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Strengthening the Branding of Lake Toba

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Abstract.

Lake Toba is the largest caldera (giant volcanic crater) lake in the world, and it is located in North Sumatra Province. Lake Toba is designated as a priority destination by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy. Furthermore, efforts to preserve nature and culture as well as ancestral heritage are needed to support the acceleration of tourism development. Foreign tourist visits to Lake Toba reached the highest point in 2017, which was 270,292 people. However, in 2018 this fell 14% to 231,465 people. The purpose of this study was to demonstrate that the level of tourist visits is not stable; that is, apart from the increase, there has also been a decrease in the level of tourist visits; and this was due to the weak approach used in destination branding. Descriptive qualitative methods were employed, using SWOT analysis, and data were collected through a literature review and social media analysis. The findings showed the need for strengthening the branding of priority destinations of Lake Toba, by strengthening and emphasizing the integrated marketing process and the brand value chain. This strength can come from the lake's main advantages, namely nature tourism and cultural tourism. Accessibility to Lake Toba should also be improved. It is necessary to prioritize the process of creating branding of destinations and cooperation between the government, tourism industry, community, media and academics.

Keywords: branding destinations, tourism promotion, priority destinations

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1. INTRODUCTION

The tourism sector is a sector that is being developed and is expected to become a sector that can become a source of growth that can provide great economic benefits from revenue from foreign and national tourist visits that ultimately improve the well-being of people. The Government has carried out development plans in ten priority tourist destinations (DPP), Bali as the main tourism, in Indonesia. In addition, it is also carried out by accelerating preparations in five superior superior destinations, Lake Toba, Borobudur, Lombok, Labuan Low and Likupang. Lake Toba as one of the five super-priority destinations is a unique tourist destination, a large

natural lake located in caldera Mountain Super volcanic with 100 kilometers (62 mi) long, 30 kilometers (19 mi) wide, and 505 meters (1657 ft) deep. This lake is the largest lake in Indonesia and the largest volcanic lake in the world, located in the middle of the lake island Sumatra the northern part (north Sumatra province). Lake Toba is a tourism destination in terms of natural attractions where it has the beauty of natural wealth, geological, biological diversity, as well as cultural and man-made products which are unique in themselves as destinations and reasons for tourists to visit, wherein the eight cities that surround Lake Toba are as follows: Samosir City, Simalungun City, Toba Samosir Kota Balige, City North Tapanuli Muara Hutaginjang, Humbang Hasundutan City, Karo City, Dairi City, City Pakpak Bharat [1]. 9.4 million foreign tourists (tourists) who came to Indonesia in 2014 increased to 14.0 million in 2017, and 16.1 million in 2019. The annual growth rate of foreign tourist visits for the 2014-2019 period is around 11.3 percent. Domestic tourist visits (domestic tourists) also experienced an increase in the 2014-2018 period, from 251.2 million trips to 303.4 million trips, or an average increase of 5.2 percent per year. However, foreign tourists' trips decreased in 2019 to 282.9 million trips, so the growth rate of foreign tourists visiting in the 2014-2019 period was 2.4 percent [2] It is important that a country or tourism destination always forms a sustainable positive brand so that there is confidence, quality, competence, and integrity, and must be supported by substance, and clear and credible behavioral actions that are online with 'branding "attractiveness From the product, the physical services of the infrastructure and the provision of services that can create memorable tourist experiences to occur the publication of the mouth that creates positive perceptions that are absolutely necessary for a tourist destination [3]. An important management tool used to achieve differentiation and create a sustainable competitive advantage, and not only does advertising campaigns, but includes internal and external communications that are able to attract tourists to come and also provide an unforgettable experience as described in the brand [4] [5], and a process of creating a competitive identity, or brand, for a purpose (or place): the process of developing and implementing a Brand strategy [3]. This study aims to analyze the branding strategy, that is carried out internally (government, community, business, Academic, and media) in order to strengthen destination branding in Lake Toba in terms of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities. and threats in implementation with 4 A components (Attractions or attractiveness, accessibility, amenities, ancillary services.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Tourism

According to Law No. 10 of 2009 concerning tourism, tourism is a travel activity carried out by a person or group of people by visiting certain places for recreational purposes, personal development, or studying the uniqueness of tourist attractions visited in a temporary period. Meanwhile, tourism is a variety of tourism activities and is supported by various facilities and services provided by the community, businessmen, government [6] and it also provides an understanding of tourist objects, namely tourism objects "are anything that has uniqueness, beauty, and value in the form of natural products, culture and culture. and humans who are targeted or tourist travel destinations.[6]. There are four components that must be owned by a tourist attraction attractions, such as attractive nature, regional culture and captivating (artificial) performing arts; accessibility, such as transportation and local terminals; facilities or facilities (amenities), such as access to accommodation, restaurants, and travel agents ; additional services, (ancillary services), namely tourism service organizations, such as management organizations. tourism marketing [7].

