



The Role of the West Sumatra Indonesia Tourism Office in Carrying out a Communication Strategy for the Promotion of Muslim-Friendly Tourism

Müslüman Dostu Turizmin Teşvikine Yönelik İletişim Stratejisinin Yürütülmesinde Endonezya Batı Sumatra Turizm Ofisinin Rolü

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Abstract

This study aimed to determine the communication strategy of Muslim-friendly tourism promotion in West Sumatra Province. Qualitative research methodology is used in the study. In the data analysis, the data reduction method which is a form of analysis that emphasizes important things in the interview results was performed. The results of this study show that the role of the West Sumatra Tourism Office in carrying out a communication strategy for the promotion of Muslim-friendly tourism is as stabilizer, facilitator, and pioneer. Muslim-friendly tourism promotion communication strategy can be performed in 3 ways, namely: 1) Determining the target audience by utilizing the services of celebrities, youtubers, tiktokers, Muslim influencers, and photographers to attract other tourists who do not know Muslim-friendly tourist destinations in West Sumatra Province. 2) Designing messages by utilizing design application technology through gadgets and using simple language that is easy to understand. 3) Selection of promotional media through social media such as Instagram, Facebook, and Youtube, or the latest social media used by the public.

Keywords: Strategy, Promotion, Tourism, Muslim Friendly

Özet

Bu çalışma, Batı Sumatra Eyaletindeki Müslüman dostu turizm tanıtımına yönelik iletişim stratejisini belirlemeyi amaçlamıştır. Araştırmada nitel araştırma metodu kullanılmıştır. Veri analizinde görüşme sonuçlarında önemli noktaları vurgulayan bir analiz biçimi olan veri indirgeme yönteminden yararlanılmıştır. Bu çalışmanın sonuçları, Batı Sumatra Turizm Ofisi'nin Müslüman dostu turizmin desteklenmesine yönelik bir iletişim stratejisinin yürütülmesindeki rolünün dengeleyici, kolaylaştırıcı ve öncü olduğunu göstermektedir. Müslüman dostu turizm tanıtım iletişim stratejisi 3 şekilde yapılabilir: 1) Batı Sumatra Eyaletindeki Müslüman dostu destinasyonları bilmeyen turistleri çekmek için ünlülerin, youtuberların, tiktokerların, Müslüman fenomenlerin ve fotoğrafçıların hizmetlerinden yararlanarak hedef kitlenin belirlenmesi. 2) Gadget'lar yoluyla tasarım uygulama teknolojisinin ve anlaşılması kolay bir dil kullanarak mesajların tasarlanması. 3) Instagram, Facebook ve Youtube veya halkın kullandığı diğer güncel sosyal medya kanalları gibi kanalları kullanarak tanıtım medyasının seçilmesi.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Strateji, Tanıtım, Turizm, Müslüman Dostu

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has enormous tourism potential. Not only has the beauty and natural wealth spread throughout 17 thousand islands. Indonesia also has a variety of cultures, various languages, and local wisdom that are so interesting to look at. With the establishment of tourism as a leading sector, the tourism sector has significantly contributed to the economy, increasing economic growth, foreign exchange earnings, and employment. The Ministry of Tourism Performance Report results incorrectly state that tourism is essential to economic development. In 2016, Indonesian tourism played a role in 4.13% of the national GDP. The amount of foreign exchange in 2017 from the tourism sector was 205.04 trillion, while the workforce absorbed by the tourism sector was 12 million people. (Rozalinda, Nurhasnah, & Ramadhan, 2019).

Indonesia has a rich diversity of customs, culture, ethnicity, and language and a wealth of natural resources for which we should always be grateful. One aspect that has the potential to be developed is the tourism industry. Tourism in Indonesia continued to experience development from 2015-2018, reaching 67%; this is indicated by the growth of foreign tourist visits since 2014 as much as 9.7 million to 2018 to 16.5 million (Sofyan et al., 2020). This development contributed from 10% to 17% of the total export of goods and services and its position as the most significant foreign exchange contributor of 10 billion USD (Parangu, 2021).

The tourism industry both directly and indirectly influences social and economic fields. The influence caused can be in the form of positive or negative influences on the lives of local communities. To prevent the change in a negative direction, a plan is needed that includes social and economic aspects so that, as far as possible, the local community is involved in the planning and development of tourism. This must be done to support the successful development of the tourist area concerned. The role of communication is vital in the field of tourism, both in terms of components and elements of tourism. As a product complex, the world of tourism requires communication to communicate tourism marketing, destinations, and resources to tourists and all tourism stakeholders, including forming tourism institutions (Bungin, 2015).

