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Strategies and Steps Taken by Tourism Stakeholders to Communicate Urban Tourism Promotions to Generation Z in Jakarta

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Abstract

Urban tourism in Jakarta faces both challenges and opportunities in attracting Gen Z as potential domestic tourists. This study proposes promotional strategies based on the strategic steps taken by tourism stakeholders in communicating urban tourism promotions to Gen Z. This study employs a qualitative approach using the design thinking method through five stages: empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test. Data were collected through observation, semi-structured interviews, and literature review. The results indicate that stakeholders adopt three main approaches: (1) strengthening their role through digital ecosystems, culturally informed policies, and creative public spaces; (2) leveraging technological innovations such as Augmented Reality/Virtual Reality, gamification, and interactive social media content; and (3) promotion strategies based on community engagement, digital accessibility, and cross-sector collaboration. These findings underscore that the integration of technology, creativity, and participatory approaches is key to building an emotional connection with Gen Z and strengthening Jakarta's position as an urban tourism destination relevant to the lifestyle of the younger generation.

Keywords : Gen Z, urban tourism, design thinking, gamification

A. Introduction

Urban tourism has evolved into a global phenomenon that continues to expand, in tandem with the growth of metropolitan cities as hubs of economic, cultural, and creative activity. Major cities around the world continue to attract tourists with their cultural heritage, modern entertainment, and culinary experiences. Urban tourism is projected to account for more than 30% of total international travel by 2023, making it a vital component of the global tourism industry (WTO, 2018). The use of digital technology in tourism development has become a key driver of sustainable urban tourism, with the aim of enhancing the quality of life for tourists and visitors (Polishchuk, 2023). As a metropolitan hub, Jakarta offers a wide variety of tourist attractions, including modern shopping centers, creative spaces, cultural and culinary destinations, and family recreational spots. These conditions make Jakarta an ideal location to study tourist behavior, particularly among Generation Z (Gen Z), which is currently the largest age group in Indonesia and has the potential to become the dominant market in the tourism industry in the future (Gurning et al., 2024).

Gen Z refers to those born after 1995, with the oldest members turning 24 in 2014 (Chhetri et al., 2014). The letter "Z" comes from the last letter of the alphabet, symbolizing the end of established roles, traditions, and identities. Gen Z possesses a unique personality, philosophy, and work ethic distinct from other generations. They have also proven to be highly resilient in various circumstances. However, most fundamentally, Gen Z is a group whose lives are profoundly shaped by technology and the internet, which have become key factors influencing nearly every aspect of their development (Sladek & Grabiner, 2014). Gen Z's lives are so dependent on technology that they prioritize popularity on social media by engaging in sensational acts. Gen Z's behavior is still being observed, yet this generation is also known for being creative, innovative, open-minded, and assertive.

Understanding the attitudes and behaviors of Gen Z as local tourists is crucial for the development of urban tourism in Jakarta. Previous research has examined Gen Z's behavior in tourism. IDN Research Institute (2022) reports that approximately 55% of Gen Z respondents in Indonesia expressed a willingness to travel, with travel preferences focused on nature, culinary experiences, urban destinations, and staycations, alongside a dominant hobby of playing games. Two out of five Gen Z individuals play mobile games. Recent developments indicate a growing synergy between the tourism and gaming industries in Indonesia. The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy launched the Indonesia Game Seed 2025 program to empower local developers to create innovative games that can also promote sustainable tourism and cultural heritage. This indicates a shift in the travel behavior of Gen Z consumers. Stakeholders, including local governments, local authorities, and industry players, must be able to recognize the unique characteristics of this generation. This ability will ensure that communication plans and marketing offers align with their needs. On the other hand, a failure to understand Gen Z can lead to ineffective campaigns and a decline in future visits from this key

market segment. However, research on stakeholder communication strategies in promoting urban tourism to Gen Z in Indonesia, particularly in Jakarta, remains very limited. The research question posed is: "What steps do urban tourism stakeholders take to communicate urban tourism promotions to Gen Z?" Thus, this study aims to fill this gap by deeply exploring the steps taken by urban tourism stakeholders in communicating tourism promotions to Gen Z in Jakarta. This study employs a human-centered design thinking approach. It not only identifies existing strategies but also explores Gen Z's own perspectives on how they wish to be engaged and communicated with.

