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## **Developing Marketing Strategy Using Promotion Mix Method to Increase Purchase Intention at PT Sinar Dempo Bus Service**

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### **ABSTRACT**

In the fast-paced digital era, the bus transportation industry is undergoing significant transformation, especially in how consumers behavior when booking transportation. PO Sinar Dempo, a well-established bus operator in Sumatra, recognizes the need to adapt by developing an integrated marketing communication (IMC) strategy. This study aims to explore how promotional elements such as advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, and digital marketing influence consumer attitudes and, ultimately, their online ticket purchase intentions. A quantitative approach was applied by distributing a structured questionnaire to 250 respondents who are users of Sinar Dempo services. The collected data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with the SmartPLS 4.0 software. The findings reveal that digital marketing, advertising, personal selling and sales promotion have a significant impact on shaping consumer attitudes, which then influence their intention to purchase. Beyond promotional impacts, this research also examines both internal and external strategic factors that influence Sinar Dempo competitive position. Internal analysis using STP (Segmentation, Targeting, Positioning), the 7P Marketing Mix, and VRIO framework was complemented by external analysis through Porter’s Five Forces, PESTEL, competitor mapping, and customer analysis. These insights were synthesized into a comprehensive TOWS Matrix to formulate actionable strategies. Through this holistic approach, Sinar Dempo is expected to strengthen customer loyalty, expand its digital market presence, and optimize service offerings that cater to both modern digital consumers and those who still prefer traditional booking methods.

**Keywords:** PO Sinar Dempo, integrated marketing communication, digital marketing, consumer attitude, purchase intention, strategic marketing, STP, 7P, VRIO, SEM-PLS.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The development of digital technology and the increased use of smartphones have driven significant changes in global consumer behavior, especially in the adoption of ecommerce that emphasizes convenience, speed, and accessibility (Wilson, Brown, & Johnson, 2024). Studies in India show that smartphone use significantly increases ecommerce adoption due to ease of access (MultiArticles Journal, 2025). Selain itu, penelitian oleh Ahmad et al. (2021) on mobile commerce in Jordan found that the perception of convenience and usability directly influences consumers' intention to use digital services. Biswas, Yoganarasimhan, dan Zhang (2025) It also highlights that the adoption of online shopping affects price sensitivity when shopping offline, signaling a shift in consumer decision patterns across platforms. Next, Jovanovic, Sjödin, dan Parida (2021) underlining that the evolution of digital platform architecture and its governance directly affects the value of services and user experience, which is an important factor in maintaining the competitiveness of companies.

The development of digital transformation in Indonesia is reflected in the increase in internet penetration—in the APJII survey (2024), the internet penetration rate increased

from 73.7% (2020) to 79.5% (2024), with around 221 million active users—which encourages changes in consumer behavior towards online transactions, including in the transportation sector. The e-Conomy SEA report from Google, Temasek, and Bain & Company (2024) reports that the GMV of Indonesia's digital economy will reach US\$ 90 billion by 2024, with the highest growth being in the online travel sector, which rose from US\$ 3 billion in 2022 to US\$ 9 billion in 2024—indicating a significant adoption of digital ticketing. Empirical studies in Indonesia confirm the high need for e-ticketing systems, especially in bus services, where the main factors are ease of access, availability of route information, and affordability. An analysis of the literature also shows that increasing internet penetration, growth of smartphone users, and changes in consumer behavior are the main catalysts for the development of ecommerce in Indonesia, although infrastructure gaps are still an obstacle (Purba et al., 2025; Yoyo Sudaryo et al., 2020).

In addition, research on consumer behavior in Indonesian online marketplaces highlights how utilitarian and hedonic browsing habits affect satisfaction, eWOM, and repurchase intent, reflecting the close interconnectedness between digital technology and consumer behavior. Today, many companies have embraced digitalization to enhance operational efficiency and service quality. A report published by *DS Research* (2020) shows that digitalization allows for more optimal resource utilization. The report highlights that companies such as Blue Bird and Garuda Indonesia have made it easier for consumers to book tickets online through websites and mobile applications even outside regular operating hours making such features essential for all players in the transportation industry. However, despite the widespread availability of technology, customer adoption rates vary significantly, especially in regions where people are still accustomed to purchasing tickets offline through agents or nearby counters due to long-standing habits or limited internet access. These factors hinder the broader adoption of digital services.