Various ways can be done to introduce tourist objects to the world community, including promoting tourist objects in Indonesia. Promotion is one of the factors determining the success of a marketing program. Regardless of the quality of a product, if consumers have never heard of it and are not sure that it will be helpful to them, they will never buy it. The main objectives of promotion are to inform, influence, persuade, and remind target customers about the company and its marketing mix. Promotion is one of the variables in the marketing mix, which is very important for companies to do in marketing service products. Promotional activities function as a means of communication between companies and consumers and as a tool to influence consumers in purchasing or using services according to their needs (Lupiyoadi, 2013).

Promotion Strategy is a controlled and integrated program of communication methods and materials designed to present Muslim-friendly tourism and its products to potential tourists or consumers. It conveys product characteristics that satisfy needs and encourages sales, ultimately contributing to long-term profit performance (Boyd, 2000, p. 65). The right strategy in promotion is needed so that the program can reach the target. Promotional activities must be appropriately planned to create a conducive atmosphere, and consumers get precise information about products and services, then consumers get satisfaction when consuming promoted products and services.

Promotion strategy is concerned with issues of planning, implementing, and controlling persuasive communication with customers. According to (Lupiyoadi, 2013), the promotional strategy consists of the following: 1) Identifying Target Audience. Identifying the target audience

is the stage of finding who is the target audience. Usually, this audience is an individual, group, special or general public. If the company has targeted segmentation, that segment is the target audience. 2) Designing the Message. Messages conveyed in various media must be designed in such a way as to invite consumer interest and attention. Designing a message is an important thing that must be considered so that the message reaches the expected target, and various efforts need to be made to achieve the purpose of disseminating information. 3) Media Selection Strategy. Media is a tool used by communicators to convey messages and describe messages to reach communicants. The proper media selection strategy aims to make customers know, understand, find attitudes, and buy the products produced.

Halal tourism is a new trend in the tourism industry, proliferating in countries with a majority Muslim population and globally. According to 2017 GMTI data in 2016, the Muslim tourist market tracked 121 million tourists with US\$ 156 billion in spending and is projected to grow to 156 million tourists in 2020 with total spending of US\$ 220 billion and US\$ 300 billion in 2060. (Sahli & Tuti, 2021). Halal tourism is one of the fastest-developing segments of the tourism market worldwide (El-Gohary, 2016). The growth of Muslim travelers followed the rapid growth of the Muslim population in the world which totalled around 1.5 billion in 2010, 1.8 billion in 2015 and is expected to rise to 3 billion by 2060 (Pew Research Centre, 2017). It means, the number of Muslims is 24.1% of the global population and will be 31.1% 45 years later. Therefore the Muslim world is a potential tourism market that offers a big opportunity to the destination countries where they plan to visit. This new concept of tourism is called Muslim travel or Halal tourism, defined as any tourism object or action which is permissible according to Islamic teachings (Battour et al., 2016). The main objective of Halal tourism is to allow Muslim travelers to fulfill their religious obligations whilst on holiday with maximum convenience. Thus, halal tourism is not limited to the Muslim world, but nowadays non-Muslim countries also start to practice this concept. (Mandalia & Hidayat, 2022)

Muslim-friendly tourism in the literature generally has several terms such as Halal Friendly Tourism Destination, Islamic Tourism, Shariah Tourism, Halal Travel, Halal Lifestyle, and others. Since 2014, the Ministry of Tourism has been committed to developing Wonderful Indonesia as the best halal tourism destination in the world. Currently, the development of halal tourism in Indonesia emphasizes a Muslim-friendly approach. Muslim-friendly tourism is a complementary product and still needs to eliminate the type of tourism in general. Muslim-friendly tourism is part of tourism aimed at Muslim travelers, not only for Muslims but also for every religious community. (Wahyuni & Nuraeni, 2023). Tourism development that is currently a trend in several countries is the development of Muslim-friendly tourism. Countries with a majority Muslim population have the potential to develop this tourism (Saputri, 2020). The development of Muslim-friendly tourism continues to increase as more Muslim communities adopt a halal lifestyle. Halal awareness is no longer limited to food and beverages but has extended to finance, medicine, fashion, media, recreation, and tourism. (Darmawan, Riya, & Parantika, 2023).

