

## Analysis of Jungle Zone Tourism Communication at Tahura, Berastagi

Nurbani<sup>1</sup>, Sabilla Tri Ananda<sup>2</sup>

<sup>12</sup>Universitas Sumatera Utara

nurbani@usu.ac.id<sup>1</sup>, sabilla.ananda@usu.ac.id<sup>2</sup>

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### Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui bagaimana strategi komunikasi pariwisata pada objek wisata alam Jungle Zone di Tahura Berastagi dalam persepsi pengelola dan pengunjung. Selain itu, penelitian ini juga menganalisis bagaimana pemahaman mengenai pariwisata berkelanjutan untuk meminimalisir dampak negatif terhadap lingkungan oleh pengelola Jungle Zone. Dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data berupa wawancara, observasi dan kajian literatur, peneliti mewawancarai 5 informan utama yang terdiri dari satu pengelola dan empat pengunjung. Berdasarkan hasil analisis data, dapat disimpulkan bahwa pengelola Jungle Zone menerapkan strategi pemasaran Word of Mouth Communication dengan memberikan fasilitas bebas biaya retribusi kepada pengunjung yang merupakan pelajar dan penduduk setempat, dan berharap pengunjung tersebut mempromosikan Jungle Zone ke kerabatnya. Strategi promosi pariwisata juga diterapkan dengan aktif mengunggah aktivitas pengunjung pada akun Instagram Jungle Zone. Dalam aspek keberlanjutan lingkungan, pengelola memahami pentingnya perawatan lingkungan Tahura semaksimal mungkin untuk meminimalisir dampak negatifnya terhadap lingkungan.

**Keywords:** Jungle Zone, Tourism Communication, Nature Education

### Abstract

*This research aim to analyze the tourism communication strategy implement in managing Jungle Zone in Tahura, Berastagi in the perception of management and visitors of Jungle Zone. Additionally, this research analyze how Jungle Zone managemers understand sustainable tourism to minimize negative environmental impacts. Using a qualitative method with data collection techniques including interviews, observations, and literature reviews, the researcher interviewed 5 key informants, one manager and four visitors. Based on the data analysis results, it can be concluded that the management of Jungle Zone implements a Word of Mouth Communication marketing strategy by providing free admission to visitors who are students and local residents, hoping that these visitors will promote Jungle Zone to their relatives. Tourism promotion strategies are also implemented by actively uploading visitor activities to the Jungle Zone Instagram account. In terms of environmental sustainability, the management understands the importance of caring for the Tahura environment as much as possible to minimize its negative impact on the environment.*

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## Introduction

Berastagi Forest Park (Tahura) is a popular heritage site protected for nature education in North Sumatra. However, this function has changed in the last two years with the presence of Jungle Zone as a tourist attraction. Although it has become a popular tourist site, this attraction has the potential to damage the Tahura. The Jungle Zone, which is part of the Berastagi Grand Forest Park, (Tahura) is one of the popular natural attractions in North Sumatra.

The success of a tourist destination is inseparable from the role of various parties. Tourism has emerged as a vital driver of economic growth and cultural exchange. However, the rapid development of the tourism industry has led to significant environmental degradation, threatening natural resources and ecosystems. Effective tourism communication and environmental care are crucial for promoting sustainable tourism that minimize negative environmental impacts while maximizing benefits for surrounding communities. This study aims to explain the tourism strategies implemented by the management of Jungle Zone and how visitors perceive and understand the sustainable tourism strategies used by Jungle Zone management to minimize the negative impact of Jungle Zone's presence on Berastagi Grand Forest Park (Tahura).

## Literature Review

To establish it as a field of study, tourism communication is supported by various other disciplines that contribute significantly to its theory, as well as other more distant disciplines. The closest discipline is marketing and marketing communication. This discipline contributes to communication theory, marketing strategies, marketing elements, product theory, and brand and branding theory (Bungin, 2017).

