Utami, & Mahmudin, 2024](#)). Tourism products are no longer marketed solely through brochures or mass media but through digital platforms such as online travel agencies (OTAs), social media, virtual tours, influencer content, artificial intelligence recommendation systems, mobile travel applications, and review communities that allow tourists to obtain real-time information, compare alternatives, read reviews, and conduct transactions instantly. Literature shows that digital tools such as social media marketing, AI-based personalization, web analytics, mobile responsiveness, and targeted digital content have become major drivers of modern tourism marketing effectiveness ([Gkikas & Theodoridis, 2025](#)).

Interactions established among individuals and groups through new media generate a more interactive pattern compared to traditional media ([Purba & Irwansyah, 2022](#)). Furthermore, the digital economy has shifted the tourism marketing paradigm, where tourists are no longer merely information recipients but active participants in value creation through reviews, user-generated content, social sharing, rating systems, digital storytelling, and community recommendations. A study confirmed that User Generated Content (UGC) and Destination Image significantly influence tourist Satisfaction and Revisit Intention. The findings demonstrated that both Emotional UGC and Factual UGC positively contribute to shaping the Destination Image of Borobudur Temple. A positive Destination Image formed by UGC and tourists' own experiences proved to be a strong predictor of tourist Satisfaction and Revisit Intention ([Willyanto & Tunjungsari, 2025](#)). Thus, the success of tourism marketing is no longer determined solely by how extensively destination managers or tourism businesses promote destinations, but also by how effectively digital platforms create engagement, trust, authenticity, and personalized tourist experiences. This phenomenon illustrates that the digital economy creates increasingly complex relationships among technology, tourism producers, digital platforms, and consumer behavior ([Dang & Nguyen, 2023](#)).

Nevertheless, the development of the digital economy in tourism marketing does not always progress linearly and without challenges. Several studies emphasize that behind the vast opportunities offered by digital technologies, there are serious challenges including digital infrastructure inequality, low

technological capabilities among tourism businesses, data fragmentation, inconsistent multi-platform strategies, dependence on third-party algorithms, and issues related to the trustworthiness of user-generated reviews ([Haris, Azis, Jauhara, & Pratama, 2025](#)). In many destinations, particularly developing regions, small and medium-sized tourism businesses still face difficulties in adopting AI marketing, data analytics, search engine optimization, immersive digital promotion, and customer automation due to financial resource limitations and insufficient digital competencies. Consequently, digital tourism marketing transformation often creates disparities between digitally mature destinations and destinations that still rely on traditional promotional methods ([Restrepo-Sarmiento, Andrea Gómez Torres, & Londoño-Cardozo, 2023](#)).

In addition to implementation challenges, another issue that emerges is the increasingly complex landscape of tourism marketing strategies in the digital era. Currently, there is no established conceptual consensus regarding which strategies are the most dominant, most effective, and most sustainable within the context of digital tourism marketing. The dominance of social media engagement and influencer ecosystems as primary strategies, while others highlight the role of AI-driven personalization, smart recommendation systems, blockchain-based booking trust, immersive metaverse tourism promotion, and digital twin destination management as future strategic innovations ([Siregar, 2025a](#)). These differing focuses indicate that the literature on digital economy and tourism marketing is evolving rapidly, yet remains scattered across various domains including technology, marketing, hospitality, and information systems without a comprehensive synthesis that maps strategies, challenges, and opportunities in an integrated manner.

On the other hand, existing empirical studies predominantly focus on testing relationships between specific variables, such as the effect of platform usability on revisit intentions, the influence of AI personalization on booking intention, or the impact of digital infrastructure on tourism growth. However, relatively few studies comprehensively map how the digital economy conceptually shapes the evolution of tourism marketing over time. Such holistic understanding is crucial because tourism marketing today extends beyond digital promotion to encompass customer journey transformation, digital consumer trust, smart service integration, virtual destination representation, and predictive marketing intelligence ([Siregar et al., 2025](#)). In other words, tourism marketing has evolved into a multidimensional and cross-platform digital marketing system.

This literature gap becomes even more apparent when compared with the increasing number of digital tourism studies over the last five years. A state of the art review by Wu et al. identified more than 278 studies on digital tourism and smart development, yet emphasized that existing research remains fragmented among discussions of technology, tourist experiences, and destination development without strong integration in terms of marketing strategy synthesis ([Wu, Xu, Zhao, Li, & Law, 2024](#)). Similarly, the systematic review by Alhaddar and Kummitha demonstrated that digitalization in tourism destination branding has generated various new approaches based on AI, VR, mobile applications, and social engagement, yet the literature still lacks mapping frameworks that systematically explain the relationship between strategic adoption, implementation barriers, and future opportunities in tourism marketing ([Kummitha, 2025](#)).

