



DIGITAL MARKETING ANALYSIS IN OPTIMIZING ROOM ADVERTISING SHARIA HOTEL IN SEMARANG CITY (CASE STUDY AT GRASIA HOTEL SEMARANG)

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ABSTRACT

This research focuses on digital marketing analysis in optimizing room advertising for sharia hotel in Semarang city. Digital marketing that is carried out to restore and revive the economic sector through halal tourism that has potential to increase the income of halal accommodation facilities for sharia hotels in Indonesia, especially in the Semarang city. The purpose of this study is to find out digital marketing activities that are implemented in sharia hotel, especially in Grasia Hotel Semarang, so that can optimize room advertising. This research uses descriptive qualitative with and interpretive paradigm and a case study approach that focuses on digital marketing and advertising which are online marketing activities for Grasia Hotel Semarang. The method of data collection uses by interviewing informants corresponding criteria for the objectives research, field observations by author during internship period, and documentation in photos, videos, recordings, and documents. The object of this research is Grasia Hotel Semarang and the conclusion is from data triangulation. The results of this study are digital marketing activities in accordance with marketing communication theory in optimizing room advertising for sharia hotels that already have halal certificate from the Indonesian Ulema Council at Grasia Hotel Semarang through digital marketing tools such as social media and OTA (Online Travel Agent) as well as the process of creating concepts of digital content on social media or OTA by implementing the advertising function in persuading potential guest to stay at Grasia Hotel Semarang, there are by informing, persuading, reminding, adding value, and assisting the guest as well as the impact of reviews or testimonials given by guest on OTA (Online Travel Agent) application, TripAdvisor, and Google Maps review. The existence of the application of digital marketing can have implications for sharia hotel room advertising to the optimum and increase the sharia hotel revenue.

Keywords: Digital marketing; room advertising; sharia hotel

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of Sharia has many developments of halal tourism in Indonesia according with data from the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy. The concept of Sharia is products and services that are guaranteed to be halal as the main fulfilment of the needs of the Muslim, up to the selection of a place that provides Sharia based on facilities and services that have received a halal certificate. Including hotel, there are hotels that have segmentation of Sharia. Sharia hotels are hotels that facilitate lodging, food, and beverage or other services that managed commercially and fulfilling the requirements by Sharia regulations, industry, and government (Mujahidin, 2018). Sharia hotels are hotels that provide a place to stay that save from Muslim people, create a religious atmosphere, and is friendly to guests. Sharia hotels really need the role of the government to strengthen the existence, by composing legal certainty, so that there will be more Sharia hotels in Indonesia.

Sharia hotels in practice conform to the principles of Islamic law that meet the qualifications and classification according to the regulators of Sharia hotel standards that have been compiled by National Syariah Council – Indonesian Ulema Council or *DSN-MUI* so that they are included as criteria for Sharia Hotel (Priyatmoko et al., 2021). Sharia hotels are hotels that practice Sharia principles in every sector, while conventional hotels free the guests to enjoy food that does not know whether it is halal or not, and also the hotel entertainment facility that are inversely related to Sharia principles. This is very different from Sharia hotels, where all food and beverage must have certificate from *MUI* or Indonesian Ulema Council and avoid guests committing adultery in accordance with the provisions of Islamic teachings in the Qur'an (Madalena et al., 2022).

Indonesia's tourism and accommodation has been recorded as having risen to second place from previously being ranked fourth in The Global Travel Muslim Index (GMTI) 2022, thus showing great potential for Indonesian halal tourism. According to data from 2019, Muslims around the world spend as much as US\$2.02 trillion on travel and recreation and the global Muslim market is predicted to grow to US\$2.4 trillion by 2024 (Muthiariny, 2022)

Sharia hotels in Indonesia with Syariah concept branding by having Halal certificate from *MUI*. This because many newly established hotel services do not have standards and provisions of Sharia hotels according to the *Fatwa* of the *MUI* National Syariah Council No.108/DSN-MUI/X/2016 concerning guidelines for managing tourism according to Sharia principles (Pradesyah

& Bara, 2019). In the Semarang city itself, it only has one Sharia Hotel that has halal certificate from the Indonesian Ulema Council, namely Grasia Hotel Semarang (Rohmah, 2019).

