



Planning an effective communication strategy for tourism information centers (TICs) in managing product information

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ABSTRACT

Linggarjati Village possesses significant historical and natural tourism potential, yet its information dissemination remains sporadic and decentralized. This study analyzes the necessity of a centralized Tourist Information Center (TIC) to bridge the information gap and promote local assets effectively. Using a descriptive analysis method with purposive sampling of 45 respondents, the research identifies a tourist profile dominated by young females (56.5%) and Gen Z (43.5%), who prioritize "coolcations," safety (65.2%), and weather accuracy (63%). Findings indicate that while digital platforms are widely used, 43.5% of tourists visit a physical TIC specifically to verify internet-sourced data. Furthermore, 67.4% prefer interpersonal communication with staff supplemented by visual aids. The study emphasizes a systematic management approach encompassing data collection, analysis, and dissemination synergized across multi-platform media including TikTok, Instagram, and physical brochures. The proposed communication strategy, branded as "Explore Linggarjati: History, Nature, and Hospitality," aims to enhance public trust and empower informed decision-making. Ultimately, a TIC integrated with real-time digital tools and competent personnel is vital for the sustainable tourism development of Linggarjati Village.

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1. Introduction

The development of tourism in a tourist destination is determined by various factors, such as natural uniqueness, culture, local community lifestyles, and tourism facilities, which are collectively known as tourist attractions. Tourist attractions must be introduced to tourists so that they are interested in visiting the intended destination. One method of introducing a tourist destination is through communication programs. Currently, communication programs can be packaged through digital communication. A new trend in the communication industry is the presence of various media that combine new communication technologies (digital) and traditional mass communication technologies (analog) [1].

The development of Linggarjati Village as a tourist destination is quite rapid, marked by the emergence of several new tourist attractions, accommodations, restaurants, cafes, and others. Information regarding the existence of tourism products is created and managed by each business unit through digital communication platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. Although tourist needs can temporarily be met through digital platforms, the existence of a Tourist Information Centre (TIC) remains highly necessary and required by tourists.

A Tourist Information Centre (TIC) is an official institution established by the local government to bridge the information gap between the tourist destination and the tourists. The existence of TIC becomes important for a tourist destination because TIC serves as a medium for exchanging information between guests (tourists) with hosts (resource persons/hosts) and between tourists [2]. The Tourist Information Center (TIC) presents comprehensive comparative data between tourist attractions to assess their respective positioning from the traveler's perspective. Furthermore, the TIC serves as a public relations medium to introduce regional attractions by providing holistic and detailed information, ensuring a thorough understanding of the various components of the tourism product.

The form of communication encountered in the dissemination of information is interpersonal communication between the sender and the receiver of the message—in this instance, the TIC staff and the tourists. Interpersonal communication that is carried out twice or more with interaction and face to face with one another, the feedback is immediately known and the effect is quickly known, and often does not use media [3]. Furthermore, tourists also require contextual information regarding emergency handling in a tourist destination. The need for a Tourist Information Centre (TIC) pertains more to confirmation and providing confidence to tourists regarding information already obtained through other media. The current provision of information in Linggarjati Village, which is still sporadic or decentralized, requires a forum in the form of a Tourist Information Centre (TIC) that possesses an integrated communication strategy, ensuring tourism potential can be conveyed effectively to tourists. The communication conducted is two-way, which allows for immediate feedback on questions posed to the staff serving at each Tourist Information Centre (TIC).

Through two-way communication, it is expected that the information conveyed can be well-received; for this reason, effective communication methods are required to achieve a shared meaning between tourists and Tourist Information Centre (TIC) service personnel. Effective communication is communication that results in a change of attitude in students, which can be observed during the communication process. The objective of effective communication is to make the message easily understood between the sender and the receiver, ensuring the language is clearer, complete, with balanced delivery and feedback, as well as practicing proper non-verbal language [4].

