

Digital Marketing Strategies among Traditional Healers in Solo and Wonosobo: Engaging Young Audiences

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Abstract

Traditional healers in Solo and Wonosobo face increasing challenges in engaging young people, despite the widespread use of digital platforms by this demographic. This study explores the adoption of digital marketing strategies by traditional healers to enhance their outreach to youth. Employing a qualitative approach, semi-structured interviews were conducted with healers in both regions to examine their current practices and perceptions regarding digital engagement. The findings reveal that while a few healers, such as Ibu Ani, have effectively utilized platforms like TikTok and Instagram, most still rely heavily on word-of-mouth promotion. Limited use of digital media stems from a lack of technological skills and insufficient content tailored to youth preferences. The study is guided by Uses and Gratifications Theory to understand how young people seek and interact with online health content. The results suggest that to improve engagement, traditional healers should adopt more interactive and youth-oriented digital strategies, including collaboration with influencers and the use of culturally resonant content. These findings offer practical insights for revitalizing traditional medicine in the digital age.

Keywords

traditional healers, digital marketing, youth engagement, social media, uses and gratifications theory, Solo, Wonosobo

INTRODUCTION

In an era dominated by technology, traditional healing practices in Solo and Wonosobo are facing a critical challenge: young people, who are increasingly relying on modern medicine and digital platforms, are largely disengaged from traditional health practices (Stoumpos et al., 2023). This disengagement reflects not only a shift in medical preferences but also a broader cultural transformation, where ancient knowledge systems risk being overshadowed by the rapid evolution of digital health technologies. The urgency of revitalizing traditional healing among youth lies in the need to preserve cultural heritage while also addressing modern health issues such as stress, anxiety, and chronic lifestyle diseases through holistic approaches.

Despite the vast potential of traditional medicine to offer complementary or alternative solutions, the lack of effective digital marketing strategies targeting younger generations has led to a significant knowledge gap (Schneider & Seetharaman, 2022). Evidence suggests that while traditional healers in these regions are beginning to embrace digital tools, their efforts remain minimal and ineffective in capturing the attention of young people, who are more likely to turn to online resources for health information (Orsolini et al., 2022; Martati et al., 2024). This disconnect between the growing popularity of digital media and the underutilization of it by traditional healers presents a pressing issue that must be addressed to ensure the preservation and revitalization of these practices among youth.

While there is growing recognition of the importance of digital marketing in the healthcare sector, existing research rarely focuses on traditional healers—particularly in rural Indonesian contexts—and how they can adapt to digital trends to attract a younger audience. Most prior studies have explored the general use of social media in health promotion (Orsolini et al., 2022; Martati et al., 2024), but there is a lack of research that examines how traditional, culturally embedded practices like jamu or alternative therapies can be effectively promoted through digital means. Moreover, studies often neglect the importance of tailoring content to youth interests and the integration of traditional values with modern digital formats (Schneider & Seetharaman, 2022). This presents a clear research gap: How can traditional healers use digital tools not only to inform but also to engage and connect with younger generations?

This research is framed through the lens of Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), which explores how individuals actively seek out media to satisfy specific needs and desires (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973). In the context of traditional medicine, UGT provides insight into how young people in Solo and Wonosobo engage with digital platforms to fulfill their health-related needs, such as seeking information, social interaction, or entertainment. Additionally, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is applied to understand how young people perceive the ease of use and usefulness of digital marketing strategies employed by traditional healers (Davis,

1989). This model helps to explain the factors influencing their decision to engage with online content related to traditional medicine. Together, these theoretical perspectives provide a conceptual framework for interpreting the interaction between healer-generated content and youth media behaviors.

