

MARITIME TOURISM: BRAND COMMUNICATION OF MARITIME TOURISM DESTINATIONS IN LEBAK REGENCY

Suryaning Hayati¹, Engga Probi Endri², Nurul Aidin³, Luli Agustina⁴

Mercu Buana University, Lebak Regency Culture and Tourism Office

Author Correspondence: engga.probi@mercubuana.ac.id

ABSTRACT

The Covid-19 pandemic that has hit the world including Indonesia since the beginning of 2020 has had a significant impact on the tourism sector in Indonesia. Tourism in Lebak Regency is also among those experiencing the impact of the *multiplier effect*, abandoned tourist destination, business closing, economic income has decreases, which is caused by a decrease in the number of tourists to 83.57% in 2019. However, over time, tourist destinations in Lebak Regency have begun to reopen, with considerations based on vaccination achievements that have been above 50 percent and a commitment to implementing strict and firm health protocols. This policy certainly encourages the Lebak Regency Culture and Tourism Office to revive the nuances of tourism through programs to communicate tourist destinations. This study aims to describe the implementation of tourism communication within the framework of message construction on tourist destination brands. The paradigm of this research is constructivist with a case study method. Primary data will be obtained through interviews. The results showed that, in the first stage of market search analysis and strategy recommendations, the Lebak Disbudpar conducted market analysis research before establishing the Lebak Unique destination brand and launching the Lebak Regency tourism vision and mission; the next stage is communicating the brand, Lebak Disbudpar optimizes planned website and social media media, event publications, and informative and educative message concepts; at the stage of implementing the brand, Disbudpar Lebak organizes events, especially in maritime tourism destinations, surfing events, sports events, and plans to hold a kite festival; At the evaluation stage, it is carried out by measuring the impact on tourists and the community, especially on the sustainability aspect, to find out the contribution of the event to the community's economy.

Keywords: *tourism communication; maritime; destination brands*

INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic has entered its second year. It can be said that it is a long time to deactivate all forms of tourism activities such as the *hospitality industry*, including the economy of the community around the area. This greatly affects the tourism industry and foreign tourist visits.

The significant decline in the number of tourists directly impacts the occupancy of hotels in Indonesia. In addition, to workers in this sector. Around 12 million people in the tourism sector experienced a reduction in working hours, and 939 thousand of people in the tourism sector were temporarily out of work. On the other hand, the COVID-19 pandemic also directly impacts various jobs in the tourism fields. According to BPS 2020 data, around 409,000 employees in the tourism sector losing jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Similar to businesses in the culinary field, shifting tourism trends in Indonesia also have an impact on several food and beverages businesses. To survive, its industry must innovate along with changing consumer behavior. Because around 70% of people use *online food services (delivery, takeaway, and catering)* during the COVID-19 pandemic, restaurants should provide *takeaway services* by implementing *contactless service* (kemenparekraf.go.id)

However, over time, apart from the efforts of the central government to revive Indonesian tourism, local governments must also carry out strategies to encourage the recovery of the tourism sector in their respective regions. This effort is based on the different characteristics in each region, such as tourist destinations, features or superior tourism, culture and society, existing resources, and so on. One of the areas implementing this strategy is Lebak Regency.

Lebak Regency has *six fantastic* priority destinations, as well as the development of geopark-based tourist destinations that must be re-communicated to the public target of post-pandemic tourists divided into two categories, domestic tourists from JABODETABEK and foreign tourists from Malaysia and Singapore (Hayati, Aidin: 2021)

The results of previous studies showed that; 1) The pandemic condition caused a significant decrease in the number of tourists entering Lebak Regency tourist destinations, which amounted to 83.57% compared to the previous year; and 2) The pandemic caused the tourism sector of Lebak Regency to experience a *multiplier effect*, namely abandoned tourist destinations, economic actors closing their businesses, and decreasing economic income. A significant decrease in the number of tourists due to the pandemic contributed to the weakening of the Lebak Regency tourism sector as the second point in the study.

The Department of Culture and Tourism said it had made efforts to re-communicate Lebak Regency's tourist destinations by optimizing online media and zoom meetings. However, there appears to be a gap between the expected achievements in this case. Although the Lebak Regency tourist destination brand can still be promoted through online media, it is not in line with the actual conditions faced by business actors around tourist destinations and how the Lebak Regency Government deals with these conditions. Judging from previous studies' results, the multiplier's impact is very influential on the tourism sector. Therefore researchers must

study more deeply related to tourism, predominantly maritime. In maritime tourism marketing, brands are surveyed as media and messages.