Based on these conditions, a systematic literature review approach is required to identify, classify, and synthesize the development of knowledge regarding the relationship between the digital economy and tourism marketing more broadly. A systematic literature review is considered relevant because this method not only aims to evaluate the effectiveness of certain variables but also maps research areas, identifies dominant themes, discovers knowledge gaps, and formulates future research agendas in rapidly evolving and multidisciplinary fields. In the context of this study, the systematic literature review is intended to answer three fundamental questions: (1) what digital strategies have been used in tourism marketing, (2) what challenges most frequently hinder their implementation, and (3) what future opportunities emerge alongside the integration of AI, big data, immersive technology, and platform economy within the tourism sector. Therefore, the study entitled “*Digital Economy and Tourism marketing: A Systematic Literature Review of Strategies, Challenges, and Opportunities*” is important because it contributes theoretically by providing a comprehensive conceptual mapping of the

evolution of tourism marketing in the digital economy era, while also offering practical contributions for industry practitioners, destination managers, tourism SMEs, and policymakers in formulating adaptive, competitive, and sustainable marketing strategies.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Digital Economy as a Fundamental Transformation in Tourism Marketing

Over the last decade, the digital economy has evolved into one of the major forces transforming the structure of global business competition, including within the tourism sector. The digital economy is no longer understood merely as the use of internet media for promotional activities, but rather as the integration of digital technology, data analytics, artificial intelligence, platform economy, mobile connectivity, and automated decision systems throughout the entire business value chain. Digital transformation in the tourism sector has created a new combination of technology, tourist behavior, and business models, forcing industry players to shift their marketing approaches from traditional systems toward data-driven and digital experience-based systems ([Gutiérrez, Ferreira, & Fernandes, 2025](#)).

This transformation becomes highly relevant in the context of tourism marketing because tourism products are intangible, cannot be tested prior to consumption, and are strongly influenced by visual perception and prospective tourists' trust. Digital marketing and related technologies have become dominant instruments in shaping visibility, trust, and tourist engagement over the last 15 years, particularly through social media, mobile applications, review systems, and online travel platforms ([Panigrahy & Verma, 2024](#)). Therefore, tourism marketing in the era of the digital economy is no longer limited to simply informing tourists about destinations but must also be capable of building convincing digital experiences even before tourists make their visits.

Digital transformation in the tourism industry has shifted the marketing paradigm from firm-centric communication toward customer-centric and data-driven interaction. Under this new paradigm, marketing decisions no longer rely solely on promotional creativity, but also on the company's ability to understand tourist behavior through online data, search history, geolocation, digital reviews, and social interactions ([Y. Zhang & Szabó, 2024](#)). This demonstrates that the digital economy has transformed tourism marketing into a more complex, adaptive, and competitive system.

2.2 The Evolution of Tourism marketing Studies in the Last Decade

Based on the development of previous studies, research on tourism marketing within the digital economy has undergone a significant evolution. In the early phase, research primarily focused on the digitalization of tourism information distribution through official websites, search engine optimization, and online reservation systems. Early studies viewed digital technology as a supporting tool to expand market access and facilitate tourist transactions. However, beginning around 2018, the focus of research gradually shifted toward social media engagement and tourist participation in destination image formation. Social media and influencer tourism marketing have evolved into some of the most effective digital persuasion instruments because tourists tend to trust visual storytelling, user-generated content, and authentic recommendations more than formal promotions from tourism companies ([Iswanto, Handriana, Rony, & Sangadji, 2024](#)). At this stage, tourists are no longer passive recipients of information but also become producers of information through reviews, travel vlogs, ratings, destination photographs, and digital comments that directly influence other prospective tourists.

Further developments indicate that digital tourism research has expanded beyond social media. Through a 10-year systematic literature review, revealed that technologies applied in tourism marketing have increasingly incorporated AI-based personalization, chatbots, machine learning, augmented reality, virtual reality, and smart recommendation systems ([Simões et al., 2023](#)). This means that tourism marketing is no longer solely oriented toward increasing awareness but is also directed toward predicting tourist behavior and creating personalized experiences. In their state of the art review on digital tourism and smart development, emphasized that recent studies increasingly position digital technology as part of an intelligent tourism ecosystem, namely a system in which data, platforms, destinations, tourists, and service providers are interconnected in real-time tourism decision-making

processes ([Wu et al., 2024](#)). Therefore, it can be concluded that the literature on tourism marketing has evolved from merely digital promotion toward smart predictive tourism marketing.

2.3 Dominant Strategies in Digital Economy-Based Tourism Marketing

Based on the development of various studies, several major strategies consistently emerge in literature.

- 1) **Social Media and Influencer Engagement Strategy**
Social media has become the most dominant marketing channel because it can present destination images in a visual, interactive, and emotional manner. Influencer marketing in tourism effectively increases destination trust, emotional familiarity, and booking consideration through experiential narratives perceived as more authentic by audiences ([Iswanto et al., 2024](#)). This indicates that the power of tourism marketing today heavily depends on social proof and digital storytelling.
- 2) **Personalization Strategy through Artificial Intelligence**
AI technology has increasingly been used to automate customer communication, provide tourism package recommendations, implement dynamic pricing, and deliver personalized travel suggestions. Gutierriz et al. explained that AI integration enables tourism companies to build more responsive relationships with customers because the system can adjust offers based on user behavioral data ([Gutierriz et al., 2025](#)).
- 3) **Strategi Immersive Experience Marketing**
The metaverse, virtual reality, and immersive tourism simulations are emerging as new strategies for destination marketing because tourists can virtually experience destination representations before making purchase decisions ([Sánchez-Amboage, Crespo-Pereira, Membiela-Pollán, & Jesús Faustino, 2024](#)). This strategy reduces tourist uncertainty and strengthens emotional attachment.
- 4) **Smart Data Analytics Strategy**
The utilization of online reviews, customer feedback mining, mobile tracking, and digital search behavior has become a primary source for identifying market trends ([Utomo, Risdiyanto, & Judijanto, 2024](#)). This strategy enables tourism businesses to determine promotional content, tourist segmentation, and optimal offering timing more accurately.

