

# Digital Marketing Communication for Tourism Lhokseumawe

## ABSTRACT

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## ABSTRACT

Digitalization of marketing communications Tourism is the main target in promoting tourism in Indonesia. The maximum use of digital technology can advance the world of tourism. This study aims to record and describe how digital tourism marketing communications in Lhokseumawe City. The final results of this research are typologies, models, strategies, potentials and patterns regarding the digitization of tourism. Primary and secondary data were obtained through observation, interviews and literature review. The theoretical basis, concepts and models are used; tourism and marketing communications, digitalization or digital tourism, new media, information technology and communication of Acehese local wisdom. Whereas in data collection, communication, tourism marketing in the digital era, it is increasingly advanced and it becomes easier to reach the local, national and foreign public. Digitization is the main communication medium in obtaining and disseminating tourism information. The scientific contribution in this research is multidisciplinary, mainly communication science. The results of the study show that the diversity of tourism potential in Lhokseumawe City has not been recorded organized and maximally promoted. Generally, tourism in Lhokseumawe City is still traditional and conventional. Not maximally take advantage of digitization. The presence of digitalization should allow all tourism potential to be developed properly and correctly. The magnitude of the tourism potential of Lhokseumawe City should be a new job area for millennials, increasing Regional Original Income and community welfare. It is hoped that all circles; government, tourism actors, entrepreneurs, stakeholders and universities can work together as a whole in maximizing the digitization of tourism in Lhokseumawe City.

**Keywords:** Marketing, Communication, promotion, digitization and, tourism

## I. INTRODUCTION

Digitization of regional tourism potential is now a necessity that the government has started to implement information technology as the main foundation in tourism promotion. With the digital tourism policy initiated by the ministry of tourism, it has received a positive response from various regions, including the City of Lhokseumawe. The key to the success of regional tourism development cannot be separated from the participation of all stakeholders, both central and regional. The tourism sector should be developed on a national and international scale by local governments.

Meanwhile, digital tourism is a tourism development strategy by utilizing digital media massively. The study of Isnaini & Fauziyyah (2017) shows that digital

marketing is able to improve the brand or image of tourism. This strategy was then initiated by the Ministry of Tourism (Kemenpar) with the aim of achieving the main national target of 20 million foreign tourists (tourists). Digital tourism can be seen as a form of government effort in adjusting to changing market conditions. Because currently tourists travel from looking for and looking at information (look), then ordering the tour packages of interest (book) to paying online. In other words, modern-day foreign tourists search and share using digital media.

The city of Lhokseumawe, which is one of the tourist destinations in Aceh, has not yet fully implemented this policy. It is known that the tourism potential has not been fully optimized by the Government and stakeholders in Lhokseumawe City. However, until

2021, serious efforts have been made by the Government and stakeholders in Lhokseumawe City in implementing the concept of digital tourism. By utilizing digital media which has a very important role in influencing the development of tourism promotion?

The implementation of tourism promotion through the internet or digital media in Lhokseumawe City can be observed from the website of the Lhokseumawe City Youth, Sports and Tourism Office, namely <http://Disporapar.com/>. Information was obtained that the website had been on hiatus and has only been active since 2019. Of course, this prevented potential tourists from getting updated information through digital media.

The social media accounts owned by the Lhokseumawe City Disporapar are also classified as inactive where the last time they updated tourist information was in October 2018. The use of digital technology is still minimally applied by the Lhokseumawe City Government. Developments in the digital era of tourism require every actor who plays a role in tourism development to be qualified in the use of technology and be able to utilize digital media in maximizing the tourism potential that exists in each region.

The village-based tourism potential of Lhokseumawe City needs to be developed immediately by following the development of information and communication technology, meaning the development of digital-based tourism potential. Several types and forms of tourism in Lhokseumawe City that have not been maximally developed include; Marine/Maritime/Beach tourism include: Ujung Blang Beach Tourism, Ujung Bate, Meuraksa Beach, Seumadu Island Area. Nature Tourism / Nature Reserve / Conservation Park, Japanese Cave Tour, Jeulekat Reservoir Tour, Pusong Reservoir Tour, Water Boom Tour. Paramotor tourism, mangrove tourism, religious tourism, Great Mosque Islamic Center tourism, Tgk's Tomb. Syiah Hudam, Tomb of Tgk. Chik Di Paloh, Putroe Neng's Tomb, Teuku Syik Monuments in Tunong, Tgk's Tomb. Lhokseumawe, Cannon (Kuta Blang), TKR Resistance Monument, Cot Plieng Monument. Tomb of Princess Mardum Meuria, Cultural Arts Tour, Culinary Tour, Riyadhah Park Tour, History/pilgrimage Tour, Convention Tour, Agricultural Tourism (Agrotourism), Pusong Fisherman Village Tour and others. This is one of the reasons for the urgency of this research. Lhokseumawe City tourism commodities have various types, forms and potentials. So it is necessary to re-collect the data and then design creative, creative photo, visual, video creative content that has local wisdom, promotional value and selling value.

