

DEVELOPING ENGLISH WEBSITE TO PROMOTE BENGKALIS DISTRICT ICONIC FOOD

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Abstract: *This research aimed to develop an English-language website called Flavor of Bengkalis to promote the iconic traditional food of Bengkalis District as a tool for digital marketing and cultural preservation. The study used the Research and Development (R&D) method based on Dick & Carey's model, covering stages such as needs analysis, design, development, and evaluation. Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and observations with local food sellers and users. The website was developed using PHP, MySQL, and XAMPP, featuring bilingual content (English and Bahasa Indonesia), categorized culinary data, multimedia (photos, videos, stories), and a user-friendly interface. The results showed strong interest and support from users, who found the website attractive, informative, and effective for promoting Bengkalis cuisine to both local and international audiences. Most respondents highlighted the importance of using English for global reach while suggesting bilingual access for inclusivity. The final product successfully filled the gap in culinary promotion and contributed to local tourism by presenting Bengkalis food culture in a modern and accessible digital platform.*

Keywords: *Digital marketing, Bengkalis cuisine, website development, cultural promotion, user-centered design.*

INTRODUCTION

Bengkalis District in Riau Province is known for its rich variety of traditional foods, influenced by diverse cultural backgrounds and its strategic location close to Malaysia. These culinary products have high potential to attract both local and international tourists. However, the promotion of Bengkalis iconic foods is still limited,

especially in the form of accessible English-language resources.

In the digital era, websites are an effective medium for marketing and cultural promotion. An English-language culinary website can break language barriers, expand global reach, and present comprehensive information such as food descriptions, images, locations, and cultural stories.

This not only supports tourism but also contributes to the local economy and the growth of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

This study aims to develop an English-language website called *Flavor of Bengkalis* to promote the district's iconic foods. Using the Research and Development (R&D) method based on the Dick & Carey model, the website is designed to be user-friendly, visually attractive, and bilingual, offering multimedia content that meets the needs of both local and global audiences.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Related Theory

Marketing Communication

Marketing communication refers to organizational efforts to inform, persuade, and remind target audiences about products or services, either directly or indirectly (Bambang, 2021). It plays a critical role in shaping consumer awareness, building brand image, and influencing purchasing decisions. In the context of culinary promotion, marketing communication ensures that messages about local cuisine are effectively conveyed to

both domestic and international audiences through appropriate channels.

Marketing Strategy

A marketing strategy is an overall plan that defines target markets and determines how to deliver value through the marketing mix: product, price, place, and promotion (Kotler, 2008; Ardian, 2021). Three common approaches include undifferentiated marketing, differentiated marketing, and concentrated marketing (Pasaribu, 2022). In culinary promotion, an effective strategy enables regional foods to be positioned competitively while maintaining their cultural authenticity.

Website

A website is a collection of interconnected web pages hosted on a server and accessible via the internet (Susilowati, 2019). It typically contains various forms of digital content—text, images, audio, video, and interactive features—and serves as a primary tool in digital marketing. Effective websites combine essential elements such as a clear structure, engaging visuals, responsive design, and ease of navigation (Muhammad, 2023). For cultural and culinary promotion,

websites offer a 24/7 platform for reaching global audiences.

Culinary Business and Tourism

The culinary industry is not only an economic sector but also a medium for cultural preservation and tourism development (Stierand, 2008). Culinary tourism involves experiencing local food as part of a destination's identity, where traditional dishes serve as a cultural bridge between communities and visitors. Promoting regional culinary heritage contributes to both the creative economy and the sustainability of local traditions.

Bengkalis Iconic Food

The term "iconic" in semiotics refers to a sign that conveys meaning through resemblance to its object (Everett, 2015). Bengkalis iconic foods represent the region's unique culinary identity, characterized by traditional recipes passed down through generations, use of local ingredients, and distinctive preparation methods. Highlighting these iconic foods in promotional media reinforces regional branding and supports cultural tourism initiatives.

