

## **The Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) Approaches in *Sharia* Beach Santen, Banyuwangi**

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### **Abstract:**

This paper aims to critically explore any kinds of applications of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) approaches applied in marketing and promoting Santen Beach Banyuwangi. Banyuwangi has many tourist destinations across the region. One of them is Santen Beach. Santen Beach has been exclusively developed and promoted by the local government as *Syariah (Sharia) Beach* (beach which has been developed and promoted by Islamic values as its foundation). To achieve the above aim, a qualitative research design was employed. In-depth interviews were conducted with local tourism officers and those who were involved at the beach management. The result shows that some IMC approaches applied at the beach were as follows: 1) advertisements through billboards, websites, and magazines, 2) promotion through free entrance ticket trials, 3) events and experiences with carrying out various events 4) public relations and publicity by building stakeholder collaboration 5) interactive marketing was conducted by social media posts and websites, and 6) word of mouth strategy. While *Syariah (Sharia)* brand should bring special characteristics towards the application of IMC approaches, the result shows that the IMC has been conducted with little care of accommodating *sharia* values. The beach has been promoted as 'normal beach' as therefore the values were rather disregarded.

**Keyword: Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC), tourism, promotion, destination**

### **Tourism in Banyuwangi, Indonesia**

Tourism in Indonesia has been growing fast. The total number of international visitor arrivals had increased by 3.03 per cent in 2017. The number of international tourists came to Indonesia for the two years between 2016 and 2017 was 1.11 million and 1.15 million respectively (Statistics Indonesia 2018). Overall, in 2015, the Indonesian travel and tourism economy contributed around 4.25 per cent of Indonesia's GDP (Statistics Indonesia 2018). This growth has brought tourism as the Indonesia's fourth generator of foreign exchange after oil/gas, palm oil and latex (Kementerian Pariwisata dan Ekonomi Kreatif

Republik Indonesia 2012).

Moreover, Banyuwangi tourism also develops fast. In this year (2018), Banyuwangi targets 5 million visits of domestic tourists and 100.000 overseas tourists (tribunnews.com 2018). This target fits with the launching of ‘TOP 77 Calendar of Events Banyuwangi Indonesia Festival 2018—a tourism calendar that promotes 77 tourism festivals in Banyuwangi’ program. Those 77 festivals are expected to increase tourists to visit Banyuwangi. Besides that, the festivals are also designed to support Indonesian Ministry of Tourism program, ‘Visit Indonesia Wonderful Indonesia’, which has target of 17 million foreign tourists in 2018 (Kompas.com, 2018).

One of the excellent tourist destinations in Banyuwangi is Santen Beach. On March 2017, the regent of Banyuwangi, has launched Santen Island as a Sharia Beach. As *Sharia* is a branding for halal tourism product, the beach is developed by using Islamic or halal values as its foundation. For example, there is separation between male and female visitors while visiting the beach; men go towards right side of the beach, while female is on the left. Also, there is musholla (small mosque) on the beach. This special brand should lead to special promotion as well. Special integrated marketing communication (IMC) is expected to apply at the beach in order to make sharia beach more well-known and lead many people visit this halal beach, without leaving Sharia values.

## **INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION**

An IMC is coordination of many promotional elements and other marketing activities that communicate with customers (Belch and Belch, 2001). An IMC combines strength and weakness of each communication element. Each method also involves different activities and skills. Here are the characteristics of marketing communication tools:

### **1. Advertising**

Advertising can be used to build a long-term product image. According to Kasali (1995:19), advertising is a message that offers a product to people through a media. Advertising tends to set for persuading people to buy a product.

## **2. Promotion**

Sales promotion is a marketing activity which gives added value or intensive to salesman, distributor, or consumer. This activity is expected to increase the sales. According to Muhammad (2009:63-64), sales promotion include tools for promotion, such as sample, coupon, cash back offer, discount, bonus, prize, free trial, guarantee, cross-promotion, exhibition, and demonstration at the store.

## **3. Events and Experiences**

Events and experiences are activity and program which are designed for creating daily interaction related to a certain brand (Kotler & Keller, 2009:174). Schmitt states that brand can create five different experiences: sense, feeling, thought, action, and relation.

## **4. Public Relations and Publicity**

Publicity is one of the techniques which is often used in public relations programs. It is an activity of making news about someone, an organization, or a company, in mass media. Publicity is a non-personal communication in form of news/news story form, related to certain organization, and or about its products which is transmitted through mass media (Muhammad, 2009:60).

