



Communication Strategy in the Management of Lejja Tourism in Soppeng Regency

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ABSTRACT

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This research was conducted to determine the communication strategy of Lejja hot spring tourism in increasing tourism interest in Soppeng Regency and the things that support and hinder travel. This study uses a qualitative method that aims to describe a situation or phenomenon. In this study, there are research results that show that the parties involved in the development of tourist objects have implemented tourism communication strategies, but still need to be more optimized. In tourism communication, to find interest in traveling, tourism communication is carried out through advertising or promotion through the website. Tourism communication strategies, among others, focus on: natural attractions, community support and advances in information technology.

KEYWORDS:

Strategy, Communication, Tourism, Lejja, Soppeng District.

INTRODUCTION

Strategy is planning (planning) and management (management) to achieve a goal that has been planned. Likewise, the communication strategy is a combination of communication planning and management (management communication) to achieve a certain goal. To achieve this goal, the communication strategy must show how tactical operations must be carried out, in the sense that the approach can be different at any time, depending on the situation and conditions (Effendi, 2008). The focus of a communication is how the message can reach the communicant (receiver), in this case the audience. A good communication strategy will help the message delivery process.

To support the tourism that is owned, each region and private-based tourism managed by the management body will design a strategy to increase the number of visitors by conducting integrated marketing communications, this is the focus of research in Soppeng Regency, especially Lejja bathing tourism. By seeing that the activity of increasing the number of visitors is influenced by the management of the strategy which includes the implementation of the promotional mix elements. In addition, the development of

tourist attractions to become icons of the region and promote community economic growth by opening jobs. According to data from the BPS (Central Statistics Agency) shows that tourism is the fourth largest foreign exchange earner in Indonesia.

Reported by data from eprints.undip.ac.id, South Sulawesi is a province that has various tourism potentials and is looking forward to developing them. With this tourism potential, it was recorded that in 2016 tourist visits to South Sulawesi reached 8.6 million people, exceeding the target of 8 million people. It was recorded that in 2015, the number of foreign and domestic tourists in South Sulawesi Province in 2015 amounted to 7.3 million tourists, which increased rapidly from the previous year which was only 6 million tourists

(BPS Sulawesi Selatan, 2017). The South Sulawesi Culture and Tourism Office (Disbudpar) is targeting 7.5 million domestic tourists and 250 thousand foreign tourists to visit South Sulawesi in 2018 (Saldy, 2018). Therefore the government has prepared its programs to boost tourist visits.

The tourism potential in South Sulawesi is very diverse, starting from the cultural, natural, culinary, educational and historical sectors. South Sulawesi is famous for its Bugis tribe where the Bugis tribe is divided into 4 major ethnicities including Bugis, Makassar, Mandar and Toraja. The cultural diversity and natural potential that exists in South Sulawesi is unfortunately still a little exposed. This is due to the lack of public awareness to maintain and preserve. Most are

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influenced by increasingly modern developments so that younger generations prefer to follow the times rather than love their own traditional traditions. For the sake of the development of tourism in South Sulawesi, especially Soppeng with warm water tourism in Lejja, a forum is needed to make this happen.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Marketing

Fandi Tjiptono and Anastasia Diana stated in her book entitled *Marketing Essentials and Applications* that everyone has many needs and desires, but unfortunately not all of them can be fulfilled. The reasons are limited resources (money, time, energy), competence (for example, prospective students want to study at Harvard Business School but cannot meet the selection requirements set), and access to marketers and their products (for example, cell phone signals that have not reached their place). where the consumer lives) it is these limitations that make every consumer set priorities in searching for, purchasing, and consuming products.

Mutually beneficial exchanges will take place when the product offering is aligned with the priority scale of consumer purchases. Likewise, marketers and markets will be satisfied if their respective goals are achieved. This is where the importance of effective marketing activities and processes lies.

In general, marketing is an activity and process for creating, communicating, delivering and providing or exchanging an offer that can usually be of value to customers, clients, partners and society in general, marketing can also be defined as a management process that can identify, anticipate and provide what a customer or group of customers wants efficiently and profitably.