Based on the description of the problem above, this research focuses on how maritime tourism communication is implemented on tourist destination brands in Lebak Regency? Implementation is studied using the concept of a destination brand, namely, the brand as a medium and the brand as a message.

TOURISM COMMUNICATION

Previous research relevant to this study was obtained from several sources. Research on the Tourism Communication Strategy of the Lebak Regency Culture and Tourism Office in Communicating Local Tourism after the Covid-19 Pandemic by Suryaning Hayati and Nurul Aidin (2021). The results showed that the Lebak Regency Culture and Tourism Office identified problems through online coordination meetings with all tourism stakeholders, distributing questionnaires to tourists, and direct requests or input from the community. The public target of post-pandemic tourists are domestic tourists from JABODETABEK and foreign tourists from Malaysia and Singapore. The program that is carried out refers to the MUSRENBANG and RENSTRA, communicates the six fantastic priority destinations, as well as the development of geopark-based tourist destinations. Efforts are being made to re-communicate the tourist destinations of Lebak Regency by optimizing online media and zoom meetings. The basis for preparing program evaluations refers to assessing the suitability of program design specifications, and evaluating the economic development of local communities for the construction of facilities and infrastructure. Evaluation is carried out by conducting supervision and approaches related to the effects of tourism development on the economy of local communities or those in tourist destinations.

Research conducted by Rosmawaty Hilderiah (2020) on Village Tourism Communication Problems in the Perspective of the Sawarna Village Community, Lebak Banten. The purpose of this study is to obtain a solution to the problem of village tourism communication. Using the perspective of social construction in the constructivist paradigm, with the FGD method. The results of the study indicate that from the perspective of the Sawarna village community, there are nine sources of tourism communication problems in Sawarna Lebak Banten village, which are also a solution to the problem. Among them are, both the community, community leaders, and the Sawarna village government, each of which is not yet communicative and creative, both in approaching, and in overcoming the existing tourism communication problems, and there is still a communication gap between them, due to the existing communication does not yet have "dual function" and the absence of village tourism communication media that can also be used as a medium for empowering rural communities.

Research on the Growth Potential of the Internet Generation in the Development of Tourism Communications in the Kepulauan Seribu DKI Jakarta by Ervan Ismail and Siti Dewi Sri Ratna Sari (2019). This study aims to obtain data on the potential for the growth of the internet generation among the young generation of the Thousand Islands DKI Jakarta and to find out the situation of the digital divide

and the availability of the internet and its use for the benefit of tourism stakeholders in the Kepulauan Seribu DKI Jakarta. The results of the study indicate that the local youth of the Kepulauan Seribu have the potential to become the internet generation to develop tourism communications and the Kepulauan Seribu human resources in the future. But they still need the ability to produce interesting content about tourism in the Kepulauan Seribu and disseminate it through digital communication. The digital-divide situation in terms of internet network accessibility and availability is not visible in the Kepulauan Seribu. However, the government needs to implement a tourism communication program in the form of designing and implementing innovative tourism support programs that involve the participation of citizens, especially the younger generation, such as training to produce digital tourism promotion content and mastery of foreign languages so that the younger generation can face tourism competition in the industrial era 4.0.

Another research is on the implementation of Jember Fashion Carnaval (JFC) Tourism Marketing Communication by Anisa Soleha Manaf (2018). The results show that the implementation of JFC marketing communications uses print and online advertising media, media sales promotion by participating in exhibitions at home and abroad such as festivals and cultural tourism celebrations, using public relations media such as interactive talk shows, press conferences, and seminars, using direct selling media and online marketing through the official website www.jemberfashioncarnaval.com, jembertourism.com, as well as social media Instagram and Twitter.