METHODOLOGY OF STUDY

Research Design

This study employed the Research and Development (R&D) method to design and produce an English-language website for promoting Bengkalis District's iconic foods. The R&D approach was chosen to enable systematic development, testing, and refinement of the website product based on user needs and expert input. The development process referred to the Dick & Carey instructional design model.

Location and Object of the Study

The study was conducted in Bengkalis District, Riau Province, Indonesia. The research object was the development of a bilingual culinary website named *Flavor of Bengkalis*. The website's main focus was to present information on Bengkalis' iconic foods through descriptive texts, images, and cultural narratives. Respondents involved included local government tourism officers, culinary MSME owners, and potential website users from both local and international audiences.

Research Instrument

The instruments used in this study consisted of interview guides, questionnaires, and expert validation sheets. The interview guides and questionnaires were used to collect needs analysis data from stakeholders, while the validation sheets were used to evaluate the website's content, design, and functionality.

Data Collection Technique

Data for this study were collected through interviews, questionnaires, and documentation. Interviews were conducted with local tourism officers and culinary MSME owners to identify the features and content needed for the website. Questionnaires were distributed to potential users to gather feedback on the prototype's usability, design, and content relevance. Documentation in the form of culinary photographs, food descriptions, and cultural narratives was obtained from various local sources to enrich the website's content.

Data Analysis Technique

The data analysis process involved both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Qualitative data from interviews were analyzed through thematic coding to identify

user needs and expectations. Quantitative data from questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics to assess website usability, attractiveness, and content relevance. Feedback from expert validation was used to revise and improve the final product.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Need Analysis

The initial stage of this research was conducting a needs analysis to determine the essential features and content for the Flavor of Bengkalis website. Data were collected through questionnaires distributed to stakeholders, including local tourism officers, culinary MSME owners, and potential users from both local and international audiences. The questionnaire covered aspects such as preferred website language, desired features, content type, and design expectations.

The analysis revealed that the majority of respondents preferred a bilingual website (English and Indonesian) to attract both domestic and foreign visitors. Other highly requested features included high-quality food photographs, detailed descriptions of dishes, cultural

background stories, categorized menus, and interactive maps to locate culinary destinations. Respondents also emphasized the importance of a simple and user-friendly interface to ensure easy navigation for all users. These findings served as the foundation for the design and development stages of the website.

Culinary Bengkalis Website Development Process

The development of the *Flavor of Bengkalis* website was implemented through a structured technical process consisting of five main stages. Each stage was designed to ensure the website's functionality, bilingual accessibility, and ease of use for both administrators and end users.

1. Setup XAMPP

The first stage involved preparing a local development environment using XAMPP. This application provided the Apache web server to execute PHP code and MySQL to store essential data such as food names, descriptions, images, and locations. After launching the XAMPP Control Panel, both Apache and MySQL modules were activated by pressing the *Start* button. MySQL's *phpMyAdmin* interface was then

accessed to create a new database specifically for the project.

Once the server was active, Visual Studio Code was used as the text editor for PHP development. The website structure, including the homepage, culinary menu list, and detail pages, was coded and saved in the *htdocs* directory of XAMPP. This configuration allowed the website to be accessed locally through the *localhost* address, enabling thorough testing before deployment.

