

Level of Local Community Brand Awareness of Samosir Tourism

Nur Cahaya Bangun¹, Jhonson Pardosi², Ilham Mirzaya Putra^{3*}

^{1,2}Fakultas Ilmu Budaya, Program Studi D3 Perjalanan Wisata, Universitas Sumatera Utara

³Program Studi Pengembangan Masyarakat Islam, Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara

*Corresponding Author: ilhammirzaya@uinsu.ac.id

Abstract: This study aims to: (1) determine the level of local community brand awareness of the brand "Negeri Indah Kepingan Surga" in Samosir Regency, and (2) know the local community's perception of the branding "Negeri Indah Kepingan Surga" in Samosir Regency. Methods of data collection through questionnaires and interviews. Data analysis was carried out in descriptive quantitative with a Likert scale and qualitative. In order for qualitative research to be better, member checks and group discussion forums were then carried out. The sample in this study amounted to 96 people, while the informants amounted to 9 people. The results of this study are: (1) the level of brand awareness of the local community towards the brand "Negeri Indah Kepingan Surga" in Samosir Regency is at the brand recall level, and (2) There has not been any unified perception among the local community on the brand "Negeri Indah Kepingan Surga". in Samosir Regency. Some of the ways that must be done in order to achieve brand awareness of local community. The local community's perception of the tourism brand in Samosir Regency is still varied, although it has a positive tone.

Keywords: Brand Awareness; Tourism Marketing; Local Community

History Article: Submitted 1 July 2021 | Revised 2 August 2021 | Accepted 10 September 2021

How to Cite: Putra, I. M., Bangun, N. C. (2021). Level of Local Community Brand Awareness of Samosir Tourism. International Journal of Applied Sciences in Tourism and Events, 5(2), 121-130. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.31940/ijaste.v5i2.121-130>

Introduction

Branding is the process of interacting symbols which are manifested in the form of language, sound (intonation), gesture, and visualization to construct a meaning which then becomes the identity or characteristic of an object be it an individual, product, or institution (Susan, 2009). Branding is a marketing strategy. Branding strategies are used to support the existence of a product or service in order to keep progressing and developing. Branding creates consumer perceptions of a product or service and helps build an image

Brand combines a set of product or service features related to the brand name and serves to identify the product or service in the market. A successful brand involves at least three additional aspects, namely: (a) understanding of consumers, where a product or service brand is highly dependent on consumer perceptions, (b) marketing communication where once a product or service brand is formed it is very important to be communicated and placed on a particular niche in the market, and (c) continued interaction with consumers where organizational processes must be directed at maintaining brand identity while maintaining continuous interaction with target consumers, so that the product or service has a competitive advantage with competitors (Geoffrey, 2007).



Figure 1. Samosir Regency Tourism Brand

"Negeri Indah Kepingan Surga" is a tourism brand in Samosir. Choosing a brand in tourism promotion is not easy, because the brand used must represent the overall tourist destination. Negeri Indah Kepingan Surga means that Samosir has a special beauty that is said to be like a piece of heaven such as natural beauty, cultural uniqueness and the hospitality of the local community. This was done to support the vision of Samosir Regency which is to become an innovative environmental tourism destination by relying on tourist objects in Samosir (Manullang, 2015).

Tourism branding must be synergized with stakeholders who interact directly with tourists. A complete perception is needed that guarantees brand awareness of all stakeholders regarding "Negeri Indah Kepingan Surga", including local communities. Local communities have a direct role in managing tourist destinations and the tourism industry. In addition, local people also play an important role as tourism marketers. Perceptions and attitudes of local people towards tourists are the face of Samosir tourism.

Brand awareness is a person's ability to remember a particular brand or particular advertisement spontaneously or after being stimulated by key words (Rangkuti, 2009). Thus, brand awareness can be said to be the general goal of marketing communication. The existence of high brand awareness is expected to be able to associate a product with its brand. Like "Negeri Indah Kepingan Surga", the brand sticks in the mind of everyone who hears it with a "indah/beautiful" and "surga/heavenly" atmosphere. Two key words: "beautiful" and "heaven" must be visualized so that a meaning is constructed which becomes an identity or characteristic. In the context of marketing communications, brand identity must be maintained by managers of tourist destinations, tourism industry players, and local communities who interact directly with tourists, so as to generate tourist perceptions that are in accordance with the marketing communications built.