Marketing is an activity, a set of institutions and a process that creates, communicates, delivers and exchanges offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners and society in general. The philosophy that exists in marketing usually experiences an evolution from an internal orientation to an external orientation. This internal orientation reflects on production orientation, product orientation, and sales orientation, while external orientation includes consumer orientation and social marketing orientation. Marketing plays an important role for organizations, consumers, individuals and society at large. The significant role of marketing is realized in eight universal functions, which include buying, selling, transporting, storing, standardizing, and grading, financing, risk taking, and securing marketing information. Marketing contributes to the process of creating value for customers and receiving value from customers. The concept of value (value) refers to the relationship between benefits and costs in obtaining a specific product or service.

2. Tourism

When hearing the word tourism, sometimes one's thoughts will lead to the words traveling, traveling and vacations, basically tourism is an activity of individual or

group travel from a place of residence to a certain place or city to get experiences outside of the daily life for a while. From the notion of tourism, there are several important components that make these activities happen, the components in question are: residence, travel, tour operators, and destination. The following figure is a model that can show the interrelationships between these components.

The term tourism (tourism) only appeared in society around the 18th century, especially after the Industrial revolution in England. The term tourism originates from the implementation of tourism activities (tour), which is an activity of moving daily residence for any reason other than carrying out activities that can generate wages and salaries.

Tourism is an activity, service and product of the tourism industry that is able to create a travel experience for tourists. The meaning of "tourism" has not been widely disclosed by Indonesian language and tourism experts. the word 'tourism' is derived from two syllables, namely *pari* and *Wisata*, *pari* means a lot, many times and round and round, while the word *Wisata* means traveling or traveling. So this tourism means trips that are carried out repeatedly or around from one region to another. Tourism is the Indonesian equivalent of the term tourism in English.

According to Presidential Instruction No. 19 of 1969 tourism is a service activity that usually utilizes natural wealth and a unique environment, such as cultural products, historical heritage, beautiful natural scenery and a comfortable climate.

According to Law No. 9 of 1990 concerning tourism, tourism is everything related to tourism including the exploitation of tourist objects and attractions as well as related businesses in this field.

The definition of tourism according to Law No. 10 of 2009 is various kinds of tourism activities and supported by various facilities and services provided by the community, businessmen, government and local government (Chapter 1, article 1, paragraph 3).

As for what is called modern tourism, this explains that the concept of tourism defines itself as a modern business product, so all these tourism products are designed as business products, starting from destinations, creative economy, transportation, hotels, recreational venues, art attractions in packages tours that look interesting, awesome, challenging and impressive.

Tourism activities are developing widely and penetrating into the lives of individuals and communities around the world. The spread of tourism activities is increasingly expanding in urban areas, rural areas, mountains, beaches to the outskirts of forests. Various forms of urban, rural, mountain, beach and sea tourism activities are developing along with the flow of distribution to various parts of the world. However, not all tour agents and prospective travel agents know about the trends and achievements of tourism progress in various regions. In order to obtain optimal and effective outputs from tourism development, a kind of

mapping and basis for consideration of decisions is needed through tourism socialization actions.

Modern tourism destinations are very complex and also very capitalistic, thus the management of modern tourism must use business management and rely on accurate and measurable mass media.

For this reason, it is very necessary to have an understanding of the promotion strategy to make informed decisions that best suit the marketing objectives and the available budget. Through the existing promotion mix, with an attractive packaging system, the image of tourism products will be maintained, but we also still have to pay attention to the quality, comfort and attractiveness of cultural and natural destinations so that it requires optimal readiness to be promoted.

METHOD

In this study, researchers used a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research approaches are more focused on describing and analyzing a phenomenon, event, social activity, attitude, thinking of people individually or in groups. Data was taken through observation, along with detailed context and interview records, as well as the results of document analysis (Muslimin, 2016).

According to Boglan and Taylor in (Moleong, 2007) suggests that a qualitative approach is a research that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observed behavior. Researchers are involved in the situations and phenomena being studied, so it is hoped that researchers can focus on statements or events in the context under study. Researchers chose to use this approach because the results of the data are not in the form of numbers or numbers, it is also easier to gain understanding after research on social facts which are the focus of research so that later it becomes a conclusion.