2.4 Challenges in Implementing Tourism Marketing in the Digital Economy Era

Although the digital economy offers numerous opportunities, various studies indicate that its implementation in tourism marketing is not without challenges. First, there is a significant gap in digital readiness among tourism business actors. Many tourism destinations and tourism SMEs still lack adequate digital capabilities in utilizing analytics tools, AI systems, and integrated promotion platforms ([Marbun, Siringoringo, Simatupang, & Simorangkir, 2024](#)). Second, there is a growing dependence on third-party platforms such as Online Travel Agencies (OTAs), Google algorithms, Meta Ads, and social media reach ([Siregar, 2025b](#)). This dependency causes tourism businesses to lose partial control over their own market distribution. Third, although digital data is abundantly available, many tourism companies are still unable to integrate such data into effective strategic decision-making processes ([Panigrahy & Verma, 2024](#)). Fourth, digital trust issues have become increasingly serious. The proliferation of fake reviews, sponsored influencer content, and AI-generated promotional content has made tourists more selective and skeptical toward digital information. Fifth, digital transformation also creates challenges related to ethics, data privacy, and human resource competency requirements that are not yet fully prepared within the tourism sector ([Rodrigues, Breda, & Rodrigues, 2024](#)).

2.5 Research Gap

Based on the evaluation of previous literature, this study identifies four major research gaps. First, various digital economy technologies have not yet been integrated into a unified framework for discussing tourism marketing. Second, previous studies have been dominated by partial empirical investigations and have not sufficiently provided macro-level strategic mapping. Third, studies that balance digital strategies, implementation challenges, and future opportunities remain very limited. Fourth, no systematic literature review has been identified that specifically discusses “*Digital Economy and Tourism marketing*” through the three primary lenses of strategies, challenges, and opportunities. Therefore, this study is conducted to fill these gaps through a systematic literature review approach

aimed at systematically mapping the development of digital economy-based tourism marketing strategies, the implementation barriers encountered, and the transformation opportunities that can be utilized in the future.

3. Methodology

The rapid development of the digital economy has brought significant changes to various industrial sectors, including the tourism industry. Among the areas most affected by technological advancement in the tourism sector is marketing, which has shifted from conventional approaches toward digital-oriented systems. In this section, the authors describe the methodology used to examine the digital economy and tourism marketing through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR). This type of research is commonly referred to as library research. Library research is a method of data collection conducted by understanding and studying theories from various literature sources related to the research topic ([Adlini, Dinda, Yulinda, Chotimah, & Merliyana, 2022](#)). The primary objective of this study is to synthesize knowledge from existing literature while providing a broad understanding of the application of technology in tourism marketing.

The SLR methodology was employed to ensure a rigorous and structured review process. This method relies on qualitative data, particularly the content of secondary articles. It offers a systematic approach to identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing available studies relevant to a particular research question or topic ([Simões et al., 2023](#)). The study period was limited to publications from 2021 to 2026, covering scientific articles published within the previous six years. The reviewed original scientific articles were written in both English and Indonesian. The scientific databases were obtained from articles published by major publishers and platforms, namely Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, Springer Nature Link, and ResearchGate. These databases were used to search for relevant literature. The keywords used in the search process included *digital economy*, *tourism marketing*, *digital marketing*, and *technology*. The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) protocol was strictly followed to ensure a systematic and transparent literature review process. This methodology includes standardized procedures for article selection consisting of three major phases: identification, eligibility, and inclusion, as illustrated in Figure 1 as a summary of the PRISMA protocol applied in this study.

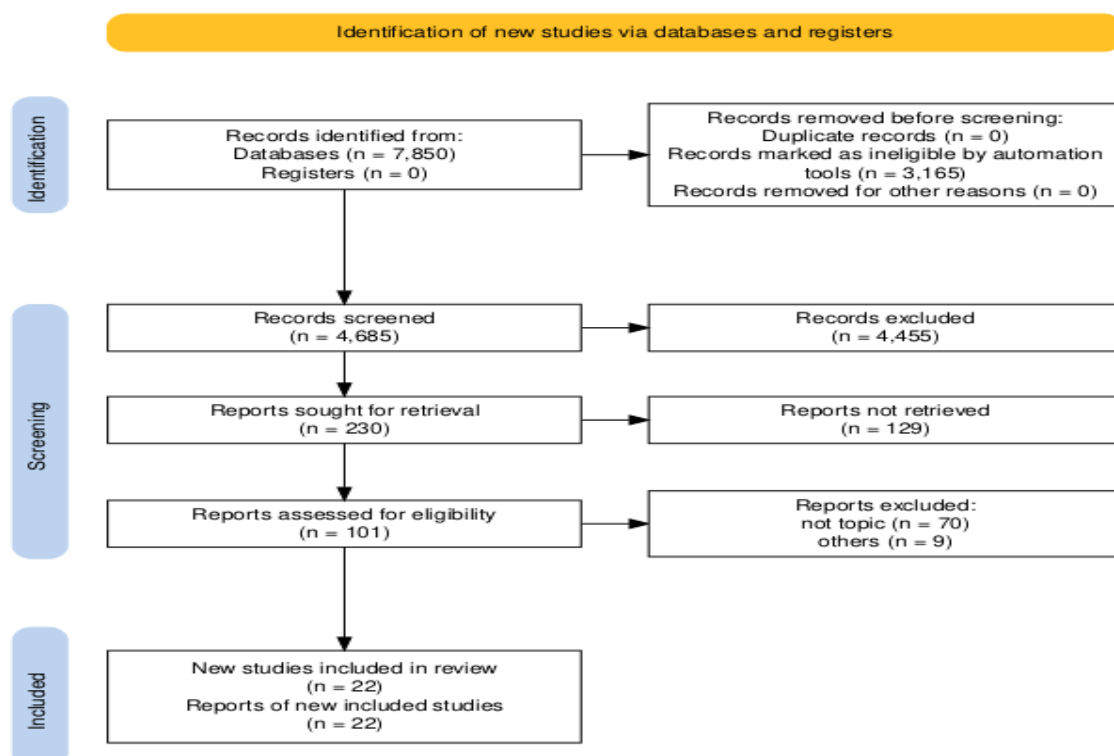


Figure 1. PRISMA flowchart for the systematic review process to identify relevant studies