Tourism communication develops with the merging of several disciplines in one study of communication and tourism. The birth of this study discipline is part of the multilinear development of science with the merging of several disciplines. The study of tourism communication has a biological closeness to the studies of communication and tourism that gave birth to it. Communication contributes to theories of persuasive communication, mass communication, interpersonal communication, and group communication. Meanwhile, tourism contributes to tourism marketing studies, destinations, accessibility, human resources, and tourism institutions. The components of tourism communication described in the figure are as follows (Bungin, 2015):



Figure 1. Tourism Communication Component (Source: Bungin, 2015, hal 88)

In increasing the contribution of tourism to Indonesia's development, the analogy of communication as transaction theory becomes vital in tourism. How communicators package messages for their communicants (West dan Turner, 2007). Regarding tourist destinations, Pikkemart explained that the selection of tourist destinations was determined by two factors: pull factors consisting of attributes related to the destination and push factors consisting of personal characteristics.

Made and Anna (2013), in their research concept, explain that tourism is communicated so that transactions occur, therefore it is necessary to pay attention to what attributes affect message recipients in the message corridor that can provide stimuli and motivation for individuals in tourism messages, or termed as attributes, as evidenced by the number of research results and references related to tourism attributes. Indonesian tourism message makers need to know the essential characteristics from the side of tourists/potential tourists so that the messages built can fulfill the needs of tourists/potential tourists and encourage tourist visits to Indonesia" (Cakici dan Harman (2007).

Made and Anna's research (2013) concluded that all destination attribute variables received good preferences from respondents with different levels. The three highest priority attributes of destinations, or things that become the main attributes of tourists and potential tourists when determining Indonesian destinations, are safety and security, physiography, and culture. The following attributes are activities, facilities/superstructure, marketing/personal proximity, events, and entertainment. This research proves that the attributes of safety and security are the priority for tourists/prospective foreign tourists.

Destination Brand

Destination *brand* advertising aims to introduce destination products to sell them in the tourism market. Like other products, to be able to sell, the product is imaged through a process of social construction; the product must also be communicated to the public. In sharing products, it is necessary to understand several concepts of communicating a product to the public. Brannan (2005) says every *brand* must know the communication hierarchy (Bungin, 2015).

Branding has several principles: consistency, clarity, continuity, visibility, and authenticity. Consistency is the essential *brand* rule for a product; consistency concerns all product dimensions, including marketing channels, how staff serves customers, social responsibility, and even investment planning. The clarity in branding concerns how a brand describes the identity of a destination that distinguishes it from other destinations. *Brand* clarity is based on the destination vision, destination focus, and tourism locus that is easy to understand and interpret. Clarity is unique and has relevance for travelers' decisions. Continuity means that the destination should not change the *brand* for reasons of change because a successful and strong *brand* is a *brand* that is known continuously (Bungin, 2015).

In some instances, *brand* visibility will support the *brand* image in the eyes of tourists and become essential to achieve a more excellent mind-share destination brand for tourism. *Brand* authenticity is directed at the thoughts and actions of everyone at a destination, focusing on creating originality and the feeling in tourists to

own, use or perform unique searches, even if they are unaware of it.

METHODOLOGY

The paradigm of this research is constructivism. This paradigm views social science as a systematic analysis of *socially meaningful action* through direct and detailed observations of social actors concerned with creating and maintaining or managing their social world (Hidayat, 2003). Researchers use the constructivist paradigm because researchers want to get a development of understanding that helps the process of interpreting an event.

The research method used is a case study. A case study is a type of approach in research that examines a case intensively, in-depth, in detail, and comprehensively (Elvinaro, 2011). Case study research allows researchers to collect detailed and rich information, covering the dimensions of a particular case or several small cases, in a wide range. A good case study is able to highlight the various factors that govern communication in a given situation, illustrate its uniqueness, while at the same time trying to offer insightful insights that have wider relevance.

Researchers conducted in depth interviews directly with general questions, which allows the informant to provide open answers to the questions asked. The key informants in this study were the Head of Destinations, Mrs. Luli Agustina, S.Hut., M.Sc. He is a party who contributes directly in communicating local tourist destinations in Lebak Regency through communication programs so that he can provide concrete answers and descriptions regarding the implementation of maritime tourism communications as required in this research. The informant of this research is Marketing, Mr. Aditya Nugraha, S.Par., M.H. He is the party responsible for communicating the brand of Lebak tourism destinations and attractions through marketing and promotion activities. And the Pantai Kelapa Warna Tourism Awareness Group, Mr. Vandenharr. He is the Deputy Chair of the Kelapa Warna Beach Pokdarwis who was recommended by Mrs. Luli Agustina, S.Hut., M.Si to provide information about maritime tourism as needed in this research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Lebak Culture and Tourism Office (Disbudpar Lebak) has made integrated communication efforts involving all elements in Lebak Regency to communicate the Lebak Unique destination brand. Recommendations for analysis and market search strategies in 2018, carried out in 2018 before launching the Lebak Regency tourism vision and mission. In the market analysis recommendations, several things are set:

1. Lebak Unique Brand as a tourist destination brand for Lebak Regency
2. The top *six fantastic* destinations are Sawarna, Baduy, Bagedur, Multatuli Museum, Kasepuhan Citorek, and Cikuya Tea Gardens.
3. Featured destinations are determined based on uniqueness based on the number of visitors characteristic of Lebak Regency, reflecting the culture of Lebak Regency, and the highest number of tourists.
4. Mapping the potential of 228 tourist destinations
5. Target domestic tourists (domestic tourists) and foreign tourists

The underlying thing is regarding the analysis recommendations and market

search strategies which have a market analysis that has been made, research for anpas (read: market analysis) was carried out in 2018 before launching the tourism vision and mission of Lebak Regency by choosing to have the data, software, and hardware so that an answer can be obtained as to why the brand is Lebak Unique, what and who is our target market, and in which area; it has also been stated in the market analysis. Regarding the communication efforts made by the Department of Culture and Tourism in communicating the brand of tourist destinations in Lebak Regency, utilizing social media to understand how the tourism brand can be conveyed to the manager and the community.

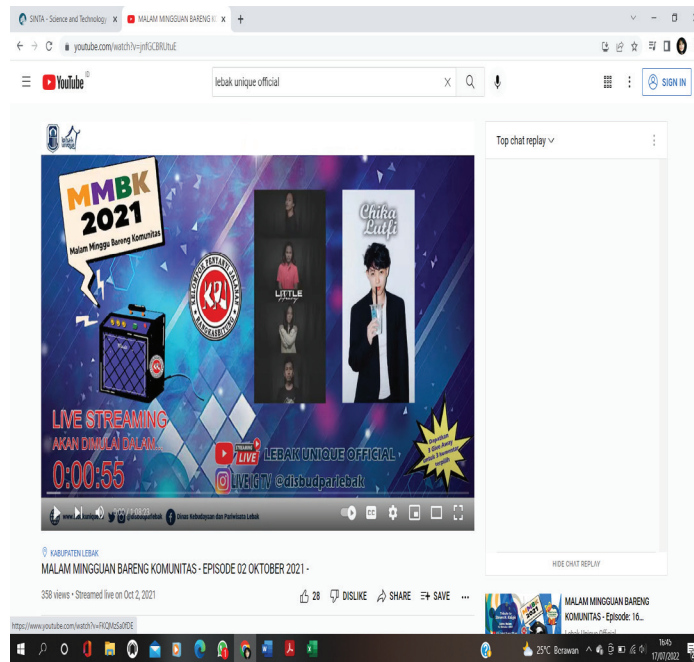


Figure 2. Youtube Official Lebak Unique

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jnfGCBRUtuE>

The efforts made in communicating the Lebak Unique destination brand are dominated by the management of website media and social media (Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter). Among the most influential media are the IG account @disbudparlebak, the Lebak Unique Official youtube channel, and the website <https://lebakunique.id/>. This website and social media are managed in a planned manner. The following is a description of Lebak Disburpar's media management:

1. Every day there are at least three posts, including greetings for big day celebrations, e-craft products, culinary, destination promotions, and Lebak Disbudpar activities.
2. Event publication starts from pre-event to the implementation of activities, both in the form of videos and releases.
3. Composing the message concept through themes and colors, the main branding is blue, according to the basic color of the Lebak Unique brand.
4. Educational messages on posts on websites and social media.

