

The Effect of Marketing Mix Quality on Customer Perceived Values to the Images of Well-Known Recreational Destinations in Sukabumi Region

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Abstract—The aim of the research was to find out how marketing mix efforts in promoting thematic of recreation destinations in Sukabumi region (affected values of the customer on the images of the destinations). Furthermore, it is interested to evaluate the influence of marketing image and mix applied on the scope of tourists responds to the images. The explored dimensions of the images are included: perceived uniqueness of image as a whole, perceived uniqueness of attractions and experiences, perceived quality of the environment (cleanness), as well as the dimensions of the marketing mix: perceived quality of products (available facilities, safety measure, etc.), perceived price of services, and perceived manner of sales for the promotion (politeness, friendliness, and multicultural openness, etc.). The research is a descriptive-mixed method research category with the procedure of data collecting activities and the final presentation technique descriptively by surveyed customer perceived values of the tourist parks themes. It was also benchmarking the survey results with findings of similar research previously conducted. The findings revealed how positive image on a destination become stronger or weaker due to marketing mix attributes experienced by the visiting tourist. The strong image (on uniqueness, pleasant, price attributes, etc.) produces high perceived values of the destinations. In opposite, less positive or even negative image (on cleanness, available facility, safety, etc.) make low perceived values of the destinations. In case the local governments and related stakeholders do not improve the facility conditions, cleanness, and road safety of those five thematic tourism destinations, the tourist's images on Sukabumi tourism destinations can fade away or eroded in competing with another region. Referred to previous researches, the analysis can be regarded as the first research on evaluating marketing mix implemented to affect tourist perception on the image of tourist destination zones in Sukabumi region.

Keywords—marketing mix; recreation destination; tourist perceived values

I. INTRODUCTION

The tourism sector is a sector that has great potential to be developed in Sukabumi Regency. The strategic geographical location of Sukabumi Regency provides a variety of potential tourism objects and destinations. Tourist attractions possessed

by Sukabumi are varied from *Gurilaps* (sparkling) natural tourism (mountains, jungles, sea, beaches and rivers), cultural and traditional culinary, manmade recreational destinations, and special interest tourism. As one of the main tourist destinations in West Java, these tourism objects and attractions are very potential to support the development of regional economy. There are 50 tourism objects that support the economy of Sukabumi Regency, including 34 natural attractions, 8 artificial recreation destinations, and 8 special interest tour packages.

Literature review showed the Sukabumi tourism has been extensively researched. However, researchers rarely focus on the relationship between the marketing mix efforts implemented and the image really perceived compared to the marketing goals. This research focuses on two topics; (1) typical marketing mix efforts for each tourism theme and (2) perceived value of the customer (tourists) on the images of the recreational destinations. To emphasize the research question: we are interested in identifying the best-selling image and how the marketing mix can strengthen sales. To what extent does the image and marketing mix affect sales of tourism products? This question can be considered as eternal, contemporary and always interesting.

A. Tourist and Tourism Destinations

Tourism is one of the most prosperous and fastest growing branches of the world. The latest analysis shows that world tourism with 284 million employees (1 in 11 employees on average) estimates growth of 3.5% for 2015, which is 1 percent higher than world economic growth [1]. Tourism represents 9% of world GDP, moreover, estimates for 2030 with 3.3% annual growth showing that the number of people staying in the world can even reach 1.8 billion.

In 1942, Walter Hunziker and Kurt Krapf defined tourism scientifically with the statement that tourism is a combination of relationships and phenomena originating from the journey and life of strangers in a particular place if it is not connected with permanent settlement or economic activity [2]. The world organization for tourism states that tourism consists of the activities of people who travel and live in places outside their

usual environment no more than one year in a row for recreational, business and other purposes.

A tourist destination can be exemplified as a tourism system that is managed with a balanced relationship between the participants and with a political consensus in an area that is geographically defined with sufficient natural and built tourist attractions, developed infrastructure, ability to create added value for its visitors and ability to ensure the development of sustainable tourism. A visitor feels the final destination of travel and tourist destinations such as complete units, namely tourism products complete with added value. The term tourist destination has been interpreted in various ways, but the majority admits that this is a geographic area that is coherent with a uniform identity and various tourism products. Tourist destinations have an independent and competitive product appearance [3]. Bieger describes tourist destinations as geographical areas (cities, regions, and cities) visited by visitors or tourism segments for the purpose of the trip [4]. It defines the criteria for the characteristics of goals, but recognizes that goal boundaries in reality are difficult to define. According to the objective criteria, the goal must be:

- includes cultural, physical and social attributions that usually define regional identities,
- including tourism infrastructure to support tourism development,
- displays more than one tourist attraction,
- includes existing attractions or has the potential to develop interesting attractions,
- can support planned marketing from tourist areas,
- available to more visitors.