## **5. Direct Marketing**

Direct marketing is an interactive marketing system which makes use of one or some advertising media to generate measured response and transaction everywhere (Sulaksana, 2003:150). In direct marketing, the direct communication between seller and individual customer uses promotion method besides face to face personal selling. Most of direct marketing communications are designed to get quick response from the customer (Cannon, 2008:80).

## **6. Interactive Marketing**

Interactive marketing is an online activity and program which is designed to involve customer or potential customer. Interactive marketing also asks for awareness, fix image, or sell the product and service directly or indirectly (Kotler

& Keller, 2009:174). The advance of communication technology makes interactive communication through mass media, especially internet, through World Wide Web (www) become possible. The internet provides both seller and consumer a chance to interact and individualize in a bigger world of communication (Adisaputro, 2010:280).

## **7. Mouth to Mouth Marketing**

Mouth to mouth marketing is a communication (oral, written, and electronic) between people about the excellence of the product or service, as well as buying or using experience (Kotler & Keller, 2009:174). This kind of promotion is the most effective personal promotion.

## **8. Personal Selling**

According to Winardi (in Muhammad, 2009:56), personal selling is a process which the customers are given information and they are persuaded to buy products through personal communication in an exchanging condition.

Various elements in marketing communication above are completing each other and they shall be integrated in Santen Sharia beach tourism marketing activities and persuasive communication.

## **Research Methods**

This research employs a qualitative approach. The informants were from Government Tourism Office and the management of Santen Sharia Beach. They were interviewed about topics which are related to this study. A variety of research methods combining semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis were employed to provide triangulation of data. Interviews and observations were conducted on July 2018. Informants were chosen by purposive and snowball sampling, which concluded with 10 informants taken from bureaucracies, communities, and tourists. Data analysis involved transcription and reduction in Bahasa Indonesia, and then translated into English for presentation, interpretation, verification and conclusion.

## **The IMC approaches in Santen Beach**

The aim of the IMC applied at the beach is to increase the number of the beach's visitor as well as improving local citizen's economic condition. Some IMC approaches which are used are as follows:

### **1. Advertising**

Advertising is a promotion which is needed in marketing a tourism destination. Sharia Beach tourism is categorized as new and unique. According to the sharia beach management:

“I advertise the beach by promoting it through my social media. I do not do that often, just a few times.” (Interview with Yulian, one of the management of Sharia Beach).

While according to Banyuwangi Cultural and Tourism Government Office:

“We advertise the beach by putting a big billboard at Blambangan Park about tourism objects in Banyuwangi. Besides that, we also advertise it through magazines that shows the beauty of sharia beach.” (Interview with Ainur Rofiq, Head of Development and Information of Banyuwangi Government Tourism Office).

A bit different thing is delivered by Headman of Karangrejo. He said that there was no any special promotion in order to promote the sharia beach:

“There is no any promotion, but the local government put a billboard about list of tourism object in Banyuwangi, including Santen beach” (interview with Fendy, Headman of Karangrejo).

Therefore, Banyuwangi local government has advertised the beach by giving information on billboard, social media, website, and magazines. The billboard shows list of tourism object in Banyuwangi, including the new sharia beach. On social media, they gave information about sharia beach. Website and magazines gave information about the beach's history, address, and accessibility.

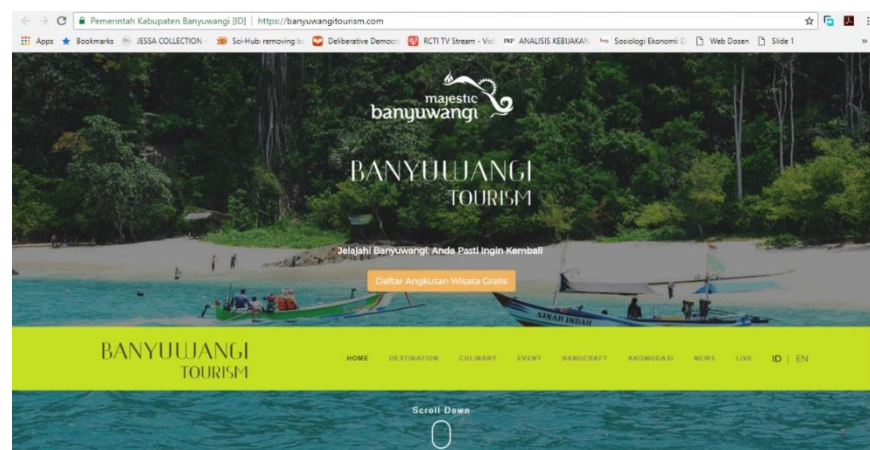
## 2. Sales Promotion

According to the visitor of Sharia beach, the promotion was conducted by giving a free trial entrance ticket at the beginning of Sharia beach opening.