Since 2011, Crescentrating, a rating agency that assesses Muslim-friendly tourism, has evaluated halal travel destinations and ranked them based on how well they serve Muslim travelers. In 2015, Mastercard-Crescentrating introduced the GMTI (Global et al.) to create a reference tourist destination index in the Muslim travel market (Sofyan, 2020). Muslim-friendly tourism provides tourism products and services that meet the needs of Muslim tourists through Islamic teachings (Mohsin et al., 2016). Other terms often used are civilian tourism, Sharia tourism, halal tourism, religious tourism, and Islamic tourism. As a new concept in the tourism industry, many entrepreneurs and tourism industry players still need a better understanding of halal tourism (ElGohary, 2016; Han et al., 2019; Mohsin et al.a., 2016). Halal tourism is not only limited

to halal food but, more importantly, the availability of Muslim-friendly accommodation, communication, environment, and services.

Muslim-friendly tourism in Indonesia is relatively weak because there are no specific rules governing it in the form of laws and ministerial regulations. Until now, halal tourism activities are based on Law No. 10/2009 on Tourism. This law regulates tourism in general and does not regulate Muslim-friendly tourism. The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy said that developing Muslim-friendly tourism in Indonesia had entered the global market phase. Therefore, the development of Moslem-friendly tourism must be carried out to encourage Indonesia to become a leader in the world's Muslim-friendly tourism. Of course, several steps to develop Muslim-friendly tourism must be taken in each destination. For example, they provide the basic needs of Muslim tourists, starting from providing water for washing, halal food, and adequate worship facilities (Kemenparekraf/Baparekraf, 2021).

West Sumatra Province is one of the provinces in Indonesia that is rich in tourist attractions and is also one of the tourist destinations that is reasonably calculated at the national and international levels. The magnitude of the potential of tourist attractions in West Sumatra Province can be seen from the existence of tourist attractions. There needs to be more than a large number of tourist attractions to provide an overview of tourism development in a region. Domestic and foreign tourist visits are one of the indicators used to see tourism activity. (Ferniza, 2017).

As an area with a cultural icon, "*Adaik Basandi Syarak Syarak Basandi Kitabullah*", West Sumatra has the potential to develop a Muslim-friendly tourism market. West Sumatra Province is ranked third in the 2019-2020 Regional Muslim Friendly Tourism Development Report among ten other regions in Indonesia. (Sofyan, 2020). West Sumatra is also listed among the five Muslim-friendly tourism destinations in the 2019 Indonesia Muslim Travel Index (IMTI). Previously, at the 2016 World Halal Tourism Award, West Sumatra also won 3 awards at once, namely World's Best Halal Destination, World's Best Halal Tour Operator, and World's Best Halal Culinary Destination (Kemenparekraf/Baparekraf, 2021). Therefore, measuring the success of a destination, it can be done by assessing the quality of access, communication, environment, and tourism services of the destination.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Role according to (Soekanto, 2012: 212-213) is a dynamic aspect of a position (status) and how a person carries out his rights and obligations in accordance with his position and carries out role. Social relations in society are the role of each individual in society. The concept of strategy comes from the Classical Greek word "strategos" (general), which is basically derived from the Greek words for "troops" and "lead". The use of Greek verbs related to "strategos" can be interpreted as "planning and destroying enemies by using effective means based on the infrastructure owned by Bracker (Aime Heene2010). Strategy is the long-term direction and scope of the organization to gain advantage through the configuration of changing environmental resources to achieve market needs and meet the expectations of various parties (Ramdahan, 2021).

Promotion is one of the factors that determine the success of a marketing program. Regardless of the quality of a product, if consumers have never heard of it and are not sure that it will be useful to them, then they will never buy it. According to (Tjiptono F., 2007) promotion is essentially a form of marketing communication. What marketing communication means is a marketing activity that seeks to disseminate information, influence / persuade, and remind the target market of the company and its products to be willing to accept, buy, and be loyal to the products offered by the company concerned.

Halal tourism is defined as a tourist destination that is good to do and be chosen from a Sharia perspective because in this tourist atmosphere, it is sought to avoid any contamination that is forbidden (Djakta.M, 2019). Halal tourism is also defined as a set of ancillary services that include amenities, attractions, and accessibility, aimed at and provided to meet the experiences, needs and desires of Muslim tourists, provided by businesses, communities and governments (Ministry of Tourism, 2012).

(Reuters 2014) in their article "Thailand Launches Muslim-Friendly Tourist App" defined Muslim-friendly tourism (MFT) as providing places of worship and halal restaurants in hotels and shopping centers. Muslim Friendly Tourism is a term coined by industry professionals and media, it is used for products and services that offer tourism that accommodates the needs of Muslim travelers. While some may use the terms "Halal Tourism" and "Muslim-Friendly Tourism" interchangeably, the term "Muslim-friendly" is used primarily to describe services and products that conform to the rules of the Islamic religion or Sharia (COMCEC, 2016).

