

STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION IN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN MEDAN CITY

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ABSTRACT

Medan City's tourism potential is threatened by the lack of supporting infrastructure and ineffective promotion. To overcome these challenges, collaboration between the government, local businesses, communities, media, and academia is needed in developing an inclusive tourism strategy. The research was conducted to explore the tourism potential in Medan City and provide strategic recommendations for the sustainable development of the tourism sector. The research method used was descriptive and qualitative, to describe tourism development in the city. The population of Medan City consists of a heterogeneous community with diverse ethnicities and cultures that are relatively dynamic and have high mobility. Stakeholder collaboration is important to create a sustainable tourism ecosystem, with the principles of open communication, active participation, commitment to common goals, and conflict management. The cultural diversity and historical buildings of Medan City are tourist attractions that can support the development of cultural tourism by involving local communities.

Keywords: Medan City, Stakeholder Collaboration, Tourism Development.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has great potential in the tourism sector that can have a significant impact on the economy, thanks to the natural and cultural wealth spread across more than 17,000 islands with 270 million inhabitants. Tourism in this country not only acts as a foreign exchange earner but also as a motor of job creation and a driver of investment that supports the development of infrastructure and services in tourist destinations (Parmawati, 2019). As demand for natural and cultural tourism destinations increases, the sector's contribution to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has reached 5.8% in 2023 and is expected to increase to 7.4% in 2027 (Badan Pusat Statistik Indonesia, 2023). However, in Medan City, which is the gateway to North Sumatra Province, the tourism sector still has major challenges, as seen from the decline in the number of foreign tourist arrivals between 2013 and 2018. The main problem faced is the lack of supporting infrastructure, such as proper pedestrian paths and inadequate promotion (Octaria & Hidayat, 2015).

Table 1. Number of Foreign Tourists in Medan City 2013-2018

Years	Number of Foreign Tourists
2013	233.998

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2014	243.641
2015	205.926
2016	177.180
2017	229.035
2018	221.185

Source: (Badan Pusat Statistik Kota Medan, 2021)

Addressing these challenges requires a collaborative approach where all stakeholders-government, academia, business, community, and media-play an active role in developing an effective and inclusive tourism strategy (Aditya, 2022; (Lubis & Sari, 2024). The government plays a role in setting policies and providing basic infrastructure, such as transportation and public services, while local businesses can support through investment in accommodation, transportation, and entertainment facilities (PSPPR UGM, 2023). Local communities as tourist hosts play an important role in creating authentic experiences that can enhance Medan City's tourism appeal, while the media helps in the promotion and introduction of the destination through various platforms to reach more tourists, both domestic and international (Fatimah et al., 2024). In this context, the role of academics is also important to conduct in-depth studies on the dynamics of the tourism sector and provide data-based recommendations that can help make targeted policies. This synergy is the basis for accelerating tourism development in Medan City that not only boosts the local economy but also supports cultural and environmental preservation in accordance with sustainable development goals (Williams & Baláž, 2015). This study aims to explore the tourism potential in Medan City through the analysis of attractiveness, accessibility, and facilities that support the development of the tourism sector. By identifying various factors that influence tourist visits, this research is expected to provide strategic recommendations for more effective and sustainable tourism development in the city. In addition, this research also aims to highlight the importance of collaboration between stakeholders in creating synergies that drive local economic growth and cultural preservation. The limitations of this research include a focus on existing tourism attractions in Medan City, including cultural, historical, and natural aspects, without discussing destinations outside the city. The research is also limited to analyzing current conditions, not including comparisons with other tourist destinations in Indonesia. In addition, data collection was conducted through qualitative and quantitative methods, with interviews and surveys as the main techniques, so as to provide a comprehensive picture of Medan City's tourism potential. Based on the problems described above, researchers are interested in examining how to analyze stakeholder collaboration in tourism development in Medan City.

METHODS

The research method used in this research is a descriptive method with a qualitative approach. The descriptive method aims to describe systematically and accurately various facts and characteristics about a particular field, including conditions, problems, attitudes, procedures, or systems factually. Qualitative research methods are used as a social science approach to collect and analyze data in the form of words (both oral and written) and human actions, where researchers do not try to calculate or quantify the qualitative data obtained.

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However, it does not rule out the possibility for researchers to collect and use numerical data if needed in the analysis (Afrizal, 2014). This method also provides greater flexibility to researchers to understand phenomena directly through relationships formed with respondents, so that they are more sensitive and easily adapt to the value patterns encountered (Moelong, 2014). The results of the data obtained will be analyzed using descriptive-analytical methods. This research was conducted in Medan City, with the main focus on Stakeholders' collaboration in tourism development. The selection of Medan City as the research location is based on the existence of problems in the development of the tourism sector in this city, which requires in-depth analysis to find the root of the problem. This research aims to understand the role of each element, namely academics, businesses, communities, government, and media, in supporting sustainable tourism development in Medan City. The results of the study are expected to contribute to improving the local economy, particularly through increasing Medan City's Regional Original Revenue (PAD).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Increase the Tourism Potential of Medan City

