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Participatory Communication of Batam City SMEs in Supporting Tourism Development

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ABSTRACT

Seeing the current development of the Covid-19 pandemic, the government has again changed its policies in various sectors, including MSME activities and tourism. One of them is the city of Batam which has reopened tourism for both local and foreign tourists. BPS stated that the tourism sector has collapsed. Based on Bappenas data, tourism to Indonesia's GDP is around 4 percent per year. Batam City has opened tourism between countries through a travel bubble, which is an agreement between countries that allows international air travel by reducing restrictions or with applicable provisions. The focus of this study is to examine the participatory communication of MSME actors in the city of Batam in developing its tourism. Tufte & Mefalopulus stated that participatory communication is a dialogical and horizontal communication approach, by identifying problems and finding solutions so that in implementing the strategies that have been discussed. The data collection technique in this study was through interviews with MSME actors. The results of the study showed that participatory communication allows MSME actors to find solutions in dialogical communication to be able to develop tourism.

INTRODUCTION

Along with the reopening of Indonesian tourism which was previously paralyzed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Batam City is also making improvements to welcome both local and foreign tourists. According to BPS data (2020), almost all sectors have collapsed due to the Covid-19 pandemic except for health services and social activities, information and communication, water supply, waste management, waste and recycling. The sectors most affected according to the data are transportation and warehousing and the accommodation and food and beverage provision sector (BRS No. 85/11/Th. XXIII, November 5, 2020). These two sectors are the mainstays of tourism in Indonesia. Data obtained from Sakernas 2019, around 11.83% of workers in Indonesia depend on the tourism industry for their livelihood. Meanwhile, tourism's contribution to Indonesia's GDP is around 4 percent per year (Bappenas, 2020).

Batam City began opening its international tourism by implementing a travel bubble for foreign tourists on January 24, 2022 (Ulya, 2022). This was done to revive Indonesian tourism. Many countries have implemented travel bubbles as a transition

from restrictions due to the pandemic to the new normal. According to IATA (2021) in Barsei (2022), a travel bubble is defined as an agreement between countries that allows international air travel by reducing restrictions or with provisions that apply to travel from and to other non-travel bubble countries. This policy has been in effect since the opening of international flights to accommodate business and tourism purposes between countries with certain travel rules.

However, the travel bubble policy only lasted for two months. On March 22, 2022, tourists from Singapore and several other countries were able to freely enter the Batam area using BVK-Visa Free Visit and VOA-Visa On Arrival (PresMedia, 2022). Since the travel bubble policy was abolished, tourism in the Batam area has returned to normal until now. Along with the revival of tourism, Small, Micro and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) which are also supporters of tourism have also improved and are enthusiastic about welcoming tourists.

MSMEs and tourism have a relationship in which they need each other, because the tourism sector is supported by MSME activities. In the tourism sector that is organized, there will be more potential consumers, including in increasing business opportunities for local MSME actors. So that it directly conveys the importance of the role of MSMEs in supporting and developing tourism, including in the city of Batam (Febrianita, et al., 2022). MSMEs that play a role in tourism activities are very diverse, according to BPS in 2020 in Anggarini (2021), MSMEs in Indonesia are divided into 2 sectors, namely MSMEs engaged in the hotel and restaurant/eating house sector, and MSMEs engaged in the transportation, accommodation, communication and cultural tourism sectors. Both MSME sectors contribute to the tourism sector in Indonesia (Anggarini, 2021).

As an important supporter of tourism, where MSMEs play a very important role in the advancement of tourism. Even in Batam City, for this reason, active participation from MSMEs is needed to support the advancement of tourism. This is because the location of Batam City is a strategic position between the borders of two countries, namely Malaysia and Singapore, so that it directly has the opportunity to develop MSMEs. Seeing this, the government has carried out various empowerment in the form of assistance, both in improving the expertise of its resources and also financial support, to MSME actors, as an encouragement to be able to play a greater role in economic growth that is beneficial to the community (Aris, 2022).

In addition, Batam City is also a gateway for trading various products in the ASEAN region, so this directly becomes an opportunity and also a chance to be able to encourage MSME actors to move up a class. Participatory communication is important to be used by MSME actors and communities in Batam City, especially in developing tourism. According to (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009), participatory communication is communication in which there is a two-way or dialogical communication process. Participatory Communication of MSME actors includes how the process of discussing ideas or problems to be able to make decisions, with the aim of being able to jointly develop tourism in Batam City. Participatory Communication is also carried out with planning and can generate profits, including in public satisfaction with the plans made (Sinaga, Winoto, and Perdana, 2016).

