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Digital Video Virtual Tours as a Potential Factor Considered by Tourists Visiting Bali

I Wayan Pariasta Bendesa¹, I Ketut Sutapa², Isyrotullatifah³, Ni Nyoman Ardani⁴

University of Dhyana Pura, Badung Bali¹

University of Triatma Mulya, Badung, Bali^{2,3,4}

wayanpb98@gmail.com¹, ketut.sutapa@triatmamulya.ac.id², isyrotullatifah@triatmamulya.ac.id³,
nyoman.ardani@triatmamulya.ac.id⁴

ABSTRACT

The proliferation of digital technologies has established video content as a predominant medium for showcasing the aesthetic appeal of tourism destinations. For middle-class tourists, such content functions as a catalyst for physical visitation, while for economically constrained individuals, it provides a viable substitute for in-person travel. This study seeks to quantify the influence of virtual tourism videos on destination image perception. Employing a multiple linear regression analysis, we examined three determinants video quality, features, and language against the dependent variable of destination image. Data were collected from 62 purposively sampled respondents, including tourism practitioners, travel agency clientele, and visitors to Bali. Results indicate that video quality and features exert a statistically significant positive effect on destination image, whereas linguistic elements demonstrate no measurable impact. These findings imply that destination management organizations should prioritize optimizing technical quality and interactive features in digital promotional content. Furthermore, disseminating knowledge regarding the utility of digital videos in facilitating informed destination selection is recommended for public awareness initiatives.

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1. Introduction

The global tourism industry plays an essential role in shaping the world economy, contributing \$10.9 trillion, equivalent to 10% of global GDP, and generating 357 million jobs by 2024 (WTTC, 2025). Driven by robust growth in both domestic and international spending, tourism fosters economic development and promotes cross-cultural understanding on a global scale (Nair et al., 2025). The industry's ongoing transformation, fueled by rapid advances in digital technology, continues to redefine the tourism landscape (Gutierriz et al., 2023).

Digital platforms have revolutionized the way travelers plan their journeys, encompassing everything from online bookings and virtual experiences (Sobarna, 2025) to personalized, AI-driven recommendations (Kim et al., 2025). These innovations have enhanced convenience, broadened accessibility, and allowed for highly tailored travel options. Although the COVID-19 pandemic posed significant challenges to the tourism industry, it also accelerated the adoption of virtual tours and

alternative online services (Wu & Wang, 2025), as well as safety-focused technologies aimed at protecting travelers (Ng Kok Meng & Bhutia, 2025).

Among the growing array of digital innovations, virtual tours and digital videos hold particular significance for the immersive experiences they provide (Sobarna, 2025; Dutta, 2025; Kim et al., 2025). These technologies allow tourists to explore destinations remotely, offering deeper insights and aiding informed decision-making through vivid and engaging visual content. Notably, it is often the authenticity of the material, rather than its technological sophistication, that proves most effective in attracting travelers (Zeqiri, 2024). Immersive devices further amplify this authentic experience, strengthening tourists' emotional connection with the destinations they envision or eventually visit.

Authenticity remains essential for destinations such as Bali. As a globally recognized tourist destination (Utama et al., 2023), Bali depends heavily on the tourism sector (Sharon, 2024), welcoming over 6.3 million international visitors each year (Subadra, 2025; Theurillat, 2025). Its allure stems from a harmonious blend of breathtaking natural landscapes, the vibrant Hindu-Balinese culture, and the warm hospitality of its people. Capturing these qualities authentically in digital media is vital to maintaining the island's appeal. Bali's tourism industry continues to adopt digital technologies, leveraging their potential to promote the destination while advancing sustainability in tourism practices (Subadra, 2024).

This study aims to explore the significance of digital video tours as key factors shaping destination image and influencing travelers' decisions to choose Bali. It addresses a notable gap in current understanding of how digital technologies contribute to tourism marketing, particularly in aiding Bali's post-pandemic recovery efforts (Oka et al., 2024; Antara, 2022).

Previous research has reinforced the impact of virtual experiences on tourist behavior. For instance, Ouerghemmi et al. (2023) demonstrated that telepresence in virtual reality (VR) tourism strongly influences mental imagery and intentions to visit. Similarly, Ulinnuha (2023) identified a moderate correlation between engagement in virtual tours and tourists' interest in, and decisions to, visit physical destinations. The digitalization program for tourist villages through the creation of promotional videos in the form of 360-degree virtual tours was conducted by taking photos and videos at Jagasatru and Beji Dedari waterfalls. We implemented these videos on social media platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, and websites (Yuda et al., 2024).

