CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Digital Literacy and Digital Tourism

2.1.1 Digital Literacy

The advancement of technology in this century has indeed had a lot of impact on our lives. Where everything can be accessed easily and instantly, with internet usage increasing every year. Reading is one of the skills that is highly valued, especially nowadays that uses this technology (Cahyani et al., 2024). Technological advances at this time have proven to be very powerful, as a bridge to facilitate and access all information through several applications in gadgets and other technologies (Arindani et al., 2022). With digital literacy, it makes people better at reading information that has been provided by the media. In addition, digital literacy is the beginning of an interest in reading to be able to deepen reading so that it can market to a wider connection. Digital literacy is the use or utilisation of digital technology to meet the needs and facilitate the activities of its users. Furthermore, digital literacy is characterised by the ability of people to understand, operate, and utilise digital technology.

Digital literacy can be defined as the ability to use and utilize digital technology to meet the needs and facilitate the activities of its users (Ginting et al., 2021). This competency includes the skills to understand, operate, and optimize various digital platforms effectively. In the context of websites, digital literacy enables users not only to access information but also to navigate available features, evaluate the credibility of content, and engage meaningfully with digital media (Rizki et al., 2023). Therefore, a well-developed website can function as both a product and a medium that strengthens digital literacy, as it presents structured, easily accessible, and interactive content, thereby helping users obtain accurate and relevant knowledge (Wardani & Vanel, 2024).

2.1.2 Digital Tourism

In the current era of information technology advancement, tourism has transformed to be very accessible and supported by information technology. According to Cahyani, Hutagalung, Harahap (2024), digital literacy is needed by every individual to be able to participate in the modern world and become a critical foundation in dealing with the development of information and communication technology. Digital culture is defined as the personal ability to describe, recognise, and develop the values and insights of nationalism, Pancasila, and diversity in everyday life through information and communication technology (Amelia et al., 2023).This concept is often referred to as tourism 4.0 or can be connected to Digital Tourism, which is the development of the tourism industry using technology that allows this industry to become smarter. Digital literacy is important in the context of Digital Tourism because it serves as a medium for promoting tourist destinations. Through digital literacy, information about tourist attractions can be known by prospective tourists, which makes it easier for them to get information related to the tourist attractions to be visited. According to Rizki, Elmayati, Irawan, and Nurdiansyah (2023), the website is a form of technology that can be utilised as a medium for providing information. By applying the concept of hyperlinks between pages, websites make it easier for users to browse and access information via the internet. In the context of digital marketing, the use of websites is one of the effective strategies to promote tourist destinations, because it is able to provide access to information that is fast, flexible, and can be accessed anytime and anywhere by the public.

In other words, introducing what are the advantages and highlights of one of the tourist attractions. It is hoped that there will be enthusiasm from several groups of people or individuals to visit.

2.2 Vihara Buddhagaya Watugong Semarang

In Semarang, Central Java, Indonesia, there is a Buddhist temple complex called the Buddhagaya Watugong Monastery. Founded in 1955, it is a public cultural landmark as well as a place of worship for the Buddhist community. The Indonesian Theravāda Buddhist Council oversees the monastery, which serves as a hub for spiritual instruction, religious practice, and cultural preservation. Buddhagaya Watugong Monastery serves as a center for Buddhist ceremonies, meditation retreats, and cultural tourism in addition to its religious significance. It is conveniently accessible for travelers due to its advantageous placement along the Semarang–Solo route (Yubi, 2014).

2.2.1 History of Vihara Buddhagaya Watugong

Buddhism arrived in Indonesia in the early centuries AD. There are two main traditions that took root: Theravada Buddhism, which originated directly from India, and Mahayana Buddhism, which was integrated with Chinese beliefs and culture. The influence of Buddhism was immense, especially on the islands of Java and Sumatra. This era witnessed the rise of powerful Buddhist kingdoms, leaving behind significant archaeological evidence such as the magnificent Borobudur and Mendut temples, which testify to the rich Buddhist heritage of the archipelago (Dewa, 2016). These monumental buildings underscore a period where Buddhist philosophy and art flourished, becoming an integral part of the region's cultural identity. Sources suggest that the Buddha Dhamma played an important role in shaping the historical development of religion in Indonesia, as seen in these ancient relics.

