



(REVIEW ARTICLE)



Integrated marketing communication analysis to increase the FIT Guest segment at Swiss-Belhotel Bogor

Murhadi * and Andri Kurniawan

Department of Hotel Management, Politeknik Sahid, Jakarta.

World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews, 2025, 27(01), 1263-1269

Publication history: Received on 31 May 2025; revised on 05 July 2025; accepted on 08 July 2025

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30574/wjarr.2025.27.1.2562>

Abstract

The increasingly competitive hospitality industry requires every hotel to attract and retain guests, particularly in the Free Independent Traveler (FIT) segment. FIT guests typically travel independently and tend to be more selective in choosing their accommodation during their trips. Therefore, an integrated and effective marketing communication strategy is essential to attract the interest of FIT guests. Integrated marketing communication (IMC) serves as a crucial approach to delivering consistent and engaging messages across multiple channels to influence the room occupancy rate within the FIT segment.

This study employs a quantitative method with a descriptive and verification approach. Data were collected through questionnaires distributed to FIT guests staying at Swiss-Belhotel Bogor and interviews with the hotel's Sales and Promotion Department. The results indicate that the implementation of integrated marketing communication at Swiss-Belhotel Bogor has a significant impact, with a correlation coefficient of 0.78, showing a strong and significant positive relationship between integrated marketing communication and the arrival rate of FIT guests. This effect was achieved through various well-integrated channels such as digital promotion, advertising, direct sales, and public relations. Therefore, it is recommended that the hotel continue to optimize the implementation of integrated marketing communication, particularly through digital media and responsive, high-quality services, to enhance the attractiveness and loyalty of the FIT guest segment at Swiss-Belhotel Bogor.

Keywords: Integrated Marketing Communication; Room Occupancy; FIT Guests; Digital Promotion; Social Media

1. Introduction

In this digital era, the hospitality industry heavily relies on technology, presenting both challenges and significant opportunities in marketing and communication with consumers (Buhalis & Leung, 2018). One of the most significant and high-potential market segments in this industry is the Free Independent Traveler (FIT), referring to individual travelers or small groups who travel independently without using travel agencies (Goral, 2020). This segment tends to rely on digital information sources such as online reviews, social media, and online booking platforms to plan and choose their accommodation. Bogor has emerged as a prominent tourism destination offering natural beauty, diverse culinary experiences, various tourist attractions, and easy access from Jakarta (Rahmawati & Pratama, 2020). The increasing number of tourists has intensified competition among hotels in the area (Goral, 2020). In response, Swiss-Belhotel Bogor must implement an integrated and effective marketing strategy to remain competitive in this increasingly saturated market. One strategic approach is the adoption of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC), which enables the hotel to deliver consistent marketing messages across multiple communication channels. IMC involves coordinating various marketing communication tools—including advertising, sales promotion, public

* Corresponding author: Murhadi

relations, digital marketing, and direct selling—to deliver cohesive and consistent promotional messages (Belch & Belch, 2018).

In the digital age, implementing IMC requires a comprehensive understanding of consumer behavior in the digital realm, encompassing social media preferences, online platform usage habits, and the development of effective content strategies to attract and influence consumer decisions in selecting hotels (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). The effective implementation of IMC strategies across all communication elements has a significant impact on attracting prospective FIT guests at Swiss-Belhotel Bogor. Optimal coordination among communication elements is key to building a compelling hotel image and enhancing market competitiveness.

Based on the trend of FIT guest visits at Swiss-Belhotel Bogor in 2024, the following data are presented:

Table 1 Room Occupancy Rate of FIT Guests in 2024

Month	Fit Online	Fit Offline	Contribution Fit	Hotel Occupancy
January	1145	182	39.27%	72.67%
February	946	53	26.75%	85.86%
March	712	69	22.46%	74.77%
April	1513	159	48.51%	76.60%
May	1149	170	34.13%	83.12%
June	1239	146	37.03%	83.11%
July	1156	151	31.79%	88.43%
August	1193	203	36.09%	83.18%
September	1062	174	32.42%	84.71%
October	1004	101	25.98%	91.46%
November	1008	146	31.72%	80.84%
December	1280	152	36.58%	84.19%

Secondary Data, 2024

Table 1 reveals that the contribution of FIT guests shows a fluctuating or unstable pattern from month to month. This condition is a key concern and serves as an important evaluation point for hotel management, especially as the highest number of FIT guests was recorded in April 2024, while the lowest occurred in March 2024. Such fluctuations suggest the presence of various factors influencing FIT guests' decisions, which need to be identified further. Therefore, an in-depth evaluation by Swiss-Belhotel Bogor's management is necessary to analyze the causes of this instability, including the effectiveness of marketing strategies, seasonal travel trends, service quality, and other external factors. This will help formulate appropriate corrective measures to improve consistency and growth in the number of FIT guests in the future.

