



Pentahelix Stakeholder Synergy in a Public Communication Perspective to Realize Digital Tourism

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Abstract

The tourism industry in Indonesia was the second-largest contributor to foreign exchange earnings, which absorbed approximately 10% (13 million workers) of the total national workforce in 2019. However, COVID-19 led to a drastic decline in tourists visiting Indonesia. The number of tourists in West Sumatra Province decreased by more than 50%, while the city of Padang experienced a decrease of more than 75% for foreign and 50% for domestic tourists. To solve this problem, the Padang City Tourism Office devised an alternative solution using digital platforms. The Padang City Tourism Office launched an application called SIDETA (Tourist Destination Information System), which contains information about tourism in Padang. This research aims to investigate how the collaboration between the Padang City Tourism Office and other helix elements contributes to the realization of digital tourism in Padang City and analyze the obstacles and challenges faced by the Padang City Tourism Office in building synergy with other helix elements. This research uses a qualitative and quantitative research approach. Informants and respondents were selected using purposive sampling. Furthermore, three data collection techniques were used: surveys, rapid appraisal, and participatory methods. The results show that 75% of the helix elements in Padang's tourism sector are unaware of the existence of the SIDETA, and 94.2% admit to not being involved in the creation and development of the application.

Keywords: *Stakeholder Synergy; Public Communication; Pentahelix Collaboration; Digital Tourism*

Received November 24, 2023

Revised May 02, 2024

Published Mei 29, 2024



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Introduction

The tourism sector is one of the leading and fastest growing industries. From the aspect of profitability, the tourism industry significantly contributes to the country's economic income and ranks third in the world after the oil industry and the automotive industry (Akhtar et al., 2021; Mukhammedrzaevna et al., 2020; ZiyadinDSc et al., 2019). It is proven that this sector is a priority sector for development and the second largest foreign exchange contributor in Indonesia in 2019 (Stefanus Purba & Setiawan, 2022). The tourism business as a driver of tourism activities can provide a multiplier effect on other sectors. The tourism sector is able to absorb around 10% (13 million workers) of the total national workforce in 2019 (Sari et al., 2021).

However, the Covid-19 pandemic that has hit all regions in the world including Indonesia, has made the tourism industry seem to be dormant (Susanti et al., 2021). As a result, the number of tourist visits to Indonesia also experiences a drastic decline every year. One of the provinces in Indonesia that feels its impact is West Sumatra Province, which has experienced a decrease in the number of tourists by up to 50%. In 2020, there were 8,041,868 people recorded, and this number dropped to 4,806,599 people in 2021 (Wahyudi, 2022). In line with that, the city of Padang has also experienced a very significant decline in the last three years,

where the decrease in foreign tourists is more than 75% and domestic tourists by more than 50%, as can be seen in figure 1 and figure 2.

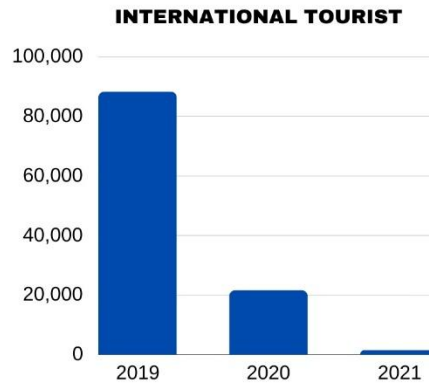


Figure 1. The number of foreign tourists in Padang City for the years 2019-2021 (Wahyudi, 2022)

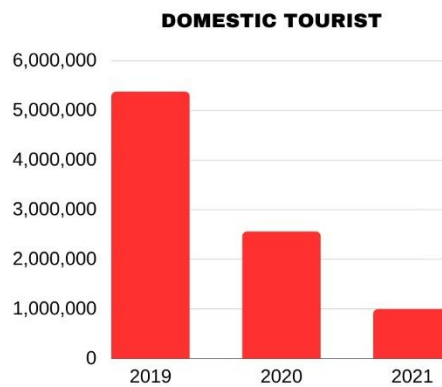


Figure 2. The number of domestic tourists in Padang City for the Years 2019-2021(Wahyudi, 2022)

