



Marketing strategy analysis of Sam Poo Kong in increasing number of visitors

Nabilah¹, Michael Rudolf Bernadus²

^{1,2}Corporate Communications, LSPR Communication & Business Institute

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received Jul 22, 2023

Revised Sep 12, 2023

Accepted Sep 27, 2023

Keywords:

Event;
Media;
Strategy.

ABSTRACT

This research aimed to investigate the marketing strategies used by Sam Poo Kong, a leading tourist destination business in Semarang, to ensure the sustainability of their business. Qualitative methods were used in this study. The research utilized in-depth interviews with Sam Poo Kong's managers and CEO to collect data on their marketing approach. The findings showed that Sam Poo Kong relied heavily on two main marketing strategies, such as event promotion and social media promotion. The organization actively organizes and participates in various events to interact with potential customers, create brand awareness, and foster customer loyalty. In addition, social media promotion has also emerged as another important aspect of Sam Poo Kong's marketing strategy. By harnessing the power of social media platforms, the company effectively reaches a wider audience and engages with customers in a more interactive and dynamic way. The insights gained from this study can be useful for other businesses in the industry looking to improve their marketing strategies and maintain long-term sustainability.

This is an open access article under the [CC BY-NC](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/) license.



Corresponding Author:

Nabilah
Corporeate Communication
LSPR Communication & Bussiness Institute
Tanah Abang, Jakarta, 10220, Indonesia
Email: Nabilahalkatiri98@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

Traveling is one of the needs of modern humans (Neupane, 2021). The development of technology and information makes it easier for people to find and enjoy various attractions (Heever, 2022; Nielsen et al., 2022). Indonesia is one of the many countries in the world that is rich in natural resources, including global tourism resources (Dalimunthe et al., 2020). Yesterday's COVID-19 pandemic has hit the tourism industry and creative economy in Indonesia (Putri, 2020; Susilawati et al., 2020). According to the Indonesian Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, since February 2020 the number of foreign tourists entering Indonesia has dropped dramatically, and the peak occurred in April 2020 which only reached 158,000 foreign tourists, according to data summarized in the 2021 Tourism Trends Book published by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy. In total, throughout 2020 the number of foreign tourists entering Indonesia was only around 4.052 million people. This figure is very concerning, because in total it is only about 25% of the number of tourists who entered Indonesia in 2019 (Rijal et al., 2022).

All destinations or tourist attractions in Indonesia were affected by the Covid-19 pandemic situation last year (Heever, 2022; Nielsen et al., 2022). Tourism objects are the potential that encourages the presence of tourists to an area. One of the tourist destinations or tourist attractions in Central Java is the Sam Poo Kong Grand Temple also experienced a decrease in the number of tourists and was almost deserted during the pandemic several years ago (Neupane, 2021).

As a historical tourist attraction, Sam Poo Kong Temple has a lot of potential to be further developed post-pandemic. However, it is still difficult to achieve, especially to restore the level of tourist visits as before the pandemic hit (Lin & Kishore, 2021; Rosmadi, 2021). Several strategies are implemented by the tourism industry. One of them is a marketing strategy. Kotler, P. & Armstrong (2018) explain that the marketing mix strategy can be interpreted as a set of controllable variables used by companies to pursue the desired level of sales in target markets or in other words 4P is a combination of marketing variables in the form of internal factors that are within the range that can be controlled by the company.

One of the strategies is promotion, which is an effort to disseminate or offer a product or service with the aim of attracting potential customers to buy it. One way can be done digitally. According to Soegoto & Rahmansyah (2018), digital marketing is interactive and integrated marketing that allows producers, market intermediaries, and potential customers to communicate. Meanwhile, Rizaldi & Hidayat (2020) state that digital marketing plays a strategic role in the sale of their company's goods, namely through the use of social media as marketing communication.

Some previous research results also examined marketing strategies. First, research by Cahyani (2022) shows that marketing communication strategies (MCS) do not directly influence purchasing decisions (BD) in the context of the Shopee application. However, the study found that perceived quality (PQ) has a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions (BD), and confirmed that the effect of marketing communication strategies on purchasing decisions occurs through the perceived quality factor as an intermediary variable.

In addition, research by Haris (2022) highlights the importance of marketing communication in expanding market share in the 4.0 era. This research emphasizes that marketing communication plays an important role in directing potential customers to products that suit their needs based on factors such as culture, lifestyle, purchasing habits, and preferred communication channels. The results of this study provide a deeper understanding of how marketing communications can influence consumer preferences and behavior in today's digital era.

