

Analysis of the Islamic Broadcasting Communication Strategy of the Tourism and Culture Office of Langkat Regency in the Development of Tangkahan Nature Tourism

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ABSTRACT

Indonesia possesses abundant natural and cultural resources supporting sustainable tourism development, including Tangkahan ecotourism and Halal tourism, which require an integrated communication strategy and community participation. This study examines the implementation of the communication strategy by the Langkat Tourism Office through the theories of Communication Strategy and Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) to enhance the attractiveness of Tangkahan and raise public awareness of sustainable tourism. This research employs a qualitative case study method with data collection techniques including interviews, observations, and documentation, analyzed through data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The data validity is tested using source and technique triangulation. The results indicate that the communication strategy in developing Tangkahan tourism applies the 4A 1P approach, digital promotion, service improvement, and environmental education to strengthen the destination's competitiveness and support sustainable tourism. The natural beauty, interaction with elephants, and the use of social media are major strengths. However, challenges such as difficult access, geographical conditions, and weather present obstacles, necessitating adaptive, community-based strategies. Positive impacts of this ecotourism include increased community income, job creation, and growing awareness of cultural and environmental preservation. Community involvement in interactions with tourists also reinforces local identity and fosters inclusive and sustainable tourism development. In conclusion, the integrated Islamic communication strategy has successfully developed ecotourism, enhanced the economy, preserved culture, and encouraged community participation in sustainable tourism development.

Keywords:

Communication, Islam, Ecotourism, Tourism Promotion, Tangkahan

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A. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is known as a country rich in natural and cultural resources, making it an attractive destination for domestic and international tourists (Maudyakasih & Nuraeni, 2018). The island of Sumatra possesses extraordinary natural potential that remains largely unexplored (Izzulhaq, 2023; Putra Pratama, 2018). Tourism has become an important sector in economic and social development (Juwita et al., 2018). Besides serving as entertainment, tourism also has educational and recreational functions (Purwanti, 2016; Tunggal & Saadjad, 2019). Nature tourism has recently become popular (Meilisa & Firdaus, 2018). Indonesia's natural potential strongly supports the development of sustainable tourism (Perwirawati & Juprianto, 2019). Experiences of exploring nature can foster environmental awareness and enrich tourists' knowledge (Vicenovie & Situmeang, 2020).

Tangkahan in Langkat Regency, North Sumatra, is known as "The Hidden Paradise" due to its pristine and unique natural beauty, such as clear rivers and wild elephants (Sitepu & Sabrin, 2020). Since its opening in 2004, Tangkahan has become an ecotourism destination offering activities like elephant bathing and forest exploration. Accessibility from Medan and available transportation and accommodation support its growth. However, promotion remains suboptimal, especially in attracting local tourists. International tourists, mainly from Europe and Australia, still dominate most visitors. The local government has utilized social media and mass media as promotional tools, but message integration is yet to be optimized. An integrated communication strategy is needed to disseminate information more evenly and effectively. Promotion must also involve local communities, business actors, and the media to strengthen and sustain the strategy. The active role of the Tourism Office in designing innovative promotions that reach various market segments is key to the development of Tangkahan (Firdaus, 2022).

Promotion in tourism plays a strategic role in building the destination's image and attracting tourists (Buluamang & Handika, 2018). Messages must be attractive, relevant, and easily accessible to the audience (Pratiwi, 2018). Adaptive communication strategies are essential to reach broader markets (Daud & Novrimansyah, 2022). The communication theories of Rogers and Middleton provide a conceptual foundation for developing integrative strategies (Andrianti & Lailam, 2019). Publication support must exist at all local and international levels (Yanu, 2020). The government needs to provide strategic tourist information centers (Selviana, 2019). Active community participation significantly determines the success of tourism programs (Safitra et al., 2022). Communication strategies targeting all social layers, including the younger generation, will strengthen sustainable promotion of Tangkahan tourism.