B. Images of Tourism Destinations

The definition of a recognized image term states that this is a mental picture or mental image of someone about something. Images can be contrasted with identity. Identity is something that is objectively present, while image is a subjective reflection of identity.

Subjects perceive the identity of the organization, individual or entity in a different way. It should be noted that organizations, individuals or entities can have various images because there are many different individuals in the environment. Certain individuals may feel the same identity is very different. Theorists claim that images are a set of beliefs, ideas, and impressions of a person with reference to a particular object [3]. Crompton further defines the image of tourism as a structure of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that someone has about tourist destinations [5].

Interestingly, Gartner saw in the picture the purpose of three components that are hierarchically connected: mental, emotional, and impulsive [6]. The emotional component is also supported the image with favorable or unfavorable prejudices that the public has about the product or purpose. Cohen, Evans-Pritchard, Morgan and Pritchard also add visual images due to the fact that they analyze the characteristics and expressions of visual images (photos, films, brochures, logotypes), and thus

they open the dilemma of whether visual images reflect reality or distortion. In the field of tourism, images will be mutually defined as "imitation of objects that appear (or as) identities of objects marked visually [7].

More than 50 years ago theorists have shown that goal images (as a combination of mental images, perceptions, opinions and impressions of an individual or group) are key factors that influenced decisions, judgments and consequently the position of tourism providers.

We can interpret the goal image as "a mental image of the true appearance of a tourist destination". Thus, we define the research variables that refer to:

- feel the uniqueness of A destination's complete image,
- feel the uniqueness of tourist attractions and activities in A destination,
- perceived (clean) quality of the environment,
- perceived security.

C. Mixed Marketing Goals

The marketing tip of the idea of understanding needs (as they really are in human nature) and desires (striving for individual goods to meet their needs) from potential buyers.

This affects purchasing power and aspires to create demand that can be met with tourism products. A user will not only feel satisfied, but will also understand the benefits received and the costs made. Next is a logical step that represents the core of the sale, namely exchange. This is a process that creates value and improves the position of both parties.

The theoretical foundations of marketing also need to be considered. Harvard was the first to introduce the term marketing mix with twelve different marketing elements [8]. Theoretical and practical input then led to the marketing mix of a product called 4P named McCarthy with the following elements: product, price, place, and promotion. Further sales services lead to additional 3P elements: people / participants, processes and physical evidence [9].

Marketing tourist destinations adds more P elements: politics and deficiencies. Kotler, Bowen and Markens recently estimated two further dimensions: internal and interactive marketing [10]. Historical overview of marketing strategies shows a deep transformation in time [11]:

- production (cheap products, productivity is very important
- interests) and high-quality practical products are preferred,
- sales concept (users need to be convinced to buy services),
- marketing concepts (sensory philosophy and responses must help us offer the right services for users),
- the concept of social responsibility (sustainable, socially oriented and environmentally friendly services).

Kotler et al. insisted that the purpose of each business operation was to create and maintain satisfied and profit figure clients [3].

Once their needs are met, these clients will share their opinions and experiences with others.

Due to the nature of tourism products, which are a combination of services and products or because of a mixture of physical products, services and natural or cultural goods a slightly changed marketing approach needs to be employed to achieve better results. Marketing in tourism is a voluntary exchange process between users and product / service providers / tourism experience where both parties must be satisfied [12].

Providers are bound to offer products / services / experiences that provide the best experience for modern travelers. When providing experience to specific user groups, targeted marketing combined with the destination marketing mix must be used.

A client satisfied with the services provided is an important element of tourism. Satisfaction can be interpreted as "the level of personal satisfaction when a client compares achievement with expected satisfaction by using a product or service" [12]. In addition to the two dimensions mentioned from the expected and experienced ones; service quality, related to the fact by whom, when and how this is achieved, is the most important element. Customized elements of the marketing mix therefore become the focus of our research:

- Product, in the form of uniqueness and pleasant feeling experienced by the tourist.
- Place, in the form of facility and safety (accommodation, culinary offer, transfer, etc.),
- Price, direct and indirect cost charged, and
- Promotion (politeness, friendliness, openness to visitors, etc.),

Refer to the previous studies on marketing topics of Sukabumi region tourism, they are not specified on evaluation of marketing mix efforts or strategies. Three of the relevance studies are mentioned as follow:

Widagdyo in 2017 studied the attraction of Ciptagelar cultural village, by categorized the tourism marketing mix of product into three groups of value [13]:

- Group 1 is called the Factor of Adventure and Culture, which consists of variables Leuit, local wisdom, traditional clothing, and culinary, Off-road and Downhill lanes.
- Group 2 is called Tourism Attraction and Natural Beauty, which consists of variables of natural beauty, coolness, jungle forest, traditional arts, and ecotourism.
- Group 3 is called the Social and Historical Institutional Value Factor, which consists of rules, traditional houses, and historical sites.