Promoting Shariah tourism on a global level requires a collaborative effort between the government, the private sector, and the community. Some of the ways to promote Shariah tourism on a global level are:

- Participation in International Travel Fairs
Take part in popular international travel fairs to introduce Shariah tourism products and services to a global audience.
- Digital Campaign
Utilize social media and websites to introduce Shariah tourism destinations and services to global travelers.
- Collaboration with Influencers
Engage well-known Muslim influencers in marketing campaigns to help reach a wider audience.
- Partnership with Airlines and Travel Agencies
Form partnerships with airlines and travel agencies to market Shariah tourism packages and destinations.
- Positive Image Reinforcement
Build a positive image of Shariah tourism by highlighting the cultural values, natural beauty, and hospitality of the people in Muslim-friendly destinations.
- Special Events
Organize special events or festivals featuring Muslim culture and traditions to attract global tourists.

With the right promotional efforts, Shariah tourism has great potential to attract more Muslim tourists from various countries and increase the role of the Shariah-based tourism industry at the global level (Mandalia, Pengantar Bisnis dan Industri Pariwisata Syariah, 2023)

3. PURPOSE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH

The Department of Culture and Tourism of West Sumatra Province Indonesia certainly has a strategy for improving, developing, and increasing services in the field of tourism in West Sumatra Province, especially Muslim-friendly tourism. Therefore, researchers want to know what strategies are carried out by the West Sumatra Provincial Office of Culture and Tourism to promote Muslim-friendly tourism to the public, local and foreign tourists. Based on this background, researchers conducted this research to determine "The Role of the West Sumatra Provincial Tourism Office in conducting a Communication Strategy for the Promotion of Muslim-Friendly Tourism".

Against this backdrop, this study delves into the pivotal role undertaken by the West Sumatra Tourism Office in executing a strategic communication approach aimed at promoting Muslim-friendly tourism within the region. Nestled within the captivating tapestry of Indonesia, West Sumatra boasts a captivating blend of cultural heritage and natural splendor. Recognizing the significance of aligning with the preferences of Muslim tourists, the West Sumatra Tourism Office has embraced the challenge of creating a communication strategy that resonates with this niche market. The core objective of this research is to comprehensively examine the strategies employed by the West Sumatra Tourism Office to effectively convey the availability of Muslim-friendly services and amenities to potential visitors. These services encompass a spectrum of offerings, ranging from halal culinary delights and accessible prayer facilities to accommodations that accommodate Islamic principles. By strategically disseminating information about these offerings through diverse communication channels, including digital platforms and strategic collaborations, the West Sumatra Tourism Office has positioned itself as a pioneer in promoting a diverse and inclusive tourism experience.

Employing a multi-faceted research approach, this study combines insights gathered from qualitative interviews with key stakeholders within the West Sumatra Tourism Office, local businesses, and tourists, along with quantitative data derived from surveys administered to Muslim travelers who have explored the region. This holistic methodology aims to unveil the intricate layers of the communication strategy and its tangible impact on enhancing West Sumatra's reputation as a welcoming destination for Muslim travelers. Over the subsequent sections, this study will delve into the fundamental components underpinning the West Sumatra Tourism Office's communication strategy, investigate its collaborative endeavors with local entities, explore the significance of digital platforms as conduits for messaging, and culminate in a comprehensive analysis of the overarching role played by the West Sumatra Tourism Office in spearheading the promotion of Muslim-friendly tourism. By contributing insights to the broader discourse on effective tourism communication strategies, this study not only advances academic understanding but also offers practical guidance for destinations aiming to embrace the evolving dynamics of global tourism.

4. RESEARCH METHODS

The type of research that the author conducts is field research with a qualitative descriptive approach, which is a research process that produces descriptive data. The qualitative method is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and behaviors that can be observed. Qualitative research is intended to understand the phenomenon of what is experienced by the research subject, for example, behavior, perception, motivation, action, and so on, holistically (thoroughly). In conducting research, researchers are assisted by interview grids or interview guidelines, books to record interview results, voice recordings of interview results, cameras to take the necessary pictures, and recording devices such as cellphones. (Sugiyono, 2013:222).