In Islamic tourism, integrated marketing communication strategies are applied to promote destinations such as Santen Island, Indonesia, although they do not specifically emphasize Sharia elements (Reindrawati et al., 2019). The concept of the Halal lifestyle, which encompasses health, safety, purity, and human dignity, is increasingly integrated into Islamic tourism marketing communications and is believed to benefit not only Muslims but also all groups (Reindrawati, 2017). Halal tourism focuses on fulfilling the needs of Muslim tourists, such as Halal food, Sharia-compliant accommodations, and prayer facilities (Oktadiana et al., 2016). Therefore, effective communication in this sector must consider prevailing cultural norms and ethics (Baykal, 2023; Baykal, 2021).

Micro-segmentation strategies, which target the specific needs of Muslim tourists, are essential for planning effective communication in the tourism sector, including promoting Halal tourism as a lucrative business opportunity (Sánchez González, 2017). The use of the Arabic language in communication practices by tour operators in Malaysia has been proven significant in increasing tourists' comfort and loyalty to destinations, highlighting the importance of language in promoting Islamic tourism (Wahab & Yusof, 2015). In Indonesia, social media platforms like Instagram showcase Islamic expression symbols in marketing communication strategies for Equestrian and Archery Tourism, which have received positive user responses (Jaelani et al., 2019). However, despite receiving considerable attention, Halal tourism still requires improvements to align with sustainability principles through Sharia-based guidelines (Rhama, 2022).

This study aims to analyze the communication strategy of the Langkat Regency Tourism Office in promoting the Tangkahan destination to increase its recognition among tourists. An effective communication strategy influences perceptions and visitation intentions and raises local community awareness in supporting sustainable tourism. This research employs the Communication Strategy theory and the Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) concept from Kotler & Keller (2012), which combines various communication channels to deliver consistent and compelling messages (Pane, 2024). IMC also refers to the 4A 1P principles: Awareness, Attitudes, Actions, Advocacy, and Participation. This study is essential to understand the obstacles in promotion implementation and to formulate a more realistic, targeted, and sustainable communication strategy to enhance Tangkahan's tourism appeal.

B. RESEARCH METHODS

The research method used in this study is qualitative research with a case study approach, focusing on the communication strategy of the Tourism Office in promoting Tangkahan tourism. This approach allows the researcher to explore various aspects of promotional communication conducted by the Tourism Office, including interactions with visitors and local tourism managers. The case study was chosen because it enables a comprehensive analysis of real-world phenomena and helps to understand the social and cultural context behind the applied communication strategies. Using this method, the researcher can investigate various factors influencing the effectiveness of tourism promotion, such as the media used, messages conveyed, and responses from the target audience.

Data collection techniques applied include interviews, observation, and documentation. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants such as Tourism Office staff, tourists, and local tourism managers, allowing the questions to be adjusted according to the flow of conversation to obtain deeper information. Observations were carried out directly at the tourism site to monitor promotional activities, interactions between managers and tourists, availability of facilities, and field conditions covering accessibility and digital promotion. Documentation involved collecting supporting materials such as brochures, leaflets, banners, tourism office social media accounts, activity reports, and photos and videos of tourism activities.

Data analysis was conducted using the Miles and Huberman model, which includes three main stages: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. To maintain data validity, source and technique triangulation were used by comparing information from various



informants and data collection methods to ensure consistency and validity of the research findings. The conceptual framework of this research is described as follows:

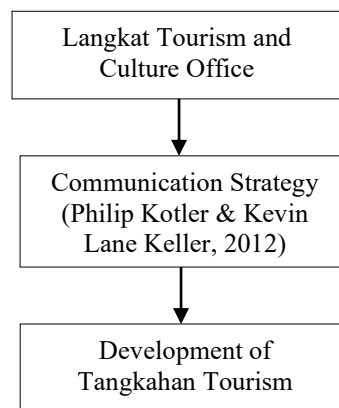


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

The research questions are formulated as follows:

1. What communication strategies does the Langkat Tourism Office use in developing the Tangkahan nature tourism destination?
2. What are the supporting and inhibiting factors in implementing the communication strategy by the Langkat Tourism Office for the development of the Tangkahan nature tourism object?
3. What are the impacts of implementing the communication strategy of the Langkat Tourism Office on the development of the Tangkahan nature tourism object?

