

Implementation of Sustainable Tourism Attraction Promotion Strategy in North Halmahera Regency

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ABSTRACT: Sustainable tourism is very popular with tourists. A variety of tourist attractions that are environmentally friendly, protect the lives of local communities, and impact economic growth are the essence of sustainable tourism. However, the North Halmahera Government's efforts to promote these various tourist attractions have not been optimal. So the aim of this research is to analyze tourism promotion from the North Halmahera Regency Government using the BAS (branding, advertising and selling) approach. Qualitative methods with a case study approach are used to photograph tourism promotion activities that have been carried out by local governments. Data were collected through observation and face-to-face interviews with informants which were used as primary data. Study of documents, activity results, and various concepts are used as secondary data sources. Data analysis was carried out in two stages, namely narrating all promotional activities and then conducting evaluations. The results show that the implementation of sustainable tourism promotion strategies in North Halmahera is in three conditions: first, the government has developed a tourism promotion concept but everything has not been implemented. Second, tourism promotion is still strong in the advertising aspect, while branding and selling are not yet optimal. Third, collaboration between parties and financial support from the Regional Government is needed to encourage sustainable branding, advertising and selling.

KEYWORDS -Promotion, Tourism, North Halmahera

I. INTRODUCTION

The development of Indonesian tourism in 2024 will lead to nature, culture and adventure-based tourism (Mediaindonesia.com, 2024). This condition is also recognized by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy that sustainable tourism is in great demand and is the choice of tourists in the tourism industry and creative economy in Indonesia (wonderfulimages.kemendparekraf.go.id, 2022). This trend is included in the scope of sustainable tourism which is now in great demand. Tourists who travel are not just on vacation, but they pay attention to aspects of health, sustainability and comfort (Kemendparekraf.go.id, 2021).

In order to attract tourist visits to a destination, a tourism promotion strategy is needed to be able to influence tourists' perceptions of visiting and returning at a certain time (Humairah, 2022). Tourism development in the region must be accompanied by sustainable promotional measures. Tourist attractions in a destination must be able to be marketed through various media to attract the interest of local and foreign tourists (Haryono, 2016). Because the development of the tourism sector which follows developments in the tourist market will be able to open up employment opportunities in tourist areas (Mediaindonesia.com, 2024).

Tourism promotion is a series of marketing tourism products to potential tourists through various print and digital media with the hope of increasing and attracting the number of tourist visits to tourist attractions. When carrying out promotions, you need to pay attention to the media. The choice of promotional media can influence the effectiveness of delivering promotional messages to reach and answer the preferences of potential tourists (Putri et al, 2023). Kusmiati (2020) explained that Regional Governments have a role in efforts to promote tourism in the region. Promotion is carried out by publishing various tourist attractions in online and print media, tourist exhibitions at home and abroad, and personal promotions to each individual.

Sustainable tourism contains the objectives of reducing the environmental impact of tourism activities, carrying out environmental conservation, and respecting the traditions and heritage that exist in tourist areas. This approach is expected to be able to provide long-term changes in travel behavior and bring economic and social benefits to local communities (Pandowo, 2023). Sulistyadi et al, (2017) revealed that sustainable tourism development takes into account the wishes of tourists and continues to maintain environmental balance for future sustainability by involving local community groups.

In carrying out tourism promotions, there are many models that can be used. One of them is through branding, advertising and selling. These three models are usually known as the BAS approach which is believed to be able to convey the message of what will be promoted by a company or government agency. However, promotion of tourist destinations carried out by local governments faces various problems. Saniati et al, (2022) revealed that promotions carried out through tourism advertisements in the form of videos connected to YouTube and promotions using official government websites experienced problems with the completeness of the promotional message content. Where complete information on tourist attractions published in various channels does not yet fully explain a tourist destination, resulting in less than optimal tourist visits.

In the context of tourism promotion carried out by the Tourism Department to market various tourist destinations in North Halmahera, it is also faced with similar problems. There is no systematic integration in the promotion of various marine, natural and cultural tourism objects in North Halmahera. So efforts to maintain the level of tourist visits in the last two years to consistently increase will be increasingly difficult. In 2021, there will be 53,890 domestic tourists and 44 foreign tourists. Then it rose to 71,282 and there were 101 foreign tourists (BPS Halut, 2024).

