

Collaboration Between The Regional Government, Local Msmes, And Local Influencers In Maximizing Jambi's Economic Potential

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ABSTRACT

Jambi Province has significant economic potential, particularly in agribusiness, cultural and nature-based tourism, and the unique products of local Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). However, this potential is often not optimally utilized due to classic challenges in terms of market penetration, weak digital branding, and coordination between stakeholders. This study analyzes the urgency and effectiveness of the Collaborative Triple Helix model involving the Regional Government (Regulator and Facilitator), Local MSMEs (Producers), and Local Influencers (Digital Marketing Catalysts) in creating a synergistic and sustainable economic ecosystem in Jambi. The main objectives of this study are to identify the most effective collaboration mechanisms to (1) increase the exposure of Jambi products and destinations through social media, (2) strengthen the branding capabilities of MSMEs, and (3) increase sales volume and tourist visits. Using a qualitative-descriptive approach involving in-depth interviews with representatives of the three parties, this study proposes a digital platform-based collaboration model. Initial findings indicate that local influencers play a crucial role as a bridge of trust between MSME products and millennial/Gen Z audiences. In contrast, local governments must shift from mere regulation to a digital incubator and cross-sectoral coordinator. The conclusion emphasizes that intensifying this collaboration is key to accelerating Jambi's digital economy.

Keywords: *Triple Helix Collaboration, Jambi Economic Potential, Local MSMEs, Local Influencers, Digital Branding, Destination Marketing.*

Introduction

Jambi Province is endowed with a unique wealth of natural and cultural resources, giving it substantial economic potential, particularly outside of its primary commodity sectors (such as palm oil and coal). Sectors focused on sustainable development, such as tourism (e.g., Muaro Jambi Temple, Lake Kerinci, and Kerinci Seblat National Park) and leading MSME products (e.g., Jambi batik, coffee, and culinary specialties), offer opportunities for diversifying regional revenues [1].

Despite this significant potential, the primary challenges facing MSMEs and tourism destinations in Jambi are visibility and market penetration [2]. In the digital era, products and destinations must compete not only physically but also narratively in the *online* space. Often, local MSMEs possess high-quality products but lack the capacity for professional digital branding, while local governments face significant promotional budget constraints to compete nationally and globally [3]. As a result, regional economic potential often stagnates and fails to reach its optimal scale.

This research uses the *Triple Helix* Collaboration Model [4] as a basic framework, which traditionally involves universities, industry, and government. In the context of regional and digital economic development, this model has been adapted to [5]: 1) Local Government: Acts as a regulator, policy facilitator, and provider of supporting infrastructure (e.g., internet access and digital regulations). 2) Local MSMEs: Act as economic actors, producers, and product/service innovators. 3) Local Influencers: Acting as *Knowledge Transfer* entities and digital marketing catalysts, filling the role often held by academic institutions in facilitating communication and innovation.

Transparency and accessibility of information are key to the success of this collaboration. In the era of *User-Generated Content* (UGC), the branding of a destination or product is no longer solely controlled by a single authority (DMO/Government), but rather dominated by narratives constructed by social media

users [6].

The role of local influencers has become a crucial component in today's digital marketing strategies. Local influencers, or Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs), who have a geographically relevant and interest-based follower base, offer several unique advantages over traditional marketing campaigns [7]: 1). Authenticity and Trust: They offer higher credibility (a trust bridge) because they are perceived as honest locals and are not part of formal advertising (non-advertisement look). 2). Targeted Reach: They are able to reach a specific audience, both local Jambi residents and potential tourists/buyers outside the region who are interested in Jambi-specific content [8]. 3). Viral Effect: The storytelling-based content they produce has greater viral potential than government press releases or simple MSME advertisements. Therefore, the urgency of this collaboration lies in utilizing local influencers as effective and efficient digital branding agents.

Despite the high potential for this collaboration, its implementation in Jambi remains partial and ad-hoc [9]. The fundamental question posed in this research is: How can a structured collaboration mechanism between the Regional Government, local MSMEs, and local *influencers* be formulated and implemented to measurably maximize *the exposure* and economic potential of Jambi Province?

The aims of this scientific research are: 1) to analyse the interaction patterns and collaboration *gaps* that currently occur between three stakeholders in Jambi. 2) Identifying critical success factors in utilizing local *influencers* for branding destinations and MSME products. 3) Formulating an optimal and sustainable *Triple Helix collaboration model for Jambi's economic acceleration in the digital space*. By answering these questions, this research is expected to make theoretical contributions to the cross-sectoral collaboration literature and to provide practical implications for the formulation of regional digital economy policies in Jambi.

Research Methods

This research methodology uses a qualitative-descriptive approach with a case study design in Jambi Province, aiming to analyze the collaboration mechanism between the Regional Government, Local MSMEs, and Local Influencers in maximizing the potential of the regional digital economy [10] & [11]. Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews and FGDs with key informants purposively selected from the three actors, complemented by digital observations of branding and engagement patterns on social media [12] & [13]. The collected data were then analyzed using an interactive model (data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing) to identify collaboration gaps, the roles of each actor, and formulate an optimal and sustainable Triple Helix Collaboration Model for Jambi Digital Innovation [14].

Result And Discussion

Roles and Gaps of the Regional Government (PD)

The Regional Government (Tourism Office, Cooperative/MSME Office) demonstrated a strong commitment to supporting Jambi's branding. However, its role was still dominated by the functions of a Financial Facilitator (granting, events) and Regulator.

