

Revitalizing Indonesian Tourism: Insights from Gunungkidul Regency's Communication Strategy

Revitalisasi Pariwisata Indonesia: Wawasan Strategi Komunikasi Kabupaten Gunungkidul

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Abstract

Tourism is a crucial part of Indonesia's economy, thanks to the country's natural beauty and attractions. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has presented significant challenges to the sector, requiring innovative strategies to revive it. This study examines the communication strategy of the Gunungkidul Regency Tourism Office, focusing on how it navigates the complexities of the new normal era. The study uses a qualitative descriptive approach and centers on the Gunungkidul Regency Tourism Office. Data was gathered through observation and documentation of tourist sites and interviews with tourism officials, site management personnel, and tourists from June to July 2021. The study found that the Gunungkidul Regency Tourism Office diligently adopted key communication strategy phases, including audience profiling, message formulation, method selection, and media choice. They also provided fundamental components of tourism development, such as attraction, accessibility, amenities, and ancillary, to cater to tourist demands. The strategy emphasizes effective communication to engage diverse stakeholders, using audience segmentation and engagement and multimedia platforms to ensure maximal outreach and resonance. The findings highlight the importance of crisis communication best practices, audience

segmentation, and evaluating tourism community resilience, which are essential for crafting a resilient and sustainable tourism ecosystem.

Keywords: *strategic communication, tourism recovery, tourism, tourist, tourism office*

Abstrak

Pariwisata merupakan bagian penting dari perekonomian Indonesia, berkat keindahan alam dan atraksi yang dimiliki negara ini. Namun, pandemi COVID-19 telah menghadirkan tantangan besar pada sektor ini sehingga memerlukan strategi inovatif untuk menghidupkannya kembali. Penelitian ini mengkaji strategi komunikasi Dinas Pariwisata Kabupaten Gunungkidul dengan fokus pada bagaimana menavigasi kompleksitas era new normal. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dan berpusat pada Dinas Pariwisata Kabupaten Gunungkidul. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi dan dokumentasi lokasi wisata, serta wawancara dengan pejabat pariwisata, personel pengelola lokasi, dan wisatawan pada bulan Juni hingga Juli 2021. Studi ini menemukan bahwa Dinas Pariwisata Kabupaten Gunungkidul dengan tekun menerapkan tahapan strategi komunikasi utama, termasuk pembuatan profil audiens, perumusan pesan, pemilihan metode, dan pemilihan media. Mereka juga menyediakan komponen dasar pengembangan pariwisata, seperti daya tarik, aksesibilitas, fasilitas, dan tambahan, untuk memenuhi permintaan wisatawan. Strategi ini menekankan komunikasi yang efektif untuk melibatkan beragam pemangku kepentingan, menggunakan segmentasi dan keterlibatan audiens, serta platform multimedia, untuk memastikan jangkauan dan resonansi yang maksimal. Temuan ini menyoroti pentingnya praktik terbaik dari komunikasi krisis, segmentasi audiens, dan evaluasi ketahanan komunitas pariwisata, yang penting untuk menciptakan ekosistem pariwisata yang tangguh dan berkelanjutan.

Kata Kunci: kantor pariwisata, komunikasi strategis, pemulihan pariwisata, pariwisata, turis

Introduction

Tourism is one source of foreign exchange earnings that has the potential to help build a country's economy. Indonesia is known as a country that has abundant natural wealth and beauty. 2019, the Indonesian tourism sector generated up to IDR 280 trillion in foreign exchange (Kontan Nasional, 2019). The current development of the tourism sector is rapid and can continue to be improved; the development of the tourism sector that is managed appropriately and adequately will attract domestic and foreign tourists to visit for vacation. The increasing number of tourists visiting will positively impact the surrounding community economically, socially, and culturally. Therefore, tourism is the most critical sector that supports a region's economy (Salim et al., 2022).

One of the five regencies in the Special Region of Yogyakarta Province is Gunungkidul. The regency is located at the southeastern tip of the center of Yogyakarta City. It is bordered by Sleman and Bantul regencies in the west, Klaten Regency in the north, Wonogiri Regency in the east, and the Indian Ocean in the south. It has an area of about $\pm 1.485,36$ km². Geographically, the area consists of hilly plateaus. Gunungkidul Regency has various tourism potentials, ranging from nature tourism, such as beaches, caves, hills, waterfalls, and mountains, to artificial, cultural, and religious tourism. Tourist destinations in Gunungkidul are well known by the public, not only the people of Yogyakarta but also all Indonesian people (Dinas Pariwisata Kabupaten Gunungkidul, 2021).