Discussions about tourism promotion have been carried out previously through various studies. Blesstwinka (2019) discusses tourism promotion strategies through International Video Competition activities, WAVE 2017, and ITB Berlin 2017. Participation in these activities can increase the added value of tour package transactions to Indonesia and make many people get to know Indonesia. Erliana (2022) who links the implementation of community-based tourism with promotional strategies that are able to provide a new face to AlamGosari tourism. Meanwhile, a study from Sitepu, &Sabrin (2020) revealed that tourism promotion carried out by the government through advertising, direct marketing and personal sales was not optimal.

From various discussions about tourism promotion that have been carried out previously, it can be seen that the studies have not focused on branding, advertising and selling. Researchers are still conducting studies that combine various approaches to tourism promotion. In addition, previous studies rarely relate to the promotion of tourist destinations that carry out sustainable tourism. Therefore, the aim of this research is to conduct a study that discusses regional tourism promotion using branding, advertising and selling approaches. Then analyze sustainable tourism promotion by mapping various promotional steps specifically according to tourist destinations. So this phase shows that this research is different from previous studies on tourism promotion. Therefore, this research is very important in strengthening tourism promotion studies, especially tourism promotion in North Halmahera Regency, North Maluku Province.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative method with a case study approach. A case study approach was used to be able to analyze the research objectives regarding tourism promotion carried out by the North Halmahera Regency Government. Assyakurrohim et al (2023) revealed that the case study method is a useful approach for researchers to find out in depth about a problem or case which is supported by abundant collection of information related to the problem being studied. Meanwhile, Kusmarni (2012) explained that the use of case studies in research is able to encourage researchers to discover certain phenomena in the form of programs or processes through systematic data collection efforts with the support of procedures and tools within a certain time period. Thus, the focus of the research on tourism promotion in North Halmahera Regency which was carried out during 2023 became the background for the case study approach to discuss the overall promotion approach based on branding, advertising and selling implemented by the North Halmahera Regency Government through the Tourism and Culture Office.

This research collects primary and secondary data by conducting interviews, observations and documentation studies. To find original primary data, interviews were conducted with informants from the Department of Tourism and Culture. Then a review of documentation related to branding, advertising and selling from various library sources was carried out by researchers. The results of this data collection were then continued with the data analysis stage. Sarosa (2021) explains that data analysis in qualitative research can be progressed into three stages as per the model developed by Miles and Huberman, namely condensing data, displaying data, drawing and verifying conclusions.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Results

1. North Halmahera Tourism Attraction

Tourism in North Halmahera Regency is one of the priority sectors in regional development. Various types of historical, natural and artificial tourism are found in North Halmahera Regency. This area has 133 tourist attractions. Tobelo District has the highest number of tourist attractions, namely 26 objects or 19%, followed by Loloda Islands District with 22 objects (16%), Tobelo District 15 objects (11%), Galela District 14 objects (10%), and Tobelo Tengah District with 9 objects (7%). West Tobelo, North Galela, Kao Teluk subdistricts have the fewest tourist attractions, namely 1 object or 1% of the total 133 tourist attractions (RippardaHalut, 2023).

Tourists can find many attractions in North Halmahera, including volcanoes, waterfalls, hot springs, beaches, small islands, diving locations, fishing and jungle trekking. Apart from that, tourists can also see animals endemic to the TelagaPaca forest area. Enjoy the beauty of the lake, food, artistic performances, culture, historical relics from world wars, and local crafts. This attraction is a priority in North Halmahera tourism development. This can be seen from the development area which includes three strategic areas. First, Galela and Loloda developed lake and beach tourism. Second, in the Tobelo area, marine and culinary tourism is being developed. Third, the Kao-Malifut area is an ideal place to develop historical tourism or the remains of the Second World War (Puspar UGM, 2022).

The North Halmahera Regency Government, through the Department of Tourism and Culture, has made improvements and rearranged strategies for promoting tourist attractions. This can be seen in the Regional Tourism Development Master Plan (Ripparda) document as a response to the changes that have occurred over the last 10 years and the occurrence of Covid-19. This review was carried out to produce a tourism promotion policy framework that is more implementable in accordance with the changes that are occurring. One of the substantive changes is related to tourism marketing. This aspect needs special attention because after Covid-19 various efforts need to be made to increase tourists' interest in visiting North Halmahera.

