

DESIGNING ENGLISH TOURIST NAVIGATION WEBSITE TO PROMOTE BENGKALIS TOURISM

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Abstract : *This study aims to design an English tourist navigation website to promote the tourism of Bengkalis Regency. The research employed the Research and Development (R&D) method using the Borg and Gall model, which consists of six main stages: research planning, product development, expert validation, field testing, product revision, and implementation. The website was built using the Laravel framework, a popular PHP-based web application framework, and integrated with Google Maps API to support real-time location-based services. The development began with designing a relational database for managing destination data, including names, descriptions, locations, photos, and categories. The website was designed to provide international tourists with detailed information about 25 tourist destinations. Data collection involved questionnaires, interviews, and documentation with stakeholders and prospective users. The research results showed that most users thought the website was useful at establishing Bengkalis tourism more accessible and offering English-language information. The improvements were made to features like the user interface, content clarity, and navigation guidance based on input from both users. Overall, the final product received positive responses and was considered a useful promotional media for enhancing the visibility and accessibility of Bengkalis tourist destinations to international audiences.*

Keywords: *English Website, Tourism Promotion, Tourist Navigation, Bengkalis*

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the key drivers of Indonesia's economic growth, contributing significantly to national income, employment, and regional development. As international tourist arrivals to Indonesia continue to increase, there is a growing need to expand digital tourism promotion

strategies to reach a global audience.

Bengkalis Regency, located strategically along the Strait of Malacca and part of the Indonesia–Malaysia–Singapore and Indonesia–Malaysia–Thailand growth triangles, possesses diverse and rich tourism potential. Its attractions include pristine beaches, mangrove forests, cultural

heritage sites, and ecotourism areas such as Rupert Island, which has been designated as both a National and Provincial Tourism Strategic Area.

Despite its potential, Bengkalis faces challenges in attracting foreign tourists due to limited English-language information and inadequate digital promotion. Data from BPS–Statistics Bengkalis showed a significant drop in international arrivals from 4,373 in 2019 to only 799 in 2020, primarily due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Although recovery has started, with 1,746 foreign tourists recorded from January to June 2024, most visitors come from neighboring Malaysia, indicating low international diversification. Another barrier is the lack of accessible and centralized English-language information about local attractions, especially for destinations located in remote areas.

To address this gap, this study focuses on the development of an English-language tourist navigation website aimed at promoting Bengkalis tourism. The website serves as a digital platform that integrates information, navigation features, and multilingual accessibility to support international visitors in exploring 25 selected tourist

destinations across Bengkalis. By utilizing the Research and Development (R&D) method based on the Borg and Gall model, the website is designed not only to support tourism promotion but also to improve tourist accessibility, support local economic growth, and enhance the visibility of Bengkalis as an international travel destination. This study contributes to the broader discourse on digital tourism innovation and its role in sustainable regional development.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Related Theory

English Tourism Website as Promotional Media

A website serves not only as a digital information hub but also as an essential promotional tool in the tourism industry. According to Zhang et al. (2020), websites play a strategic role in disseminating tourism information, improving destination visibility, and building brand awareness. Mulyani (2023) outlines the basic structure of a website, including domain, hosting, HTML, CSS, and JavaScript, which are essential for developing responsive, accessible, and content-rich platforms. In the context of tourism, Brenner (2022) explains that websites provide not only information but

also promotion, learning, interaction, and e-commerce functions.

In the case of Bengkalis tourism, the website functions as a virtual gateway to showcase destinations, especially for international audiences who require English-language content. It bridges the promotional gap by integrating multimedia content and navigational tools into one centralized platform. König et al. (2022) also state that such digital tools can serve both as marketing channels and as digital tour guides.

Tourist Navigation

Tourist navigation refers to the ability of travelers to access accurate, updated, and user friendly information to guide their travel routes. The integration of Google Maps API, as applied in this study, supports real-time, location-based navigation.

According to König et al. (2022), modern tourists rely heavily on mobile navigation platforms for wayfinding and decision-making during travel. The lack of English-based navigational support in Bengkalis has been identified as a barrier, particularly for destinations located in rural or less-known areas. This study addresses that gap by offering clear directions,

interactive maps, and multilingual support for 25 destinations in Bengkalis Regency.

The Role of English in the Tourism Sector

English is considered a global language in tourism and hospitality. Al-Saadi (2015) emphasizes that the use of English improves communication, customer service, and international engagement. Many foreign tourists cannot speak Indonesian, so the absence of English information hinders their experience. By providing English-language descriptions, routes, and destination insights, Bengkalis can increase its attractiveness to global travelers. Moreover, English-language content reflects a destination's readiness to serve international visitors, giving a professional and welcoming impression.