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 PRISMA Flow Diagram Description

The article selection process in this study followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines to ensure a systematic, transparent, and reproducible literature review process. The identification stage began with a comprehensive search of several academic databases, resulting in 7,850 records relevant to the keywords related to digital economy, tourism marketing, digital marketing, and tourism technology. No records were obtained from registers or other sources. During the initial filtering process, 3,165 records were automatically excluded because they were considered ineligible based on automated screening tools, while no duplicate records or records removed for other reasons were identified. As a result, 4,685 records proceeded to the screening stage.

In the screening phase, the titles and abstracts of the 4,685 records were reviewed to determine their relevance to the research objectives. Following this process, 4,455 records were excluded because they did not meet the inclusion criteria, leaving 230 reports for further retrieval and full-text assessment. However, 129 reports could not be retrieved due to limited access, incomplete manuscripts, or unavailable full-text versions. Consequently, 101 full-text articles were successfully obtained and assessed for eligibility. During the eligibility assessment, each article was examined in greater detail based on predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria, including relevance to the digital economy, tourism product marketing, digital transformation, tourism technology, and related strategic issues. From the 101 articles evaluated, 70 articles were excluded because they were not directly related to the research topic, while 9 additional articles were excluded for other reasons, such as insufficient methodological information, lack of empirical or conceptual relevance, or duplication of research findings. After completing the eligibility assessment, 22 studies met all inclusion criteria and were therefore included in the final systematic literature review.

The final dataset of 22 articles formed the basis of the analysis and synthesis presented in this study. These selected studies provided a comprehensive representation of current research concerning digital economy implementation in tourism product marketing, including discussions on digital strategies, implementation challenges, and future opportunities. The rigorous screening and selection process ensured that only the most relevant and high-quality studies were included, thereby strengthening the validity and reliability of the review findings. The summary of article selection process based on PRISMA framework presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of article selection process based on PRISMA framework

PRISMA Stage	Process Description	Number of Records (n)	Percentage (%)
Identification	Records identified through database searching	7,850	100.00
Identification	Records removed by automation tools	3,165	40.32
Screening	Records screened (title and abstract review)	4,685	59.68
Screening	Records excluded after title and abstract screening	4,455	56.75
Screening	Reports sought for retrieval	230	2.93
Screening	Reports not retrieved	129	1.64
Eligibility	Full-text articles assessed for eligibility	101	1.29
Eligibility	Full-text articles excluded (not relevant to topic)	70	0.89
Eligibility	Full-text articles excluded (other reasons)	9	0.11
Included	Studies included in the final review	22	0.28

The inclusion and exclusion criteria presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Criteria	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Publication Year	2021–2026	Published before 2021
Language	English and Indonesian	Other languages
Document Type	Peer-reviewed journal articles	Conference papers, books, book chapters, theses, dissertations
Research Area	Digital economy, tourism marketing, digital tourism, tourism technology, smart tourism	Unrelated fields
Accessibility	Full-text available	Abstract only or inaccessible full-text
Relevance	Directly discusses strategies, challenges, or opportunities in digital economy and tourism marketing	Indirect or peripheral discussion

The distribution of excluded articles during eligibility assessment presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Distribution of excluded articles during eligibility assessment

Reason for Exclusion	Number of Articles
Not directly related to digital economy and tourism product marketing	70
Incomplete methodological information	3
Insufficient empirical or conceptual contribution	4
Duplicate findings or overlapping studies	2
Total Excluded	79

The characteristics of the final selected articles (n = 22) is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Characteristics of the Final Selected Articles (n = 22)

Characteristic	Category	Number of Articles
Methodology	Quantitative	14
	Qualitative	4
	Mixed Methods	2
	Literature Review/Bibliometric	2
Geographic Focus	Asia	13
	Europe	4
	Africa	2
	Global/Multiple Countries	3
Main Theme	Digital Marketing Strategy	8
	Digital Transformation Challenges	7
	Digital Economy Opportunities	7

4.2 Literature Studies Review

Following the PRISMA-based screening and selection process, a total of 22 articles were retained for the final analysis. These studies represent diverse geographical contexts, methodological approaches, and research perspectives related to the intersection of the digital economy and tourism product marketing. To facilitate a systematic understanding of the reviewed literature, a synthesis table was developed to summarize the key characteristics of each study, including research context, primary focus, digital technologies examined, identified strategies, implementation challenges, and emerging opportunities. This synthesis enables cross-study comparison and provides a foundation for identifying recurring patterns, dominant themes, and research gaps within the existing body of knowledge. As shown in Table 5, the reviewed studies collectively demonstrate that digital technologies have become critical drivers of tourism transformation, influencing marketing strategies, organizational capabilities, consumer experiences, sustainability initiatives, and tourism ecosystem development. Synthesis of reviewed articles (n = 22) presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Synthesis of Reviewed Articles (n = 22)