Lestari studied the implementation of word of mouth (WOM) as tools for promoting the tourism attraction of Ciletuh Geopark. The study found out that social media like Instagram, twitter, and mainly Facebook are effective become media for marketing mix aspect of promotion [14].

Oktaviani studied the relationship marketing by guide association in Ciletuh as marketing mix strategy of Place. The efforts focused to 1) customer service, carried out by providing friendly and polite service to tourists. 2) Loyalty program, done by giving discount of tour package rate for tourists who make a second visit. 3) Community building, by developing website as communication media with potential tourists [15].

II. METHOD

A. Formulation of the Problem

According to data from the Passenger Exit Survey (PES) in 2014, the largest contribution of tourists is to cultural tourism destinations (cultural and historical tourism, shopping and culinary, city and village) for 60%, natural tourism (marine tourism, ecotourism, adventure) is 35%, and artificial tourism (MICE tours and events, sports, integrated areas) is 5% of total contribution [16]. This research is built on previous academic researches and studies on tourism destinations in Sukabumi region. Main variables being analyzed are perceptions and responds of tourist's images as Google's local guides visited thematic destinations in Sukabumi region in the last two years.

The tourism image attributes classified into nine aspects, (1) travel environment (i.e. safe and secure environment, clean and tidy environment, friendly and helpful local people, tranquil & restful atmosphere and pleasant weather); (2) natural attractions (i.e. scenic mountain & valleys, scenery & natural attractions, gardens & springs, scenic drive, destinations, lakes, rivers, wildlife, caves and underground formations); (3) entertainment & events (i.e. shows or exhibitions, cultural events & festivals, quality, fun, western music, nightlife and entertainment); (4) historic attractions (i.e. history & heritage and Vintage buildings); (5) infrastructure (i.e. restaurants, cuisine, shop facilities and accommodations); (6) accessibility (i.e. traffic flow and destinating information, destinating facilities, access to the area and affordable trolley system); (7) relaxation (i.e. spa, soothing the mind and refreshing the body, spiritual rejuvenation); (8) outdoor activities (i.e. boating, fishing, hiking, picnicking, camping and hunting, outdoor recreation and golfing) and (9) price and value (i.e. food, accommodation, good value for money, attractions and activities and good [17].

Refer to the tourism image attributes mentioned above, from about 50 tourism objects and recreational destinations in Sukabumi region, there are 5 most well-known destinations are selected as object of the studies, considering each represented a tourism image, those are:

- Natural attraction image, represented by Ciletuh *palabuharatu* National Geopark (GNCP), which is located along the southern coast of Sukabumi, is one of the longest Geopark in the world, and it consist of waterfall, forest, peak scenery, and beach attraction in a location.

- Relaxation attraction image, represented by Cikundul hot spring complex, the area is one of the leading tourism objects in Sukabumi City. The area is specifically included in KSDP Zone 3 which includes the Cikundul tourism agro-tourism area and Cikundul hot spring bath. The themes that are featured in the region is natural tourism. While the target is the production of education, conservation, and natural tourism based on agriculture and natural tourism based on natural resources of hot water.
- Historic attraction images, represented by Kasepuhan Ciptagelar, as a beautiful traditional village with cool air, suitable as a cultural tourism destination. This traditional village is part of Cisolok District, Sukabumi. Its location is situated in the hilly area of Mount Halimun-Salak National Destination (TNGHS).
- Infrastructure attraction image, represented by Mochi souvenir and culinary shop. Mochi Kaswari Lampung has become a typical cake and the mainstay of Sukabumi city. So, it is very fascinating for tourists who are visiting Sukabumi and make it as reminders that must be brought home.
- Special interest natural attraction image, represented by Buniayu Cave, a 1.5 km long cave and filled with beautiful natural ornaments in the form of a spear-shaped stalactite, stalagmite located under a stalactite, a flow stone that is like a frozen waterfall. It is suitable for travelers who are like to challenge its adrenaline. This cave is located on an area of 10 hectares and has become an alternative adventure full of natural attractions that began to be much interested.