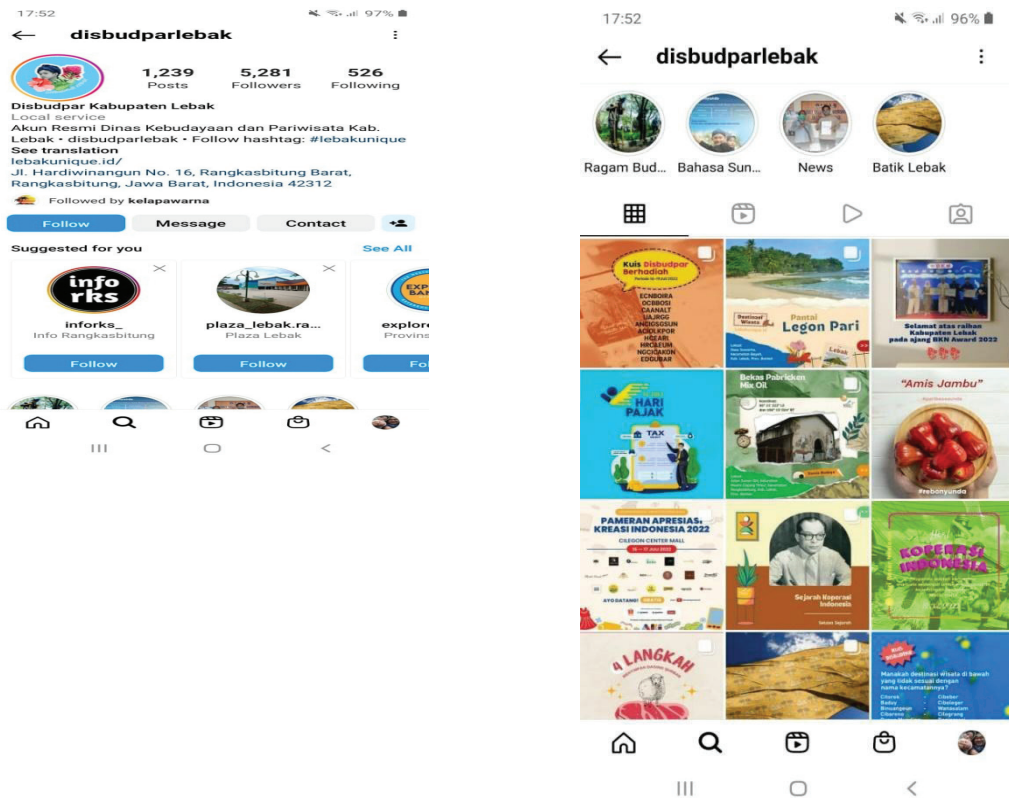


Figure 3. Instagram Disbudpar Lebak
Source: <https://www.instagram.com/disbudparlebak/>

This study found data about the Lebak Unique brand (<https://Lebak Unique.id/filosofi-logo>), and get the following picture:



Figure 4. Logo Lebak Unique

Color Philosophy:

1. Blue means universal,
2. Green means creativity and friendly to nature,
3. Orange color symbolizes innovation as well as innovative,

4. Red color symbolizes strength and spirit,
5. Magenta is a symbol of the balance of common sense and practicality.
6. The black or white color in the word Lebak is a symbol that Lebak can adapt according to the progress of the times.

Shape Philosophy:

The shape of the Lebak Unique Logo resembles the shape of *Leuit* which is a characteristic of the local wisdom of the Indigenous Peoples in Lebak Regency as a place to store rice harvests, a symbol of food security for the Baduy Tribe and the Kasepuhan Community. Food security is one of the keys to community welfare by meeting food needs independently. Through this symbol, it is hoped that Lebak will be able to independently improve the welfare of its people with local wisdom in Lebak Regency. The heart symbol on the letter Q means that the people and government of Lebak Regency are expected to work with heart and work sincerely so that what is achieved can be enjoyed with a happy heart.

On the other hand, regarding the community's contribution, as referred to by the key informant, the researcher asked the Deputy Chairperson of the Pantai Kelapa Warna Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) about the efforts made in communicating tourist destinations, creating content to be uploaded on social media, especially Instagram and Tiktok. , and Facebook; this is Kelapa Warna's account, there is also youtube, but this is a personal channel. Social media manager at the Kelapa Warna tourist destination.

The support of business owners such as hotels and culinary delights to communicate the Lebak Unique brand, Lebak Unique Branding on maritime tourism, which is highlighted because it has a 91KM coastline, only in the southern region, and indeed focuses on maritime with the potential of the south sea which has its peculiarities, the waves are not like Anyer, such as Sawarna Beach, Bagedur, and others similar to Pelabuhan Ratu. This is what is integrated with tourism because we also want fishermen and other coastal communities to contribute to tourism because tourists must look for uniqueness when they visit tourist objects. , whether it's culinary or creative products.