The objectives of this research are threefold: Firstly, this study seeks to examine the current digital marketing strategies employed by traditional healers in Solo and Wonosobo to target young people, to describe the specific tools and practices used in these regions. Secondly, the study also aims to analyze how these digital marketing strategies influence young people's awareness and engagement with traditional medicine, exploring the relationship between digital content and youth engagement. Finally, it focuses on identifying potential improvements or innovations in the digital marketing strategies used by traditional healers to enhance their appeal to younger generations, thereby proposing actionable strategies that could better capture the attention and interest of youth. By addressing these aims, the study seeks to offer both theoretical insights and practical recommendations for promoting traditional healing in today's digitally connected society.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT)

Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) is a communication theory that posits individuals actively seek out media to fulfill specific needs or desires, such as information, entertainment, or social interaction (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973). The theory categorizes media usage based on the different gratifications sought by audiences, which can be broadly divided into five categories: cognitive needs, such as acquiring information; affective needs, including emotional or aesthetic experiences; personal integrative needs, related to self-identity and social status; social integrative needs, involving interaction and community; and tension release needs, focused on relaxation and escapism (McQuail, 2010). In the context of traditional medicine, UGT suggests that young people may turn to digital media to fulfill needs such as understanding alternative health practices, socializing with peers who share similar interests, or seeking entertainment through health-related content. By applying UGT, this research explores how traditional healers can tailor their digital content to meet these specific needs, thus enhancing engagement and awareness among younger audiences.

Technology Acceptance Model

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), developed by Davis (1989), is a theoretical framework that explains how users come to accept and use technology. TAM posits that two key factors, Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU) and Perceived Usefulness (PU), determine an individual's

decision to adopt new technology. PEOU refers to the degree to which a person believes that using a particular technology would be free from effort, while PU refers to the extent to which a person believes that using the technology would enhance their performance or provide benefits. These factors influence users' attitudes towards using technology, which in turn affects their intention to use and actual use behavior. In the context of traditional medicine and digital marketing, TAM can help explain how young people's perceptions of the ease of using social media platforms and the usefulness of digital content (such as health tips or product information) influence their acceptance and engagement with digital marketing strategies employed by traditional healers. TAM's framework provides valuable insight into how digital tools can be designed and marketed to encourage greater adoption among younger audiences (Davis, 1989; Venkatesh & Bala, 2008).

Digital Marketing Strategies

Digital Marketing Strategies refer to the use of digital channels, tools, and platforms to promote products, services, or practices to a targeted audience. These strategies are designed to engage consumers by leveraging the capabilities of digital media, such as websites, social media platforms, email marketing, search engine optimization (SEO), content marketing, and paid digital advertising (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). Digital marketing can be categorized into content marketing, which involves creating valuable content to attract and engage an audience; social media marketing, where platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok are used to interact directly with consumers and build brand loyalty; search engine optimization (SEO), aimed at improving the visibility of content in search engine results; and email marketing, which focuses on delivering personalized content to an audience. In the context of traditional healing practices, digital marketing strategies are critical for building awareness, educating the public, and engaging younger generations, especially through visual content and interactive platforms (Ryan, 2016). By understanding these various strategies, traditional healers can effectively promote their services and reach a broader, digitally connected audience.

Traditional Healers

Traditional Healers are individuals who provide healthcare services based on indigenous knowledge, practices, and remedies passed down through generations. These practitioners often utilize herbal medicine, manual therapies, spiritual healing, and other culturally rooted methods to treat physical and mental health conditions (Farnsworth et al., 1985). Traditional healers are categorized into three broad types: herbalists, who specialize in the use of plants and natural substances to create remedies; spiritual healers, who use religious or spiritual rituals to treat ailments; and manual healers, such as bone setters or massage therapists, who rely on physical techniques to address musculoskeletal problems (Ahmad et al., 2021). In many societies,

traditional healers continue to play a significant role in primary healthcare, especially in rural and underserved areas, where they are often trusted more than modern healthcare providers due to their deep-rooted cultural connection and holistic approach to well-being (Labhardt et al., 2010). For traditional healers, engaging with digital tools and platforms offers an opportunity to expand their reach, educate the younger generation, and preserve indigenous knowledge in the modern age.

Young People Targets

Young People Targets refer to individuals typically aged between 18 and 35 years who are often considered the primary demographic for various marketing and engagement strategies due to their high level of media consumption, technological savviness, and influence on consumer trends (Srisard, 20227). This group is highly engaged with digital platforms, including social media, mobile apps, and online content, making them a key target for digital marketing efforts (Pew Research Center, 2021). Young people are categorized into subgroups such as Millennials (born 1981-1996), known for their digital nativity and preference for social interaction through platforms like Instagram and Facebook, and Generation Z (born 1997-2012), who are even more tech-dependent, preferring platforms like TikTok and YouTube for entertainment and information (McCrindle & Wolfinger, 2009). This demographic is characterized by their demand for authenticity, social responsibility, and personalized content, which can influence how traditional healers market their practices to appeal to younger audiences (Williams & Page, 2011). Understanding these categorizations helps tailor marketing strategies that resonate with young people's values and media consumption habits.