No	Author(s) & Year	Country/Context	Main Focus	Digital Technology / Component	Strategy Identified	Key Challenges	Key Opportunities
1	Huda, Gaol, Warnars, and Soewito (2023)	Indonesia	Smart Digital Tourism Development	Smart Tourism System, ICT	Smart tourism ecosystem integration	Technology integration complexity	Improved tourist experience and service efficiency
2	Wider et al. (2023)	Global	Digital Tourism Trends	AI, AR, VR, Smart Tourism	AI-driven tourism innovation	Technology adoption readiness	Intelligent tourism systems
3	Simões et al. (2023)	Global	Tourism Marketing Technologies	AI, Chatbots, VR, AR	Technology-enhanced customer engagement	Technology adaptation barriers	Personalized tourism marketing
4	Restrepo = Sarmiento et al. (2023)	Latin America	Digital Transformation in Tourism	Digital platforms	Digital transformation strategy	Organizational readiness	Improved competitiveness
5	Panigrahy and Verma (2024)	Global	Digital Marketing Evolution	Social media, AI, Mobile Marketing	Digital marketing optimization	Data integration issues	Data-driven marketing decisions
6	Rodríguez et al. (2024)	Europe	Industry 4.0 in Tourism	Industry 4.0 Technologies	Automation and smart operations	Human resource competency gaps	Operational efficiency
7	Sánchez-Amboage et al. (2024)	Europe	Tourism Marketing in Metaverse	Metaverse, VR	Immersive destination marketing	User adoption uncertainty	Virtual tourism experiences
8	Iswanto et al. (2024)	Indonesia	Influencer Tourism Marketing	Social media, Influencers	Influencer engagement strategy	Credibility and trust issues	Destination awareness enhancement
9	Rumanti et al. (2025)	Indonesia	Digital Literacy in Edu-tourism	Digital communication systems	Stakeholder digital literacy development	Low digital literacy	Stronger stakeholder collaboration
10	Gutiérrez et al. (2025)	Spain	Digital Transformation in Tourism	AI, Digital Platforms	AI-based personalization strategy	Organizational adaptation	Enhanced customer experience
11	Han et al. (2025)	Asia	Digital Money in Tourism	CBDM, Digital Finance	Digital payment integration	Consumer trust issues	Seamless tourism

							transactions
12	J. Zhang, Cao, and Li (2025)	China	Cross-Border Tourism	Digital Inclusive Finance	Financial technology adoption	Technology adoption barriers	International tourism growth
13	Yang and Ning (2025)	China	Rural Cultural Tourism	Digital Platforms	Digital rural tourism integration	Digital divide	Sustainable rural tourism development
14	Zuñiga-Collazos, Galvez-Albarracín, Vera-Jaramillo, and Patiño-Giraldo (2025)	Colombia	Tourism MSMEs Digitalization	Digitalization & Innovation	Innovation-oriented digitalization	Limited organizational capability	Sustainable MSME performance
15	Kummita (2025)	Global	Digital Branding	AI, Digital Branding Tools	Sustainable destination branding	Branding consistency	Destination differentiation
16	Cheng (2025)	China	Digital Economy and Tourism Development	Digital Economy Ecosystem	Digital economy integration	Regulatory and policy differences	High-quality tourism development
17	Lee et al. (2026)	Malaysia	Digital Storytelling	Digital Storytelling Platforms	Cultural storytelling strategy	Content authenticity	Strong destination branding
18	Busulwa, Pathirana, and Pickerin (2026)	Global	Digital Skills in Tourism Education	AI, Cloud Computing	Digital competency development	Skills and curriculum gaps	Future-ready tourism workforce
19	H. Torabi, Maalmir, and Ahmadi (2025)	Iran	Tourism Ecosystems	Digital Platforms	Adaptive digital resilience strategy	Platform dependency	Organizational resilience
20	Ebabu, Yu, Weikang, Yixiong, and	South-South Countries	Sustainable Digital Transformation	E-commerce, Green Marketing	Green digital marketing strategy	Sustainability implementation challenges	Inclusive tourism growth

	Ambelu (2026)						
21	Maksum, Muflih, Rohman, Injaz, and Sanrego (2025)	Africa	ICT and Tourism Sustainability	ICT Infrastructure	ICT-enabled tourism management	Environmental impact of ICT	Sustainable tourism governance
22	(Fernandi, Utami, & Noviarita, 2024)	European Smart Tourism Cities	Digital Accessibility	Website Accessibility, WCAG 2.1	Accessible tourism strategy	Accessibility limitations	Inclusive tourism development

4.3 Overview of Literature Characteristics

The systematic literature review identified a growing body of research discussing the intersection between the digital economy and tourism marketing. The reviewed studies demonstrate that digital transformation has become a dominant force shaping tourism development, marketing practices, customer experience, sustainability, and tourism competitiveness across various countries and tourism contexts. The selected articles reveal that research on digital economy and tourism marketing is highly interdisciplinary, involving perspectives from digital marketing, information systems, smart tourism, sustainability, consumer behaviour, digital finance, cultural tourism, platform economy, and artificial intelligence. Methodologically, the literature is dominated by quantitative approaches such as Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), panel data regression, spatial econometric analysis, machine learning approaches, and bibliometric analysis. However, qualitative and conceptual studies remain important in explaining emerging phenomena such as digital storytelling, digital resilience, platform dependency, and digital adaptation in tourism ecosystems. The findings indicate that digital economy implementation in tourism industries can generally be categorized into three major dimensions, these dimensions are discussed in detail below.