2. Literature Review

2.1. Tourist information centre (TIC)

According to [5], a Tourist Information Centre is a service hub for obtaining information in oral, written, print media, and audio-visual forms regarding tourism. The functions of a Tourist Information Centre are as follows:

1. As an information medium for the public, through visual communication between visitors and tourist attractions.
2. Serving the primary function as a facility for tourism information and promotional activities, including traditional handicraft products and traditional arts.

Meanwhile, the objectives expected from the existence of this Tourist Information Centre are (TIC):

1. For the general public/tourists as consumers
 - a. To increase public motivation and interest in tourism.
 - b. To enhance public appreciation of local handicrafts and arts.
 - c. To provide convenience for tourists in obtaining information regarding various types of tourist attractions, handicrafts, and local arts.
 - d. To expand knowledge and provide diverse recreational alternatives to enhance tourism appeal.
2. For traditional handicraft artisans and local art practitioners
 - a. To identify market information, consumer preferences, and product design development.
 - b. To provide in marketing and promotion to the public as consumers and to provide opportunities for communication and information exchange.
3. For the City Government
 - a. To increase local government revenue because, with the existence of information and promotion centers, the tourism sector will progress, as well as an effort to create new tourist attractions.
 - b. To support local government programs in enhancing the tourism sector.

2.2. Tourism product components

The following are the 4A components of tourism based on the theory by Cooper et al. in [6]:

1. Attraction
Attractions are the most critical product element as they represent the core reason why visitors are willing to make the effort to visit a particular tourist destination.
2. Amenity
Amenities refer to everything that facilitates and serves visitors at a destination while they conduct their tourism activities. In Government Regulation No. 50 of 2011 regarding the National Tourism Development Master Plan 2010-2025, it is implicitly noted that destination product amenities consist of three categories: public infrastructure, public facilities, and tourism facilities.
3. Accessibility
Accessibility refers not only to the available modes of transportation but also to the ease of reaching a destination. Examples include accessibility via public or private vehicles, good road conditions, the absence of significant traffic congestion, and the availability of services such as gas stations, tire repair shops, and food and beverage outlets during the journey.
4. Ancillary Service
Ancillary services refer to additional services that must be provided by the local government for both tourists and tourism stakeholders. These additional services include marketing (tourism information services, pamphlets, tourism biographies, books, posters, maps, and tour guides), physical development (statues, city lighting, and public spaces), and statutory regulations conditions, the absence of significant traffic congestion, and the availability of services such as gas stations, tire repair shops, and food and beverage outlets during the journey.
5. Ancillary Service
Ancillary services refer to additional services that must be provided by the local government for both tourists and tourism stakeholders. These additional services include marketing (tourism information services, pamphlets, tourism biographies, books, posters, maps, and tour guides), physical development (statues, city lighting, and public spaces), and statutory regulations.

2.3. Communication strategy & effective communication

According to [7], communication strategy is an integration of communication planning and management communication to achieve specific objectives. In order to achieve these goals, a communication strategy must demonstrate tactical operations, meaning that the approach may change at any time depending on the prevailing situation and conditions. Within a communication strategy, once we understand the nature of the communicant and the effects generated by them, it becomes essential to select the most effective method of communication, as this directly relates to the media that will be utilized. A communication strategy encompasses all matters related to a plan and tactics or methods employed to facilitate communication by presenting the sender, the delivery of the message, and the receiver within the communication process, in order to achieve the desired objectives.