“I often come to this place, since my house is located near from here. In the past, this place was crowded because the entrance ticket was free. But now we must pay, although it is actually still categorized as cheap, only Rp 4.000” (interview with Cahya, Sharia beach’s visitor).

Other visitor stated that Banyuwangi Government Tourism Office promote the beach by giving tour package:

“I know this Sharia beach from Government Tourism Office’s website that held city tour in Banyuwangi. I am city tour participant from Depok. We got discount, and accommodation during in Banyuwangi has been borne” (interview with Indah, Sharia beach visitor).



Picture 1. Banyuwangi Government Tourism Office’s City Tour website  
Source: banyuwangitourism.com



Picture 2. Entrance ticket purchasing, and the visitor got free beverages  
Source: researcher document (2018)

Sales promotion was conducted by giving free trial entrance ticket at the beginning of the Santen beach opening. Promotion was also conducted by giving free beverage for visitors. Besides that, the local government of Banyuwangi also provided city tour with free accommodation offer during the tour.

### 3. Events and Experiences

Events and experiences are activity and program which are designed for creating daily interaction related to certain brand (Kotler & Keller, 2009:174).

According to Head of Development and Information of Banyuwangi Government Tourism Office, stated that it is free for everyone who wants to hold event at the beach:

“Sharia beach’s branding was initiated by the Regent of Banyuwangi. Then we, together with other SKPD, fixed Santen Island and made it to be sharia beach. SKPD cooperated with private side—through their CSR—to build the sharia beach. For the example, that umbrella at the beach was a charity. We also cooperated with travel agencies to promote Sharia beach. Besides that, in every year, there is Banyuwangi tourism magazine that contains tourism objects’ profile in Banyuwangi. For the events, it is allowed for everyone to hold event at the beach, as long as they give us proposal and permission letter, since the area is belong to the Indonesian Army’s area, so we need to make a permission to the head of the Indonesian Army of Banyuwangi” (interview with Ainur Rofiq, Head of Development and Information Banyuwangi Government Tourism Office).



Picture 3. Jazz Music at Sharia Beach

Source: Document of Sharia beach management (2017)



Picture 4 Friday aerobic workout at Sharia beach

Source: Document of Karangrejo Village (2017)





Picture 5. Scouting Event at Sharia Beach  
Source: Document of Karangrejo Village (2017)

Events and experiences which have been conducted by Sharia beach management or village around the beach turned out to give bad impression, such as expressed by one of the visitors:

“I have gone to this beach twice, since my house is near from here. My children love to play at the beach. If I am not mistaken, in the past there was a dangdut music stage here. At that time this beach was never quiet. However, it is a troublesome to have a dangdut stage at a sharia beach.” (Interview with Cahya, visitor of Sharia beach).

“In the past, there was a grilled fish cooking competition, so fishermen of this village caught fish and then they grilled it right away.” (Interview with Yahya, visitor of Sharia beach).

Therefore, events and experiences conducted by Banyuwangi Local Government and the beach management are aerobic workout every Friday, scouting event, cooking competition, and jazz music event. However, all of those events did not themed sharia, so it did not create interaction between the events and the experience that the visitor got.

#### **4. Public Relations and Publicity**

In concept of IMC, public relations do variously. It does not only track public opinion, but also manages the corporate brand, and maintains company's reputation. Publicity appears to help company to get public's awareness and make the company different from its competitors. Publicity means getting mentioned in mass media in a different way, as often as possible, so the company can get "top-of-mind awareness".

In creating relationship, of course it does not only one party that is involved, but also needs the synergy between different parties:

"In the past, at the Sharia beach, there were aerobic workout every Friday, scouting events, and cooking competition. Actually, the position of this beach is strategic, since it faces Bali. There were also investors who are interested in investing to this beach. Unfortunately, since the management of the beach is Indonesian Army, so it comes to be troublesome. In the past, the owner of Mirah Hotel came to this beach to see the beach's prospectus. To maintain the sharia concept, management of the beach made gate. Satpol PP guard the gate everyday and reprimand every tourist who violate the border. That was crowded. However, since the army asked to manage the beach, there is no border anymore, so it is no more sharia" (interview with Fendy, Headman of Karangrejo).

