

Driving Regional Economic Growth through Tourism Marketing Innovation

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Abstract

The effective marketing of tourism products requires more than mere coordination—it demands strategic and sustained collaboration among stakeholders responsible for tourism development and those directly or indirectly engaged in tourism-related activities. The success of tourism marketing initiatives is strongly influenced by a unified understanding of the strategic role that tourism plays in driving regional economic growth. Prior to the implementation of any marketing strategy, a collective commitment is essential from all relevant parties, acknowledging tourism as a high-yield economic sector and a catalytic driver of regional development and local revenue generation. Recognizing this shared vision enables the formulation of more targeted, inclusive, and sustainable tourism marketing strategies that align with broader economic objectives.

Introduction

Tourism has increasingly become a strategic sector in national development, contributing significantly to foreign exchange earnings, equitable employment distribution, and the improvement of household income. Taxes derived from tourism-related activities represent a considerable portion of Regional Original Revenue (Pendapatan Asli Daerah or PAD), thereby stimulating efforts to expand regional tourism infrastructure. Consequently, tourism development is closely interlinked with advancements in other economic sectors, acting as a catalyst for comprehensive regional growth.

As development fundamentally entails the optimal utilization of resources to improve societal welfare, tourism development is regarded as a vital mechanism for accelerating regional economic performance. However, this process requires a systematic and time-bound approach. In the past five years, noteworthy progress has been achieved, despite existing limitations. These positive developments suggest that the sector is moving in the right direction. The concept of the Development Trilogy - comprising economic growth, political stability, and income equity - remains a fundamental pillar supporting cross-sectoral development (Henderson, 2015).

The construction of new tourist sites and supporting facilities remains imperative, particularly in regions where such infrastructure is underdeveloped. It must be

acknowledged that establishing new tourist destinations requires substantial investment and constitutes a long-term commitment. Despite not yielding immediate financial returns for PAD, the strategic value of tourism development is multifaceted and essential for district and municipal administrations. Key contributions of such infrastructure include:

1. Offering recreational, sports, and leisure spaces for public use.
2. Creating employment and entrepreneurial opportunities across tourism-related sectors such as trade, transport, entertainment, telecommunications, and services.
3. Supporting educational initiatives, research activities, and experiential learning such as outbound programs.
4. Fostering civic pride and regional identity.
5. Preserving and promoting regional art and culture through competitions and performances.
6. Enhancing long-term regional assets as sustainable PAD resources under the framework of regional autonomy.
7. Generating a growing source of PAD annually.
8. Providing tax revenue from tourism-related sectors, including hotel, restaurant, and entertainment taxes (Sutanto, 2017).

Since the implementation of regional autonomy on January 1, 2001, local governments have gained greater authority in managing and promoting tourism development. Within this

framework, the central government—through the Ministry of Tourism—assumes a facilitating role, primarily focused on national branding, while regional administrations (Level II Regions) are tasked with marketing and developing tourism products.

Law No. 32 of 2004 on Regional Government affirms the autonomy of Regency and City Governments, which now function under a decentralized system. According to this law, an Autonomous Region is defined as a legally recognized community with specific territorial boundaries and the authority to govern and administer public interests based on local aspirations within the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. Complementing this is Law No. 33 of 2004, which governs fiscal relations between central and local governments, granting regions full authority not only over tourism development planning but also in strategizing marketing and promotional initiatives previously managed by the central administration (Maulana, 2018).

Nevertheless, the decentralization of authority has revealed several readiness issues at the regional level, notably:

1. Limited availability of skilled human resources in tourism marketing, previously centralized under the Ministry of Tourism.
2. The absence of comprehensive guidelines outlining tourism development priorities for regions post-autonomy.
3. A lack of clearly defined and adaptable models for marketing and

promoting tourist destinations, especially within the context of global trade liberalization such as the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) implemented in 2003 (Nugroho, 2016).

To increase competitiveness and strategic value, the tourism sector must incorporate technology, knowledge, and information systems. Market analysis forms the foundation of such an approach, requiring accurate data interpretation and a deep understanding of consumer behavior. The Theory of Reasoned Action, originally proposed by Ajzen and Fishbein (revisited in 2013), remains relevant in this context. This model facilitates a comprehensive understanding of tourist decision-making behavior, including factors influencing visitation patterns, satisfaction, and advocacy.

