

TOURISM MARKETING COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES FOR POSITIONING GOSONG TELAGA BEACH IN ACEH SINGKIL AS A LEADING TOURIST DESTINATION

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the tourism marketing communication strategies employed to promote Gosong Telaga Beach in Aceh Singkil as a leading tourist destination and to identify the factors that hinder their implementation. The study adopted a qualitative approach using a descriptive method. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation involving representatives from the Aceh Singkil Regency Tourism Office, destination managers, tourism business operators, local communities, and tourists as research informants. The findings reveal that the marketing communication strategy for Gosong Telaga Beach has been implemented through several forms of integrated marketing communication, including basic advertising through banners and billboards, public relations through the involvement of local communities, digital marketing through social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, and word-of-mouth promotion generated by tourists' experiences. Digital marketing emerged as the most dominant strategy because of its ability to expand the reach of information, visually showcase the destination's attractions, and facilitate interaction with prospective visitors. However, the implementation of the marketing communication strategy continues to face several constraints, including limited promotional budgets, inadequate tourism-supporting facilities, low levels of community participation in digital promotion, and competition from other tourist destinations. This study concludes that the development of Gosong Telaga Beach requires a more integrated marketing communication strategy through the strengthening of destination identity, improvement of digital content quality, enhancement of tourism facilities, provision of promotional training for local communities, and sustained collaboration among government institutions, destination managers, business operators, and local communities to improve the destination's long-term competitiveness.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism constitutes a strategic sector in regional development because of its contribution to economic growth, employment creation, increased community income, and the strengthening of regional identity. Tourism activities are also closely connected to various supporting sectors, including transportation, trade, hospitality, culinary services, service industries, and the creative economy. Consequently, tourism development can generate a multiplier effect on local economies. Within the context of regional development, tourism is no longer understood merely as a recreational activity but also as an instrument of sustainable economic development that must take social, cultural, and environmental dimensions into account (Putranto et al., 2024). Therefore, regions with tourism potential need to manage their destinations strategically so that they can compete effectively and deliver tangible benefits to local communities. The importance of tourism as a driver of regional economic

development is also emphasized in the literature, particularly because of its interconnection with other economic sectors and its orientation toward economic, social, cultural, and environmental sustainability.

Aceh Singkil Regency is one of the regions in Aceh Province with considerable marine tourism potential. The area is known for its coastal zones, small islands, beaches, and relatively well-preserved natural resources. One destination with significant development potential is Gosong Telaga Beach, located in Gosong Telaga Selatan Village, North Singkil District. The beach offers several attractions, including coastal scenery, sandy shores, sea views, a relatively unspoiled coastal atmosphere, and a well-maintained environment. These characteristics make Gosong Telaga Beach highly relevant for development as a leading regional tourist destination. However, the availability of natural attractions does not automatically guarantee high tourist visitation unless it is supported by effective destination management and marketing communication strategies (Anismar et al., 2018; Wiharjokusumo et al., 2021). Previous discussions have likewise emphasized that although Gosong Telaga Beach possesses substantial tourism potential, its level of exposure and competitiveness remains relatively limited compared with other tourist destinations.

Marketing communication plays an essential role in tourism destination development by disseminating information, shaping destination image, increasing public awareness, and encouraging tourists' intentions to visit. Tourism marketing communication is not limited to communicating information concerning a destination's location, facilities, and attractions. It also seeks to establish positive perceptions and develop emotional connections between destinations and prospective visitors. Marketing communication strategies may be implemented through advertising, public relations, digital promotion, event publicity, event organization, and word-of-mouth marketing. In the digital era, social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, YouTube, and websites have become increasingly important communication channels because they enable the rapid, engaging, and interactive presentation of visual content (Hardiyanto et al., 2025; Sulistiani & Syarifuddin, 2024). Accordingly, the success of Gosong Telaga Beach as a leading destination largely depends on the ability of destination managers to integrate multiple communication channels consistently and align them with the characteristics of the target tourism audience.

Various promotional efforts have been undertaken to introduce Gosong Telaga Beach through social media, websites, banners, and visitor experience-based promotion. These initiatives demonstrate an awareness among the village government and tourism managers of the importance of marketing communication in promoting the destination. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of these promotional activities continues to encounter several obstacles, including limited budgets, inadequate tourism facilities, low levels of community participation, insufficient human resources, and competition from other destinations in Aceh Singkil Regency (Padang et al., 2025). These conditions indicate that the existing marketing communication strategy has not yet been fully integrated and has not optimized the destination's overall potential. Preliminary findings also indicate that promotional activities have been conducted through Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, websites, and banners, although their implementation remains constrained by limited budgets, facilities, community participation, human resources, and inter-destination competition.