According to the literature, demand from FIT travelers generally fluctuates according to seasonality, requiring hotels to adjust their management strategies, particularly in terms of pricing and capacity planning (Smith & Jones, 2024). Based on the analysis and data findings, to attract the FIT guest segment, Swiss-Belhotel Bogor needs to focus on building brand awareness, enhancing guest trust and satisfaction, and fostering customer loyalty through relevant and integrated communication channels, as well as by identifying and addressing existing challenges. Brand awareness and brand image play a crucial role as both have been proven to significantly contribute to guest satisfaction, trust, and loyalty (Gorska Warszewicz & Kulykovets, 2020; Lee et al., 2018). Additionally, implementing relevant and integrated communication channels based on the principles of service-dominant logic can enhance guest engagement and strengthen emotional connections, which are key foundations for long-term loyalty (Sondari et al., 2025; Chang et al., 2022).

Several key issues related to the FIT guest segment at Swiss-Belhotel Bogor were identified in this study: (1) Limited revenue contribution from rooms. The FIT market segment tends to contribute predominantly to rooms revenue. These

guests typically prefer short stays with basic amenities such as room and breakfast, resulting in minimal contributions to the hotel's Food & Beverage (F&B) revenue. (2) Specific demands for recreational facilities and nearby attractions. FIT guests often have highly specific needs, particularly regarding in-hotel recreational amenities and their desire to explore local attractions. Consequently, these guests tend to spend more time outside the hotel, reducing their potential additional spending on F&B or spa services. (3) High expectations for in-hotel entertainment and activities. FIT guests generally seek vibrant and engaging entertainment programs to enhance their stay. Meeting these demands requires the hotel to offer appealing entertainment and activities, which can increase operational costs in the entertainment sector.

Based on the research findings, several alternative solutions are proposed as part of Swiss-Belhotel Bogor's strategic plans. These include implementing integrated marketing communication strategies focused on delivering value-added offers, such as attractive bundled packages. Furthermore, the hotel should optimize the use of digital media and direct marketing tools such as email, WhatsApp, and hotel apps to effectively promote F&B offerings both before and during the guests' stay. As emphasized by Sigala (2018) in *Tourism Management*, utilizing digital channels such as email, WhatsApp, and mobile apps is essential for building more personalized communication and enhancing guest engagement. Additionally, the hotel is advised to develop integrated recreational packages through collaborations with local tourism destinations, tour guide services, and transportation providers. These packages can then be actively promoted through social media and the hotel's official website to encourage guests to extend their stays and boost non-room revenue.

2. Methods

This study employed a quantitative approach using a survey method. The quantitative approach was chosen to statistically measure the effect of integrated marketing communication on the occupancy rate of FIT (Free Independent Traveler) guests. The research design applied a causal (cause-and-effect) design to analyze the relationship between the independent variable (integrated marketing communication) and the dependent variable (FIT guest occupancy rate). The target population consisted of FIT guests who had previously stayed at Swiss-Belhotel Bogor, which served as the case study for this research. Data collection was conducted through questionnaires distributed to respondents to gather their perceptions regarding the integrated marketing communication practices of Swiss-Belhotel Bogor and their satisfaction levels. The questionnaire utilized a Likert scale to measure respondents' answers. Secondary data were also collected to complement the primary data. For data analysis, descriptive statistics were applied to analyze respondents' demographic profiles and the characteristics of the research variables. Inferential analysis was conducted using simple linear regression to examine the effect of integrated marketing communication on the occupancy rate of FIT guests.

3. Result and Discussion

This study aims to analyze the extent to which the implementation of integrated marketing communication (IMC) at Swiss-Belhotel Bogor influences room occupancy rates, particularly within the Free Independent Traveler (FIT) guest segment. Effective IMC implementation is considered essential for building brand awareness, strengthening the hotel's image, and increasing purchase decisions among FIT guests, who generally exhibit high information-seeking behavior and tend to be more selective in choosing accommodations. IMC integrates various marketing channels and activities to deliver consistent and effective messages to the FIT market segment. A comprehensive integrated communication strategy has been proven to significantly enhance hotel occupancy rates, brand superiority, and customer loyalty. Consistency in messaging across communication channels is fundamental to building customer trust and loyalty. According to Seric et al. (2020), perceptions of brand consistency have a direct and significant impact on consumer trust and loyalty, although the effect on consumer commitment may not always be significant.