The main gap was found in the Digital Incubator function: 1) Active Function: PD actively organises exhibitions and familiarisation trips (Famtrips). An interview with the Head of Tourism Marketing revealed: "We have allocated funds to invite influencers, but often it is only a one-off and not integrated with the MSME roadmap." 2). Critical Gap (Unsustainability): Collaboration with influencers often stops after the event concludes. PD does not yet have a shared governance platform or an integrated database that facilitates influencer meetings with appropriate MSMEs within the product niche (e.g., coffee influencers meeting premium coffee farmers).

The Role and Challenges of Local MSMEs

Local MSMEs act as Innovation Producers and key players in product/destination quality. They are enthusiastic about digital marketing, but face two significant challenges: 1). Limited Branding Budget: MSMEs consider professional influencer endorsements too expensive. 2). Low Digital Skills: They struggle to develop effective briefs for influencers (failing to communicate their Unique Selling Proposition—USP) and are unable to measure the Return on Investment (ROI) of digital campaigns.

An interview with the owner of Batik Jambi X revealed: "We know our product is good, but we don't know how to get influencers to talk about it in the language of young people who sell it. The money we spend on endorsements often doesn't come back."

The Role and Effectiveness of Local Influencers

Local influencers have proven to be the most effective Trust Bridge. Digital observations show that content produced by local influencers (with 10,000–50,000 followers) has an average engagement rate 2.5 times higher than content uploaded by official government or official MSME brand accounts. This is because local influencers can package product/destination narratives with a strong sense of authenticity and personalization: 1). Gatekeeper Role: Influencers act as information gatekeepers, validating the quality of MSME products to their communities. However, they also complain about the lack of professionalism and unclear Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) from MSMEs or PDs.

Jambi Digital Innovation Triple Helix Collaboration Model (Proposed Model)

Based on the gaps identified above, this study proposes a structured Jambi Digital Innovation Triple Helix Collaboration Model that shifts the focus from event-based to platform-based.

Table 1
Collaboration Model

Collaboration Pillars	Proposed New Functions	Synergy Mechanism
Local Government	Digital Incubator & Niche Coordinator	Build an integrated database (for MSMEs based on niche and influencers based on audience). Act as a quality guarantor and contract mediator.
Local MSMEs	Product Brief & Quality Provider	Must develop a clear Unique Selling Proposition (USP) and provide authentic storytelling (not just product-driven) to influencers.
Local Influencers	Performance-Based Branding Catalyst	Move from a pure endorsement model to a Performance-Based Contract (PPC) model, where compensation is based in part on measurable engagement rates or sales conversions.

This model emphasizes the establishment of the Jambi Content Synergy Center (PSKJ), facilitated by the Regional Leadership Council (PD), as a forum for regular meetings and co-training involving the three actors to ensure a shared understanding of Jambi's digital marketing goals.

Discussion

Theoretical Implications: Modified Triple Helix Model

These findings provide significant modifications to the classic Triple Helix Model. In a local economy driven by digital consumption, digital media actors (in this case, local influencers) have emerged to replace, or at least share, the role of academic institutions. Influencers serve as the fastest means of transferring market knowledge, far more agile than the slow academic research process. The success of this collaboration depends on how well the local government internalizes its new role as "Keeper of the Digital Ecosystem" rather than merely a regulator.

Disparities and Challenges in Measuring ROI

The discussion revealed that the biggest challenge in this collaboration is measuring Return on Investment (ROI). MSMEs tend to measure ROI from direct sales, while PDs measure ROI from increased awareness or destination traffic. The proposed Performance-Based Contract (PPC) model seeks to bridge this disparity by incorporating dual metrics: 1). Awareness Metrics (PD): Reach, impressions, and the use of Jambi-specific hashtags. 2). Conversion Metrics (MSMEs): The use of unique discount codes tracked by influencers to measure direct sales conversions.

The Urgency of Endorsement Legality and Ethics

The interviews also highlighted the need for the Jambi Digital Collaboration Ethics Guidelines issued by PD. Influencers complained about requests for free or unprofessional endorsements, while MSMEs were

concerned about product misuse. These guidelines are crucial for standardizing contracts, ensuring tax compliance for influencers who receive fees, and maintaining authentic content to avoid damaging public trust—key elements that make influencers effective.

Overall, the study concludes that Jambi's economic potential will only be maximized if collaboration between these three actors is formalized in a digital ecosystem supported by shared governance infrastructure and transparent performance-based contracts, transforming Jambi's branding from a sporadic effort into a unified and sustainable digital campaign.

Conclusion

This study found that Jambi Province's economic potential remains hampered by coordination gaps and weak digital branding among three key actors (a modified Triple Helix): the Regional Government (PD), local MSMEs, and local influencers. Influencers as Trust Catalysts: Local influencers have proven to be the most effective actors in increasing engagement and exposure for MSME products and destinations in Jambi, thanks to their ability to build authentic, personal narratives (trust bridges). Influencer content achieves an average engagement rate 2.5 times higher than official channels. PD Role Gaps: The PD's current role is still limited to event facilitation and regulation, and is ineffective as a sustainable Digital Incubator and Niche Coordinator. Existing collaborations are ad-hoc and event-based, rather than strategically integrated. MSME Barriers: MSMEs struggle to develop effective briefs and measure ROI from digital campaigns, indicating low literacy in collaboration management.

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