The population of Medan City consists of a heterogeneous community, with diverse ethnicities and cultures that are relatively dynamic and highly mobile. This diversity is a result of the historical formation of Medan City, where many workers from outside Medan, such as coolies from China, Tamil, and Java Island, were brought to work on the plantations. Inter-ethnic and religious relations in the city are characterized by mutual respect, creating strong social cohesion. As a city with high cultural pluralism, Medan City reflects diversity in aspects of life, including religion, race, language, and arts, so it is often considered a “miniature Indonesia” (Pelly, 1984). Medan City has many historical buildings that represent its multicultural history, with architecture varying from neo-classical to art-deco. These buildings are not only a silent witness to the city's historical development, but also a tourist attraction. Based on tourism typology, Medan City can be categorized as historical tourism, which focuses on historical buildings as part of cultural tourism. With around 600 historical buildings, Medan City has enormous potential as a cultural tourism destination that can attract tourists. The preservation of historical buildings in Medan City not only improves the image of tourism, but also has various social and cultural benefits. According to Uka Tjandra Sasmita, the benefits of archaeological remains include as historical evidence, sources of science, and media for the development of cultural values. By involving the community in cultural and tourism management, the potential of cultural resources, traditions, and past activities can be effectively packaged through commodification, thus supporting Medan City's tourism industry and preserving the existing cultural heritage. Tourism attraction is the main element of a destination, including anything that tourists can see and do, such as natural beauty, flora, fauna, and man-made tourism, such as historical relics, cultural arts, and recreational parks. Based on Law No. 10 of 2009, tourist attraction is defined as something that has uniqueness and value, both from nature, culture, and human works. In Medan City, tourism development includes cultural, heritage, natural, and artificial tourism, with areas that include City Tourism Destinations (DPK) and City Tourism Strategic Areas (KSPK), which are ready to be developed thanks to community support and future potential. The development of tourist attractions often develops spontaneously, but without careful

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planning it often creates obstacles in physical and institutional arrangements, even conflicts of interest. Therefore, it is important to identify tourist attractions as the initial stage of scientific planning so that tourism development is more directed. This process is expected not only to maximize tourist satisfaction, but also to have a positive impact on economic improvement, cultural preservation, and local environmental sustainability. Facilities are an important factor that attracts tourists to visit and return to a destination, by meeting their needs during the visit so that they are comfortable and get a positive impression. The expected forms of facilities include accommodation, transportation, restaurants, sports facilities, and other needs such as public toilets, parking lots, health clinics, and worship facilities, which are tailored to the destination situation and tourist needs (Hana et al., 2019). The development of public facilities in tourist destinations aims to increase tourist attractiveness and support sustainable tourism that maintains socio-cultural and ecosystem sustainability. In 2018, Medan City recorded 221,185 tourist visits. Based on data from the Central Bureau of Statistics of Medan City in 2021, the city has 220 hotels, consisting of 62 stars hotels and 158 jasmine hotels (BPS Kota Medan, 2021). In Medan City, various transportation options such as road, train, plane at Kuala Namu, and ship at Belawan are available to support tourist access. Medan City also acts as a hub for North Sumatra tourists, making it a potential transit point that can be developed to boost tourism and the local economy. Accessibility within the destination needs to be in line with sustainable development concepts, such as the implementation of low emission zones, friendly pedestrian paths, as well as safe bicycle lanes to support eco-friendly mobility in tourist areas. Good transportation infrastructure is expected to increase tourist comfort and ease of access to destinations. Adequate accessibility, including transportation and infrastructure, is an important factor for tourists to visit tourist destinations in Medan City. Land, sea, and air transportation, including Kualanamu International Airport serves up to 8 million passengers per year, with a maximum capacity of 22 million passengers, and is connected to rail and bus transportation modes from surrounding cities such as Binjai, Pematangsiantar, and Kabanjahe. Belawan Port is also the main entry point, serving 58 passenger ships per year (2017-2018 data) (BPS Kota Medan, 2021). Public transportation within the city, such as 5 Trans Metro Deli Bus routes and 69 city transportation routes, facilitate the movement of tourists within Medan City, which has an area of 265.1 km² and a population of 2,210,624 people. Other supporting infrastructure, including 70.57 km of state roads and 34.05 km of provincial roads, with 96.73% in good condition, as well as access to clean water, electricity, and telecommunications, further support tourists' convenience during their visit (Khoiria, 2024).

Stakeholder Collaboration in Medan City Tourism Development

Tourism development in Medan City requires strong collaboration between various stakeholders, such as the local government, tourism industry players, local communities, academics, media, and tourists. Each party has different roles and interests, whether in terms of economy, culture, or environment, which affect their level of commitment in collaborative projects. Regarding government policies in tourism development in Medan City, Mr. Yuda Pratiwi Setiawan, S.STP as the Head of Tourism Office of Medan City stated that: “Government policies aim to increase tourist interest in tourist destinations in Medan City.