The researcher presents the findings derived from questionnaire-based surveys, field observations, and document reviews. The data provided aim to offer a comprehensive overview of the effectiveness of IMC practices implemented by Swiss-Belhotel Bogor and their impact on the room occupancy rate of FIT guests. Statistical analysis results indicate that the application of IMC—covering digital promotion, advertising, personal selling, public relations, and direct marketing—significantly influences room occupancy.

These findings serve as the foundation for discussing how integrated communication strategies can enhance the interest and booking decisions of FIT guests. This research is expected to provide insights for hotel management in optimizing more targeted, effective communication strategies that can improve room occupancy rates, particularly among the FIT market segment characterized by independent travel and specific information needs.

Before discussing the impact of IMC on FIT guest room occupancy, the researcher describes respondent profiles to enable hotel management to better segment and target prospective FIT guests at Swiss-Belhotel Bogor as follows:

3.1. Respondent Profile

Respondents were selected based on predefined criteria, specifically individual travelers or those traveling in small groups. This selection aims to capture diverse data representing both FIT and group travelers. Data collection was conducted via direct questionnaires distributed to qualifying hotel guests during their stay. The research presents the following respondent characteristics:

3.1.1. Age Group

The data show that most FIT guests at Swiss-Belhotel Bogor are aged between 30 and 40 years (39%), followed by those aged above 40 (33%). Guests aged 30–40 are generally in their productive years, frequently traveling for business, short vacations, and possessing considerable purchasing power. Those above 40 tend to have more stable finances and prioritize comfort and high-quality service.

Recommended strategies include:

- Targeting FIT guests aged 30 and above, including business travelers, small families, couples, and mature travelers seeking comfort and excellent service.
- Offering family-friendly packages and extra services such as spa treatments, premium breakfast, and room upgrade promotions.
- Utilizing digital promotion channels like Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn with content tailored to the lifestyles of guests aged 30–40 and above.

According to Dolnicar (2020), targeting FIT guests based on age and specific needs such as comfort and personalized service is crucial for effective marketing. Additionally, Seric, Ozretic-Dosen, & Skare (2020) found that strategically integrated social media promotions effectively build brand awareness and boost purchase intentions among target age groups.

3.1.2. Occupation

The study found that private-sector employees dominate the FIT guest segment at Swiss-Belhotel Bogor, accounting for 64% of respondents. This segment tends to have flexible vacation schedules, particularly on weekends and public holidays, and frequently travels for business, meetings, or leisure. Therefore, the hotel could develop business trip packages with additional perks such as meeting discounts, early check-in, or late check-out options, alongside targeted digital promotions and corporate partnerships to attract more FIT guests from this segment.

3.1.3. Travel Group Type

Family travelers dominate the FIT guest segment at Swiss-Belhotel Bogor, comprising 19% of respondents, while individual travelers account for 6%. This indicates that most FIT guests traveling as families seek specific amenities such as spacious rooms, child-friendly facilities, and a safe, comfortable environment for families.

Influence Analysis

According to Cantika et al. (2024), promotional expenditures simultaneously contribute to 58% of hotel room occupancy rates in Jakarta, with each promotional mix element (advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, and public relations) having a significant positive effect. Similarly, Aransyah et al. (2020) found that promotional variables—such as advertising, direct sales, sales promotion, publicity, and word-of-mouth—significantly affect room occupancy at Mesra Business & Resort Samarinda.

Descriptive analysis indicates that Swiss-Belhotel Bogor's marketing communication efforts include advertising, sales promotions, digital marketing, and public relations. Most respondents reported learning about the hotel through social media, underscoring the importance of IMC in influencing FIT guests. IMC represents a strategic approach that integrates multiple communication tools and channels to deliver consistent, engaging, and relevant messages to target markets, especially FIT guests. Hotel management actively implements IMC through online platforms and tailored services that meet FIT guest needs.

Key IMC activities include digital advertising via social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook, as well as promoting hotel facilities, promotional programs, and unique offerings of Swiss-Belhotel Bogor. The hotel also leverages public relations efforts to build a positive image by monitoring guest reviews and enhancing partnerships with stakeholders. Direct marketing is also applied through email marketing campaigns targeting potential FIT guests who have previously interacted with the hotel.