The efforts of Disbudpar in introducing the Lebak Unique brand, especially in maritime tourism with the six great brandings, it includes marine tourism, including Bagedur and Sawarna, but focus, services, and other OPD2 are also in the area which is included as priorities. The first, in Sawarna, has an international surfing event held in August. This surfing event in Sawarna is because the waves have a characteristic. This is one of our strategies and efforts to introduce Sawarna. In 2010, there were possibilities of hundreds of tourists from Australia, Denmark, and Sweden, surfed in Sawarna. Starting to be abandoned because nature in Sawarna is uncertain about what month the waves are good for. We have also held cultural events in Sawarna, a mix of cultural and maritime affairs and music performances. If in Bagedur, the possibilities are different again, such as sports events, healthy walks, and Zumba, and in the future, there will be a kite festival.

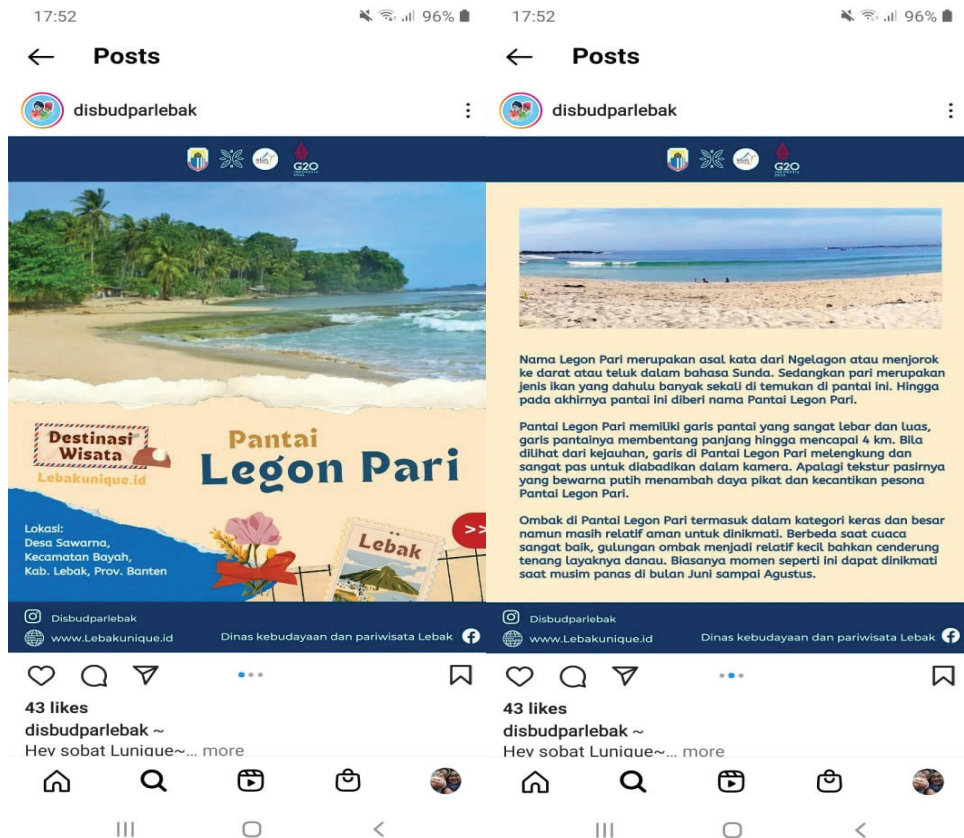


Figure 5. Instagram Disbudpar Lebak
Source: <https://www.instagram.com/disbudparlebak/>

Regarding the spread of messages, especially on maritime tourism, maximizing social media, the same tagline, Lebak Unique, wherever the destination is, one slogan, one motto. The Lebak district government has also endorsed artists for making videos in Sawarna, which have been uploaded on Instagram and Youtube. In Bagedur also already, Budi Dalton to introduce tourism potential in Bagedur. Communications of the tourism office in Lebak to introduce maritime tourism through social media, e-posters, videos, and in some cases, also pay attention to messages and education so that potential tourists know the philosophy of the destination.