METHODS

This research is descriptive and exploratory in nature, as it aims to examine the current digital marketing strategies employed by traditional healers in Solo and Wonosobo to target young people, while also exploring potential improvements for these strategies. The unit of analysis for this study is the traditional healers themselves, specifically focusing on their use of digital marketing tools and techniques in engaging the younger demographic. The focus of the research is on understanding how these marketing strategies influence the awareness and engagement of young people with traditional medicine. The study adopts a qualitative approach to collect in-depth insights through semi-structured interviews with traditional healers, which provide rich, contextual data regarding their marketing practices, challenges, and opportunities for digital engagement. Secondary data such as published literature on digital marketing and traditional medicine will also be reviewed to support the analysis (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019; Orsolini et al., 2022; Martati et al., 2024).

In this research, semi-structured interviews serve as the primary instrument for data collection, chosen for their flexibility and ability to explore complex phenomena in depth. This method enables the researcher to ask specific, pre-determined questions while allowing participants to elaborate freely, capturing rich and contextualized insights (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006; Kallio et al., 2016). The interviews allow a conversational flow, providing space for traditional healers to share their practices, experiences, and reflections on the use of digital marketing tools. Unlike structured surveys, this approach uncovers nuanced details of individual strategies and motivations.

The research procedures follow a systematic process to ensure the collection of relevant and ethical data. Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on their active involvement in traditional healing and willingness to share their digital marketing experiences (Etikan et al., 2016). A total of three traditional healers were interviewed, consisting of only herbalists, two men and one woman, ranging in age from the 40s to the 50s, who are active in the city and district areas of Solo and Wonosobo. Interviews were conducted face-to-face, lasting approximately 30 to 45 minutes. The researcher began by introducing the purpose of the study, obtaining informed consent, and ensuring confidentiality. Sample guiding questions included: "What digital platforms do you use for marketing, and how do you think they influence younger people?" Interviews were audio-recorded with consent and subsequently transcribed for analysis.

The data analysis technique employed in this research is thematic analysis, which is suitable for identifying and interpreting patterns within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The process involved several stages: familiarization with the transcribed data through repeated readings, generation of initial codes, and categorization of codes into broader themes. These themes helped highlight patterns such as strategies, challenges, and perceived effectiveness of digital marketing for youth engagement. The analysis was further contextualized with existing literature on digital marketing and traditional medicine (Saldana, 2016).

While the methodological approach provides in-depth insights, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the small sample size ($n=3$) limits the generalizability of findings to the broader population of traditional healers. Second, the narrative nature of interviews may introduce subjective bias, as participants may present themselves in a favorable light. Third, the study is limited to two geographic areas, potentially excluding regional differences in digital marketing practices. These limitations are considered in interpreting the findings and offer directions for future, broader studies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Current Practices and Tools Being Used by Traditional Healers in Solo and Wonosobo to Reach the Younger Demographic

The research explores the current digital marketing strategies and tools used by traditional healers in Solo and Wonosobo to target young people. Based on the interviews with Mr. Sugiman, Ibu Ani Florida Ngete, and Mas Goen, the results show a mix of traditional and digital practices, though digital marketing remains underutilized in comparison to other methods.

1. Use of Social Media for Promotion

Ibu Ani has actively embraced digital marketing to reach the younger audience. She uses platforms like TikTok and Instagram to share content about traditional healing practices, including workshops on making jamu and creating body scrubs. These platforms have attracted young people, especially when paired with interactive content such as video tutorials. Ibu Ani's approach to social media is strategic, aiming to make traditional medicine more relatable to the youth by sharing practical tips and demonstrations of how to make traditional remedies. The success of her TikTok content, which leads to direct orders, illustrates the effectiveness of social media as a tool for engagement with younger people.

