Digital Marketing Communication Strategy of Tourism Destination of Mandalika: A Semiotic Analysis

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Abstract

The MotoGP event will be held in Indonesia located in Mandalika, Lombok. As Indonesia is hosting world-class event, it is an honor to be able to handle big event and earn achievement from that. With the aid of Instagram as social media, Mandalika Circuit actively promotes their campaign and information around MotoGP; thus, it is one of the key to further understand Indonesia diplomacy dynamics. Through @themandalikagp Instagram account using Saussure's Semiotic Analysis, we can identify their sign and signifier then examine the relationship of it. The importance of Saussure's Semiotic Analysis will expand new diplomatic perspective for Mandalika Circuit event and its potential.

Keywords*: Mandalika Tourism; Mandalika Circuit, Saussure's Semiotic Analysis, Diplomatic Interest*

INTRODUCTION

Lombok's Mandalika is a tourist resort located on the Indonesian island of Lombok. It is a popular destination for both domestic and international tourists and is known for its beautiful beaches, lush tropical forests, and traditional culture. The area is being developed as a major tourist hub, with the Indonesian government investing heavily in infrastructure and facilities to attract more visitors(Kamal et al., 2023; Pandamdari, 2023; You & Hon, 2022).

Lombok's Mandalika is located on the southern coast of Lombok and is approximately one hour from the island's capital city of Mataram. The resort features a variety of accommodation options, including luxury hotels, mid-range hotels, and budget-friendly lodges, making it accessible to travellers with different budgets. In addition to the beautiful beaches, visitors can also enjoy a range of activities such as snorkelling, diving, surfing, and exploring the local

culture and traditions. By all means, Lombok's Mandalika is a unique and exciting destination that offers a unique blend of natural beauty, cultural heritage, and modern amenities, making it a popular choice for travellers looking for a tropical escape.

The Mandalika tourism area is a newly developed tourist destination located on the island of Lombok, Indonesia. It covers a total area of 1,250 hectares and aims to provide a range of attractions and activities for visitors, including beaches, cultural experiences, and adventure sports. The area is designed to be a sustainable tourism destination, with a focus on preserving the local environment and culture while providing economic benefits to the local community.

The Mandalika area features several pristine beaches, including the popular Mandalika Beach, which is known for its clear waters and picturesque scenery. Visitors can participate in a range of water-based activities, such as snorkelling, diving, and surfing, or simply relax on the beach and soak up the sun. The area is also home to a number of cultural attractions, including traditional villages, temples, and markets, which offer visitors a unique glimpse into the local way of life.

In addition to its natural and cultural attractions, Mandalika is also positioning itself as a destination for adventure sports, with a range of activities on offer, including mountain biking, trekking, and kitesurfing. The area is also being developed as a hub for MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) tourism, with several large-scale convention and exhibition facilities currently under construction. By all means, Mandalika is a vibrant and exciting tourism destination that offers visitors a wide range of experiences and activities in a beautiful and culturally rich setting.

The Mandalika tourism development project in Indonesia has faced several challenges and problems. Some of the key issues include:

1. Environmental concerns: The development of the Mandalika area for tourism purposes has raised concerns about its potential impact on the local environment, including coral reefs and wildlife.
2. Lack of infrastructure: The Mandalika region has limited infrastructure, which has made it challenging to develop the area for tourism. This includes a lack of transportation options, basic facilities like water and electricity, and accommodations for tourists.
3. Resistance from local communities: Some members of the local community have expressed concerns about the development of Mandalika for tourism and the potential displacement of people who live in the area.
4. Limited government support: The government has been criticized for not providing enough support for the development of Mandalika as a tourist destination. This includes a lack of funding and regulatory framework to ensure sustainable development.
5. Competition from other tourist destinations: Mandalika faces competition from other popular tourist destinations in Indonesia and around the world, which makes it challenging to attract tourists.

These are some of the key challenges that the Mandalika tourism development project has faced. To overcome these challenges and ensure the success of the project, it will be important for the government and other stakeholders to work together to address the concerns of local communities, invest in the necessary infrastructure, and promote the destination to attract tourists.