B. Literature Review

Generation Z

Generation Z (Gen Z) is a term used to describe individuals born between 1996 and 2009 (Sladek & Grabinger, 2014). Other classifications suggest that Gen Z comprises those born between 1995 and 2012 (Fitri et al., 2023). Research findings reveal the values and aspirations of Gen Z in shaping their identities as individuals as follows (IDN Research Institute, 2022): (1) The majority assess religious tolerance in Indonesia as already quite good. Although gender equality is seen as progressing, they acknowledge it still needs improvement; (2) In family life, Gen Z prioritizes their parents above all else. They tend to delay marriage until they reach the age of 26–30, which is a later age range compared to the Millennial generation; (3) Gen Z's interest in education and careers is very high. As beneficiaries of the demographic dividend, one in three prefers online learning for self-development. Interest in entrepreneurship reaches 64%, particularly in the lower-middle-income segment. Consumer-oriented jobs such as marketing, transportation, media, public relations, and computer science are the top choices, with the influencer profession also seen as promising; (4) In media consumption, Gen Z is still exposed to conventional TV but prefers digital publishing over traditional newspapers. They focus more on entertainment content (music, movies, video games) than news. WhatsApp and social media play a major role, with many celebrities transitioning to become influencers on YouTube, further strengthening digital influence among them; (5) In terms of entertainment and recreation, Gen Z enjoys outdoor sports. In 2022, 55% traveled via Traveloka with a focus on nature and cuisine. YouTube is the primary music streaming platform (surpassing JOOX and Spotify) for pop and K-pop genres. Podcasts are listened to by one-third of Gen Z, while their film preferences include comedy, action, and local dramas. As many as 43% of Indonesian Gen Z are also active mobile gamers; (6) In financial management, Gen Z's monthly spending generally remains below Rp4 million. Conventional bank accounts remain the primary choice, with interest in local investments and alternative assets (cryptocurrency and NFTs). The use of e-wallets and cashless payments is growing rapidly, as evidenced by 79% of Gen Z actively using e-commerce platforms.

Consumer Behavior in the Digital Age

Consumer behavior in the digital age has undergone significant changes. Shareef et al. (2016) distinguish between traditional consumer behavior and online shopping. According to them, online purchasing has the following unique characteristics: (1) Consumers are more responsive to exclusive offers on digital platforms than to purchasing products in general; (2) They cannot physically evaluate products using their senses before purchasing; (3) The process of information search and purchasing is highly dependent on consumers' digital literacy and ICT experience; (4) Belief in technology and the level of trust influence online purchasing decisions.

Technological advancements are also transforming the tourism industry. Bajpai and Lee (2015) state that the internet is a key factor in understanding consumer behavior in the e-tourism sector. Their study in Taiwan identified three stages of consumer behavior: (1) Stimulus trigger, which is the drive from travel interest and exposure to online applications; (2) Information search as a response to curiosity; (3) Post-purchase service quality assessment, which determines customer loyalty.

Video game inspired tourism

Video games have expanded into non-commercial sectors such as education, healthcare, and tourism as a promotional medium (Xu et al., 2016). Their strength lies in the gameplay experience that actively engages users. By adapting the principles of gamification the application of game elements to enhance engagement (Egger & Bulencea, 2015) video games are capable of creating compelling narratives and immersive experiences that are essential in tourism marketing (Yu & Egger, 2021; Neuhofer et al., 2020).

Video games serve as a preview medium for destinations, allowing travelers to get to know a place before visiting (Dubois & Gibbs, 2018). Locations in games represent real-world environments with a touch of fantasy, while also providing direct information about the destination (Ramírez-Moreno & Leorke, 2021). This can encourage gamers to take a real-life trip to the locations depicted (Xu et al., 2016).