Bali's economic stability hinges critically on tourism, a sector accounting for over 50% of its GDP. Consequently, understanding the tangible impact of digital video tours transcends academic interest; it represents an urgent strategic imperative for stakeholders across Bali's tourism ecosystem. While these tools promise transformative benefits to enhance destination image, securing competitive differentiation, supporting sustainable visitor management, and ensuring culturally authentic representation, unchecked proliferation has created a critical knowledge void. This gap directly impedes evidence-based decision-making: despite substantial investments in virtual tour technologies by Bali's government and private sector, empirical validation of their efficacy in converting virtual engagement into physical visitation, extended stays, and higher tourist expenditure remains alarmingly absent.

This study directly addresses this pressing gap by quantifying how virtual tour videos shape destination perception and, critically, drive concrete tourism behaviors (bookings, duration of stay, and spending). Without such data, stakeholders risk misallocating limited resources on untested digital strategies, potentially eroding Bali's market position against intensifying global competition. Our findings deliver urgently needed, actionable intelligence to optimize marketing ROI, fortify destination resilience, and safeguard Bali's long-term socio-economic vitality.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Bali Virtual Tourism Overview

Bali which renowned for its vibrant culture and stunning landscapes stands as a leading tropical destination and a case study in modern tourism marketing. The tourism sector contributes 30–40% of Bali's GDP and supports over one million jobs. Before the pandemic, the island welcomed 6.3 million international visitors, with numbers rising again to 4 million by 2022 (Sharon, 2024; Subadra and Hughes, 2021). However, ongoing challenges such as over-tourism and environmental strain highlight the urgent need for sustainable practices.

Bali's tourism promotion strategy blends digital and traditional marketing approaches, spearheaded by the Bali Tourism Board and key industry stakeholders. The "Wonderful Indonesia" campaign leverages social media platforms, influencer partnerships, and immersive digital content to showcase Bali's appeal, highlighting themes of relaxation, adventure, and cultural authenticity. Complementary initiatives such as "Bali Clean and Green" aim to engage environmentally conscious tourists (Zuchrinata, 2025). Luxury resorts also play a strategic role, employing personalized marketing techniques and encouraging user-generated content (e.g., #VisitBali) to foster trust and attract upscale travelers. These combined efforts contribute to a dynamic and adaptive branding ecosystem that supports Bali's visibility in a competitive global tourism market (Prasiasa et al., 2025).

Bali has also embraced VR technology to enhance marketing efforts, mitigate over-tourism, and improve destination accessibility. The Virtual Bali application, developed in collaboration with Google and Oculus, offers 360° tours of natural attractions such as Ubud's forests and coral reefs, capturing the interest of global audiences, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic (Dutta, 2025). Additionally, private stakeholders have introduced preview VR rooms and immersive storytelling experiences at travel exhibitions to showcase cultural events like Nyepi (Bagus, 2025). Despite challenges such as limited internet infrastructure and high device costs, the continued adoption of VR and AR technologies supports sustainable tourism and offers immersive, experiential engagement for visitors. The use of digital video is an effort to differentiate conventional marketing concepts towards digital marketing, Karta et. al, (2021)

Tourism marketing has shifted away from costly mass media approaches (Misal, 2017) toward data-driven digital platforms, propelled by globalization and evolving consumer demands. Current strategies rely heavily on tools such as search engine optimization (SEO), social media engagement, and online booking systems (Adams, 2025), offering improved cost-effectiveness and interactive user experiences. However, this digital shift also brings challenges, including information overload, which can complicate decision-making for travelers.

Visual media has become a focal point in tourism marketing, with platforms such as social media and VR tours playing a key role in shaping destination perceptions and influencing booking decisions (Kukkakorpi & Pantti, 2020). While these tools promote greater engagement and democratize access to tourism experiences, they also carry the risk of generating unrealistic expectations. To preserve authenticity, it is essential to balance emotional appeal with credible storytelling and to leverage user-generated content (Arora, 2025) in order to create transparent and compelling experiences.