Digital Promotion and Tourism Development

Tourism promotion in the digital age relies on dynamic and interactive strategies. Tjiptono, et al (2021) define promotion as the process of informing, persuading, and reminding customers about services or destinations. Online promotion using websites offers high interactivity, global reach, and cost-

effectiveness. Laoli (2023) describes digital media as vital in communicating marketing messages efficiently. In the case of Bengkalis, where traditional media are not sufficient to reach foreign tourists, digital platforms offer an alternative path for tourism development.

Tourism Potential in Bengkalis Regency

Bengkalis Regency holds significant natural and cultural tourism potential, including destinations like Lapin Beach, Bukit Batu Tourism Village, and historical relics from the Siak Kingdom. Rahmawati, et al (2023), note that these assets can support ecotourism, cultural tourism, and educational tourism. However, accessibility and promotion remain major challenges. The development of a navigation-based promotional website aims to harness these potentials, offering visibility to 25 tourism destinations spread across the regency. The digital platform highlights the region's strengths while addressing its current limitations in accessibility and international visibility.

METHODOLOGY OF STUDY

This study employed a Research and Development (R&D) method, adopting the Borg and Gall model which was later simplified into six core stages: research planning, product

development, expert validation, field testing, product revision, and final implementation. This model was chosen because it enables the development and evaluation of an innovative product—in this case, a web-based tourist navigation platform—to address real-world problems in tourism promotion.

Research Design and Procedure

Based on the explanation above, the development of the English Tourist Navigation Website in this study followed the systematic stages of the Research and Development (R&D) method. The steps were adapted from the Borg & Gall development model and modified by Sadiman (2010) to suit the scope and objectives of this research. This adaptation was necessary to ensure that the product was not only technically functional but also met the practical needs of its target users both domestic and international tourists. The model emphasizes interactive design, validation, and revision, enabling the website to be developed through a structured process that integrates theoretical principles with field-based findings. The stages in the adapted model are presented

research and development procedures according to Borg & Gall as follows:



Figure 1. Research and Development Procedures according to Borg & Gall which was modified by Sadiman (2010: 100-101).

The research began with a **research planning** to identify user requirements and the current challenges in accessing Bengkalis tourism information, especially among international tourists. This phase involved need analysis questionnaires and interviews with local stakeholders, including tourism department staff, guides, and prospective users.

Based on the analysis, the **product development** phase included designing the website architecture using the Laravel framework, implementing Google Maps API, and organizing a relational database to manage destination data. The website provided multimedia content, bilingual (English–Indonesian) language options, and real-time navigation features for 25 selected tourist destinations in Bengkalis Regency.

After the initial product was completed, **expert validation** was conducted by media and tourism

professionals to assess the website's usability, functionality, language accuracy, and design quality. Feedback from the validators was used for **product revision**, focusing on improvements to the interface, content clarity, and system responsiveness.

Subsequently, the **field-testing** phase involved real users who interacted with the website and completed evaluation questionnaires to assess its effectiveness. Their responses were analyzed to determine the level of satisfaction and the relevance of the information provided.

Finally, the **implementation** phase confirmed the usability of the final product as a functional promotional tool. The finalized English tourist navigation website was deployed and proposed as a practical solution for supporting Bengkalis tourism promotion on an international scale.

Location, Time and Subject of the Study

This research was conducted in Bengkalis Regency, Riau Province, from February to July 2025. The participants included 2 expert validators (web and tourism experts) and 38 local users and potential tourists who tested the website. The 25

destinations featured were selected to represent a range of cultural, historical, natural, and marine tourism in the region.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The development of the English Tourist Navigation Website to promote Bengkalis tourism was conducted through the Research and Development (R&D) method using the Borg and Gall model (2010). The process involved six stages: research planning, product design, expert validation, product revision, user testing, and implementation.

1. Result of Development

Based on the needs analysis, it was found that prospective tourists, especially international visitors, faced difficulties in accessing clear information about tourist destinations in Bengkalis Regency due to the lack of English-based promotional media. To address this gap, an English tourist navigation website was developed using the Laravel framework, designed to provide comprehensive destination information and user-friendly navigation. One of the key features integrated into the website is the use of Google Maps API to support real-time

navigation, this maps integration as shown in the figure.