The high level of immersion makes video games an effective approach for conveying tourism messages (Dubois et al., 2021). However, marketers need to be cautious because tourists may expect the real-life experience to be exactly as depicted in the game (Ramírez Moreno & Leorke, 2020). Although the representation of destinations in games is virtual, players often perceive these locations as real destinations. The popularity of video games has been shown to have a positive impact on the image of tourism destinations. Some real-world examples include Notre Dame in Paris in *Assassin's Creed: Unity*, Hong Kong in *Sleeping Dogs*, New York City in *Marvel's Spider-Man*, and the Moscow Metro in *Metro: 2033* (Bhunia, 2022). Video games offer immersive, interactive, and emotional experiences, making them an ideal medium for conveying the values, stories, and attractions of urban tourism in an enjoyable and participatory way—especially to younger generations like Gen Z. The

presence of real-world destinations in games can boost motivation to visit while reinforcing positive perceptions of a city. However, the use of video games in the tourism industry is still relatively new and has not yet surpassed the effectiveness of traditional media such as films (Dubois et al., 2021).

C. Research Methodology

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach using the design thinking method. The design thinking approach was chosen because of its iterative and participatory nature, which aligns with the study's objective to deeply explore the perspectives of users (Gen Z) and stakeholders, as well as to formulate strategic steps centered on user needs (Yassierli, 2023). This study falls within the pragmatism paradigm, which emphasizes solutions that can be practically implemented and prioritizes beneficial outcomes. In this study, design thinking is used to identify strategies and steps for tourism stakeholders in communicating urban tourism promotions to Gen Z in Jakarta through five working stages: empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test.

In the empathize phase, the research began with a series of observations, data collection, and in-depth interviews focused on urban tourism in Jakarta. Participants in this phase included Generation Z as the primary subjects as well as tourism stakeholders. The initial exploration focused on three main aspects: (1) Gen Z's preferences regarding urban tourism in Jakarta, (2) Gen Z's perceptions of the role of innovation and technology in enhancing the appeal of urban tourism, and (3) stakeholders' views on the strategic approaches needed to optimize tourism promotion and attractions in the city center.

The findings from the empathize stage then serve as the foundation for the define stage, during which researchers systematically identify and select data in accordance with the research objectives. At this stage, data is filtered to determine the most relevant and significant information, ensuring that only data directly contributing to the formulation of the research problem is used in subsequent analysis. The third stage, ideate, is the process of formulating ideas as a continuation of the findings defined earlier. The primary focus of this stage is to develop strategic solutions centered on concrete steps that can be implemented by Jakarta's tourism stakeholders. These solutions are designed to effectively communicate the values of Jakarta's tourism to Gen Z, with the aim of encouraging their active participation in urban tourism activities.

During the prototype phase, the ideas that have been formulated are then translated into more concrete strategies and implementation steps. This phase produces a framework consisting of a series of structured actions for stakeholders to promote Jakarta to the Gen Z demographic. The final phase, the testing phase, is a process of validating the developed prototype. In this phase, researchers will test the effectiveness of the designed strategies by involving Gen Z as respondents, in order to obtain direct feedback regarding the suitability and appeal of the proposed approach.

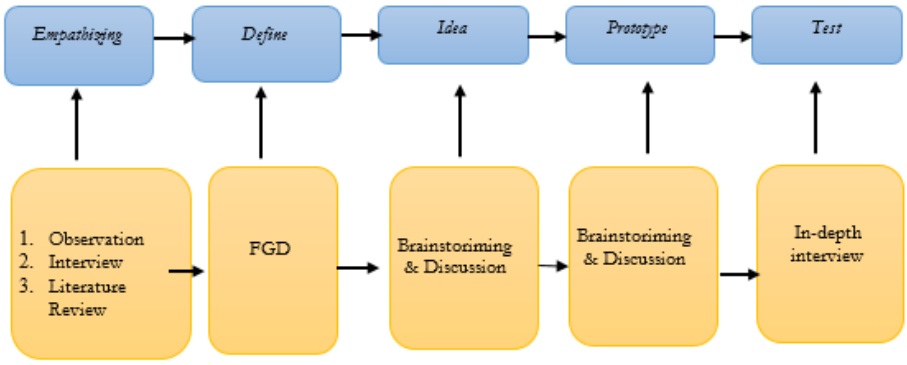


Figure 1. Stages of Design thinking
Source: Author's (2025)

Participants in this study were selected using purposive sampling, a strategy for selecting a sample based on specific criteria relevant to the study's objectives and research questions. The participants consisted of two main groups. First, Generation Z aged 18–23 residing in Jakarta who enjoy playing video games. Second, stakeholders in Jakarta's tourism sector, including representatives from government agencies and destination managers, namely the Department of Tourism and Creative Economy, the Ministry of Tourism, M Bloc Space, Pos Bloc Jakarta, and the Old Town District. The specific criteria for stakeholders include positions or roles such as research and development staff, IT specialists, information center staff (particularly for digital media), sales and marketing supervisors, heads of administrative units, and tour guide specialists.