In the past, Gunungkidul was an impoverished and arid area. However, after its Regency Government (Pemkab), through the Gunungkidul Regency Tourism Office, showed its seriousness in managing and developing the existing tourism potential, Gunungkidul was able to compete with other tourism areas in Indonesia. Until 2017, Gunungkidul's locally generated revenue (PAD) reached IDR 30 billion and became a promising regional revenue source. 2019, the Gunungkidul Regency Tourism Office strengthened professional tourism management by issuing the Gunungkidul Regency Tourism Development Policy Direction, grounded on UU No. 10 of 2009. The direction is achieved through the Four Pillars of Tourism: Development of the Tourism Industry, Development of Tourism Destinations, Development of Tourism Marketing, and Development of Tourism Institutions. The Tourism Office also applied the concept of Community-Based Tourism to increase the competitiveness of tourism sites in Gunungkidul Regency (Dinas Pariwisata Kabupaten Gunungkidul, 2021).

Unfortunately, the tourism sector is most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, which still engulfs the world. As the Indonesian tourism sector is experiencing a significant decline, President Joko Widodo aims for it to survive and thrive. At a closed cabinet meeting, the President asked the Ministry of Tourism Industry and Creative Economy (Kemenparekraf) to prepare a new concept for the latest average era (Media Indonesia, 2020; Kristanti & Marta, 2021).

The term 'New Normal' is the invocation of adaptation by exercising a set of health protocols so that they become habits when doing daily activities during the COVID-19 pandemic (Safitra et al., 2022; Salim et al., 2023). The ministry is preparing to reopen the tourism sector in Indonesia by issuing the CHS (Cleanliness, Health, and Safety) program and the Safety Traveling campaign. This program is a strategy to promote tourism in Indonesia. It can also be used as a reference for tourism stakeholders so tourists feel comfortable and safe without ignoring the danger of COVID-19 (Angreani et al., 2021).

Tourist destinations in Gunungkidul Regency, magnets for local and foreign tourists, closed at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic following the 'patient zero' found in Indonesia. As the government prepares to reopen the tourism sector in the new normal era, the Gunungkidul Regency Tourism Office carried out socialization, simulation, and the Trial phase of tourism opening with the new normal Standard Operational Procedure (SOP) (Ismail et al., 2022). Some actions that need to be considered by the tourism stakeholders are applying *Sapta Pesona Wisata*, limiting the number of tourists visiting simultaneously, and implementing

health protocols, such as wearing masks, instigating physical distancing, and providing handwashing infrastructures around tourist attractions (Goma et al., 2022).

The proceedings of Indonesia's tourism during the COVID-19 pandemic became more evident when tourism branding became a more critical tourism industry sector. Transforming a particular tourist destination will turn around Indonesia's tourism development as it will construct new brands for tourists (Lang et al., 2020). The constructed brand will be spread among different kinds of tourists, facilitated through social media. Digital content is easier to access, which makes the spread of anything related to trends faster and reachable for multiple variations of audiences (Septiarysa et al., 2021).

These preventions became more critical as the number of tourists visiting Gunungkidul significantly declined. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the number reached 3,680,803 tourists. Meanwhile, when the COVID-19 pandemic occurred, and the new normal era occurred in the rest of 2020, there were only 1,981,599 tourists (Dinas et al., 2021). For this reason, the government of Indonesia, especially the ones in the tourism sector, attempts to improve its tourism attractiveness by improving its brands and promotions across the digital sector. Undeniably, digitalization has made people of different nations feel more connected within their social media circles (Harry et al., 2021). To increase the plummeting number, careful program planning is also needed. The development program shall not only be concerned with budget and infrastructure issues but also with communication. To achieve this goal, the Gunungkidul Regency Tourism Office must choose and prepare the right communication strategy for tourism.

Social media has been prominent in spreading multiple kinds of information to their users. This makes them one of the most influential media for distributing all messages to the audience (Tjajadi et al., 2021). No matter what messages anyone wants to send, they guarantee at least a small exposure to other users on their social media. Social media allows many instances to implement their communication strategy to push their brand image or increase their sales quantity (Latukolan et al., 2021). The same applies to the tourism industry, which requires tremendous exposure for the audience to perceive a specific destination (Pertiwi et al., 2023). This further explains the urgency of communication strategy implementation in the digital sector, as it will create a new perspective for audiences at the constructed tourism destination (Gandakusumah & Marta, 2021).