Such insights are instrumental for local governments to formulate targeted strategies for improving tourism products, strengthening destination appeal, and enhancing the overall effectiveness of the marketing mix. Ultimately, the goal is to align tourism development initiatives with market demands, thereby boosting the sector's contribution to regional income generation and economic resilience.

Methodological Approach

This study employs an exploratory approach, combining qualitative inquiry, literature review, and empirical observations. The research process begins with a comprehensive examination of legal frameworks,

academic publications, and theoretical insights from recent literature (2013–2019) concerning the contribution of the tourism sector to Regional Original Revenue (Pendapatan Asli Daerah—PAD). Field observations were conducted to assess the current conditions of tourist destinations (DTW) at the regency and municipal levels. Additionally, semi-structured interviews with local government officials were carried out to gather insights into existing tourism marketing strategies that contribute to regional revenue streams.

Situational Analysis

1. Environmental Assessment

A fundamental step in strategic tourism marketing is environmental analysis, which enables stakeholders to identify prevailing trends and evaluate their implications for tourism destinations and associated enterprises. This diagnostic process aims to recognize both emerging opportunities and potential threats, thereby facilitating strategic anticipation.

Given the dynamic nature of the tourism environment, regular reassessments are essential. Strategic planning involves understanding how changes in the external environment affect an organization's internal capacities—its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT). The tourism ecosystem, being multifaceted and sensitive to shifts, necessitates its division into three analytic components:

- **Macro Environment:** Encompasses broader socio-political, economic, cultural, and demographic trends that are largely uncontrollable. These factors may either foster or hinder tourism development.
- **Competitive Environment:** Refers to the competitive dynamics among tourism operators vying for similar market segments. Tour package providers, often targeting the same visitor groups, must navigate rivalry that can intensify as market saturation increases.
- **Market Environment:** Constituted by actual and prospective visitors to a given DTW. Understanding visitor preferences, expectations, and behavioral tendencies forms the basis for market-driven tourism planning.

2. Resource Assessment

The resource analysis focuses on identifying and evaluating organizational assets and limitations that influence tourism development at the destination level. Key internal variables such as managerial capacity, financial support, infrastructure, and institutional readiness are assessed through inventory audits and capability mapping to determine strategic advantages or constraints.

Formulation of Regional Strategies

Both environmental and resource assessments provide the contextual groundwork necessary to define a destination's mission, vision, goals, and objectives. As external conditions evolve, periodic reassessment of these strategic elements ensures alignment with emerging realities.

Strategic planning allows tourism organizations to:

1. Prioritize strategic actions and avoid inefficiencies.
2. Develop coherent implementation plans.
3. Establish performance benchmarks for tourism-related enterprises.
4. Conduct systematic evaluations of operational outcomes.

Without clearly defined targets, organizational efforts become directionless, analogous to a vessel adrift without a navigational point. Therefore, the strategic roadmap begins with the formulation of the mission.

1. Mission Statement Development

A mission statement articulates the tourism sector's purpose, its contribution to the regional economy, and the values underpinning its operations. Effective mission statements:

- Reflect historical experience and socio-cultural characteristics of the region.
- Represent the aspirations and preferences of the majority of local stakeholders.
- Emphasize competitive advantages—such as unique cultural assets or ecological diversity—that differentiate the region from others.

A strong mission supports alignment between tourism development and community identity while garnering support from local authorities and the public. It should encompass:

- Visitor needs and expectations fulfilled through tourism services.
- The prospective economic impact of tourism expansion on the region.

2. Vision Formulation

A vision articulates a desired future state for the DTW, responding to questions like: *“Where do we want this destination to be in five or ten years?”* and *“What will the destination look like when we succeed?”* The vision embodies ambition and serves as a motivational reference point.

Vision development becomes particularly critical when:

- Substantial shifts occur in governance (e.g., regional autonomy).
- Opportunities for tourism development expand significantly.
- Stakeholders demand improved service quality and infrastructure.
- Competitive pressure from other destinations intensifies.

Benefits of a well-articulated vision include:

- Clarifying long-term goals and targets.
- Providing structure and motivational value for employees.
- Guiding prioritization in operational planning.
- Reinforcing vision development with ongoing SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats).