Data analysis was conducted through a systematic process that included organizing, categorizing, and interpreting information obtained from observations and interviews. Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured approach with open-ended questions to elicit in-depth data. All data were analyzed using NVIVO 15 software through three coding stages: open coding, followed by axial coding, and concluding with selective coding. Nevertheless, the process of interpreting the interview results was still carried out conventionally to ensure that the data obtained was appropriate and aligned with the research objectives.

D. Result and Discussion

Result

The results of the data analysis on the measures taken by tourism stakeholders to communicate urban tourism promotions in Jakarta to Gen Z are divided into three sections: (1) The role of tourism stakeholders, (2) Innovation and technology in enhancing the appeal of urban tourism in Jakarta for Gen Z, and (3) Strategic approaches to improving urban tourism promotion and appeal.

The Role of Tourism Stakeholders

Tourism stakeholders specifically the Tourism Office, the Ministry of Tourism, M Blok, Pos Blok, and Kota Tua, play a strategic role in promoting Jakarta's urban tourism to Gen Z. These roles include creating a technology-based tourism ecosystem, formulating policies with economic and cultural perspectives, providing inclusive creative public spaces, and strengthening Jakarta's identity as a cultural heritage destination (Erwin et al., 2024).

The Jakarta Tourism and Creative Economy has adopted a digital approach through the Djaki app, which provides public transportation information, and has integrated gamification into its promotions, such as the interactive game "Catch the Ondel-Ondel" on Instagram and quizzes on the Jakarta Tourism website (Erwin et al., 2024). Meanwhile, the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy is strengthening promotions through the Wonderful Indonesia campaign and the empowerment of the creative economy, positioning Jakarta as an urban destination that blends traditional and modern values in line with the preferences of young travelers (Prakarsa et al., 2019).

Creative public spaces such as M Bloc Space and Pos Bloc have also made significant contributions. M Bloc Space serves as a hub for community activities and cross-sector collaboration that supports the creative industries, while Pos Bloc provides a space for Gen Z to express themselves through art and music events, while preserving its historical value as a Class A cultural heritage site (Erwin et al., 2024). The Jakarta Old Town area, as a representation of heritage-based tourism, offers educational and authentic experiences through a variety of historical, shopping, and culinary activities that help empower the local economy and preserve the city's cultural identity.

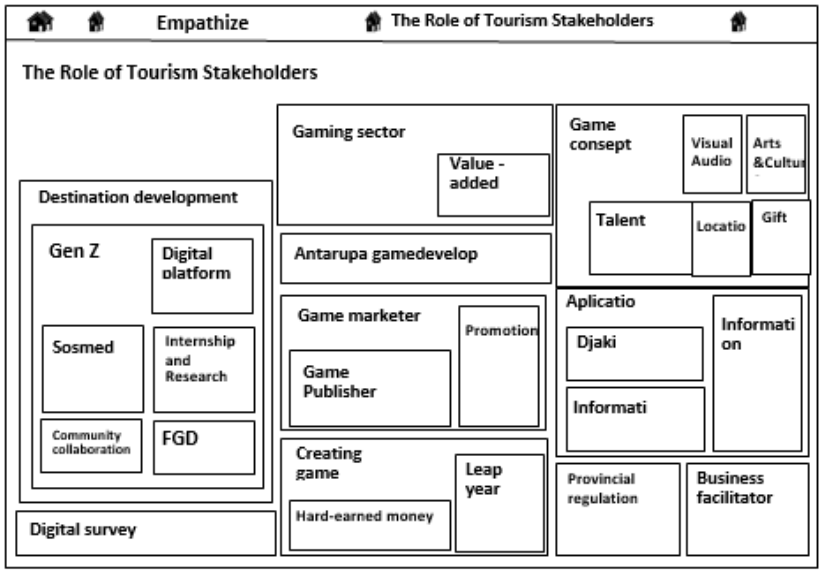


Figure 2. Results of data analysis on the roles of tourism stakeholders
Source: Author's (2025)

Innovation and technology in enhancing the appeal of urban tourism in Jakarta for Gen Z.