In contrast, Mr. Sugiman's use of digital platforms is more limited. He mainly relies on WhatsApp for direct communication and shares occasional updates. Although he is aware of the potential of social media, his team lacks the technical expertise to fully leverage these platforms. This results in a more passive digital presence, with most of his marketing still relying on word-of-mouth referrals, which remain the primary source of new clients. Despite this, Mr. Sugiman acknowledges the growing necessity to adapt digital marketing strategies to sustain his business and attract a younger audience in the future.

Mas Goen also makes limited use of social media, primarily using Facebook and WhatsApp to inform clients about therapy services. However, he admits that social media has had minimal impact on attracting younger clients compared to traditional word-of-mouth marketing. His marketing approach is more localized, relying heavily on direct referrals and Google Map listings. Despite acknowledging the potential of digital platforms, Mas Goen is hesitant to adopt more aggressive digital marketing strategies due to his limited technical knowledge.

2. Word-of-Mouth Marketing

While social media remains an underutilized tool for many traditional healers, word-of-mouth marketing continues to be a dominant strategy for reaching young people in Solo and Wonosobo. According to Mr. Sugiman and Mas Goen, many of their new clients come from personal recommendations by previous patients. This approach has been particularly effective in

attracting young people, especially those who may not yet trust the conventional forms of advertising. The power of personal testimonials is evident in the cases shared by both informants, where patients from different regions, including outside Java, visit based on referrals. The strong reliance on word-of-mouth demonstrates the importance of trust and personal connections in the traditional healing sector.

3. Offline and Event-Based Promotion

Ibu Ani has also been proactive in organizing workshops and events to engage directly with the younger demographic. A notable example is her workshop at the Keraton Surakarta, where she demonstrated the process of making jamu and body scrubs. This event attracted not only local participants but also international attendees, such as visitors from Singapore, who were interested in learning more about traditional healing practices. These kinds of events serve as effective offline promotions, allowing Ibu Ani to connect with young people in a personal, hands-on environment. Such interactions help to demystify traditional medicine and foster a deeper connection with the younger generation.

4. Limited Technical Expertise in Digital Tools

A common challenge identified by all three informants is the lack of specialized skills in digital marketing. While they recognize the importance of digital tools, such as social media and online advertising, none of the informants have yet established a fully effective digital marketing strategy. This limitation is particularly evident in the case of Mas Goen, who expresses difficulty in navigating digital tools and prefers to maintain simpler forms of communication through WhatsApp and Facebook. Mr. Sugiman's team, while initially experimenting with social media, struggles to maintain a consistent online presence due to the lack of dedicated personnel with expertise in managing digital marketing platforms.

Summary of Current Practices

The traditional healers in Solo and Wonosobo are gradually incorporating digital marketing tools, but they are still heavily reliant on traditional methods, such as word-of-mouth marketing and event-based promotions. Social media has seen some adoption, particularly by Ibu Ani, who actively engages with young people on platforms like TikTok and Instagram. However, the use of digital marketing tools by other healers remains limited, with a lack of technical expertise and limited online engagement being key barriers. Despite these challenges, all three healers recognize the growing importance of adapting digital marketing strategies to connect with the younger generation and ensure the longevity of their practices.

The Relationship Between the Marketing Strategies Employed and the Level of Awareness and Engagement Among Young People Regarding Traditional Medicine

The research investigates the relationship between the digital marketing strategies employed by traditional healers and the level of awareness and engagement of young people with traditional medicine. Based on the responses from the three informants, the results indicate a mixed impact of marketing strategies on young people's awareness, with some healers achieving greater engagement through digital platforms, while others are still struggling to connect with this demographic.

1. Impact of Social Media Marketing on Awareness and Engagement

Ibu Ani's use of TikTok and Instagram has shown a direct positive impact on young people's awareness of traditional medicine. Her engaging content, which includes tutorials and demonstrations of making jamu and creating body scrubs, has successfully attracted young audiences. Her efforts have led to increased awareness, as evidenced by the international interest in her workshops, including participants from Singapore. The engagement levels are higher on platforms like TikTok, where interactive and visual content resonates with younger users. This type of content helps demystify traditional healing and presents it as both accessible and relevant to modern lifestyles. As a result, young people are more likely to engage with her offerings and share them, further promoting awareness.