4.4 Digital Strategies in Tourism Marketing

4.4.1 Digital Transformation and Smart Tourism Development

One of the most dominant themes emerging from the literature is the increasing role of digital transformation in tourism product development and marketing. Studies consistently emphasize that digital technologies have shifted tourism marketing from conventional promotion toward integrated digital ecosystems. Research on smart tourism demonstrates that tourism organizations increasingly rely on digital infrastructure, ICT integration, data analytics, AI, mobile applications, and digital platforms to improve tourist experiences and operational efficiency. Smart digital tourism systems improve stakeholder integration, customer personalization, and tourism service efficiency through ICT-based solutions ([Huda et al., 2023](#)). Similarly, AI-driven tourism systems, AR/VR experiences, and smart tourism destinations as dominant trends shaping the future of tourism ([Wider et al., 2023](#)). The literature also indicates that digital transformation enables tourism businesses to provide more immersive and personalized experiences. Digital technologies such as virtual reality, augmented reality, interactive applications, and AI-supported systems help tourism destinations increase competitiveness and customer engagement. Furthermore, tourism marketing is evolving from traditional transactional promotion toward “sequenced solutions,” where tourism organizations integrate digital touchpoints across the entire customer journey. This transformation indicates that digital tourism marketing is no longer limited to advertising and social media promotion, but extends to personalized guest experiences, integrated service ecosystems, and real-time engagement. These findings align with the broader smart tourism framework, which emphasizes technology-enabled destination management, customer experience optimization, and tourism innovation.

4.4.2 Digital Marketing Capability and Organizational Agility

Another major strategy identified in the literature is the development of Digital Marketing Capabilities (DMCs) and organizational agility. Marketing agility acts as a mediator that enables tourism organizations to rapidly respond to market changes, customer behaviour shifts, and technological disruptions. The literature indicates that tourism organizations with strong digital capabilities are better able to adapt to rapidly changing digital environments, improve service innovation, personalize customer experiences, optimize communication strategies, and strengthen destination competitiveness. This is especially relevant in tourism and hospitality industries where customer preferences, online trends, and digital platforms continuously evolve. Several studies also emphasize that digital capability development requires organizational readiness, digital literacy, and technological adaptation. Organizational performance and stakeholder engagement significantly strengthen digital literacy and communication in Edu-tourism ecosystems ([Rumanti et al., 2025](#)). Tourism industries face digital skill gaps because emerging technologies such as AI, cloud computing, and advanced analytics remain insufficiently integrated into tourism education and workforce development ([Busulwa et al., 2026](#)). These findings suggest that tourism organizations must not only invest in technology but also develop human capital and adaptive organizational structures.

4.4.3 Digital Storytelling and Cultural Tourism Marketing

The literature further reveals the growing importance of digital storytelling in tourism destination marketing. Lee et al. found that culturally grounded digital storytelling enhances destination branding, tourist engagement, and cultural sustainability. Digital narratives allow tourism destinations to communicate authentic local identities while simultaneously creating emotional connections with tourists ([Lee et al., 2026](#)). Similarly, Yang and Ning emphasized that digital technologies facilitate sustainable integration in rural cultural tourism by improving cultural visualization, interactive experiences, and digital engagement ([Yang & Ning, 2025](#)). The use of storytelling in digital tourism marketing reflects a broader shift toward experience-based marketing strategies. Rather than simply promoting tourism products, destinations increasingly market emotions, authenticity, cultural narratives, and immersive experiences. Digital storytelling also supports destination differentiation in highly competitive tourism markets. Cultural heritage elements such as local traditions, festivals, cuisine, arts, and indigenous identity become strategic marketing assets when integrated into digital content ecosystems. These findings support the argument that tourism marketing in the digital economy era increasingly relies on emotional branding, interactive communication, and experience-oriented digital content.

4.4.4 Digital Finance and Tourism Transactions

Another important strategic dimension identified in the literature is the role of digital finance and digital payment systems. Wang et al. and Zhang et al. demonstrated that digital finance significantly improves tourism resource allocation, tourism consumption, and cross-border tourism revenue. Digital inclusive finance enhances payment efficiency, information exchange, and financial accessibility, thereby improving tourism experiences and international tourism competitiveness ([Wang, Yang, & Yue, 2022](#)). Similarly, Han et al. found that consumer adoption of Central Bank Digital Money (CBDM) in tourism industries is influenced by perceived usefulness, confidence in digital technology, and psychological factors such as Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) ([Han et al., 2025](#)). The increasing adoption of digital finance indicates that tourism marketing is becoming deeply integrated with financial technologies. Digital payment systems not only facilitate transactions but also contribute to tourist convenience, cross-border tourism growth, customer trust, and tourism platform integration. These findings highlight that digital finance has become an essential component of tourism marketing ecosystems within the digital economy.

4.5 Challenges in Digital Economy and Tourism Marketing

4.5.1 Digital Infrastructure and Technology Gaps

Despite the opportunities offered by digital transformation, the literature consistently identifies major challenges related to digital infrastructure and technological readiness. Several studies found that tourism organizations, particularly MSMEs and rural tourism operators, face resource limitations, technological capability gaps, and insufficient digital infrastructure. Zuniga-Collazos et al. revealed that

digitalization alone does not automatically improve organizational performance because many tourism MSMEs lack sufficient organizational capabilities and resources to maximize digital transformation benefits ([Zuñiga-Collazos et al., 2025](#)). Similarly, Yang and Ning highlighted persistent issues such as digital divide, information security concerns, and lack of digital talent in rural tourism development ([Yang & Ning, 2025](#)). In developing countries, digital infrastructure limitations remain significant barriers to tourism competitiveness. These include limited internet access, inadequate digital systems, insufficient technological investment, and low digital readiness. The findings suggest that digital transformation in tourism industries requires not only technological adoption but also institutional support, digital infrastructure development, and workforce capability enhancement.

