

# Regional Plan of Public Relations:

## A strategy in tourism sector

R. Mahendra Haryo Bharoto  
Public Administration  
Universitas Swadaya Gunung Jati  
Cirebon, Indonesia

Welly Wihayati  
Communications Department  
Universitas Swadaya Gunung Jati  
Cirebon, Indonesia

Iin Indrayanti  
Department of Civil Engineering  
Universitas Swadaya Gunung Jati  
Cirebon, Indonesia  
mysunforever@gmail.com

**Abstract**—This study aims at identifying factors supporting regional plans employed by the local government by using public relations and to find out the role of public relations in promoting and increasing tourism visit in one of historical sites in the city of Cirebon, Sunyaragi Cave .It is a qualitative study based on in-depth interviews with the communication manager and some staff of the local government at the Sunyaragi Cave Office .The interview is administered by addressing some close-ended and open-ended questions to find out more detailed information due to some issues on tourism sector in the city. A short observation is also conducted in order to have further description due to number of the visitors and other activities held by the community and management. The results of both interview and observation show that the numbers of tourists or visitors in Sunyaragi Cave increase during high seasons or public holidays. It is one of the impacts of the improvement of infrastructure development in the city and public relations using media partners and media social. It is approximately 10,000 to 12,000 visitors coming to enjoy the beauty and ancient site.

**Keywords**—*regional plan; public relations; tourism*

### I. INTRODUCTION

The definition of tourism is the travel for recreational, leisure, family or business purposes, usually of a limited duration [1]. Today's, tourism has become a multinational business of global importance. This of course is due to today's Worldwide Web, a new era in social interaction and culture solely built around this medium, triggered in Hassan and Morteza [1]. Tourism is so important in countries where ancient civilization once existed, their remains of these ancient cities with their natural beauty and history that attract the potential tourists [2]. For that reason, it is a necessity, that the tourism professional use an optimal method of advertising to achieve its goals [3]. The question is what tools should be used to advertise? Which of these tools is the most effective, and what are effective methods of informing tourists in order of importance?

This study will explore one of strategies applied by local government in Indonesia particularly in a city due to increase tourism visit.

Indonesia is a country well known with thousands of beautiful places and tourism destinations. It ranges from Sabang to Merauke. One of most popular destinations in Indonesia is Bali. However, Cirebon is one of city in West Java and is located in strategic area in the north coast of Java island or in Pantura road as the gate to enter Central Java. Because Cirebon is located in strategic area or in intersection among Jakarta, Bandung and Semarang, this makes Cirebon valuable and potential to invest such as in hotel, restaurant, market area, education or tourism.

Some tourism objects are available especially historical, cultural or religious tourism. One of those is because Cirebon cannot be separated from the history of spreading Islam in West Java. In addition, Cirebon has a famous religious tourism destination. Most of local community are familiar with Sunyaragi Cave.

The Cave was built in 1703 under the local government territory in 15 acres wide. It is constructed mostly in the form of waterpark dedicated for the royal family member of Kasepuhan Palace Cirebon.

The development of Sunyaragi cave can be seen step by step. However, the development does not look quite seriously being completed. Therefore, local government is trying to set some plans to provide some more facilities in order to increase tourism visit especially in historical place, Sunyaragi Cave by managing public relations tourism. It implies a strategic managing that unites the stages: (1) defining the issue through research, (2) planning and creating the plan and program, (3) taking action and communication and (4) estimation of the program [3]. Accordingly, the local government concerns more to taking action and communication in order to reach the goal. The action is decided through Public Relations.

Well-known hotel brands have emphasized the need for professional Public Relation since development and expansion of a chain of hotels includes intensive support by the immediate public [4]. According to the view of Goymen [5] public relations, as a two-way communication between the organization (product or service) and public. However, the local government in the city requires a strategy as regional plan based on tourism regulation in order to promote tourism sector.

There are various ways to promote tourism industry. The use of a brand name as the media of promotion in getting the public attention works well as method of regional cooperation in tourism [6].

The role of a media is visible in the following figure [7].

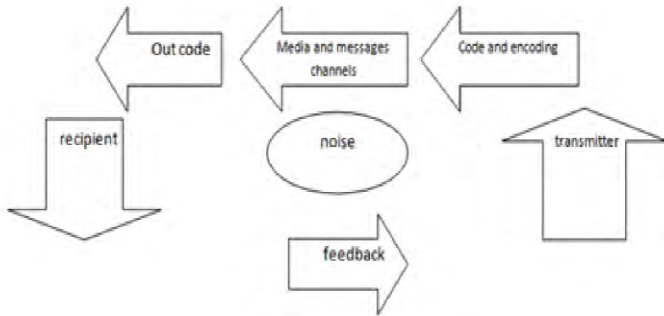


Fig. 1. The role of media in communication.