These studies provide insights into effective marketing communication strategies in various contexts, including digital marketing, online marketplaces, social media, and MSME businesses. The research gap between previous research and current research is that the current research focuses more on tourist destinations and post-pandemic visit recovery, while previous research focuses more on MSMEs, product marketing, digitally.

This research aims to find out the marketing strategy analysis of Sam Poo Kong in increasing the number of visitors. The practical implication of this research is that this research can be used as marketing input in various places to increase the number of visitors.

RESEARCH METHOD

According to Harmon in Moleong (2004), a paradigm is a fundamental way of perceiving, thinking, assessing and doing things that are specifically related to reality. In other words, paradigms are concepts, methods, and rules used as a framework for implementation in research (Rukajat, 2018; Sugiyono, 2018, 2019). This research uses a constructivist paradigm because researchers want to get the development of understanding that helps the process of interpreting an event.

This research is a descriptive case study with a qualitative approach. According to Nawawi (2005), descriptive method by describing or describing the state of the object of research at the present time based on the facts that appear or as they are. According to Moleong (2010), qualitative

research is research that intends to understand the phenomena of what is experienced by research subjects such as behavior, perceptions, motivations, actions, etc., holistically, and by means of descriptions in the form of words and phrases.

The research data was collected by conducting in-depth interviews with the manager and CEO of Sam Poo Kong itself. According to Sugiyono (2016), in qualitative research, data collection is carried out in natural settings (natural conditions), primary data sources, and data collection techniques are more on participant observation, in-depth interviews and documentation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The data analysis is carried out by collecting data in natural settings (natural conditions). Retrieve data from various related sources. For the most part, data collection relies more on participant observation and by conducting in-depth interviews with selected and predetermined response respondents. Local area documentation is also carried out when carrying out the data collection process. All data sources obtained were analyzed and presented in the following results.

Sam Poo Kong, also known as Klenteng Gedung Batu, is the oldest Chinese pagoda in Semarang, the capital of Central Java province. The 1,020-square-meter building combines Javanese and Chinese architectural elements from the 14th century. The pagoda can be visited at Jl. Simongan No.129, Bongsari, West Semarang, Semarang City, Central Java 50148.



Figure 1. Location of Sam Poo Kong.

Based on the results of in-depth interviews with the manager and CEO of the Sam Poo Kong Grand Temple, information was obtained that this historical tourist destination maintains its existence and attracts more visitors after the pandemic last year through two main strategies, namely direct promotion in the form of events and promotions by utilizing information technology, in this case social media.

The strategy used is in line with the theory expressed by Kotler and Armstrong (2018) explaining that the marketing mix can be interpreted as a set of controllable variables used by

companies to pursue the desired level of sales in target markets or in other words 4P is a combination of marketing variables in the form of internal factors that are within the range that can be controlled by the company.

The 4Ps are (1) Product, which is a combination of goods and services offered by the company to the target market. (2) Price is the amount of value that consumers must pay to get the product. (3) Place is a place where company activities that can make products accessible to consumers. Then the last one is (4) Promotion, which is an activity to communicate product advantages and persuade consumers to buy it.

According to Firmansyah (2020), there are at least 5 types of promotions, namely advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations and public relations, and direct marketing. Marketing techniques by communicating directly to customers, both new customers and potential customers, without going through third-party intermediaries, such as media or advertisements. One example is holding events for tourist destinations.

Event Promotion

Sam Poo Kong, a famous historical tourist destination in Semarang, Central Java, implements an effective marketing strategy by utilizing direct promotion in the form of events. Sam Poo Kong regularly organizes special events that attract local and foreign tourists. By involving the community directly, this strategy has succeeded in creating a high awareness of Sam Poo Kong's existence and attractiveness as an attractive tourist destination.

The events organized by Sam Poo Kong include a variety of interesting activities, such as art performances, cultural exhibitions, culinary festivals, and traditional art demonstrations. By presenting a variety of activities related to history and culture, Sam Poo Kong is able to attract a diverse audience and expand its visitor base. In addition, Sam Poo Kong also often participates in other events themed around historical tourism, such as cultural festivals and tourism seminars. By actively participating in these events, Sam Poo Kong strengthens its image and reputation as a tourist destination that is influential in maintaining and raising historical awareness.