2. North Halmahera Regency Tourism Promotion

Efforts to market tourism in North Halmahera Regency have developed various policy strategies. The Department of Tourism and Culture is expected to be able to implement strategies that have been designed to increase the level of tourist visits to various tourist destinations spread across North Halmahera Regency. Some of the strategies implemented are the development of tourism promotion through the development of an information technology-based tourism marketing system to provide the widest possible access to information and communication for tourists. Furthermore, improving the quality and effectiveness of tourism promotion, as well as developing tourism marketing evaluation mechanisms and increasing promotional activities. These two steps use a branding, advertising and selling (BAS) approach.

To realize the objectives of the tourism marketing policy, the North Halmahera Regency Government through the Department of Tourism and Culture has developed several tourism marketing steps consisting of: 1) Strengthening and expanding tourism promotion within the country, including: establishing, supporting and strengthening the North Halmahera Regency Tourism Promotion Agency ; and 2) Promotion of North Halmahera tourism abroad through embassies, especially in several neighboring countries.

Tourism marketing efforts that have been carried out post-Covid-19 can be identified in several types of promotional activities, namely through digital platforms, mass media, national scale tourism events, and tourism promotion through overseas visits to Poland. Various tourism marketing efforts that have been carried out can be categorized into the branding, advertising and selling (BAS) approach. Branding is all the efforts made to create an idea about a tourist attraction. Advertising is part of this effort to promote tourism widely to the public. Selling is an effort to attract more visitors to tourist attractions (Anisa et al, 2019).

Promotion via the digital platform is carried out by making videos about tourism destinations in North Halmahera which are then published on YouTube, Instagram and <https://dispar.halmaherautarakab.go.id/>, the website of the Tourism and Culture Office. Tourism promotion through mass media is carried out in a number of online media such as Tribunnews.malut.com and several local media. Tourism promotion through tourism exhibition activities is carried out by the government by participating in the Indonesia Tourism and Trade Investment Expo 2022 Bandung. Promotion of North Halmahera's tourism potential was carried out directly by Regent Frans Manery in Poland. Various natural tourist attractions, marine tourism and historical tourism are promoted during visits to Poland in the hope of attracting tourists to come to North Halmahera (Humas Halut, July 2022). This activity was followed up with a direct visit by the Mayor of Gora Kalwaria Poland to various tourist destinations in North Halmahera (Halut Public Relations, November 2022). Tourism promotion is carried out through national scale tourism events held in North Halmahera with the theme "North Halmahera Wonderfull Festival". In this activity various tourist attractions are displayed to increase tourist visits and encourage economic turnover in North Halmahera.

The various tourism marketing carried out by the North Halmahera Regency Government can be interpreted as using a branding, advertising and selling (BAS) approach. This can be seen in tourism promotion activities through mass media, online, tourism events, and promotions abroad. So it is hoped that tourist destinations in North Halmahera will be better known by the wider community, thereby encouraging them to travel to North Halmahera.

B. Discussion

The Tourism Marketing Strategy carried out by the North Halmahera Tourism Office using a branding, advertising and selling (BAS) approach has several advantages. The BAS approach is a comprehensive approach to introducing and promoting tourist destinations to potential tourists. Branding is an important first step in building a unique image and identity for a tourist destination. Through branding, tourist destinations can determine the core values they want to convey to their target market, create logos and slogans that reflect their identity and attract attention. Furthermore, advertising is an important step in expanding the reach of tourism promotions. By using media such as television, radio and the internet, tourist destinations can introduce the beauty and uniqueness of the place to the wider community. Meanwhile Selling is the final step to convert interest into tourist visits. Through selling tour packages, tourist destinations can attract tourists to visit the place and experience an unforgettable experience. With the BAS approach, tourism promotion can reach the target audience effectively and efficiently.

Although tourism promotion using the BAS method can help increase marketing and tourist visits, there are several drawbacks that need to be considered. One of them is the costs required to implement an effective marketing strategy. The use of sophisticated technology and promotional media often requires large investments, especially for tourist destinations that are still in the development stage or have limited budgets. In addition, it is common to have difficulty measuring the effectiveness of this approach. Measuring the impact of tourism promotions and visits generated by a BAS approach can be challenging, especially if there is no appropriate system or method to track and analyze the data. This can make it difficult to determine whether this approach is truly effective or not.

In carrying out tourism marketing, the North Halmahera Regency Government needs to include environmentally friendly tourism material and preserving local culture in the BAS approach used by the Tourism Office. There are several strategic steps that can be taken. First, the Tourism Department can carry out strong branding by prioritizing environmental sustainability values and local culture as the main attraction of tourism destinations. In this case, the use of logos, slogans and visual identities that reflect a commitment to

environmental sustainability and local culture can help build a positive image and attract tourists who care about the environment.