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The main foundation of marketing communication is communication and marketing. Marketing will be so successful or powerful if it is combined with effective and efficient communication. How to attract consumers or audiences to become aware, know and want to buy goods or services through communication channels [1].

For Kolter and Keller trying to define communication as a process of individuals providing stimuli in both verbal and non-verbal forms to change behavior and behavior. Meanwhile, the purpose of marketing communication according to Brannan in Tom (1998) is to convey messages to certain target groups in a clear and effective way to carry out communication for an institution or company. In addition, to convey certain messages related to the products being marketed and then feedback can be obtained with consumers [2].

## **III. RESEARCH METHODS**

This study uses a constructivism paradigm with a qualitative approach. According to Patton, constructivist researchers study the various realities that individuals construct and the implications of these constructs for their lives with others[3]

For this reason, extracting information from informants is qualitatively not quantified by calculating percentages and answers that are fixed (fixed questions). Excavation of information is carried out in depth with a perspective that represents the selected groups. In the assessment, the informant must be considered as an active subject who can develop information based on the questions raised. Therefore, for the purposes of this assessment, a few informants, if deemed to have provided a "thick description" – using the term Clifford Geertz – is considered sufficient, compared to hundreds of respondents from quantitative research models.

## **IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Basically all the information obtained in this research shows great desire and hope in the development of around 35 tourism potentials of Lhokseumawe City through digitalization. Problems arise when talking about technical mastery in promoting tourism through digital.

However, the City of Lhokseumawe continues to improve in the development of tourism potential through digitalization, the ultimate goal is to improve the welfare of the people of Lhokseumawe City. Efforts to involve millennials in promoting digital era tourism show the seriousness of the Lhokseumawe City government.

The results of this research can be conveyed, in several subtitles, among others; mapping the tourism potential of Lhokseumawe city. The subtitle is about how to communicate the tourism marketing of Lhokseumawe City by utilizing digitalization. How tourism stakeholders in Lhokseumawe utilize digital media in promoting tourism potential and how to follow up in developing the tourism potential of Lhokseumawe City based on digitalization.

### **Digital Business Communication Lhokseumawe City Tourism**

Business communication, marketing and digitalization of the tourism potential of Lhokseumawe City are being

promoted until now in 2021. With the development of communication technology today, the City Government of Lhokseumawe adjusts itself in the pattern of tourism marketing business communication.

The Department of Youth and Sports and Tourism, (Disporapar) of Lhokseumawe City has a website <https://disporapar.lhokseumawekota.go.id/>. This website contains nine rubrics such as official profiles, galleries, news, office addresses, download documents, and contact us. The majority of the rubrics have not been filled with the required documents. For example, strategic plan documents (Renstra), annual work programs, promotion programs.

The website also includes social media backlinks such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Flickr, Behance, Pinterest, and Linked. Unfortunately the backlink is not active so when accessed it does not go directly to the destination social media page.

The structure of this service for the tourism sector consists of three sections, namely the tourism resource development section, the tourism potential development section and the promotion section. This website is technologically still very weak and must be addressed comprehensively as the main tool for promoting digital tourism in Lhokseumawe City.

One of the improvements that must be done is to activate all connected backlinks on the website. On the other hand, the information presented is not published regularly. It can be seen that the last press release was uploaded on the website on Wednesday, August 28, 2019. This means that this website has not uploaded the latest information for more than a year.

In fact, digitization is a necessity to activate website content and social media. These two types of media are the most effective and efficient promotional media. Where the public, tourists, or consumers can find details of all the information needed about Lhokseumawe City tourism.

Uniquely, this agency has two promotion accounts in the youth sector and the tourism sector. The youth sector can be accessed via a YouTube account under the name Youth Disporapar Lhokseumawe with only 15 subscribers and two promotional video content in it within the last 10 months of 2021.

Meanwhile, the tourism sector can be accessed via a YouTube account with the name Fantastic Lhokseumawe only has 52 subscribers with 17 video content in the last two years .