Mr. Sugiman, however, reports a more limited impact of his digital marketing efforts on young people's awareness and engagement. His main tool is WhatsApp, where he communicates with clients, but he does not actively create or share content that promotes traditional healing practices to a broad online audience. Consequently, the awareness among young people remains relatively low, with most of his clientele coming from word-of-mouth recommendations, rather than social media interactions. Although he recognizes the importance of social media, his minimal online presence and lack of engagement with youth-centric platforms hinder his ability to effectively raise awareness among younger generations.

Mas Goen also experiences limited success with social media, particularly Facebook and WhatsApp. His online content is mostly focused on the therapy services provided at his clinic, with posts shared on Facebook about the conditions treated and the therapeutic processes. However, the engagement levels from young people are minimal, with few responses or interactions. This is attributed to his reliance on word-of-mouth marketing, which remains the primary source of new clients, rather than a robust digital marketing strategy. The lower engagement on social media suggests that his marketing approach, while effective for local clients, has not yet succeeded in capturing the attention of a broader, younger audience.

2. Effectiveness of Word-of-Mouth and Offline Promotion

For both Mr. Sugiman and Mas Goen, word-of-mouth marketing continues to be the most effective strategy for attracting young people. Their clients, particularly young adults, typically come from referrals by previous patients or local communities. This word-of-mouth approach works because traditional healing practices are often viewed with skepticism, and young people are more likely to trust recommendations from family, friends, or peers than from online content. Mr. Sugiman's reliance on personal recommendations and his extensive local network has proven effective in maintaining a steady flow of clientele, though the reach remains geographically limited.

Mas Goen also shares a similar reliance on word-of-mouth referrals, which have helped raise some level of awareness about his clinic. However, he points out that his marketing efforts on social media, particularly Facebook and WhatsApp, have not yielded significant engagement from young people. The traditional methods of promotion, like face-to-face interaction and personal referrals, continue to be the most successful at drawing in younger clients who trust the authenticity of these personal connections.

3. Limited Engagement Due to Lack of Tailored Content

While some level of engagement is achieved through word-of-mouth and offline interactions, Ibu Ani is the only informant who tailors her content specifically to the younger demographic, particularly through visual and interactive content on platforms like TikTok and Instagram. Her content, which showcases traditional medicine in a fun and approachable way, encourages young people to try out remedies and share their experiences. This kind of tailored content, which speaks directly to the needs and interests of young people, has proven to increase both awareness and engagement.

In contrast, Mr. Sugiman and Mas Goen still struggle with a lack of dedicated and engaging content aimed specifically at younger audiences. Without a clear digital strategy or targeted content that resonates with the youth, their marketing efforts have not had a significant impact on the younger generation. Both healers' content is generally limited to informational posts or therapy-based updates, which do not appeal as directly to the lifestyle and health concerns of younger audiences.

Summary of Findings

The findings suggest that traditional healers' digital marketing strategies have had varied success in raising awareness and fostering engagement among young people. Ibu Ani's proactive use of social media, especially TikTok and Instagram, has significantly increased young people's awareness of traditional medicine and encouraged higher levels of engagement. In contrast, Mr.

Sugiman and Mas Goen have primarily relied on offline marketing methods, such as word-of-mouth referrals, with limited success in using social media to attract younger clients. The lack of tailored, engaging content and limited technical expertise have hindered their ability to effectively utilize digital marketing tools to reach a broader audience. The results highlight the importance of engaging, youth-oriented digital content for increasing the visibility of traditional medicine among young people.

While this research provides practical insights into the digital strategies employed by traditional healers, it does not comprehensively capture the perspectives of the intended audience—young people themselves. Due to this limitation, the effectiveness of these strategies can only be inferred from the practitioners' point of view, not validated through recipient responses.

Moreover, a comparative analysis reveals that Ibu Ani's success stems from several differentiating factors: her willingness to explore new digital platforms, her creative integration of modern trends with traditional practices, and her basic digital fluency. In contrast, Mr. Sugiman and Mas Goen seem constrained by a lack of digital knowledge, fewer resources, and a heavier reliance on conventional methods. This contrast points to a broader implication—the need for digital literacy among traditional practitioners to bridge generational and technological gaps.