The sequential level of brand awareness are as follows(Simamora, 2001):

1. Unaware of brand. This category includes brands that remain unknown even though aided recall has been carried out
2. Brand recognition. This category includes product brands that are known to consumers after aided recall is carried out
3. Brand recall. This category includes brands in a product category that consumers remember without having to be recalled, termed unaided recall
4. Top of mind. This category includes product brands that the first appear in the minds of consumers in general

Based on information sourced from the Samosir Regency Tourism Office, the brand "Negeri Indah Kepingan Surga" does not yet have a meaningful formula, so that anyone who hears it is free to perceive and interpret. This condition affects the level of brand awareness of the local community. In accordance with the theory of symbolic uninteractionism which explains that individual interactions always use symbols which are then practiced to get meaning. So, in fact, " Negeri Indah Kepingan Surga " as a symbol must have a meaning in order to be practiced by the local community.

Based on literature search, there are several similar studies. Priyatmoko examined the level of awareness of tour guides on Branding Wonderful Indonesia and Pesona Indonesia: Tourism Destination Marketing Strategies. The result of this research is the level of brand awareness of the guides in the Special Region of Yogyakarta Province is at a score of 2,663, the third level is brand recall, which means being able to recognize branding without the help of certain stimuli (Priyatmoko, 2016).

In addition, Adona et al researched City Branding: Padang City Tourism Marketing Strategy. The result of this research is that city branding is not implemented in accordance with the work process, it is more spontaneous without planning. As a result, the government's vision, mission and goals are less consistent with the brands they compile. Most of the West Sumatra bureaucracy has not been able to explain the consequences and their understanding of city branding . On the other hand, community participation in promoting city branding is also not very visible (Adona et al., 2017).

Furthermore, Yuristiadhi and Sari's research in 2017 examines Indonesia's Tourism Branding Strategy for International Marketing. The results of this study are (1) The branding that has been used since 2015 to date is Wonderful Indonesia for foreign markets and Pesona Indonesia for the domestic market. Previously, since 2008-2015 the Government of the Republic of Indonesia used Visit Indonesia (2) The Ministry of Tourism used four media used as a means of publication and promotion, namely online media, electronic media, printed media, and space media (3) Branding Wonderful Indonesia has significantly attracted tourists China, which surged 42.22% in 2017, but has not done well in other countries (Makhasi, 2017).

The aim of this research are: (1) This is to determine the level of brand awareness of the local community on the branding "Negeri Indah Kepingan Surga" in Samosir Regency. (2) This is to find out the local community's perception of the "Negeri Indah Kepingan Surga" branding in Samosir Regency.

Methodology

This type of research is a survey. survey research is research conducted on large and small populations but the data studied is data from samples so that relative incidents, distribution and relationships between sociological and psychological variables are found (Kerlinger, 2006).

The first research objective uses a descriptive quantitative research approach. quantitative research is research that analyzes quantitative data (data in the form of numbers or quantitative qualitative data) using statistics as a test tool. Then the results of the quantitative research were analyzed and explained again descriptively through qualitative research (Sugiyono, 2012).

The second research objective used a qualitative research approach. In qualitative research, primary data sources are determined by using criterion-based selection which is based on the assumption that the subject is an actor in the research theme. Meanwhile, in determining the informants, using the snow ball sampling model to expand the research subject .

The population of this study were all people of Samosir Regency aged 15-64 years. Based on data obtained from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) of Samosir Regency in 2020, it is known that the population of Simanindo District aged 15-64 years is 73.031 people (Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Samosir, 2020). The sample calculation uses the Frank Lynch calculation formula (Irawan, 2006):

$$En = \frac{Nz^2 \cdot p(1 - p)}{Nd^2 + z^2 \cdot p(1 - p)} \quad (1)$$

Information :

n = number of samples

N = total population

z = standard value according to the level of confidence (1 , 96) 95% confidence level

p = benchmark price (0 , 5)

d = sampling error (0 , 1)

Then,

$$n = \frac{73031(3,84) \times 0,25}{73031(0,01) + 3,84 \times 0,25}$$

$$n = \frac{730,31 + 0,96}{70109,76}$$

$$n = \frac{731,27}{731,27}$$

n = 95,87 or rounded to 96 , then the sample size is 96 people

The sampling technique in this study was purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a sampling technique with certain consideration (Sugiyono, 2014). In this case, the authors taking samples based on field observations of Local community in Samosir involved who are actively

involved in the tourism industry and managing tourist destinations. This is because they interact directly with tourists as tourism marketing objects.

