Agritourism Resilience during Covid 19: Building Awareness of Kandri Tourism Village through Digital Platforms

Nur Laili Mardhiyani[1], Liliek Budiastuti[2]
{nurlaili.dhiyan@gmail.com[1]}

Universitas Diponegoro, Indonesia[1, 2]

Abstract. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a crisis in the tourism sector. The absence of travel and visitors makes tourist attractions do not get income. This paper focuses on agritourism in Kandri Tourism Village during Covid-19 to study how community-based tourism survived in the pandemic era to divert the crisis. Even though there are no tourism activities, but the public are aware of their existence. The aim of this paper is to find out how the strategy of Kandri Tourism Village in building public awareness about agritourism activities through digital platforms. This study uses a qualitative approach, using in-depth interviews, observation, and FGD. The results of the research are (1) Kandri Tourism Village segmentation consists of three groups, elementary school, youth, and adults. (2) The aim is to build awareness to the public about agricultural tourism activities in Kandri Tourism Village. (3) Messages are delivered in photos and videos using the visual storytelling method. (4) Kandri Tourism Village has 2 digital platforms for branding, such as YouTube and Instagram. This method is intended that the public will be interested in visiting or plans to spend holidays in Kandri if the covid pandemic has ended.

Keywords: Agritourism, Tourism Village, Digital Branding, Covid-19, Brand Awareness

1 Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic that emerged in 2019 has caused a crisis in the tourism sector until 2021. The policies of each country regarding tourism travel both domestically and abroad are strictly limited. This has an impact on the tourism sector in terms of decreasing visitors and income. During the Covid-19 Pandemic, tourism sites were limited and not even operating due to the government's policy to limit the number of people in one space and keep their distance. Regulations regarding the temporary closure of tourist attractions during Covid-19 have made tourism sites unable to operate.

One of the most serious impacts due to regulations during a pandemic is community/community-based tourism, namely tourist villages. One of the tourism villages affected by the pandemic is Kandri Tourism Village in Gunungpati, Semarang. In 2020, Kandri Tourism Village experienced a significant decrease in income and the number of visits by local and foreign tourists. In 2019 there were 10,241 visitors and down in 2020 which was only 2,473 visitors.

Table 1. List of Visitors to Kandri Tourism Village in 2014 - 2021

No	Year	Local	Foreign	Total	Income (Rp)
1	2014	1.270	25	1.295	84.175.000
2	2015	3.392	36	3.428	257.100.000
3	2016	6.787	72	6.859	857.375.000
4	2017	8.767	96	8.873	1.067.160.000
5	2018	12.289	126	12.415	1.489.800.000
6	2019	10.241	87	10.328	1.239.360.000
7	2020	2.473	-	2.473	296.760.000

Kandri Tourism Village is one of the tourist villages that has natural and cultural potential to be used as a tourist attraction. Based on the table above, the decrease in the number of tourist visits in Kandri Tourism Village in 2020 has an impact on a decrease in income. If income decreases in the scope of community-based tourism such as tourist villages, then the most affected by the decline in the number of visits and income are the surrounding community who are also tourism actors in the area.

Limitations in tourism promotion during the pandemic made Kandri Tourism Village take advantage of their official accounts to share information. Branding through digital platforms is one of the most effective ways to re-promote tourist attractions during a pandemic. Kandri Tourism Village must have a communication strategy to attract local and foreign tourists to visit their place during the pandemic with strict health protocols and or after the pandemic later. The aim of this article is to find out how the communication strategy used by Kandri Tourism Village to stay afloat during the pandemic while still providing information about Kandri Tourism Village so that it can attract tourists and increase the number of visits after the pandemic.

2 Method

This research uses descriptive qualitative research methods. Descriptive research is to describe the quality of a symptom to make readers know what is happening in the related research. The researcher describes a symptom based on the indicators that he makes the basis of the presence or absence of the symptoms studied [1]. Qualitative methods were used in this study because data collection required interviews with informants. The type of data used in this study is qualitative data obtained from observations, interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGD), and documentation. We conducted interviews with the Chair and Secretary of the Kandri Tourism Village Pokdarwis, the marketing department, tour guides, and one of the residents who own homestays in Kandri Tourism Village. FGDs were conducted twice together with Pokdarwis management and tour guides.