Previous studies on tourism in the Gosong Telaga area have examined destination development from several perspectives, including the implementation of the *Sapta Pesona* tourism principles, tourism management, community participation, and supporting facilities. Manik (2025), for example, explains that the principles of safety, orderliness, cleanliness, coolness, beauty, hospitality, and memorable experiences can improve visitors' experiences at Cemara Indah Beach in the Gosong Telaga area. However, the study also indicates that tourism promotion, community involvement, and facility quality remain important issues that require further improvement. Thus, a research gap remains concerning how marketing communication strategies are planned, which media channels are employed, what messages are communicated, how different communication channels are integrated, and which barriers affect the effectiveness of promoting Gosong Telaga Beach as a leading tourist destination. The limited number of studies specifically examining the marketing communication strategy of Gosong Telaga Beach has also been highlighted, as previous research has predominantly focused on tourism development, community participation, and destination management.

Based on this research gap, the present study focuses on analyzing tourism marketing communication strategies at Gosong Telaga Beach in Aceh Singkil as a leading tourist destination. The study employs the perspectives of marketing communication and Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) to examine how advertising, public relations, digital marketing, publicity, and word-of-mouth communication are used to build the destination's image and enhance its attractiveness. The novelty of this study lies in its specific examination of Gosong Telaga Beach from the perspective of integrated

marketing communication strategies rather than focusing solely on tourism potential or destination management. Therefore, this study is expected to contribute academically to the development of tourism marketing communication scholarship while also offering practical insights for local governments, destination managers, tourism business operators, and communities in designing more integrated, participatory, and sustainable promotional strategies to strengthen the competitiveness of Gosong Telaga Beach as a leading tourist destination in Aceh Singkil Regency.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design. This approach was selected because the study sought to obtain an in-depth understanding of the marketing communication strategies implemented in developing Gosong Telaga Beach as a leading tourist destination in Aceh Singkil Regency. Through a qualitative approach, the researcher was able to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the marketing communication process, the promotional media employed, the messages communicated, and the factors influencing the effectiveness of destination promotion strategies. Qualitative research is relevant for examining social phenomena based on the experiences, perspectives, and direct involvement of informants within the natural context of the study (Sugiyono, 2019). The research was conducted at Gosong Telaga Beach, located in Gosong Telaga Selatan Village, North Singkil District, Aceh Singkil Regency. The site was selected because of its marine tourism potential and its inclusion in the regional tourism destination development agenda (Wiharjokusumo et al., 2021).

Research informants were selected using purposive sampling, whereby participants were chosen based on specific considerations aligned with the objectives and focus of the study. The informants consisted of representatives from the Aceh Singkil Regency Tourism Office, managers of Gosong Telaga Beach, tourism business operators, members of the surrounding community, and tourists who had visited the destination. These informants were selected because they possessed relevant knowledge and experience and were directly involved in promotional activities, destination management, tourism services, and the utilization of tourism resources. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted to directly examine the condition of the destination, available tourism facilities, promotional activities, and interactions among destination managers, local communities, and tourists. In-depth interviews were used to explore information concerning marketing communication strategies, the use of promotional media, forms of collaboration, and the challenges encountered in tourism development. Documentation was employed to complement the data through photographs of activities, archives, reports, and other documents relevant to the research focus (Mulyana & Fanggi, 2022).

The data were analyzed using the interactive analysis model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction involved selecting, organizing, and categorizing information relevant to the marketing communication strategies of Gosong Telaga Beach, including advertising, public relations, digital marketing, word-of-mouth communication, and promotional barriers. The data were then presented in narrative form to enable the relationships among the findings to be understood systematically and interpretively. Conclusions were subsequently drawn by identifying patterns in the field findings and relating them to the concepts of marketing communication and Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC). To ensure data validity, the study employed source triangulation and methodological triangulation by comparing data obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation. This process was intended to ensure that the findings achieved an adequate level of credibility (Miles et al., 2018; Rahmawati, 2024).

3. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

Marketing Communication Strategies for Positioning Gosong Telaga Beach as a Leading Tourist Destination

The findings indicate that the development of Gosong Telaga Beach as a leading tourist destination has been undertaken through various marketing communication strategies involving digital media, direct promotion, public relations, and word-of-mouth marketing. These strategies were implemented to increase public exposure to the destination while simultaneously building a positive image of Gosong Telaga Beach as one of the leading marine tourism destinations in Aceh Singkil Regency.

The findings further demonstrate that the marketing communication strategies employed are consistent with the concept of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC), which emphasizes the integration of various communication channels to deliver consistent messages to target audiences.