The Mandalika tourism area is a 1,000-hectare resort area located on the Indonesian island of Lombok. The area was first designated as a special economic zone for tourism development in 2010, and since then the Indonesian government has made significant investments in infrastructure and tourism facilities in the region. In recent years, the Indonesian government has prioritized the development of Mandalika as a major tourist destination, with the goal of attracting millions of visitors to the island and boosting the local economy. The government has committed to investing in infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, and airports, to improve access to the region. In addition, plans are underway to develop a range of tourism facilities, including hotels, resorts, and cultural attractions(Pradjoko et al., 2021; Wibowo & Hariadi, 2022).

One of the key draws of Mandalika for tourists is its natural beauty, including pristine beaches, lush forests, and rugged landscapes. The area is also rich in cultural heritage, with a long history of Hindu and Buddhist traditions dating back centuries. Despite these efforts, the development of Mandalika as a tourist destination has faced some challenges, including environmental concerns and resistance from local communities. However, the Indonesian government and tourism developers are working to address these issues and ensure that the development of Mandalika is sustainable and beneficial for both visitors and local residents (Pradjoko et al., 2021). By all means, the history of Mandalika tourism is a story of the Indonesian government's efforts to develop the region as a major tourist destination, while balancing the interests of various stakeholders and preserving the area's natural and cultural heritage.

The development of Mandalika tourism can be broken down into several key stages (Haris & Ningsih, 2020):

1. Designation as a Special Economic Zone (SEZ): In 2010, the Indonesian government designated the Mandalika area as a special economic zone for tourism development, recognizing its potential as a major tourist destination.
2. Infrastructure investment: The Indonesian government has made significant investments in infrastructure in the Mandalika region, including roads, bridges, and airports. This has improved access to the region and made it more accessible to tourists.
3. Tourism facility development: Plans are underway to develop a range of tourism facilities in Mandalika, including hotels, resorts, and cultural attractions. This will increase the number of tourist offerings in the region and help to attract more visitors.
4. Promotion and marketing: The Indonesian government has been promoting Mandalika as a tourist destination both domestically and

internationally, highlighting its natural beauty, cultural heritage, and tourist offerings.

5. Balancing sustainability and development: While the development of Mandalika tourism has the potential to bring economic benefits to the region, it is important to ensure that this development is sustainable and does not harm the natural and cultural heritage of the area. The Indonesian government and tourism developers are working to address this issue and ensure that the development of Mandalika is sustainable for both visitors and local residents.

By all means, the development of Mandalika tourism has been driven by the Indonesian government's commitment to making the region a major tourist destination and boosting the local economy. Despite some challenges, such as environmental concerns and resistance from local communities, the government and tourism developers are working to ensure that the development of Mandalika is sustainable and beneficial for all.

There are several challenges and limitations to the development of Mandalika tourism based on the past records, including :

1. Environmental concerns: The development of Mandalika tourism has raised concerns about the potential impact on the local environment, including degradation of coral reefs, damage to wildlife habitats, and increased waste and pollution. To address these concerns, the Indonesian government and tourism developers are working to implement sustainable tourism practices and minimize the negative impacts of tourism on the local environment.

2. Resistance from local communities (Rosyidi, 2021): Some local residents have expressed concerns about the potential impact of tourism development on their way of life and cultural heritage. To address these concerns, the Indonesian government and tourism developers are working to engage with local communities and ensure that their needs and interests are taken into account in the development of Mandalika tourism.

3. Competition from other destinations (Santoso et al., 2020): Mandalika is competing with other tourist destinations in Indonesia and around the world, and it will be important for the region to differentiate itself and offer unique and appealing experiences to visitors.

4. Infrastructure development: The development of Mandalika tourism requires significant investment in infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, and airports. This investment can be challenging to secure, especially in a country like Indonesia where there may be competing priorities for government funds.

5. Sustainability and preservation of cultural heritage: The development of Mandalika tourism must balance the need to attract visitors with the need to preserve the natural and cultural heritage of the area. Ensuring that tourism development is sustainable and does not harm the local environment and culture will be a key challenge for the Indonesian government and tourism developers.

