
**TOURISM COMMUNICATION IN DEVELOPMENT SIPIROK CITY,
SOUTH TAPANULI REGENCY**

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ABSTRACT: *This study aims to analyze tourism communication in the development of the city of Sipirok. This research is a qualitative descriptive study with a library research approach through reading sources related to the title of this research. The findings of this study indicate that Sipirok has great natural potential that can support city development, both nature tourism, and city tourism. The readiness of the local community to receive tourist arrivals is still lacking and needs guidance from the government so that tourism communication becomes an alternative that must be implemented. Based on the description of the tourism potential of Sipirok, the tourism sector is an environmentally friendly industry, which can increase people's pride in their own identity (culture). To increase the potential for a more professional Sipirok tourist destination, it still requires a creative touch from the South Tapanuli Regional Government, tourism promotion, the presence of investors, and the readiness of the community to accept tourists arrivals, especially residents who live in tourist sites. One approach in implementing tourism communication is to communicate the potential and the tourism industry through the advantages and uniqueness of local products. So that it becomes a regional tourist attraction. In addition, tourism communication carried out in Sipirok is by creating a program called marsipature forestabe (repairing their respective areas) which is able to encourage the spirit and spirituality of the community to always participate in development in Sipirok, especially in developing the tourism sector by synergizing with the government. Tourism communication efforts carried out by the government in tourism development through economic, social, cultural empowerment and also through the environmental field. On the other hand, the steps taken by the local government are to always coordinate and supervise the implementation of tourism promotion so that there is no misinformation about tourism.*

KEYWORDS: potential, tourist destinations, Sipirok

INTRODUCTION

Each region in Indonesia has its own potential, especially in the context of tourism. Indonesia is an archipelagic country that has abundant natural resources. Therefore, the development of the tourism sector can be done by utilizing tourism potential with existing natural conditions. However, in its implementation, there are many areas that have tourism potential but are not utilized properly due to a lack of human resources

both in terms of promotion and preservation (Gorlevskaya, 2016). So far, tourism potentials in various regions have not been exposed due to the inability to communicate with people outside the area (Gorlevskaya, 2016). The importance of communicating is as a way to attract people's attention both from within and from outside the region. This condition is also found in North Sumatra, especially in South Tapanuli Regency, right in Sipirok District. Geographically, this area has very good natural potential, ranging from hot springs, active mountain Sibual-buali and other city attractions such as the Great Mosque of Sipirok. Unfortunately, not many people know about this tourism potential.

Sipirok's tourism potential has not been touched by skilled hands so that its natural beauty and unique culture are still hidden and have not fully aroused the interest of tourists to see it more closely (Bungin, 2015). Thus, all tourism products must be communicated in such a way that they become attractive business products. Starting from destinations, creative economy, transportation, hospitality, recreation, art attractions in attractive, amazing, challenging, and impressive tour packages (Wahyuwibowo, 2019). The point is, everyone who has visited should have the desire to come back again to see it. Communication is the transmission of a message from a source to a receiver. Thus, communication is in the form of messages that are mutually understood by both parties, namely between the communicator and the communicant (Baran, 2012).

Tourism relies heavily on communication, either to communicate attraction, or to communicate between companies, among other factors (Santoso & Negoro, 2019). In terms of technology and media, tourism communication occurs in various forms, either through print, television, radio, internet, and others (Ho & Gebsonbut, 2019). Between people who live in tourist sites with immigrants or travelers, of course, close communication must be established so that migrants do not feel afraid to be in these locations. Close relationships are characterized by high levels of hospitality and affection, trust, self-disclosure and responsibility. Thus, hospitality can be done through speech, attitude and appearance in accepting the arrival of other people (Budayatna, 2015). Tourism communication is oriented to face-to-face interpersonal interactions between tourists and residents, residents and immigrants in the physical environment and social destinations.

One of the efforts to increase the economic growth of the Sipirok area is to increase tourist visits through community participation. Of course, it must be accompanied by a good tourism communication strategy. Each area that has tourism potential must refer to tourism marketing communications where marketing should be more focused on tourism promotion through advertising in four media through electronic media, namely advertising on international television channels, through print media, and others (Koswara et al., 2019). By doing these efforts, the public will remember, feel, and realize the beauty of Sipirok. In connection with the problem in this study,

namely how tourism communication in Sipirok South Tapanuli. From this description, this theme is very interesting to study with the title, "Sipirok Tourism Communication in the Development of Sipirok City, South Tapanuli Regency".

