

STRATEGIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH, SPORTS, AND TOURISM IN INCREASING TOURIST ARRIVALS IN PADANGSIDIMPUAN CITY

Putri Azhar Sibarani 1, Irman Puansah 2, Nurhamidah Gajah 3.

Universitas Muhammadiyah Tapanuli Selatan
azharputri112@gmail.com

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the strategies implemented by the Department of Youth, Sports, and Tourism in increasing the number of tourist visits and to identify the constraints encountered in these efforts. This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach, with data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The findings indicate that the strategies adopted by the Department of Youth, Sports, and Tourism to enhance tourist arrivals include: (1) establishing cooperation with hotels and restaurants in Padangsidempuan City to promote and recommend local tourist destinations; (2) collaborating with influencers to expand promotional reach and produce engaging content at tourist sites; (3) providing training programs for local communities to improve the management of tourism objects; (4) organizing the selection of tourism ambassadors as representatives and extensions of the department's role in tourism promotion; and (5) holding art and cultural events to increase tourist attraction. Meanwhile, the main obstacles in increasing tourist numbers include the low level of community participation in tourism-related activities and limited budget allocation for sustainable tourism management.

Key words: Strategy; Increase; Tourist Arrivals

INTRODUCTION

Tourism has become one of the leading sectors in many countries due to its ability to generate significant economic benefits for destination regions. In Indonesia, the tourism sector plays a crucial role as one of the major contributors to foreign exchange earnings and as a key component of national development strategies. The diversity of Indonesia's tourism potential, ranging from natural and cultural tourism to man-made attractions, constitutes a major attraction for both domestic and international tourists. The preservation of rich local cultures further strengthens Indonesia's position as a competitive tourism destination at the global level (Nadira,

Conceptually, tourism refers to temporary travel activities undertaken by individuals outside their place of residence not for employment purposes, but for recreation and the fulfillment of experiential needs (Haryati, T., & Hidayat, A. G; 2019). Tourism is also regarded as an industry capable of stimulating economic growth through job creation, increased community income, and the development of supporting sectors such as transportation, accommodation, travel services, and creative industries (Yakup, A. P; 2019). Therefore, tourism plays a strategic role in regional economic development, including in the advancement of remote areas with tourism potential.

Padangsidempuan City, widely known as the “Salak City,” possesses considerable potential to be developed as a tourism hub in North Sumatra. In addition to its natural, agro-tourism, and man-made attractions most of which are managed by the private sector the city also benefits from strengths in education, relatively affordable living costs, and a safe and culturally rich social environment. These conditions position Padangsidempuan not only as a tourism destination but also as an educational center that encourages population mobility and visits from outside the region.

Recent data indicate fluctuations in the number of domestic and international tourists visiting Padangsidempuan City over the past few years. While tourism destinations are predominantly privately managed, the Department of Youth, Sports, and Tourism is responsible for policy formulation, business licensing, service quality development, and destination promotion. The tourism sector’s contribution to local government revenue is derived from taxes and levies imposed on tourism-related businesses such as swimming pools, restaurants, and entertainment venues.

In practice, the Department of Youth, Sports, and Tourism of Padangsidempuan City faces several challenges, including low public awareness of sustainable tourism, limited destination marketing skills, and inadequate tourism-supporting infrastructure. Consequently, effective and collaborative strategies involving the government, local communities, and other stakeholders are required to optimize regional tourism potential. Based on these considerations, this study focuses on examining the strategies employed by the Department of Youth, Sports, and Tourism in increasing tourist arrivals in Padangsidempuan City.

METODE

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of social phenomena through a systematic and factual description of the conditions of the research subjects or objects. Research data are collected in the form of words, statements, and actions; therefore, the emphasis is placed not on numerical data but on the meanings and social processes that occur. A descriptive-analytical approach is applied to describe and analyze empirical facts based on field findings within the context of the study. (Puansah, 2024, 2025, 2025; Puansah et al., 2025; Puansah, Parapat, et al., n.d., 2023; Puansah, Pulungan, et al., n.d., 2023, 2024; Puansah, Sukmana, et al., n.d., 2024; Puansah, Syah

Pulungan, et al., n.d.; Puansah & Parapat, n.d.; Puansah & Ritonga, 2020; Puansya et al., 2024).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Strategy

Strategy essentially refers to a series of planned decisions and actions designed by individuals or organizations to achieve objectives effectively and efficiently by utilizing available resources. Strategy functions as a policy framework and a pattern of actions formulated over a specific period to respond to environmental opportunities and challenges (Hindun, H; 2015). Porter conceptualizes strategy as the creation of a unique and valuable position through the selection of activities that differ from those of competitors, while Pearce and Robinson emphasize strategy as a set of decisions and actions directed toward the attainment of organizational goals (Sudiantini, D., & Hadita, S. P; 2022). In the context of the public sector, strategy aims to create public value and enhance community welfare.