Previous research referred to the journal (Listyawati & Akbar, 2016) regarding Kutai National Park, which used a promotional mix strategy consisting of advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, direct marketing, word of mouth, publicity, and public relations. Although several aspects could have been more effective, the implementation went well. It can be seen from the increase in visitors in the following years. The second research refers to the journal (Mellisa, 2018) regarding the Department of Tourism, Youth and Sports of Indragiri Hilir Regency, which divides it into four strategies. (1) Communicator Strategy involves placing communicators with credibility and knowledge about Solop Beach. (2) Audience Strategy divides audiences into primary and secondary groups. (3) Message Strategy involves designing, emphasizing, and organizing messages. (4) Media

Strategy involves choosing suitable print, electronic, and online media. The third research refers to the journal (Tunggala & Saadjad, 2019) discussing the strategy carried out by the Banggai Regency Culture and Tourism Office. This strategy involves leveraging the power of the media for promotions, such as print, electronic, and online media. However, this approach is considered less innovative, and the messages conveyed to the public are deemed less effective.

Methods

This study employs a qualitative, descriptive research design to comprehensively elucidate the communication strategy deployed by the Gunungkidul Regency Tourism Office to enhance tourist influx within the new normal era. The qualitative approach is chosen due to the inherent nature of the data, which encompasses intricate linguistic constructs, symbols, and visual representations, making it conducive for nuanced exploration (Angreani, Tandranegara, et al., 2021). The aim is to offer a rich and contextual understanding of the communication strategy's nuances and outcomes, aligning with the study's exploratory objectives (Kurniawati et al., 2021).

Primary and secondary data are meticulously collated to ensure a comprehensive investigation. Primary data is sourced through in-depth interviews and keen observations from April to July 2021. The Gunungkidul Regency Tourism Office is the primary source, while tourists and destination managers contribute as secondary sources. The informants included Supriyanta, S.Sos, MM, Head of Subdivision of Planning; Yohanes Nanang Putranto, S.SiT., Head of Tourism Facilities Division; Muslim Winarno, Chairman of the Kalisuci Pokdarwis and Pacarejo Tourism Village; Suwarji, Chairman of the Baron Indah Pokdarwis; Windi Septi Anindi, Tourist; and Cindy Desiyani, Tourist. Concurrently, secondary data are sourced from official reports, digital platforms, and scholarly literature. An immersive on-site observation approach involves visits to various tourist destinations within Gunungkidul, enabling a firsthand grasp of pertinent factors amid the new normal era (Fernando et al., 2020).

A systematic three-stage approach is employed for data analysis, encompassing data reduction, presentation, and conclusion. The data reduction phase involves categorizing and condensing the voluminous dataset to extract salient themes and patterns. Subsequently, the data are methodically presented, enabling a coherent narrative that aligns with the research objectives. The conclusion stage involves synthesizing findings, allowing for comprehensive insights into the nuances of the communication strategy's implementation and impact. To ensure robustness and credibility, data validation is executed using triangulation techniques. This involves a strategic confluence of various data collection methods and pre-existing data sources, facilitating a holistic validation process that enhances the authenticity and reliability of the study's outcomes.

Results and Discussion

The communication strategy is a highly effective plan for conveying a message to someone. It helps the person understand and accept what is being expressed, which can ultimately change their attitude or behavior (Effendy, 2017). A communication strategy includes all communication components, such as the communicator, messages, communicators, media, and effects. These components are appropriately designed to achieve communication goals and the best results (Cangara, 2017).

Communication Strategy

A communication strategy combines all components ranging from communicators, messages, communicants, and media to the effects designed fittingly to achieve the communication goals with maximum results. Furthermore, the function of a communication strategy can be felt during its implementation phase (Samiaji et al., 2022). The implementation of communication strategies and their development must be managed thoughtfully and supervised closely to increase the number of tourists. When implemented accordingly, the communication strategy can make tourism the highest regional revenue for the Gunungkidul Regency Government. A study by Chinmi (2020) supports the implementation of communication strategy, as it allows organization or individual to construct their interactivity and positivity toward different audiences, especially in the digital sector.