According to (Mulyana, 2005) in [8], effective communication is communication whose results are in accordance with the expectations of the audience (the individuals

communicating); it is important to note that proper planning is required so that a message can be well-received. The way to communicate effectively is by employing proper ethics and language that is clear and easy to understand, selecting and utilizing adequate tools or technology, and minimizing barriers to communication. To be able to communicate effectively, we need to understand the elements of communication, which include:

1. Communicator
The sender who transmits a message to the communicant using a specific medium. This is a highly influential element in communication, as it serves as the origin (source) of the communication process.
2. Communicant
The receiver who receives the message from the communicator, then understands, interprets, and ultimately provides a response.
3. Media
The channel used to convey the message as a means of communication. This can take the form of verbal or non-verbal language, manifested through speech, writing, images, body language, machine language, codes, and so forth.
4. Message
The content of the communication in the form of a message, whether as words, symbols, gestures, signs, or images delivered by the communicator to the communicant. The clarity of both the transmission and reception of the message significantly influences the continuity of communication.
5. Response
The impact (effect) of communication as a response to the receipt of a message. This is implemented in the form of feedback or actions that correspond with the message received [9].

2.4. Information management concept

According to (Sutanto, 2003) in [10], the information management mechanism is implemented based on a systems approach and follows system concepts; the system concept itself, as expressed by Sutanta, comprises three elements: input, process, and output. Input is the initial stage where data enters, in which the input component consists of planning formulated based on information assessment and serves as the preliminary data for the information management process. The next stage is the process, within which an information transformation occurs, aiming to process data into information. This process will yield outputs in the form of information products that align with the users' needs.

Viewed from the concept above, according to (Hamalik, 1993) in [10], information management is synonymous with information system management, which aims to produce information suitable for user requirements. The mechanism of information system management itself follows the stages of information transformation, which is the follow-up to the stages of processing data into information consisting of five stages: data collection, data processing, analysis, presentation and dissemination, as well as documentation or storage. Synergy is one of the efforts in conducting information management. Synergy involves performing activities together and requires good coordination, the exchange of information, mutual necessity, and mutual benefit to achieve a specific, mutually agreed-upon objective. Synergy can be defined as a relationship or cooperative bond between

several related parties in a balanced manner. Synergy can be viewed as a combination or blend of elements or parts that can produce better and greater outcomes. Synergy can be understood as a combined operation or fusion of elements to produce superior results. Synergy can be established if communication and coordination exist [11].

2.5. Concept of promotion

According to (Manafe et al., 2016) in [12], promotion is a marketing activity that seeks to disseminate information, influence/persuade, and remind the target market of its products so that they are willing to accept, purchase, and remain loyal to the products offered by the company concerned. Promotion can also be defined as a company's effort or activity in influencing both actual and potential consumers to make purchases of the products offered, either currently or in the future.

Promotion will be more effective through the promotion mix, which is an optimal combination of selecting various types of promotional activities that are most effective in increasing sales. According to (Marniatun et al., 2022) in [12] there are five types of promotional activities, namely:

1. Advertising
A form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, and services paid for by a specific sponsor. Various parties can act as sponsors, including not only companies but also non-profit organizations such as government agencies, universities, and others.
2. Personal Selling
In personal selling, direct interaction often occurs, involving face-to-face meetings between the buyer and the seller. The communication carried out by both parties is individual and two-way, allowing the seller to immediately obtain feedback regarding the buyer's desires and preferences.
3. Publicity
Publicity is a promotional activity that is similar to advertising as it utilizes mass media; however, the information reported is not in the form of an advertisement but as news. It involves a range of information about an individual, product, or company disseminated to the public by creating news with commercial significance or other forms of positive presentation.
4. Sales Promotion
Sales promotion consists of promotional activities other than advertising, personal selling, or publicity. Activities included in sales promotion are displays, shows and exhibitions, demonstrations, and so forth.
5. Marketing Sponsorships
Marketing sponsorships are the application of promoting a company, institution/agency, or a specific brand through certain activities. Sponsorships have the capability to convey information across a number of communication fields.

3. Method

The analysis method that will be utilized in this research is the descriptive analysis method, which is a method used to investigate a group of people, an object, a set of conditions, a system of thought, or a class of events in the present time. The objective of descriptive research is to create a systematic, factual, and accurate description, illustration, or depiction regarding the facts, characteristics, and relationships between the phenomena being investigated [13].