Table 1. List of Questions in the Questionnaire

Brand Awareness Level	No.	Question	Scale
<i>Unaware of Brand</i>	1	You Know that Samosir has <i>tourism branding</i>	Likert
	2	You know the <i>branding of</i> Samosir tourism promotion	
<i>Brand Recognition</i>	3	You know the logo / image of the Samosir <i>tourism branding</i>	
	4	You know the <i>tagline</i> or sentence of Samosir <i>tourism branding</i>	
<i>Brand Recall</i>	5	You recognize the <i>branding of</i> tourism Samosir when viewed logo or read the <i>tagline</i> that	
	6	Samosir <i>tourism branding</i> logo / image is memorable	
	7	Samosir <i>tourism branding tagline</i> or sentence is easy to remember	
<i>Top of Mind</i>	8	When you hear <i>tourism branding</i> , the first thing you will remember is <u>Samosir <i>tourism branding</i></u>	

The data collection method in this study is the interview given to informants who are community leaders and a list of questions (questionnaire) given to the research respondents. Interviews were conducted in a structured and in-depth manner to determine the local community's perceptions of the tourism brand logo. Meanwhile, the statements in the questionnaire were built from four levels of brand awareness, namely unaware brand, brand recall, brand recognition, and top of mind. There are eight questions in the questionnaire with a choice of five answers according to the Likert scale level as shown in table 1.

The data analysis technique used in the formulation of the first problem is quantitative data analysis to estimate the level of brand awareness of the local community towards the brand "Negeri Indah Kepingan Surga". Therefore, each alternative answer chosen by the respondent to the questions on the questionnaire will be given a score or weighted value. The calculation of the answer score is as follows:

Maximum score for each question	:	5
Minimum score for each question	:	1
Number of questions	:	8
Number of respondents	:	96
Lowest score	:	768
Highest score	:	3,840
Ranking Range	:	3,072
Many Levels	:	4
Range between tiers	:	768

Then set the class interval table based on the level of *brand awareness* :

Table 2. Class interval table and *brand awareness* level

No.	Interval	Brand Awareness Level
1	768 - 1,536	<i>Unaware of Brand</i>
2	1,537 - 2,304	<i>Brand Recognition</i>
3	2,305 - 3,072	<i>Brand Recall</i>
4	3,073 - 3,840	<i>Top of Mind</i>

The method of data analysis in the second research objective was carried out qualitatively by emphasizing the relations between data, interpreting and interpreting them. The formulation is not explained in numbers, but it will be well illustrated if it is done narrative. In addition, a member check was carried out on every data obtained, then a group discussion was held with several experts so that the results of the research carried out could be accounted for and could be used to answer the problem under study.

Results and Discussions

Results

Respondent Characteristics

Respondents in this study were local people aged 15 - 64 years in Simanindo sub-district, Samosir Regency, totaling 96 people. To determine the condition of the characteristics of the respondents, it can be seen from the general description of the research respondents. In the following discussion, the characteristics of respondents are classified based on gender, education, occupation, and domicile of the sub-districts, which are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristics	Number of Respondents (%) = 96 people (100%)								
Domicile	Daily	Nainggolan	Onan Runggu	Palipi	Panguguran	Ronggur Nihuta	Sianjur Mulamula	Simanindo	Sitiotio
	11 (11%)	9 (10%)	5 (5%)	5 (5%)	18 (19%)	8 (9%)	7 (7%)	29 (30%)	4 (4%)
Profession	Craftsmen	Business Owners	Employees	Attraction Actors	Teacher	Student	Public figure		
	5 (5%)	20 (21%)	8 (9%)	8 (9%)	12 (11%)	2 (2%)	41 (43%)		
Education	SD	Junior High	High school	D-3	S-1	S-2			
	8 (9%)	17 (18%)	52 (54%)	3 (3%)	13 (13%)	3 (3%)			
Gender	Man	Women							
	53 (55%)	43 (45%)							

Source: Primary research data, 2020

Level of Brand Awareness

Based on the data analysis method that has been established in this study, it is known that the results of the calculation of the total score of answers from 96 respondents to 8 questions resulted in a score of 2.405. This means that the level of brand awareness of the local community towards the tourism brand in Samosir Regency is at the level of brand awareness or being able to recognize branding without certain assistance. For more details, see Figure 2.