Vihara Buddhagaya Watugong itself is one of the religious-based historical tourist attractions in the city of Semarang, located in the Banyumanik area with a land area of around 2.25 hectares. The establishment of Vihara

Buddhagaya Watugong in Semarang in 1955 is directly and significantly related to the revival of Buddhism in Indonesia. The impetus for its establishment came after the Vesak celebration at Borobudur in 1955, where the wisdom and personality of Bhikkhu Ashin Jinarakhita greatly inspired a prominent Buddhist landlord in Semarang, Goei Thwan Ling (Sutopo). Recognising the need for a central place for the development of the Buddha Dhamma, Goei Thwan Ling generously donated his land for the construction of the Vihara. Therefore, the Buddhagaya Foundation was established on 19 October 1955, with the specific purpose of managing the Monastery and its activities (Nur Jamal, 2018). Bhikkhu Ashin Jinarakhita himself lived at Buddhagaya Vihara Semarang from 1955, effectively making it the centre of the Buddhist revival movement in the country.

After experiencing many ups and downs in the organisation and development of tourist attractions, since 2000, Buddhagaya Monastery finally tidied up the structure to be able to develop into a Buddhist Centre that focuses on Buddhist training places in practicing dhamma such as Meditation, Puja Bhakti, and others. On the other hand, with the establishment of several buildings and also ornaments in the environment around the monastery such as the Avalokitesvara Pagoda which makes this place more beautiful and makes the main icon of Watugong Buddhagaya Monastery. Now, this place can be a tourist destination for domestic or international tourists. And make this place a valuable asset in the pluralism of the nation and state of Indonesia as historical tourism.

2.2.2 Vihara Buddhagaya Watugong Attractions

Vihara Buddhagaya Watugong is not only a place of worship, but also a significant historical and cultural site that offers various attractions to visitors. The information regarding the attractions of Watugong Monastery is based on Selayang Pandang Vihara Buddhagaya Watugong by Yubi (2014), published by Yayasan Buddhagaya. According to this source, the Watugong Monastery consists of 12 attractions, each contributing to its spiritual, historical, and architectural significance.

1. Watu Gong

Watugong, a granite stone that resemblance to a gong, a traditional Javanese musical instrument. The stone was initially discovered incidentally by project workers engaged in road construction along the route between Semarang and Solo, in close proximity to the monastery. The stone's distinctive form and cultural parallels swiftly garnered attention, leading to its designation as a local landmark. The stone, which the local populace began to refer to as "Watu Gong" (Javanese for "gong-shaped stone"), was initially placed near the large banyan tree in front of the monastery complex. However, in order to enhance its visibility and symbolic presence, it was later relocated to a position closer to the entrance gate of Watugong Monastery. At this location, it now functions as a welcoming symbol for visitors.

2. Sanchi Gate

Sanchi Gate serves as the primary point of entry to Watugong Buddhagaya Monastery. The gate is composed of three passages, each adorned with Chinese-style reliefs that symbolize cultural harmony. The architectural design of the gate draws inspiration from the renowned Great Stupa of Sanchi in India, a site regarded as one of the most venerable stone structures in the nation and a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The original Sanchi Stupa was commissioned by Emperor Ashoka in the 3rd century BCE and is located in Madhya Pradesh, India. Its gateways, designated as "toranas," are meticulously carved with scenes from the Jataka tales, which symbolize the life and teachings of the Buddha. A similar approach is evident in the Sanchi Gate at Watugong, which reflects the spirit of Buddhist architecture and storytelling through its structure and ornamentation.

3. Dhammasala

Dhammasala, the primary building of a monastery, is the focal point of this practice. This building functions as the epicenter of religious and spiritual activities conducted at the monastery. These activities include puja, devotion ceremonies, meditation sessions, and the ordinations of hikku and samanera. Additionally, it serves as a venue for Buddhist Dhamma discussions. It is a hallowed space where both monks and lay devotees convene to enhance their comprehension and implementation of the Buddha's tenets.

Within the confines of the Dhammasala, there is a Buddharupam (Buddha statue) in the Dhammacakkha Mudra position, which symbolizes the moment when the Buddha first preached the Dhamma. This iconic posture, known as "Turning the Wheel of Dhamma," signifies the commencement of the Buddha's teaching journey and is a potent symbol of enlightenment and the dissemination of wisdom.

On significant occasions such as Vesak or Kathina, this hall assumes a pivotal role, becoming a focal point of activity characterized by chanting, offerings, and collective contemplation. For novice practitioners and those lacking formal training, it serves as a venue for receiving guidance, attending sermons, and posing inquiries to further refine their practice.

4. Pattica Samupadda Relief

If visitors are visiting Dhammasala, there is an ornament of Tirtana symbolising the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha which informs about the Buddha, Dhamma which is his teaching and the students who introduce Tiratana. Tiratana is an image that means learning to see the reality of life by looking at the roots of the process of life that takes turns.