Through direct promotion strategies in the form of events, it helps business to be succeed in achieving its marketing objectives well (Noor, 2013). By organizing interesting events and participating in other events, Sam Poo Kong managed to build community engagement, attract tourists, and raise awareness of the uniqueness and beauty of the place. This strategy also helped Sam Poo Kong to expand its market reach, create visitor satisfaction, and increase revenue through increased visitor numbers and merchandise sales. In this condition after the big pandemic, direct marketing strategies in the form of events are still relevant and effective in promoting tourist destinations such as Sam Poo Kong.

Social Media Promotion

Sam Poo Kong has also employed effective marketing strategies through social media. By utilizing platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, business can actively communicate with its followers and promotes its appeal to a wider audience (Rehman, 2022). In its social media promotion campaign, Sam Poo Kong uses beautiful photos, short videos, and interesting stories to showcase its beauty and history to its followers (Bharathi et al., 2022; Bramantyo, 2021; Kusumawardhani & Sari, 2021; Zubiaga et al., 2016). Through this strategy, Sam Poo Kong managed to reach a larger audience and attract local and foreign tourists to visit the place.

In addition, Sam Poo Kong also actively interacts with its followers through social media. They respond to questions, provide information about upcoming events, and invite followers to participate in contests and giveaways. In this way, Sam Poo Kong creates strong engagement with its followers and builds closer relationships. Promotion through social media allows Sam Poo Kong to be constantly present in the minds of its followers, reminding them of its existence, and keeping their interest alive. By utilizing the potential for wide reach and direct interaction offered by social

media, this marketing strategy helps Sam Poo Kong to remain a popular and relevant tourist destination in today's digital age.

Promotion Factors

Several factors can affect or inhibit the promotion of a tourism destination. According to the interview, here are several factors that might become obstacles in promoting Sam Poo Kong.

Infrastructure and Accessibility. The availability and quality of transportation networks, such as airports, roads, and public transportation, significantly impact a destination's promotion. Good infrastructure and easy accessibility make it more attractive to potential visitors. There still some transportation that did not operate fully in Semarang area since pandemic.

Economic Factors. Economic stability, exchange rates, and disposable income levels of potential tourists can affect the promotion of a destination. The stability of economic still fluctuated.

CONCLUSION

Sam Poo Kong's marketing strategy in increasing the number of visitors, it was found that promotional strategies through events and social media play an important role in achieving these goals. Through organizing various events such as art performances, cultural exhibitions, and culinary festivals, Sam Poo Kong managed to attract and expand its visitor base. These events created a high awareness of Sam Poo Kong's existence and appeal as an attractive tourist destination.

In addition, promotional strategies using social media have also proven effective in increasing the number of visitors. By utilizing social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, Sam Poo Kong can communicate directly with its followers and promote this tourist destination to a wider audience. Through engaging content and active interaction with its followers, Sam Poo Kong is able to build strong engagement and keep visitor interest alive. Promotion through social media also allows Sam Poo Kong to expand its market reach and remain relevant in this digital age.

The influencing factors during promotional activities are also not very significant. As explained, these factors are only accommodation issues and the economic situation of the community since the pandemic. Overall, this research has successfully revealed that the marketing strategies used by Sam Poo Kong, namely promotion through events and social media, have a positive impact in increasing the number of visitors. The combination of engaging events and a strong presence on social media succeeded in building awareness, engagement and interest in Sam Poo Kong as a historical tourist destination. This research provides valuable insights for Sam Poo Kong and other tourist destinations in planning effective marketing strategies to achieve their goals.

References

- Bharathi, R., Bhavani, R., & Priya, R. (2022). Twitter Text Sentiment Analysis of Amazon Unlocked Mobile Reviews Using Supervised Learning Techniques. *Indian Journal of Computer Science and Engineering*, 13(4), 1242-1253. <https://doi.org/10.21817/indjcs/2022/v13i4/221304100>
- Bramantyo, T. (2021). Digital art and the future of traditional arts. *Music Scholarship*, 1. <https://doi.org/10.33779/2587-6341.2021.1.096-110>
- Cahyani, P.D., Welsa, H. & Krisdiantoro, F. (2022). Pengaruh strategi komunikasi pemasaran dan pemasaran media sosial terhadap keputusan pembelian dengan persepsi kualitas sebagai variabel intervening pada aplikasi Shopee. *International Journal of Economics, Business and Accounting Research (IJE BAR)*, 6(2), 2614-1280.
- Dalimunthe, D. Y., Valeriani, D., Hartini, F., & Wardhani, R. S. (2020). The Readiness of Supporting Infrastructure for Tourism Destination in Achieving Sustainable Tourism Development. *Society*, 8(1).