Seeing the background above, this study aims to examine how participatory communication from MSMEs in Batam City, especially those with close contact in supporting tourism to make tourism a success in Batam City. Especially in this era of the Covid-19 endemic. Where tourism is starting to recover and make adjustments after previously slumping.

Various previous studies have shown that horizontal participatory communication will enable the community to participate in the communication process which is not only giving and receiving, but also in it there is dialogue and sharing with each other. Participatory communication in the community that is actively involved in discussing and also determining various community solutions including in determining how ideas and problem solving. Participatory Communication carried out in community activities, there is community involvement especially in community leaders who play a role not only as supervisors and listeners but also participate in discussing and determining solutions to the problem (Sinaga, Winoto, and Perdana, 2016).

Participatory communication implemented in government by involving Small and Medium Industries (IKM) for activities in promotion and also regional sales, which aims to strengthen the identity of the city. Research also shows that the results of this application are that the community also supports the implementation and utilization of the results. In addition, participatory communication can also be carried out in the branding process which can also be carried out continuously to involve various stakeholders in it (Dewi and Nulul, 2018).

Other studies also show that participatory communication in developing the entrepreneurial sector for MSME actors in villages has positive results. Through participatory communication both in the implementation of training and also various routine meetings by MSME actors and facilitators, there is an active dialogue in delivering materials and also in expressing opinions. So that through participatory communication that includes entrepreneurial values, it can be economically beneficial and also obtain results that can improve the quality and production of MSME products (Sutowo, 2020).

Participatory communication focuses on identifying a problem, including developing solutions and also designing and implementing strategies to solve the problem (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009). Participatory communication is communication in which there is a two-way or dialogical communication process. The purpose of participatory communication is to produce a common understanding of the message or information that has been conveyed (Sukarni, 2018).

Verhangen (in Dewi and Nulul, 2018) said that participation is interaction and communication that are interconnected in the form of responsibility, authority and also the benefits generated. Of course, in the application of participatory communication there is interaction and communication with the awareness to participate in activities that are beneficial in activities. Uphoff (in Srampickal, 2006, p.8) also said that in community involvement there are four levels, namely, participation in implementation, participation in evaluation, participation in utilization and also in decision making.

Participatory Communication is a solution that can improve and complement the previous linear communication model. Participatory communication allows the

community to have the opportunity to convey their ideas and interests, including participating in the decision-making process until its implementation. So it can be said that this participatory communication begins with the idea of the community to be able to build and improve itself by being involved in the community which is an important element in the implementation of development.

According to Sarvaes (2002), there are several fundamental differences between communication strategies and participatory communication, namely; Participatory communication, places the community as a dynamic actor, where it is active and involved in making social changes and how to communicate, as a message recipient and also behaves passively, because in making decisions are other people.

Participatory communication can be adjusted to the community or social group in society, including culture, language or norms and also the media used in the group. In participatory communication, dialogue is also carried out by referring to the community and also how to communicate so that it can identify differences in needs in the community or social group. The communication process is the right of every individual, so that everyone has the same opportunity in the community or social group.

This participatory communication can also understand and achieve awareness in social reality, including the process and is determined in getting the solution. The application of participatory communication can also create personal communication that can be a dialogue, both between communities and communities and also regional leaders. The implementation of participatory communication also uses media, both traditional media or other media that are adjusted to the needs of the community. In addition, the implementation of participatory communication also creates the growth of social activities between groups and can also develop community media.

Tufte and Mefalopulus (2009), stated that in participatory communication there are principles in it. (1) Dialogue. In the principle of dialogue, it focuses on free and open dialogue, which can discuss social and economic problems, both in the form of inequality or injustice. So that it uses communication strategies that can be developed in various ways through the dialogue. Communication dialogue focuses on full attention and active listening with an interest in the topic and theme being conveyed. (2). Voice. In this voice, it is also commonly referred to as conveying aspirations by having an awareness of the need for space for the community, including marginalized groups to be noticed and unable to convey their problems and concerns. The media has a role in participatory communication, by supporting groups that do not get their rights and can convey their concerns including in solving their problems. (3) Liberating Pedagogy. Freire said that in implementing dialogical communication, it must be able to articulate the process, both in the internal and external environments that can create dialogue. The goal is to be able to apply solutions to problems that occur, so that the information to be conveyed can still be informed. Liberating Pedagogy has four pillars related to communication, namely; love, humility, trust and hope. The focus of Liberating Pedagogy is not only in helping to facilitate aspirations but can form a dialogue and can identify problems and find the right solution. The results can free dialogue into actions that can be carried out together. (4) Action-Reflection-Action. This principle focuses on action, namely in the form of

movements in solving problems that have been previously identified in a group. Participatory communication emphasizes awareness and commitment to acting and taking action in their group. The empowerment process that will be carried out can have commitment and a sense of ownership of the problems faced.