Starting with the relief on the floor of the Dhammasala entrance, made of green stone and round with a diameter of 120 cm; depicting a 3 animals biting each other's tails, this symbolises the root of human defilement. And there are 12 other images on the wall of Dhammasala.

5. Plaza Borobudur

Plaza Borobudur is an open area located in front of the Dhammasala building, designed in the shape of the mandala of Borobudur Temple. This symbolic layout mirrors the spiritual journey depicted in the architecture of Borobudur from the earthly realm to the world of enlightenment representing the gradual path toward spiritual awakening in Buddhism. The mandala structure of the plaza is not only aesthetically meaningful but also spiritually significant. It reflects the three levels of Buddhist cosmology: Kamadhatu (the world of desire), Rupadhatu (the world of form), and Arupadhatu (the formless world). Visitors who walk through the space are invited to contemplate this journey, both physically and metaphorically. Plaza Borobudur serves as a multifunctional space for outdoor religious and cultural activities, such as Vesak celebrations and Dhamma walks.

6. Library

The monastery's administrative office is the library, which also has a selection of general and Buddhist reading materials. Visitors are welcome to examine or read Buddhist history literature there. literature about the history of Buddhism in Indonesia, the Buddhagaya Watugong Temple, and Buddhist teachings are a few examples of the literature that are available. The Buddhagaya Watugong Monastery's history and information are made available to visitors in the form of numerous pamphlets.

7. Kuti

A Kuti is a humble and sacred building made of ironwood, known for its strength and durability, which serves primarily as a resting and sleeping space for monks and samanera (novice monks). The use of natural, sturdy materials like ironwood is not only practical for long-term use but also reflects the Buddhist values of simplicity, sustainability, and harmony with nature.

In addition to its primary function as a residence, the kuti is also utilized by lay participants and retreatants as a space for personal meditation and contemplation. The quiet and minimal design of the kuti helps create an atmosphere of calm and mindfulness, free from distraction. With its serene surroundings, it allows practitioners to focus inward, deepen concentration, and reflect on the Dhamma.

8. Buddha Parinibbana

The Parinibbana Buddha is one of the sacred objects that still remains from the early construction period of Buddhagaya Watugong Monastery. This Buddharupam statue depicts the Buddha in his final earthly moment, lying on his right side under the shade of two Sala trees, symbolizing the event of Parinibbana, or the Great Passing Away, the moment when the Buddha left the cycle of rebirth and entered complete liberation (Nibbana).

9. Pagoda

The Pagoda Avalokitesvara is a majestic stupa-style structure with strong Chinese architectural characteristics, standing as one of the most iconic landmarks within Vihara Buddhagaya Watugong. Soaring at 45 meters high, it is not only the tallest pagoda in Indonesia but also a symbol of compassion, peace, and spiritual elevation. At the heart of the pagoda lies the Metta Karuna Room, named after the two core Buddhist values: loving-kindness (metta) and compassion (karuṇā). This

sacred chamber enshrines the image of Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, also widely revered as Guan Yin or Kwan Im Po Sat the Goddess of Compassion.

The statue is a powerful spiritual focal point, believed by devotees to offer blessings, guidance, and protection to all beings who call upon her with sincere intention. Architecturally, the pagoda blends Chinese-Mahayana influences with local aesthetics. Its seven-tiered structure symbolizes the seven levels of spiritual attainment, gradually rising toward liberation. Each tier is adorned with intricate carvings and statues representing various Bodhisattvas, guardians, and lotus motifs, all of which carry deep symbolic meaning.

10. The Bodhi Tree

The Bodhi Tree is a profoundly sacred symbol in Buddhism, revered as the living embodiment of enlightenment. It is an object of puja (devotional offering) and deep veneration for Buddhists around the world. The tree that stands within Vihara Buddhagaya Watugong is not just any tree, it is a grafted Bodhi tree whose parent originates from Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka, a city known for preserving one of the oldest and most sacred Bodhi trees in the world. This tree in Anuradhapura is itself a direct descendant of the original Bodhi Tree in Bodhgaya, India, under which Prince Siddhartha Gautama meditated and attained perfect enlightenment, becoming the Buddha more than 2,500 years ago. Through this lineage, the Bodhi Tree at Watugong becomes a living connection to that sacred moment in human history a tangible link to the very spot where the journey toward liberation was fulfilled.

11. The Asoka Monument

The Asoka monument is a replica of King Asoka's edict inscriptions that are scattered over 34 regions in remote India, Nepal, Pakistan and Afghanistan to inform the people about the reform programme, and encourage the people to be more generous, wise and moral. One of the most famous was about religious tolerance.