Mintzberg classifies strategy into five perspectives: strategy as a plan, ploy, pattern, position, and perspective. These approaches indicate that strategy is not merely a formal construct but also evolves from organizational practices and experiences (Hutabarat, J., & Huseini, M; 2017).

Strategy and Tactics

Strategy and tactics differ fundamentally in terms of their level of specificity, time horizon, and the actors responsible for their formulation. Strategy is oriented toward the medium to long term and is formulated by top management as a general direction for the organization, whereas tactics are more operational and specific, short-term in nature, and implemented by functional units to support the achievement of strategic objectives (Novianto, E; 2020).

Functions and Types of Strategy

The primary function of strategy is to ensure the alignment of an organization's vision with the external environment, optimize the utilization of resources, and direct organizational activities in a sustainable manner. Strategy also plays a critical role in responding to environmental changes and creating new opportunities. In the tourism sector, strategies may be implemented through various forms, including promotion, advertising, public relations, and the organization of events. Promotional and communication strategies serve to build destination image, expand market reach, and enhance tourism attractiveness (Sumantri, dkk; 2025).

Strategic Management and Strategy Formulation

Strategic management refers to the process of planning and managing strategies that are oriented toward the long-term sustainability of an organization. This process includes the analysis of internal and external environments, the formulation of vision and mission statements, the identification of strategic alternatives, and the selection of strategies that best

align with the organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Strategic planning is generally conducted by top management through stages of goal setting, environmental analysis, and the selection of appropriate strategies to achieve organizational competitiveness (Adiatma, dkk; 2025).

Department of Youth, Sports, and Tourism

The Department of Youth, Sports, and Tourism is a regional government agency that functions to assist the head of the local government in managing and developing the youth, sports, and tourism sectors. Its roles include policy formulation, guidance and supervision, the issuance of tourism business permits, and the promotion of tourism destinations. In the context of Padangsidempuan City, the department's policies and programs are aligned with the regional development vision and mission to increase tourist arrivals and enhance the contribution of the tourism sector to the local economy.

Concept of Increasing Tourist Arrivals

Improvement essentially refers to a process of change toward better conditions, both in terms of quality and quantity. In the context of tourism, an increase in tourist arrivals indicates the effectiveness of destination management and promotional strategies. Tourism is defined as temporary travel activity undertaken outside one's place of residence for recreational purposes, while tourists are individuals who engage in such travel without the intention of working at the destination visited. Based on travel characteristics, tourists can be classified into international tourists, domestic tourists, business tourists, and transit tourists. (Puansah, 2017).

Special Interest Tourism

Special interest tourism refers to a form of tourism that focuses on tourists' specific interests or hobbies, such as nature-based tourism, cultural tourism, sports tourism, culinary tourism, and religious tourism. This type of tourism has the potential to generate significant economic impacts through job creation and the strengthening of local economies. The development of special interest tourism requires appropriate promotional strategies, targeted event planning, and careful attention to sustainability aspects to ensure the preservation of the natural environment and local culture (Nurhidayati, dkk; 2025).

Padangsidempuan City has a number of tourism attractions distributed across various sub-districts; however, the majority of these destinations are managed by the private sector. This condition limits the capacity of the Department of Youth, Sports, and Tourism (Disporapar) to undertake physical destination development, particularly due to constrained regional budgets and the absence of government-owned tourism land assets. Consequently, the department's role is primarily focused on destination mapping and registration, facilitation, capacity building, and promotion.

The promotional strategies implemented by the department to increase tourist arrivals include collaboration with business actors such as hotels, restaurants, and food outlets—as

channels for destination recommendations, as well as the use of social media through the production of promotional content. The department also involves local communities surrounding tourist destinations through a collaborative approach, including training in destination management and the provision of business spaces, such as kiosks, for local residents. In addition, the department has planned the development of a rafting tourism attraction in Simatohir Village (Angkola Julu Sub-district); however, its implementation has not yet been optimal due to funding constraints. Community empowerment programs, such as Tourism Awareness Groups (Kelompok Sadar Wisata), are directed toward strengthening attractions (dance, music, and culinary arts), improving village tourism facilities (road access and lighting), fostering awareness of environmental and cultural conservation, and building partnerships with relevant stakeholders. Annual art and cultural performances are also organized as efforts to preserve and promote local cultural heritage.