In the intercity bus service sector, *Sinar Dempo*, one of the bus operators in South Sumatra, has taken strategic steps toward digitalization. The company has developed an online ticket booking system via its website and mobile application, aiming to provide convenience and ease for customers in purchasing bus tickets online. Additionally, the online platform extends the reach of services to consumers located along bus routes that previously lacked adequate service. However, despite the availability of this digital option, its usage remains low, as most customers continue to prefer offline booking. This suggests shortcomings in the effectiveness of Sinar Dempo's marketing communication strategy. Observations indicate that low customer awareness of the available online platform reflects ineffective marketing communications that fail to build positive attitudes or encourage behavioral change. With intensifying competition from other bus operators and alternative modes of transportation, a more aggressive and targeted marketing strategy is required.

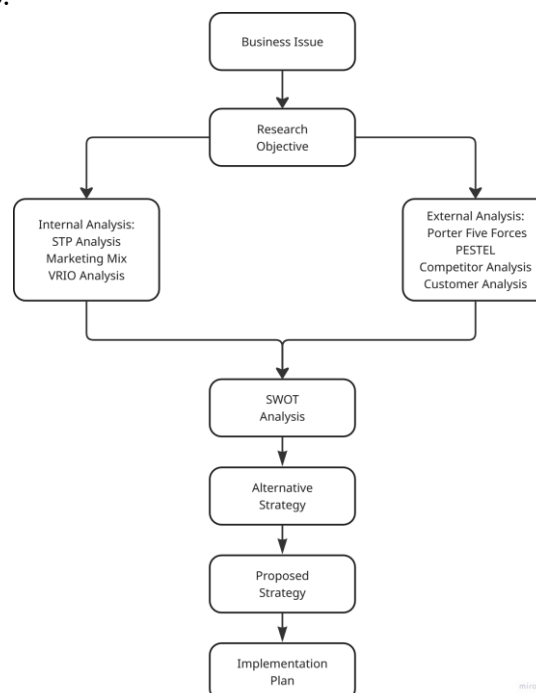
Previous research by Marfo and Quansah (2020) applied the Technology Acceptance Model to examine factors such as perceived usefulness and subjective norms

influencing the adoption of e-ticketing systems in the bus transport sector in Kumasi, Ghana. Their findings indicated that these factors significantly affect user intentions (*researchgate.net*). However, their study focused solely on user behavior analysis, without exploring strategic approaches to increase awareness or drive digital platform adoption. Another relevant study by Susilo et al. (2023) in Yogyakarta highlighted the underutilization of ride-hailing services as a first- and last-mile mode at intercity terminals, identifying comfort, safety, and transaction efficiency as key factors in adopting digital transport services (*mdpi.com*). However, the study did not investigate marketing communication strategies to enhance the usage of online bus booking platforms.

This research aims to bridge those gaps by integrating user adoption analysis with digital marketing communication strategies to enhance customer awareness and encourage behavioral shifts toward online bus ticketing services. The objective of this study is to design and evaluate an effective digital marketing communication framework to increase user adoption of intercity bus e-ticketing platforms and assess its impact on customer awareness and behavioral intention. The expected benefit is to provide practical guidance for bus operators such as *Sinar Dempo* and other transportation stakeholders in developing targeted campaigns that strengthen digital service adoption, improve customer loyalty, and enhance competitiveness in the digital era.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research is a qualitative descriptive study that aims to formulate an effective marketing communication strategy to increase consumer intention in using the online ticket booking platform provided by Sinar Dempo.



**Figure 1. Research Design**

Source: Author's Analysis

The study begins by identifying the core issue faced by the company, namely the low usage rate of its digital platforms, including its website and mobile application. To address this problem, the research focuses on determining the appropriate marketing communication strategy through comprehensive internal and external analyses.