3. Goal Setting

Goals translate the mission into actionable strategic directions. Unlike a mission, which outlines purpose, goals offer quantifiable targets to guide execution and performance evaluation. For DTWs, goals fulfill both developmental and marketing functions.

• **Developmental Goals (Corporate Goals):** These address regional economic aspirations and commonly include metrics such as:

1. Investment growth in the tourism sector.
2. Expansion of business opportunities.
3. Increase in tax-based revenues.
4. Rise in per capita income.
5. Enhancement of local revenue (PAD).
6. Foreign exchange earnings from international tourism.

• **Marketing Goals:** These relate to demand generation and visitor attraction, including:

1. Projected growth in tourist arrivals.
2. Expansion of market share in targeted segments.
3. Strategic entry into new source markets.

The goals must remain adaptable and responsive to changing circumstances, reflecting both short-term objectives and long-term development aspirations.

4. Objective Specification

Objectives are specific, measurable targets aligned with broader goals. They

are time-bound, performance-oriented, and serve as key reference points for evaluation. Effective objectives are realistic and grounded in the current capacity of the destination.

Formulation of DTW-Level Strategic Plans

1. Analysis of Tourism Business Units

To evaluate investment potential, DTWs can utilize strategic portfolio matrices:

- **Boston Consulting Group (BCG) Matrix:** Positions tourism products based on market participation and growth prospects.
- **General Electric (GE) Matrix:** Assesses products based on industry attractiveness and business strength.

These tools aid in prioritizing tourism sub-sectors and product clusters for targeted investment.

2. Regional Growth Strategies

Following the identification of tourism clusters and investment conditions, the destination must determine whether to expand existing attractions or develop entirely new ones. This leads to four strategic alternatives:

1. Invest in existing products in growing markets.
2. Innovate new products for emerging markets.
3. Diversify attractions to reduce dependency on saturated segments.
4. Withdraw from underperforming or unsustainable segments.

These strategies must be tailored to each destination's unique resources,

environmental dynamics, and long-term objectives.

	<i>Existing Product New Product</i>	
<i>Existing Market</i>	<i>Market Penetration</i>	<i>Product Development</i>
	<i>Market Development</i>	<i>Diversification</i>

Figure 1

Regional Growth Strategy

Market Expansion Assumptions and Strategic Matrix

It is generally assumed that a tourist destination aims to broaden its market reach to attract a greater number of visitors, extend their stay, and increase their expenditure. This pursuit essentially seeks to enhance the destination's market share through the promotion of existing tourism offerings. A market penetration strategy is employed when a destination aims to increase its market share with current products, but its success is contingent upon the market not being saturated (Smith et al., 2013).

In contrast, the introduction of new products caters to both existing and untapped markets. Product diversification, on the other hand, is implemented solely to address the demands of newly emerging markets. A strategic matrix serves as a valuable tool for tourism organizations at the destination level (DTW) to formulate policy measures in a more systematic and data-driven manner (Brown & Thomas, 2014).

3. Target Marketing Strategy

a. Market Definition and Analysis
Understanding and delineating the

market entails identifying which tourist segments exhibit the most interest in the current tourism offerings available at a DTW (Miller & Garcia, 2015).

b. Target Market Selection This process involves two key actions:

1. Identifying suitable market segments for existing products and guiding industry stakeholders to adapt services, facilities, and experiences according to the needs and preferences of those market segments.
2. Selecting priority target markets that are most likely to visit the DTW.

4. Regional Positioning Strategy

Positioning is a strategic effort to embed the DTW within the public consciousness. Although multiple destinations may offer similar attractions, each can be perceived differently by tourists due to effective positioning. This strategy, as a component of the marketing mix, is designed to emphasize the distinctive features, advantages, and emotional appeal of a specific DTW, ensuring it remains memorable to visitors (Lee, 2016).