METHOD

This study uses a constructivism paradigm with a descriptive qualitative method. The study was conducted by collecting primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained by conducting in-depth interviews with relevant informants according to the specified criteria. These criteria are MSME actors in the city of Batam, at least the MSME has been established for at least 1 year and participates in or supports tourism in the city of Batam. The MSME in question can be those engaged in the hotel and restaurant/eating house sector, as well as MSMEs engaged in the transportation, accommodation, communication and cultural tourism sectors.

The informants interviewed were approximately 4 people. The trustworthiness checking technique was carried out by triangulation of sources, where in this study it was also carried out by interviewing informants who were international tourists or appropriate experts (from the local Tourism Office or competent experts in their fields). While secondary data was obtained by studying relevant literature, either obtained through books and other manuscripts or obtained online. Documentation and observations were also carried out that were relevant to the research object. Observations were carried out directly at the research location in order to obtain accurate data. The data obtained were then analyzed using the Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014) technique. The data was then reduced to data that was relevant and irrelevant to this study and then data presentation and conclusions and verification were carried out.

The theory used in this study is participatory communication with a focus on the principles contained in participatory communication according to Tufte and Mefalopulus (2009). So that the analysis and discussion, namely focusing on these principles, namely Dialogue, Voice, Liberating Pedagogy and Action-Reaction-Action, are also adjusted to the findings obtained during field observations.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Ministry of Cooperatives has a program called New PLUT. The presence of PLUT, which is relatively new, is still making program plans and budgets. PLUT was present in 2020 with around one hundred and sixty thousand registered MSMEs, which aims to develop through incubation activities. MSME actors have the same opportunity to be able to participate in various trainings, as well as mentoring by PLUT mentors. This study focuses on participatory communication by conducting in-depth interviews with PLUT administrators and also with six MSME actors fostered by PLUT, which are analyzed

through elements of participatory communication, namely; dialogue, voice, liberation pedagogy, and action-reflection-action.

The PLUT Batam government provides and accepts dialogue with fostered MSME actors. The dialogue that is carried out focuses on interactive and open communication. MSME actors convey that the PLUT government accepts input, suggestions or complaints experienced by MSMEs. For example, if the MSME actors in the implementation of the MSME bazaar or exhibition event organized by PLUT do not match their market share, then the MSME actors convey this to PLUT.

In the principle of dialogue, it focuses on free and open dialogue, which can discuss social and economic problems, both in the form of problems of inequality or injustice. So that it uses a communication strategy that can be developed in various ways through the dialogue. Communication dialogue focuses on full attention and active listening with an interest in the topic and theme being conveyed.

Voice in conveying aspirations speaks about the space given to the community to convey their aspirations. In this case, PLUT fostered MSMEs can convey their aspirations to the management of PLUT Batam City. This was conveyed by several MSMEs who were sources in this study. One example, for example, was what happened regarding the exhibition location which according to the MSMEs was not strategic. They conveyed this to the management of PLUT Batam City and this became the attention of the Service and finally decided to move to a strategic location. Several knitting MSMEs said that perhaps currently the attention of the Service is still on batik products, while for knitting products it is still not. However, knitters or so-called knitters are also given the opportunity and place to participate in the exhibition. This shows that MSMEs can also participate in conveying aspirations for mutual progress.

Liberating pedagogy in participatory communication of Batam MSMEs is carried out through dialogue between management and MSMEs informally. For example, when MSMEs visit the Batam City PLUT office for training or document management and others. This is an informal means for MSMEs to convey their aspirations. Or it can also happen the other way around from the Batam City PLUT management who asks about progress and others related to the development of the MSMEs being fostered. From the dialogue that is carried out, the Batam City PLUT management can identify problems and "needs" of MSMEs. Of course, the solution to the problem is adjusted to the capabilities of the Batam City PLUT. If the matter conveyed can be given a solution, then it will be resolved immediately. However, if it is related to other things such as policies, budgets and others, the resolution will be postponed.

Liberating pedagogy also talks about love, humility, trust and hope. In this case, based on the results of observations made by researchers, the interaction and dialogue that occurs between management and MSMEs is quite good and mutually respectful and appreciative. The management and UMKM also showed humility in interacting and both had the same vision and mission for mutual progress. In terms of trust, UMKM Batam City really trusts the management of PLUT Batam City. Because in addition to seeing its credibility as a government office, UMKM also really believes that what PLUT does is for the progress of UMKM Batam City. In the position of the management itself, based on

interviews conducted, the management gives trust to most of the UMKM who are committed and participate in activities held by PLUT. According to the management, there are several UMKM whose commitment is questionable and some even initially thought that they came to PLUT only to look for money such as transportation money, and others. However, when asked to participate, the UMKM did not show their participation. For UMKM like this, PLUT Batam City usually does not involve them again for the next activity because they no longer trust the UMKM. UMKM Batam City certainly hopes that by involving them in activities held by PLUT, their business will progress further. Likewise, the hope of the Batam City PLUT is that from the planned program, they certainly want Batam City's MSMEs to progress and improve the standard of living of the Batam City community.