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism Communication

Tourism communication is the development of communication science in the field of tourism. This can happen because tourism has the potential as a means of communication (Law et al., 2014). Tourism communication is related to cultural elements that strengthen the tourism sector if it is communicated properly and sustainably among interested parties in an effort to develop tourism objects. Utilization of the beauty of natural and regional panoramas can strengthen and increase the popularity of a tourist attraction if good communication has been established between the government, capital owners, the community, and also other interest groups (Soemardiono & Hartono, 2021).

Tourism relies heavily on communication, either to communicate attraction or to communicate between companies, among other factors. In terms of technology and media, tourism communication occurs in various forms, either through print, television, radio, internet, and others. By varying media and technology tools, localities/attractions can be communicated to different visitors/tourists. This concept is based on three main modes of communication: (a) face-to-face interpersonal interactions between tourists and residents, residents and immigrants in physical environments and social destinations; (b) classical mediated communication, carried out by tourists through tourism institutions (headquarters or tourism areas), tourism organizations (tourism agencies) and through mass media e.g. newspapers, television; (c) digital media, for example, tourism sites and social networks and, more recently, digital mobile media. Mobile devices are the main tool contributing to the emergence of so-called electronic and internet-based e-tourism and the more mobile-oriented m-tourism (Razzaq et al., 2019).

City Tourism Development

The development of sustainable tourism in urban areas must begin with determining the key points that will have an impact on the application of the concept of sustainable development tourism in these areas. Sustainable tourism is defined as an alternative form of tourism that improves the quality of life of the host community, provides a high-quality experience for visitors, and maintains the quality of the environment on which both the host community and visitors depend. Tourism is developed and maintained in an area (society, environment) in such a way and at such a scale that it remains viable for an indefinite period and does not damage or alter the (human) and physical environment (Pavlic et al., 2013). Tourism development requires informed participation of all relevant stakeholders, as well as strong political

leadership to ensure broad participation and consensus building (Dr. M. Agus Cholik, S.E, 2017). Tourism development must be sustainable and requires constant monitoring of impacts, introducing necessary preventive and/or corrective actions when necessary (Merkaj, 2013). Tourism development should also maintain high levels of tourist satisfaction and ensure a meaningful experience for tourists, increase their awareness of sustainability issues and promote sustainable tourism practices among them (Amin & Priansah, 2019).

RESEARCH METHODS

To obtain data in this study used descriptive qualitative research methods, namely by describing an event into certain things and then making conclusions on the event (Sugiyono, 2014). Descriptive research is research conducted to determine the value of independent variables, both one variable or more (independent) without making comparisons or connecting one variable to another. According to (Imam Gunawan, 2013) that qualitative research is a specific relation to the study of social relations related to the facts of the pluralism of the world of life. To obtain the data needed in this study, data collection was used through library research, namely research conducted by reading literature books and other reading sources such as journals, articles, magazines, histograms and documents related to the subject matter. researched.

In accordance with the design of this research, which is qualitative, the data analyzed also uses qualitative descriptive data analysis techniques. Data analysis was carried out since and after the data was searched in the field. The technical analysis of the data used in the research on the social integration of ethnic Chinese in Indonesia is analyzed using a model approach (Huberman Miles, 2014). First, data reduction means that after primary and secondary data are collected, it is done by sorting the data, making themes, categorizing, focusing the data according to their field, discarding, compiling data in a way, and making a summary of research summaries from interviews and observations that must be analyzed.

After the process takes place, the data is checked again and proportioned the data on objects that have been identified in accordance with the problem under study. After being reduced, the data in accordance with the research objectives are described in the form of sentences so that a complete picture of the research problem is obtained. Second, display data (presentation of data). This form of analysis is carried out by presenting the data in the form of a narrative, where the researcher describes the data findings in the form of an outline sentence chart, the relationships between categories that are sequential and systematic.