Tourism deals with many stakeholders. Communication thus plays a crucial role in conveying messages or information to them. As the Gunungkidul Regency Tourism Office is reopening the tourism sector in the new normal era, it must design communication strategies. However, the strategy must also adhere to the SOPs of health protocol that the government has set to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in tourist destinations. Gunungkidul Regency Tourism Office takes four steps in designing its communication strategy.

To get good results according to the communication strategy, a common interest embedded in the messages, methods, and media must be created with the audience in mind (Knowing the Audience). Knowing the audience means understanding the audience's mindset and recognizing what the audience wants to make the same goal. The segmentation of the audience from the communication strategy of the Tourism Office of Gunungkidul Regency starts with children, teenagers, adults, and even older people, ranging from 50 to 60 years old. However, the targets aimed by the Tourism Office are tourism managers, entrepreneurs, travel agencies, tourists, and the public. To know its audience, the Gunungkidul Regency Tourism Office holds a Communication Forum (Forkom) to discuss with stakeholders, especially Pokdarwis. The office knows what the tourists want through a Community Satisfaction Index (IKM) survey. Scheduled every six months, the office receives various criticisms and suggestions via email, WhatsApp, and phone calls.

A communication strategy is a highly effective plan to convey a message. The strategy makes it easier for the audience to understand and accept what has been conveyed by the communicator. It can, thus, change a person's attitude or behavior (Marta et al., 2021). The purpose of communication strategy is (1) to inform the primary information of an entire message, (2) to motivate the audience regarding the content of the idea conveyed, (3) to educate through the message delivered, (4) to disseminate information to the public regarding the message to be conveyed; and (5) to make the audience support decisions from a series of delivery processes of the message it has received.

A communication strategy has four steps (Yuliana & Pribadi, 2022). The first is knowing the audience. It is essential to understand how the audience thinks and what they want to choose and prepare the most suitable strategy. The second is composing the message. The message influencing the audience must be well and precisely arranged to achieve the desired goal. It must also be adapted from economic, social, and cultural perspectives to the audience. An optimal marketing communication strategy will allow the organization to improve its image through the audience, boost product or service sales, and build a positive brand image for their benefit and the consumers (Vincent & Pribadi, 2021). The third is determining the Method.

The message influencing the audience must be appropriately structured and precise to achieve the desired goal (Messages Compose). Gunungkidul Regency Tourism Office involves stakeholders in compiling messages. Messages are compiled together so that all parties involved can reach an agreement. The messages compiled in the design of communication strategies in the new normal era are closely related to health protocol SOPs and safety traveling campaigns. Gunungkidul Regency Tourism Office implements health protocols in all destinations in Gunungkidul to spread COVID-19. Gunungkidul Regency Tourism Office is trying to adjust to new normal conditions and meet the needs of health protocols so that audiences can be moved to carry out activities following the goals and objectives that have been formulated.

Several delivery methods can be used in communication strategies: redundancy, canalizing, informative, persuasive, educative, and coercive. A repeated message will attract more attention and be easier for the audience to remember. For a message to be impactful, it must be relatable to the values and standards of the audience. It can later be gradually adjusted toward the desired direction. A message must be delivered informatively and supported by facts, data, or common sense, such as research findings, news, or statements. The audience will be easily exposed to suggestions in the conveyed message and will change their thoughts, feelings, and behavior accordingly. A vital message can be expressed as rules, orders, and intimidation. The fourth is choosing the media. Media plays a significant role in ensuring a message reaches the audience. They also determine whether or not it must be adjusted to suit the audience better (Marta et al., 2022).

The Method of delivering the right message will make it easier to influence the audience (Setting Method). Message delivery methods used in communication strategies are: 1) Redundancy is the Method of influencing the audience by repeating a message (Harry et al., 2022). Messages repeatedly delivered by the

