

Branding Strategy Based on Mangrove Conservation Ecotourism-Three Colors of South Malang District

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ABSTRACT

Currently, tourism development in East Java is running quite rapidly, especially South Malang district which has an increase in the percentage increase as of October 2023 of 59.80 %. This value increased by 1.57% from the previous month. Tourism destinations are dominated by natural tourism in the form of beaches along the Southern Cross Route, causing local communities and the government to use these beaches as tourist destinations. South Malang Regency has 101 beaches that have been opened or are still under development and several locations are still known as pristine tourist locations. From several cases of opening beach tourism locations in South Malang Regency, complaints from visitors or prospective visitors were regarding access to ingress and egress roads, conditions and behavior of the local community as well as the lack of supporting public facilities and this was also the same as expressed by tourism managers. This shows the lack of strength and unpreparedness of a brand built by regional and central governments at a coordinated tourist location. In building and developing a tourist destination brand, CMC Tiga Warna creates the identity of their tourist destination in the form of a sustainable tourism system, offering several attractions such as banana boats, canoes, snorkeling, diving and mangrove planting. By using direct and indirect marketing processes and involving customers as a supporting force in forming an image for potential visitors, CMC Tiga Warna combines marketing strategies and a strong self-identity to introduce potential visitors and the public.

Keywords: brand image, brand destination, brand identity, Ecotourism

INTRODUCTION

South Malang is a tourism destination that is currently developing rapidly. Based on BPS data from Malang district, the level of growth in the number of domestic tourist visits in 2020 was 662 570, in 2021 it was 771 670 and in 2022 it was 2 749 783. Apart from the reopening of tourist collations after the Covid-19 pandemic era, domestic tourist interest has also increased quite a bit. sharp considering that tourist locations of choice are starting to spread (both official regional government tourist locations are also developing into new tourist locations) which are busy with tourists.

South Malang Regency takes advantage of maritime lines or coastal tourism to attract a lot of visitor attention. According to the Forest Management Unit (KPH) Malang Forestry Office, Malang Regency has 101 tourist attractions and the majority are beach tourism. The research location is called Tiga Warna Beach because the characteristics of this beach have quite contrasting levels of depth in the sea so that there are differences in the color of the sea water. When viewed from the top of the hill, the gradations of sea color will be increasingly visible, especially if supported by the intensity of the sun. The beach, which is a Marine Protected Area (MPA), has color gradations starting from the shore, namely clear bluish, turquoise blue and dark blue. From these three color gradations, this beach has the name "Three Color Beach" which is currently being sought after by foreign and local tourists.

Apart from Tiga Warna Beach which is the name of this tourist destination, Clungup Beach is the beach with the name used as a brand in this destination. Clungup Beach is an estuary where fresh water and sea water meet, this beach is not as wide as Tiga Warna Beach, but Clungup Beach is a Mangrove conservation area. Tourists who want to visit Tiga Warna Beach must first walk through the conservation area at Clungup Beach, or they can go by sea using a Solar Ship and visit the Floating House, so it's no wonder that this tourist area, even though it is managed by the local community, is never quiet. from visitors, especially holidays.

It is felt that the large number of tourist locations offered by the region requires a more organized way of marketing and management, so studies are needed to serve as a guide to improving regional tourism. Tourism marketing studies have been around since 2004 , and in each destination the State has an SKPP constructed by the state where the SKPP is the benchmark for the tourism marketing strategy planning program constructed by the State. The vision and mission of a destination is currently also implemented in various destinations in Indonesia with the vision of the Indonesian Ministry of Culture and Tourism "to create an Indonesian nation that is able to strengthen national identity and character and improve the welfare of society".

In the digital era, comparing tourism marketing or *destination branding*, the use of the Internet and social networks to carry out the process of introducing destinations to the public is very important. In Indonesia, the problem of *destination branding* still experiencing many obstacles in the process both in the vision and mission section, tourism marketing strategies used in Indonesia, each destination owner uses a logo and tagline as a means of *branding image* which is different in each region.