Third, drawing conclusions. Although the data reduction conclusions have been drawn, they are not permanent in nature, there is still the possibility of additions and

subtractions. So at this stage, the conclusions have been found in accordance with the evidence of data obtained in the field accurately and factually. Starting with data collection, data selection, data triangulation, data categorization, data description, and drawing conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sipirok Tourism Potential

Geographically, Sipirok District has a very strategic position as a land transportation route, trans Sumatran trans, Medan-Jakarta, and vice versa. Its position, which is at an altitude of 970 – 1,819 meters above sea level, makes the air cold and sometimes foggy, especially in the afternoon and evening. With this geographical location, Sipirok District is very suitable as a rice field farming area, plantation, and inland fishery business. Therefore, the livelihood structure of the population generally consists of rice farmers and field farmers. Other sectors of community activity are weaving industry services, ASN, TNI/Polri. Residents who work as farmers are almost entirely found in every village/kelurahan, while those who work as traders, ASN, TNI/Polri, and industrial services are generally domiciled in the sub-district capital.

With the geographical position of Sipirok District like that, the wind is very strong so that the air is cool and fresh every day, especially in the morning and evening. In June there will usually be cold winds that are classified as strong and it is not uncommon to thresh grains of rice in the fields. To avoid this strong wind, usually, the farmers will harvest their paddy fields. For this reason, the pattern of the growing season is adjusted by farmers to the climate of the arrival of large winds. In the last 5 years, this condition has changed a lot because many farmers have practiced the rice planting system 2 times a year.

The cold, especially in the 80s, felt bone-chilling, especially at night, now it has changed a lot with the influence of global warming. Without wearing body-warming clothes at night, we are able to face the cold air that previously had to add body-conditioning clothes such as sarongs, sweaters, jackets, or the like. This condition may be caused by illegal logging so that the slopes of hills and mountains have been denuded. Due to the actions of a handful of naughty farmers who burn land to open gardens or rice fields, it is not uncommon for forest fires to occur, thereby exacerbating forest damage.

The cold weather of Sipirok Sub-district is especially strongly influenced by its position which is surrounded by mountains. When we are in this District, when we look to the north, south, west and east, the whole area is surrounded by mountains in four squares, so it feels like a big pot or cauldron. This area is also crossed by the Bukit Barisan mountain which stretches along the island of Sumatra. To the east it is

bordered by Mount Sipipisan, to the west by Mount Sibual-buali, to the south, there is Tor Simago-Mago and to the south is Tanah Angkola.

Sipirok District is one of the sub-districts in the jurisdiction of South Tapanuli Regency, in 2019 it had a population of approximately 38,502 people consisting of 18,914 males and 19,588 female, spread over 34 villages and 6 sub-districts. From the composition of the population of Sipirok District, approximately 10% of them are Christians, while there are no Hindus, Buddhists, and Confucians. Transportation access to Sipirok District is classified as very good because it is a trans-Sumatran road and its role is very vital as a flow of land transportation liaison between the City of Sipirok District and other sub-districts in the South Tapanuli District such as Arse District, Saipar Dolok Hole District and Aek Bilah District as well as being a liaison with the surrounding villages.

When viewed from the harmony of life between religious communities, especially adherents of Islam and adherents of Christianity, it has long been well established. It is said that according to residents, they come from the descendants of the same ancestor, namely from the Sipirok pagan community (before they embraced religion). After Islam and Christianity entered Sipirok, according to their respective beliefs, some of the population adhered to Islam, and some adhered to Christianity. In fact, the houses of the Muslim population and the Christian houses are not infrequently next to the wall because the hermitage of the house they live in is an inheritance from their ancestors who were previously a family lineage unit. Communication between religious adherents is well established and mutual understanding of the differences that exist between them.

According to (Hafied Cangara, 2014) Communication is the process by which an idea is transferred from a source to one or more recipients with a view to changing their behavior. Thus, communication has a very important function. Because it has functions, among others, humans can control their environment, adapt to the environment in which they are in, transform social heritage to the next generation. Therefore, in the development of tourism communication has a very strategic role. Access to Sipirok can be reached by air and land. The air route can be reached from Kualanamo Airport-Deli Serdang Regency to Aek Godang Airport, North Padang Lawas Regency, then continue the road trip by four-wheeled or two-wheeled vehicle with a travel time of about 1 hour. While access by land from Medan City can be reached using private cars and public passenger cars with a distance of about 350 Km. Public transportation that routinely serves the Medan-Sipirok route, among others, CV. Sipirok Nauli Express (SINEX), Simpati Taxi, Martabe Taxi, and several other Travel fleets. Medan-Sipirok's travel time is around 8-10 hours. The departure time that most passengers are interested in is in the afternoon or evening so that they arrive at their destination in the morning.