Gunungkidul Regency Tourism Office were related to health protocol SOPs by re-uploading posts on social media. 2) Canalizing is the Method of influencing the audience by understanding and researching so the message can be accepted. The Community Satisfaction Index survey results conducted by the Gunungkidul Regency Tourism Office were used as evaluation materials to improve and routinely check or monitor the availability and application of health protocols in all Gunungkidul tourist destinations. 3) Informative is the Method of influencing the audience by conveying facts and data that are true and not made up, such as messages in the form of statements, information, and news. Gunungkidul Regency Tourism Office always informs the retribution tariffs, attractions in tourism destinations, their opening and closing, and their health protocols. 4) Persuasion is the method of influencing the audience through persuasion. The persuasion approach by the Gunungkidul Regency Tourism Office is conducted indirectly. For the audience to be interested and desire to visit Gunungkidul, the office posts pictures or videos of tourist attractions in Gunungkidul and activities held in the regency while practicing health protocols. 5) Educational is the Method of influencing the audience by giving a general statement based on facts, experiences, or opinions that can be justified regularly, intentionally, and deliberately. Gunungkidul Regency Tourism Office conducts coaching and training for tourism managers and educates the audience to practice health protocols. 6) Coercive is the method of influencing the audience by coercion without allowing them to think and accept the conveyed ideas. Gunungkidul Regency Tourism Office forces the public to obey health protocols to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in tourism destinations.

Media selection determines whether a message reaches the audience (Selecting Media). The choice of media must be tailored to the audience, message, and communication strategy. Depending on the objectives, a single or combination of several media can be selected. The Gunungkidul Regency Tourism Office disseminates information through various media and social platforms, including websites, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Email, and WhatsApp groups. Additionally, it utilizes print media such as newspapers, pamphlets, banners, brochures, and booklets and electronic media like local and national radio and TV stations.

Tourism

According to UU No. 10 of 2009, tourism is a trip made by a person or group by visiting certain places for vacation, self-development, or observation of the destination or attractions. Tourism is a trip an individual or group plans from one tourist place to another to get pleasure and satisfaction (Masyhari et al., 2018). There are essential components in tourism development that must be considered, called the 4A components. The first is attraction, which refers to something that becomes an attraction for someone to visit a particular tourist destination. Tourism attractions can be pristine or artificial beauty and cultural diversity of the surrounding community. The development of a tourist destination must comprise “what to see,” “what to do,” and “what to buy.”

The second is accessibility, which refers to the convenience of tourists getting to a destination. It includes easy access to transportation and information for tourists to arrive at their desired destination, such as directional signs and traversable main and alternative routes. The third is an amenity, which refers to all supporting facilities located around tourist destinations and tailored to meet the needs and comfort of the tourists. It can be a part of an accommodation, such as restaurants and entertainment venues, or public places, such as places of worship, shopping, and parking lots. The fourth is ancillary, which refers to tourism organizations facilitating and encouraging the development and marketing of a tourist destination provided by the local government.

As a tourist area, destinations in Gunungkidul are the main tourist attractions for vacation. Gunungkidul Regency has various tourism potentials, including natural, artificial, cultural, and religious tourism. Four components are used for the analysis of tourism development in the regency. Tourist attractions are the reasons that tourists come to Gunungkidul. The regency's tourist attractions range from natural, artificial, cultural, and religious tourism to local, national, artistic, and cultural events to the life of the local people. A few are Baron Beach, Watukodok Beach, Gesing Beach, Pindul Cave, Kalisuci Cave, Jonge Lake, Pacarejo Tourism Village, Nglangeran Ancient Volcano, and Sewu Mountains. Accessibility is how tourists reach tourist destinations. One of the accessibility requirements is providing easy access to information for tourists to find their destinations. There are several ways to Gunungkidul, such as via Wonosari Street and the Southern Route (JJLS). The main road to Gunungkidul has been smoothly paved. There are also street signs directing to tourism destinations along the route. Amenities are supporting facilities located around tourist destinations and can be used to meet the needs of tourists when traveling. Accommodations near Gunungkidul tourist destinations to support tourist comfort are complete, starting from the availability of lodging, restaurants, places of worship, bathrooms, pavilions, and a large parking area. Ancillary, or additional services, refers to tourism organizations that encourage the development and marketing of a tourist destination provided by the local government. The government offers additional tourism services in Gunungkidul, such as the availability of electricity, water flow, cellular or internet networks, Tourist Information Centers, tour guides, first aid service, Puskesmas (Mobile Puskesmas), and even SAR SATLINMAS.

Tourist

Tourists have various goals, interests, preferences, and expectations. They also come from diverse social, cultural, and financial backgrounds. The World Tourism Organization (WTO) defines a tourist as every person who resides in a country, regardless of nationality, visiting a place in the same country or region for more than 24 hours (Menayang & Marta, 2020). Asy'ari (2021) states that tourists are divided into two groups. The first is domestic tourists, referring to those traveling outside their residence, but both areas are in the same country. The second is foreign tourists, referring to those traveling from one country to another outside their country of residence.