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Islamic Communication Strategy Used in Developing the Tangkahan Tourism Destination

a. Implementation of the 4A 1P Communication Model

The Langkat Regency Tourism and Culture Office has developed the Tangkahan tourism strategy based on the 4A 1P concept: Attraction, Accessibility, Amenities, Ancillary Services, and Promotion (Sitepu & Sabrin, 2020). This strategy aims to create a deep tourism experience and encourage repeat visits. The main attractions include interactions with wild elephants, the natural beauty of Gunung Leuser National Park, rafting, and flying fox activities. Accessibility is enhanced through road improvements and public transportation, while comfort is supported by facilities such as toilets, prayer rooms (musholla), parking, food stalls, and accommodations. Additional services such as tour guides and information centers are also provided. All these elements are directed to strengthen Tangkahan's competitiveness as a leading ecotourism destination (Situmeang, 2020), through an integrated communication strategy emphasizing the harmony of elements and stakeholder synergy (Kotler et al., 2019).

Integrated Islamic Communication is a holistic approach combining spiritual, ethical, and organizational principles within an Islamic context. This approach emphasizes core values such as honesty, responsibility, and politeness, which are crucial for building trust and communication effectiveness within organizational environments (Aini & Fachrunnisa, 2023). These values originate from prominent Islamic scholars

who formulated communication principles aligned with Islamic ethics to create an ideal working environment (Harun, 2021). Moreover, prophetic communication utilizing new media and social media by religious leaders expands the reach of Islamic preaching (dakwah), enhances public trust, and improves fundraising effectiveness (Rasiam et al., 2023). Dakwah communication also brings spirituality into the workplace through compulsive, objective, and impulsive da'wah approaches (Liaqat et al., 2024).

The implementation of 4A 1P requires close coordination between local government, managers, and the local community. The main challenges include limited budgets and low environmental awareness among tourists. Therefore, environmental education must be part of the promotion to ensure sustainability (Saraswati & Afifi, 2022). Tangkahan also faces competition from other destinations such as Bali and Java, so maintaining service quality and building an image as a conservative and natural destination is essential. The communication strategy should prioritize educational and conservation values rather than merely visual promotion (Masyhadiah, 2019).

Integrated Islamic Communication is also applied in education to integrate Islamic values into the curriculum, encouraging the holistic character development of students (Ferdinan et al., 2025). In a broader context, this approach is used in crisis management and public relations, where integrated communication strategies combining conventional principles and Islamic values have successfully reduced cultural barriers and strengthened collaboration between public relations practitioners and religious figures (Saragih et al., 2023). In education, applying Islamic values has proven effective in fostering honesty and responsibility among students (Asfiati et al., 2023). However, the integration of Islamic communication models must consider the complexity of modern communication and avoid essentialist cultural views (Kasmani et al., 2017).

Periodic evaluations are conducted to assess the effectiveness of each element of the 4A 1P. Methods used include analyzing visitor data, local community responses, tourist feedback, interviews, and field observations. The evaluation focuses on accessibility, facility comfort, and tour guide performance. Evaluation findings form the basis for recommendations such as guiding training and trekking path development. Evaluations also emphasize the importance of inter-agency synergy in supporting the sustainability of the communication strategy (Kurniawan et al., 2021).

Evaluations of Islamic Communication Practices highlight challenges, strategies, and ethical considerations in Islamic broadcasting in the digital era. The tension between maintaining theological integrity and expanding the reach of dakwah on social media is a primary concern to ensure core values such as tawhid (monotheism) and adab (etiquette) are upheld (Simamora & Farid, 2024). Persuasive communication models such as dakwah and prophetic communication are used by institutions like Rumah Quran Aisyah Radliallahu'Anha to increase public interest in Qur'anic learning through various media channels (Mukhtar et al., 2023).