Internally, the study employs tools such as the *Marketing Mix (7Ps)*, *STP (Segmenting, Targeting, and Positioning)* analysis, and *VRIO* analysis to assess the company's internal capabilities and strategic positioning. Externally, the research utilizes *Porter's Five Forces*, *PESTLE* analysis, *Competitor Analysis*, and *Customer Analysis* to understand macro and industry-level factors influencing consumer behavior. The insights derived from both internal and external assessments are synthesized using a *SWOT* analysis to generate strategic alternatives. The final output includes an actionable implementation plan aligned with the selected strategy.

To support this analysis, data collection is conducted through in-depth interviews with company management and staff, as well as through documentation review and direct observation of the company's marketing and operational practices. The internal analysis specifically focuses on identifying the company's resources and capabilities that can be optimized to enhance its competitive advantage, while the external analysis maps out potential threats and opportunities that influence customer preferences in the digital ticketing landscape.

Internal analysis examines factors within the company that can improve performance and strengthen its competitive edge. This includes evaluating resources, capabilities, and internal processes to identify organizational strengths and weaknesses. Conducting internal analysis helps enhance elements that represent the company's unique advantages, enabling it to compete more effectively with other businesses. In this study, internal analysis is conducted using the *7Ps Marketing Mix*, *STP* analysis (*Segmenting, Targeting, and Positioning*), and *VRIO* analysis applied to *Sinar Dempo Sanutra*.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### SWOT Analysis

**Table 1. Product Source: Company's Data**

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
Fleet Class Differentiation (Marketing Mix)	Low brand awareness outside Sumatra (Marketing Mix)
Internal Support for Online Ticketing (VRIO)	Limited Geographic Expansion and Scalability (Marketing Mix)
Hybrid services: online & offline (Marketing Mix)	Digital systems are not yet fully integrated such as tracking features, e-tickets, etc. (Marketing Mix)
Loyal Customer in Rural Area (VRIO)	Digital promotion and online visibility are still limited (Marketing Mix)

Source: Company's Data

**Table 2. Product**

<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
Growth of internet and smartphone users (PESTLE)	Competition from digital aggregators (PESTLE)
Lifestyle and Regulatory Push Changes Towards Digitalization (PESTLE)	Substitute Pressure from Trains, Low-Cost Airlines, and Door-to-Door Shuttle Services (Porter Five Forces)
Collaboration opportunities with fintech and ticketing platforms (Competitor Analysis)	Expansion of Java-based competitors via JTTS (PESTLE)
Potential new features (loyalty points, notifications, bus tracking) (Competitor Analysis)	Low entry barriers in industry (Porter Five Forces)

Source: Company's Data

**Strengths**

- a. Fleet Class Differentiation, Sinar Dempo has a clear competitive advantage in terms of fleet quality, particularly through the provision of premium class bus services such as Big Top and Super Executive. Facilities offered include a 2–1 seating configuration (more spacious and comfortable than the standard 2–2), toilets on the bus, air conditioning with personal ventilation, USB ports, pillows and blankets, a personal entertainment system, as well as a main snack and meal service. This can be the company's unique selling point in marketing Sinar Dempo existing services through the website and application.
- b. Internal Support for Online Ticketing: The company serves main routes such as Pagar Alam – Palembang – Jakarta – Bandung – Yogyakarta. Ticket sales can be done online through the website and application and can also be booked offline at the nearest agents along the Sinar Dempo route. For online ticket bookings, consumers can directly contact WhatsApp for each agent to get more information. In addition, there is an online ticketing admin who can help with problems that occur when booking tickets online. This is expected to make it easier for consumers to purchase online.
- c. Hybrid Services: Online and Offline: Sinar Dempo has developed a website- and app-based ticketing system but still maintains manual booking through agents and WhatsApp. This makes the company's services inclusive, reaching customers who are digitally literate and who are more comfortable with conventional transactions. This combination of services also supports the transition process to digitalization without losing the traditional customer base.
- d. Loyal Customer in Rural Area: Sinar Dempo as a strong and dominant local company in South Sumatra has loyal consumers who become valuable to the company. This is supported by a strong network of agents and loyalty, especially in Pagaralam. The interpersonal relationships built by agents are difficult to replicate but have not been maximized in supporting increased sales online. Agent training is needed to support the digitalization carried out by Sinar Dempo.