From a theoretical perspective, this study touches on the relevance of the Diffusion of Innovations Theory (Rogers), in which Ibu Ani may be categorized as an early adopter in using digital media to promote traditional healing. Meanwhile, Mr. Sugiman and Mas Goen can be seen as late adopters, whose reluctance or inability to use digital tools hinders the spread of their practices. Furthermore, the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) could provide insight into how young people seek health-related content online and what types of messages they are more likely to engage with, though this study does not include empirical data from the youth to confirm such motivations.

Ways to Transform Current Marketing Efforts and Propose New Strategies That Could Better Capture the Attention and Interest of Younger Generations.

The research explores potential ways to transform the current marketing efforts of traditional healers and suggests strategies that could better engage younger generations with traditional medicine. Based on the responses from the three informants, the results highlight several key areas where marketing strategies can be improved, particularly through enhanced digital engagement and content tailored to younger audiences.

The following strategies are proposed in light of the existing data, but it is important to note that these are drawn solely from the healers' perspectives. The absence of youth voices limits the ability to assess how well these strategies actually resonate with their intended audience.

1. Increase Digital Presence and Expertise

A common theme that emerged from the interviews is the need to improve digital presence by leveraging more dynamic and engaging platforms, such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube. Ibu Ani's use of TikTok has proven to be effective in attracting young people, but other healers, such as Mr. Sugiman and Mas Goen, expressed challenges due to their limited digital marketing expertise. Transforming their efforts involves investing in digital skills and training for themselves or their staff to consistently engage with social media platforms. For example, Mr. Sugiman noted that while he recognizes the importance of digital marketing, his team lacks the technical expertise to properly execute online campaigns. A potential solution could be outsourcing digital marketing tasks or hiring young professionals who are familiar with social media trends to create content that resonates with younger people.

Additionally, both Mr. Sugiman and Mas Goen acknowledged the importance of expanding their online presence. One suggestion is for Mr. Sugiman to better utilize Instagram and Facebook for creating more visual content, such as short videos or posts that showcase his traditional healing practices. Similarly, Mas Goen could increase his engagement with platforms like YouTube or TikTok to create video tutorials or health tips that demonstrate the benefits of traditional therapy for young people.

2. Tailoring Content to Youth Interests

The success of Ibu Ani's social media campaigns, particularly on TikTok, can be attributed to her ability to create engaging, relevant content that directly appeals to the interests and concerns of younger people. Her content often blends traditional healing practices with modern lifestyles, presenting jamu and herbal remedies in a fun and relatable way. To better capture the interest of young people, traditional healers should aim to create interactive and educational content that not only promotes the health benefits of traditional medicine but also ties it to the values and lifestyle preferences of younger generations.

For example, content related to fitness, wellness trends, and natural beauty could be popular among young people, as many are increasingly focused on health-conscious living. Both Mr. Sugiman and Mas Goen could benefit from incorporating these themes into their content, showing how traditional remedies align with modern health practices. Mr. Sugiman, who specializes in cancer treatments, could create educational content explaining the role of traditional medicine in supporting overall well-being and prevention, while Mas Goen could share content about how his therapies address issues like back pain, stress relief, and energy restoration—common health concerns for young professionals and students.

3. Encouraging User-Generated Content and Social Proof

A key element in capturing the attention of younger generations is the concept of user-generated content (UGC). Both Ibu Ani and Mas Goen's marketing strategies could benefit from encouraging customers to share their experiences on social media, creating a sense of community around traditional healing practices. This could involve creating a hashtag campaign on Instagram or TikTok, where young people share their experiences with jamu or therapeutic treatments, or a challenge where users post about their progress or results using specific remedies.

Additionally, social proof through testimonials and success stories is an essential way to build trust with a younger audience. Ibu Ani has experienced success in this area by showcasing the popularity of her workshops and sharing customer feedback on her social media pages. Mr. Sugiman could implement similar strategies, encouraging his clients to post about their experiences and share their success stories on Instagram or Facebook. By leveraging UGC and social proof, traditional healers can increase their credibility and attract more attention from younger generations.

4. Collaborating with Influencers and Content Creators

Influencer marketing has become a powerful tool in reaching younger audiences, especially when it comes to health and wellness. One potential strategy for all three healers is to collaborate with influencers who align with their brand values and target audience. Ibu Ani's experience with content creation for young people could be further amplified by partnering with wellness influencers who can help promote her products or services to a larger audience. By collaborating with influencers who already have the trust and attention of young people, traditional healers can extend their reach and gain credibility more quickly.