In several studies regarding destination *branding* , a study from Lucari and Berg (2011) on *city branding with the object of study* in Sweden. According to Lucari and Breg (2011), research on destination *brands* was carried out to make a region the main domain because tourism marketing theory itself is a theory that uses many scientific disciplines. In contrast to the study by Morgan, Pritchad and Prode (2011), *brand destinations* will pose a challenge in measuring the future of a tourism location.

Tourism marketing is developing and combining several scientific disciplines in one study and has several main areas of study that can be developed in an interesting way. One of them is *City Branding*. *City Branding* is needed to build a tourism image. Basically, *City Branding* is not a new marketing practice in organizing regional tourism. The *branding* process carried out by regions is a complex marketing strategy because to produce a strong and characteristic *brand* requires in-depth study so that it can market comparative regional advantages. A region's decision to carry out *city branding* can be seen as a public policy taken by the regional government. Good *city branding will of course influence the formation of brand identity and brand image*. According to Kavaratzis (2004) the main stages in the *branding process* lie in the management of space, behavior, infrastructure and organizational structure. Meanwhile, the secondary stage is the use of jargon, advertising, public relations and the like.

of the tourism sector in South Malang Regency is beach tourism , which is automatically a matter of culture and the uniqueness of the location is one of the potentials it has and adds value to . This potential can be realized through *branding* . Khavaritzis (2004) said further that *city branding* can seen as a form of image marketing that involves three aspects, namely: a) Primary marketing : It is all the appearance of the city such as landscape strategy, infrastructure, bureaucracy and all behavior related to the city; b) Secondary marketing : This is formal, intensive marketing which is usually known as marketing practices such as advertising, public relations, graphic design and so on;

c) Tertiary marketing : Here it relates to word of mouth marketing, which is reinforced by media and competitor marketing that cannot be controlled by marketing.

Tourism in an area, building city branding and tourism marketing to introduce to the public that an area has tourism potential that must be visited. City branding and tourism marketing are useful in building the perception of tourists to come and return to visit the tourism location.

Branding image is a representation of the overall perception of a brand and is formed from information and past experiences with the brand. According to Setiadi (2003), brand image refers to the general memory of a brand, which contains consumer interpretations of the attributes, advantages, uses, situations, users and characteristics of marketers and/or characteristics of makers of the product/brand. In the world of tourism, branding image or what can be called *Branding Destination*. Destination branding aims to introduce destination products to sell them on the tourism market, so apart from being imaged through a social construction process, tourism products must also be marketed to the public.

Indonesia is a country that is rich in various tourism sectors because several of the tourism objects in Indonesia are world class. The world of ecotourism is currently becoming an attractive tourism destination. Indonesia itself has several ecotourism areas that have been used as tourism locations. As an ecotourism-based tourism area in several districts in East Java, in South Malang district there are 101 beaches that can be visited by tourists, including Tiga Warna beach which is one of the mangrove conservation beaches. This location developed because tourists explored it and then uploaded it on their social media. This makes these tourist locations develop as they are with minimal touch and readiness of the local government.

Marketing Strategy Ecotourism Marketing in tourist destinations, Marketing Communication aspects and found the results that the creation of an image and brand awareness of a destination is determined by the organization and internal audiences. This internal audience will function as a tourism-aware community in realizing sustainable tourism.

Literature Review

According to the Institute of Tourism in Britain in 1976, tourism was defined as the temporary departure of people for short periods of time to places in search of entertainment. The movement (travel) of these people can be described as many people leaving their residence or home temporarily to another place with the true aim of being a consumer and completely without the aim of earning a living (Kusmayadi, 2000: 5). Meanwhile, according to the WTO in Richardson & Flickert, (2004: 6) defines tourism as, "... *the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for no more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes*". (Pitana, 2009 :45).

The birth of this study discipline is part of the multilinear development of science with the joining of several scientific disciplines such as Marketing, Tourism, Marketing Sociology & Mass Media Social Construction, Marketing, Public Relations, Advertising, Sociology, Management and Politics.