People visiting Gunungkidul are local tourists from Yogyakarta, domestic tourists from other provinces in Indonesia, and foreign tourists from abroad. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the recent number of tourists visiting Gunungkidul has been significantly declining, especially the number of foreign tourists. Before the pandemic hit, the number of domestic tourists was 3,661,612 people, while the number of foreign tourists was 19,191 in 2019. However, entering the new normal era, the total number of tourists in 2020 was only 1,981,599, consisting of 1,978,146 domestic and 3,453 foreign tourists. Similarly, the total number of tourists until July 2021 was 1,287,927, consisting of 1,287,919 domestic and eight foreign tourists. The complete number of tourists can be seen in the following table.

Table 1. Tourists in Gunungkidul

Year	Local Tourist	Foreign Tourist	Total
2016	2.989.006	3.891	2.992.897
2017	3.236.931	21.082	3.258.013
2018	3.032.525	22.759	3.055.284
2019	3.661.612	19.191	3.680.803
2020	1.978.146	3.453	1.981.599
January- June 2021	1.287.919	8	1.287.927

Source. Gunungkidul Regency Tourism Office

The communication strategy prepared by the Gunungkidul Regency Tourism Office to reopen tourism in the new normal era starts with the SOP preparation stage, socialization activities for tourism managers, simulations of implementing health protocols for tourist objects, and trial opening tours involving tourists. The communication strategy in the new normal era by the Gunungkidul Regency Tourism Office begins with getting to know the audience.

The first step is to know the audience and segmentation from the Gunungkidul Regency Tourism Office's communication strategy, starting with children, adolescents, adults, and even the elderly aged 5-60 years. The targets are tourism managers, business actors, tourists, travel agents, and the public. The Gunungkidul Regency Tourism Office can get to know the audience by holding a Communication Forum (Forkom) activity with tourism managers. Meanwhile, to find out what tourists want, the Gunungkidul Regency Tourism Office conducts a Community Satisfaction Index (IKM) survey, which is carried out every six months and also receives various criticisms and suggestions.

The second step is compiling messages. The Gunungkidul Regency Tourism Office composes messages together by involving stakeholders. The messages compiled are closely related to health protocol SOPs and campaigns to introduce safety traveling to the public. For the audience, especially tourists, to be motivated to implement the health protocol, the Gunungkidul Regency Tourism Office and tour managers complete existing facilities at tourist objects, oversee the implementation path, urge the public to implement health protocols while in tourist areas, and remind each other.

The Gunungkidul Regency Tourism Office employs several effective methods to influence audiences. These methods include redundancy, canalizing, information, persuasion, education, and coercion. Redundancy involves repeating messages, such as posting on social media about health protocol SOPs. Canalizing involves understanding and researching, which is done through a Community Satisfaction Index survey to evaluate and improve future efforts. The office also ensures the availability and implementation of health protocols in all tourist destinations, provides informative public updates on user charges, tourist attractions, and operating hours, and uses creative persuasion tactics by posting captivating pictures and videos related to tourist attractions, inspiring potential visitors. In terms of education, the office conducts coaching and training for tourism managers and educates audiences on implementing health protocols. Lastly, the office enforces compliance with health protocols to prevent COVID-19 in tourist destinations as a coercive measure.

The final step is choosing media. The Gunungkidul Regency Tourism Office utilizes social media such as Websites, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Email, and WhatsApp groups. Print media through newspapers, pamphlets, banners, brochures, and booklets, while electronic media cooperates with local and national radio and TV stations. In addition, the Gunungkidul Regency Tourism Office conveys information directly and utilizes information channels through the government or agencies.

The development of tourism is made up of various components, including attraction, accessibility, amenities, and ancillary services. Gunungkidul offers a wide range of tourist attractions, such as natural, artificial, cultural, and religious sites, as well as insights into the local community's way of life. To reach Gunungkidul, travelers can take several routes, including Jalan Wonosari and Jalan Lintas Selatan (JJLS), both of which are well-paved and feature clear signs to tourist attractions. Additionally, there are various accommodations in Gunungkidul, providing lodging, dining options, places of worship, and restroom facilities at many tourist sites to ensure visitors' comfort. The government has also implemented several services to support tourism in Gunungkidul, including access to electricity, running water, cellular and internet networks, Tourist Information Centers, tour guides, healthcare facilities, and SATLINMAS SAR.