Conducting Islamic communication cultural behaviour in carrying out marketing that is well established with the guests can reflect what the Sharia hotels looks like. Therefore, marketing communication is certainly a characteristic of an Islamic hotel because it has to adjust how the information and digital marketing strategy can match current marketing targets (Mohansyah & Parani, 2018). The potential to restore and revive the economic sector of an accommodation company through halal tourism as well as increase the income of halal accommodation facilities for hotels in Indonesia, especially at the Grasia Hotel Semarang. In 2019, Grasia Hotel Semarang received an award certificate as The Best Muslim-Friendly Hotel Nominee organized by PHRI Central Java (Central Java Hotel and Restaurant Association) which was held in Karawang on February 19, 2022.

One of the 3 (three) star hotels in the Semarang city is Grasia Hotel Semarang. This hotel has a logo tagline, 'The Family and Convention Hotel'. Grasia Hotel is a large capacity hotel for MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, and Exhibitions) activities. Positioning as the only Sharia hotel in the Semarang city and the segmentation of MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, and Exhibitions) space and family room are priorities for generating income for Grasia Hotel Semarang. During the last pandemic, for MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, and Exhibitions) activities there were restrictions on activities so that full board meetings or meetings package including rooms also fell. Grasia Hotel's target for 2022-2023 is to increase room revenue beyond the full board meeting package.

Therefore, in addition to management making efforts to repair and maintain rooms. Grasia Hotel also uses digital marketing activities to optimize room advertising owned by Grasia Hotel Semarang. Based on the background above, the formulation of the problem in this study is How digital marketing activities implemented at the Grasia Hotel Semarang can optimize room advertising and the Purpose in this study is describe the analysis of digital marketing activities applied at Hotel Grasia Semarang so that they can optimize room advertising.

This research was researched by observing a case study approach with content of samples are from several guests through TripAdvisor ratings review or testimonial based on Google Maps,

Online Travel Agent (OTA) because OTA provided many choices depending facility, price, location, discount, and authorized digital payment (Rahadi et al., 2021). Grasia Hotel Semarang was chosen because it is the only hotel in Semarang City that has received the Halal certificate for food and beverage and The Best Muslim-Friendly Hotel by Indonesian Hotel and Restaurant Association in Central Java. Obtaining research data collection was carried out directly by the author through work lectures, observations, interview, documentation studies, and focus group discussion meetings of the sales team, head of departments, and general manager of Grasia Hotel Semarang.

2. METHODS

In this research study using qualitative research methods, interpretive paradigm and case study approach. The case study approach had an unusual uniqueness. In addition, research that used qualitative methods is set to answer how digital marketing activities can optimize room advertising at Grasia Hotel Semarang and for the collection of analysis and the processed data information derived from the results of research conducted. In the case study's approach, data collection was carried out directly by taken in detail through the author's observation in the field from information dissemination updates via social media on Instagram, TripAdvisor, Online Travel Agent, and guests reviews to obtain more valid data. According to Patton (2002) data collection came from interview scripts, direct observation, videos, photos, memos, and written documents (Hasan et al., 2021).

The objects to be studied are digital marketing communication activities and advertising activities at Grasia Hotel Semarang. Source of data found in this study used primary and secondary data sources. The primary data source was the presentation of data obtained directly from the original source observed, there is sales & marketing department of Grasia Hotel Semarang. Research conducted on data through direct and online interviews. Interviews were conducted with Head of Departments of Grasia Hotel Semarang included General Manager, Front Office Manager, Sales Manager, and Online Travel Agent reviews. In addition, observations were made regarding reviews from guests who have stayed on the Hotel through TripAdvisor page and Google Maps reviews. Secondary data is a source of research study data obtained through other media such as books, journals, e-books, articles, official hotel websites, social media, documentation, and others. With another intention, the researcher collects data using the case study method through the literature by tracing information related to digital marketing communication activities in Sharia hotel. Collection

data techniques are by observation, interviews, and documentations. In this study the authors used a conclusion in the form of data triangulation because various data sources would appear in this study.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