Innovation and technology are key factors in enhancing the appeal of Jakarta's urban tourism for Gen Z. Stakeholders are adopting a digital approach through creative content, collaborations with influencers, and immersive experiences driven by social media and technology (Erwin et al., 2024). The Jakarta Tourism and Creative Economy Agency utilizes platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube to present visual tourism information and facilitate two-way communication with Gen Z. Collaborations with content creators are undertaken to strengthen emotional connections through lighthearted and inspiring historical and cultural narratives (Erwin et al., 2024). The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy supports these efforts through gamification (e.g., Civilization 7 with a Majapahit theme), the use of AR/VR, and interactive stickers as educational cultural promotional media (Prakarsa et al., 2019).

Creative destinations such as M Bloc Space and Pos Bloc have implemented cashless payment systems, digital administration, e-sports programs, and gamified online challenges, thereby successfully attracting active participation from Gen Z (Erwin et al., 2024). The Old Town area also integrates technology through QR codes and AR/VR in walking tours that blend historical, cultural, and sports elements. Collaborations with nearby museums further enhance the immersive and educational tourism experience, making this area relevant to Gen Z's lifestyle (Erwin et al., 2024).

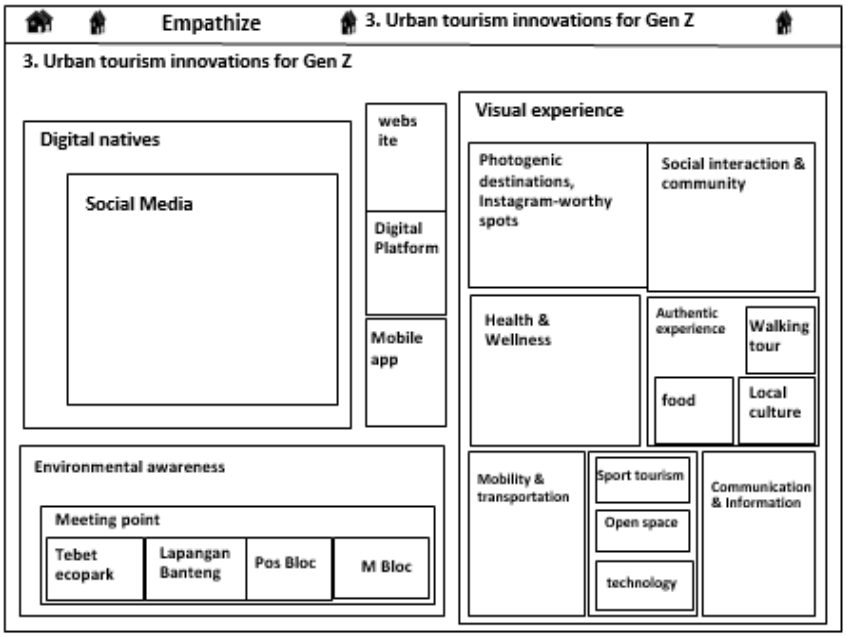


Figure 3. Results of data analysis on innovation and technology in enhancing the appeal of urban tourism
Source: Author's (2025)

A Strategic Approach To Enhancing The Promotion and Appeal of Urban Tourism

Jakarta's tourism stakeholders are adopting an innovative and inclusive strategic approach to attract Gen Z by integrating digital transformation, creativity, and community engagement. Digital transformation is achieved through easy access to information, online booking, and authentic, locally-based promotions, in line with Gen Z's preference for convenience and social connections.

The Jakarta Tourism and Creative Economy Agency is developing digital features for booking and payment, as well as building organic promotion through grassroots community engagement. This strategy is reinforced by the expansion of destinations such as public open spaces, sports and wellness tourism, and the development of the Thousand Islands as a National Strategic Tourism Area (KSPN). Meanwhile, the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy is strengthening marketing through digital integration, branding, and cross-sector collaboration, utilizing platforms like TikTok and Instagram, as well as product innovations such as AR/VR-based souvenirs and the distribution of tourism vouchers as a form of interactive promotion.

