Benchmarking as a Marketing Strategy Promotion for Increasing Tourism: Case Study of SMEs in Kediri City Square

Iva Khoiril Mala1*, Puji Handayati2, Arief Noviarakhman Zagladi3
1Doctoral Program Knowledge Management, Universitas Negeri Malang,
2Department Management, Universitas Negeri Malang
Corresponding Author: Iva Khoiril Mala iva.khoiril.2204319@students.um.ac.id

ARTICLE INFO
Keywords: Benchmarking, Marketing Strategy, Kediri Square SMEs, Tourism

ABSTRACT
This research discusses strategies to increase the number of visitors to the SME square in Kediri through benchmarking and collaboration between related parties. Kediri Square has undergone significant revitalization and facial changes to increase its appeal. Apart from being a tourist spot, Kediri Square is also used as an educational place. This research also highlights the importance of internal marketing strategies effective promotion, integration of local culture, and cooperation with related parties. The research method used is qualitative with a case study approach to alun-alun SMEs Kediri city with observation and interviews. The research results show that developing attractive facilities, effective promotions, increasing security and comfort, and collaborating with related parties can increase the number of visitors. In addition, combining educational activities and promotion of local culture can also be an effective strategy. In its conclusion, this research emphasizes the importance of cooperation between local government, tourism actors and local communities in increasing the number of visitors to Kediri Square.

©2023 Mala, Handayati, Zagladi: This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Atribusi 4.0 Internasional.
INTRODUCTION

Kediri Square, as one of the popular tourist attractions in the city, continues to experience developments and changes aimed at increasing its attractiveness. One of the characteristics of Kediri Square is the magnificent Great Mosque building, with beautiful dome architecture. This building not only functions as a place of worship, but is also an attraction for tourists who want to capture moments at interesting photo spots. To answer the increasing needs of visitors, the Kediri City Government has revitalized Kediri Square (BPS Kediri City 2021). This revitalization includes improvements and additional facilities, such as refreshing gardens, larger parking areas and better toilets. The aim is to provide comfort and convenience for visitors to enjoy the beauty of Kediri Square. With this improvement in facilities, it is hoped that tourists can stay longer and enjoy the atmosphere of Kediri Square without significant obstacles.

Not only that, Kediri square also experienced a significant change in face. The plan is that this square will be more spacious and functional. Good spatial planning and efficient design will create a comfortable atmosphere for visitors. This thinking is also included in the planning for the construction of a new square which will integrate aesthetic aspects and community needs (Karia 2021). Thus, the Kediri square will become an attractive place for tourists to relax, eat food, exercise, or even hold community events.

Apart from being a tourist spot, Kediri Square is also used as an educational place. The concept for developing this square pays attention to the role of education in providing insight and knowledge to visitors (Sundström 2020). In Kediri Square, there are various information media and interactive spaces that can be used to convey educational messages, whether regarding history, culture, the environment or other important topics. In this way, Kediri Square is not just a tourist spot, but also a knowledge and culinary center that provides added value for visitors.

The vision and direction for the development of Kediri Square has been expressed by the Mayor of Kediri. He stated that the Kediri square would be restored to its original function, where it would be a place to gather, socialize and relax for the community. This shows the government's commitment to creating public spaces that are friendly and inclusive for all levels of society. In this context, the Kediri square will become a place where people can interact with each other, share experiences and strengthen social relations.

The revitalization of Kediri Square does not only focus on physical aspects, but also on developing concepts that involve the local community. In planning the construction of a new square, active community participation is important. Through discussion forums and public consultations, community opinions and aspirations are respected and implemented in object development tour (Gamage et al. 2020). This creates a sense of community ownership and pride in the Kediri square, thereby increasing local visits and support. With the ongoing revitalization and plans to build a new, better square, it is hoped that Kediri Square can become an increasingly attractive tourist destination and be in demand by tourists. Kediri has great potential to build an image as a tourist destination city that combines natural beauty, cultural heritage and the
friendliness of its people. Through appropriate and sustainable development of the square, Kediri can expand its tourist attractions and provide an unforgettable experience for every visitor.