Challenges arise when social media is utilized by incompetent figures, potentially spreading incorrect religious information and confusing younger generations (Ab Kadir et al., 2018). Therefore, tabayyun, or verification of information before public dissemination, is a fundamental principle in maintaining the ethics of Islamic

communication in the digital realm (Harizan & Mydin, 2024).

b. Socialization Through Mass Media

The socialization strategy for Tangkahan tourism heavily relies on mass media, particularly social media, as the spearhead of promotion. The Tourism Office manages digital content through official accounts such as @disparbudlangkat on Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok, featuring visually engaging content of elephant interactions and tropical forests that effectively capture attention (Hidayat & Rizqi, 2021). Most tourists learn about Tangkahan via digital platforms, especially TikTok, supporting findings that visual content increases visit interest (Sahrin, 2022). Sponsored advertisements are used to broaden the reach to audiences interested in ecotourism. However, the government's official website remains outdated and lacks interactivity, complicating information retrieval.

Socialization is conducted persuasively and informatively through regular posts and visitor testimonials. Live streaming of ecotourism events and cultural festivals strengthens credibility and emotional closeness with the audience (Karman et al., 2022). Challenges also arise from extortion practices on-site. Digital reputation must be maintained by ensuring consistent real experiences. Therefore, the socialization strategy needs support from enforcement by local authorities such as Satpol PP, Police Sector (Polsek), and village officials. Responsible tourism behavior education should also be included in promotional narratives through captions and videos, such as campaigns like #CleanTangkahan or #SayNoToExtortion (Sintia, 2022). Digital promotion, local governance, and environmental education are key to building sustainable and safe tourism in Tangkahan. Visual content, simple language, and relatable narratives for millennials have led to increased interactions, comments, and positive shifts in the intention of younger audiences (Sobar et al., 2023).

c. Quality Services from the Government and Tourism Actors

Quality service is a strategic component in the development of tourism in Tangkahan. Through the Tourism Office, the local government provides public facilities such as restrooms, parking areas, rest spots, and prayer rooms that meet comfort standards (Sumiyati & Murdiyanto, 2018). The provision of trash bins and regular staff support efforts to manage cleanliness. Informative booklets, leaflets, and service channels such as telephone and websites also enhance the impression of professionalism. Basic infrastructure, including roads and signage, is designed to support ease of access, in line with the principles of physical evidence and service delivery in tourism services (Rahayu & Mutiah, 2021).

However, although the physical facilities are adequate, complaints remain regarding illegal levies by local individuals at the tourist bridge, which disrupt visitor comfort and perceptions. Monitoring illegal activities is essential because modern destination management involves facilities and regulating parasitic tourism practices (Pratiwi, 2018). Collaboration between the government, security forces, and the community is necessary to enforce regulations and impose deterrent effects on violators. Humanistic communication encourages social change through values of empathy, dialogue, and inclusivity. As a result, there is an increase in tolerance, social concern, and the empowerment of the Muslim community in daily life (Karimullah, 2023).

Tangkahan has competitive advantages such as white water rafting, flying fox, and elephant conservation, which demand comprehensive service quality improvement. Tour guide training should include service skills, safety procedures, and environmental education. This approach aligns with the concept of service blueprints in the tourism industry (Jayaningsih & Anggreswari, 2019). Furthermore, ticket prices and tour packages must be evaluated to remain affordable yet still reflect the economic value of the destination. The combination of professional service, environmental education, and field security forms the foundation to strengthen Tangkahan's image as a leading destination in North Sumatra.