The tourist target of the Lebak Culture and Tourism Office is not limited to domestic tourists but also foreign tourists. It can be seen that foreign tourists visit Australia, Pakistan, and the Netherlands. But the tourism office has never held an event abroad. Other efforts made by Disbudpar and the community managing tourist destinations such as Pokdarwis, apart from social media, are also through events routinely carried out and programmed. And for every event that is held, publications lead to social media. The events referred to in maritime tourism destinations are: Disbudpar Lebak held a Surfing Event attended by foreign tourists from *Australia, Denmark, and Sweden*. Disbudpar Lebak held Sports Events such as health walks and Zumba, which were participated in by domestic tourists and the community around the event location. Disbudpar Lebak will hold a Kite Festival event. Pokdarwis Kelapa Warna held a Band Festival event attended by domestic tourists. In addition to events, the Lebak Disbudpar also utilizes key opinion leaders such as artist endorse-

ments for making videos at Sawarna Beach or content creators to communicate tourism in Lebak.

Regarding the completeness of information about Lebak tourist destinations, the Lebak Regency Culture and Tourism Office has a Lebak Unique.id website, which contains information on Tourist Destinations, Lodging and Culinary, Tourism Events, Creative Economy, Tourism Map.

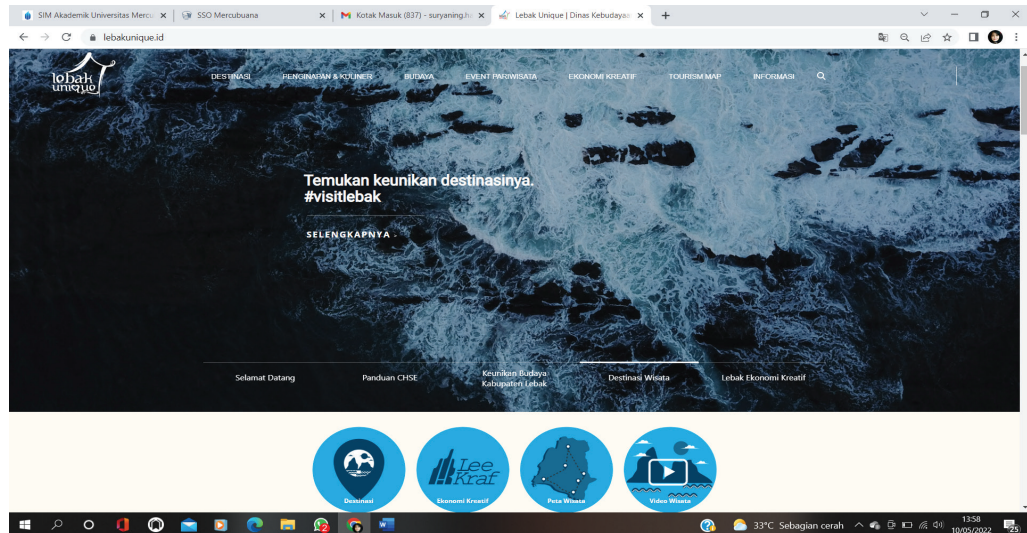


Figure 6. Website Lebak Unique
Source: <https://lebakunique.id/>

Brand implementation is a tangible manifestation of the whole process of building branding. The form of activity in communicating the brand is not only through the media, but also through programs. There are many programs in the calendar of events in order to promote tourism destinations. An example of the 2020 program is in Lebak Unique, we'll see. This Calendar of Events is expected to refresh the memories of tourists to visit Lebak Regency. The researcher then traced the Calendar of Events referred to by the informant. Here is a picture of the Calendar of Events on the Lebak Unique.id website:



Figure 7. Calendar of Events
Source: <https://lebakunique.id/>

Based on the Calendar of Events above, it can be seen that maritime tourism is held in January, namely the Bagedur/Sawarna New Year Holiday.