The sampling method is conducted using purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a method of acquiring a sample by selecting participants from a population according to the researcher's specific objectives. In this technique, the researcher selects a purposeful sample based on subjective judgment. The selection of this "purposive sample" is conducted because the researcher recognizes that the required information can be obtained from a specific target group capable of providing the desired data, as they possess the necessary expertise and fulfill the established criteria [14]. Respondents are tourists originating from Cirebon City/Regency and its surroundings, as well as tourists who are visiting Cirebon City/Regency at the time of data collection. The research instrument utilizes an online questionnaire via Google Forms. In determining the number of samples for this study, the Slovin formula will be utilized, as the population size in this research is known [15].

Description:

n : Number of samples

N : Number of population (the population in this study consists of 79 tourists)

e : Error tolerance limit of 0.1

The total population (N) in this study is derived from data on tourist visits to the nearest tourist attraction to the Tourism Information Center, namely the Linggarjati Nature Park. According to data from (kuninganbeu, 2024), the number of visits in December 2024 was 948 tourists. Based on the researcher's observations, tourists generally visit Linggarjati Village during the weekends, from Friday to Sunday (3 days/week). Thus, the total population (N) is $948 : (3 \text{ days} \times 4 \text{ weeks}) = 79$. The figure of 79 was selected as the target population representing the average daily active visits during peak periods (weekends). Given that this study focuses on face-to-face interactions at the TIC, which occur most effectively during peak visitation days, dividing the monthly total (948) by the total number of effective visiting days per month (12 days) provides a more accurate daily population profile for field sampling.

$$n = \frac{79}{1+79(0.1)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{79}{1.79}$$

$$n = 44.13$$

The number of samples to be used in this research is 45 tourists (rounded up from the Slovin formula calculation).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Analysis of the importance of a tourist information center (TIC) in linggarjati village

Linggarjati Village possesses significant historical and natural tourism potential, anchored by the Linggarjati Agreement Museum and Mount Ciremai. However, because current information is sporadic and localized, a centralized Tourist Information Center (TIC) is necessary to provide integrated communication. As a formal "ancillary service" established by the government, the TIC bridges the gap between the destination and tourists by providing pamphlets, maps, and guides. Beyond basic info, the TIC should be an integral part of regional policy that promotes local wisdom, maintaining directories for traditional handicrafts, food souvenirs, and cultural event schedules.

Research shows that 28.3% of respondents view a TIC as a trusted source for tourism products. To be effective, the center must provide accurate, real-time information through attractive verbal and visual media. When arriving, 58.7% of tourists inquire about attractions, hotels, and culinary options; 23.9% seek local history and mythology; and 17.4% ask about ongoing events. Consequently, the Linggarjati TIC must offer comprehensive data on entrance fees, operational hours, and accommodation price ranges.

Additionally, 43.5% of tourists visit a TIC to verify internet data, while 26.1% seek information regarding "hidden gems." By providing details on location, safety, and facilities for these lesser-known sites, the TIC serves as a vital problem-solving tool. Ultimately, a centralized TIC empowers tourists to make informed decisions and enhances their overall experience in Linggarjati Village.

4.2. Analysis tourist information needs of a destination area

The tourist profile for Linggarjati Village is predominantly young and female, with 56.5% females and 45.3% males; age groups include 15-19 years (43.5%), 20-24 years (23.9%), and 25-29 years (8.7%). These millennial and Gen Z visitors are highly media-dependent and, particularly among females, prefer "coolcations" focused on atmosphere and wellness, such as camping, sightseeing, and forest bathing rather than high-physicality activities. This demographic demands specific details on safety, weather, and available activities. Data shows that 65.2% of tourists prioritize information on safety, comfort, and the availability of local guides. Furthermore, 63% require extreme weather warnings and emergency contacts, while 43.5% need geological maps, 41.3% seek food and beverage locations, and 37% desire information on accident insurance.