Creative entities such as M Bloc Space, Pos Bloc, and the Old Town District are also playing an active role. M Bloc Space hosts music concerts, festivals, and social media promotions; Pos Bloc organizes esports competitions and indie music events; while the Old Town District combines educational experiences with technologies like AR/VR in museum tours and social media content to strengthen Gen Z's connection to cultural heritage. Overall, Jakarta's tourism promotion strategy is aimed at creating modern, creative, and relevant experiences aligned with Gen Z's lifestyle, while fostering an emotional connection to local culture.

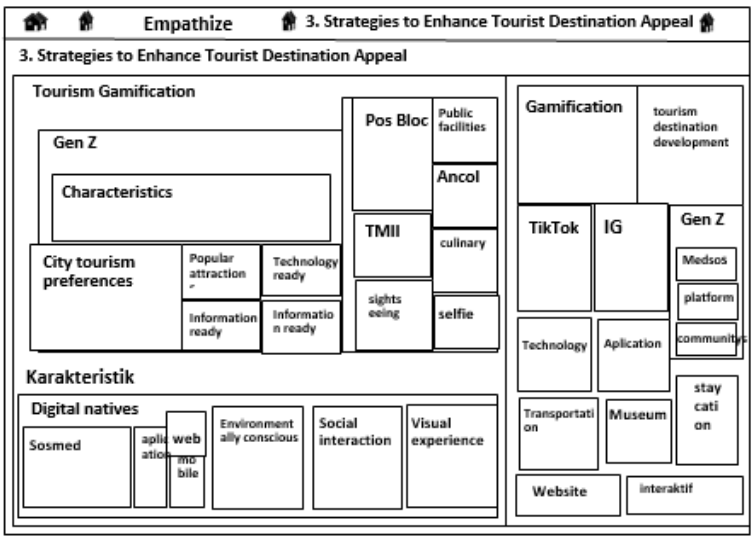


Figure 4. Data analysis results : A strategic approach to enhancing the promotion and appeal of urban tourism
Source: Author's (2025)

Discussion

Tourism stakeholders play a crucial role in the development of urban tourism. To enhance the effectiveness of management, planning, and evaluation, urban tourism must optimize the use of big data and information and communication technology (ICT). These technologies not only drive innovation in tourism products but also expand the spatial and temporal distribution of tourists, as well as encourage longer visit durations (UNWTO, 2020). A significant trend in global tourism over the past few decades has been the rise in short-term travel, which largely takes place in urban areas (Urošević et al., 2023). The Jakarta Tourism and Creative Economy Agency, the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, and industry operators such as M Bloc Space, Pos Bloc, and the Old Town District recognize that the appeal of urban tourism for Gen Z is heavily influenced by digital technology, particularly in providing access to information and services. The strategic approach focuses on three key elements: responsiveness to digital innovation, availability of transportation facilities, and the use of digital media as a promotional tool. These three elements are reinforced through the integration of gamification into new media that supports the government's functions and role.

Responsiveness to Digital Innovation

Digital innovation plays a role in creating immersive and engaging travel experiences for Gen Z. Research findings indicate that Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) technologies provide immersive experiences that this generation enjoys when visiting destinations such as Dufan, TMII, museums in Old Town, and modern malls. Immersive technology allows visitors to experience a virtual presence as if they were in the real world (Suh & Prophet, 2018), while blurring the boundaries between physical and virtual reality (Soliman et al., 2017).

Digital innovations can also be accessed remotely through engaging visual content on social media, such as Instagram Stories and Reels, collaborations with influencers and content creators, the use of popular hashtags, and educational and informative content. This content highlights Jakarta's tourist attractions and Instagrammable spots. The Jakarta Tourism and Creative Economy Agency utilizes interactive features like polls and Q&A sessions on Instagram to build direct connections with Gen Z. Digital media has proven to be an effective promotional tool in boosting this generation's interest in visiting.