Various efforts have been made by the Tourism Office of Padang City to increase the number of tourist visits, including issuing policies related to tourist visits, providing guidance and socialization to tourism stakeholders. However, the results are still not optimal (Furqan Oktowita Putra & Fachri Adnan, 2022). Another alternative solution that can be done is the utilization of digital platforms (Adeola & Evans, 2019; Arribe et al., 2018; Belonozhko et al., 2018; Bramantyo & Ismail, 2021; Filipiak et al., 2020; Gonçalves et al., 2022; Happ & Ivancsó-Horváth, 2018; Pencarelli, 2020; Sorooshian, 2021) which is in line with the National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) 2020-2024 and one of the three priorities of the Ministry of Tourism to increase the number of tourists visiting Indonesia (Indriani Sianipar & Politeknik Pariwisata Medan, 2019; Putra et al., 2020; Sulthan, 2017; Susilo, 2020).

In efforts to create digital tourism in Padang City, the Padang City Tourism Office has launched an application called SIDETA (Tourism Destination Information System) to enhance tourist visits. This application contains information ranging from tourist destinations, hotels, culinary options, as well as transportation available to reach the tourist locations, and information about the creative economy in Padang City (Rais, 2021). The success of implementing the SIDETA application is closely related to stakeholder synergy based on pentahelix collaboration. Achieving stakeholder synergy can be accomplished

through effective public communication among government entities, communities, academia, businesses, and the media in tourism. Synergy is the key to success in building relationships among actors gathered in tourism development aimed at avoiding policy and program overlaps among stakeholders (Maturbongs & Lekatompessy, 2020; Raseuki & Choiriyati, 2019; Rizkiyah et al., 2019).

This study aims to investigate the collaboration of the Padang City Tourism Office with other tourism helices from the perspective of public communication and analyze the barriers and challenges in communication faced by the pentahelix stakeholders of tourism in Padang City in building synergy.

Literature Review

Studies on public communication in the context of building stakeholder synergy in the tourism sector have attracted the interest of researchers and academics in various countries around the world over the past decade. Many of them have conducted interdisciplinary research with different focuses as well (Amin & Priansah, 2019; Kagungan & Yulianti, 2019; Labanauskaitė et al., 2020; Palazzo et al., 2021; Park et al., 2019). However, there is still a gap that needs to be examined, understood, and explained so that public communication can become a comprehensive study theoretically and practically applicable. Limited studies have deeply explored the synergy among stakeholders through pentahelix collaboration in the tourism sector.

Previous studies, "Synergy of Stakeholders in the Development of Halal Tourism in West Sumatra" (Syahril et al., 2020) and "Penta helix Element Synergy as an Effort to Develop Villages Tourism in Indonesia" (Chamidah et al., 2021), stated that the lack of public communication in pentahelix synergy results in suboptimal coordination and collaboration among the involved parties, leading to a lack of stakeholder vision alignment, cooperation, and coordination between tourism stakeholders, the government, and related stakeholders.

The following critical review will describe the research position to be conducted among previous research in the field of public communication studies. In the existing literature (Chandratama Priyatna et al., 2020) titled "Optimizing Information Technology by Government Agencies in Public Communication Activities" discusses public communication management in government agencies by optimizing communication technology according to the standards outlined in Presidential Instruction No. 9 of 2015 regarding public communication management. Another study (Imaddudin & Syafrina, 2022) titled "Government Information Synergy Through Public Communication in Handling the Covid-19 Virus Pandemic in Indonesia," where the focus of the research lies in the synergy of government information through public communication in handling Covid-19, shares similarities with the research the researcher will undertake. However, differences can be seen in the research models and methods used, as well as the research objects to be studied.