Overall, the development of Mandalika tourism faces a range of challenges and limitations, including environmental concerns, resistance from local communities, competition from other destinations, infrastructure development, and sustainability. To overcome these challenges and fully realize the potential of Mandalika as a tourist destination, it will be important for the Indonesian government and tourism developers to work together and find solutions that benefit all stakeholders.

The impact of Mandalika tourism on local communities can be both positive and negative. Some of the potential positive impacts include (Rinuastuti et al., 2019):

1. Economic benefits: Tourism development in Mandalika has the potential to bring economic benefits to local communities, including increased job opportunities and higher incomes. This can improve living standards and help to reduce poverty in the region.
2. Infrastructure improvements: The development of Mandalika tourism requires significant investment in infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, and airports. This investment can bring indirect benefits to local communities, such as improved access to basic services and better transportation links.
3. Cultural preservation: Mandalika is rich in cultural heritage, and the development of tourism in the region can help to preserve and promote local cultural traditions and customs. This can increase the cultural value of the area for both residents and visitors, and help to maintain the unique identity of the local community.

However, there are also potential negative impacts of Mandalika tourism on local communities, including:

1. Displacement of local residents: The development of tourism in Mandalika may result in the displacement of local residents, particularly those living in areas designated for tourism facilities. This can cause social and economic disruption and reduce the quality of life for affected communities.
2. Increased competition for resources: Tourism development can increase competition for resources such as land, water, and other natural resources. This can put pressure on local communities and reduce their access to these resources, particularly if they are not fairly compensated for their use.
3. Cultural homogenization: The development of tourism in Mandalika can result in cultural homogenization, as local communities are exposed to outside cultural influences and adopt new lifestyles and values. This can erode local cultural traditions and lead to the loss of unique cultural heritage.
4. Environmental degradation: The growth of tourism in Mandalika can lead to environmental degradation, including increased waste and pollution, damage to wildlife habitats, and destruction of coral reefs. This can harm the local environment and reduce its ability to support tourism and other economic activities in the future.

Overall, the impact of Mandalika tourism on local communities will depend on how it is managed and implemented. To maximize the positive impacts and minimize the negative impacts, it will be important for the Indonesian government and tourism developers to engage with local communities, listen to their concerns, and involve them in the decision-making process.

Best practices and lessons learned from Mandalika tourism can help inform future developments and ensure the success of the project. Some of the best practices and lessons learned from Mandalika tourism include:

1. Community engagement and consultation: It is important to involve local communities in the development of Mandalika as a tourist destination and to address their concerns and needs. This can be achieved through regular consultation and communication with local communities to ensure that they are informed and have a voice in the decision-making process.

2. Sustainability: The development of Mandalika as a tourist destination should be sustainable, taking into account the impact on the environment and local communities. This can be achieved through environmentally friendly practices, such as using renewable energy sources and preserving natural habitats, and through the provision of sustainable employment opportunities for local people.

3. Investment in infrastructure: To attract tourists, it is important to invest in the necessary infrastructure, including transportation, accommodations, and basic facilities like water and electricity.

4. Marketing and promotion: To increase the visibility of Mandalika as a tourist destination, it is important to invest in marketing and promotion efforts, both domestically and internationally. This can include the development of promotional materials, the creation of a strong online presence, and the promotion of Mandalika at travel trade fairs and events.

5. Collaboration and coordination: The development of Mandalika as a tourist destination will require collaboration and coordination among various stakeholders, including the government, private sector organizations, and local communities. This will ensure that the interests of all parties are taken into account and that the project is implemented in a transparent and effective manner.

These are some of the best practices and lessons learned from Mandalika tourism that can help inform future developments and ensure the success of the project. By following these best practices and lessons learned, it is possible to develop Mandalika as a sustainable and successful tourist destination that benefits both the local community and the wider economy(Prasetya & Susilo, 2022; Triary Hardy & Susilo, 2022).

The future research in Mandalika Tourism may focus on several areas, including:

1. Sustainable tourism development (Suryade et al., 2021): As Mandalika becomes a popular tourist destination, it will be important to ensure that its growth is sustainable and does not have negative impacts on the environment, local culture, or the local community. Future research may examine the effectiveness of sustainable tourism development initiatives

in Mandalika, and explore new ways to promote sustainable tourism practices in the region.