2.2. Virtual Tours & Digital Videos in Tourism

Virtual tours have emerged as a transformative force within tourism marketing, fundamentally changing how destinations engage potential visitors. By offering immersive previews of travel experiences, these digital tools allow users to explore locations remotely, sparking inspiration and facilitating informed travel decisions (Kieanwatana & Vongvit, 2024). The landscape of virtual tours is diverse, encompassing a wide spectrum of formats. These range from relatively simple 360-degree videos and web-based platforms accessible on standard browsers to highly sophisticated, interactive VR-based experiences requiring specialized headsets. Furthermore, dynamic drone footage provides unique aerial perspectives, while Augmented Reality (AR) layers digital information onto the real world. Each format delivers distinct levels of interactivity and realism, catering to different audience needs and technological capabilities, collectively enhancing destination appeal and accessibility.

The sophistication of virtual tours represents a significant evolution from their origins in the 1990s as basic, static panoramas (Cassimatis, 2025). Driven by rapid advancements in virtual reality (VR) technology, ubiquitous mobile device adoption, and seamless social media integration, these experiences have become far more engaging and widely available. This technological progression enabled richer, more interactive explorations long before 2020. However, the global COVID-19 pandemic acted as a powerful catalyst, dramatically accelerating their adoption out of necessity as physical travel halted. Recognizing the urgent need to maintain global visibility and engagement, major cultural institutions and destinations swiftly pivoted; prominent examples include the Louvre Museum offering comprehensive online VR tours, effectively bringing world-renowned art collections to a vast, geographically dispersed audience during lockdowns (Kieanwatana & Vongvit, 2024). This period cemented virtual tours as an indispensable component of modern tourism strategy.

Virtual tours offer significant advantages that extend beyond simple marketing, fundamentally enhancing destination engagement through improved accessibility, substantial cost savings, and heightened user interaction (Barzey, 2022). By enabling remote exploration for individuals facing physical, financial, or geographical barriers, they democratize travel inspiration. Furthermore, these digital experiences promote ethical tourism by alleviating pressure on fragile environments and communities suffering from over-tourism. For tourism providers, virtual tours present compelling economic benefits: they significantly reduce operational expenses associated with physical infrastructure, staffing, and energy consumption. Simultaneously, they generate valuable indirect income streams by fostering improved online interactions that translate into higher website engagement, longer viewing times, and ultimately, increased conversion rates for actual bookings. Critically, virtual tours also contribute meaningfully to sustainability goals; by offering immersive alternatives to physical travel, they help lower the carbon footprint associated with transportation and mitigate the detrimental impacts of excessive visitor numbers on popular sites, preserving them for future generations.

This rise of virtual tours aligns with the broader transformation of travel planning driven by digital technology, particularly in the crucial search and evaluation stages where travelers actively seek information (Buhalis & Law, 2008). Within this digital landscape, rich multimedia content, especially compelling video, has emerged as a paramount tool for effectively conveying the unique atmosphere, aesthetics, and experiences of a destination. Virtual tour videos represent a powerful evolution of this trend, offering interactive, immersive previews that go far beyond static images or text descriptions. To fully understand their influence on tourist behavior and choices, it is essential to examine the specific role these dynamic virtual tours play within this complex decision-making framework. They function not just as promotional tools, but as key informational resources that shape perceptions, reduce perceived risk, and build destination familiarity long before a physical visit is considered or booked.

Research on virtual tours within tourism marketing is undeniably expanding, reflecting their growing strategic importance. However, a significant gap persists: dedicated studies rigorously analyzing the specific, causal impact of virtual tour videos on actual destination choice and booking behavior remain scarce. Much of the existing literature tends to situate virtual tours within broader digital marketing or experience design frameworks. While valuable for understanding their role in the marketing mix, this broader focus often fails to isolate and quantify the direct influence these immersive videos exert on converting interest into concrete travel decisions. This lack of causal data linking virtual tour exposure to bookings is a critical limitation. Furthermore, despite the proliferation of high-quality virtual tour content across major platforms like YouTube and within immersive ecosystems like Meta's VR offerings, research methodologies haven't fully kept pace. Many current studies continue to rely predominantly on qualitative insights or small-scale, self-reported user surveys. These approaches, while useful for exploring perceptions, often lack the statistical power and objective behavioral tracking needed to establish definitive cause-and-effect relationships, particularly concerning tangible outcomes like reservations or revenue generation.