Method

This research employs a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, commonly known as mixed methods. Previous study (Malina et al., 2011) suggest that the use of mixed methods in research provides the best opportunity to answer research questions. The implementation of mixed methods in pentahelix synergy of public communication is developed into three data collection techniques. First, the Survey method which is conducted using questionnaires distributed to all pentahelix stakeholders, including the Padang City Tourism Office, the Indonesian Hotel and Restaurant Association (PHRI), the Association of The Indonesian Tours and Travel Agencies (ASITA), relevant departments of the Padang City Government, the Indonesian Tourist Guides Association (HPI), local tourism associations (Pokdarwis), Creative Economy Communities, academics from UNP, media outlets, and the Regional Tourism Promotion Agency (BPPD). To facilitate the distribution

and completion of the questionnaire, we used Google Forms by sharing the link through WhatsApp groups and email to each stakeholder.

The second method is the Rapid Appraisal method. This method is highly suitable for extracting qualitative data. Rapid appraisal is designed to obtain in-depth information about pentahelix synergy of public communication towards all pentahelix tourism stakeholders in Padang City. Pentahelix stakeholders are the subjects of the interviews using open-ended questionnaires. Lastly, the third method is the Participatory Appraisal method. This method is chosen in the research on pentahelix synergy of public communication to support the depth of the data to be gathered. In the field data collection technique, the researcher will involve all pentahelix tourism stakeholders in Padang City as subjects. The researcher conducts Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) where selected informants are those directly involved in pentahelix synergy in tourism management in Padang City. Additionally, this research is supported by references from various relevant documents and books to strengthen the analysis in the research report.

Result and Discussion

Stakeholders' Collaboration in Promoting SIDETA Application for Tourism Improvement in Padang City

The term collaboration is often used to describe the process of completing work that is cross-boundary, cross-sectoral, cross-relationship (O'Leary et al., 2010), or even cross-organizational and cross-national. This understanding is consistent with the definition established by Roschelle and Teasley, who state that collaboration more specifically as "mutual engagement of participants in a coordinated effort to solve a problem together" (Lai, 2011). Furthermore, Roschelle and Teasley explain that collaborative interactions are characterized by shared goals, symmetry of structure, and a high degree of negotiation, interactivity, and interdependence. Similarly, Camarihna-Matos and Afsarmanesh (Camarihna-Matos & Afsarmanesh, 2008), state that collaboration is a process when multiple entities or groups share information, resources, and responsibilities for a program of activities designed, implemented, and evaluated together to achieve agreed-upon goals.

Meanwhile, a more detailed and comprehensive definition of collaboration is articulated by Sanaghan (Sanaghan & Lohndorf, 2015) as follows.

"Collaboration involves a transparent and trusted communication process where all parties feel informed and can provide feedback and ideas to others with whom they work. Most importantly, collaboration involves shared decision making, where the decision rules are understood by everyone and all involved parties can inform or influence important decisions that can potentially impact them, especially resource allocation decisions"

The explanations of collaboration from these experts can be summarized as follows: collaboration involves various groups or organizations engaged in a process of communication and cooperation to share information, resources, and responsibilities for an activity or program designed, implemented, and evaluated collectively to achieve jointly set targets.

In line with the explanation regarding collaboration, it can be assured that collaboration is highly needed to enhance tourism in Padang City. The Padang City Tourism Office endeavors to promote tourism in Padang city through the SIDETA application. An application designed to facilitate tourists in obtaining information about things related to tourism in Padang City.

However, many stakeholders are still unaware of the existence of the SIDETA application. For example, in an interview with Mr. Iwan, a journalist from the Singgalang newspaper, on August 23, 2023, said:

“Not too familiar, because the application is not widely promoted, so it's not very familiar yet. And as for visitors, I don't think many of them go there (to the SIDETA application), they tend to search on the internet. So, they have their own references either through Instagram or searching on other media.”