3 Result

Kandri Tourism Village is a community-based tourism that was formed in 2014 by carrying out geographical advantages which are dominated by agricultural and plantation land. Kandri Tourism Village is one of the agritourism that emphasizes the side of Edutourism,

nature, and culture. Kandri Tourism Village is located in Kandri Village, Gunungpati District, in Semarang with an area of 319,640 Ha. The area consists of 97,622 hectares of paddy land, 221,368 hectares of yards and buildings, and 650 hectares of land for public facilities. The largest livelihood is in Kandri Tourism Village, around 40% of the population of Kandri Village work as farmers, while the rest work as breeders and laborers. Judging from the land area and livelihoods that are the majority in the region, Kandri Tourism Village has advantages and opportunities in terms of agriculture. The positioning of Kandri Tourism Village is in an area surrounded by agricultural land, and is supported by the majority of the population who daily cultivate agriculture.

3.1 Agritourism

Agritourism is a form of tourism spent in agricultural areas. Agritourism means familiarization with agricultural production or recreation in a farm environment and the opportunity to assist with agricultural tasks during visits. Agritourism can also be interpreted as part of various forms of the accommodation industry [2]. There are three characteristics of agrotourism, namely visits that allow practical participation in the food production process, in rural family life and in rural communities. Second, the fulfillment of human cognitive needs in agricultural production or ethnography. Third, agritourism is the possibility to satisfy emotional needs, namely the willingness to deal directly with domestic animals, plant and animal products and processing products, and the need to experience the beautiful countryside associated with a rural atmosphere [2]. The type of agritourism is how to function agricultural land in an area to be used as a tourist spot. Agritourism is related to therapeutic (care farms), educational (educational farms), recreational, etc. There are also facilities in which the traditions and values of the village are involved [3]. One of the possibilities for regional development is to promote specific fields of tourism, e.g., rural tourism and agrotourism [4]. Based on the area and potential of Kandri Tourism Village, agritourism is a big concept that is presented from this tourist spot. Utilization of agricultural land, the life of rural communities, the majority of the population who work as farmers and ranchers, as well as the cultural traditions of Kandri Village. The theme raised by Kandri Tourism Village is Eduwisata which includes elements of learning, playing, and traveling (about agriculture and community traditions).

3.2 Communication Strategy

The strategic communication related to digital platforms is based on the understanding that digital strategy stemmed from the rapid increase in digital communication tools, platforms and opportunities. Digital strategy is defined as a portion of an organization's overall communication strategy that includes digital and traditional strategies that serve to meet organizational goals through marketing, advertising, or public relations [5]. Branding is the process of designing, planning and communicating a name and identity to build or manage a reputation [6]. The four strategic steps to build a good image are establishing an appropriate image identity (building deep and broad image awareness), creating appropriate image meanings (unique image association), and generating appropriate image responses (positive reactions). and acceptable) and form good relationships with customers (strong and active loyalty).

3.3 Segmentation

The segmentation of visitors to Kandri Tourism Village can be seen through the potential and advantages of each of these potentials. Kandri Tourism Village has three potentials,

namely in terms of geography, demography, and arts and culture. Each of these potentials has its own advantages that can be used as part of agritourism. Based on the potential and advantages in it, it can be obtained segmentation of visitors to Kandri Tourism Village which carries the theme of Edu tourism (Eduwisata).

Table 2. Mapping of the Positioning of Kandri Tourism Village

Potency	Content	Segmentation
Geography	The beauty of nature, rice fields, spring, wells.	"Eduwisata" that explore the potential of the target area with tourists aged 4-30 years from local and/or foreign in a group or team who want live in the village and gain experience and knowledge in the field of agriculture, arts and culture.
Demographics	farmer, cattle raiser, labor	
Arts and culture	Music, Gamelan, traditional dance	

The segmentation targeted by Kandri Tourism Village can be divided into three age groups. The first group is early childhood who are in elementary school (including elementary school teachers). Group 2 is a group of teenagers who like nature and culture. The third group is teenagers and adults who like nature, rural life, and culture. Visitors to Kandri Tourism Village are usually in groups.