Therefore, the problem formulation in this research is whether or not marketing mix quality on customer perceived values are influenced strongly to the images of well-known recreation destinations in Sukabumi region.

B. Research Purposes

This research aims to identify supporting factors, immediate problems, and possible solutions to improve the performance of marketing mix strategies to improve image of tourists on thematic tourism destination in Sukabumi regions.

C. Research Method

Research method is the mixed method research category with the procedure of data collecting activities and the final presentation technique descriptively. This research includes library research, the main object of which is books or other literature sources, namely journals, articles, and research reports from previous researches. Data is searched and found through literature reviews that are relevant to the discussion. The information may be quantitative or qualitative, as long as the research uses a scientific setting, with the intention of interpreting phenomena that occur and are carried out by involving various existing methods [18].

The study carried out is to solve the problem, which is basically based on a critical and in-depth study of the written experiences of the tourist visited thematic tourist destinations

in Sukabumi regions, which are categorized as scenic and beauty, cultural, culinary, manmade recreational destinations, and special interest tours. Sources of data obtained through library research of valid printed and online journals, academic studies, and reports that support the deepening and sharpness of analysis.

III. RESULTS

A. Image Dimensions

1) *Image uniqueness and pleasant*: The comparison of the answers shows that all 5 destination categories in Figure 1 are perceived very well in terms of uniqueness and pleasant environment.

The most unique image of those destinations is the cultural attraction. High ranking of the cultural came as a big surprise, whereas the result of the natural scenery is expected, since the Ciletuh Geopark is shown on practically every promotional material of Destination. Respondents find the ambient and peace environment are unique and pleasant. While the on other 4 theme destinations the image of uniqueness and pleasant generally perceived well.

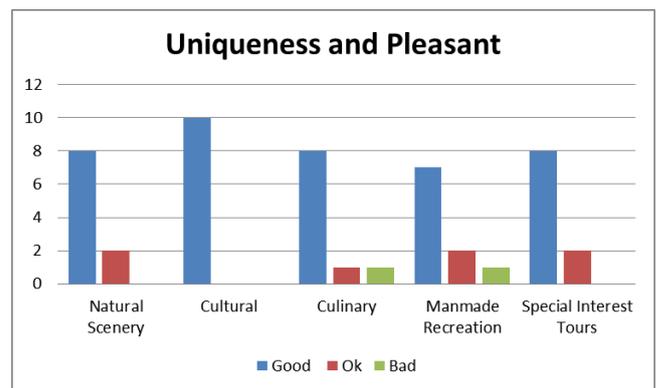


Fig. 1. Uniqueness and pleasant.

2) *Cleanness of the environmen*: The respondents rated (Figure 2) most destinations as not clean (dirty). Almost all destinations perceived not clean or dirty. The garbage management still less coordinated, as there are less of officers that supervise and warn tourist to keep the tidiness and cleanness of the destinations.

The most perceived dirty destination is natural scenery represented by Ciletuh Geopark, many tourists complaining dirtiness of the beach. While, the most perceived clean is cultural destination represented by Ciptagelar village.

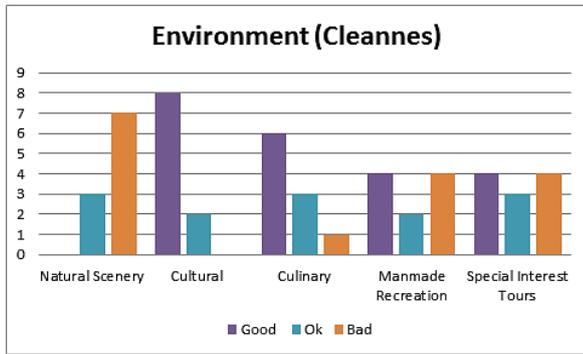


Fig. 2. Environment (cleanliness).

B. Marketing Mix Dimensions

1) *Facility and safety*: Most of tourist perceived the facility and safety are adequate. Less perceived facility (Figure 3) is insufficient destinationing lot, inadequate number of toilets, lacking water supply, and unsatisfactory cabin/villa for night rest.

Regarding safety, the main concerns are hazardous roads, due to narrow and curvaceous track and poor surface conditions in some road segments.

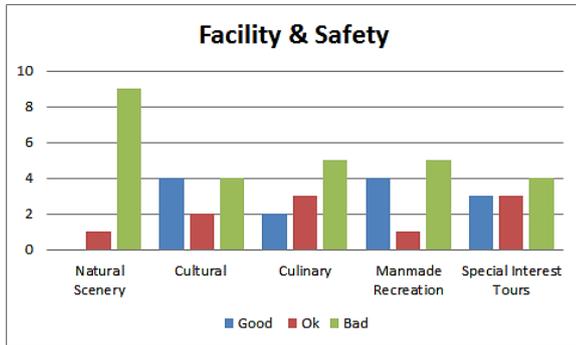


Fig. 3. Facility & safety.