2. Destination branding and marketing (Virgota et al., 2021): Mandalika is still in the process of establishing its brand as a tourist destination, and future research may explore how best to position and market Mandalika to attract the right mix of tourists and generate economic benefits for the local community.

3. Economic impact of tourism: Researchers may study the economic impact of tourism in Mandalika, including the direct and indirect benefits and costs of tourism development, and the distribution of these benefits and costs among different stakeholders, such as local businesses, government, and the local community.

4. Tourist behaviour and preferences: Understanding the motivations, behaviours, and preferences of tourists who visit Mandalika will be important for improving the tourist experience and ensuring that the destination remains competitive. Future research may examine what factors influence tourists' decisions to visit Mandalika, and how their experiences in the destination impact their perceptions and behaviours.

5. Tourism and local culture: As Mandalika continue to develop as a tourist destination, it will be important to understand the impact of tourism on local culture and heritage. Future research may examine the role of culture in shaping Mandalika's tourism offerings and explore ways to preserve and promote the region's cultural heritage for both tourists and local residents.

METHODOLOGY

This research's analysis method will use Saussure's Semiotic Analysis and is found to be most fitting. Ferdinand de Saussure's theories form the basis of semiotic analysis, which is the study of signs and symbols in culture and society that is also effective on Indonesia's religious aspects (Fadhliyah, 2021). Saussure's semiotic analysis method involves several key steps:

1. Identification of signs and symbols: The first step in Saussure's semiotic analysis is to identify the signs and symbols that are present in the text or artifact being analyzed. This includes both linguistic signs (such as words and phrases) and non-linguistic signs (such as images, gestures, and objects) (Maharani et al., 2020).

2. Analysis of the signifier and signified: Saussure's semiotic analysis method involves the examination of the relationship between the signifier (the physical form of the sign) and the signified (the mental concept or idea that the sign represents). The analyst must identify the signifier and signified of each sign in the text or artifact and analyze their relationship to each other (Sajdahfath & Sukendro, 2022).

3. Examination of the sign's connotations: Saussure's semiotic analysis method involves the examination of the connotations of each sign. Connotations are the associations and meanings that are attached to a sign beyond its literal or denotative meaning. The analyst must identify

the connotations of each sign and analyze how they contribute to the overall meaning of the text or artifact (Abdullah & Abdillah, 2021).

4. Analysis of the semiotic system: Saussure's semiotic analysis method involves the examination of the semiotic system, which is the system of signs and symbols that make up a language or culture. The analyst must identify the rules and conventions of the semiotic system that are being used in the text or artifact and analyze how they contribute to its meaning (Ni Made Desi Trisnayanti et al., 2021).

5. Analysis of intertextual connections: Saussure's semiotic analysis method involves the examination of intertextual connections, which are the connections between the text or artifact being analyzed and other texts or artifacts in the same language or culture. The analyst must identify any intertextual connections and analyze how they contribute to the overall meaning of the text or artifact (Setawan & Utoyo, 2021).

These are the key steps involved in Saussure's semiotic analysis method. By following these steps, the analyst can gain a deeper understanding of the signs and symbols that are present in a text or artifact and the meanings that they convey(Primatama & Susilo, 2016; Rucirisyanti et al., 2018; Triary Hardy & Susilo, 2022).

The unit of the analysis will be the Instagram post of @Themandalikagp which will be showing the message from their post whether it is visual, colors, textual, and caption(Andrianto, 2018; Halliday, 1994; Sampurna et al., 2020; Schoenfelder, 2011). The analysis unit will be around five posts divided between Signifier and Sign of certain visual then the description. The analysis will be qualitative-oriented since it is using Saussure's semiotic analysis. The benefit of using this analysis is to see the potential of Mandalika tourism after seeing the message contained in it. @Themandalikagp was chosen since the event is related to worldwide event which is important to improve Indonesian diplomatic perspective. Through knowing the semiotic message behind these posts, the diplomatic perspective could shift into better improvement.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

SIGN & SIGNIFIER	DESCRIPTION
	Sign: Sign is in a form of visual posted by @themandalikagp Instagram account. The visual is showing the food tourism of Lombok's Mandalika local food. **Signifier:** The signifier is in a form of a text involving title of Ayam Taliwang and its explanation, Sate Bulayak and its explanation, Soto Mandalika and its explanation.