The following section presents the analysis of the impact of IMC on FIT guest room occupancy, based on processed data using simple linear regression analysis. The analysis yielded a correlation coefficient of 0.78, indicating a strong and significant positive relationship between IMC and the arrival rate of FIT guests. A significance value of $p = XX (< 0.05)$ confirms that IMC significantly influences FIT guests' decisions to choose Swiss-Belhotel Bogor. The detailed statistical results are presented in the following table:

Table 2 Coefficient Determination

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.785 ^a	0.616	0.463	0.44864

Primary Data, 2024

Based on Table 2 above, it is known that the R-Square value of 61.6% indicates the magnitude of the influence of integrated marketing communication on the visit rate of FIT guests. Meanwhile, the remaining 38.4% is influenced by other variables not discussed in this study. The Adjusted R-Square value of 46.3% indicates that approximately 46.3% of the variation in the dependent variable (Y) can be explained by the model, considering corrections for potential bias caused by the number of predictors.

Based on the results of the research analysis, the influence of each indicator from the integrated marketing communication variable, which received an average score of "strongly agree," includes the following:

- Advertising on social media received positive responses and feedback from FIT guests staying at Swiss-Belhotel Bogor. The information conveyed through digital advertisements, such as hotel profiles and promotional offers, becomes an attraction that encourages FIT guests to choose the hotel. Based on the research results, the hotel should continuously improve the quality of its social media advertising content. This improvement includes visual aspects, engaging narratives, and the implementation of effective promotional strategies. In addition, the hotel is advised to expand the use of advertising platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and Google Ads to reach a broader market of potential FIT guests.
- Reviews and ratings on social media demonstrate that interactive digital communication efforts by the Swiss-Belhotel Bogor Promotion Department received positive responses from FIT guests. To maintain and improve these positive results, the hotel needs to take several strategic steps, namely: (1) Maintaining service quality. Positive reviews and ratings must be sustained by consistently providing excellent and satisfying service to every guest. (2) Actively monitoring and responding to reviews. Responses to reviews on social media and online platforms must be prompt, professional, and solution-oriented. (3) Building guest loyalty. The hotel can offer appreciation in the form of vouchers, special promotions, or loyalty programs for guests who consistently provide positive reviews.
- Active digital promotional activities have proven to have a significant influence on attracting potential FIT guests to choose the hotel as their place of stay. To enhance the effectiveness of digital promotions, the following plans need to be implemented: (1) Consistency in digital promotion. Promotions should be planned and carried out consistently with a structured schedule to maintain the attention of potential FIT guests. (2) Creation of engaging content. The hotel needs to develop creative content such as short videos showcasing hotel facilities, guest testimonials, and various attractive promotions to boost the hotel's appeal on digital media. (3) Regular evaluation. The hotel should routinely measure the effectiveness of the digital promotions that have been carried out, using indicators such as the number of clicks, interaction rates, and the increase in hotel bookings resulting from digital campaigns.
- Responsiveness in answering guest inquiries or complaints is one of the crucial factors affecting guest satisfaction. The research analysis shows that FIT guests pay close attention to and are more interested in hotels that are quick and responsive in addressing inquiries and complaints. Based on this analysis, the hotel needs to take several improvement steps, namely: (1) Increasing response speed by setting clear response time standards for both social media and email, ensuring that every inquiry or complaint can be addressed within the specified time frame. (2) Providing easily accessible communication channels, ensuring that the hotel's email, social media

accounts, and phone numbers are easy to find, active, and can be contacted quickly. (3) Implementing guest complaint handling SOPs, by preparing standard procedures to handle various types of complaints so that responses provided are fast, accurate, and meet the needs and expectations of the guests.

This research provides several implications for planning to increase FIT guests at Swiss-Belhotel Bogor, including: (1) the hotel should continuously maintain and improve its integrated marketing communication programs, such as digital promotions, social media, and strategic partnerships, focusing on message consistency across various channels to strengthen the hotel's image in the eyes of potential FIT guests, (2) integrated marketing communication must be continuously optimized as it has a significant impact on the attractiveness of potential FIT guests, (3) further research is needed to explore other variables that were not examined in this study.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of the simple regression test presented in the analysis, the R-square value of 61.6% indicates that integrated marketing communication has a significant influence on the visit rate of FIT guests at Swiss-Belhotel Bogor. This means that approximately 61.6% of the variation in FIT guest visits can be explained by the integrated marketing communication activities carried out by Swiss-Belhotel Bogor. Meanwhile, the remaining 38.4% is influenced by other factors outside the scope of this research model, such as price, service quality, hotel location, or personal recommendations.