Although the research results show that the Level of Local Community Brand Awareness towards tourism branding in Samosir Regency is at the brand recall level. However, this is unfortunate, because the local community's brand awareness should be at the top level of mind. Local people who live in tourist areas are one of the key actors in tourism. Not infrequently, local people with all their perceptions about tourism management have already been involved in tourism management. That is why their role is very important in tourism development. Their role is seen primarily in the form of providing accommodation, guiding services, providing food, souvenirs and other tourism services. In addition, local communities usually have traditions and local wisdom in preserving culture and history that are not shared by other stakeholders.

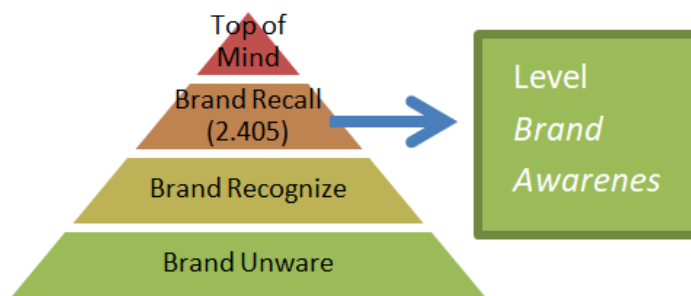


Figure 2. Level of Local Community Brand Awareness on tourism branding in Samosir Regency

When local people have a level of brand awareness at the top of mind level, it means that local people can apply the branding of Negeri Indah Kepingan Surga well. So that the marketing function of the brand can be felt by tourists when interacting with local people when visiting Samosir Regency. As one of the stakeholders who is in direct contact with tourists, ideally, local community brand awareness is at the top of mind level. Some of the ways that must be done in order to achieve brand awareness include the following (Aaker, 1997): (1) The message to be conveyed to consumers/local community must be easy to remember and different from other products; (2) The symbol used can be associated with the brand; (3) Brand extensions can be used to make the brand more memorable or known by consumers/local community; (4) Sponsorship and publicity can be used to achieve brand awareness; (5) Perform repetitions of the message conveyed.

Discussions

Local Community Perceptions of Tourism Branding in Samosir Regency

Interviews were conducted with 9 informants who are community leaders in Samosir Regency. Community leaders consist of traditional leaders, management of tourism organizations, hotel managers, and government employees. The list of interview questions is formatted based on the color, shape, and writing contained in the tourism branding of Samosir Regency.

Table 4. Perception of Branding by Color

Question Items	ID	Informant Statement
The meaning of Samosir's writing is Batak, Yellow and Red	1	Yellow symbol of agriculture Red bold symbol
	2	Red means according to the color of the batak manganduk flag of meaning, struggle, achievement and sikab tebuka. While yellow is the color of egg yolk (transparent has always been a completeness of batak ritual) is meaningful meaning of life needs the blessing of God Pnguasai Alam.
	3	I never knew yellow was a Batak ethnic color.
	4	Actually the color of batak is actually red and white black, but the red yellow only beautify the color of it.
	5	Yellow is Beautiful and Red is Brave
	6	Island
	7	Representing a peace-loving and courageous society
	8	The natives and most of the samosir population are batak ethnicities.
	9	<i>Yellow signifies diversity</i> Red indicates courage.
The meaning of Samosir writing with red border	1	Brave
	2	Contains meaning, sturdy, consistent and bravely different. (Red is not easy in other color separations)