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In addition to developing existing destinations, the government focuses on making Medan City a MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions) center to encourage tourist visits and contribute to the local economy. Some of the MICE activities that have been organized by the Medan City Tourism Office include: Gelar Melayu Serumpun (GEMES), Color Medan Carnaval (CMC) to celebrate Medan City's anniversary, and Culinary Festival as a culinary promotion event”. To achieve sustainable development of the tourism sector, it is important to analyze the extent to which each party contributes and is committed, as well as evaluate the existing communication channels to identify barriers that may arise in the collaboration of stakeholders. Stakeholders who show high commitment, such as governments that support tourism development with appropriate policies, can increase trust and motivation among industry players and local communities. Relationship dynamics between stakeholders also affect the level of commitment, where tensions between industry players and the government can reduce the desire to collaborate. Therefore, it is recommended to organize workshops and training and build stronger networks to facilitate information exchange. This was conveyed by Terang Dewi Tanjung, S.STP, Head of Creative Economy at the Medan City Tourism Office: “The current government tourism management adopts a management approach that includes planning, organizing, directing, and supervising. Planning is done through the preparation of a tourism strategic plan involving Stakeholders, including destination development and cultural preservation. Organizing is done by forming a Tourism Committee and Creative Economy Committee, as well as training to improve competence. Direction is provided through policies related to tourism sector development and security, as well as training for industry players. Supervision is carried out by periodic monitoring to ensure the development of the tourism sector and coaching of business actors”. A collaborative model involving government, academia, industry, community, and media, is an approach that can be applied to achieve sustainable tourism development. Each element has a complementary role; the government serves as a regulator, academia provides data and research, industry provides experience, the community maintains cultural sustainability, and the media builds public image (Purba & Indainanto, 2024). Although Stakeholder collaboration offers many benefits, challenges such as differences in interests and lack of communication between stakeholders must be overcome to achieve common goals. Mr. Yuda Pratiwi Setiawan, S.STP, as the Head of the Medan City Tourism Office said that: “The government has collaborated with various parties, both with universities, communities, associations, creative business associations, and tourism industry destinations in advancing or developing tourism in Medan City”. The same statement was also expressed by Adryanta Putra Ginting, S.Sos, as the Head of Destination and Industry Division of Medan City Tourism Office, who said that: “The Medan City Government cooperates or collaborates with various parties in advancing or developing tourism in Medan City, including by involving elements of stakeholders (government, academics, associations, media, and private sector) in the implementation of various activities for tourism development and the implementation of tourism events. Among others, the Medan City Government made an MoU with Poltekpar Medan in an effort to develop tourism in Medan City. Medan City Government also cooperates with other Regency/City governments (tourism promotion cooperation with Surakarta City and Aceh Province) as

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well as with the Central Government/Kemenparekraf in the implementation of international scale events and capacity building of tourism human resources.”

The principle of open communication is an important foundation in building strong collaborative relationships among various stakeholders, such as government, industry and local communities. The government establishes cooperation or collaboration with various parties to promote tourism in Medan City. With effective communication, each party can share their views, hopes and concerns, which is crucial in tourism development. Continuous dialogue helps convey information accurately, prevent misunderstandings, and minimize conflicts that can hinder the progress of collaboration (Gede et al., 2024). In addition, active participation of each stakeholder is also crucial, as their involvement not only increases the sense of ownership, but also enriches the decision-making process with diverse inputs. For example, involving local communities in tourism project planning ensures that the development is in line with community needs and values, while increasing community support for the proposed initiative (Annisa & Fadli, 2024). The principles of commitment to a common goal and conflict management also play an important role in collaboration. All parties must have a strong commitment to the agreed goals, such as sustainable destination development and environmental preservation, for collaboration to be more purposeful and productive (Destiana et al., 2020). Managing conflict constructively through mediation and discussion forums helps create a harmonious environment. In addition, diversity among stakeholders can enrich the collaboration process, resulting in more innovative solutions. Transparency in sharing information and decisions is also important to build trust among the parties involved. With a systematic approach and continuous evaluation, any collaborative initiative can be refined and improved, making tourism development more effective and providing greater benefits to all parties involved (Friend et al., 2010).

CONCLUSIONS

Stakeholder collaboration in tourism development is a very important approach to creating a sustainable and mutually beneficial ecosystem. The basic principles of collaboration, such as open communication, active participation, commitment to a common goal, and conflict management, are the foundation for building strong relationships between various stakeholders, including government, academia, industry, community, and media. Each element has a unique and complementary role, so effective cooperation can lead to innovative solutions that meet the needs of tourists while still paying attention to cultural and environmental preservation. Medan City's tourism potential shows that the city's ethnic and cultural diversity creates a strong foundation for tourism development. With many historical buildings that serve as tourist attractions, Medan City has great potential as a cultural tourism destination. The preservation of cultural heritage and tourism management that involves the community are important steps to improve the image of tourism and support the local economy. Tourism development in Medan City is also supported by adequate facilities and good accessibility, which contribute to tourist convenience. In addition, collaboration between the government, industry, academia, media, and local communities is crucial in advancing the tourism sector. The principles of open communication, commitment to common goals, and constructive conflict management are important factors in creating

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effective cooperation. With a systematic collaborative approach, it is expected that tourism development in Medan City can provide sustainable benefits for all stakeholders.

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