

## Netizens' Perception of Bunda Beach And Resort as a Tourism Destination on The Facebook Platform in Gunungsitoli

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### ABSTRACT

Penelitian ini mengkaji persepsi netizen tentang Bunda Beach and Resort sebagai destinasi pariwisata melalui analisis konten di platform Facebook di Gunungsitoli. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif, penelitian ini menganalisis postingan Facebook dan komentar netizen terkait Bunda Beach and Resort dari tahun 2023–2025 untuk memahami bagaimana pengguna media sosial memandang dan terlibat dengan tujuan secara online. Studi ini menggunakan analisis konten untuk memeriksa persepsi netizen berdasarkan aspek-aspek seperti daya tarik, fasilitas, kualitas layanan, dan citra tujuan secara keseluruhan, seperti yang tercermin dalam komentar dan interaksi mereka. Temuan tersebut menunjukkan bahwa netizen umumnya menunjukkan persepsi positif terhadap Bunda Beach and Resort, terutama mengenai keindahan alam dan daya tarik pariwisatanya. Postingan yang menyajikan visual yang menarik dan informasi yang jelas cenderung menerima keterlibatan yang lebih tinggi dalam bentuk suka, komentar, dan berbagi. Selain itu, studi ini menunjukkan bahwa Facebook memainkan peran penting dalam membentuk persepsi publik dan mempromosikan tujuan pariwisata lokal. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pemahaman persepsi netizen dalam promosi pariwisata digital dan memberikan wawasan untuk meningkatkan strategi media sosial untuk pengembangan pariwisata di Gunungsitoli.

*This study examines netizens' perceptions of Bunda Beach and Resort as a tourism destination through the analysis of content on the Facebook platform in Gunungsitoli. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, the research analyzes Facebook posts and netizens' comments related to Bunda Beach and Resort from 2023–2025 to understand how social media users perceive and engage with the destination online. The study employs content analysis to examine netizens' perceptions based on aspects such as attraction, facilities, service quality, and overall image of the destination, as reflected in their comments and interactions. The findings indicate that netizens generally show positive perceptions of Bunda Beach and Resort, particularly regarding its natural beauty and tourism appeal. Posts that present attractive visuals and clear information tend to receive higher engagement in the form of likes, comments, and shares. Additionally, the study demonstrates that Facebook plays an important role in shaping public perception and promoting local tourism destinations. This research contributes to the understanding of netizens' perceptions in digital tourism promotion and provides insights for improving social media strategies for tourism development in Gunungsitoli.*



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## INTRODUCTION

Nias Island is located to the west of North Sumatra, Indonesia, and is part of the Nias Archipelago. The island is surrounded by the Indian Ocean and is well known for its natural beauty, including beaches, coastal landscapes, and cultural richness. Nias Island offers various tourism attractions, ranging from natural destinations to recreational resorts. One of the emerging tourism destinations that highlights the natural charm of Nias is Bunda Beach and Resort, located in Gunungsitoli City. This destination attracts visitors with its coastal scenery, recreational facilities, and resort services, making it one of the tourism icons in the area.

In recent years, tourism has become a popular topic of discussion among the people of Nias on social media platforms, particularly Facebook. Due to social media's high degree of virality, information can travel swiftly and extensively. Facebook makes it simple for people to exchange information, viewpoints, and experiences about travel places. Local communities continue to use Facebook as one of the most popular venues for posting images, videos, and status updates on tourist attractions as well as for voicing their thoughts, satisfaction, or grievances about amenities and services. As a result, Facebook inevitably turns into a platform for the formation and expression of diverse public opinions regarding travel locations.

People's perceptions greatly influence how they see and assess travel places. According to Suyadi et al. (2021), Nur Lindawati et al. (2022), perception is a cognitive process in which people receive stimuli through their senses, reorganize and interpret information, and construct meaning based on their thoughts, feelings, and prior experiences. According to these concepts, perception is influenced by individual experiences as well as how information from the environment—including social media—is interpreted.

Facebook has grown in importance as a tool for public engagement and tourism promotion in the digital age. Because Facebook allows for extensive information sharing, depends on user participation, and is still widely used by the public, particularly young people, to exchange and disseminate tourism-related content, it has emerged as a significant platform for public interaction and tourism promotion in the digital age (Kiswanto et al., 2021; Samia, 2019). Through comments, replies, and shared information, internet users frequently convey their opinions about tourist sites. Because user-generated content like images, videos, and reviews shared on social media shapes destination image, influences tourists' perceptions, and influences their intention to visit, netizens frequently express their opinions about tourist destinations through comments, reactions, and shared content (Maha & Mahagangga, 2023; Samia, 2019). Users can contribute their thoughts, impressions, and experiences by directly responding to posts about Bunda Beach and Resort on the Facebook network. The public's perception of Bunda Beach and Resort as a travel destination is influenced by these internet exchanges. High levels of interaction, such as likes, comments, and shares, show how interested and opinionated internet users are about the location.

To understand how the public perceives a tourist site, it is crucial to analyze the opinions of netizens through Facebook postings. Users' opinions of the attractions, amenities, services, and general perception of the destination are reflected in Facebook comments and interactions. Facebook comments facilitate digital communication by allowing individuals and communities to share ideas, opinions, and facts, which shapes public opinion. As a result, Facebook influences how the general public views travel destinations in addition to acting as a promotional tool.