Three theories that contribute marketing theory, marketing strategy, marketing elements, product theory, brand theory and branding. Meanwhile, other disciplines that are closer to marketing are marketing sociology and the social construction of mass media. These two study disciplines

contribute theories of media influence and mass media imagery which can be used to influence the branding process and brand social construction.

Brand Image

Quoting from Burhan Bungin's book, he says that a brand is a name, brand, term, symbol or design, a combination of these to identify the goods or services of a company or group of brands and to differentiate them from competitors. (Kotler, 2000). There are two characteristics of a brand, namely: 1) *The brand* has the nature of being announced to the public, thus *the brand* has a publicity nature, therefore the *brand* only lives in the marketing space; 2) *The brand* provides the best value to society, both quality, service, comfort and so on. Marketing also drives *brand publicity* to achieve positioning in society. Media and marketing channels are used to place *the brand* in the best position in the minds and minds of the public.

In creating a brand image, you must also understand *Brand Destination*. Destination Brand Advertisers aim to introduce destination products to sell them on the tourism market. For this reason, Branam (2005:1) says that every product must know the following hierarchy: a) Positioning: What we want other people to feel and always have in mind; b) Personality: How we want them to feel about the brand. c) Proposition: How to bring out the two things above.

The brand is always the message in the marketing process, so the brand as a message product has contact with various aspects of marketing. (Rossiter and Bellman, 2005). In Kotler and Hermawan's marketing management, taken from the Tourism Marketing book, products are closely related to brands and differentiation. Hermawan (2009) said that the most important elements of marketing are brand, positioning and differentiation.

Integrated Marketing Communication

The fact is that potential buyers are "under siege" and attacked by various marketing methods and our efforts to attract potential buyers so that they buy our products. This is known as the marketing mix. Basically, marketing is less effective if it only uses promotions or sales. However, all marketing activities must be in synergy with one another, from various aspects so that the final result is that potential buyers can become buyers of the product.

To achieve successful sales, in marketing we recognize the 4P concept (Product, price, place and promotion). This concept was further developed into 7P (4P and people, physical evidence and process), namely 4P plus people, physical evidence and process (Smith & Taylor: 2002). Meanwhile 4P and 7P were revised by Hermawan Kertajaya by adding 8E, namely marketing elements namely brand, segmentation, service, positioning, selling and targeting. So by combining existing elements, the entire marketing mix concept becomes 13 units.

When carrying out a marketing mix, a communication mix occurs. The target of the communication mix is not selling products, but the target of the communication mix is the level of customer knowledge of the products we are offering/selling so that potential customers know and understand the product. Communication mix is an investment in the future for a company that runs it because potential customers who fail to buy a current product with complete knowledge about a product, there is a possibility that they will return to buy the product they already know.

AIDDA Conception

The decision-making process when individuals receive exposure to information can be referred to from the concept of thinking about AIDDA as in Effendy in his book Science, Theory and Philosophy of Marketing (2000: 304), stating that marketing experts are of the opinion that in

conducting marketing it is better to use an approach called AA Procedure or from Attention to Action Procedure. AA Procedure is actually a simplification of a process which is abbreviated as AIDDA.

The AIDDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Decision, Action) phasing process is that marketing begins by generating attention as the beginning of marketing success. If marketing attention has been aroused, then it is followed by efforts to generate interest, which is a higher level. from attention. Interest is a continuation of attention which is the starting point for the emergence of desire (desire) to carry out an activity that the marketer hopes for. There is only desire in consumers, for marketers it doesn't mean anything, because it must be followed by a decision, namely the decision to take action as expected by the marketer (Effendy, 2000: 305).

Ecotourism

Ecotourism or ecological tourism was first introduced by an organization called the International Ecotourism Society (1990) which is defined as tourist trips to natural areas carried out with the aim of conserving the environment and preserving the life and welfare of local residents. All ecotourism is carried out by nature-loving tourists who want the tourist destination to remain intact and sustainable, while the culture and welfare of the community is maintained. In its development, ecotourism is very popular with tourists so that it develops and is able to create business activities.