The decrease of the number of visitor at the beach shows that the reputation of Sharia beach getting worse. The decrease is predicted caused by public perception about concept of sharia beach:

"About sharia theme, I cannot talk too much, since it has been not sharia anymore. In the past, it often become attention for journalists. Every day in that time, if there was a man who enter women area, the journalist would take a photo of the man right away. However, it is not really "not sharia", and I cannot really explain it. Unless there is a new order, this beach can be "sharia beach" again. It is a troublesome, since at the new year eve, there will be a request for the sharia concept to be applied again. It is a troublesome" (Interview with Yulian, management of Sharia beach).

Therefore, in this indicator, every stakeholder synergize with each other in promoting the Sharia beach. In public relation, the stakeholder only conducted it until the phase of cooperating with mass media as well

as funding the program. The cooperation is selective and not with all mass media. Meanwhile, publicity is not built since the concept of sharia beach, that is separation of men and women area is not put into effect anymore.

## **5. Direct Marketing**

Direct marketing is one of the integrated marketing communication functions which is consist of front-end and back-end operations. Front-end arrange the hopes of the consumers which cover up the offer (everything—whether real or not—which is promised by the company to make customer do what the company wants, for example: special price, warranty, etc.) and the database (getting the customer's data and use the data to give next offer).

Direct marketing has a function as a message that is delivered to get response from the consumer

“I do not market the beach directly. I tend to market it interactively and promote it mouth to mouth” (interview with Fendy, Headman of Karangrejo)

Banyuwangi Government Tourism Office also did not conduct any special promotion for Sharia beach.

“Generally, the development of tourism in Banyuwangi we specify it by looking at its contour, and also see who is responsible to the area, since not all area in Banyuwangi is under local government's authority. So, the treatment is different. However, for the promotion, we do the same to almost all of those tourism object in Banyuwangi. We are responsible to introduce every tourism object to the tourist by conducting promotions, including for this Santen sharia island. We also cooperate with travel agencies and drivers here to invite their guests to tourism objects in Banyuwangi, especially those new objects” (interview with Ainur Rofiq, Head of Development and Information Banyuwangi Government Tourism Office).

Meanwhile the visitors thought that only a few of them who felt direct marketing:

“Yes, I market it indirectly. But posting on social media can lead my friends know that Sharia beach can be one of their travelling choices” (interview with Cahya, visitor of Sharia beach).

“In the past, I often came to this place, but recently I rarely come here. Today I have a plan to go to this beach to take a video, I am *gonna* make a video clip. Yeah, it can be material for promoting this beach to my friends, right?” (interview with Indah, visitor of Sharia beach).

Therefore, both Banyuwangi Local Government and the management of the beach did not conduct direct marketing for Sharia beach specifically. The visitor also did not conduct specific direct marketing to attract tourists to the beach. In this digital era, marketing are more often conducted through social media.

## **6. Interactive Marketing**

Interactive marketing is an online activity and program which is designed to involve customer or potential customer. Interactive marketing also asks for awareness, fix image, or sell the product and service directly or indirectly (Kotler & Keller, 2009:174). The newest marketing communication channel is the electronic channel. The advance of communication technology makes interactive communication through mass media, especially internet, through World Wide Web (www) become possible. The internet provides both for the seller and consumer a chance to interact and individualize in a bigger world of communication (Adisaputro, 2010:280).

Interactive marketing in this study is more specified to company's ability of communication with their customer, or their ability of giving a good solution, which is related to the use of the product. In this case, interactive marketing is also related to customer relationship management.

The interactive marketing of Santen Sharia beach can be seen from the website of Banyuwangi Government Tourism Office, that is <https://www.banyuwangikab.go.id/>. In that site, there is a menu of tourism, that is “Pariwisata” menu, which will redirect to <https://banyuwangitourism.com/>. The promotion is also conducted through sharing tourism information on social media such as Twitter, Instagram,

Facebook, Youtube, and visitor's blog. Interactive marketing and social media usage are supposed to make the potential tourists easier to find information. In other words, when someone wants to look for a good and delighting tourism object, he just needs to type the keyword, and then all of the information related to the keyword will appear.

## **7. Mouth to Mouth Marketing**

Mouth to mouth marketing is one kind of conventional marketings which is still often used in product marketing.