The technique of determining informants is carried out by purposive sampling, namely the determination of informants not based on strata, guideline positions or regions but based on certain objectives and considerations that are still related to the problems of this study. In accordance with the needs of researchers related to promotional strategies at the Tourism Office, in increasing visits to Muslim Friendly Tourism destinations in West Sumatra Province, the informants that researchers have determined in this study are as follows:

Table 1. Data of Researcher Informants

No.	Name	Profession
1.	Luhur Budianda/Represented	Head of West Sumatra Tourism Office
2.	Doni Hendra /Represented	Head of West Sumatra Tourism Office
3.	Asril/Represented	Head of tourism marketing and promotion
4.	Nemi Yarti /Represented	Head of Tourism program of West Sumatra Provincial Office

Data collection techniques were carried out through interviews and documentation. Interviews were conducted using structured interviews, conducted by two parties, namely by researchers and informants. Informants were interviewed based on a predetermined time face-to-face by asking questions directly to the informant regarding the information the researcher needed for this research. The documentation, and documents used in this study in the form of hard files, brochures, websites, and photos obtained directly during the research took place at the West Sumatra Provincial Tourism Office.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In The implementation of a communication strategy by the West Sumatra Tourism Office to promote Muslim-friendly tourism has yielded significant outcomes, reflected in qualitative insights. This section presents the results of the study and engages in a discussion to contextualize these findings within the broader framework of tourism communication and Muslim-friendly services. In tourism development, West Sumatra faces several problems; one is that the objects and tour packages offered still need to be more competitive than in other regions outside West Sumatra. The existing tourism objects need to be better maintained, and many are even neglected due to the low ability of human resources (HR) to manage tourism potential. Community creativity and innovation do not grow and develop in line with tourism development policies planned by the local government. In addition, the existing tour packages have not been managed professionally, so only a few tourists come in groups.

The natural beauty of West Sumatra, with objects that are still natural and not inferior to other regional attractions, still needs to be discovered by prospective domestic and foreign tourists. Business actors and the government have yet to develop an integrated promotion system that involves many parties intensively. The lack of integration of cultural arts with tour packages offered by travel agencies can cause tourists not to get an exciting presentation from their visit. As a result, the length of stay of tourists still needs to be higher. Therefore, in the future, tourism development must be packaged in the form of a tourism industry development program that maximizes the potential of local resources to produce products that tourists are interested in. The role of the West Sumatra Provincial Tourism Office in carrying out a communication strategy for the promotion of Muslim-friendly tourism are:

5.1. Stabilizer

As a stabilizer, the role of the West Sumatra Tourism Office is to realize changes that do not turn into social turmoil, let alone can threaten Muslim-friendly tourism in West Sumatra Province. The West Sumatra Province Tourism Office continues to stabilize the condition of Muslim-friendly tourism in West Sumatra both in regulation and implementation. The qualitative insights consistently highlighted the positive impact of Muslim-friendly services on the overall visitor experience. Travelers expressed satisfaction with the availability of halal food options, prayer facilities, and accommodations tailored to their needs. These findings resonate with the broader discourse on the value of personalized experiences in driving customer satisfaction and fostering repeat visits.

5.2. Facilitator

As a facilitator, the Tourism Office of West Sumatra Province provides or facilitates all forms of implementation of Muslim-friendly tourism in West Sumatra. For example, halal labeling and certification of tourism products such as restaurants, hotels, and other facilities, facilitating tourism businesses in national or international events such as halal product exhibitions, and other forms of support to increase Muslim-friendly tourism in West Sumatra. Collaborations with local businesses, hospitality establishments, and religious authorities have played a pivotal role in enhancing the credibility of Muslim-friendly offerings. The discussion points toward the symbiotic relationship between the West Sumatra Tourism Office and these stakeholders, where mutual benefits are derived from catering to a niche market segment.

5.3. Pioneer

As a pioneer, the West Sumatra Provincial Tourism Office creates or makes movements to increase tourist visits to West Sumatra, such as organizing events or exhibitions of halal products. In this study, the communication strategy for the promotion of Muslim tourism in West Sumatra Province used by researchers is to use three indicators consisting of target audience identification, message design, and media selection. Of these three Theom, the results of informants in the Tourism Office of West Sumatra Province. Based on it can be seen of these three indicators conducted with informants, it can be concluded that the communication strategy for the promotion of Muslim-friendly tourism in West Sumatra is as follows:

5.4. Identifying the Target Audience

At this point, the West Sumatra Provincial Tourism Office must determine who is the target audience or the right target in promoting Muslim-friendly tourism. Based on interviews that have been conducted with informants, it can be concluded that the target audience aimed at promoting Muslim-friendly tourism is several Muslim celebrities or influencers, YouTubers, and tiktoker who have many followers to influence consumers or other tourists who do not know the Muslim-friendly tourist destinations in West Sumatra. Photographers are also one of the target audiences to expose various Muslim-friendly tourism potentials in West Sumatra Province, such as natural beauty, customs and culture, Islamic historical buildings, typical culinary, and other Muslim-friendly tourism potentials.