Overall, the video content on the two accounts reflects digital business communication efforts via the YouTube social media platform. One example is a video with the title "Water Boom Mangat Cheerful" which is packaged in duration of 4.42 minutes. Loading a song in Acehese with the background of taking pictures of Water Boom Mangat Stories, in Blang Mangat District, Lhokseumawe City.

In fact, this business communication effort begins to show in the video content. It's just that, the minimal number of subscribers and the lack of account promotions make very few viewers. In the Water Boom Mangat Ceria video, for example, it has only been watched 15 times in one month. It's a very small audience. Not worth the video production costs that have been allocated.

According to Zulkarnain Masry, Content Creator of Banda Aceh, to produce a video clip complete with songs in Aceh currently costs IDR 2,000,000. The price is much cheaper than the price on the island of Java or North Sumatra, around Rp. 5,000,000 per video and song.

So, if there is a video that has a small viewer, it is very unfortunate. According to Zulkarnain Masry, efforts to increase the number of viewers must be done by studying YouTube's metadata. If needed, you can do promotions via Facebook, Instagram or YouTube social media accounts. So that it can reach the digital community or social media users in large numbers or according to the target geographic area.

This effort is to strengthen the implementation of digitalization-based tourism promotion or digital tourism in Lhokseumawe City, which requires the cooperation of all parties, including in the regulatory process. In the process of formulation, it is not only the responsibility of the Lhokseumawe City government, but the responsibility of every element of society because the tourism sector is expected to improve the economy. Every element of society should strive to promote.

In the process of managing the tourism potential of Lhokseumawe City according to the capacity of each stakeholder. In this case, the Lhokseumawe City Government refers to Aceh Qanun Number 8 of 2013 concerning Tourism. This regulation is a legal umbrella that strengthens the application of digital tourism in Lhokseumawe City.

Head of the Lhokseumawe City Disporapar Office Zulkifli (55) in an interview, 6/10/2021, said that the responsibility of the Lhokseumawe City government in promoting tourism in Lhokseumawe City, of course, in various ways, including digitalization. In this case, the Lhokseumawe City government refers to policies that according to the government can optimize tourism promotion and the community can also participate in promoting tourism potential with existing regulations.

The Lhokseumawe City Government refers to Aceh Qanun Number 8 of 2013 concerning Tourism. Lhokseumawe has started to clean up and started promoting tourism through digitalization, although it is not yet comprehensive considering that at this time there is no regional Qanun that regulates the application of digital tourism in Lhokseumawe City.

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An illustration is obtained that the rules used today still refer to the Aceh Qanun because there are no regional regulations that specifically regulate the application of digital tourism. If the application cannot be optimized in promoting tourism, then various policies are needed that can provide solutions to these problems.

The unrealized implementation of digital tourism optimally is one of the problems that must be resolved together considering that this is a shared task, including the community and all parties involved in tourism actors. However, Disporapar continues to make efforts to upgrade the developments that occur, especially in the era towards digital tourism, given that several regions have also begun to slowly prepare themselves to implement digital tourism.

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The issue of implementing digital tourism is indeed given special authority and this responsibility lies with the Lhokseumawe City Disporapar. But overall this responsibility does not lie with the City Government and not just Disporapar, the community also has a very simple responsibility, for example the use of social media with tourism content. Moreover, young people have a very persuasive way of creating interesting photo content that will be uploaded on social media so that this will be one of the simple ways that can be done in implementing digitization promotions.

Diana Rosa, ST, Disporapar Lhokseumawe, 5/10/2021, said, but that does not mean that in the real world we forget, the community must also be open and friendly to tourists so that they leave a good impression and finally there is promotion by word of mouth, meaning responsibility. In this responsibility, there must be a combination of the City Government, Disporapar, and the community. If only the City government and Disporapar were responsible for tourism promotion, especially digitalization, it would not work without the participation of the community.

In addition, socialization is needed to the people of Lhokseumawe City which is carried out by Disporapar in increasing public tourism awareness. Through this activity, it is hoped that all elements of the community will support all tourism activities, both in the context of tourism promotion and various tourism agendas carried

out in Lhokseumawe City. This is in order to create a better community economy from the tourism sector.

According to the Disporapar of Lhokseumawe City, the application of digital tourism in Lhokseumawe City is carried out in two ways, either directly by the Department every time there is a tourism agenda such as the Aceh Fest Rapa'i International, which is directly published with existing media and every tourism potential is also promoted through various media such as websites official.