If departing from Medan City in the afternoon or evening, arrive at the location at 6 am. On the way to the tour, usually, the driver will adjust the speed of the vehicle so that it is not too early to arrive at the destination so that the passengers feel safe and comfortable getting off the bus they are riding. Before entering Sipirok City, a row of beautiful scenery is seen in the form of a cool natural panorama, a beautiful mist accompanied by the chirping of birds from the forest that is still beautiful.

From the sidelines of the trees, at a glance, you will see the morning sun with a reddish color that adds to the beauty of the morning atmosphere. For travelers who drive private vehicles, it is not uncommon to take advantage of this moment of beauty by parking their vehicles on the side of the road while enjoying the natural surroundings, for example in Aek Latong Village, Hutalimbaru Village, and Bulu Payung Village. Meanwhile, passengers of public vehicles can only enjoy it when the vehicle is traveling at low speed because the route is very extreme so the driver requires high concentration to control the speed of the vehicle he is driving. Visitors can choose lodging places, among others, Tor Sibohi Hotel, Wisma Parsorminan, Pesanggarahan, and several community-managed lodging places. The lodging rates are relatively very affordable, namely, Rp. 150,000-Rp. 1,500,000 per night. Before exploring Sipirok tourist attractions, to refresh the body from feeling sore during a road trip, and cleanse themselves from stains, sweat that sticks to the body, travelers can visit the Aek Milas Sosopan hot spring bath in Hutabaru Village, Aek Milas Padang Longitude in the village of Padang Longitude and Aek Milas Parausorat in the village of Parausorat. In the bathing area of Aek Milas, there is warm water that comes out of hot springs originating from Mount Merapi, Sibual-buali, which can also expel the cold atmosphere by soaking in the available hot springs.

Based on the description of the tourism potential of Sipirok, the tourism sector is an environmentally friendly industry, can increase people's pride in their own identity (culture), create mutual understanding between cultures, alleviate poverty, and encourage development in remote areas. Thus, to develop the tourism sector, government intervention is necessary. The government has a role in making policies so that travelers who come feel comfortable while in tourist attractions and the local community does not feel disturbed by the arrival of these tourists. By (Antariksa, 2018) in relation to efforts to achieve strategic national development goals, tourism can be utilized to support the achievement of a more general development master plan. At a time when the economy is at a weak level either due to the influence of the global economy, due to the Covid 19 pandemic, perhaps the tourism sector can be an alternative to revive the community's economy. This is done, of course, taking into account the Health Protocol.

However, as time goes by, it gets less maintenance so it gets damaged with age. At this tourist location, we can see the stunning natural panorama. The sound of gibbons and birds chirping will be heard from behind the trees, especially in the late

afternoon. The attractions that are no less interesting are the Natural Huraba and Adian Rindang tours. In this place, travelers will be spoiled with the beauty of the foot of Mount Sibual-buali, while in the Adian Rindang area you will clearly see the blue expanse of the Sibolga Sea, Aek Namappar (Mappar River), and Aek Puli (Puli River) especially when the air is clear. Tourist sights that are a shame to be missed by travelers are of course also natural scenery from above the height of Parandolak Village. From this height, it will be clearly seen the houses of the residents in the Sipirok Market, the village of Pagaran Padang, the expanse of rice fields, and the gardens of the residents in the village of Padang Longitude and its surroundings.

Nahum Situmorang, a national musician from Batak land, cannot hide his admiration for the natural beauty of Sipirok. The lyrics of the song "Si Boru Renggan" (The Beautiful Girl), describes the hospitality of the beautiful Sipirok girl, the natural scenery, and the abundant produce. Some of the stanzas of this song are:

Ulang lupa hamu bayo anggo ke tu Sipirok (*jangan lupa kalau pergi ke sipirok*)
Mardalan tu hutabaringin nang parau sorat (*berjalan ke baringan dan parausorat*)
Ai dalanmu juo ma muse pagaran batu (*juga akan kamu jalani desa pagaranbatu*)
Kehe tu dolok tu batuolang (*pergi ke bukit batuolang*)

Ai tatapanmu juo ma muse dolok natimbo (*kamu akan memandang bukit yang tinggi*)
Tor langge dohot simakbujing nang simago-mago (*Tor langge, simakbujing dan simago-mago*)

Disi hatubuan ni hunik kol nang dohot kopi (*disitu tumbuhnya kopi, kunyit dan kopi*)
Imanasinuanni si boru enggan bujing najogi. (*yang ditanam sigadis cantik*).