Similarly, both Mr. Sugiman and Mas Goen could benefit from partnering with local influencers or even micro-influencers in the health or lifestyle space to create content that introduces their services to younger people. For example, a collaboration with an influencer in the wellness or fitness community could allow Mr. Sugiman to reach an audience that is already interested in health-related content, making traditional medicine more appealing.

5. Engaging in Community and Educational Outreach

Another suggested strategy for increasing engagement with younger generations is to engage in educational outreach. All three healers could organize webinars, live sessions, or virtual events where young people can learn about the benefits of traditional medicine, its history, and its role in modern health practices. These virtual events could be promoted through social media channels and could include guest speakers or collaborations with universities to increase

credibility and visibility. By focusing on educational content, traditional healers can position themselves as thought leaders and attract an audience interested in learning more about alternative medicine.

Future research should consider directly involving young people in Solo and Wonosobo to better understand their perceptions, preferences, and motivations when it comes to engaging with traditional healing content online. Such input would help bridge the current empirical gap and offer deeper insights into the effectiveness of these strategies from both producer and consumer perspectives.

DISCUSSION

The research findings reveal that traditional healers in Solo and Wonosobo are in the early stages of adopting digital marketing strategies, with varying levels of engagement among young people. Ibu Ani has successfully utilized platforms like TikTok and Instagram, creating engaging, interactive content that resonates with younger audiences, leading to increased awareness and participation in her workshops. In contrast, both Mr. Sugiman and Mas Goen have made limited use of digital tools, primarily relying on WhatsApp and Facebook for communication, with minimal impact on young people's engagement. Word-of-mouth remains the dominant marketing method, with many new clients coming through personal referrals rather than online interactions. The analysis indicates that while traditional healers recognize the importance of digital platforms, there is a significant gap in their ability to effectively use these tools to engage younger generations. The study highlights the need for tailored digital marketing strategies that align with youth interests and preferences, such as using more visual and interactive content, collaborating with influencers, and encouraging user-generated content to enhance outreach and engagement.

The research findings reflect the importance of understanding the motivations behind young people's engagement with digital marketing strategies, as framed by Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT). According to UGT, individuals actively seek media to satisfy specific needs, such as acquiring information, entertainment, or social interaction (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973). In the case of traditional healers, the success of Ibu Ani's digital marketing strategy on platforms like TikTok and Instagram aligns with UGT's notion that young people are drawn to content that is both informative and entertaining, fulfilling their desire for health-related knowledge in a socially engaging format. Conversely, the limited engagement of Mr. Sugiman and Mas Goen underscores how a lack of tailored content and interactive elements may fail to meet the diverse needs of young people. Furthermore, the findings are illuminated by TAM, which emphasizes that young people's intention to use digital tools is influenced by their perception of the usefulness and ease of use of these platforms (Davis, 1989). The success of

digital strategies depends on young people's positive perceptions of these tools, which were evident in Ibu Ani's approach, where ease of use and the perceived benefit of accessible health information contributed to higher engagement. In contrast, traditional healers who struggled with digital platforms likely faced challenges related to these perceptions, hindering their adoption of digital marketing strategies.

The research findings can be explained through the theoretical lenses of Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). According to UGT, young people actively seek media content that fulfills specific needs, such as acquiring information, entertainment, and social interaction (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973). This explains why Ibu Ani's use of TikTok and Instagram has been successful in engaging young people—her content caters to both their informational and entertainment needs, making traditional medicine more accessible and appealing. In contrast, the limited digital engagement observed in the cases of Mr. Sugiman and Mas Goen can be attributed to a mismatch between their marketing efforts and the needs of young people. Without the incorporation of engaging, interactive content, their strategies fail to resonate with the youth demographic, who prioritize immediate, relatable, and engaging experiences. From the TAM perspective, the adoption of digital tools by young people is influenced by their perceptions of the usefulness and ease of use of these platforms (Davis, 1989). Ibu Ani's successful engagement demonstrates that when digital platforms are perceived as user-friendly and beneficial, young people are more likely to engage with them, highlighting the importance of making digital marketing strategies simple and effective. Therefore, the differences in engagement levels reflect the varying degrees to which these digital strategies meet the practical and psychological needs of young people, as outlined by both UGT and TAM.