Gamification as a marketing tool

The Jakarta Tourism and Creative Economy Agency has also developed AR-based gamification in the form of simple games such as Jakarta History Quest, Culinary Adventure, and Cultural Hunt. These three games invite players to explore Jakarta's historical sites, local cuisine, and arts and culture through interactive challenges and missions. Gamification is defined as the process of transforming activities into game-like experiences by utilizing game elements to

achieve real-world objectives (Grossberg & Wolfson, 2015). These elements can stimulate motivation and enthusiasm (Landsell & Hägglund, 2016), and have an impact on the experiences of tourists, destinations, and the local economy (Prakasa & Emanuel, 2019). Advances in mobile phone technology have also driven the popularity of video games. The flexibility of gameplay and real-time communication within games have made them increasingly popular, including among Gen Z (Xu et al., 2017). Although the boundary between games and gamification systems is subjective, gamification aims to change player behavior, enhance interaction with the environment and community, and provide opportunities to earn in-game rewards (Xu et al., 2017).

The Role of Immersive and Transportative Technologies

Stakeholders are responding to digital innovation by utilizing AR, VR, and virtual tours at various destinations. The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy has even developed souvenirs based on immersive technology as a way to adapt to the characteristics of Gen Z (Suradji, 2022). The new media being developed is expected to create an engaging environment for Gen Z by featuring virtual moment-sharing capabilities, aesthetically pleasing visuals that can be shared, and elements of personal pride that align with this generation's digital consumption habits.

In the context of transportation, the Jakarta Tourism and Creative Economy Agency has developed an immersive technology-based public transportation simulation that realistically depicts interiors and routes, offering a congestion-free and comfortable experience. This simulation is expected to stimulate Gen Z's interest in using public transportation firsthand. This generation is characterized by multitasking and prioritizes efficiency, so factors such as safety, travel time, cost, accessibility, comfort, and reliability are dominant considerations when choosing a mode of transportation (Harianto et al., 2023). Additionally, attitudes toward technology, levels of trust, and technology adoption also influence Gen Z's decisions regarding city tours (Shareef et al., 2016)

The Role of Creative Destinations

M Bloc Space integrates technology through cashless payment systems, digital promotions, and barcode technology to create a modern and efficient experience. Pos Bloc hosts digital events such as gaming competitions and online challenges, as well as active promotions on social media. The Old Town area utilizes AR/VR in museums, social media, and activities that combine modern technology with cultural and historical exploration. These three destinations demonstrate that technological innovation is an effective tool for capturing the attention of Gen Z, who are deeply immersed in a digital lifestyle.

E. Conclusion

This study shows that Jakarta's tourism stakeholders have implemented strategic measures to promote urban tourism to Gen Z. Their roles include

developing a technology-based tourism ecosystem, formulating policies that support the creative economy and cultural preservation, and providing inclusive public spaces. In terms of innovation, the digital approach is realized through the use of social media (Instagram, TikTok, YouTube), collaborations with influencers and content creators, and the development of immersive technologies such as AR/VR and gamification, which have proven to create interactive experiences aligned with Gen Z's digital preferences. The strategic approach emphasizes the integration of digital transformation, engagement with local communities, and ease of access to information and services, reinforced through the development of diverse tourism products and cross-sector collaboration. Overall, these steps reflect an adaptation to Gen Z's characteristics, which prioritize efficiency, digital connectivity, and authentic, interactive experiences. The success of urban tourism promotion to Gen Z depends not only on technology but also on the ability to create an ecosystem that integrates digital innovation, cultural creativity, and community participation in a cohesive manner.

F. Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that this study was conducted without any competing interests that could compromise the objectivity of the research. No personal relationships, institutional affiliations, or financial considerations influenced the research process, the interpretation of the findings, or the preparation of this manuscript. All authors have reviewed and approved the final version of the paper.

G. Declaration of AI Use

During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors utilized ChatGPT (OpenAI) as an auxiliary tool to refine the organization and structure of the written content and to support the development of the research framework. The tool was used to assist in arranging the flow of ideas, improving the logical connection between sections, and exploring the conceptual components relevant to the research topic. The selection of research concepts, methodological decisions, analysis of findings, and academic interpretations remained the responsibility of the authors. The authors have critically reviewed the AI-assisted suggestions and take full responsibility for the accuracy, originality, and integrity of the final manuscript.

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