Regarding communication, 43.5% of tourists trust official websites and social media. However, if visiting a physical TIC, 67.4% prefer staff explanations supplemented by photos or videos. Physical media remains vital, with 43.5% valuing brochures and maps for being tangible, 41.3% as digital backups, and 8.7% for credibility. In the digital age, 78.3% of tourists desire real time interactive directional maps with estimated travel times, and

54.3% want integrated schedules for local cultural events. To enhance security, 45.7% recommend connecting main attraction CCTV feeds to the TIC for monitoring crowd density and weather. Additionally, 39.1% request city tour schedules though such packages are currently unorganized and 37% want hotel and restaurant reservations integrated into the TIC system.

4.3. Analysis of effective communication strategies of the tourist information centre in managing tourism product information at destinations

4.3.1. Service-based products

Service-based products primarily involve the competence of TIC staff. Data processing reveals that 67.4% of tourists visiting the TIC prefer direct information delivery from staff accompanied by visual aids (photos and videos), while 19.6% prefer direct verbal explanations. Effective interpersonal communication techniques are essential to create shared meaning and empathy, ensuring a personalized approach to diverse tourist needs. Tourists have high expectations for the quality of service at the center, with 87% prioritizing staff friendliness and clear communication, while 84% expect comprehensive knowledge of the destination, including new attractions and "hidden gems" in Linggarjati. Regarding media and channels, while physical brochures, maps, and non verbal cues such as body language and intonation remain vital, tourists also suggest that the TIC maintain an active presence on Instagram, TikTok, and official websites. Notably, 43.5% of tourists specifically trust information uploaded via official Instagram and website accounts. To strengthen branding and messaging, the TIC should represent Linggarjati's identity through a dedicated tagline and logo. A proposed tagline is "Explore Linggarjati: History, Nature, and Hospitality." The success of this communication strategy will be measured by observable changes in tourist behavior, such as visitors successfully locating hidden gems or completing reservations through the official TIC website.

4.3.2. Tourist information center information products

To ensure comprehensive outreach, the Tourist Information Center must utilize a strategic mix of physical and digital resources. Regarding print media products, brochures are essential for the easy socialization of information, while other vital products include tourist maps connecting various attractions, small & medium scale business catalogs featuring local culinary and handicraft units, and postcards showcasing high quality attraction photography. In terms of digital media products, websites serve as the primary digital image of the destination. Given that individuals under 21 years old represent the most active Instagram users at 54.5%, TIC social media content must be designed to be both attractive and communicative. Furthermore, there is overwhelming public interest in digital resources, as 93.5% of respondents support the creation of a digital guidebook. To enhance mobile accessibility, an e-catalog accessible via QR codes is significant for providing tourists with instant access to the calendar of events, tour packages, and available facilities.

4.3.3. Visual and audio-visual information products

In addition to print and digital text, visual media plays a crucial role in enhancing the tourist experience. A Linggarjati profile video, consisting of short clips (30-60 seconds) that showcase the village's natural beauty, should be displayed at the TIC and uploaded to social media platforms for maximum reach. Furthermore, digital photo archives should be

maintained to document the historical development and various tourism activities of the village over time. Finally, the inclusion of physical mock ups or miniatures is essential, as these representations help tourists visualize the landscape of Linggarjati Village, using the Linggarjati Agreement Museum as the central point to illustrate the locations of surrounding attractions and facilities.

4.3.4. Supporting information products

Supporting products include information boards and directional signage. These require effective communication techniques regarding word choice, phrase efficiency, and graphology to ensure clarity without staff assistance.

- a. **Aesthetics & Placement:** The font type, size, and aesthetic aspects of information boards must be carefully curated to attract readership.
- b. **Directional Signage:** Essential for guiding tourists from the TIC to various attractions or facilities easily and efficiently.