There are five transmitters, encryption, media, and the recipient out of code in establishing a relationship. Moreover, this connection is completed when the feedback is received, in between nuisance factor or noise cause problems in the relationship or hindering the development of the relationship [7]. In short, this shows that the media is a way to convey message to the costumers.

In addition, another way to promote regional plan in tourism is by using social media. Social media refers to the content prepared by users in order to share, discuss and cooperate by creating highly interactive environments using mobile and web-based technologies [8]. The virtual communities, organized by members of social networking websites, can be a target population, easy to reach by tourism companies [9]. However, one of the most important problems to face with while organizing operations of public relations in tourism sector is disobeying ethical principles.

Based on the background above, the researcher sets the main objective of this study to explore and investigate one strategy supporting the local government regulation on tourism sector and to have further description on how the strategy promotes tourism visit in one of historical sites in the city of Cirebon, namely Sunyaragi Cave.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

The objective of this research was to investigate public relations as regional strategy proposed by the local government and to find out how the strategy promotes tourism visit in Sunyaragi Cave. It was a qualitative study based on in-depth

interviews with the communication manager and some staff of the local government at the Sunyaragi Cave Office. The interview was administered by addressing some close-ended and open-ended questions to find out more detailed information due to some issues on tourism sector particularly at one of most famous historical sites in the city of Cirebon. A short observation was conducted in order to have further description due to number of the visitors and how public relations promote the sector in different ways.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A. Result

TABLE I. RESULTS OF IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW

Whether the number of the visitors increase every day or every month?	Yes
Whether there is an increasin gnumber of the visitor?	Yes, 70% increasing
How many visitors are coming to visit every month?	Approximately 10,000-12,000
What factors supporting regional plan in increasing the numbers of visitor?	Regional plans with some basic steps in the form of Public Relations through media partners and media social



Fig. 2. Results of observation.

B. Discussions

Based on the interview given to a communication manager of Sunyaragi Cave and staff, the strategy of using public relations has significant impact to the numbers of tourists or visitors in Sunyaragi Cave. According to the observation the increasing number of domestic and international tourists happens particularly during high seasons or public holidays. It is also one of the impacts of the improvement on infrastructure development in the city. There are approximately 10,000 to 12,000 visitors coming to enjoy the beauty, historical and ancient site every month. In addition, some regional plans are implemented under some basic steps proposed by Yayat [10]. One of which is the implementation of public relations using media partners and social media. Some basic steps included (1) Determining the goals; (2) Determining current situation; (3) Determining the aids and obstacles; (4) Developing a set of activities.

On the other hand, the management also applies some other interesting activities in order to attract the visitors. Sports agenda and facilities as well as local cultural performances such as Topeng Dance, Sintren, and drama performances are offered as a means of giving further description on Cirebon culture.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Tourism sector in the city is highly potential. However, it requires some plans to overcome the incomplete development in order to promote the tourism sector. As a result, soon will increase numbers of the visitors from domestics as well as international. Accordingly, the researcher believes that this study will be beneficial to the next further researcher to find some other constraints to be resolved due to the development of tourism sector in the city of Cirebon.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] S. Hassan and F. Morteza, "Tourism advertisement management and effective tools in tourism industry," *International Journal of Geography and Geology*, vol 3, vol. 10, pp. 124-134, 2014.
- [2] Z. Tomić, "Odnosi s javnošću, teorija i praksa," Synopsis, Zagreb – Sarajevo, 2008.
- [3] H. Salehi, Study Concept of Geoeconomics by Emphasizing the Capabilities in the Tourism Industry. Dissertation. Tehran: Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Branch of Tehran.
- [4] D.E. Deutschl, "Travel and tourism public relations," Elsevier Butterworth-Henemann, Burlington, pp. 23, 2016.
- [5] K. Goymen, "Tourism and governance in turkey," *Annals of Tourism Research*, vol. 27, no. 4, pp. 1025-1048, 2000.
- [6] W. Rong, and Z. Mu, "Research on the tourism effect and marketing strategy of convention and exposition industry, a case study of Shenzhen city of China," *Journal of Service Science and Management* vol. 6, pp. 151-159, 2013.
- [7] Masouleh and T. Morteza, "Tools international tourism advertising," *Journal of Marketing Specialist*, pp. 13-17, 2002.
- [8] J.H. Kietzman, Kristopher, I.P. H.Mccarty, B. Silvr, "Social media? Get serious! Understanding the functional building blocks of social media," *Business Horizons*, vol. 54, pp.241-251, 2011.
- [9] M.L. Kasavana, K. Nusair, K. ve Teodosic, "Online social networking: redefining the human web," *Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Technology*, vol. 1, pp. 68-82, 2010.
- [10] H. Yayat, *Dasar-dasar Manajemen*, Jakarta: PT Grasindo, 2016.