12. The Asoka Stone Relief

The Asoka stone relief, located near the Sanchi Gate, is an edict to the people regarding religious tolerance. It reads 'Let us not honour our own religion by denouncing others. On the contrary, the religion of others should also be respected. By doing so we help our own religion to develop while also benefiting other religions. By doing otherwise we will harm our own religion in addition to harming the religion of others'.

2.2.3 Potential of Vihara Buddhagaya Watugong

Buddhagaya Watugong Monastery has a lot of potential for Indonesian tourism, with many facilities provided and several activities that can be participated in by tourists making this place more interesting to visit. On the other hand, the location of the monastery is very strategic and also very safe because it is on the edge of the Semarang - Solo road with easy access that can attract visitors. Especially for tourists who know about the history of Buddhism which will be explained by the monastery managers.

And with maximum marketing through information media, it will make this place the centre of attention for the public because of its unique facilities and can be a photo spot for uploading on social media. It is hoped that marketing through the media will make Buddhagaya Watugong Monastery to be able to compete with other tours in Semarang and also help improve the Indonesian economy in the field of tourism.

2.3 Interactive Website Development

A website is one of the most effective digital media for tourism promotion because it provides complete, structured, and easily accessible information anytime and anywhere. Rizki, Elmayati, Irawan, and Nurdiansyah (2023) state that websites help users explore information efficiently through hyperlinks, while Putra, Pasaribu, and Wulansari (2020) emphasize their role in making promotion

faster and more efficient than conventional methods. In addition, the use of SEO strategies can increase online visibility (Antonius & Suteja, 2021), and websites combined with strong branding significantly influence tourist visits (Magfiroh & Syarif, 2025). However, Wardani and Vanel (2024) note that challenges remain in maintaining consistent content and technological support. Despite this, websites remain a strategic tool in digital tourism marketing, as seen in the case of Vihara Buddhagaya Watugong, where an interactive website is expected to strengthen cultural preservation and expand public awareness.

2.3.1 Definition of Website

According to Elgamar (2020), a website is a media that consists of many pages that are interrelated with each other, and functions as a place to display information with the contents of images, videos, text, sound, or a combination of all that exists. The website is multiplatform, which means that it can be accessed from devices or devices connected to the existing internet network. Although this technology has been used for a long time, until now there are still many companies that still use websites to market or display company profiles, sell products, or as a system used by customers.

Then from the quotation of Rizki, Elmayati, Irawan, and Nurdiansyah (2023), the website is a form of technology that can be utilised as a media provider of information. By applying the concept of hyperlinks between pages, websites make it easier for users to browse and access information via the internet. In the context of digital marketing, the use of websites is one of the effective strategies to promote tourist destinations, because it is able to provide access to information that is fast, flexible, and can be accessed anytime and anywhere by the public.

The website is used as a medium for delivering public information such as news, articles, or some materials. With the provision of this website, it can be a marketing platform to promote a product or a place to disseminate that is marketed by an individual or group. With the advancement of technology,

websites continue to evolve and become increasingly interactive, allowing users to engage and participate in a variety of ways.

2.3.2 HTML

According to an article published by Sari and Suhendi (2020), HTML stands for Hypertext Markup Language, which is a web standard language managed by the W3C (World Wide Web Consortium) in the form of tags that compose each element of the website. HTML acts as a website page structure that places each website element in the desired layout. HTML is usually stored in a file with the extension .html. To type HTML scripts, you can use a text editor such as Notepad as the simplest form or a special text editor that can recognise each element of the HTML script and display it in a different colour so that it is easy to read, such as Notepad++, Sublime Text and many other similar applications. Can be exemplified as a container, then this HTML function is as a foundation or framework for web creation. HTML itself is filled with elements called tags. These tags will be arranged, so that the basic structure of a website can be better (Sonny and Rizki, 2021).

2.3.3 Use of UI/UX for Website

Article hacktiv8 (2024) revealed that UI and UX are two interrelated and equally important elements. UI is the interface design in a system such as computers, mobile platforms, and other electronic devices that focuses on maximising user experience. Aside from being the link between the user and a platform, UI also serves to beautify the appearance and make it easier for users to interact so as to increase user satisfaction. Examples of UI components include buttons, typographic icons, themes, layouts, animations, and other interactive visuals. Meanwhile, UX is the process of designing a product by conducting market research. With this approach, you can find out and create products that suit user needs. The function of UX is to make your product more attractive and easier to use so that users feel comfortable when using the product.