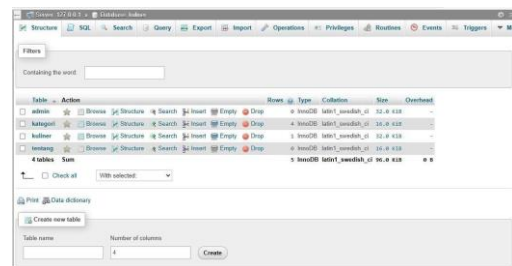


Figure 1 Setting up XAMPP for local development

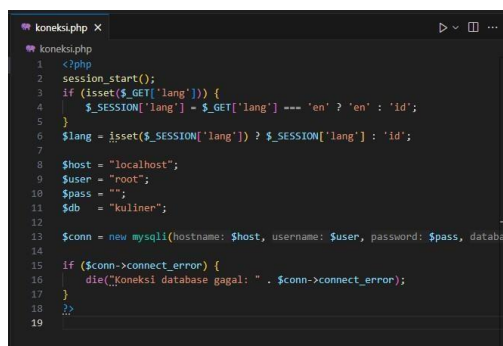
2. Web to Database Connection

The second stage was establishing the connection between the website and the database. This was done by creating a *connection.php* file in the project folder. The file contained parameters for host, user, password, and database name, and used the *mysqli* object to connect PHP scripts to the MySQL database.

A session management system was also implemented to store the

chosen language setting (en for English or id for Indonesian) in `$_SESSION['lang']`. This ensured that the website could display content in the preferred language consistently across all pages.

The main page (`index.php`) was then developed to dynamically display data retrieved from the database, such as culinary categories and slider images. The interface incorporated a navigation menu, search function, and language switcher to create a user-friendly experience.



```

1 <?php
2 session_start();
3 if (isset($_GET['lang'])) {
4     $_SESSION['lang'] = $_GET['lang']; --- 'en' ? 'en' : 'id';
5 }
6 $lang = isset($_SESSION['lang']) ? $_SESSION['lang'] : 'id';
7
8 $host = "localhost";
9 $user = "root";
10 $pass = "";
11 $db = "kulinier";
12
13 $conn = new mysqli(hostname: $host, username: $user, password: $pass, database: $db);
14
15 if ($conn->connect_error) {
16     die("koneksi database gagal: " . $conn->connect_error);
17 }
18
19

```

Figure 2 Database connection and bilingual session management

3. Manage Culinary Data

The third stage focused on developing an administrative interface for managing culinary data. The `Datakulinier.php` file functioned as the admin dashboard, displaying a table of culinary entries including food photos, categories, addresses, descriptions, prices, and upload dates.

An “Add Culinary” button allowed administrators to upload new entries, complete with images and descriptions. Data entered through this interface was stored in the MySQL database and automatically displayed on the website’s public pages. The admin system was also integrated with the bilingual session variable to

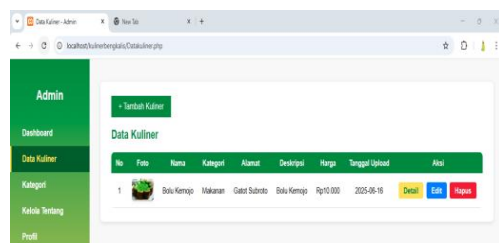


Figure 3 Admin dashboard for managing culinary data

maintain consistency across languages.

4. Admin Culinary Data Access

Once logged into the management panel, administrators could directly view and edit existing culinary data. Action buttons such as Detail, Edit, and Delete allowed real-time updates to the database, ensuring that the information displayed to users was accurate and current.

The admin panel provided a centralized location for content management, significantly reducing the time and effort required to maintain the website. By connecting all CRUD (Create, Read, Update, Delete) functions to the database, any changes

were instantly reflected on the public-facing pages.

5. Category Data Management

The final stage involved creating a dedicated category.php page

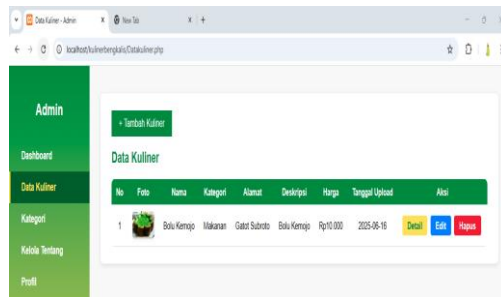


Figure 4 Admin view of culinary data entries

for managing food categories. This allowed administrators to add, edit, and delete categories for better content organization.