	3	Don't know
	4	Which means the red sign of courage in the batak people
	5	<i>Beragam</i>
	6	Batik
	7	A samosir society that always protects itself with courage
	8	Samosir customs
	9	Indicates territory
The meaning of the blue color in the tagline / slogan "Beautiful Land of Pieces of Heaven"	1	Samosir is surrounded by a blue lake.
	2	Means samosir surrounded by lakes and lakes are very close in happy life samosir residents
	3	Don't know. My advice, white, red, black, green and blue are combined. If you want to ask the meaning from my point of view, we will talk about it again.
	4	The meaning of blue color indicates the lake of blue water and surrounded by green hills.
	5	The color blue means Lake Toba.
	6	The beauty of nature
	7	Symbolizing greatness
	8	Samosir regency is around Lake Toba
	9	Lake Toba water

Based on the results of the interviews shown in Table 4, it is known that most informants perceive the red color in the Samosir tourism brand as a bold nature and the blue color as Lake Toba water . The research on " Concept of Color in Culture Batak Toba Study: Metalanguage Semantic Natural " discovered that the red color is included in the three basic colors contained in Debata Na Tolu, gorga, and Ulos which has m akna courage, wisdom, and k ekuatan. Meanwhile, yellow is one of the four complex colors of the Toba Batak as a variation of life that has a meaning of wealth. The red, yellow, and blue colors found in the Samosir Regency tourism brand are actually included in the uniqueness of the Toba Batak culture(Gebie, 2017). Even so, there are still various perceptions among community leaders in interpreting the colors of the Samosir tourism brand, however , the whole is positive.

Based on the results of the interview shown in table 5 , the shape of the island of Samosir in the tourism branding of Samosir Regency was perceived as the same by the informants that the image of the shape means geographical location; Samosir island. Meanwhile, the form of writing on the word Samosir and on the slogan "Negeri Indah Kepingan Surga" is still interpreted in various ways, but the whole is positive in tone.

Table 5. Perception of Branding Based on Form

Question Items	ID	Informant Statement
The Meaning of Samosir Map in Samosir Writing	1	It indicates that it is samosir
	2	Confirming that Samosir is, is the center of Lake Toba. Lake toba is samosir, and samosir is fanau toba. Parapat, balige, it's on the island of Sumatra so that everyone when meeting with the letter O, will remember samosir
	3	Showing the shape of samosir island
	4	Good that's what it means
	5	Indicate location
	6	Beauty
	7	Samosir community unity
	8	Samosir region
	9	Indicates the geographical location of a place
	1	Because samosir consists of rows of sturdy hills

The meaning of perpendicular writing in Samosir's writing	2	Meaning: straight words and deeds, the community is honest, stands firm and proud of the culture and lifestyle of the community
	3	Don't know
	4	The meaning of his writing is perpendicular it signifies honest and fair in Samosir Regency
	5	Samosir is godly and friendly with humans.
	6	Assertiveness
	7	Laws enforced by the samosir community
	8	Existence of samosir regency
	9	Indicates that the community is godly and carrying help
	The meaning of continuous writing on the tagline / slogan "Beautiful Land of Pieces of Heaven"	1
2		Beauty and heaven are a unit of being a product of tourism. <i>Maybe, this is a hope that the beauty, comfort, harmony of the community in Samosir is always maintained..</i>
3		<i>The meaning of the writing is connected because the batak person there is a carving of gorga batak does not break the carving in short there is a bond to the family..</i>
4		Samosir is in the middle of Lake Toba.
5		Together
6		Samosir people who always work together and please help
7		Beauty of Samosir Regency
8		Samosir is surrounded by small islands around Lake Toba.
9		

Furthermore, based on the results of the interviews shown in table 6, most of the informants perceived the phrase "Negeri Indah Kepingan Surga" as a beauty both in nature and the environment. However, the beauty of nature still dominates the public perception over the beauty of the surroundings such as to the peaceful early and to a comfortable early .