In implementing the communication strategy in the new normal era, the Gunungkidul Regency Tourism Office has taken steps following the communication strategy. However, the Gunungkidul Regency Tourism Office has yet to obtain maximum results. The message the Gunungkidul Regency Tourism Office wants to convey is clear: safety traveling. However, from the point of view of implementation in the field, it needs to be consistent. Then, because of the Java-Bali PPKM decision, tourism in Gunungkidul was closed, and tourism activities were stopped. So, in terms of an increase in the number of tourists, the number of tourists has remained the same from before the pandemic to after entering the new normal era. Currently, the Gunungkidul Regency Tourism Office is still executing the communication strategy designed so that it can resume tourism activities and be carried out following the goals that have been set.

Conclusion

In this study, we have conducted a thorough analysis of the communication strategy employed by the Gunungkidul Regency Tourism Office to revive the tourism sector in the face of the challenges brought about by the new normal era. Our investigation has highlighted the critical role of effective communication in engaging diverse stakeholders within the dynamic realm of tourism. The Gunungkidul Regency Tourism Office, recognizing the importance of this aspect, has meticulously formulated a multi-faceted strategy supported by a sequence of strategic phases. The success of the communication strategy centers around recognizing the audience as a cornerstone. The office has segmented the audience from children to older people to cater to the diverse demographics that converge upon Gunungkidul. This discernment of audience preferences has been augmented through initiatives such as the Communication Forum (Forkom) and the Community Satisfaction Index (IKM) survey, facilitating a nuanced understanding of tourist inclinations and aspirations.

The alignment of impactful messaging with health protocol SOPs and safety-oriented travel campaigns emerges as another linchpin within this strategy. The concordance between message content and the evolving difficulties of the new normal era underscores the Office's proactive stance in safeguarding the well-being of visitors and local communities. The diversity of methods deployed to influence the audience further underscores the ingenuity of the communication strategy. From redundancy to canalizing, informativeness to persuasion, education to coercion, the array of techniques bespeaks a comprehensive approach to resonating with distinct audience inclinations. Adopting these methods has been deftly orchestrated, with a discerning eye toward motivating compliance with health protocols and fostering a renewed interest in Gunungkidul's attractions. Media selection, as the conduit through which messages traverse, holds the key to amplifying the efficacy of the communication strategy. The Gunungkidul Regency Tourism Office has adeptly navigated the multimedia landscape, harnessing various platforms such as websites, social media, print media, and electronic channels to disseminate information, ensuring maximal outreach and resonance.

Our inquiry into the broader context of tourism development in Gunungkidul elucidates the multifaceted elements that contribute to the region's allure. The diversity of attractions, seamless accessibility, supportive amenities, and auxiliary services, exemplified by the Regency's comprehensive offerings, underscores the holistic approach to fostering a vibrant and sustainable tourism ecosystem. While the Gunungkidul Regency Tourism Office has exhibited commendable diligence in strategizing and executing its communication endeavors, our study underscores that challenges remain. The unforeseen impact of the Enforcement of Restriction on Community Activities (PPKM), an external constraint that temporarily hindered the full implementation of the communication strategy, serves as a reminder of the dynamic nature of the tourism landscape and the need for adaptive approaches.

The study highlights the importance of audience segmentation and engagement in the communication strategy. Further research could focus on identifying specific audience segments and tailoring messages to address their unique needs and preferences. This could involve conducting surveys or focus groups to gather insights into the preferences and expectations of different demographics. The study does not explicitly focus on tourism communication during crises, but the COVID-19 pandemic is mentioned as an external constraint that temporarily hindered the full implementation of the communication strategy. Further research could explore best communication practices during crises, such as natural disasters or global health crises, and how these practices can be integrated into ongoing communication strategies. The study suggests that a comprehensive evaluation of tourism community resilience is essential. Further research could explore the role of tourism in building community resilience, particularly in the face of environmental and economic challenges. This could involve developing strategies to enhance community preparedness, response, and recovery capabilities.

In summary, this study provides a detailed portrayal of the Gunungkidul Regency Tourism Office's communication strategy and its role in the broader tapestry of tourism development. As the world navigates the complexities of the new normal era, this analysis serves as a beacon, highlighting the multifaceted strategies that contribute to the resurgence of tourism while emphasizing the imperatives of flexibility, innovation, and stakeholder engagement in crafting a resilient and sustainable tourism ecosystem.

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