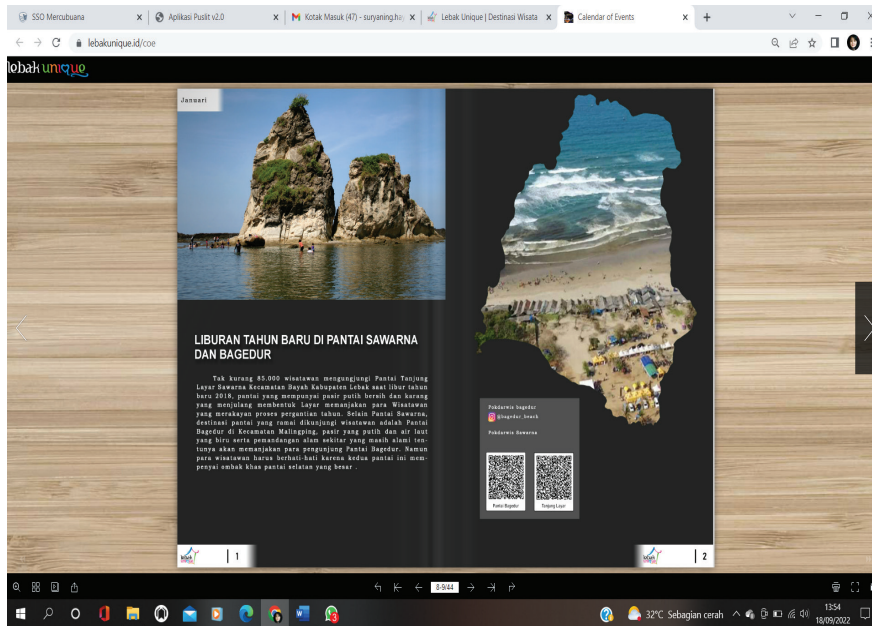


Figure 8. Calendar of Events
Source: <https://lebakunique.id/coe>

Another maritime tourism held in August is the South Lebak Festival (Sawarna and Nelayan). This event is a routine agenda that is held every year.

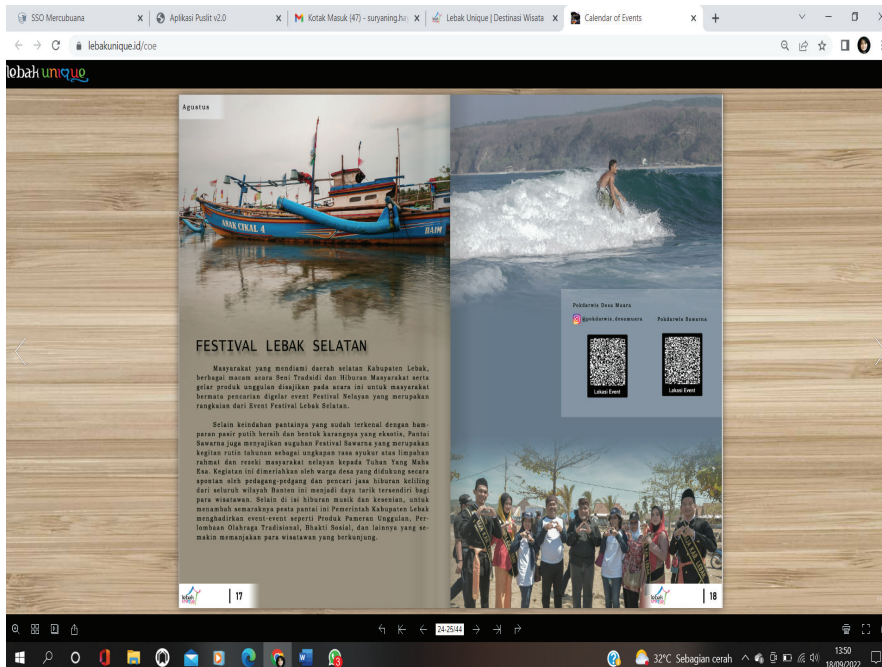


Figure 9. Calendar of Events
Source: <https://lebakunique.id/coe>

In the final stage, namely, the evaluation process of communication activities carried out are communication activities through social media, evaluations carried

out through data insight, communication activities through events, evaluations are carried out to measure the impact on tourists and the community, especially on the aspect of sustainability, not only in terms of increasing numbers. tourists, but also its contribution to the community's economy.

CONCLUSION

The conclusions obtained from this research are: In the first stage of market search analysis and strategy recommendations, Lebak Disbudpar conducts market analysis research before establishing the Lebak Unique destination brand and launching the Lebak Regency tourism vision and mission; The next stage is communicating the brand, The Lebak Disbudpar optimizes planned website and social media media, event publications, and the concept of informative and educative messages., The fourth stage is implementing the brand; Lebak Disbudpar organizes events, especially in maritime tourism destinations. Surfing Events, Sports Events, and plans to hold a Festival Kite. The last stage, namely evaluation, is carried out by measuring the impact on tourists and the community, especially on the sustainability aspect, to find out the contribution of the event to the community's economy.

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