4.5.2 Platform Dependency and Digital Vulnerability

Another critical challenge identified in the literature is platform dependency. Torabi and Hall demonstrated that tourism industries operating under digital restrictions and sanctions become highly vulnerable due to dependence on global digital platforms ([Z.-A. Torabi & Hall, 2026](#)). Tourism businesses increasingly rely on online booking platforms, social media ecosystems, digital payment systems, and communication applications. However, excessive dependency creates operational risks when platforms become inaccessible due to political restrictions, algorithm changes, digital regulations, or platform monopolization. Similarly, studies on collaborative economy platforms in Europe revealed regional inequalities, overtourism concerns, and regulatory tensions associated with digital tourism platforms. These findings indicate that although digital platforms provide visibility and market access, they simultaneously create new vulnerabilities and dependencies within tourism ecosystems.

4.5.3 Sustainability Challenges in Digital Tourism

Sustainability also emerged as a major challenge in the reviewed literature. Musah et al. found that tourism growth and ICT expansion may negatively affect ecological sustainability because digital infrastructures require high energy consumption. Similarly, Amin et al. emphasized that tourism recovery strategies after COVID-19 should prioritize green tourism and sustainable digital transformation ([Amin, Khandaker, Samia, Khan, & Taghizadeh-Hesary, 2025](#)). The literature suggests that tourism digitalization creates both opportunities and environmental risks. While digital technologies can reduce operational inefficiencies and improve resource management, they may also increase electronic waste, intensify energy consumption, contribute to overtourism, and accelerate unsustainable tourism consumption. Therefore, sustainable digital tourism development requires balance between technological innovation, environmental protection, and long-term destination resilience.

4.5.4 Human Resource and Digital Literacy Challenges

Another major issue discussed in the literature is the lack of digital literacy and workforce readiness. Tourism industries increasingly require digital competencies related to digital communication, AI tools, social media marketing, data analytics, and customer relationship management. However, the literature shows that many tourism organizations still lack adequately trained human resources. Digital literacy plays a crucial role in tourism competitiveness and sustainable tourism management ([Rumanti et al., 2025](#)). Likewise, Significant gaps in digital curriculum integration within hospitality and tourism education ([Busulwa et al., 2026](#)). This challenge becomes increasingly important because tourism marketing success in the digital economy era heavily depends on digital competencies and organizational adaptability.

4.6 Opportunities in Digital Economy and Tourism marketing

4.6.1 AI, Big Data, and Data-Driven Tourism Marketing

The literature strongly indicates that AI and big data analytics create major opportunities for tourism marketing. Machine learning approaches, sentiment analysis, image recognition, and user-generated content analytics allow tourism organizations to better understand tourist behaviour, preferences, and satisfaction. Multimodal user-generated content provides valuable insights into tourist experiences and satisfaction mechanisms. AI-driven analytics help tourism organizations optimize service quality, customer engagement, and destination management. Similarly, Wider et al. identified AI, AR/VR, and smart tourism technologies as future drivers of tourism innovation ([Wider et al., 2023](#)). These

technologies provide opportunities for predictive marketing, personalized recommendations, automated customer service, and intelligent tourism management. As tourism consumers increasingly depend on digital platforms and online experiences, AI-based marketing strategies are expected to become central to tourism competitiveness.

4.6.2 Sustainable and Inclusive Tourism Development

The literature also highlights opportunities for sustainable and inclusive tourism development through digital economy ecosystems. Sustainable digital transformation requires integration between cultural adaptation, green marketing, and inclusive business model innovation (Ebabu et al., 2026). Digital technologies enable tourism destinations to improve accessibility, empower local communities, support rural tourism, preserve cultural heritage, and strengthen stakeholder collaboration. Furthermore, digital platforms allow smaller tourism operators and local communities to access broader tourism markets without relying solely on traditional intermediaries. This indicates that digital economy ecosystems can support more inclusive tourism development if supported by appropriate governance and sustainability strategies.

4.6.3 Cross-Border and Global Tourism Expansion

The reviewed studies also demonstrate that digital economy ecosystems create significant opportunities for cross-border tourism growth. Digital finance, digital platforms, smart tourism systems, and global communication technologies allow tourism destinations to reach international markets more effectively. Zhang et al. found that digital inclusive finance significantly enhances cross-border tourism revenue, particularly in regions with high trade openness (J. Zhang et al., 2025). Similarly, collaborative economy platforms and digital tourism ecosystems facilitate international tourism accessibility, global destination visibility, and cross-cultural interaction. This suggests that digital transformation not only improves domestic tourism competitiveness but also expands global tourism connectivity and international tourism marketing.