Quality service in the Islamic context is fundamentally based on adherence to Sharia principles, ensuring that all services and products comply with Islamic law (Manik, 2019). This compliance builds trust and satisfaction among Muslim customers as it aligns with their ethical and religious expectations (Khamis & AbRashid, 2018). Beyond conventional service dimensions such as reliability and responsiveness, service quality in Islam also emphasizes devotion to customers and service providers' internalization of Islamic values (Farrag et al., 2022). Customer satisfaction and loyalty are strongly influenced by factors such as employee friendliness, service speed, and product diversity within Islamic financial institutions (Noviarita et al., 2024). Furthermore, successful service in the Islamic context encompasses cultural and religious sensitivity, so services are efficient and respectful of Islamic teachings (Abdullah & Robson, 2017). Islamic ethical principles such as honesty, transparency, and fairness are integrated into the service process, ultimately enhancing the overall customer experience (Abdullah et al., 2025).

2. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors of the Islamic Communication Strategy of the Langkat Tourism Office in the Effort to Develop the Tangkahan Natural Tourist Attraction

The natural beauty of Tangkahan serves as the main strength in the Langkat Tourism Office's communication strategy to attract tourists. The uniqueness of interactions with elephants and various nature-based activities supports producing visually engaging content for social media. Village governments and tourism managers optimally utilize digital platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok to introduce Tangkahan to a broader audience. Tourism managers have noted that social media posts often receive immediate responses from potential visitors seeking further information or expressing interest in visiting the site.

In addition to social media, WhatsApp groups are a fast communication tool among tourism managers and local communities. Digital technology accelerates internal coordination, expands the reach of promotional efforts, and enables real-time information dissemination, making the communication strategy more adaptive and efficient (Putri, 2019). This strategy is not one-way but participatory. Visual content created by Pokdarwis (Tourism Awareness Groups) and village residents strengthens a community-based approach that effectively reaches the younger tourist segment.

This study also emphasizes that communication strategies are influenced by the readiness of information, geographical conditions, accessibility, and local climate—all of

which affect promotional effectiveness. This approach enriches tourism communication models by stressing the importance of expectation management and message adaptation to environmental dynamics. Thus, Tangkahan's tourism communication strategy promotes the destination and fosters community involvement in a promotional narrative responsive to the local context.

From an Islamic perspective, social media strategically promotes halal tourism by enhancing accessibility and disseminating accurate information about religious destinations and halal services (Bhatt & Verma, 2024). The use of social media also influences tourist behavior, increasing interest and awareness of Islamic destinations such as Saudi Arabia (Azzam & Darras, 2025). Cultural and ethical sensitivity are key to creating a positive tourism experience (Yasin et al., 2025). User-generated and corporate-created content shapes the image of halal destinations (Wijaya et al., 2025). Challenges such as information authenticity, privacy, and the negative representation of Islam must be addressed (Talukder et al., 2024; Shakeela & Weaver, 2016). Community engagement, digital campaign strategies, and support from the government and stakeholders are crucial success factors in promoting halal tourism (Sommerfelt, 2024; Alam et al., 2024; Juliana et al., 2022; Mohd Suki et al., 2023).

3. The Impact of Islamic Communication Strategies on the Development of the Tangkahan Nature-Based Tourist Attraction

Tangkahan ecotourism in Langkat Regency offers natural beauty and unique travel experiences, significantly impacting the lives of surrounding communities. The increasing number of tourist visits has led to tangible changes in local economic, social, and cultural aspects. This ecotourism initiative is a strong example of tourism's positive contribution to regional development, felt by both tourism actors and the general public. Intense interactions between residents and tourists have given rise to new social dynamics, including patterns of cooperation, value systems, and a renewed spirit of cultural preservation. Public awareness regarding the importance of environmental conservation and local wisdom has also grown in line with the sustainability demands of the destination. The local government, through the Tourism Office, strives to ensure that development is carried out inclusively and sustainably.