2.2. Brand and Place / Destination Branding

The success of tourism is also determined by how perceptions of tourist destinations are formed.The American Marketing Association in Kotler defines Branding as "a name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors." is a product or service whose dimensions distinguish it in some way from other products or services designed to meet the same need. These differences can be functional, rational or real related to the product performance of the brand. They can also be more symbolic, emotional or intangible associated with a brand that represents or means in a more abstract sense [4], and a tourist's view of the brand and a collection of unique tourist beliefs that become the basis for tourists to choose tourist destinations [8]. Destination branding has the aim of identifying, describing, and distinguishing the destination and communicating it as part of its appeal for tourists to experience these features and characteristics that make it unique and attractive for the tourist destination [9], and also a set of marketing activities that ; support the creation of a name, symbol, logo, word mark, or other graphic that easily identifies and distinguishes a destination; consistently convey the expectation of a memorable travel experience

that is uniquely associated with the destination; serves to consolidate and strengthen the emotional connection between the visitor and the destination; and reduce consumer search costs and perceived risk. Collectively, these activities serve to create branding destinations that positively influence consumers' destination choices [10]. Meanwhile, identity is formed as a dynamic process consisting of four sub-processes that take place simultaneously. The relationship between the three elements of culture, identity, and the image is the core of the place branding model [11].

2.3. Brand and Marketing Process

Branding creates a mental structure that helps consumers to increase their knowledge about products and services so that it helps their decision making, it is a process, giving value to the company. The company must have a branding strategy that ensures consumers believe in the differences or uniqueness of the products and services provided [4]. The Brand Value Chain is a structured approach to assessing the sources and outcomes of branding by means of marketing activities that create value from the branding, the very beginning, Branding value creation starts with companies targeting actual or potential customers by investing in marketing programs to develop branding, including research, development, and product design; trading or intermediary support; and marketing communications until finally influen-cing the customer's mindset, buying behavior, and response as a result of the marketing [4].

3. METHODOLOGY

The research methodology uses qualitative descriptive methods with data collection using primary data, namely, surrounding communities, academics, media and business and by combining data collection, The study of literature and the study of documents. The instruments used are variables and indicators. The variables are an attraction, services, accessibility , destination branding and brand value .

According to Fredy Rangkuti, SWOT analysis is the identification of various factors systematically to formulate a strategy. SWOT can maximize strengths, opportunities, and at the same time minimize weaknesses and threats. *Strengths* is a strength factor that is owned by a company such as competent human resources, product variety, quality, differentiation as a differentiator from its competitors. *Weakness* is a factor of weakness or limitation in various ways, such as the effectiveness of segmentation, transportation. While the ability Opportunities can be said to be various situations that

provide opportunities for a company to develop. And threats are unfavorable factors for an institution or company [12].

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study conducting interviews with academics, business, community, government, and media (Penta Helix) with the afore mentioned variables provide an overview of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats at Lake Toba. Problems related to the management of the eight cities that surround Lake Toba, public awareness, and strengths are illustrated in the SWOT matrix below. Alternative strategy based on SWOT analysis in the curriculum below.

4.1. SO Strategy:

1. Developing and strengthening tourism products and activities, both natural and cultural, and artificial with the pattern of central government policies and applicable to local governments with reference to strengthening brand culture and identity as well as the image of Lake Toba. The pattern of development of attractions based on nature-based tourist attractions that strengthen branding identity with uniqueness, beauty, extraordinary views of each tourist destination, development following government policies, both leading, main and supporting tourist destinations so as to form strong Branding Images

2. Strengthening the destination branding of Lake Toba with a brand image, identity as the largest volcanic lake in the world that animates the vision, mission and logo that is understood by all stakeholders and the community and is able to communicate well to the market .The public understands the Lake Toba Branding and the central and regional governments together can be the brand ambassadors of Lake Toba

3. Involving all elements of the pentahelix both Academics, Business, Community, Government and Media. in strengthening Destination Branding as a concept and model in tourism development in Lake Toba , such as from the government side providing training facilities to ensure competence in tourist destinations, as well as academics helping programs in human resource development and program imple-mentation, community/community participation and active and knowledgeable in sustainable tourism activities, and entrepreneurs who contribute in taking part

TABLE 1: SWOT MATRIX OF LAKE TOBA TOURISM DESTINATIONS.