Figure 2. Google Maps Integration

This feature allows users to view the exact location of each tourist destination, such as Istiqomah Mosque, directly on an interactive map. Visitors can zoom in or out, switch to satellite view, and even get detailed navigation routes from their current position to the selected destination. This functionality not only enhances user experience by providing real time location guidance but also supports independent travel planning. By embedding this map into the destination page, the website bridges the gap between information and on-site accessibility, making it easier for tourists to explore without relying on printed guides or external navigation apps.



Figure 3. Homepages Website Product Development

The website covered 25 tourist destinations, including beaches, cultural heritage sites, ecotourism spots, and religious landmarks. It provided bilingual content (English-Indonesian), destination photos, location coordinates, descriptions, and travel routes. The homepage of the developed website, as illustrated in figure, prominently displayed a bilingual interface (English-Indonesian) to accommodate both local and international visitors. Users could easily switch languages through the language toggle button located at the top-right corner, ensuring accessibility for a wider audience. The **"Explore Bengkalis"** menu guided visitors to detailed information about 25 curated tourist destinations in the regency. Each destination page contained essential details such as photos, descriptions, coordinates, transportation access, ticket prices, and operational hours. By presenting this information in two languages, the platform effectively bridged the communication gap for non-Indonesian-speaking tourists, enhancing their ability to independently plan and enjoy their visit to Bengkalis.



Figure 4. Categories for Explore Bengkalis Menu

However, as shown in figure above, the "Category" menu provided a well-organized classification of destinations into six distinct types: Marine, Cultural, Artificial, Nature, Historical, and Agrotourism. This categorization allowed users to filter and explore destinations based on their interests, improving navigation efficiency and user satisfaction. For example, selecting "Cultural" displayed destinations such as traditional heritage sites and festivals, while "Marine" showcased beaches and island attractions. This structured approach not only simplified destination discovery but also reflected the diversity of Bengkalis tourism offerings. By combining the bilingual feature with an intuitive category-based navigation system, the website succeeded in delivering an informative, user-friendly, and culturally inclusive tourism promotion platform.

Another innovative feature of the website is the **Event Bengkalis** menu,

which displays upcoming cultural and tourism-related events in the region, such as the Mandi Safar Festival, Fire Zapin Dance, Bukit Batu River Festival and others.



Figure 5. Event Bengkalis Menu

The figure explain that each event card includes the date, location, representative image, and an “Event Details” button that directs users to more comprehensive information about the event. This feature not only promotes annual festivities but also helps tourists plan their visit to coincide with unique local traditions, thereby enhancing cultural tourism experiences. By integrating this dynamic event listing, the website functions not only as a navigation and information platform but also as promotional tool that connects visitors with the living culture of Bengkalis.



Figure 6. Admin Pannel for Website

The website is also equipped with an **admin panel** that enables authorized personnel from the local tourism office to manage tourism data efficiently. Through this panel, administrators can add, edit, and delete information about destinations and events, including details such as names, categories, ticket prices, operational hours, transportation access, coordinates, and media files. This feature ensures that the website’s content remains accurate, up to date, and responsive to changes in the field. By providing a centralized and user-friendly management system, the admin panel supports sustainable maintenance of the platform, allowing Bengkalis tourism promotion to be continuously improved without requiring extensive technical skills.

2. Expert Validation

Two media experts evaluated the website in terms of functionality, design, language, and usability. Their feedback led to improvements such as clearer navigation menus, enhanced visual layouts, and more consistent bilingual information.

3. User Response

User testing was conducted with 38 participants to evaluate the website’s effectiveness and usability. The results showed that the majority of users responded positively to the product. A total of 93.3% agreed that

the website was easy to navigate, while 90% appreciated the availability of English-Indonesian bilingual content. However, 86.7% of respondents stated that the information provided helped them better understand Bengkalis tourism, and 83.3% found the integrated GPS and route features to be helpful in planning their visit. These responses indicate that the website effectively meets user needs in terms of accessibility, language, and navigation, making it a promising tool for promoting Bengkalis tourism to international audiences.

4. Discussion

The development of the Bengkalis tourism promotion's English tourist navigation website followed a structured four stage process designed to ensure thorough preparation, systematic implementation, and reliable validation. The first stage involved a questionnaire needs analysis through structured interviews with key stakeholders, such as GENPI (Generation Pesona Indonesia) and the Tourism Department, complemented by a survey targeting 35 respondents from local communities, domestic tourists, and foreign visitors. The analysis produced a score of 94.75% in

the "Very Good" category, confirming the strong necessity for an English-based tourism navigation platform. These findings supported Rahmawati's (2024) conclusion that a well-structured tourism website significantly contributes to destination branding by presenting distinctive attractions, narratives, and visitor information in an appealing and organized manner.