This research gap becomes particularly pronounced and problematic when examining specific, culturally rich destinations like Bali. There is a notable absence of empirical research focused explicitly on measuring the impact of video tours within the Balinese tourism context. Existing studies frequently concentrate on Western markets or generic tourist populations, inadvertently overlooking the distinct cultural sensitivities, unique environmental pressures (such as overtourism concerns in Ubud or coastal areas), and specific economic structures inherent to Bali's tourism ecosystem. Consequently, insights derived from these broader studies may not translate effectively to the Balinese market. Moreover, research conducted within or about Bali often relies heavily on anecdotal evidence or self-reported data from limited samples. This methodology falls short of providing the robust, evidence-based understanding required. There is a clear need for more sophisticated quantitative approaches, such as longitudinal surveys tracking user journeys from virtual tour engagement to booking, or econometric modeling that correlates virtual tour metrics (views, engagement time, interactions) with actual tourism arrival data and revenue figures specific to the island. Such methodologies could reveal nuanced insights currently obscured by less rigorous data collection.

Addressing this multifaceted research deficiency demands a shift towards context-specific methodologies tailored to Bali's unique environment. Future research initiatives must combine rigorous, tailored approaches incorporating tools capable of tracking granular user engagement metrics (e.g., heatmaps, click-through rates, view duration within specific tour segments) and crucially, linking this engagement data demonstrably to downstream booking behavior on Balinese tourism platforms. Experimental techniques like A/B testing, comparing user responses and conversion rates between different virtual tour formats or promotional messages specifically designed for the Balinese market, offer a powerful avenue for isolating causal factors influencing effectiveness. Developing this kind of granular, evidence-based understanding is not merely academic; it is essential for stakeholders within Bali's vital tourism sector. Equipped with concrete data derived from methodologies sensitive to local nuances, destination marketers, hoteliers, and tour operators can move beyond reliance on generic global models. They can instead adapt and optimize their digital strategies – particularly their virtual tour content and deployment – to authentically reflect Balinese cultural values, address local sustainability challenges like overtourism mitigation, resonate with the expectations of their diverse target markets, and ultimately, drive more effective and sustainable tourism outcomes.

2.3. Framework Concepts and Theories

The conceptual framework illustrates how digital video virtual tours are integrated into key stages of the tourist decision-making process. These videos are particularly influential during the search and information evaluation phases (Crompton, 2024; Loughran, 2024), where they spark travel interest, offer detailed insights, and facilitate effective destination comparisons. By providing preview experiences, virtual tours help reduce uncertainty, strengthen traveler confidence at the moment of booking, and enhance post-purchase satisfaction. Throughout the decision-making process, rich and interactive virtual content actively shapes consumer choices.

Planned behavior theory posits that individual behavior is shaped by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 2020). Virtual tour videos influence these factors within the context of tourism decision-making. The elaboration likelihood model further explains how persuasive communication is processed either through a central route driven by detailed information or a peripheral route influenced by emotional appeal (Karoline et al., 2023). In this framework, virtual tours serve both functions by offering rich, multisensory content that contributes to destination perception (Mediano et al., 2022). The Stimulus Organism Response (SOR) model provides additional insight, describing how external factors impact internal states and behavior (Dzandu et al., 2020). Within this model, virtual tour videos act as stimuli that shape tourists' cognitive and affective perceptions ultimately influencing travel decisions and booking behavior. These stimuli are formed by attributes such as interactivity, visual quality, and

storytelling, which collectively trigger cognitive responses (e.g., destination image, perceived value, and risk) and affective responses (e.g., emotional excitement and desire to travel).

When tourists process information, their perceptions shape travel intentions eventually guiding them toward real travel decisions. The decision-making process follows a multi-stage sequence: 1. Need Recognition where virtual tours spark initial interest in a destination; 2. Information Search where tourists engage with detailed content to learn more; 3. Alternative Evaluation where options are compared visually and experientially; 4. Purchase Decision where trust in the destination is solidified; and 5. Post-Purchase Evaluation where expectations shaped by the virtual tour influence satisfaction.

Digital video tours play a critical role in the search and alternative evaluation stages of travel planning, offering immersive and detailed content that enhances decision-making and encourages travel behavior. Through a structured engagement process, these virtual tours serve as powerful tools in capturing the interest of potential tourists and shaping their destination preferences. This study focuses on analyzing the influence of digital video tour quality, features, and language on the perceived image of a destination. Specifically, it investigates how these elements affect travelers' decisions to visit a destination highlighting the extent to which digital communication in video form contributes to shaping perceptions and guiding travel choices. In order to increase the popularity of a destination, creating virtual videos is a potential branding strategy to strengthen the destination's image, Karta et.al (2021).