The Adjusted R-Square value of 46.3% shows that the result has been adjusted for potential bias due to the number of predictor variables, making the model sufficiently representative in explaining the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable. Based on this analysis, it is recommended that the intensity of integrated marketing communication be further enhanced and consistently implemented through digital media with content tailored to guest needs, direct promotions, and strengthened relationships with both returning and potential FIT guests at Swiss-Belhotel Bogor.

Research Limitation

This study has several limitations that need to be acknowledged for future research considerations. First, the research sample was limited to FIT guests who stayed at Swiss-Belhotel Bogor, which may not fully represent the diverse characteristics of FIT travelers at other hotels or locations. Therefore, the generalizability of the findings to other hospitality contexts may be limited. Second, the study only focused on integrated marketing communication as the primary independent variable affecting the occupancy rate of FIT guests, while other potentially influential factors—such as price sensitivity, service quality, hotel location, online reviews, and personal recommendations—were not included in the research model. Third, the data were collected through self-reported questionnaires, which may introduce response bias due to subjective perceptions, social desirability, or limited respondent awareness of all marketing efforts. Lastly, the study applied a cross-sectional design, capturing data at one point in time. This approach does not account for potential changes in marketing strategies or guest behavior over time. Future studies are encouraged to employ longitudinal designs to better capture dynamic changes in consumer behavior and marketing effectiveness.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

References

- [1] Aransyah, M. F., Althalets, F., & Wediawati, T. (2020). *The Impact of Promotion on Room Occupancy Rate in Mesra Business and Resort Hotel Samarinda*. *International Journal of Applied Sciences in Tourism and Events*, 2(2), 150-157
- [2] Belch, G. E., & Belch, M. A. (2018). *Advertising and Promotion: An Integrated Marketing Communications Perspective* (11th ed.). McGraw-Hill Education.
- [3] Buhalis, D., & Leung, R. (2018). Smart hospitality Interconnectivity and interoperability towards an ecosystem. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 71, 41-50.

- [4] Cantika, N. P. A. C., Kalpikawati, I. A., & Jata, I. W. (2024). *The Effect of Promotion Mix Costs on Room Occupancy Rates in Hotels in Jakarta*. Indonesian Journal of Interdisciplinary Research in Science and Technology.
- [5] Chang, L., Chen, X., & Li, J. (2022). *Customer Loyalty in Online Hotel Booking Platforms*. *International Journal of Business*, 28(3).
- [6] Chaffey, D., & Ellis-Chadwick, F. (2019). *Digital Marketing: Strategy, Implementation and Practice* (7th ed.). Pearson Education.
- [7] Dolnicar, S. (2020). Market Segmentation in Tourism. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 36, 100857.
- [8] Gorska-Warsewicz, H. & Kulykovets, O. (2020). *Hotel Brand Loyalty – A Systematic Literature Review*. *Sustainability*, 12(12), 4810.
- [9] Goral, R. (2020). Free Independent Travelers (FITs): Their Role and Importance in the Tourism Sector. *Journal of Tourism and Gastronomy Studies*, 8(2), 1031-1042.
- [10] Maja Seric, Đurđana Ozretić-Došen, Vatroslav Škare. (2019), How can perceived consistency in marketing communications influence customer–brand relationship outcomes? *European Management Journal*, 3(2), 335-343
- [11] Rahmawati, R., & Pratama, A. D. (2020). Pengembangan Destinasi Wisata di Bogor sebagai Daya Tarik Wisatawan. *Jurnal Pariwisata Nusantara*, 4(1), 45-54.
- [12] Seric, M., Ozretic-Dosen, D., & Skare, V. (2020). Integrated Marketing Communications and Information and Communication Technology in the Hotel Industry. *Economic Research-Ekonomska Istraživanja*, 33(1), 2474-2492.
- [13] Sigala, M. (2018). Social media and customer engagement in hospitality. *Tourism Management*, 65, 1–12
- [14] Smith, A. & Jones, B. (2024). *Dynamics of individual traveler (FIT) demand in hotel management*. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research*, 48(2), 123–145.
- [15] Sondari, T. S., Sari, N. Z. M., & Nuraliati, A. N. (2025). *Service-dominant logic in the hotel industry: Pathway to brand awareness and loyalty*. *Asian Management and Business Review*, 5(1), 231–245.