Similar sentiments were also expressed by the academician, Mr. Trisna Putra, SS, M.Sc, as the Head of the Tourism Department at UNP. He conveyed that:

“So, regarding SIDETA, I actually just heard about it from my fellow researchers, when I opened it up, turns out there's something called SIDETA. Actually, the concept of SIDETA is good, meaning it facilitates tourists to explore the city of Padang.”

However, a different view is expressed by the private sector, represented by ASITA (Association of The Indonesia Tour and Travel Agencies), Mr. NadirsyahBakri, who stated that he had heard about the SIDETA application but was not aware of its development or progress. Here are the details of his interview on July 15, 2023:

“First, SIDETA was introduced in 2021, which mean it entered the pandemic situation. Perhaps this was also inspired by the pandemic, as there was no offline communication possible, so they developed SIDETA. Regarding ASITA itself, as the secretary, I haven't received any concrete updates about SIDETA. I've heard of it, but I don't know, maybe there's collaboration or cooperation with other associations related to tourism. There are many other associations related to tourism, and since I'm from ASITA, I'm speaking here as a representative of ASITA.”

Based on the survey results conducted among the elements of the pentahelix, namely the Padang City Tourism Office, Private Sector (ASITA), Academics, Print Media, and Community-Based Tourism Groups (Pokdarwis) in Padang City, it is shown that only 25% are aware of the SIDETA application, while the remaining 75% do not know about the existence of this application, as can be seen in figure 3.

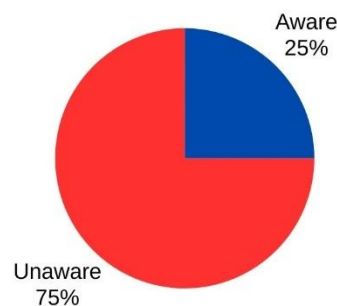


Figure 3. Stakeholders awareness of the SIDETA application

Some of the helix elements are unaware of the existence of the SIDETA application for tourists who will visit Padang City. This is directly proportional to the lack of involvement of helix elements in the creation of the application. Based on the survey results, it is evident that 94.2% of the stakeholders were not involved in the development of the SIDETA application in the future. These survey results can be seen in figure 4.



Figure 4. Stakeholders involvement in the creation of the SIDETA application

Communication Barriers and Challenges in Building Synergy

Collaboration among the pentahelix of tourism is indeed not easy; many things must be considered and seriously and meticulously thought out, such as the existence of the SIDETA application. Starting from the urgency of this application for the future development of tourism in Padang City, to how all helix elements can be involved in refining this application. Undoubtedly, many obstacles and challenges will be encountered in refining the SIDETA application and its socialization.

Some obstacles encountered for the continuation of this application are: 1) the lack of regular budget allocation from the Padang City Tourism Office for the future maintenance of this application, 2) the launching and socialization of SIDETA are included in other agendas, thus lacking focus, 3) there is no invitation for all stakeholders involved in tourism during the launching of the SIDETA application, 4) Staff mutations that occur within the Padang City Tourism Office environment resulting in difficulties in the development of the previously created SIDETA application. This is because the officials responsible for the creation of the SIDETA application were reassigned to other government organizations

Conclusion

The overall collaboration of the pentahelix of tourism in Padang City has not been well-established, as evidenced by the lack of awareness among some helix elements regarding the existence of the SIDETA application. Furthermore, the Padang City Tourism Office did not actively involve other helix elements, such as academics, media, the private sector, and community-based tourism groups/creative economy communities, in creating the SIDETA application. Consequently, achieving the sustainability of the SIDETA application as an alternative or solution to boost tourist visits to Padang City is challenging. However, a well-integrated tourism information system would be able to attract tourists. Through the application, tourists can obtain clear information and ease of access to tourist destinations, transportation, accommodation, and various other aspects related to their travel experience.

Acknowledgment

The researcher expresses high appreciation and gratitude to the Research and Community Service Institute (LPPM) of Universitas Negeri Padang for funding this research with research contract number: 1073/UN.35.15/LT/2023.

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