Disporapar and Instagram which are basically based on digitization. And the second way, namely through socialization through various tourism activities such as the Sapta Pesona Action at Ujong Blang Beach which was directly attended by speakers from the Ministry of Tourism.

Disporapar has also organized tourism training activities for the millennial generation who use digital a lot as access to daily communication, as well as all tourism actors such as community guides and photography lovers who basically interact a lot in the digital world so it is hoped that more parties will support and ready for the application of digital tourism.

It can be understood that the Lhokseumawe City Disporapar does not only carry out socialization activities, but also training and other activities. Head of Tourism Promotion Disporapar City of Lhokseumawe Zul Afrizal, 10/10/2021, said, in the context of implementing digital tourism and tourism promotion by digitizing it, we have implemented it directly by the Department in the form of publications and promotions through existing media such as websites and Instagram. However, we also carry out direct socialization to the community in the form of the Sapta Pesona Action and Tourism Training directly carried out by Disporapar with the target community so that the community is also ready and becomes a support system in the application of digital tourism in Lhokseumawe City. This means that this effort is very much needed considering that we are heading towards the digital era of tourism.

The socialization process is very important because the community also needs to receive education about digitalization-based tourism promotion to be ready to face the times and support the development of the Lhokseumawe City tourism sector. As stated by the Head of Disporapar Lhokseumawe City. Lhokseumawe City has great potential from the tourism sector, because the tourism sector is flexible and easy to follow the times. Of course, as long as it is positive, we will continue to support it, especially if the community is enthusiastic about participating in the various training provided. Surely this will embody all the ready elements. Moreover, if the training brings a tourism life that is actually implemented digitally, such as there are people who are aware of the benefits of tourism and then create homestays and promote them through applications, it will have a positive impact on the tourism sector and the economy of the people who will

benefit from the digitization process. Public awareness of the benefits of digitalized tourism will have a positive impact on the economic and tourism sectors of Lhokseumawe City.

As was once held in Lhokseumawe City, the Aceh International Rafa'i Festival (ACIRAF) is an international event organized by the Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Indonesia in collaboration with Disbudpar Aceh and Disporapar Lhokseumawe City as part of the Wonderful Indonesia Program with the target of bringing foreign tourists to Indonesia. Aceh International Rafa'i Festival (ACIRAF) has a variety of activities ranging from: Rafa'i International Concert, Rafa'i Street Art, Meet and Greet, Jeuleukat Field Trip, and Aceh Culture Expo. The existence of an international scale event will certainly have a positive impact on the tourism sector in Lhokseumawe City. This event also introduces the culture and tourism potential in Lhokseumawe City.

The Aceh International Rafa'i Festival (ACIRAF) is very beneficial for Lhokseumawe City because it brings many tourists from both national and international levels as an effort towards the digital era of tourism. The activity was attended by foreign participants such as Turkey, India, Malaysia, and Thailand. Of course this will be one of the event which will be highlighted in the media, especially the media from the outside and tourism is very helpful because it is not directly promoted the digitalization by the media both inside and outside the country and certainly there will be a lot of people outside who know the city of Lhokseumawe and want to visit the city Lhokseumawe.

Indeed, the government's efforts in creating a tourism-aware environment in the application of digital tourism in Lhokseumawe City and the community have so far not been able to run optimally. The city of Lhokseumawe, which has a lot of potential and tourism attraction, both from a panoramic view and culinary tourism, must of course be maximized with the application of digital tourism. This policy is believed to support a more optimal tourism promotion because of easier access and very effective in reaching a wider community.

Digitalization promotion in the context of implementing digital tourism should also be slowly prepared so that tourism promotion in the region can run well. Implementing a tourism-aware environment and being able to implement digitization promotions on all elements of tourism actors has become a necessity in order to keep up with the increasingly digital era.

### **Glancing at the tourism potential of Lhokseumawe City.**

The tourism potential in the city, which is located in the northern part of Aceh, and directly opposite the lips of the Malacca Strait, has many interesting places to visit. In addition to the natural panorama, it can also be used as a trace to read the history of the past.

In fact, said Lhokseumawe himself, it was born because of two confluence of water currents in Krueng Cunda from two different estuaries that caused the water to swirl, which in local terms is called "Ie meu weu-weu".