This market opportunity from the tourism sector has begun to be responded to by the community. In the tourist area of Tor Simago-mago, Situmba and the office complex of the South Tapanuli Regent's Office in Kilang Papan Village, many culinary tours are available which are crowded with tourists from various regions. Paragliding trials at Tor (hill) Sarogodung recently, have also started to enliven the arrival of tourists. With the opening of rock climbing tourism in Batu Nanggar Jati, Arse District, of course, it will also have a positive effect on tourist arrivals to Sipirok. This tourism potential will certainly attract more tourists to visit it if it is arranged properly. However, to polish the potential of a more professional Sipirok tourist destination, it still requires a creative touch from the South Tapanuli Regional Government, tourism promotion, the presence of investors and the readiness of the community to accept tourist arrivals, especially residents who live in tourist sites. The readiness of the community to build the tourism sector is certainly not only limited to words but must be able to change behavior, for example, honesty, hospitality and openness to tourist arrivals.

South Tapanuli Sipirok Tourism Communication

Currently, tourism is one of the major industries that gain massive profits (Farkhondehzadeh et al., 2016). Tourism can also be regarded as a source of income for a region. In Sipirok, tourism resources are a source of one of the government's priorities which continue to be developed either through direct socialization with the community or through the media. Other resources such as gold, geothermal, agriculture and trade are also sources of income for this area. It is this natural wealth that creates various kinds of tourism that are excavated by the government. Basically, the sustainability of the tourism sector in Sipirok continues to survive because tourism communication continues to be preserved, both communication between the government and visitors, the community and visitors and the government and the community. Thus the role of tourism is increasingly felt, which has an impact on the community's economy. As an area that has cultural and religious diversity, nature and human resources, Sipirok uses it as an important aspect of the government's efforts to improve regional income.

Tourism communication efforts carried out by the government in tourism development through economic, social, cultural empowerment and also through the environmental field. Tourism communication is one of the most powerful ways in order to catch tourists in South Tapanuli Sipirok to visit the tours offered. Sipirok tourism communication requires many aspects that must be used in activities such as synergizing with others, in every aspect (Amanah et al., 2017). As an urban area, the service sector, trade and tourism sector are sectors that have the potential to be developed, especially with the existence of a central government ascetic, which will rationally increase the mobilization of people to the area. Sipirok City so that it has an impact on increasing the population's economy. This is said to be potential, because currently the Sipirok Urban Area is able to serve its own territory and is even able to serve the surrounding sub-districts with various types of trade and services, such as: shopping centers, restaurants, supermarkets, banks and others.

In the Sipirok urban area, there are 2 types of tourist objects, including the first, Alam Simango – Mango tourism which is managed by the local community by attracting a levy of Rp. 2000 for adults and Rp. 1500 for children. The levy money belongs to the person who keeps the ticket. The local government has offered to cooperate with the manager. The local government's proposal is the construction of facilities by the local government and the return on investment is made through the withdrawal of user fees. The manager does not want cooperation on the grounds that as long as the tourist attraction becomes a complete manager's income. Second, the Aek Milas Sosopan hot spring and the Aek Milas Parandolok hot spring.

This bath is a public bath, where the surrounding community can bathe to their heart's content. Tourist objects in the Sipirok Urban Area are very beneficial for the community. When Saturday, Sunday and holidays (Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha), this

tourist attraction is visited by many. This moment is used by the local community to sell around the tourist attraction. The Sipirok Urban Area is a transit area for the Trans Sumatra transportation system which is a transit area to Padang Sidempuan City from Medan and vice versa.