**Weaknesses**

**Muhamad Fadel Abdallah***Developing Marketing Strategy Using Promotion Mix Method to Increase Purchase Intention at PT Sinar Dempo Bus Service*

- a. Low Brand Awareness Outside South Sumatra: Despite having a strong customer base in the home region, the Sinar Dempo brand is not widely known in new areas or other big cities such as Greater Jakarta. Low visibility beyond the primary base inhibits the growth of digital customers and strategic partnerships outside of core operational areas.
- b. Limited Geographic Expansion and Scalability: Sinar Dempo is still focused on certain routes in southern Sumatra and parts of Java, with the dominant center of operations in Pagar Alam. The regional scale of operations limits the potential for market growth and brand exposure nationally. This is different from competitors such as Lorena or Sinar Jaya which already have a wide network of intercity routes and are more flexible in expanding into new cities.
- c. Digital Systems Are Not Fully Integrated: Although online booking platforms are available, system integrations such as automatic payments and e-tickets have not been fully implemented. This can reduce the convenience of digital customers and limit the potential for the company's operational efficiency.
- d. Digital Promotion Is Still Limited: Sinar Dempo has not maximized digital marketing such as social media advertising, collaborations with influencers, or SEO campaigns. These limitations cause delays in reaching the target digital consumer, especially the younger generation who are more active on online platforms

**Opportunities**

- a. Growth of Internet Access and Smartphone Users: The increase in internet access and smartphone penetration in Indonesia, including in semi-urban and rural areas, open great opportunities for Sinar Dempo to expand the adoption of digital services. This supports the transformation of the online booking system and expands reach without opening new physical branches.
- b. Lifestyle and Regulatory Push Changes Towards Digitalization: Today's consumers increasingly appreciate efficiency, speed, and ease of accessing services. This digital lifestyle creates opportunities for Sinar Dempo to highlight online services as a modern transportation solution that suits the needs of the times.
- c. Potential for Collaboration with Platforms and Fintech: Sinar Dempo can expand the distribution of services through cooperation with ticket aggregator platforms (such as RedBus, Traveloka) or fintech (for digital payments and promotions). This collaboration not only improves accessibility but also strengthens trust in the company's digital systems.
- d. Development of Additional Service Features: Companies could develop additional features such as bus tracking, loyalty points systems, or departure time notifications. This kind of innovation will improve customer experience and differentiate Sinar Dempo from other conventional competitors.

**Threats**

- a. Competition with Large Aggregator Operators and Platforms: Sinar Dempo faces competition from larger national bus operators on the Aggregator Platform such as Red bus

and Traveloka. This competition requires companies to continue to improve services and the speed of technology adaptation to remain competitive. Since all operators are on the same screen, traffic and search results rankings trigger competition on the platform side (fighting for users) and on the PO side (fighting for the top position & best reviews)

Substitute Pressure from Trains, Low-Cost Airlines, and Door-to-Door Shuttle Services Ongoing upgrades to the railway network (e.g., Divre IV Sumatra) and cheap promo fares from airlines (Citilink, Lion Air) offer faster alternatives on long hauls. Meanwhile, door-to-door shuttles provide convenience for short hops. Each substitute shrinks the addressable market for conventional intercity buses unless Sinar Dempo can differentiate on comfort, flexibility, or price