IFAS	STRENGTH	WEAKNESS
EFAS	1. Lake Toba has a wide variety of attractions, both natural, cultural and artificial. 2. Lake Toba already has a vision and mission as well as an attractive logo/brand 3. Activities that can be done vary 4.Amenities such as hotels, restaurants, adequate MICE facilities	Lack of and a decrease in macro and micro environmental conditions such as Lake Toba water pollution in the severe category which causes a negative image for tourists to come. Low public knowledge and awareness about the meaning and value of resourcesareas and tourism, resulting in a lack of services provided Lack of understanding of the local government to manage the area well, for examplein terms of spatial arrangements and tourist flows, as well as education to tourists andcommunity regarding respect for heritage and tourism potential in the destinations visited Accessibility limitations. Ineffective segment and target market
OPPORTUNITIES The influence of central government regulatory policies Technological development The involvement of entrepreneurs and academics and the media in building a Branding Destination	SO Strategy Develop and strengthen product attractions and tourism activities, both natural and cultural and artificial with the pattern of central government policies and applicable to local governments with reference to strengthening brand culture and identity as well as the image of Lake Toba Strengthening the brand image with a unique identity that animates the vision, mission and logo that is understood by all stakeholders and the community Involving all elements of pentahelix (Academician (Academics), Business (Business), Community (Community), Government (Government) and Media (Media Publications) in strengthening Destination Branding as a concept and model in tourism development in Lake Toba With the help of technology communicates the market by conveying hope for an unforgettable travel experience that is uniquely linked to the destination and consolidates and strengthens the emotional connection between visitors and the Lake Toba destination.	Strategy WO Conduct continuous socialization to the community and entrepreneurs regarding the concept of sustainable tourism, tourism awareness, Sapta Pesona which is also based on "sustainable environment" as one of the strategies to increase human resources and a positive image for tourists To improve understanding and cooperation between local governments in the management of Lake Toba so that quality, memorable services that create emotional relationships with tourists can be formed (aspect of Destination Branding) Building roads and accessibility that support tourism in Lake Toba Segmenting and targeting the market with the help of technological developments carrying out promotions based on customer needs and wants as create value for customers which is a process of strengthening branding Development of waste management in Lake Toba
THREATS Influence of economic and social conditions Level of competition with other countries	ST Strategy Adjustment of prices by diversifying products with economic conditions, and CHSE habits Improvement and strengthening of positive perceptions and branding in order to be able to compete with competitors	WT Strategy Conduct scheduled market research to help understand market wants and conditions and adjust them to market segments and targets so that they are able to compete.

Source: Research Results 2021

in building and selling Lake Toba destinations, as well as media communicating

destination branding by emphasizing brand values and identity that consistently convey the hope of an unforgettable travel experience that is uniquely associated with toba destination,by consolidating and strengthening the emotional connection between visitors and Lake Toba.

4. With the help of technology communicates the market by conveying hope for an unforgettable travel experience that is uniquely linked to the destination and consolidates and strengthens the emotional connection between visitors and the Lake Toba destination.There needs to be training for digital marketing promotions, and foreign languages in order to improve digital marketing skills by maximizing online media with the concept of destination branding and value branding.

4.2. ST Strategy:

1. Adjustment to prices by product diversification, finding new target segments with economic conditions, and CHSE habits. In accordance with the Brand Value Chain, it is necessary to adjust to market conditions, this can be done by diversifying products or by restructuring prices so that they are able to compete with competitors and or by looking for a new segment and target market with a new activity that can increase visits and also with the new CHSE habit.

2. Improvement and strengthening of positive perceptions and branding in order to be able to compete with competitors

4.3. Strategy WO

1. Conduct continuous socialization to the community and entrepreneurs regarding the concept of sustainable tourism, tourism awareness, Sapta Pesona which is also based on "sustainable environment" as a strategy to increase human resources and a positive image for tourists

2. To improve understanding and cooperation between local governments in the management of Lake Toba so that quality, memorable services that create emotional relationships with tourists can be formed (aspect of Destination Branding)

3. Build roads and accessibility that support tourism in Lake Toba

4. Segmenting and targeting the market with the help of technological developments, conducting promotions based on customer needs and wants as a create value for customers which is a process of strengthening branding.

5. Development of waste management in Lake Toba.

4.4. WT Strategy

Conduct scheduled market researched to help understand market wants and conditions and adapt to market segments and targets so that they are able to compete.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study provides an alternative strategy for strengthening Destination Branding that must be done in Lake Toba tourism destinations. Strengthening Branding by emphasizing the "Integrated Marketing" process and also the Brand value chain, where branding destinations are highly determined starting from Tourism Destinations targeting actual or potential tourists, by investing in marketing programs to develop branding, including research, development, and product design ; direct trading or with the support of intermediaries ; and marketing communication until finally, there is a customer mindset, buying behavior, and response as a result of the marketing program that gives rise to the decision to choose the product. A branding destination is a series of marketing activities that produce a product or service whose dimensions are easily identified with clear distinction and uniqueness, and able to be communicated consistently in fulfilling expectations for a uniquely unforgettable travel experience that also serves to consolidate and strengthen relationships emotional relationship between visitors, as well as reducing costs and risks for tourists because they already had a positive and basic perception of tourists choosing tourist destinations. In strengthening the branding of Lake Toba destinations, it is carried out by ensuring that the destination branding process runs. In addtional by exploring local wisdom, which is found and presented as a distinguishing identity and strengthens the existing Lake Toba Brand Image. The strengthening of Lake Toba's branding through alternative strategies in destinations must be a collaboration between the government, the tourism industry, the community, the media and the community.as principle of pentahelix.

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