4.7 Discussion

Overall, the findings indicate that the digital economy has fundamentally transformed tourism marketing by reshaping how tourism products are created, promoted, distributed, and experienced. The literature demonstrates that digital transformation provides substantial opportunities for innovation, customer engagement, sustainability, and tourism competitiveness. However, these opportunities are accompanied by significant challenges related to infrastructure readiness, digital dependency, sustainability concerns, digital literacy, and organizational adaptability. The findings also reveal that tourism marketing is increasingly evolving toward platform-based ecosystems, data driven personalization, AI-supported decision making, immersive customer experiences, and sustainability-oriented tourism development. Therefore, successful tourism marketing in the digital economy era requires integrated strategies that combine technological innovation, organizational agility, digital literacy, sustainability principles, and customer centered experiences. These findings contribute to the growing discourse on digital tourism by providing a comprehensive understanding of the strategies, challenges, and opportunities shaping tourism marketing within digital economy ecosystems.

5. Conclusions

5.1 Conclusion

This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on digital economy and tourism marketing by providing an integrated understanding of how digital transformation is reshaping the tourism marketing landscape. Rather than viewing digital technologies merely as promotional tools, the review demonstrates that the digital economy represents a broader ecosystem that influences value creation, customer engagement, service innovation, and destination competitiveness. The findings suggest that tourism marketing is increasingly evolving toward data-driven, technology-enabled, and experience-centered approaches that require continuous adaptation from tourism stakeholders.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes by synthesizing fragmented literature across digital marketing, smart tourism, digital finance, platform economy, and tourism innovation into a unified framework of strategies, challenges, and opportunities. By integrating these perspectives, the

study extends current understanding of digital tourism marketing beyond technological adoption and highlights the interconnected roles of organizational capabilities, digital ecosystems, and sustainability considerations in shaping tourism development.

From a practical perspective, the review provides valuable insights for tourism businesses, destination management organizations, policymakers, and educational institutions. The findings emphasize the importance of investing not only in digital technologies but also in digital competencies, stakeholder collaboration, governance mechanisms, and sustainable innovation practices. Tourism organizations that successfully align technological advancement with customer-centric strategies and long-term sustainability objectives are more likely to strengthen their competitiveness in an increasingly digital marketplace.

Overall, this study highlights that the future of tourism product marketing will depend on the ability of tourism stakeholders to strategically leverage digital economy ecosystems while simultaneously addressing issues related to digital inclusion, organizational readiness, and sustainable tourism development. Such an approach is essential for ensuring that digital transformation generates not only economic value but also broader social and environmental benefits for tourism destinations.

5.2 Research Limitations

Despite providing comprehensive insights into digital economy and tourism marketing, this study has several limitations. First, this research relied solely on secondary data obtained from scientific literature published between 2021 and 2026. Consequently, the findings are highly dependent on the scope, quality, and availability of previous studies included in the review process. Second, the study only focused on articles published in English and Indonesian retrieved from selected academic databases such as Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, Springer Nature Link, and ResearchGate. Therefore, relevant studies published in other languages or indexed in different databases may not have been included in the analysis. Third, although this research successfully identified major themes related to digital tourism marketing, it did not conduct empirical validation through primary data collection methods such as surveys, interviews, or case studies involving tourism stakeholders directly. As a result, the study mainly provides conceptual and theoretical insights rather than operational field-based findings. Furthermore, the reviewed literature covers diverse tourism contexts and countries with different levels of digital readiness, infrastructure development, and tourism maturity, which may create contextual differences that limit the generalizability of the findings across all tourism destinations and business environments. Finally, considering that digital technology evolves rapidly, some technological trends and innovations discussed in the literature may continue to develop beyond the review period covered in this study.

5.3 Suggestions and Directions for Future Research

Based on the findings and limitations of this study, several suggestions and future research directions are proposed. Future studies are encouraged to conduct empirical investigations involving tourism businesses, destination managers, tourists, and policymakers to better understand how digital transformation strategies are implemented in real operational contexts. Qualitative and mixed-method approaches may provide deeper insights into organizational adaptation, digital resilience, and stakeholder experiences within tourism ecosystems. In addition, future research should examine the long-term impacts of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, immersive tourism, metaverse tourism, blockchain systems, and digital currencies on tourism behaviour, destination competitiveness, and tourism governance. Particular attention should also be given to ethical issues, data privacy, algorithmic dependency, and digital trust within tourism marketing systems.

Furthermore, more studies are needed to explore digital transformation among tourism SMEs and rural tourism destinations, especially in developing countries where digital infrastructure and digital literacy challenges remain significant. Comparative studies between digitally mature destinations and developing tourism regions may provide valuable strategic insights for tourism development and policy formulation. Future research should also integrate sustainability perspectives more comprehensively into digital tourism studies by examining how tourism industries can balance technological innovation,

environmental sustainability, cultural preservation, and inclusive tourism development within digital economy ecosystems. Moreover, future studies are encouraged to investigate consumer behaviour transformation in greater depth, particularly regarding AI-based personalization, digital storytelling, user-generated content, immersive digital experiences, and platform-based tourism ecosystems. Understanding evolving tourist expectations and digital engagement patterns will become increasingly important for tourism competitiveness in the future. Finally, future systematic reviews and bibliometric studies are recommended to expand the scope of analysis by including broader databases, longer publication periods, and interdisciplinary perspectives in order to develop more integrated frameworks for digital tourism marketing research.

Acknowledgement

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to all the lecturers from different major and universities that always support and encouragement each other's throughout the completion of this research. The authors also appreciate all researchers and scholars whose studies contributed to the development of this systematic literature review. No external financial funding was received for this research.

Author Contributions

SI conceptualized the study, developed the research background, selected the research methodology, and interpreted the findings obtained from the data analysis. DB conducted the data collection, performed the PRISMA-based review process, and interpreted the results. SS synthesized the findings, provided recommendations for future research, and translated the manuscript into English. All authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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