- b. Road Infrastructure Conditions and Expansion of Java-based competitors via JTTS: The quality of infrastructure on certain routes as well as changes in government regulations such as upper limit tariffs and subsidies can affect operations and profitability. This refers to the entry of large bus companies from Java (such as Sinar Jaya, Rosalia Indah, Handoyo, Lorena) into the Sumatra market, with the Trans Sumatra Toll Road (JTTS) infrastructure. Previously, local operators in Sumatra such as Sinar Dempo enjoyed a kind of "geographical protection" due to poor national road conditions, limited travel times, and limited interprovincial licensing routes. However, since the JTTS has gradually opened to 867 km in 2025, those obstacles have disappeared.
- c. Low entry barriers in industry: The threat of low entry barriers in the intercity transportation industry presents a serious challenge for Sinar Dempo. Due to relatively lenient government regulations, new players can easily enter the market with a minimum of five buses and basic licensing requirements. This situation has opened the door for small entrepreneurs or partnerships with body manufacturers to launch new operators with low investment. These new entrants often rely on aggressive pricing strategies, offering lower fares without concern for long-term sustainability or service quality.

### **TOWS Matrix**

The TOWS matrix helps shape strategy by matching what happens inside the company with what happens outside. Inside, we list strengths and weaknesses using findings from our STP analysis, VRIO review, and the 7-P marketing mix. Outside, we note opportunities and threats drawn from PESTLE factors, Porter's Five Forces, a review of rivals, and our consumer study. Putting these pieces together lets Sinar Dempo see which strategies make the best use of its strong points, fix weak spots, seize chances, and guard against risks.

**Table 3. TOWS**

	<b>Opportunities (O)</b>	<b>Threats (T)</b>
<b>Strengths (S)</b>	<b>S-O Strategy</b> 1. Use WhatsApp and online admin services to add notifications, loyalty points, and e-ticket features (S2, S3, O4)	<b>S-T Strategy</b> 1. Education of rural customers through social media and WhatsApp so that they do not depend on physical agents (S4, T1)

	<b>Opportunities (O)</b>	<b>Threats (T)</b>
	2. Collaboration with RedBus/Traveloka harnessing the power of digital distribution (S2, S3, O3) 3. Promote digital brand image through social campaigns (S1, S4, O1)	2. Maintain loyalty through a simple CRM to facing the expansion of Java-based competitors (S4, T4) 3. Promote the difference in facilities and comfort compared to other travel services (S1, T2)
<b>Weaknesses (W)</b>	<b>W-O Strategy</b> 1. Expand the reach of online promotion outside of Sumatra with SEO and Social Advertising (W1, W4, O1) 2. Integration of ticket tracking and digital notifications with third-party platforms (W2, W3, O3) 3. Launch a referral program based on WhatsApp and social media (W4, O4)	<b>W-T Strategy</b> 1. Develop digital systems gradually so as not to be left behind by new startups (W2, T3) 2. Build an internal digital marketing team that can run content campaigns (W4, T2) 3. Strengthen brand image with storytelling on social media to fight against train/airline substitution (W1, T2)

Source: Company's Data

**S-O Strategies (Strength–Opportunities)****a. Use WhatsApp and Online Ticketing platform to add notifications, loyalty points, and e-ticket features (S2, S3, O4)**

Sinar Dempo can develop a digital-based loyalty system with notification, points, and e-ticket features, which are integrated through WhatsApp and internal applications. This encourages re-purchases and improves customer convenience. Consumers who frequently use this service will get points or benefits such as discounts, priority seats, or special rewards. This will increase repeat purchase intention through applications and websites and strengthen positive perceptions of the brand through emotional added value.

**b. Collaboration with RedBus/Traveloka harnessing the power of digital distribution (S2, S3, O3)**

By maximizing the integration of online and offline bookings, Sinar Dempo can expand its market reach, especially to areas that have not been served digitally, such as Lahat, Lubuk Linggau, and Yogyakarta. Collaborations with platforms such as RedBus or Traveloka will expand digital distribution and help reach new markets more efficiently.

**c. Promote digital brand image through social campaigns (S4, S1, O3)**

By leveraging the power of social media and digital campaigns, companies can effectively communicate the quality of service and advantages of its premium class to the target market. Visual narratives such as customer experience, safety, and comfort on the go will increase emotional engagement and strengthen brand recall.