In response to the research findings, traditional healers in Solo and Wonosobo need to formulate a comprehensive digital marketing strategy that is both engaging and aligned with the preferences of young people. This should include the creation of interactive and visually appealing content on platforms such as TikTok and Instagram, where young people are most active, and that meets their needs for information, entertainment, and social connection (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973). Healers should also focus on enhancing the perceived ease of use and usefulness of their digital content, which is crucial for encouraging adoption among younger generations (Davis, 1989). A user-friendly digital interface, such as easy-to-navigate websites or mobile apps, will be key in fostering engagement and facilitating the dissemination of traditional knowledge. Additionally, collaborations with influencers who align with health and wellness trends could further expand the reach of traditional medicine to a broader audience (Ryan, 2016). The implementation of data-driven approaches—such as analyzing user engagement metrics—will help healers refine their strategies to continuously meet the evolving preferences of young

people. These steps will not only bridge the gap between traditional healing and modern digital tools but also ensure the sustainability and relevance of traditional medicine in the digital age.

The study found that while some traditional healers like Ibu Ani have effectively engaged youth through digital platforms by aligning content with their needs and preferences, others lag due to limited digital literacy and a lack of interactive content. These findings imply that targeted digital literacy training and platform-specific content development should be incorporated into public health outreach and traditional medicine policies. Support from local health authorities and partnerships with digital media professionals could significantly boost the visibility and sustainability of traditional healing practices. This study was limited to a small geographic region (Solo and Wonosobo) and focused on a few selected practitioners, which may not reflect the broader landscape of traditional healers across Indonesia. Moreover, the study primarily relied on qualitative data, which limits generalizability. Future studies should include larger samples across diverse regions and incorporate quantitative methods to measure digital engagement and health outcomes. Further exploration into the digital behavior of youth in relation to traditional health practices could also inform more effective outreach models.

CONCLUSION

One of the most striking findings of this research is the severe underutilization of digital marketing tools by traditional healers in Solo and Wonosobo, despite the growing reliance of young people on digital platforms for health information. While younger generations are increasingly turning to social media for health-related content, many traditional healers, including Mr. Sugiman and Mas Goen, continue to rely heavily on word-of-mouth and offline marketing, missing out on the vast potential of digital engagement. This gap in digital engagement is particularly alarming, as it not only limits the reach of traditional healing practices but also risks the irrelevance of these practices among youth who are more connected to online communities than ever before. The case of Ibu Ani demonstrates that with the right strategies—such as platform-specific content creation, interactive formats, and alignment with youth interests—traditional medicine can still appeal to the younger generation.

Guided by the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), this study offers theoretical insight into how young people engage with digital content and what motivates them to do so. UGT explains their active pursuit of information, entertainment, and social interaction, while TAM helps clarify how their perception of usefulness and ease of use drives digital adoption. These theoretical perspectives, combined with qualitative data, underscore the importance of designing digital strategies that are both user-centered and technically accessible to healers.

Despite its valuable insights, this research has several limitations. Firstly, the study is context-specific to traditional healers in Solo and Wonosobo, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions or countries where traditional healing practices may differ significantly (Schneider & Seetharaman, 2022). Secondly, the reliance on self-reported data through semi-structured interviews may introduce response bias, as participants may present their marketing strategies in a more favorable light or omit challenges they face (Gill et al., 2008). Additionally, the study primarily focuses on qualitative data, which, while rich in detail, does not provide a quantitative measure of the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies or the precise level of engagement from young people (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). Lastly, due to limited access to digital analytics from the healers themselves, the research could not directly measure the actual impact of digital marketing strategies on youth engagement, relying instead on participants' perceptions and self-reported engagement metrics. These factors may affect the robustness of the findings and suggest the need for further research incorporating more diverse contexts, quantitative data, and direct digital performance metrics.

Future efforts should consider targeted digital literacy training for traditional healers and greater collaboration with digital professionals and influencers to co-create culturally relevant and engaging content. Such strategies would help bridge the gap between tradition and technology, ensuring that traditional medicine remains relevant and accessible to younger, digitally native audiences.

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