Ecotourism activities are also regulated by Minister of Home Affairs regulation no. 33 of 2009 states that ecotourism is a natural tourism activity in a region that is responsible by maintaining elements of education, understanding and support for efforts to conserve natural resources and increase the income of local communities.

In essence, the definition of ecotourism is a form of tourism that is responsible for preserving natural areas, providing economic benefits and maintaining cultural integrity for local communities. Based on this understanding, ecotourism is basically a form of conservation movement carried out by the world's population. This eco traveler is essentially a conservationist.

Planning and management of coastal areas is carried out continuously and dynamically by considering ecological, social, economic, institutional aspects, regional facilities, and aspirations of communities using coastal areas, as well as conflicts of interest and management of coastal areas, including aspects of regional integration and its ecological components, sector integration, integration of scientific disciplines and integration of stakeholders.

Ecotourism area management is a cyclical process that contains a continuous quality improvement mechanism covering four stages, namely: 1) Planning; 2) Implementation; 3) Evaluation; 4) Follow up. The planning stage is the stage of determining the goals and objectives of quality management to be achieved. After the plan is prepared, the next step is to prepare an implementation containing the activities that must be carried out to answer the question "How to achieve the goal". The next stage of implementing activities is an evaluation to determine the current position and to find out whether what is desired has been achieved in accordance with the quality targets that have been set. Evaluation results must be followed up with evidence of achievements to improve and improve management performance. The results of management reviews can be corrections or adjustments to ongoing actions or the determination of new quality targets for continuous quality improvement. (Ambo Tuwo, 2011: 342).

RESEARCH METHODS

The research method used is descriptive using a qualitative approach using open interview techniques, the results of in *-depth* interviews to examine and answer problems. The focus of the

problem is on planning to build a brand destination in the Clungup Three Colors Mangrove conservation area.

Based on the source, data is divided into primary data and secondary data:

1. Primary Data: Primary Data uses data sources from the chairman of Bhakti Alam Sendang Biru, as the main object of research. To deepen the information obtained from the interview process, researchers also carried out observations at Clungup Mangrove Tiga Warna, to find out internal and external marketing patterns carried out by guides and tourists, culture and activities around ecotourism-based tourism locations.
2. Secondary Data: Secondary data obtained from a second source or secondary sources. For secondary data collection, it was obtained from sustainable tourism practitioners of the East Java Ecotourism Forum (EJEF) and the results of the Malang Regency Tourism Grand Design research on sustainable problems.

Meanwhile, data collection techniques were carried out using interviews and in-depth observation. In this participatory observation, it is carried out by dividing into four groups, so that the researcher uses passive participant observation techniques where the researcher only observes the activities or activities of tourism actors without being involved in these activities. The object of observation in this research is the Clungup Mangrove Conservation tourist location and the activities of the tourism aware community.

Here the researcher used two data collection techniques, namely semi-structured interviews and passive participant observation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Bhakti Alam Sendang Biru is a foundation that manages local tourist areas which aims to carry out various community empowerment-based coastal rehabilitation and conservation activities. Apart from that, Bhakti Alam also provides community development. Members of the Bhakti Alam Sendang Biru Foundation are members of POKMASWAS Gatra Olah Alam Lestari (GOAL) which was previously established under the auspices of the Malang Regency DKP, POKMASWAS GOAL which only focused on coastal monitoring and then developed into a foundation that has a conservation movement called CLUNGUP MANGROVE CONSERVATION (CMC) Three colours. Through the Three Colors CMC, it is hoped that it will be able to increase community resources and the economy of the local community without damaging or disturbing natural sustainability.