Based on this context, this study focuses on netizens' perception of Bunda Beach and Resort as a tourism destination on the Facebook platform in Gunungsitoli. By analyzing Facebook posts and user comments, this research aims to understand how netizens perceive and engage with Bunda Beach and Resort online. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to a better understanding of digital tourism promotion and provide insights for improving social media strategies in promoting local tourism destinations

## METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of netizens' perceptions of Bunda Beach and Resort as a tourism destination on the Facebook platform. A qualitative descriptive technique is suitable when a study seeks to comprehend participants' own

experiences and perceptions, according to Creswell (2016). In order to provide a comprehensive knowledge of netizens' opinions about Bunda Beach and Resort as a travel destination as expressed through interactions on the Facebook platform, this study uses a qualitative descriptive technique.

This approach is appropriate because social media, particularly Facebook, functions not only as a promotional medium but also as a space where users actively express opinions and perceptions related to tourism destinations (Kiswanto et al., 2021; Samia, 2019).

The focus of this research is on netizens' perceptions, which are reflected through user-generated content (UGC) such as comments, reactions, and shared posts on Facebook. User-generated content plays an important role in shaping destination image and influencing how tourism destinations are perceived by the public (Maha & Mahagangga, 2023; Samia, 2019).

The research subjects are netizens who interact with Facebook posts related to Bunda Beach and Resort, particularly through comments, reactions, and shares. The selection of subjects was conducted using purposive sampling, with criteria including Facebook users who actively engage with public posts about Bunda Beach and Resort. This sampling technique ensures that the data are obtained from users who directly express their perceptions of the destination through Facebook interactions.

Data were collected in 2023-2025. Primary data were obtained through observation of Facebook posts and netizens' interactions related to Bunda Beach and Resort. Relevant data, including comments, reactions, and shared content, were documented using screenshots to support systematic analysis. Secondary data were collected through literature studies related to tourism promotion, social media, user-generated content, and perception studies.

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the stages of data familiarization, coding, theme identification, and interpretation as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). This analysis process aims to identify recurring patterns and key themes that represent netizens' perceptions of Bunda Beach and Resort as a tourism destination on the Facebook platform.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The impressions of tourism locations, such as Bunda Beach and Resort's natural features, amenities, and services, are greatly influenced by the opinions of netizens expressed through Facebook interactions in the digital age.

### ***Netizens' Perceptions of Natural Attractions and Scenic Beauty***

The findings of the Facebook content analysis show that internet users have a very favorable opinion of Bunda Beach and Resort's aesthetic appeal and natural beauty. The environment, seaside beauty, and natural ambience that are displayed through photo and video uploads are praised in numerous comments. Words like "very beautiful," "a beautiful place," "so cool," "amazing," and "wow" are common in the comment sections, indicating favorable emotional reactions to this location. There were numerous comments, likes, and shares on one post that included drone footage of the Bunda Beach and Resort region. This high level of interaction indicates that netizens' favorable opinions of the destination's natural beauty are reinforced by visually appealing content. These results are in line with earlier research (Maha & Mahagangga, 2023; Samia, 2019) that contends social media destination visualization is crucial in influencing public perceptions of destination image and tourism appeal.

### ***Netizens' Perceptions of Facilities and Comfort***

Internet users pay close attention to Bunda Beach and Resort's amenities in addition to its natural features. The beach area, the swimming pool, and the lodging facilities are all seen favorably, according to the remarks that were examined. These facilities are referred to by online users as "cool," "adequate," "spacious," "clean," and "well-maintained." Extra amenities like hotel guests' access to the swimming pool are also thought of as added value that improves tourist comfort.

Strong interest and favorable reactions from online users were demonstrated by the large number of likes and comments on posts showcasing the swimming pool facilities. Netizens note in the comment sections that, given the services offered, the prices are reasonably priced.

According to this perception, amenities and affordability are significant factors that netizens take into account when assessing travel destinations. These results confirm the idea that visitors' opinions are influenced not only by the beauty of the natural world but also by the standard of the amenities that enhance the whole travel experience.

### ***Netizens' Perceptions of Service and Tourism Experience***

Another significant theme in netizens' perceptions is service quality. According to a number of remarks, Bunda Beach and Resort employees are thought to be amiable, considerate, and courteous when rendering services. Visitors' opinions of a nice and comfortable destination are formed in part by positive service perceptions.

Comments with affirmative phrases like "agree," "great," and "enjoy the beauty" show that netizens create opinions based on both individual experiences and group opinions formed through Facebook social interactions. This illustrates how Facebook serves as a digital communication platform that facilitates the development of public perceptions about travel locations.

### ***The Role of Facebook in Shaping Destination Image***

Overall, the study's conclusions show that Facebook is crucial in creating and spreading favorable opinions of Bunda Beach and Resort. Content with eye-catching images, facility evaluations, and travel experiences effectively draws viewers in and promotes netizen engagement through likes, comments, and shares. This high level of interaction implies that Facebook serves as a platform for creating destination pictures based on user experiences and perceptions in addition to being a promotional tool.

These results are consistent with Kiswanto et al. (2021), who claim that Facebook's reliance on user interaction and extensive information dissemination makes it an effective platform for promoting travel. In order to help tourist managers create more successful digital marketing strategies, netizen perceptions created through Facebook can be a valuable source of information.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of content analysis of netizens' posts and comments on the Facebook platform, it can be concluded that Bunda Beach and Resort is positively perceived as a tourism destination by the online community in Gunungsitoli. This positive perception is mainly reflected in netizens' appreciation of natural beauty, visual appeal, and destination images displayed through social media content. Posts that present attractive visuals and clear information have been proven to increase user engagement in the form of likes, comments, and shares, which shows the high interest and emotional response of netizens to this destination. The results of this study support Facebook's significant function as a digital marketing tool that not only spreads information but also molds people's perceptions of travel locations. In order to improve the destination's reputation and promote the growth of local tourism in a sustainable way, tourism destination managers are urged to maximize innovative, educational, and interactive social media content management tactics.

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