The development of the Sipirok Urban Area is centered on the Sipirok Market which is the capital of the Sipirok District and along with the Trans Sumatra road network which is the main road network. The center of the crowd is temporary, such as in Pasar Sipirok which is influenced by market days every Monday and Thursday. The Sipirok Urban Area also has tourist locations such as the Simanggo-Manggo tour described above, which is not always crowded, only certain times such as Saturday, Sunday, and holidays (Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha). The center of the development of the Sipirok Urban Area is located around the Sipirok Market as a trade and service center that is connected to the areas around the market through a network of state roads, district roads, and village roads. Around the city center, there is still agricultural land which is a source of livelihood and economy for the people of the Sipirok Urban Area.

90% of the people in the Sipirok Urban Area still depend on the agricultural sector for their livelihood. The development trend of the Sipirok Urban Area is to follow the regional road network to the south. Meanwhile, developments to the north, east, and west are hindered by agricultural land and mountains so that to the south is the most likely direction for urban development, in addition to placing the central government area and settlements for government employees who are in a new land which is still in the form of forest.

As a driver of economic growth, Sipirok tourism has a fairly large supply from the market sector. Tourism has a function as a market, among others, as a primary market which is the main market and has an important role in tourism, namely to meet the desires and needs of tourists for the main elements of tourism. Along with the findings above, there are many opportunities and challenges in the tourism sector in Sipirok, especially in building communication with cross-sectors.

Related to the development of tourism in Sipirok, one of the great opportunities to attract tourists and at the same time improve the welfare of the community is to develop products or regional potentials and the government acts as a facilitator and regulator. The government facilitates and organizes the development of regional superior products, helps the use of tourism industry technology so that the products produced can be better and of higher quality, and provide training to the community to be creative and develop innovations and creative tourism products. To grow the spirit of the economy, it is necessary to awaken the wheels of economic activity to take advantage of the potential and capabilities of the village. To reduce the dependence of rural communities on the government, community initiatives and

enthusiasm need to be created so that the desire to develop villages becomes better. Based on the explanation above, it can be said, an important step that must be taken is how to communicate tourism, especially in building the city of Sipirok.

As expressed by (Amanah et al., 2017) One approach in implementing tourism communication is to communicate the potential and the tourism industry through the advantages and uniqueness of its regional products. So that it becomes a regional tourist attraction. The results of the field findings regarding tourism communication carried out in Sipirok are to create a program called marsipature hutanabe (improvement of their respective areas). This program is a jargon that is able to encourage the spirit and spirituality of the community to always participate in development in Sipirok, especially in developing the tourism sector by synergizing with the government.

The government's move was welcomed by all elements of society. In addition, local governments also conduct training through empowerment, by forming various tourism driving groups, building partnerships with various parties, including media managers, and other stakeholders. On the other hand, the steps taken by the regions and in tourism communication are to always coordinate and supervise the implementation of tourism promotion so that there is no misinformation about tourism.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and discussion, stated above, the conclusion is that South Tapanuli Sipirok tourism has great potential to be developed, both nature tourism, rock climbing tourism, and paragliding. The readiness of the local community to receive tourist arrivals is still lacking and needs guidance from the government. Sipirok has great natural potential that can support city development, both nature tourism, and city tourism. The readiness of the local community to receive tourist arrivals is still lacking and needs guidance from the government so that tourism communication becomes an alternative that must be implemented. Based on the description of the tourism potential of Sipirok, the tourism sector is an environmentally friendly industry, which can increase people's pride in their own identity (culture).

To increase the potential for a more professional Sipirok tourist destination, it still requires a creative touch from the South Tapanuli Regional Government, tourism promotion, the presence of investors, and the readiness of the community to accept tourists arrivals, especially residents who live in tourist sites. One approach in implementing tourism communication is to communicate the potential and the tourism industry through the advantages and uniqueness of local products. So that it becomes a regional tourist attraction. In addition, tourism communication carried out

in Sipirok is by creating a program called *marsipature hutanabe* (repairing their respective areas) which is able to encourage the spirit and spirituality of the community to always participate in development in Sipirok, especially in developing the tourism sector by synergizing with the government. Tourism communication efforts are carried out by the government in tourism development through economic, social, cultural empowerment and also through the environmental field. On the other hand, the steps taken by the regions and in tourism communication are to always coordinate and supervise the implementation of tourism promotion so that there is no misinformation about tourism.

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