The discussion is based on interviews with three key informants: the Head of Disporapar, the Head of the Tourism Division, and the Tourism Ambassador (Putri Pariwisata). The findings indicate that the department's main strategies include collaboration with the private sector, digital promotion, community empowerment, and initiatives to develop new tourism destinations. Efforts to support sustainable tourism are carried out through environmental management training, the utilization of digital marketing, tax compliance promotion, and the development of tourism products. The department has also planned the installation of *Sapta Pesona* signboards at tourist sites to enhance awareness of cleanliness, safety, and visitor comfort.

The identified constraints are both internal and external. Internally, challenges include suboptimal promotional efforts, limited quality of tourism human resources, and low levels of investment. Externally, the primary issues relate to inadequate infrastructure and the insufficient implementation of *Sapta Pesona* principles by some local destination managers. To address these challenges, the department has undertaken measures such as collaborating with influencers, developing tourism information media (e.g., websites), conducting tourism-related training, establishing partnerships with investors and financial institutions, and advocating for government prioritization of tourism infrastructure improvements.

Beyond destination promotion, the department also utilizes events as a strategy to increase tourist visits, including facilitating traditional culinary micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) through competitions and enabling winners to participate in festivals and exhibitions, as well as organizing sports events that stimulate visitor mobility and indirectly contribute to tourism activities. Meanwhile, the Tourism Ambassador serves as a promotional envoy who helps strengthen destination branding, highlight local wisdom (including the iconic Vespa pedicabs and agro-tourism activities such as salak fruit picking), promote MSME-based creative economies, and conduct tourism awareness and cleanliness campaigns through collaboration with relevant institutions.

CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that tourism destination management in Padangsidempuan City is predominantly carried out by the private sector, resulting in the Department of Youth, Sports, and Tourism focusing primarily on destination mapping, facilitation, capacity building, and promotion. Despite limitations in authority and budget, the department has implemented various strategies to sustainably increase tourist arrivals. These strategies include collaboration with hotel and restaurant operators as destination promotion channels, partnerships with influencers through digital media, community empowerment through training in destination management, the utilization of Tourism Ambassadors (*Putri Pariwisata*) as promotional representatives, and the organization of art and cultural performances. Nevertheless, efforts to increase tourist arrivals continue to face significant challenges, particularly low levels of community participation in tourism activities and budget constraints that affect the management and development of sustainable tourism in Padangsidempuan City.

REFERENCES

- Adiatma, T., Arsawan, I. W. E., Fatchuroji, A., Putri, I. G. A. P. T., Rianty, E., Sahureka, Z., & Anantyasari, M. (2025). *Manajemen strategik: Konsep, model, dan transformasi manajemen untuk organisasi modern*. Star Digital Publishing.
- Haryati, T., & Hidayat, A. G. (2019). Konsep wisata dari perspektif ekonomi masyarakat. *Jurnal Pendidikan IPS*, 9(2), 113–122.
- Hindun, H. (2015). Perencanaan strategis dan perilaku manajerial lembaga-lembaga pendidikan. *Al-Fikrah: Jurnal Kependidikan Islam IAIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin*, 6, 56–64.
- Hutabarat, J., & Huseini, M. (2017). *Strategi*. Prasetya Mulya Publishing.
- Puansah, I. (2017). *Manajemen Pengembangan Pariwisata Daerah*.
- Puansah, I. (2024). *Studi Literatur: Politik Uang Dalam Pemilihan Kepala Daerah di Indonesia*. 8, 778–787.
- Puansah, I. (2025a). Bibliometric Analysis of Public Service Digitalization in Villages: Mapping Trends and Collaboration Networks. *Khazanah Sosial*, 7, 1018–1030. <https://doi.org/10.15575/ks.v7i3.49014>
- Puansah, I. (2025b). *Praktik Nepotisme pada Pemerintahan Desa*.

Puansah, I., & Parapat, N. (n.d.). *Kampanye Hitam Pada Pemilihan Kepala Daerah di Indonesia*. 8(1), 1396–1406.

Puansah, I., Parapat, N., Pulungan, D., & Siregar, Y. (2023). Pelayanan Publik Pada Pemerintah Desa Di Kecamatan Padangsidempuan Tenggara Kota Padangsidempuan. *Jurnal Ilmiah Muqoddimah : Jurnal Ilmu Sosial, Politik, Dan Humaniora*, 7(1), 255. <https://doi.org/10.31604/jim.v7i1.2023.255-260>

Puansah, I., Parapat, N., Sosial, J. I., & Humaniora, D. (n.d.). *Kampanye Hitam Pada Pemilihan Kepala Daerah di Indonesia*. <http://jurnal.um-tapsel.ac.id/index.php/muqoddimah>

Puansah, I., Pulungan, D. S., Nurpaisah, Y., Wahyuni, D., Gultom, A. W., & Ramadhani, L. (2023). *Kebijakan Pemerintah Desa Terhadap Pencegahan Stunting Di Desa Pagaran Gala-Gala Kecamatan Panyabungan Selatan*. 7, 532–537.