4.4. Management of tourism information products at the linggarjati village tourist information center

In managing tourism information products at the Linggarjati Village Tourist Information Center (TIC), emphasis must be placed on synergy and the continuous updating of data. The management mechanism must follow a systematic transformation process:

1. **Data Collection**
The TIC must collect comprehensive data on tourism product components, including attractions, facilities, and accessibility. Additionally, data regarding public facilities, security, and health services must be gathered. This data is processed into written tables, photographs, and videos to meet specific tourist needs.
2. **Analysis**
Data is analyzed to ensure it meets tourist requirements, remains current, and provides holistic information. A re-examination process is conducted to ensure the presentation style aligns correctly with the specific data type.
3. **Presentation and Dissemination**
Information is disseminated through various formats: written descriptions, systematic tables, brochures/pamphlets with photos, information boards, the official TIC website, Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp blasts, and e-catalogs.
4. **Documentation and Storage**
Data requires organized storage for sustainability. Written data is managed through a filing system in both hard copy and soft copy (stored via computer, external drives, or cloud storage).

4.5. Media synergy and stakeholder coordination

Effective information delivery requires integrating digital and non-digital media through synergy between the government, institutions, industry, journalists, and influencers. This ensures information is consistent, rapid, and trustworthy. Under the guidance of the Linggarjati Village local government, coordination is maintained with all tourism

businesses through rapid communication channels, such as WhatsApp groups for real-time updates and email for larger data sets.

4.5.1. Strategic media integration

The combination of various communication media produces superior outcomes in terms of visual appeal, reach, and documentation. For example, information regarding the Tour De' Linggarjati event is disseminated through a multi-platform approach: the official website, Instagram reels/posts, physical banners on main roads, and collaborations with high-reach TikTokers. To prevent data discrepancies, the TIC creates standardized information guides. Before content is uploaded, it undergoes an analysis process to ensure accuracy. Furthermore, synergy is applied to feedback loops, connecting social media posts directly to the official TIC WhatsApp and providing interactive two way communication on the website.

4.5.2. Benefits of synergistic information dissemination

- a. **Building Public Trust:** Consistent information across all platforms fosters high tourist confidence.
- b. **Wider Reach:** Diverse media accommodates different demographics; younger generations access TikTok, while others may prefer print media or direct consultations with TIC staff.
- c. **Information Verification:** Media synergy helps tourists distinguish between accurate and false information. By providing multiple touchpoints for comparison, tourists know exactly where to confirm data, with the Linggarjati Village TIC serving as the final point of truth.

5. Conclusion

The development of a Tourist Information Center (TIC) in Linggarjati Village is a strategic necessity to centralize sporadic data and effectively promote the area's historical and natural assets. The tourist profile is predominantly young and female, with 56.5% being women and 43.5% aged 15-19, shifting demand toward "coolcations" and wellness activities that require detailed information on safety (65.2%), weather warnings (63%), and the availability of local tour guides (65.2%).

To bridge the information gap, the TIC must employ a multi-platform communication strategy. While 43.5% of tourists trust official digital channels, the preference for human interaction remains strong; 67.4% of visitors desire staff explanations supported by visual media. Staff competency is a crucial point, as 87% of tourists expect high levels of friendliness and 84% require in-depth destination knowledge. This human element must be synergized with various information products, ranging from traditional print media and physical mock-ups to real-time digital tools, such as interactive maps desired by 78.3% of respondents and integrated event schedules (54.3%).

Effective management of the TIC relies on a systematic process involving data collection, analysis, dissemination, and organized documentation. By fostering media synergy and stakeholder coordination integrating government, industry, and influencers the TIC ensures information consistency. Ultimately, this centralized approach builds public trust, verifies internet-sourced data for the 43.5% of tourists seeking accuracy, and empowers

visitors to make informed decisions through the proposed branding: "Explore Linggarjati: History, Nature, and Hospitality."

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