RESULTS

Researchers have found facts in the form of interviews and observations while researching the strategy of the Soppeng Regency Culture and Tourism Office for tourism promotion from a Marketing Communication perspective¹.

1. Marketing strategy of the Culture and Tourism Office of Soppeng Regency

The promotion strategy carried out by the Soppeng Regency Culture and Tourism Office is so diverse (promotion mix). Promotion in marketing communications includes the use of communication channels. The promotion mix model shows a promotional mix model consisting of five carefully mixed channels.

The marketing communication promotion mix of the Culture and Tourism Office of Soppeng Regency is as follows:

Advertising

Is a form of non-personal communication and is paid for through mass media, such as newspapers, magazines, radio,

television, travel guides, billboards and so on. Advertising is used to achieve a variety of purposes, thereby earning the trust of the public

Public Relations

Is a non-personal communication intended to change opinion or reach the widest possible audience coverage. Coverage should provide space for audience response. Public Relations is also used to suppress the emergence of good relations with the mass media to have the opportunity to prevent news that is detrimental to the organization. Conversely, public relations can improve the image of an institution or company. In this case the Soppeng district tourism office provides real information so as to leave impressions and trust in the wider community. The information provided is real, in accordance with what is seen when visiting tourist attractions

2. Factors supporting and inhibiting the Soppeng Regency Culture and Tourism Office in the Lejja tourism marketing strategy

In a marketing activity, there are supporting and inhibiting factors that can influence the effectiveness of marketing communications from the Department of Culture and Tourism in Soppeng Regency. From observations and interviews that have been conducted by researchers, the results of the analysis are as follows:

a. obstacle factor:

Tourist awareness is still lacking

Obstacles that arise from tourists and the public are the lack of awareness to keep the environment clean. There is still a lot of trash found around the tourist attraction. This is a shared responsibility to maintain the cleanliness of tourist attractions. Not intended for tourists only but all who are there.

a) The quality of human resources (HR) is still lacking

In preparing the potential of the area to become a tourist attraction, the government conducts a number of trainings to improve the quality and quantity of human resources. For example, traders who are at the location of a tourist attraction are given seminars on the creative economy, so that people or traders selling can take advantage of the sales process creatively and innovatively. This is expected to improve the local community's economy with a creative economy.

b. Supporting factors:

a). The entrance fee for tourist sites is cheap

From the results of interviews with several Department informants

Culture and Tourism, tourism management has been integrated between tourism actors and local governments. So that every tourist actor tends to set prices according to what has been determined by the government. As found, at the Lejja tourist attraction. If you rent a gazebo, you have to pay 500 thousand rupiah. To stay for one day (Villa rental) ranges

from 200 thousand-500 thousand with the appropriate facilities.

This is felt by tourists because the Culture and Tourism Office has made efforts to maintain price stability for tourist sites in Soppeng Regency. For the entrance fee on weekdays 10 thousand adults, 3 thousand children. Especially for holidays for adults, the price is 13 thousand, so it is very affordable for all groups.

Car Parking Rp. 10,000
Motorcycle Parking Rp. 5,000

b). the existence of supporting factors by the government

Soppeng Regent H. Andi Kaswadi Razak, S.E. the 2016–2021 and 2021–2024 periods mentioned related to tourism development in Bumi Latemmamala, Kaswadi emphasized that the government is currently increasingly developing existing tourism supporting infrastructure in Soppeng Regency such as building a ring road connecting Jalan Poros to Lejja to make it easier for visitors and avoid traffic jams on during high season or holidays. The Soppeng Regent plans to make tourist sites more attractive, such as creating

a zoo. According to Kaswadi, one of the natural attractions in Soppeng can be an alternative treatment with its sulfur (sulfur) which is believed to treat itching and rheumatism, this sulfur content can be used as an ingredient in body care (soap) and cosmetics. (soppengkab.id)

From the findings of the interview, the researchers drew the conclusion that the

government in Soppeng Regency is very concerned about tourist sites in Soppeng Regency.

c) Natural wealth in South Sulawesi (Soppeng)

Tourist attractions in South Sulawesi do have natural and cultural wealth to be admired. A number of tourist attractions in South Sulawesi are even famous to foreign countries. Tourist attractions in South Sulawesi are quite unique if all of them are explored, because there are a variety of tourist attractions, one of which is in Soppeng, the Lejja warm water bath which can be used as traditional medicine.