Tourism communication is one piece of evidence of the development of communication in the tourism sector. This can happen because tourism has great potential as a means of communication. Communication helps tourism marketing in various elements. In communication media, various marketing channels, destinations, accessibility, as well as human resources and institutional media channels for tourism are available. Communication also plays a role in preparing the message content that should be conveyed to the public or tourists about what they should know about the tourist destination.

## Methods

This research is qualitative research with a constructivist paradigm. In this study, a combination of observation, interviews, and literature review was used as the data collection technique (Creswell, 2018). Using purposive sampling technique, the main informants numbered 5 people, namely the main informant is one manager of Jungle Zone, and 4 visitors to Jungle Zone. The researcher also conducted direct observation at the Jungle Zone tourist attraction to see the condition of the tourist destination. Data analysis techniques were performed using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) techniques, namely data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification.

## Results

The Jungle Zone at Tahura, Berastagi has been established since 2022. Based on observation, it can be seen that there are various facilities available in Jungle Zone for enjoying natural tourism, including 17 ATVs, children's car scooters, and a camping area for educational natural tourism. Based on the interview results, it can be seen that promotional activities through the Instagram social media platform help tourists learn information about the tourist attractions available in Jungle Zone.

Based on observation, the Jungle Zone Instagram account is managed quite well and actively uploads the fun activities of visitors there, as well as sharing information about discounts and other promotions. That Instagram account currently has 5,207 followers and follows 54 accounts. Nevertheless, the tourism marketing strategy implemented through social media is still

not optimal because, in using Instagram, there is nothing that can attract tourists' attention, such as cinematic videos, beautiful photography, or a well-organized and neat feed design. Based on an interview with Mr. Budi, the manager of Jungle Zone, the revenue for managing Jungle Zone is obtained thru a fee system charged to visiting visitors and vehicle parking fees.

However, local residents specifically students are not charged an entrance fee, they are only expected to help promote Jungle Zone to their relatives.

The information manager, who also manages Jungle Zone, stated that the government responsible for maintaining Tahura is aware of the potential danger of Jungle Zone to the environmental sustainability of Tahura and is working to minimize the potential danger as much as possible. On the other hand, visitors enjoy the Jungle Zone facilities without any concern about their potential damage to the environment.

Based on interviews with informants who are visitors, various reasons drive them to come to Jungle Zone. One informant, named Resvina, comes to Jungle Zone quite frequently because she is a local resident and a student, so she is not charged an entrance fee. Additionally, the Jungle Zone is very close to informant's residence. Similar reasons for visiting were given by 3 other informants, whose names are Helmika, Zefanya, and Febrina.

### **Discussion**

In order for tourism communication to run smoothly and be accepted by the public, a deep understanding and knowledge of the market is required. Word of Mouth (WoM) Communication is one of its strategies. WoM is product information spread by individuals to other individuals. Because we get information from people we know, WoM is more reliable and trustworthy than messages from more formal marketing channels. And, unlike advertising, WoM is often accompanied by social pressure to conform to the recommendations given (Solomon, 2020).

WoM is very effective when consumers are relatively unfamiliar with the product category. One way to reduce uncertainty is by talking about it. Communication channels to reach audiences certainly vary, and in this case, the Jungle Zone management uses two channels: online and offline. In an offline way, WoM gives visitors the opportunity to generate supporting arguments for visiting Jungle Zone and gain support from others for this decision. The WoM strategy is implemented by Jungle Zone management by providing free admission to student visitors residing near Jungle Zone, hoping they will promote Jungle Zone to their relatives.

### **Conclusion**

The marketing communication strategy for tourism implemented by Jungle Zone is Word of Mouth (WoM) Communication, leveraging the local residents' experiences at Jungle Zone. Additionally, tourist attractions are also promoted using the social media platform Instagram. From an environmental sustainability perspective, the Jungle Zone management understands tourism communication and realize the importance of maintaining environmental sustainability in nature tourism, considering it the only way to survive. They are maintaining the natural conditions in the Jungle Zone as much as possible with the available facilities.

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