In the action-reflection-action element, it focuses on the actions taken to solve problems. PLUT provides opportunities and space for its fostered MSME actors for every problem, obstacle and decision in the group. Participation from each MSME actor directly provides a commitment to contribute to each other and have a stake in advancing MSMEs in Batam City.

PLUT Batam communicates with MSME actors to work together in following and supporting the planned program planning. However, it is not uncommon for MSME actors fostered in Batam City to adjust to the needs of their respective businesses. For example, if the MSME exhibition held does not match the target market, then MSME actors are given space and allowed not to participate and receive input information from each fostered MSME actor. So that the actions decided by MSME actors are a reflection of the MSME actors directly.

Participatory communication according to Tufte & Mefalopulos (2009) focuses on the community identifying problems and being involved in developing solutions, designing and being involved in solving problems. In this study, members of the UMKM fostered by PLUT Batam City can identify problems faced by UMKM and can convey them to the management of PLUT Batam City, and be actively involved. For example, when several UMKM were invited to discuss by the Cooperatives and Micro Business Service and PLUT management to provide products that can support Batam city tourism, several UMKM were invited to discuss their products and the readiness of UMKM in producing their products. If UMKM is not capable, of course PLUT will not force it. This was expressed by one of the UMKM engaged in the production of Batam Batik clothing and also crafts from shells that carry the local wisdom of the Batam region. The identification of problems according to the UMKM came from foreign tourists who came to him who asked about Batam's typical crafts. From there, the idea arose to make Batam's typical crafts that carry local wisdom such as shells and Batam's typical motifs. Then based on input from the Cooperatives and Micro Enterprises Service and especially from the PLUT management, UMKM processes in designing and finally producing the crafts. In this case, the communication carried out is two-way and provides feedback to each other (Sukarni, 2018).

Participation according to Verhangen (in Dewi and Nulul, 2018) is a process of interaction that is interconnected in the form of responsibility, authority and benefits

generated. In this case, the management of the Batam City PLUT shows its responsibility in assisting the shell and Batik craft UMKM above by continuing to oversee it from the identification process, finding solutions to production and marketing. Also to other fostered UMKM. This is also related to its authority as a UMKM mentor and is also responsible to the Batam City Cooperative and Micro Business Service. In this case, UMKM itself is responsible for the products produced and can accommodate input from the PLUT management. The benefits generated are not only felt by UMKM but also by the Batam City government in fostering UMKM and also producing a form of creative work that carries the local wisdom of Batam City.

Participatory communication according to Uphoff in Srampickal, (2006, p.8) divides community involvement into four stages of implementation, namely participation in implementation, participation in evaluation, participation in utilization and participation in decision making. In this case, Batam City MSMEs participate in the implementation of activities programmed by the Batam City PLUT. Also, if there is an exhibition and production of a product, then MSMEs will participate in it. This certainly benefits both parties. Participation is also carried out on activities that have been carried out, for example exhibitions programmed by the PLUT. According to one MSME, the participants in this case, the Fostered MSMEs, gave an evaluation that the exhibition activities carried out did not attract many visitors and buyers because the location was not strategic. This was conveyed to the PLUT management to be used as input if at some point they hold another exhibition, then they must consider its strategic location. In terms of utilization, MSMEs certainly benefit from what has been attempted by the Batam City PLUT. Both additional knowledge, assistance in processing documents and improving MSME business efforts. For decision making, it is more about providing input to the Batam PLUT. Decisions related to programs are usually entirely the authority of the Batam City PLUT, which of course takes into account everything including the budget and others.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study above, it can be concluded that participatory communication of Batam City MSMEs in developing tourism shows an active dialogue between PLUT Batam and its MSMEs. Batam City, which has tourism potential, is a good opportunity for PLUT-assisted MSMEs, where each fostered MSME is given the same space and opportunity both in participating in implementing program designs and providing evaluations. Through participatory communication that is enhanced by expanding its communication media, more and more PLUT-assisted MSMEs participate in every activity. PLUT Batam can be an example of a government institution that supports the growth of MSMEs in the region and has succeeded in developing MSMEs.

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