The system validated form inputs before executing SQL queries to ensure data integrity. Adding a category ran an INSERT query, deleting used a DELETE query with the selected category ID, and editing used an UPDATE query. These functions were linked to the main database connection, ensuring seamless integration with the rest of the website. This structured five-step process ensured that the *Flavor of Bengkalis* website was not only technically functional but also equipped with a robust content management system,

enabling easy updates and long-term sustainability.

Validation and User Testing

Expert validation was

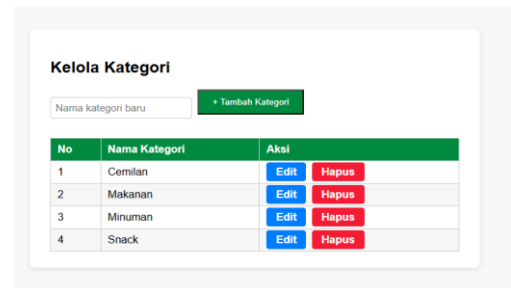


Figure 5 Category management interface in the admin panel

conducted by a media design specialist and an English language expert, focusing on accuracy, usability, and technical performance. Strengths noted included the bilingual presentation, intuitive navigation, and visual appeal, while recommendations included improving image resolution and adding more interactive elements.

Following revisions, a user trial with local and international participants demonstrated high satisfaction, with users praising ease of navigation, cultural depth, and website aesthetics. Suggestions such as an interactive map and better content arrangement were incorporated into the final version.

Final Output

The final *Flavor of Bengkalis* website successfully addressed the needs identified in the analysis stage. It

offered a visually appealing, bilingual, and user-friendly platform with categorized menus, cultural storytelling, multimedia content, and location-based navigation. These features collectively supported the website's function as both a culinary promotion tool and a cultural preservation medium.

Discussion

The results of this research highlight the importance of multilingual access, cultural narratives, and multimedia integration in digital culinary promotion. The strong user preference for a bilingual platform aligns with Winarso, Untari, & Khasanah (2024), who emphasized that language inclusivity and visual richness enhance engagement and broaden audience reach. Similarly, the integration of cultural stories supports Stierand's (2008) view that storytelling fosters stronger connections between visitors and the destination's identity.

From a development perspective, the structured five-step process reflects the Dick & Carey model's emphasis on systematic planning, iterative design, and evaluation. The positive expert and user feedback validate Kotler and

Keller's (2016) assertion that digital marketing tools combining accessibility, visual appeal, and relevant content significantly increase product visibility and audience engagement. Ultimately, the *Flavor of Bengkalis* website not only fills the gap in English-language promotion for Bengkalis cuisine but also serves as a sustainable platform for tourism development and cultural preservation.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

This research successfully developed the Flavor of Bengkalis website as a bilingual platform for promoting Bengkalis District's iconic foods. The development followed the Dick & Carey instructional design model, starting from needs analysis, design, development, expert validation, user testing, and final revision. The needs analysis indicated that stakeholders required a bilingual website featuring categorized menus, high-quality images, cultural narratives, and interactive maps.

The final product met these requirements and received positive evaluations from both experts and

users. Expert validation placed the website in the “very good” category for content, design, and functionality. User trial results showed high satisfaction in terms of usability, visual appeal, and cultural information richness. The website is expected to serve as an effective digital marketing tool, increase the visibility of Bengkalis culinary heritage, and contribute to the growth of local tourism.

Suggestion

It is suggested that future development of the website includes more interactive features, such as online ordering systems, video-based cultural storytelling, and integration with social media platforms to enhance audience engagement. Regular updates to content, including new culinary items and seasonal promotions, are recommended to maintain user interest. Collaboration with local tourism offices and culinary MSMEs should be sustained to ensure the accuracy and relevance of information. Additionally, expanding the website’s search engine optimization (SEO) strategies will help increase global visibility and reach a broader audience.

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