The development of technology and information has increased dramatically in various sectors. Advances in technology and information are also supported by the development of internet technology. With the internet, people can access and obtain the desired information effectively and easily. This also affects business growth in various industries (Putra, et al., 2024). A tourism platform is needed to introduce Indonesian tourist attractions and culture to domestic and foreign tourists to encourage economic recovery in the tourism sector. One of them is an interactive information-based website to attract public attention to visit or simply read the articles provided by the website (Denasfi, et al. 2022).

2.3.4 Web Hosting

According to Yosli and Rukun (2021), hosting is a physical place where all the content or content on the website is stored in it. Hosting requires a hard drive that is located at the owner of the hosting provider. Hosting can be accessed and used by the website owner. Hosting is used by website owners to manage all CMS Content Management Systems (CMS) domains. Hosting is also an internet service that provides rentable server resources that allow organisations or individuals to place information on the internet in the form of http, ftp, email, all files that have been created and will be uploaded. When buying hosting, the buyer rents space on the server to place or store CMS files and other data so that the website can display objects according to the wishes of the website owner. CMS is an application for websites that is used in managing files such as uploading, editing, adding, and so on.

2.3.5 SEO (Search Engine Optimization)

According to the journal of Antonius and Suteja (2021), SEO is the process of improving the structure of a website and promoting it to appear on search engines, increasing its ranking and the number of visitors. and SEO can be interpreted as a series of processes carried out systematically to increase the volume and quality of traffic visits through the website by utilising the working

mechanism or algorithm of the search engine. The main use of SEO is a platform to increase the number of organic visits to a website. When the site is in a higher position in the search engine results, it is more likely for users to click on the link and visit the site. SEO focuses not only on search engines, but also on improving the user experience of the website. By optimising the content and structure of the site, it can increase user satisfaction, reduce rejection rates, and increase conversion rates (Khairi, et al, 2023).

2.4 Advantages and Disadvantages of Website

According to the Bali Web Design (2023), websites have advantages such as being accessible from all over the world, expanding markets and business opportunities, providing convenience for users to get information or make transactions anytime and anywhere, allowing easy customisation and management of content, including product updates, services, and other information, providing an interactive experience through features such as contact forms, comments, and social media integration, and providing data that can be analysed to understand user behaviour, visit trends, and site performance. With a website, everything becomes more instant because just by typing the source we want, it will be processed directly by the provider platform.

While websites have the advantage of marketing tourist attractions to a wider audience, they also have some disadvantages in terms of marketing. The article Bali Web Design (2023) provides a number of disadvantages of websites, namely requiring stable technology and infrastructure, technical failures such as downtime can disrupt the user experience, security risks such as cyber attacks or data theft are concerns that need to be addressed with the right solution, website creation and maintenance require initial investment and ongoing operational costs to ensure optimal performance and security, in a competitive online environment, it is difficult to maintain user attention and compete with competitors who have greater resources.

2.5 Previous Studies

Based on the research from Mentari (2024), it is already quite strong in identifying the challenges and opportunities of historical tourism in Watugong Buddhagaya Monastery, such as the lack of infrastructure and promotion. However, its weakness lies in the absence of concrete solutions offered, especially regarding how digital promotion can be done strategically. However, this research is more descriptive in nature and has not gone in the direction of developing actual promotional media.

Then in Wardani and Vadel's research (2024) revealed that the lack of digital communication strategies used by the monastery, including not using SEO, SEM, or Google Analytics. However, the drawback is that this research has not produced any promotional media products, only limited to providing narrative suggestions without technical or visual implementation. There is no digital-based product development approach such as website or audiovisual.

Research from Magfiroh and Syarif (2025) is quite comprehensive in explaining the importance of tourism branding through websites. However, this research is still conceptual, not yet at the stage of direct application in the form of website design or development for certain tourist destinations. In addition, it does not discuss how the integration between multimedia content and SEO strategies is carried out in practice.

Research from Elhalim, Elias, and Farrag (2023) focuses on the role of websites as useful travel guides. However, the drawback is that this research is more relevant in general and has not focused on a local context such as Watugong Buddhagaya Monastery. In addition, the discussion emphasises the importance of communication and language features, without delving into the design strategy and technical functionality of the website directly.

Most of the previous studies have contributed to mapping the problem and emphasising the importance of digital media for tourism promotion. However, the

shortcoming is that there is no real implementation in the form of complete digital products such as interactive websites, audiovisual content, and the use of a comprehensive digital marketing strategy. This final project is here to answer these shortcomings by presenting a digital product that is not only actual, responsive, and bilingual, but also presents complete, up-to-date, and integrated tourism information with a modern digital technology-based promotion strategy.