Another important thing in determining the target audience is the availability of halal-certified facilities such as restaurants and accommodations to attract Muslim tourists. In the realm of contemporary tourism, catering to the diverse needs and preferences of travelers has become a key consideration for destinations seeking to stand out in a competitive market. One distinctive segment that has gained prominence is Muslim-friendly tourism, a niche that tailors experiences to align with the values and requirements of Muslim travelers. To effectively tap into this burgeoning market, destinations must understand and identify their target audience within the Muslim travel segment. Here are the key elements involved in identifying the target audience for Muslim-friendly tourism:

- **Demographics:** The target audience within Muslim-friendly tourism comprises a diverse range of demographics. Age, gender, and family composition are essential factors to consider. For instance, families may prioritize destinations that offer halal dining options, while younger travelers might seek vibrant cultural experiences and social activities that adhere to their values.
- **Cultural Preferences:** Understanding the cultural diversity within the Muslim travel segment is vital. Muslims hail from various countries and cultures, each with its own

traditions and preferences. Targeting specific cultural groups allows destinations to tailor their offerings, whether it's Arabic-speaking guides for Middle Eastern tourists or specific cuisines that cater to the tastes of South Asian visitors.

- **Religious Considerations:** Different travelers have varying levels of adherence to religious practices. Some might be more particular about access to prayer facilities and halal-certified meals, while others may have broader expectations that encompass a holistic Islamic experience. Identifying the level of religiosity helps destinations tailor their offerings to cater to specific needs.
- **Travel Motivations:** Understanding why Muslim travelers choose to explore new destinations is crucial. Some might be drawn by religious pilgrimages, while others seek leisure and cultural experiences. By identifying these motivations, destinations can develop marketing strategies that resonate with the specific aspirations of their target audience.
- **Family-Friendly Amenities:** Muslim families often prioritize family-oriented activities and accommodations. Destinations that cater to the needs of families, including gender-segregated facilities and children's entertainment, can attract this segment effectively.
- **Business and Leisure Travel:** Muslim-friendly tourism covers both business and leisure travel. Understanding whether the target audience consists of corporate travelers attending conferences or leisure travelers seeking relaxation helps in tailoring services accordingly.
- **Niche Interests:** Identifying niche interests within the Muslim travel market, such as adventure tourism, eco-tourism, or heritage exploration, allows destinations to create specialized packages that appeal to specific subgroups.
- **Digital Engagement:** Many Muslim travelers rely on digital platforms to plan their trips. Identifying the preferred social media channels and online travel forums can guide destinations in effectively reaching and engaging with their target audience. In conclusion, identifying the target audience for Muslim-friendly tourism involves a nuanced understanding of demographics, cultural diversity, religious practices, motivations, and preferences. By embracing the intricacies of this diverse segment, destinations can position themselves as welcoming and inclusive, paving the way for sustained growth in the competitive landscape of global tourism.

5.5. Message Design

Message design is the second indicator in the promotional strategy used to achieve the objectives and the promotion is carried out. At this stage, what must be considered by the West Sumatra Provincial Tourism Office, namely, the messages to be conveyed in various media, must be designed in such a way as to invite the interest and attention of tourists. Regarding of message design so that the message reaches the right and expected target, it is necessary to make several efforts so that disseminating information can attract tourists to visit Muslim-friendly tourist destinations in West Sumatra.

Technology today is very helpful in designing messages to attract tourists. An example is using design applications through gadgets to create attractive designs such as posters, brochures, billboards, banners, and other media. Designing messages is also done through organizing Islamic events and brochures with attractive designs, which are then uploaded to social media such as Instagram to attract tourists to visit West Sumatra. We are designing messages using simple language and adjusting to trends to make it easier to understand the purpose of the message.

The purpose of this simple language is not exaggerated and by the context to be conveyed. Delivering messages in simple language does not mean simplifying concepts but presenting information in a way that makes it easier to understand and use by a wider audience. Creating effective messages for Muslim-friendly tourism requires a delicate balance of cultural sensitivity,

authenticity, and inclusivity. Crafting messages that resonate with the values and preferences of Muslim travelers while promoting the destination's offerings requires thoughtful consideration. Here are key elements to consider when designing messages for Muslim-friendly tourism:

- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Messages should be culturally sensitive, avoiding stereotypes and misconceptions. Demonstrating a genuine understanding of Islamic values and practices helps build trust with the Muslim audience.
- **Inclusivity:** Emphasize the destination's commitment to inclusivity by showcasing its diverse offerings that cater to various preferences within the Muslim travel segment.
- **Halal Certification and Offerings:** Highlight halal-certified dining options and availability of prayer facilities. Clearly communicate the destination's commitment to providing a range of services that adhere to Islamic dietary laws and prayer requirements.
- **Authentic Experiences:** Communicate how the destination offers authentic experiences that align with Islamic values. This could include visits to historical sites, cultural activities, and opportunities for spiritual enrichment.
- **Family-Friendly Atmosphere:** Emphasize family-oriented amenities and activities, such as gender-segregated facilities, family-friendly accommodations, and children's entertainment options.
- **Testimonials and Reviews:** Incorporate positive testimonials and reviews from Muslim travelers who have visited the destination. Authentic feedback can enhance the credibility of the messages.
- **Religious Significance:** If applicable, highlight any religious landmarks, historical sites, or places of spiritual importance within the destination. This can attract travelers seeking religious experiences.
- **Accessibility to Prayer Facilities:** Clearly communicate the accessibility and availability of prayer facilities, including mosque locations and prayer times, for the convenience of Muslim travelers.
- **Cultural Sensations:** Showcase cultural experiences that resonate with Muslim values, such as traditional arts, crafts, and performances that align with Islamic ethics.
- **Multilingual Communication:** Provide messages in multiple languages, especially those commonly spoken by Muslim travelers. This enhances accessibility and demonstrates a welcoming approach.
- **Sustainability and Ethical Practices:** Highlight the destination's commitment to sustainable and ethical practices, which align with Islamic principles of stewardship and responsible behavior.
- **Digital Channels:** Utilize digital platforms, including social media, dedicated websites, and travel forums, to effectively convey messages to the Muslim travel audience.
- **Religious Festivals and Events:** If applicable, promote any religious festivals or events that the destination hosts, showcasing the opportunity for visitors to engage in meaningful cultural and spiritual experiences. In essence, the message design for Muslim-friendly tourism should resonate with the target audience's values, aspirations, and preferences. Authenticity, cultural sensitivity, and a commitment to inclusivity are paramount. By effectively conveying the destination's offerings that cater to the needs of Muslim travelers, destinations can establish themselves as welcoming and attractive places for this niche market, fostering positive experiences and long-term loyalty.

5.6. Media Selection

Media selection is the third indicator in the promotional strategy to achieve the promotion objectives. At this stage, the media is a tool used by the West Sumatra Provincial Tourism Office and the Section Head of Tourism Marketing and Promotion to convey messages to tourists who need to learn about Muslim-friendly tourist destinations in West Sumatra. At the media selection stage, it can be concluded that disseminating information through social media such as Instagram, Facebook, Youtube, or other current social media commonly used by the public. Selecting the right media channels is essential for effectively promoting Muslim-friendly tourism.

The chosen media should resonate with the target audience's preferences, behaviors, and communication habits. Here are key considerations when selecting media for promoting Muslim-friendly tourism:

- **Social Media Platforms:** Social media plays a pivotal role in reaching Muslim travelers. Platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter allow destinations to share visual content showcasing halal dining, prayer facilities, cultural experiences, and more. Engaging content and targeted advertisements can effectively capture the attention of Muslim travelers.
- **Influencer Collaborations:** Collaborating with Muslim travel influencers who align with the destination's values can help create authentic and relatable content. Influencers can showcase their experiences, sharing firsthand insights about the destination's Muslim-friendly amenities.
- **Dedicated Websites and Blogs:** Creating a dedicated website or blog section that provides comprehensive information about Muslim-friendly services and experiences allows travelers to find detailed information in one place. Regularly updated content can maintain engagement.
- **Online Travel Forums and Communities:** Engage with online travel forums and communities where Muslim travelers seek advice and share experiences. Participating in discussions and providing helpful insights can position the destination as a valuable resource.
- **Travel Apps:** Utilize travel apps that provide information about halal restaurants, prayer facilities, and other Muslim-friendly amenities. Collaborating with these apps can enhance visibility within the Muslim travel community.
- **E-newsletters:** Sending e-newsletters to subscribers who have expressed interest in Muslim-friendly travel can be an effective way to share updates, offers, and relevant information directly to their inboxes.
- **Video Content:** Platforms like YouTube provide opportunities to create informative and visually appealing videos that showcase the destination's Muslim-friendly features. Virtual tours of mosques, halal restaurants, and cultural attractions can resonate with the audience.
- **Print Publications:** For more traditional audiences, consider partnering with Muslim-focused magazines, newspapers, and travel publications. Print media can provide in-depth coverage and reach segments that might not be as active online.
- **Collaborative Partnerships:** Collaborate with Muslim organizations, travel agencies, and tour operators that cater to Muslim travelers. They can assist in promoting the destination through their networks and channels.
- **Cultural and Religious Events:** Promote the destination's participation in relevant cultural and religious events, both locally and internationally. Participation can create visibility and connections within the Muslim travel community.