The second stage focused on the design and technical development of the website, integrating multilingual support, responsive design principles, and intuitive navigation features. The interface was developed to meet the needs of both domestic and international audiences, ensuring accessibility across various devices and browsing platforms. This approach aligned with Hadi's (2021) assertion that, digital media particularly multilingual tourism websites serve as highly effective tools for expanding regional tourism to a global audience. By offering all content, including cultural descriptions, travel routes, and event schedules, in English, the platform addressed language barriers and strengthened Bengkalis's positioning as a competitive

international tourism destination. The bilingual content (English-Indonesian) also caters to both local and international visitors, addressing feedback from 97.1% of users who preferred a bilingual platform.

The third stage involved a two-phase validation process conducted by expert reviewers. A lecturer in Information Technology evaluated the website's technical performance, including loading speed, navigation efficiency, and system stability, while a Language Department lecturer assessed the accuracy, clarity, and cultural appropriateness of the English content. The results confirmed that the website met high standards of innovation, usability, and responsiveness. However, the reviewers also recommended specific improvements, such as optimizing video layout, enhancing mobile navigation features, and refining background audio to better reflect Bengkalis's cultural identity. From a technical perspective, the website followed responsive web design principles, cross-device compatibility, and interactive features such as GPS-based navigation using Google Maps API. These implementations are in line

with the theory of "*Peran Media Baru dalam Promosi Digital*" by Hadi (2021), who emphasizes that digital promotion must meet modern user expectations in design and usability.

Expert validation from both tourism and IT experts confirmed the website's innovation and usefulness. Suggestions such as enhancing destination descriptions and visual design were integrated into the revision phase to ensure user satisfaction. These improvements reflect the theory of user centered design, as proposed by Garrett (2011), which asserts that successful digital products must balance technical functionality with user needs.

The fourth stage assessed user responses through a structured questionnaire measuring satisfaction, usability, and overall experience with the developed platform. Data analysis using the Widoyoko formula indicated an average score of 3.83, equivalent to 95.75%, which demonstrated excellent performance. The results confirmed the platform's effectiveness in meeting diverse user needs, with notable strengths in mobile accessibility, cultural content integration, and user interface clarity. The "Event

Bengkalis” feature was particularly well-received for its role in educating users about local culture while simultaneously promoting tourism engagement.

This study was distinct from previous tourism website initiatives due to its explicit focus on English-language navigation for international accessibility. Another research, such as Rahmalisa et al. (2020), concentrated on domestic tourism promotion using Indonesian-only platforms. In contrast, the current project developed a bilingual, web-based system to serve both domestic and global markets. The website offered a comprehensive tourism ecosystem covering natural attractions, mangrove tourism, cultural heritage sites, local events, accommodation and transport services, and business opportunities, supported by advanced features such as real-time GPS mapping and interactive navigation.

In conclusion, the website’s positive reception from both experts and users demonstrates its potential as an effective digital tool for promoting Bengkalis tourism. The successful creation and implementation of the English tourist navigation website

demonstrated the strategic application of digital technology in promoting tourism. The platform functioned not only as a marketing and informational tool but also as an educational and cultural bridge between Bengkalis and its visitors. High satisfaction and recommendation ratings validated its ability to overcome linguistic and cultural barriers while positioning Bengkalis competitively in the global tourism market. This achievement established a strong foundation for sustainable tourism growth, cultural exchange, and long-term regional economic development.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusions

This research successfully developed an English-language tourist navigation website aimed at promoting 25 selected destinations in Bengkalis Regency. The platform was designed using the R&D method based on the Borg and Gall model and included research planning, product design, expert validation, product revision, user testing, and implementation phases. Results showed that the website was considered effective, user friendly, and valuable as a promotional tool for both domestic and international users.

It addressed key challenges such as the lack of English information and low digital visibility of Bengkalis tourism.

Suggestion

This study offers several suggestions for different stakeholders. For the government and tourism agencies, the website should be officially adopted, regularly updated, and linked with official tourism data to strengthen its impact. For future developers, improvements could include better mobile optimization, live chat features, booking system integration, and more coverage of local events and culinary tourism. For academic purposes, this research can be used as a reference for students and researchers in tourism, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), and digital media development, especially in regional tourism.

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