Sendang Biru Hamlet is located at coordinates 8 25° 54.79° S and 112 40° 70° E, with characteristics of a coastal area, namely the southern coastal area which is directly opposite Sempu Island. The topography of Sendang Biru Hamlet is in the form of medium land and small hilly land, which is around 75 m above sea level. Most of the beaches in Sendang Biru Hamlet are sandy beaches and some are rocky. Meanwhile, based on the topography of Tambakrejo Village, the topography is at an altitude of 15 meters above sea level. In general, the climate of Tambakrejo village is influenced by the rainy and dry seasons with an average rainfall of 1,350 mm per year. And this village has an average temperature of 23 – 25 °C. Tambakrejo Village has an area of 2,735,850 km. Of the village area, most of the area is forest, the next is fields, the rest is yards, rice fields, residential housing, village roads, public infrastructure and cemeteries. Based on topographic conditions, Tambakrejo village is at an altitude of 15 m above sea level. In general, the climate of Tambakrejo village is tropical and every year there are rainy and dry seasons, while the average rainfall is 1,350 mm per

year with an average temperature of 32°C. Most of the Tambakrejo village area is an extension of the mountain slopes and the forested southern 38 coastline and there are springs (springs) which are a source of fresh water for the local community.

The Three Colors CMC area is a conservation area with an area of 17 Ha consisting of 71 Ha of mangroves, 10 Ha of coral reefs, 36 protected forests which are managed by the local Sendang Biru community as an ecotourism destination. The Three Colors CMC destination has six beaches which are divided into two conservation groups, namely Mangrove conservation and coral reef conservation. Clungup Beach and Gatra Beach are Mangrove conservation areas, while Sapana Beach, Mini Beach, Batu Pecah Beach and Tiga Warna Beach are Coral Reef conservation areas. The combination of mangroves and coral reefs is one of the characteristics of tourist destinations in CMC Tiga Warna. Three Colors CMC is the only tourist destination that implements a Sustainable Tourism system. Before visiting a tourist destination, visitors must follow the rules set by CMC Tiga Warna.

The Three Colors CMC governance concept applies the principles of sustainable ecotourism with three pillars of struggle:

1. Ecological Value (Reforesting 71 hectares of Mangorve, Rehabilitating 10 hectares of coral reefs and designated as MPA),
2. Increasing Social Value (HR)
3. Community Economic Improvement (Average IDR 2,750,000/month).

Meanwhile, the management system is carried out in five ways, namely: 1) Implementing a checklist; 2)Reservation; 3) Carrying Capacity; 4) Must use a local guide; 5) Determination of weekly, semester and annual visiting holidays to maintain the ecology of the Three Colors CMC conservation and ecotourism destination.

Clungup Mangrove Conservation Tiga Warna Ecotourism Site as a Brand Destination at Tiga Warna Beach started tourism activities in 2015 by selling natural tourist destinations in the form of beaches with a total of seven beaches offering a tourism concept that is different from beach tourist destinations around South Malang district.

This tourist location, which is close to the Sempu Island Nature Reserve and the Sendang Biru Fish Auction Site, is a new tourist location that applies the concept of Sustainable Tourism. This sustainable tourism concept is the beginning of the formation of the Destination Brand in Tiga Warna. This is in line with what Kotler said, where the brand concept does not only lie in the image of products and services, but a brand is something that has abstract value starting from the logo to the office location.

In a sustainable tourism system, there are several regulations that must be implemented to maintain environmental sustainability and the survival of local communities.

By implementing a sustainable tourism system, reservations and entry flow provisions, CMC Tiga Warna has a destination identity compared to other coastal tourist destinations. If at the beach destinations in the table visitors can enjoy the beach by only walking 50 meters, at Clungup Mangrove Conservation has created a different system, namely to enter beach tourist locations where the flow of visitors has been arranged in such a way that each tourist location in the area is passed. This function is for initial visitors to introduce local tourist locations, while for visitors who already have a destination for tourist locations in that area, they can go straight to the location they want.

Differentiation is all brand efforts to create differences between competitors in order to provide the best value to visitors. Here, product differentiation is also carried out through various attractions that are sold according to the advantages of each tourist location, such as views of the south coast, beaches that have the same attractions as CMC Tiga Warna, namely Kondang Merak Beach which also provides snorkeling attractions on the beach, *Mangrove Planting*, *Canoe*, *Snorkeling*, *Banana Boat*, *Boat Rental*.

Based on an interview with Lia Putrinda as Founder of the Bhakti Alam Sendang Biru Foundation which oversees the Three Colors CMC area, it can be analyzed as follows:

- a. *Positioning* : A marketing strategy that aims to make the product occupy a different position.
- b. *Brand personality* (Brand personality): According to Aaker (1997) . Brand personality as “a set of human characteristics that are associated or connected with the brand”.