2) *Perceived price of services*: Refer to Figure 4 show that visitors think they get a fair value for the cost they pay. As most of destination applied affordable entrance ticket, even for Ciptagelar village is free of charge. However, some tourists shopping the Mochi cake are a bit resented by the price compare to image of other traditional culinary.



Fig. 4. Price.

3) *Service and politeness*: When we compare statements for service and politeness images, in Figure 5, we can see that most residents or service providers are considered to be friendly and willing to help. The destination workers are perceived to perform their work in a professional way. On the other hand, the results show a rather reserved attitude towards service in natural scenery due to less professional facility management.

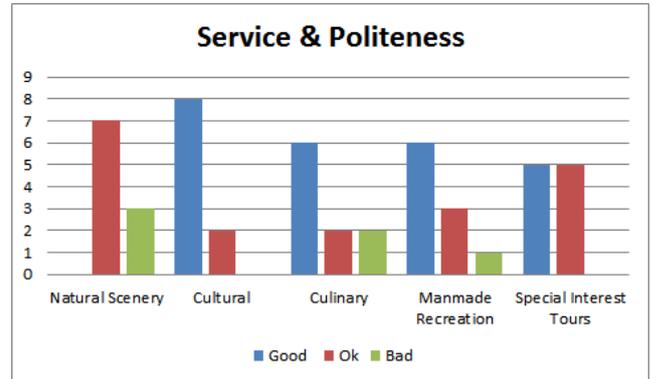


Fig. 5. Service and politeness.

IV. DISCUSSION

The results showed that marketing mix quality in the formed of Product, Place, Price, and Promotion of well-known recreation/tourism destinations in Sukabumi region are still need to be improved.

- The product aspect of most destinations is well perceived by the tourists. Most of them found the uniqueness and pleasant experience as they expected or even beyond expectation of their previous image.
- The place aspect of destinations is adequately perceived by the tourists. Though there are a contradiction image of totally satisfaction image for cultural destination (Ciptagelar) and unsatisfactory image for natural scenery (Ciletuh Geopark).
- The price aspect of destinations is in general perceived well by the tourists. The affordable ticket and price of food in location give positive image to most of the tourists, though some of them associated the inexpensive ticket with less available facility.
- The Promotion aspect of destinations is perceived fine by most tourists. In particular for cultural and special interest destinations, considering the places are remote, the people and guide there are still honest and tender, still respected visitors as their guest. While for the other three destinations, the service and politeness of the operator/ employee still okay. The tourist has acceptable image on this aspect refer to information they perceived from social media, destination website, or word of mouth.

Overall, the 4 Ps of marketing mix work well for producing effective perceived values for cultural and special interest tourism destination. It was resulted good image of the

destination among the tourists that make possible for them to come again. For relaxation and culinary attractions, though perceived well, but the limited facilities (destinating) made the image of tourist to the destinations less strong. They will come again because need to buy the culinary or for healing purpose.

While for natural scenery of Ciletuh Geopark, the perceived value is low, the hazardous road, less available facility, and the most important the dirty beach made weak image. Tourists that come because of curious will not come again, as the uniqueness and pleasant experiences they get are being compensated with other less satisfactory experiences.

V. CONCLUSION

Sukabumi region possesses plentiful of tourism objects in form of recreational destinations and other thematic destinations. The *Pelabuhanratu* beach is not included within the study as it intended to promote other new destinations.

The remoteness of most tourism destinations in Sukabumi region made the Product and Place aspects of the marketing mix still less powerful to develop effective perceived values that make strong tourist image on the destination. Except for cultural and special interest tourism, their image on the destinations are fit with such remote situation;

The highly promoted Ciletuh Geopark still have weak image on the tourist perception. As actually, there are image attributes of tourism are less available or fulfilled adequately.

The culinary and relaxing destinations are situated in the city of Sukabumi, the crowded environment give challenge (difficult to destination) for the tourist to visit.

In case the local governments do not improve the facility conditions, cleanness, and road safety of those five thematic tourism destinations, the images on Sukabumi tourism destination can fade away or lost in competing with another region. According to Google survey in 2014, found that 65% of tourists do online research before deciding for the next vacation destination. Advice from friends and family is thus crucial [13].

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