- <https://doi.org/10.33019/society.v8i1.149>
- Firmansyah, M. . (2020). Komunikasi Pemasaran. *Jakarta: Erlangga*.
- Haris, A., Samosir, H.E., & Lubis, S. . (2022). Komunikasi Pemasaran Sebagai Strategi Memperluas Pasar. *Jurnal Internasional Ilmu Sosial Dan Bisnis*, 7(1), 89–98.
- Heever, G. van den. (2022). Travelling Theories. *Religion and Theology*, 29(3–4). <https://doi.org/10.1163/15743012-02903001>
- Kotler, P. & Armstrong, G. (2018). *Prinsip Pemasaran*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.
- Kusumawardhani, E., & Sari, D. S. (2021). Gelombang Pop Culture Tik-Tok: Studi kasus Amerika Serikat, Jepang, India dan Indonesia. *Padjadjaran Journal of International Relations*, 3(1). <https://doi.org/10.24198/padjar.v3i1.27758>
- Lin, X., & Kishore, R. (2021). Social media-enabled healthcare: A conceptual model of social media affordances, online social support, and health behaviors and outcomes. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 166. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2021.120574>
- Moleong, L. J. (2004). *Metodologi penelitian pendidikan kualitatif*. Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Moleong, L. J. (2010). *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif*. Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Nawawi, H. (2005). *Penelitian Terapan*. Yogyakarta: Gajah Mada University Press.
- Neupane, D. (2021). The Conflict between Mechanical World and Natural World in “Travelling through the Dark” and “Woodchucks”: An Ecological Study. *Journal of Population and Development*, 2(1). <https://doi.org/10.3126/jpd.v2i1.43469>
- Nielsen, J. A., Mathiassen, L., & Newell, S. (2022). Multidirectional Idea Travelling Across an Organizational Field. *Organization Studies*, 43(6). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840621998566>
- Noor, A. (2013). *Manajemen Event*.
- Putri, R. N. (2020). Indonesia dalam Menghadapi Pandemi Covid-19. *Jurnal Ilmiah Universitas Batanghari Jambi*, 20(2), 705. <https://doi.org/10.33087/jiubj.v20i2.1010>
- Rehman, S.ul, Gulzar, R., & Aslam, W. (2022). Mengembangkan Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) melalui Social Media (SM): Pendekatan Komunikasi Pemasaran Modern. *SAGE Terbuka*, 12(2).
- Rijal, S., Arifin, M., Rante, M. W., Musawantoro, M., & Badollahi, M. Z. (2022). existence of tourism higher education under the ministry of tourism and creative economy (PTNP) toward Indonesia’s golden generation 2045. *Linguistics and Culture Review*, 6. <https://doi.org/10.21744/lingcure.v6ns2.2111>
- Rizaldi, A., & Hidayat, H. (2020). Digital Marketing Communication Strategy. *Jurnal Entrepreneur Dan Entrepreneurship*, 9(2), 57–66. <https://doi.org/10.37715/jee.v9i2.1340>
- Rosmadi, M. L. N. (2021). Penerapan Strategi Bisnis di Masa Pandemi Covid-19. *Jurnal IKRA-ITH Ekonomika*, Volume 4(No 1).
- Rukajat, A. (2018). *Pendekatan Penelitian Kualitatif Qualita-pdf*. 22.
- Soegoto, E. S., & Rahmansyah, M. R. (2018). Use of internet as product marketing media using internet marketing method. *IOP Conference Series: Materials Science and Engineering*, 407(1). <https://doi.org/10.1088/1757-899X/407/1/012053>
- Sugiyono. (2017). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D*. Alfabeta, CV.
- Sugiyono. (2018). *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif, Kuantitatif, dan R&D*. CV.Alfabeta.
- Sugiyono. (2019). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D* (1st ed.). Penerbit Alfabeta.
- Susilawati, S., Falefi, R., & Purwoko, A. (2020). Impact of COVID-19’s Pandemic on the Economy of Indonesia. *Budapest International Research and Critics Institute (BIRCI-Journal): Humanities and Social Sciences*, 3(2). <https://doi.org/10.33258/birci.v3i2.954>
- Zubiaga, A., Liakata, M., & Procter, R. (2016). *Learning Reporting Dynamics during Breaking News for Rumour Detection in Social Media*.