From the results of interviews in *the field*, it can be concluded that Clungup *Mangrove Conservation Management* involves customers in forming interest in *public visits* . Viewed from the customer as an element forming a marketing strategy, as stated by Onong Effendy in his book *Marketing Science, Theory and Philosophy* (2000: 304), marketing experts tend to share the opinion that in carrying out marketing it is better to use an approach called AA Procedure or from Attention to Action Procedure. AA Procedure is actually a simplification of a process which is abbreviated as AIDDA. This marketing phasing process begins with generating attention *as* the beginning of marketing success. If marketing attention has been aroused, it should be followed by efforts to generate interest , which is a higher degree of attention. Interest is a continuation of attention which is the starting point for the emergence of desire (*desire*) to carry out an activity that the marketer hopes for. There is only desire in consumers, for marketers it doesn't mean anything, because it must be followed by a decision , namely the decision to take action *as* expected by the marketer (Effendy, 2000: 305).

Person to Person Strategy Process by visitors, where visitors visit tourist destinations at CMC Tiga Warna, they upload photos/videos of holiday activities at tourist destinations on their social media by marking the location of tourist destinations, the marketing process carried out by customers will be more effective than with a marking process carried out directly by Clungup Mangrove Conservation. The role of customers as givers of testimonials is more trusted by the public because customers are considered to have experienced a tourist destination.

In the Destination Brand marketing process directly at Clungup Mangrove Conservation, CMC Tiga Warna uses a direct marketing process carried out by Guides. Local guides become marketers who will provide messages from the CMC Tiga Warna brand and will be accepted by visitors. Here it was found that not all visitors were interested in the information about conservation activities in the three colors presented by the tour guide.

From the results of the interview it can be concluded that *the noise* that occurs lies in the lack of attractiveness of the message packaged by the guide. Looking at the data on visitors who come to CMC Three Colors, the majority is *mass tourism* , so an explanation of what CMC Three Colors is doing with conservation makes visitors less interested in receiving messages or providing feedback to guides.

CONCLUSION

Research on tourism brand image strategies in the Clungup Mangrove Conservation Three Colors which is managed by the local community under the auspices of the Bhakti Alam Sendang Biru Foundation in Sendang Biru Hamlet, South Malang Regency can be concluded as follows

1. In building a beach tourism destination in South Malang Regency, CMC Tiga Warna uses a sustainable tourism system as the identity of the tourist destination "Clungup Mangrove Conservation Tiga Warna". CMC Tiga Warna offers beach tourism destinations with Tracking, Canoeing, Snorkeling, Banana Boat and Diving attractions (for those who have a license) and Mangrove planting to Ambal Warsa which is carried out behind closed doors for local village residents. The attractions offered by CMC Tiga Warna are not yet available in beach tourist destinations in South Malang Regency. From the case of Goa China Beach, it can be concluded that new tourist destinations require marketing strategies and strengthening the unique characteristics of the location as one strategy to prevent the number of tourist visits from decreasing due to the many new, more attractive tourist attractions.
2. In communicating the Destination Brand, Three Colors CMC Management uses two forms of marketing processes, namely a direct marketing process carried out by Guides to Visitors. The indirect marketing process carried out by CMC Tiga Warna is by being active on social media, especially Instagram, which is informative and persuasive.
3. Formation of interest in public visits to CMC Three Colors by involving visitors to form the interest of potential visitors using a person to person strategy carried out by visitors.
4. Forming a Brand Image Strategy by using a sustainable tourism system and bringing out elements of amenities or carrying capacity that are different from other tourist destinations, CMC Tiga Warna carries the brand "Clungup Mangrove Conservation Tiga Warna - Ecotourism Site". In carrying this brand, CMC Tiga Warna carries it out with two aspects, namely the positioning aspect to develop a destination marketing strategy and the Brand Personality aspect by bringing out the personality or self-identity of the tourist destination.

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