Table 3. Segmentation by Group

Segmentation	Group	Activities
"Eduwisata" that explore the potential of the target area with tourists aged 4-30 years from local and/or foreign in a group or team who want live in the village and gain experience and knowledge in the field of agriculture, arts and culture.	Junior – Elementary	Outbond – play in the field – feeding and play with a cow
	Youth	Outbond – love with the nature – adventure – learn about culture
	Adult	Outbound – love with the nature – adventure – learn about culture – live in (rural)

3.4 Objectives

The purpose of the communication strategy carried out by the Kandri Tourism Village is to brand all tourism activities that can be carried out in the Kandri Tourism Village. What may happen when there are no tourist activities during the pandemic (2020-2021) is the loss of the name of Kandri Tourism Village in the community as an agritourism and edutourism-based tourist spot in Semarang. The communication carried out by the Kandri Tourism Village is to reintroduce what activities tourists can do when visiting the Kandri Tourism Village. The goal is to build public knowledge about the existence of Kandri Tourism Village in the tourism sector. In implementing the communication strategy, the communicator must determine what goals will be achieved in the delivery of information or messages. The communication objectives [7] are to change the attidue, to change the opinion, to change behavior, to change the society. People tend to feel better given the information they need or who will be given access to that information which is part of a sense of trust and security. This step aims to determine the focus of the communication strategy that will be used. The purpose of the

Kandri Tourism Village communication through a digital platform is to provide information to change people's behavior so that they have an interest in visiting Kandri.

3.5 Messages

The message is conveyed about tourist activities or activities can be done in Kandri Tourism Village. This activity can be analyzed based on the potential of the Kandri Tourism Village. There are two models in compiling messages are, messages that are informative and messages that are persuasive. Informative arrangement models are distributed with the aim of broadening the horizons and also awareness of the audience. While messages are persuasive with the aim of to change public perceptions, attitudes, and opinions.

Table 4. Messages about Activities in Kandri

Potency	Content	Activities
Geography	The beauty of nature, rice fields, spring, wells.	Outbound Photography Adventure Live in (homestay)
Demography	farmer, cattle raiser, labour, entrepreneur	Farming in the field learn to raise cows learn to process crops into a product
Arts and culture	Music, Gamelan, traditional dance	Learn to play gamelan, traditional dance painting and sculpt

The message tells about what activities are offered and can be enjoyed by visitors while in the Kandri Tourism Village. The message includes outbound activities, photography, adventure, live in programs (homestay), farming in the field, learn to raise a cows and processing crops into product, play a gamelan, traditional dance, panting and sculpting. This message is to provide information on activities in Kandri Tourism Village at the same time persuades the public to visit. Companies can cast a wide net to let potential customers know about products, services, and values and address customer pain points and help them improve their lives through informative digital content.

3.6 Media and Method

The digital media used to increase awareness about Kandri Tourism Village are YouTube Kandri Official and Instagram account @desawisatakandri. Why use digital platforms?. The first reason is government regulations that reduce physical contact during the pandemic, so we cannot communicate and promote face-to-face. Second, the digital platform is a place with a large public reach and has an impact on promotional activities. Business may launch digital communication campaigns for a variety of reasons, including building a brand, generating awareness, driving conversions, creating customer experiences, delivering customer service, managing risk, providing entertainment, educating consumers [8]. Agrotourism firm brand characteristics appear more important in their impact on a visitor's confidence in a brand. It was also established that confidence in a brand is positively influencing loyalty [9].

These two accounts are two digital platforms that are actively sharing tourism activities in Kandri during the pandemic. The use of these platforms takes into account what platforms are popular and most accessed during the pandemic. Instagram currently reaches 300 million

users above Twitter users whose focus is on visuals (images, photos, and videos). This proves that social media platforms tend to develop in a visual direction, because through pictures and photos, we can see the real situation [10]. This opportunity was exploited by some brands by creating accounts in the initial phase and tasted the success of new digital marketing platform in very early stage [11]. It is worthwhile to mention that approximately 80% of the world's leading brands are registered on Instagram by visual brand communication of their products and services.