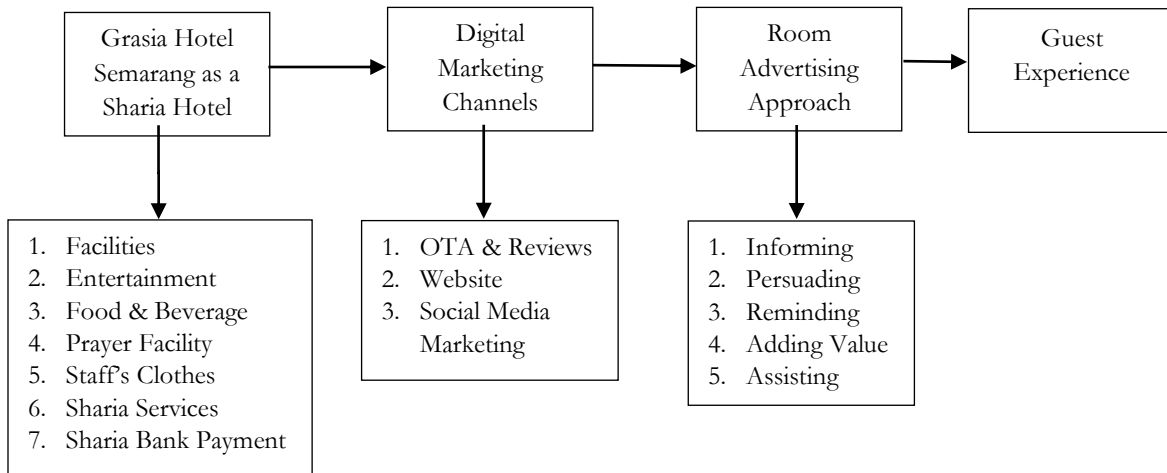


Figure 1. Digital marketing analysis in optimizing room advertising sharia hotel in semarang city (case study at grasia hotel semarang) model's discussion

Grasia Hotel Semarang Based on Sharia Hotel Regulation

Grasia Hotel Semarang is a three-star halal hotel located on Letnan Jend.S.Parman No. 29, Gajahmungkur street. Grasia Hotel Semarang is the sharia hotel that already have a halal certificate from the MUI or Indonesian Ulema Council and The Best Muslim-Friendly Hotel Nominee by PHRI Central Java (Indonesian Hotel and Restaurant Association) in Karawang, February 19, 2020. Grasia Hotel Semarang has a mosque that is quite large and wudhu access near the hall and mosque, also each room was provided with prayer mats and Qur'an. At this hotel service, all staff from Grasia Hotel always greeted the guests according to Islamic greeting. In addition, the female staff also wear the hijab. This hotel always played *Adzan* in every corridor at the hotel so the guest would know when the *Shalat* will start.

In the room check-in regulations, when the guest would stay, they were required to fellow *mubrim* or married couples. It was prohibited from bringing alcohol into the hotel. In providing product facilities, Grasia Hotel Semarang always maintains the quality and halal food and beverages. Grasia Hotel Semarang did not provide a bar or club like other conventional hotels, but had a café

to sell tea, coffee, and juice which did not contain alcohol at all. During the month of Ramadhan, Grasia Hotel Semarang also often to shared *ta'jil*. The decoration at the Grasia Hotel also did not contain elements of pornography, but instead shows the interior and exterior Islamic design with sharia values

In accordance with the provisions of Sharia hotels according to the Fatwa of the MUI National Sharia Council No.108/DSN-MUI/X/2016 concerning guidelines for tourism management according to sharia principles, the Grasia Hotel Semarang has met these criteria, because it had a wide range of product, service, and management aspects, which is in accordance with sharia principles, did not provide access to pornography or immoral acts, the food and beverages was certified halal by Indonesian Ulema Council, provided adequate facilities and means for prayer and ablution, hotel staff wears closed clothes and conforms to Islamic sharia, provided excellent service was in accordance with sharia, and use the services of sharia financial institutions or bank in making payments or services.