In addition, the Tourism Department can also work with local communities to develop sustainable tourism products and promote environmentally friendly tourism activities, such as ecotourism tours and the use of environmentally friendly transportation. These steps will help maintain the authenticity of local culture and natural beauty, as well as increase tourists' awareness of the importance of protecting the environment when travelling. By involving local communities, the Tourism Department can also empower local communities in the tourism sector, thereby improving their welfare. Thus, sustainable tourism can be a sustainable source of income for the community and can also provide long-term benefits for the environment and local culture.

One of the efforts to promote North Halmahera tourism is being carried out by the regional government, namely implementing the North Halmahera Wonderful Festival program. The implementation of this festival program aims to show the natural and cultural beauty that has been passed down by the people of North Halmahera to potential tourists. So various events were held such as creative economy and development exhibitions, tide-tide and cakalele dances, adult-level music competitions, rocking tobelo, and sports competitions. Through wonderful festival activities, it can encourage the development of tourism in North Halmahera (Ngetje, Rorong, & Rares, 2021). Not only that, to strengthen the North Halmahera Wonderful Festival, the local government involves various organizations in the tourism sector. One of them is GenPi North Halmahera which is expected to be able to support various accelerated tourism programs, including the wonderful North Halmahera festival (Cermat, 2019).

The North Halmahera Regency Government also needs to seriously promote tourist attractions for Japanese tourists visiting North Halmahera. They can find many tourist attractions such as the Japanese shipwreck Tosimaru and the remains of WWII in Malifut. Tourists from Japan can enjoy an unforgettable romantic experience in the Kao-Malifut area which is now called "The Little Tokyo" on social media (Puspar UGM, 2022). To strengthen the development of tourist attractions in Malifut-Kao, there are several steps that can be taken. First, creating a Japanese History tour package: This package will invite Japanese tourists to explore the remains of WWII in Malifut and see the wreck of the Japanese ship Tosimaru. They will be able to experience an in-depth experience of Japanese history in North Halmahera.

Second, "The Little Tokyo" Romantic Tour Package: This package will provide an unforgettable romantic experience for Japanese couples staying in the area. Third, the "Explore Halmahera" Nature Tourism Package: This package will invite Japanese tourists to explore the natural beauty of North Halmahera. They will be invited to go trekking in exotic mountains, visit stunning waterfalls, and enjoy the beauty of pristine beaches. Apart from that, they will also be invited to interact with local residents and learn about their culture and daily life. This package will provide an in-depth and unforgettable experience in exploring the natural beauty of North Halmahera.

The various efforts to strengthen tourism promotion in North Halmahera Regency above must be carried out by involving various parties. Collaboration is very important in the promotion process because it can accelerate the dissemination of information about tourist attractions in North Halmahera Regency. As carried out by the West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) Provincial Government which prioritizes the collaboration aspect in implementing tourism promotion. The NTB Tourism Office promotes destinations through publications and promotions on Paid Media (local and national print and electronic media), owned media (websites), social media (Twitter, Facebook and Instagram). In implementing this strategy, the Tourism Office collaborates with 5 elements of Pentahelix, namely Academics, Business, Community, Government and Media. (Wulandari, Chotijah, & Suadnya, 2019). The involvement of parties in tourism promotion certainly provides strength in tourism promotion. This gives tourists confidence about the readiness of tourism service providers in the region to provide tourism services. Especially the delivery of tourism promotion information which is carried out collaboratively.

IV. CONCLUSION

The implementation of tourism promotion carried out by the North Halmahera Regency Government through the Tourism Office can be said to have used a branding, advertising and selling (BAS) approach. However, tourism promotion is still dominated by the branding aspect, while advertising and selling have not

been balanced compared to branding. In general, the North Halmahera Regency Tourism Office has developed various tourism promotion approaches with the concepts of branding, advertising and selling, but they have not yet been implemented. Apart from that, in tourism promotion there has not been any initiation of collaboration between tourism actors from elements of society, tourism groups and local government. So that tourism promotion activities are carried out by each party. To support sustainable tourism promotion in North Halmahera Regency, cooperation is needed between tourism industry players in carrying out comprehensive promotions related to various natural, cultural and marine tourist attractions.

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