The development of Tangkahan ecotourism has brought significant economic benefits to both the local community and the regional government through revenues from levies, small business taxes, and contributions from accommodations and other tourism facilities. This sector has stimulated the growth of infrastructure, transportation, and MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises), while also increasing the daily transactions of residents who run businesses such as food stalls, homestays, and local guide services. The government has also seen an increase in regional revenue (PAD), which supports development in other sectors. Furthermore, the presence of tourists has opened up new business opportunities and jobs, encouraging the community to become entrepreneurs in areas such as culinary services, homestays, rentals, and handicrafts, ultimately increasing income and absorbing local labor.

The development of Tangkahan ecotourism has also produced positive social impacts, such as strengthening the spirit of cooperation (*gotong royong*) and encouraging active community participation in maintaining tourism facilities. For instance, residents voluntarily repair the suspension bridge that serves as the main access point—an activity that reflects

their sense of ownership toward the destination. Moreover, increasing tourism has created employment opportunities for local youth, reducing unemployment and fostering community-based jobs. The positive social impact of tourism can enhance social cohesion when the community is directly involved in the management process (Haryono & Albetris, 2022).

Tangkahan's tourism development also contributes positively to cultural preservation and historical heritage. The community has begun to recognize the tourism value of traditional customs, local arts, and historical relics, resulting in the revival of various traditional art forms as tourist attractions. The local government supports this through cultural festivals and art training programs for the younger generation. This creates synergy between cultural preservation and the creative economy based on local values. Tourism can revitalize local culture if managed wisely and with community involvement (Yanu, 2021).

In addition to culture, environmental conservation is promoted by developing Tangkahan ecotourism. As a gateway to Gunung Leuser National Park, the area encourages the community to maintain cleanliness and biodiversity. Activities such as tree planting, waste management, and environmental education are routinely carried out. Local communities play an active role in maintaining ecosystem balance by directly engaging in tourism activities. TIES (The International Ecotourism Society) emphasizes that tourism must benefit conservation and empower local communities (Istiyanto, 2020). This ecological awareness fosters a harmonious relationship between people and nature, making the environment a key asset for the sustainability of Tangkahan tourism.

The main attraction of Tangkahan ecotourism lies in the authenticity of the experiences it offers. Tourists seek genuine experiences such as local culture, cuisine, and lifestyles. This motivates residents to preserve their traditions and identities. Positive feedback from tourists encourages the community to maintain its uniqueness rather than imitate other destinations. Modern tourists increasingly value authenticity as a primary criterion in choosing a destination (Izzulhaq, 2023). Thus, the development of Tangkahan ecotourism is a medium for cultural promotion and a powerful tool for preserving priceless local heritage.

D. CONCLUSION

The communication strategy implemented by the Tourism and Culture Office of Langkat Regency plays a significant role in developing Tangkahan Ecotourism. Social media, official websites, and various promotional activities have successfully disseminated information about the destination's attractions widely and effectively. The integrated approach through the 4A 1P concept (Attraction, Accessibility, Amenities, Ancillary Services, Promotion) has proven effective in creating appealing and high-quality tourism experiences for domestic and international visitors. The active use of digital platforms such as Instagram and TikTok has enhanced visual appeal and helped establish a positive image of the destination. Furthermore, the quality of services provided by local government and tourism stakeholders serves as a supporting factor for successful promotion. Community support in maintaining the environment and participating in promotional efforts has strengthened Tangkahan's position as a sustainable ecotourism destination. Economically, the presence of tourists opens new business opportunities, increases community income, and drives regional economic growth.



Social impacts include the creation of job opportunities and stronger community collaboration in tourism management. Culturally, there is a growing awareness of preserving traditional values and environmental sustainability. Thus, the synergy between communication strategies, sustainable management, and community participation forms the foundation for strengthening Tangkahan Ecotourism's competitiveness as a leading destination.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

- Author 1 : Designed and developed the methodological framework of the research, including the qualitative approach and data collection techniques such as observation, interviews, and documentation.
- Author 2 : Conducted data analysis using qualitative descriptive methods, categorized findings, and formulated interpretations based on communication and tourism theories to compose a systematic discussion.

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