Steps to effective destination positioning include: a. Forecasting the

desired perception among target markets. b. Designing strategic plans to achieve this perception and fostering

collaboration among tourism industry stakeholders. c. Executing the plan using an integrated marketing mix:

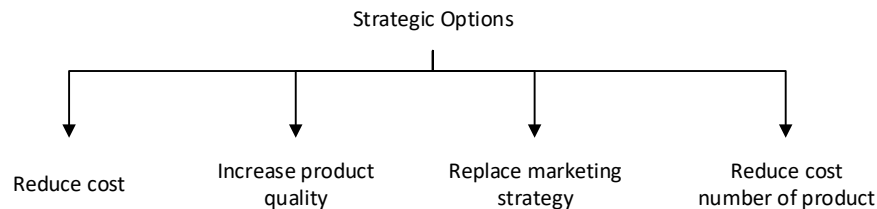


Figure 2
Strategic Options

Product Strategy

When a tourism product exhibits limitations, several strategic options can be considered:

- a) Reduce maintenance and development costs to compete with comparable offerings.
- b) Enhance quality in line with tourist expectations, even if it involves relatively higher pricing.
- c) Realign marketing approaches, including re-segmenting the market, adjusting pricing models, revising distribution channels, and intensifying public relations.
- d) Streamline offerings by retaining high-performing products and temporarily discontinuing underperforming ones for revision.

Pricing Strategy

Pricing is a pivotal and often sensitive element of the marketing mix. It encompasses various components such as transport, accommodation, local tours, and souvenirs. These elements

collectively shape tourists' perception of value. Therefore, collaboration among local tourism agencies, hotel associations (e.g., PHRI), travel agent associations (e.g., ASITA), and regulatory bodies is essential to determine competitive pricing benchmarks through comparative analysis (Chen & Wang, 2017).

Distribution (Place) Strategy

Distribution oversight is critical to ensuring accessibility and avoiding confusion among tourists. Three main distribution structures are observed: a) **Consensus-based Channels:** All stakeholders collaborate equally, with no single entity dominating. This is prevalent in the U.S. (Taylor, 2014). b) **Vertically Coordinated Channels:** A lead tour operator manages contracts with agents, resembling franchising. c) **Vertically Integrated Channels:** A single company owns and operates both production and distribution, often evolved from retail travel agents. Key considerations here include:

- a. **Market Coverage:** Ensuring access to diverse segments and securing market representation.

- b. **Image:** Preserving brand image through reliable intermediaries.
- c. **Motivation:** Recognizing the varying incentives across channel partners.

Promotional Strategy

Developing a regional promotional campaign involves: a. Identifying the target market to tailor media, messaging, and timing. b. Evaluating the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of promotional efforts. c. Designing an appropriate marketing mix. d. Creating impactful advertisements, including visuals, language, and compelling copywriting. e. Planning sales promotion activities. f. Preparing promotional materials such as brochures and handouts. g. Organizing familiarization trips for tour operators and travel writers. h. Assigning a dedicated public relations officer to maintain the DTW's reputation and counter negative publicity.

Effective promotional execution requires coordination, thematic consistency, authenticity, and integration into broader marketing initiatives (Gomez et al., 2019).

Regional Organizational Design

According to Craven and Lamb (2013), a robust organizational framework must:

1. Align with strategic marketing plans.
2. Coordinate all activities to ensure cohesive implementation.
3. Establish clear accountability for outcomes.
4. Be flexible and responsive to external changes.

Peters and Waterman (2015) emphasized the importance of seven interrelated elements: strategy, structure, system, style, staff, skills, and shared values. While the first three represent organizational hardware, the latter four are software components crucial to effective management.

Management Support Systems

Kotler (2016) identified three essential systems for supporting marketing strategies:

1. **Regional Information System:** Encompasses internal reporting, marketing intelligence, market research, and analytical tools to support tourism planning and decision-making.
2. **Regional Planning System:** Establishing a Regional Tourism Development Master Plan (RIPPDA) is crucial, especially in areas without one, to provide direction for long-term tourism growth.
3. **Regional Evaluation System:** Implementation requires continuous assessment, identifying gaps, and correcting deviations. A marketing audit is recommended as a periodic tool for performance evaluation.

Conclusion

The ultimate objective of tourism marketing strategies is to empower regional tourism actors to thrive in a constantly evolving environment. Regional tourism bodies must be forward-looking, supported by capable personnel, and equipped with well-structured systems. Key drivers for developing robust tourism organizations include:

1. Dispersed tourist traffic from traditional hubs, causing inefficiencies that necessitate centralized coordination.
2. The strategic role of tourism as a catalyst for regional economic development and PAD generation.
3. Increasing travel volumes driven by improved welfare and longer holidays, requiring enhanced service provision for tourists.

These factors underline the necessity for a comprehensive and dynamic tourism management framework at the regional level.

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