Sign:
The sign is a form of visual which appear as plate, spoon, fork, and the food composition. The another one is the wood table that is a place to put the put.

Signifier:
The signifier is a text titled "Makanan Legendaris – Nasi Balap Fuyunghai" with subittle of "Siapa yang sudah coba".

Sign:
The sign consist of visuals involving small islands, mountain, and sea.

Signifier:
The signifier is consists of "Beberapa Tempat Wisata Yang Wajib Kamu Kunjungi di Sekitar Sirkuit Mandalika" text-built.

	Sign: The sign consists of people who wears traditional clothes and also hijab, the other one is carrying celebration food, and lastly the celebration objects/accessories. **Signifier:** The signifier is "Fakta Perang Ketupat di Pura Lingsar Nusa Tenggara Barat. Festival Budaya Lombok Akhir Tahun."
	Sign: The sign consists of Sky, road, and welcome symbol in visual form. **Signifier:** The Signifier is the text of "5 Perayaan Adat di Lombok Yang Harus Kmau Tahu."

Based on the data above, we can identify some conceptualization put into the design that would result in diplomatic interest-based promotion. From the data, we can identify there are 3 kinds of content promoted in the pic. They are *food, tourism spot, and also cultural celebrations.*

➢ **Food**

Food is a universal concept of promotion. The industry that is difficult to die is food Industry where everyone is happy of it and also preserve its innovation. Putting food in Tourism Marketing of Mandalika is effective item due to Indonesian huge variation of foods. With the huge variation of food, it stimulates human common curiosity to try new things; thus, making it a huge amount of continuous business (Rachão et al., 2020). The sign of food frequently included with natural furniture such as wood chair and wood table. It's reassuring and healing for them to see natural aesthetic combined with the good taste of food. The signifier of suggesting to buy the food is to increase Indonesian value through the most common use of business, food. With suggesting the food listed in the promotion, they could find food that'll taste easier in foreigner's tongue. The high value in consumption makes it easy for developed country like Indonesia to be known as well as gaining high profit from tourist's curiosity or the urge to seek fresh entertainment. The high value in consumption is what helps the food tourism expanding this much, making Indonesia has dependence on tourism business (Rousta & Jamshidi, 2020).

➢ Tourism Spot

Tourism spot is one of most common elements in the Industry other than food. Tourism spot sells healing natural aesthetic as their strongest point. Living in big city makes people easily gets burnout; thus, tourism spot helps them recover from the exhaustion and burnout. The sign of tourism spot from @themandalikagp Instagram account includes sea, small islands, and mountain. Those objects are natural objects. Natural objects have been the selling point of tourism aesthetic due giving the vibes of fantasy, healing, world reset to yourself, hence their scenic spots are put in cover to get the dual-channel profit (Luo & Zhong, 2022). The signifier with the suggestion of visiting Mandalika Circuit is what makes the tourism spot practice common. If Japan promotes Akihabara tourism spot through Steins;Gate Visual Novel, Indonesia promotes it trough Mandalika Racing event's tourism spot recommendation or the event recommendation. Narration of recommendation even though not subtle, it's still common and easiest to understand. With the high-interest, the easy method could be swallowed by general people. The tourism spot recommendation purpose in the end is the novelty (Hidaka et al., 2020).

➢ Cultural Celebration

The conceptualization of cultural celebrations are to show the culture of Indonesian history and intelligent behavior across generation.