Puansah, I., Pulungan, D. S., & Sahbana, A. (2024). Politik Identitas Pada Pemilihan Kepala Desa. *Jurnal Ilmiah Muqoddimah : Jurnal Ilmu Sosial, Politik, Dan Humaniora*, 8(1), 340. <https://doi.org/10.31604/jim.v8i1.2024.340-348>

Puansah, I., Pulungan, D. S., Sahbana, A., Sosial, J. I., & Humaniora, D. (n.d.). *Politik Identitas Pada Pemilihan Kepala Desa*. <http://jurnal.um-tapsel.ac.id/index.php/muqoddimah>

Puansah, I., & Ritonga, S. (2020). Pelaksanaan Otonomi Desa dalam Mewujudkan Pemberdayaan Aparatur Pemerintah Desa Tambiski Nauli, Kecamatan Naga Juang Kabupaten Mandailing Natal. *Jurnal Ilmiah Muqoddimah: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial, Politik Dan Hummanioramaniora*, 4(1), 44. <https://doi.org/10.31604/jim.v4i1.2020.44-54>

Puansah, I., Sukmana, O., & Soedarwo, V. S. D. (2024). *Political Dynasties in Village Government and Their Impact on Society and Development*. 5(2), 119–136.

Puansah, I., Sukmana, O., Soedarwo, V. S. D., & Malang, U. M. (n.d.). *Keadilan Sosial dalam Implementasi Kebijakan Dana Desa*. 8(November 2024), 2006–2014.

Puansah, I., Syah Pulungan, D., Haris, R., Harahap, S., Baroroh, R., Tapanuli, U. M., & Alamat, S. (2025). *ENHANCING THE ROLE OF THE RUMAH DESA SEHAT AS A CONVERGENCE CENTER FOR ACCELERATING STUNTING MITIGATION IN MANDAILING NATAL REGENCY*.

Puansah, I., Syah Pulungan, D., Maruli Aruan, V., Parapat, N., Ilmu Sosial, J., Dan Humaniora, P., maruli aruan, V., & Muhammadiyah Tapanuli Selatan, U. (n.d.). *Peningkatan*

Partisipasi Masyarakat dalam Pengawasan Pilkada Tahun 2024 Melalui Kampanye Media Sosial. <http://jurnal.um-tapsel.ac.id/index.php/muqoddimah>

Puansya, I., Pulungan, D. S., & Harahap, R. H. (2024). *Local Government Policy on Handling Stunting in Mandailing Natal Regency*. 4(001), 408–415.

Nadira, N., Bahrudin, M., & Iqbal, M. (2025). Dampak pariwisata halal terhadap pelestarian budaya lokal: Tantangan dan peluang di Indonesia. *Jurnal E-Bis*, 9(1), 377–388.

Novianto, E. (2020). *Manajemen strategis*. Deepublish.

Nurhidayati, S. E., Muliani, L., Judijanto, L., Apriyanto, A., Haryanti, T., Darmayasa, D., ... Raksapati, A. (2025). *Pesona pariwisata Indonesia: Potensi, pengembangan, dan inovasi membangun destinasi pariwisata Indonesia*. PT Sonpedia Publishing Indonesia.

Sudiantini, D., & Hadita, S. P. (2022). *Manajemen strategi*. CV Pena Persada.

Sumantri, S., Wahyuni, E. S., Miftah, M., & Khristianto, W. (2025). *Manajemen strategi: Teori, konsep, dan aplikasi*. CV Eureka Media Aksara.

Yakup, A. P. (2019). *Pengaruh sektor pariwisata terhadap pertumbuhan ekonomi di Indonesia* (Disertasi doctoral). Universitas Airlangga.

Pemerintah Kota Padangsidempuan. (2003). *Peraturan Daerah Kota Padangsidempuan Nomor 12 Tahun 2003 tentang Pajak Hiburan*.

Pemerintah Kota Padangsidempuan. (2003). *Peraturan Daerah Kota Padangsidempuan Nomor 15 Tahun 2003 tentang Pajak Restoran*.

Pemerintah Kota Padangsidempuan. (2013). *Peraturan Daerah Kota Padangsidempuan Nomor 4 Tahun 2013 tentang Pajak Bumi dan Bangunan Perdesaan dan Perkotaan*.

Pemerintah Kota Padangsidempuan. (2016). *Peraturan Wali Kota Padangsidempuan Nomor 42 Tahun 2016 tentang Tugas, Fungsi, dan Tata Kerja Perangkat Daerah Kota Padangsidempuan*.

Pemerintah Kota Padangsidempuan. (2019). *Perubahan Rencana Strategis Perangkat Daerah Kota Padangsidempuan Tahun 2019–2023*.