Advertising

Advertising represents one of the marketing communication instruments used to introduce Gosong Telaga Beach to the public. Based on the research findings, advertising activities were carried out through the installation of banners and billboards, as well as the dissemination of promotional information through various media accessible to the public. The use of these media was intended to increase public awareness of Gosong Telaga Beach as a tourist destination with considerable potential to attract visitors.



Figure 1. Gosong Telaga Beach Gate

The advertising media used is still relatively simple and focuses more on local promotion. Nevertheless, the presence of banners and billboards is considered effective in helping the public recognize the location and location of tourist attractions. The use of advertising media also serves as a reminder to keep the public informed about tourist destinations in the Aceh Singkil region.



Figure 2. Gosong Telaga Beach Cottage

Research findings indicate that advertising effectiveness is still suboptimal due to budget constraints available to tourism managers. This condition results in relatively limited promotional reach. This finding aligns with the opinion of Hardiyanto et al. (2025), who explained that the success of tourism destination promotion is greatly influenced by the manager's ability to utilize various communication media optimally.

Public Relations

Public relations is a marketing communication strategy that plays a crucial role in building a positive image of Gosong Telaga Beach. Based on the research findings, tourism managers strive to build good relationships with the surrounding community by involving them in various tourism management activities. Community involvement is evident in environmental cleanliness activities, tourist services,

culinary business opportunities, and various other economic activities that support the sustainability of tourism activities.



Figure 3. The Role of the Gosong Telaga Beach Community

Community participation has a positive impact on the image of a tourist destination because tourists assess not only the natural beauty of a destination but also the friendliness and quality of service provided by the local community. The presence of the community as part of tourism activities is one factor that can create a positive experience for tourists during their visit.

This finding aligns with research by Syahari et al. (2023), which explains that community involvement in tourism destination management can increase promotional success while strengthening the sustainability of community-based tourism development. Harmonious relationships between tourism managers, the government, and the community are crucial for increasing the competitiveness of tourist destinations.

Digital Marketing

Digital marketing is the most dominant marketing communications strategy used in promoting Gosong Telaga Beach. Based on the research, social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok are used as the primary means of disseminating information about the tourist destination to the public. Social media was chosen due to its wide reach, relatively low cost, and ability to reach various age groups.



Figure 4. The Beauty of Gosong Telaga Beach

Content published on social media generally includes photos of the beach's beauty, videos of tourist activities, information about facilities, and various information related to activities taking place in the tourist area. The use of visual content is considered effective in attracting public attention because it provides a direct picture of the conditions and attractions of Gosong Telaga Beach.

The use of digital marketing provides significant opportunities for tourism operators to expand promotions beyond Aceh Singkil. Furthermore, social media also allows for two-way communication between tourism operators and tourists. Interactions through comments, messages, and various other forms of feedback serve as a means of building closer relationships with tourists. These findings support the opinion of Hardiyanto et al. (2025) who stated that digital media plays a crucial role in increasing the visibility of tourist destinations and expanding the reach of promotions.

Word of Mouth Marketing

Word of mouth marketing is a marketing communication strategy that has a significant impact on increasing tourist visits. Research shows that many tourists learn about Gosong Telaga Beach through recommendations from family, friends, or relatives who have previously visited the location.



Figure 5. Visitors at Gosong Telaga Beach

Positive experiences gained by tourists during their visits constitute a major factor encouraging word-of-mouth promotion. Satisfied visitors tend to share their experiences with others, thereby indirectly expanding the dissemination of information about the destination. In the current digital era, word-of-mouth promotion also occurs through social media in the form of photographs, videos, reviews, and comments posted by tourists.

Word of mouth is particularly important because people generally place greater trust in recommendations from friends, relatives, and other close contacts than in promotional messages produced by destination managers. Therefore, service quality and the overall tourism experience must receive serious attention in order to support the effectiveness of the marketing communication strategy.

Barriers to the Marketing Communication Strategy

The findings reveal that the marketing communication strategy used to position Gosong Telaga Beach as a leading tourist destination continues to face several major barriers, including limited promotional budgets, inadequate tourism-supporting facilities, low levels of community participation in promotional activities, and competition from other tourist destinations in Aceh Singkil Regency. These barriers have restricted the reach of promotional activities, weakened the formation of a strong destination image, and limited the ability of Gosong Telaga Beach to compete with other attractions that receive greater promotional and infrastructural support. The findings indicate that marketing communication challenges are not limited to the selection of promotional media but are also related to resource readiness, service quality, and stakeholder involvement in creating a consistent tourism experience. The study findings likewise identify limited budgets, inadequate supporting facilities, low community participation, and inter-destination competition as the principal barriers to the marketing communication strategy of Gosong Telaga Beach.