Digital Marketing Channels & Activities

This research found the efforts used before did the promotion activities for Grasia Hotel Semarang. This statement given by NF (General Manager of Grasia Hotel Semarang) that before a content was created, it was necessary to plan the content itself by known the SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats). The strengths of Grasia Hotel besides having a halal certificate and the best Muslim-friendly, this hotel also have 4 parking areas, a large mosque, and this hotel provides prayer mats and the Qur'an in each room. Grasia hotel also supports MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, and Exhibitions) events by having 14 meeting rooms. The opportunity that Grasia Hotel has is that Grasia Hotel Semarang has point of interest which is close to tourism place in Semarang City or places that have the potential to bring a lot of people in the city of Semarang. The weakness of Grasia Hotel is that has been operating for a long time since 1994 and there are old buildings that have not been renovated, for example it can be seen from TripAdvisor that there are guests who are dissatisfied with hotel's room, so it has a threat for Grasia Hotel's guests will move to other hotels.

After prepared the SWOT analysis, there was a RACE (Reach, Act, Convert, Engage) that used to framework planning to set the activities for digital marketing (Chaffey & Chadwick, 2019),

then the concern of guest's awareness for the Grasia Hotel Semarang would increase and reach of the promotional content can be created through good actions between own media and earn media. Then the act was created with the interaction and actions of potential guests, after that sales would achieve and convert the multichannel selling from online to offline, and finally Hotel Grasia got the engage from digital marketing.

Online Travel Agent and Rating Reviews

OTA or Online Travel Agent is an online booking service facility for consumers to make reservations at hotels and other accommodations. Online Travel Agent produced a very large reach because it was digital based that easy to ued which could be done anywhere and anytime. The payment method used has also been authorized, so guests can make payments via bank transfer methods or other digital payment.

The results of an interview with SGT (Front Office Manager of Grasia Hotel Semarang) said that Grasia Hotel Semarang had 8 (eight) OTA platforms partners, Traveloka, Agoda, Tiket.com, PegiPegi, Booking.com, Xpedia, MG Holiday, dan Click & Book to advertise hotel rooms. However, the platforms that were frequently used are Traveloka and Tiket.com. If there was material information from hotel, the hotel would send the photos and description of the latest promo or information provided by the hotel or the OTA could provide promos that would be posted on their platform by notifying the hotel in advance. SGT (Front Office Manager of Grasia Hotel Semarang) also mentioned that the influence of reviews from guests was very important for hotel room sales. Reviews or ratings was benchmarks for potential guests to choose the lodging accommodations they want.

Guest reviews was very important because they provide feedback from guests for the hotel. In addition, the guest also provided reviews via TripAdvisor and Google Maps Reviews. If guests felt satisfied and happy with hotel services, they would give positive reviews and become a benchmark for other guests that want to stay at Grasia Hotel Semarang. Same as reviews from X in Google Maps Reviews, FK (on August 2022) mentioned that there was pros and cons stayed at Grasia Hotel Semarang, the pros were Grasia Hotel gave good and friendly services, spacious hotel, and affordable price used Traveloka or PegiPegi. the cons were the distance between parking lot and the lobby is quite far by walking. From Tripadvisor, majority of guests gave positive reviews and there

are some guests who have negative reviews due to the hotel condition which is considered quite old in the front room's building that the guest felt not impressed as in the review given by JCL (on September 2019).

Therefore, the hotel always tries to maintain guests to provided positive feedback to the hotel by provided excellent service and treatment.

1. Website

Grasia Hotel Semarang has a website, namely www.hotelgrasia.com, SGT (Front Office Manager of Grasia Hotel Semarang) mentioned that the website was operated by the Front Office Department for managing room reservations through the website as a link to social media such as WhatsApp for making reservations, and also DNS (Sales & Marketing Manager of Grasia Hotel Semarang) said that Sales & Marketing Department operated the website as promotional company profile material for guests and as a platform to given offered letters for guests which that letters would be forwarded on the e-mail sales & marketing departments. On the Grasia Hotel Semarang hotel website, there was several elements like explanations for rooms, meeting rooms, wedding packages, restaurant, locations, how to book, Youtube channel, WhatsApp, and company profile. Besides being able to booked room through the website, guests could also view the latest information provided by Grasia Hotel Semarang.