“So, tourism ambassadors is called vary, according to the area or region. In Banyuwangi, they are called *jebing tole*. We call Banyuwangi's tourism ambassador as *jebing tole*. Yeah, the election of *jebing tole* is held annual. When someone is chosen as *jebing tole*, he is obliged to promote Banyuwangi in various events. We also asked tour guide drivers to bring their guests to new tourism objects” (interview with Ainur Rofiq, Head of Development and Information Banyuwangi Government Tourism Office).

Promotion through tourism ambassador can be classified as mouth to mouth marketing. Besides that, according to the Headman of Karangrejo:

“I always promote sharia beach at the time the beach was still beautiful. I invited my friends to come to Banyuwangi and stop by at Sharia beach. But now I am embarrassed if I must promote the beach, since the beach is now dirty and not well-organized” (interview with Fendy, Headman of Karangrejo).

“Mouth to mouth promotion is usually conducted by my subordinates. We often practice at the beach, run at the beach. So, maybe my subordinates promote it mouth to mouth” (interview with Bambang, head of Indonesian army of Banyuwangi).

Local Government of Banyuwangi has promoted the beach mouth to mouth. The way of mouth to mouth promotion was vary, such as market it to colleague and community. From information that the visitors got from mouth to mouth, they come right away and look for the location of Sharia beach.

## **8. Personal Selling**

Personal selling is one of the forms of direct communication between seller and potential buyer (Morissan, 2010:34). Since direct marketing makes

the seller meets potential buyer(s) face to face to do presentation, answer question, and make order (Kotler & Keller, 2009:174), so the feedback can be heard right away and carefully, then the company also can give its response to the customer's feedback.

Besides interactive marketing and mouth to mouth marketing, personal selling is a more persuasive marketing communication.

“We do not conduct personal selling, because many tourists that we must handle. We just have built Cacalan beach. Its location is not too far from highway. I think the travel agencies offer the tourists, and they communicate persuasively with the tourists directly” (interview with Ainur Rofiq, Head of Development and Information Banyuwangi Government Tourism Office).

“Yeah, at the beginning (of Sharia beach opening), if there was a guest came to the village, I would invite him to Sharia beach. Even my office must be moved to Sharia beach, since I need to watch the beach too. So, If there was a guest, I would invite him to go to Sharia beach and promote the beach at once” (interview with Fendy, Headman of Karangrejo).

Both Local Government of Banyuwangi and stakeholders does not use personal selling as a mean of Sharia beach marketing. Personal selling tends to be conducted by tour guides of travel agencies, or third parties who can communicate persuasively with tourists directly by chance.

Branding as “sharia beach” which is delivered for Santen Beach is often inconsistent with the concept of sharia itself. The above pictures and descriptions show that the events which were held there do not comply fully with Sharia theme. The concept of “Sharia beach” was not promoted. The local government only promotes the “area”, not the concept of “sharia beach”. As a result, promotional activities and events which were held by the Local Government of Banyuwangi did not give certain impression or experience (in this case is sharia) to the visitors. The events which mix between male and females on some sport events, for instance, have shown that the beach has disregarded the values that Sharia has.

All IMC elements that were applied at the beach show nothing special in terms of the application of those elements. The publicity, the direct marketing and

other elements have promoted the beach as the ‘usual beach’, not the sharia one. These bring consequences of disappointment among those who expect experiencing the Sharia values applied at the beach as the bombarded promotion.

### **Conclusion**

From data above, it can be concluded that the IMC which is used by the local government of Banyuwangi and Santen beach management cover main communication model proposed by Philip Kotler. The IMC conducted by Banyuwangi Local Government and the beach management are as follows: 1) advertising, 2) promotion, 3) events and experiences, 4) public relations and publicity, 5) interactive marketing, 6) and mouth to mouth marketing. There are also third parties who help the local government and management to conduct personal selling.

Also, the Local Government of Banyuwangi has built relations with travel agencies to promote the Sharia beach. Besides that, the government has also cooperated with mass media in promoting the beach. The local government has also given sponsorship program with local citizens or communities who wanted to hold event at the beach.

However, sharia becomes one “missed” thing in that IMC application. Even at the beginning, for example, the beach is separating men and women area, then the separation is not a case anymore. The unique IMC application which is expected to apply, unfortunately, it does not happen. The IMC has been applied without concerning so much toward the Sharia values.

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