Limited promotional funding constitutes a fundamental barrier because it directly affects the intensity, quality, and reach of marketing communication activities. The findings indicate that the promotion of Gosong Telaga Beach still relies heavily on relatively basic media, including banners, billboards, and limited social media publications. From the perspective of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC), the effectiveness of marketing communication is largely determined by the ability of destination managers to integrate various communication channels so that destination-related messages can be delivered consistently to target audiences (Shimp, 2018). However, financial constraints make it difficult for managers to produce professional promotional content, conduct paid digital campaigns, collaborate with content creators, or organize large-scale promotional events. Consequently, messages concerning the distinctive features of Gosong Telaga Beach have not been disseminated optimally beyond the local area. This condition is consistent with the findings showing that the advertising media employed remain relatively basic and that their effectiveness is constrained by the limited promotional budget available to destination managers.

Another barrier concerns the inadequacy of tourism-supporting facilities. In tourism marketing communication, promotional messages must be supported by the quality of the actual experience encountered by visitors at the destination. When promotional materials portray an attractive destination image while basic facilities, such as sanitation, parking areas, public amenities, security, and

visitor comfort, remain inadequate, tourists may experience a discrepancy between their expectations and the actual conditions. In tourism studies, amenities, accessibility, attractions, and supporting services are essential components that determine destination quality and tourist satisfaction (Prayogo & Febrianita, 2018). Therefore, inadequate facilities are not merely a technical destination management issue but also a marketing communication barrier because they may weaken the destination's image and reduce the likelihood of tourists providing positive recommendations. The findings also emphasize that several facilities, including sanitation facilities, parking areas, public amenities, and other supporting infrastructure, still require further development.

Low levels of community participation in promotional activities also constitute an important barrier because the development of marine tourism depends substantially on the support of local communities. The findings indicate that community members have participated in several tourism-related activities, including environmental cleanliness, visitor services, culinary provision, and other supporting economic activities. Nevertheless, their participation in digital promotion remains relatively limited because not all community members possess adequate knowledge and skills to use social media as a promotional platform. From the perspective of community-based marketing communication, local communities should not merely serve as economic beneficiaries but should also act as communication agents who contribute to the formation of the destination image through service quality, hospitality, social media content, and word-of-mouth recommendations (Hardiyanto et al., 2025). When community involvement in promotional activities remains limited, the potential of word-of-mouth communication and organic digital promotion cannot be fully utilized. This finding is supported by evidence indicating that community involvement can strengthen the destination image, although participation in promotional activities remains low because of limited digital capabilities.

Competition with other tourist destinations in Aceh Singkil Regency represents an external barrier that requires Gosong Telaga Beach to establish a stronger destination identity. In an increasingly competitive tourism market, destinations cannot rely solely on their natural beauty but must also develop clear differentiation, a distinctive image, and memorable visitor experiences. Marketing communication theory emphasizes that promotional success depends on the ability to communicate a destination's value and competitive advantages clearly to target audiences (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Therefore, Gosong Telaga Beach needs to strengthen its destination branding through consistent visual narratives, high-quality digital content, distinctive tourism experience packages, and collaboration among local government institutions, destination managers, tourism business operators, and local communities.

Interpretively, the barriers affecting the marketing communication strategy of Gosong Telaga Beach do not arise solely from insufficient promotional activities. They also result from the lack of integration among promotion, supporting facilities, community participation, and destination differentiation within a sustainable IMC strategy. Accordingly, strengthening the destination's marketing communication requires an increased promotional budget, improved tourism facilities, digital promotion training for local communities, and the development of a distinctive destination identity capable of differentiating Gosong Telaga Beach from competing tourist attractions.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the marketing communication strategy used to position Gosong Telaga Beach as a leading tourist destination in Aceh Singkil Regency has been implemented through several forms of integrated marketing communication. These include basic advertising through banners and billboards, public relations through the involvement of local communities, digital marketing through social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, and word-of-mouth promotion generated by tourists' positive experiences. Among these strategies, digital marketing has emerged as the most dominant communication channel because of its ability to reach wider audiences, present the beach's attractions through visual content, and facilitate interaction between destination managers and prospective visitors.

Nevertheless, the effectiveness of the marketing communication strategy remains suboptimal due to several constraints, including limited promotional budgets, inadequate tourism-supporting facilities, low levels of community participation in digital promotion, and competition from other tourist destinations in Aceh Singkil Regency. Therefore, the development of Gosong Telaga Beach should be directed toward a more integrated marketing communication strategy by strengthening the

destination's identity, improving the quality of digital content, upgrading tourism facilities, providing promotional training for local communities, and fostering sustained collaboration among local government institutions, destination managers, tourism business operators, local communities, and tourists. Through these measures, Gosong Telaga Beach can not only increase its exposure and tourist arrivals but also strengthen its image as a competitive and sustainable leading marine tourism destination in Aceh Singkil Regency.

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