2. Social Media Marketing

Sosial media marketing was an important category in digital marketing because it could encourage potential clients to visit hotel's social media profile or website or blog about their hotel. In addition, the hotel can also establish relationship with prospective clients via chat or online ingteraction. Conversation can create opportunities to attract potential guests by sharing product information, promotions, or the customer service. DNS (Sales & Marketing Manager of Grasia Hotel Semarang) said that Grasia Hotel often to shared promotional content via Instagram, WhatsApp, and E-mail. Video and photo content is still strength on Instagram' platforms because questions from guests was often arise via Instagram, while WhatsApp and E-mail were used to negotiate offers and blast-promotions to potential guests and guests who have stayed at the Grasia Hotel Semarang. Product information provided in video and photo content included several visits from public figures, room promotion in monthly, staycation and holidays season, wedding,

announcement about Grasia Hotel Semarang, events and partnerships, and also CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) activities which could be entertained so that it would attract the attention of potential guests because of screening reviews from the guests themselves.

3. Room Advertising Approach

Grasia Hotel Semarang generally used 5 (five) room advertising approaches according to A Shimp (2005) (Firmansyah, 2020), there were :

- 1) Informing, Grasia Hotel Semarang always improved TOMA (Top of Mind Awareness) in provided information through the content provided. SGT (Front Office Manager of Grasia Hotel Semarang) said that Front Office and Sales & Marketing Department did collaboration to create a room content such as the 'Mudik Asik' package, StayTember, City Tour Room Package, Free Drop POI Room Package, Octovaganza, and Grasia Hotel near from Jatidiri stadium and other point of interest.
- 2) Persuading, advertising could be said to be effective if it is able to persuade customers to try a product or service that being advertised, such as the advantage of this hotel's facility was that had many meeting rooms so the guests could try to stayed with full board package. In other hand, another way to persuade was to provided, launching products, discounts promotions and gave treatment or complimentary.
- 3) Reminding, Grasia Hotel Semarang kept a hotel's brand in the minds of guests so that it always increases consumer attention in selecting decisions about brand image. This statement was given by NF (General Manager of Grasia Hotel Semarang) that rather than hotel management lowering the room prices, it was better for hotels to give gift in the form of welcoming drinks or Grasia's pouches as complimentary service, also gave birthday greetings compliments so that the guests always remember the Grasia Hotel and would not to try other hotels. Both of SGT (Front Office Manager of Grasia Hotel Semarang) and DNS (Sales & Marketing Manager of Grasia Hotel Semarang) said that reminding done by sending information via telephone and chat such as WhatsApp blasting, direct messages, or e-mail regarding promotional updates. If there was Instagram story content for a long term, it would be uploaded every day to keep reminding the guests.

- 4) Adding Value by influencing the guest's perceptions of other competitors. NF (General Manager of Grasia Hotel Semarang) always said that Grasia Hotel Semarang had various facilities like large mosque, four parking lots and fit by buses, 14 meeting rooms, halal MUI certificate for beverage and food, the best muslim-friendly hotel nominee, sharia standard, and also had point of interest, such as near form tourism area like Sampoo Kong, Lawang Sewu, Giri Natha Temple, airport, also government places.
- 5) Assisting, as a companion to the hotel's business facilities to carried out marketing communications to launch sales promotions. Information on the launched of a product was share via social media, such as Instagram by provided photo or video content, such as a new menu at the hotel's restaurant facilities so that guests stayed overnight knew what's new at the Grasia Hotel Semarang. Another digital launch tool was by radio or television. Grasia Hotel Semarang often cooperated with Idola FM for radio and TVKU Central Java for TV advertising facilities. SGT (Front Office Manager of Grasia Hotel Semarang) and DNS (Sales & Marketing Manager of Grasia Hotel Semarang) had mentioned this too in the interviews.

Grasia Hotel always evaluate each period to be able to find out promotional themes by offered lower prices and changed the atmosphere of hotel's decorations so that they can keep guests coming back again to stay at the Grasia Hotel Semarang. After these actions have been taken, content can be created and shared on social media so that the wider community had known about the latest information about the Grasia Hotel Semarang. According to DNS (Sales & Marketing Manager of Grasia Hotel Semarang), digital marketing through digital media could be said to be 100% effective because almost everyone used gadgets to find information and interact more wider audience.

This study had limitations that author could not predict the future developments due to limited buildings that had not been updated or reconstructed. Hope for further research, hopefully the next author could provide research on the latest Grasia Hotels so the digital marketing could be more innovative and creative.

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