The Lejja location has four pools, among which the pools have different temperatures and depths. Some even get hot up to 60 degrees Celsius. Lejja Hot Springs is located in a protected forest area, which still has beautiful nature and shady trees.

This is of course an influence so that the air we breathe is very clean and refreshing, especially when added to the water vapor that also adorns this hot spring tourist area. In this Lejja tourist spot, there is a hot pool with temperatures that are not too hot, there are pools with cold (normal) water and some are equipped with slides so that it can be said that there are various choices when tourists visit this tourist spot.

In addition to the options above, the Lejja Hot Spring tourism manager also provides a private pool for tourists who

want to soak without joining other visitors, so this can be an option in a pandemic situation like today.

According to the information the researchers found, the hot water in Lejja Hot Springs is believed to cure various skin diseases, such as itching, acne, and even rheumatism.

From the explanation above, the benefits of tourism in Lejja can also be therapy for body health and can be a strategic reason for promotions launched by the government/managers of Lejja tourist destinations.

DISCUSSION

Marketing in the field of tourism promotion is very necessary because with the existence of marketing these tourist objects become known to the wider community and can attract many foreign tourists to come to visit tourist objects. One of them is by using a communication strategy through social media.

According to (Rangkuti, 2009) promotions are carried out by a company with the aim of notifying the existence of these products and giving confidence about the benefits of these products to buyers. Promotion is one way to increase sales volume. This opinion also applies in increasing tourist visitors in Soppeng Regency. Currently in terms of an effective promotion strategy carried out using social media in Soppeng Regency using the web for promotion.

In the current tourism sector, many tourists use the internet to plan their travels, from vacation destinations, comfortable hotels to stay in, to what culinary delights they will visit while on vacation. Usually tourists get recommendations from fellow users of social media or social networking sites. Tourism lovers often use trip advisor's online travel services to obtain information about tourist destinations.

Seeing the effectiveness and the magnitude of the benefits obtained from social media to introduce tourist attractions to the public, this process is an important thing to be carried out by the Soppeng Regency Tourism Office.

Social media is actually a medium for socialization and interaction, as well as attracting other people to see and visit links that contain information about products and others. So it is only natural that its existence is used as the easiest and cheapest (low cost) marketing medium by tourism managers. This is what finally attracts tourism business actors to make social media a mainstay promotional media supported by websites/blogs which can display a complete company profile. In fact, it is not uncommon for business actors to have social media but still exist in competition (Siswanto, 2013).

From a business perspective, social media is an effective medium for marketing products to consumers. Marketing through social media can help companies expand their market to gain consumers. In addition, using social media as a means to develop a business is relatively cheaper than conventional media which is considered too expensive for business actors, especially micro-scale businesses.

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Another opinion regarding the purpose of promotion states that there are six main objectives of promotion as an effect of communication, namely (Tjiptono 2001): a. Able to generate customer perceptions of needs

- b. Provide product information and understanding to consumers
- c. Encourage product selection
- d. Persuading customers to buy products
- e. Compensate for weaknesses in other marketing mix elements
- f. Embedding the product image of the company.

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that the strategy used by the Soppeng Regency Tourism Office is to use promotions through websites that are easily accessible by the public.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data presentation and discussion that has been made, there are several things that can be drawn into a conclusion regarding the marketing communication strategy of the Soppeng Regency Tourism Office in attracting tourists to visit. The marketing process carried out by the Soppeng Regency Tourism Office is carried out through promotional communication media through local television, newspapers and magazines. However, for now the Soppeng Regency Tourism Office refers more to marketing communication media with a focus on online advertising media with media such as websites.

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