Culture is the pattern of human intelligence that is preserved for long time and tends to be homogenous. In their sign conception, their use of the symbol is the food celebration, the people with two different traditional clothes, and also cultural accessories. The massive display of colors and objects in the visual promotion is to show that Indonesian identity is strong through their cultural heritage; therefore, a developed country like them can be called equal in global power (Stahl & Maznevski, 2021). Their Signifier is suggesting to have the knowledge of Mandalika's cultural celebrations. That kind of promotion is also most basic promotion which is easiest element to be swallowed by general people; however, they highlighted the *Perang Ketupat*. *Perang Ketupat* has strong point between former majority power of Indonesia, Hinduism; and also the current majority of Indonesia, Muslim. *Perang Ketupat* title as signifier is intended to promote strong diversity in Indonesia, knowing Hinduism and Muslim is also big population in the world (Juang & Schachner, 2020). By showing how cultural celebration of *Perang Ketupat* had continuous co-existence each other, Indonesia could gain trust from global power due to the difficulty of managing two big forces. This kind of tourism related to cultural celebration is name *eco-cultural tourism* (Sendra et al., 2019).

Digital Marketing as a Key

Mandalika Circuit used Instagram as one of their digital marketing platform. Their strength in promoting Mandalika Tourism despite being an account of sport racing; thus, the synchronization of sport and tourism results well as how sport is said to unite people. Their promotion of Mandalika's food tourism, tourism spot, and Cultural Celebration serves as a medium, a key to communicate the message of Indonesian state and Indonesian people to the world. With the strength of their Instagram view, not only Indonesia could gain increase in tourism but the international power get additional big market segmentation from Indonesia.

Instagram as a medium itself conceptualized the synchronization of food tourism and tourism spot; therefore, the cultural celebration could have better reception from foreigners. To expand the acceptance of Indonesian cultural heritage is the goal of Mandalika Ciruit's goal through their Instagram account. This can be mean that to this day, even after pandemic, social media is still effective as ever despite facing despair during COVID-19 as we can see that how many industries have fallen into several bankruptcy, that includes tourism and hospitality.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of the semiotic analysis upon @themandalikagp's Instagram post is that food tourism and tourism spot promotion serve as business/profit-oriented for the state, what is liked by people in common is what makes money the fastest (Rizkiyah et al., 2021). They developed diplomatic

power in term of economy and hospitality; thus, it will help Indonesia in standing as decent country in a status of developed country. The Mandalika racing is a world competition based event, the food and scenic spot are easiest to capture the mind of foreigners who is used to homogeneity in their land and also culture (Nurlelawati, 2019). The homogeneity engraved in most of white people the main theme of why they are having huge promotion of cultural diversity. Indonesia has that very element despite having big land and also status of developed country. The sport nature in Mandalika circuit helps Indonesia expand their business through food tourism and scenic spot due to sport tends to unite people (Fajarica et al., 2022).

While the food tourism and tourism spot serve as their business pillar, the cultural celebration in our semiotic analysis is that of agenda setting potential for Indonesian diplomatic power (Hayatun Sofian et al., 2022). Foreign countries have been facing the struggle of diversity due to white people culture, even wearing *Batik* in G20 forum looks like cultural appropriation to them. Knowing that, Indonesia used food tourism and tourism spot to synchronize into Indonesian cultural heritage despite being served as business or money-maker for Indonesia, such as *Perang Ketupat*. *Perang Ketupat* has a role of eco-cultural tourism after cultural heritage is promoted enough. With the definition of *Perang Ketupad* bringing two world majorities of Hinduism and Muslim having continuous celebration in Indonesia, Indonesia could be known to be best at managing diversities or synchronizing two great majorities that are difficult to manage due to their diversities. With Indonesia being able to blend each other, Indonesia had their own global power feat and could gain trust in handling differences. This serves as Indonesian diplomatic interest in being seen as equal between other powerful countries despite in status of developed country (Satrio, 2021).

Author's academic suggestion for the future research of Tourism Semiotic Analysis is to expand research perspective into the potential of Dark Tourism. The Dark tourism could captive foreigner's adrenaline rush and the different landscape of healing by finding light inside darkness. Due to Indonesian strong mystical culture, the selling point could attract curiosity and challenge for outsiders. It also needs more exploration since Netflix documentation of it also has high selling point (Martini & Buda, 2020).

Author's practical suggestion for Mandalika Tourism is to mix the scientical aspect of the world with local wisdom; therefore, the global communication could synchronize each other. Foreigners had strong interest in science, if they can find scientific point of the local heritage, it could be higher selling point and diplomatic feat increase.

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