3. Methodology

This study investigates the impact of virtual tour videos on destination image and how they influence travelers' decisions to visit Bali. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire designed to reflect current trends in digital tourism. Descriptive in nature, the study aims to offer an in-depth understanding of relevant characteristics and phenomena. In this context, the research focuses on the role of digital virtual tour videos in shaping perceptions of Bali and influencing travel decisions. A quantitative approach was employed, involving structured questionnaires distributed to travel agents, tourism professionals, and tourists who utilized virtual videos prior to visiting Bali. A purposive sampling method was applied to select a total of 62 respondents from these three stakeholder groups.

Multiple linear regression analysis was used to examine the relationship between three independent variables X1 (digital video quality), X2 (digital video features), and X3 (language used in digital video communication) and the dependent variable Y (destination image) as promoted through digital video content.

4. Discussion

Based on the tabulated responses collected through Google Forms, the descriptive analysis reveals three independent variables: Video Quality (X1), comprising three indicators; Features (X2), with four indicators; and Language (X3), represented by a single indicator. The dependent variable is Destination Image (Y), which is measured by one indicator.

Table 1. Variables and Indicators

Variables	Item	Sig. (2Tailed)	Cronbach's Alpha
Quality (X1)	X1.1	0.000	0.814
	X1.2	0.000	
	X1.3	0.000	
Features(X2)	X2.1	0.000	0.904
	X2.2	0.000	
	X2.3	0.000	
Language(X3)	X2.4	0.000	

Image(Y)

The validity test results for the independent variables X1 (Video Quality) and X2 (Features) confirmed that all indicators are valid in representing their respective constructs, with significance values of 0.000, which are below the threshold of 0.05. The reliability tests for both X1 and X2 yielded Cronbach's alpha values above 0.6, indicating that the items meet acceptable reliability standards.

Subsequently, classic assumption testing was conducted, including normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests. The normality test using the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov method produced an Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.200—greater than 0.05—confirming that the data is normally distributed. Multicollinearity was evaluated via tolerance and VIF values from the regression coefficients table. All variables showed tolerance values above 0.10 and VIF values below 10, indicating the absence of multicollinearity issues.

Heteroscedasticity was assessed through regression analysis of the absolute residuals. The results showed significance values above 0.05 for all independent variables—Video Quality (X1) = 0.141, Features (X2) = 0.421, and Language (X3) = 0.186—indicating no heteroscedasticity problems.

Finally, hypothesis testing was conducted to measure the influence of each independent variable (X1, X2, X3) on the dependent variable (Y: Destination Image), using multiple linear regression analysis.

Table 2. Hypotesis Test Results

	Unstandardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Sig.
(Constant)	0.673	0.400	0.098
Quality	0.288	0.138	0.042
Feature	0.583	0.136	0.000
Language	-0.002	0.115	0.987

Dependent Variable: Image

Based on Table 2, the resulting multiple linear regression equation is:

$$Y = 0.673 + 0.288X1 + 0.583X2 - 0.002X3$$

This equation indicates that Video Quality (X1) and Features (X2) exert a positive and significant influence on the Destination Image (Y). Meanwhile, the variable Language (X3) used in the virtual tour videos shows no meaningful impact on the destination image.

The strength of the relationship between these independent variables and the dependent variable is reflected in the Adjusted R² value, which stands at 0.596 (or 59.6%). This implies that 59.6% of the variation in destination image can be attributed to the quality and features of the virtual tour videos. The remaining 40.4% is influenced by other factors not accounted for in the model—such as supplemental video elements or the presence of recognizable personalities or influencers.

5. Conclusion

Based on the results of the analysis, it can be concluded that to effectively enhance a destination's image, virtual tour videos must be well-designed. Key elements include high-quality visuals, sharp image resolution, and strong interactive capabilities. The video features should be comprehensive such as 360° viewing options, user-generated reviews or testimonials, and real-time accessibility. Regarding language use, digital promotional videos should employ clear, straightforward language that is easily understood and tailored to the target market. In this study, the language variable was found to have no significant influence on destination image, likely due to a mismatch between the language used and the preferences of the tourists visiting Bali.

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