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- **Multilingual Content:** Ensure that all content is available in relevant languages spoken by the target Muslim travelers. This demonstrates a commitment to accessibility and inclusivity.
- **User-Generated Content:** Encourage visitors to share their experiences through user-generated content. Reposting such content on official channels can strengthen the sense of community and authenticity.
- **Interactive Webinars and Q&A Sessions:** Host virtual webinars or Q&A sessions addressing questions and concerns of Muslim travelers. This interactive approach can establish direct communication and build trust.

In conclusion, the media selection for promoting Muslim-friendly tourism should align with the preferences and habits of the target audience. A multi-channel approach that combines digital platforms, authentic content, and partnerships can effectively capture the attention of Muslim travelers and position the destination as a welcoming and attractive option for their travel experiences.

CONCLUSIONS

The role of the West Sumatra Provincial Tourism Office in carrying out a Muslim-friendly tourism promotion communication strategy is as a stabilizer, facilitator, and pioneer. These three roles are carried out so that communication is running well. This will also be a factor in the success of promotional communications. The West Sumatra Province Tourism Office must consistently carry out these three roles so that implementing Muslim-friendly tourism in West Sumatra Province continues to run stable and facilitated. It can also increase domestic and foreign tourist visits, attracting revisits. The communication strategy for promoting Muslim-friendly tourism can be done with three strategies, namely:

- **Determining the target audience** by utilizing the services of celebrities, YouTubers, TikTok, Muslim influencers, and photographers to attract other tourists who do not know about Muslim-friendly tourist destinations in West Sumatra Province so that they are interested in visiting West Sumatra Province.
- **Designing messages** by utilizing design application technology through gadgets and designing messages using simple language and adjusting to trends to make it easier to understand the purpose of the message. The purpose of this simple language is not exaggerated and by the context that will be conveyed.
- **Selection of promotional media.** Media is a tool used by the West Sumatra Provincial Tourism Office and the Head of Tourism Marketing and Promotion to convey messages to tourists who need to learn about the Muslim-friendly tourist destinations in West Sumatra. The media used in disseminating Muslim-friendly tourism information in West Sumatra Province is through social media such as Instagram, Facebook, and Youtube, or the latest social media used by the public.

In conclusion, the West Sumatra Tourism Office plays a crucial role in the promotion of Muslim-friendly tourism through its adept implementation of a well-designed communication strategy. This study has illuminated several key takeaways:

- **Strategic Communication Impact:** The findings highlight how a thoughtful and targeted communication strategy significantly contributes to the success of promoting Muslim-friendly tourism. By emphasizing the availability of halal amenities, prayer facilities, and culturally sensitive accommodations, the West Sumatra Tourism Office effectively reaches its target audience and addresses their specific needs.

- Collaboration and Partnerships: The study underscores the importance of collaboration with local businesses, hospitality providers, and religious authorities. These partnerships not only lend credibility to the offerings but also enhance the overall experience for Muslim travelers. The Tourism Office's ability to foster these alliances demonstrates its commitment to providing authentic and meaningful services.
- Digital Platforms as Catalysts: Digital platforms, including social media and dedicated websites, emerge as powerful tools for disseminating information about Muslim-friendly offerings. The Tourism Office's utilization of these platforms showcases an understanding of contemporary communication trends and the global reach they afford. Tourist Insights: Insights gathered from both qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys shed light on tourists' perceptions, preferences, and challenges. This understanding can guide ongoing refinements of the communication strategy to ensure its relevance and effectiveness.
- Best Practices for Inclusive Tourism: The study serves as a blueprint for destinations seeking to tap into the Muslim travel market while championing inclusive tourism. By catering to the specific needs of Muslim travelers, the West Sumatra Tourism Office exemplifies how regions can adapt their communication strategies to create welcoming environments for diverse groups of visitors. In a rapidly evolving tourism landscape, the West Sumatra Tourism Office's approach stands as an exemplar of effective communication strategy implementation for promoting Muslim-friendly tourism. As other destinations grapple with similar challenges, the insights gained from this research can guide their efforts to cultivate inclusive and sustainable tourism practices. Ultimately, the role of the West Sumatra Tourism Office transcends mere promotion; it fosters cultural understanding, economic growth, and an enriched travel experience for all.

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