Glancing at the city of Lhokseumawe itself, if you want to visit the mainland, you have to pass a connecting bridge that cuts the Cunda river, like a stretch that divides the mainland of Sumatra Island and the center of the capital city of Lhokseumawe itself. Krueng Cunda in the past as a stopover for sailing ships. Because previously the stretch of the Krueng Cunda watershed was still wide and there was no formation of aquaculture land either on the south or north side of the river flow.

In Krueng Cunda also live a variety of unique aquatic ecosystem habitats. Such as fish, shrimp, types of mangrove crabs and so on. However, because over time, there have been many changes in the flow of the typical Lhokseumawe river. Now, along the Krueng Cunda stream, there are many culinary stalls that serve special foods and drinks. The most typical drink is sugar cane juice.

It is not difficult to find a natural marine scene in Lhokseumawe. Like at Ujong Blang Beach, for example, it is very appropriate to relax and release boredom while enjoying a plate of Aceh salad plus young coconut. Along the shores of this beach, there are small stalls that provide this special dish, when the sun is hot while enjoying the sound of the waves and the gentle breeze on the beach which is directly related to the Malacca Strait.

In fact, if you want to feel the sensation of wading through the ocean, there are also fishing boats for rent, which you can enjoy freely sliding on the surface of the water. Ujong Blang Beach is not only beautiful from a nautical point of view, it turns out that this beach also holds a history of the occupation of the first Dai Nippon era [4]. The proof, along the coast, still visible bunkers belonging to the Japanese army. It is said that history reports these bunkers as protective buildings for the Japanese soldiers who were on guard on the beach.

Along the coast, if it protrudes slightly to the east, to be precise towards the city center, you will be presented with busy fishing villages. Or rather at Pusong Beach, where almost every time you can see, small fishermen pulling inland trawls. In addition, most of them are busy processing and drying fish to be made into various types of salted fish.

The production of salted fish of various types originating from Pusong is marketed outside the region and has become one of the mainstay commodities of local residents. The view of marine tourism in Lhokseumawe City, not only on Ujong Blang and Pusong beaches, but we can see the view of Meuraksa Beach. The beach, which is located at the northern end of Blang Mangat District, Lhokseumawe City, can be said to be still very beautiful. This rarely visited beach, its charm is very impressive. Because apart from being

clean, it is still very shady, various trees characteristic of the beach, especially the types of Waru, Ketapang and pandan trees, are still scattered around the edges.

#### **Constraints and obstacles**

faced in the process of strengthening the promotion of the tourism potential of Lhokseumawe City, including the lack of utilization of digitalization for both the regional government and tourism stakeholders, in addition to that, the implementation of policies issued by the Lhokseumawe City Government is still weak which refers to Aceh Qanun Number 8 2013 concerning Tourism is one of the efforts so that every tourism activity cannot be separated from the regulations that have been set, including regarding the promotion of tourism in the region.

For the application of digital tourism and tourism promotion by digitization, the Lhokseumawe City Government through the Youth, Sports and Tourism Office has started to implement it slowly, although it is not optimal due to existing limitations. The government has also invited all elements of tourism actors based on existing policies. However, the government still needs programs that are creative and innovative in order to boost the popularity of tourism in Lhokseumawe City.

In addition, the socialization process to the community as a policy of the Lhokseumawe City Disporapar in increasing public awareness of the benefits of tourism and seeing that the tourism sector has the opportunity to help the community's economy is also not optimal. Socialization is very much needed in the process of implementing a policy because implementing a policy requires cooperation from various parties, be it the government, the private sector, and the community. Stakeholder awareness is expected to give birth to support from all parties for the welfare of the community if this policy process goes well.

Furthermore, the obstacle in communication is that the application of digital tourism and tourism promotion has not run optimally in Lhokseumawe City. In this case, good communication is needed so that the objectives of a policy can be achieved.

#### **V. CONCLUSION**

The general conclusion of this research can be conveyed that one of the solutions to improve the welfare of the community is to increase marketing and promotion through digitizing tourism potential in Lhokseumawe City. This solution is supported by the potential of Lhokseumawe as a trade and service city with tourism potential. It needs to be developed optimally, including in digital marketing strategies. In addition to increasing the quantity and quality of tourism potential. Digital marketing is one of the important points in the success of improving the welfare of the people in Lhokseumawe City.

Tourism is an important economic sector. A million natural beauty, culture, and original ancestral heritage are added values that we need to continue to echo.

Tourism has a strategic position in increasing foreign exchange. Nationally, even last year, the Indonesian tourism industry was able to contribute around US\$ 10 billion of foreign exchange. This position is number four after oil, coal and palm oil.

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