Likewise with YouTube which currently has reached 2 billion users. YT brand channels have become cost-effective conduits, since commercials can be uploaded at no cost, and could potentially be viewed by millions of young consumers if they are entertaining to go viral [12]. YouTube is the choice because it is free at no cost, people can post and download videos for free too, and can be watched by many people from all over the world, especially young people, according to the targets desired by the Kandri Tourism Village.

The use of these two platforms indicates that Kandri Tourism Village is branding with a visual storytelling method that prioritizes visuals rather than text. Visual storytelling is a method in which images, videos, infographics, presentations, and other visuals on social media platforms are used to describe a product by compiling a graphic story around the value and offering of the product [13]. Visual storytelling is a method for promoting through social media platforms by using visualization through still or moving images. The images presented do not only focus on the product that is highlighted but also the story behind the product. Consumer interest in visual content is easier and faster for humans to accept. The right image can be more than just telling a story visually, where humans can feel emotions, generate memories, and even make changes in human attitudes.

Then, is it the same visual storytelling method used on YouTube and Instagram?. Certainly not. If Instagram can upload images, photos and videos, then YouTube can only upload videos. Types of Images used for Visual Storytelling are photography, graphics and pictures, User-Generated Images, Photo Collage, Images with Text (Captions, Quotes, Statistical data), Postcards and E-cards, Word Photos, memes, cartoons, GIFs, infographics , videos, and presentations.

On Instagram, we can use all these types of images. But on YouTube. We can only use video. The strategy carried out by Kandri Tourism Village is to upload photos of activities that focus on three potential areas of focus, namely geography, demographics, and arts and culture. Photos related to geography are photos of outbound activities that have been carried out before the pandemic (aimed at remembering the excitement of traveling in rural areas), photos of cultural activities - annual traditions that are still carried out during the pandemic, photos of gamelan training by local teenagers, and photos of awards achieved by Kandri Tourism Village. Photography every spot and activity can be a photo opportunity. Photos shared on social media platforms show what matters to you and what you believe is worth sharing. A good, well-crafted photo can encourage an immediate response from followers. In addition, photos can be designed using photo collages, namely multiple images collated in one frame can sometimes tell a story better than a single image. Multiple still images in one frame offer creative products by highlighting various attributes of a company, product or event. This photo collage can then tell a storyline in itself.

How about videos? Will one video be uploaded on the two platforms?. The videos uploaded on the YouTube are long videos (more than 1 minute). While Instagram only contains video teasers. The communication strategy used is to direct Instagram followers to also access other platforms, so that the viewer on YouTube will increase. The teaser can be uploaded via the Instagram feed or story which will then be directed to access other digital

platforms (YouTube) so that you can watch it in its entirety. Video helps companies and products to reach consumers in ways that other visual media cannot. Videos can tell a funny, inspiring, personal, moving visual story, and also highlight the product, idea, or image of the product itself.

4 Conclusion

The communication strategy carried out by Kandri Tourism Village to survive during this pandemic is to introduce and promote Agritourism activities in Kandri Tourism Village through digital platforms. The strategy taken is to use the visual storytelling method on two official accounts belonging to Kandri Tourism Village on the Youtube and Instagram platforms. The target of Kandri Tourism Village is aged 3-40 years old who like the potential of the area in terms of geography (about nature and rural), demographics (adventurers), and also arts and culture (gamelan, traditional dance, tradition). The purpose of this communication strategy is to provide information about tourism activities in Kandri Tourism Village and change people's behaviour so that they are interested in visiting after the pandemic ends. The selection of the visual storytelling method is to describe the conditions, activities, and processes that we can get when we learn and play in the Kandri Tourism Village. The images presented do not only focus on Desa Wisata Kandri that is highlighted but also the story behind it. Followers interest in visual content is easier and faster for humans to accept. The right image can be more than just telling a story visually, where we can feel emotions, generate memories, and even make changes in human attitudes.

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