Table 6. Perception of Branding by Lettering

Question Items	ID	Informant Statement
The meaning of the tagline "Negeri Indah Kepingan Surga"	1	That the beauty of samosir is likened to a piece of heaven "... This piece of heaven is true. The right thing is not a tagline, not a slogan. Because the understanding is very different where slogans are not commonly known in the science of branding. It means that samosir is beautiful, beautiful, sweet, cool, peaceful and natural as it is. It feels like a piece of heaven that is located on earth, and it is in the batak universe.
	2	If the beautiful land of the pieces of heaven can explain that when we are in samosir, we seem to feel that the beauty and comfort of heaven is in this place (samosir). Although the scope of beauty and comfort of the paradise we dream of is beyond what we see and feel disamosir. That's why maybe the use of the word pieces was made.
	3	It means before the ladies and gentleman goes to heaven but has stepped on the pieces of heaven that samosir
	4	Samosir a very beautiful tourist area
	5	Figurative of a natural beauty
	6	A beautiful and comfortable place.
	7	Beauty in Samosir Regency
	8	Signifies that samosir is beautiful like the paradise of the world
	9	

Overall, the local community's perception of tourism branding in Samosir Regency is still mixed. Except for the image of the Samosir map which already has the same perception. This

condition is in contrast to the level of brand awareness which is at the brand recall level. Brand awareness should be followed by a good perception of the brand. So that the meaning of the tourism brand can be realized in its entirety, especially for local people who are in direct contact with tourists.

Conclusions

The level of brand awareness of the local community towards the tourism brand in Samosir Regency is at the level of brand awareness or being able to recognize branding without a certain stimulus (assistance). As one of the stakeholders who is in direct contact with tourists, ideally the local community's brand awareness should be at the top of mind level. Efforts are needed to increase brand awareness in local communities which will have an impact on tourism in Samosir Regency.

The local community's perception of the tourism brand in Samosir Regency is still varied, although it has a positive tone. So, it is necessary to formulate the meaning of the tourism brand in Samosir Regency which is then socialized by the Tourism Office as the owner of the brand's authority. The formulation of the meaning of the tourism brand and the socialization must be done, so that the level of brand awareness and perception does not contradict the findings in this study, so that the meaning of the tourism brand in Samosir Regency can be realized in its entirety.

Acknowledgement

The author gratefully acknowledgement the financial support from North Sumatera University Research Institution Number: 4142/UN.5.R/PPM/2020 on 27th April 2020

References

- Aaker, D. A. (1997). *Managing Brand Equity: Capitalizing on the Value of a Brand Name*. The Free Press Alfabeta.
- Adona, F., Nita, S., Yusnani, & Mafrudoh, L. (2017). City Branding: Strategi Pemasaran Pariwisata Kota Padang. *Proceeding SENDI_U*.
- Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Samosir. (2020). *Kabupaten Samosir Dalam Angka*.
- Gebie, P. (2017). *Konsep Warna Dalam Budaya Batak Toba: Kajian Semantik Alami*.
- Geoffrey, S. (2007). *E-Branding: Developing the Internet as a Branding Tool*. Marketing Intelligence and Planning.
- Irawan, A. (2006). *Modul Praktikum Statistika*. Cipta Prima Nusantara.
- Kerlinger. (2006). *Asas-asas Penelitian Behaviour* (3rd ed.). Gadjah Mada University Press.
- Makhasi, G. Y. M. ; C. U. (2017). *Pariwisata Indonesia Untuk Pemasaran Mancanegara*. 2.
- Manullang, Y. (2015). Pelaksanaan Promosi Kepariwisata Samosir Oleh Dinas Pariwisata Seni dan Budaya Kabupaten Samosir. *JOM FISIP*, 2(2).
- Priyatmoko, R. (2016). Tingkat Kesadaran Pramuwisata Terhadap Branding Wonderful Indonesia dan Pesona Indonesia: Strategi Pemasaran Destinasi Wisata. *Jurnal Destinasi Kepariwisata Indonesia*, 1, 83–102.
- Rangkuti, F. (2009). *The Power of Brand: Teknik Mengelola Brand Equity dan Strategi Pengembangan Merek*. PT. Gramedia Pustaka Utama.

Simamora, B. (2001). *Memenangkan Pasar dengan Pemasaran Efektif dan Profitabel*. Gramedia Pustaka Utama.

Sugiyono. (2012). *Statistika untuk Penelitian*. Alfabeta.

Sugiyono. (2014). *Statistika untuk Penelitian*. Alfabeta.

Susan, N. (2009). *Sosiologi Konflik & Isu-isu Kontemporer*. Kencana Penada Media Group.