### **S-T Strategies (Strength–Threats)**

**a. Education of rural customers through social media and WhatsApp so that they do not depend on physical agents (S4, T1)**

Hybrid services (online + offline) are used to teach simple digital purchases made through social media. This step reduces the cost of maintaining agents and retains the penetration of aggressive online players in rural areas. In addition, Sinar Dempo can use agents to educate customers to use online ticket booking.

**b. Maintain loyalty through a simple CRM to facing the expansion of Java-based competitors (S4, T4)**

With CRM and digital integration, companies can offer specific promotions based on location or travel time (e.g. weekend discounts or off-peak times). This strategy can counter the threat from players who rely on bulk discounts or aggressive digital business models.

**c. Promote the difference in facilities and comfort compared to other travel services (S1, T2)**

An integrated campaign through marketing channels that emphasizes the superiority of premium buses over door-to-door shuttles, plane or trains: 2-1 seats, on-board toilets, and snack service. This real differentiation reinforces the "value for money" argument without having to compete purely on price.

### **W-O Strategies (Weaknesses–Opportunities)**

**a. Expand the reach of online promotion outside of Sumatra with SEO and Social Advertising (W1, W4, O1)**

Sinar Dempo needs to expand digital promotion outside of Sumatra through SEO and social media advertising. This strategy aims to increase brand visibility in the wider market and reach potential passengers who are more familiar with digital platforms.

**b. Integration of ticket tracking and digital notifications with third-party platforms (W2, W3, O3)**

The ticket booking system can be improved by integrating tracking and notification features through cooperation with third-party platforms such as Traveloka or RedBus. This will improve the user experience while improving the efficiency of the service.

**c. Launch a referral program based on WhatsApp and social media (W4, O4)**

Referral programs based on WhatsApp and social media can be used to encourage satisfied consumers to recommend services to others. This strategy effectively expands the reach organically at a low cost.

### **W -T Strategies (Weaknesses–Threats)**

**a. Develop digital systems gradually so as not to be left behind by new startups (W2, T3)**

Conduct digital system development to ensure that technology adoption runs stable, is aligned with user needs, and maintains competitiveness against digital-native entrants.

**b. Build an internal digital marketing team that can run content campaigns (W4, T2)**

This team is responsible for editorial planning, paid advertising, and community management. The focus on storytelling raises driver stories, customer testimonials, and local pride weapons to fight against a lot of content competitors from Java.

**c. Strengthen brand image with storytelling on social media to fight against train/airline substitution (W1, T2)**

Comfort, safety, and timeliness testimonial content improves the perception of a brand that is still weak, while also being a differentiator when consumers compare substitution alternatives such as plane or shuttle.

**CONCLUSION**

Based on the research findings, the analysis reveals that three out of the four elements of the promotion mix—advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, and digital marketing—have a significant and positive influence on consumer attitude. In turn, consumer attitude significantly influences purchase intention. The study also demonstrates that digital-based promotional strategies, such as interactive content on social media, loyalty points, referral programs, and time-limited offers, have a strong influence on shaping the positive perceptions of young, digital-native consumers aged 18–35, especially in Sumatra. This group highly values ease of access, trust, affordability, and comfort, aligning with *Sinar Dempo*'s strengths in fleet class differentiation and intercity network coverage.

From a strategic perspective, *SWOT* and *TOWS* analyses confirmed that *Sinar Dempo* possesses valuable resources, including strong brand trust, hybrid online–offline channels, and loyal customers in rural areas. However, these advantages are currently limited by weak digital infrastructure, low online visibility, and narrow geographic market reach. Therefore, to achieve competitive advantage and improve online ticketing adoption, *Sinar Dempo* must invest in integrated *CRM* systems, *SEO*-driven campaigns, digital advertising, and data-based decision-making. Implementing a structured *IMC* (*Integrated Marketing Communication*) strategy aligned with user behavior will support digital transformation, boost market awareness, and drive long-term business performance.

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