Even though the square is one of the popular tourist attractions in Kediri. However, the number of visitors to the square in Kediri is still relatively low compared to squares in other cities in East Java. Therefore, an effort is needed to increase the number of visitors to the main square in Kediri through promotional strategies related fill from place That especially How on- site SME development tour that. One effort that can be made is by benchmarking squares in other cities that have been successful in increasing the number of visitors and income of SMEs around (Amoako et al. 2021). The town square in Kediri, even though it is a popular tourist attraction, still faces challenges in attracting quite a large number of visitors when compared to town squares in other cities in East Java. This phenomenon shows that there is potential that has not been fully exploited in developing the attractiveness of Kediri Square.

To overcome this problem, strategic steps are needed that can increase the number of visitors to Kediri Square and the development of SMEs around. One approach that can be taken is to benchmark squares that have been successful in increasing the number of visitors in other cities. By studying approaches that have been successful in other squares, Kediri can adopt effective marketing strategies and implement them with adjustments to suit local uniqueness and needs. (Modi and Rawani 2021). Through benchmarking, Kediri can evaluate key factors that have influenced the success of SMEs in other places, such as management concepts, facilities, activities, promotions, and integration with other tourist attractions in the vicinity. In this process, the Kediri square development and management team can identify the strengths and weaknesses of other squares and look for inspiration for innovations that can increase the attractiveness and uniqueness of Kediri square as well as various culinary from SMEs in it (Hungund and Mani 2019).

Apart from the benchmarking strategy, efforts to increase the number of visitors to Kediri Square can also be done through increasing promotions and branding related to surrounding SMEs. By expanding the reach of SME promotions, both online and offline, Kediri Square can be better known and become an attractive tourist destination for local and international tourists. (Pulka, Ramli, and Bakar 2018). A creative and effective marketing campaign can highlight the appeal of Kediri square, communicating culinary uniqueness local, as well as offering interesting experiences for visitors (Antunes et al. 2021). Apart from that, collaboration with related parties, such as tourism actors, local entrepreneurs and local communities, can also help increase the number of SME visitors to the Kediri square. By building solid partnerships, Kediri square can become receptacle for SMEs to offers a variety of interesting activities and events for visitors, such as cultural festivals, music concerts, art exhibitions, and so on. Through this collaboration, Kediri Square can become a center of activity that enlivens the atmosphere of the city and creates a sustainable attraction for tourists.
In conclusion, to increase the number of visitors to the main square in Kediri esp in the field culinary, benchmarking strategy can be an effective step. By studying the success of squares in other cities that feature facet different culinary delights, Kediri can adopt best practices and apply them with adjustments to suit the local context namely the City of Tofu. Apart from that, increasing promotion, integration of local culture, and cooperation with related parties are also important factors in developing the attractiveness of Kediri Square. With sustainable and collaborative efforts, it is hoped that Kediri Square can become a tourist destination that is increasingly in demand and develops positively.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Marketing strategy

Tull and Kahle define marketing strategy as a fundamental tool that is planned to achieve a company's goals by developing sustainable competitive advantages through the market (Pranoto, Hapsari, & Prianto, 2015). The main focus of marketing strategy is to effectively allocate and coordinate marketing resources and activities to achieve a company's goals in a specific product market (Mullins, Walker, & Boyd, 2013, p. 43).

Marketing Mix

Marketing Mix according to Strauss and Frost has four aspects, namely (Strauss & Frost, 2012): 1. Product: Benefits that can meet the needs of an organization or consumer and for those who are willing to exchange money or other goods according to their value. 2. Price: Broadly speaking, price is the sum of all values (such as money, time, energy and psychological costs) exchanged by buyers to obtain the benefits of the product or service they need or want. (Strauss & Frost, 2012). 3. Place: Place is a place or location to market products or services owned by a company. Place shows all the activities necessary for a product or service to reach consumers when they want it in a timely manner (Grewal & Levy, 2012, p. 11). 4. Promotion: Promotion is an activity carried out by a company to communicate the value of its products to a predetermined target market (Suliyanto, 2010).

Benchmarking

Benchmarking is a learning process to find better ways of doing something. This is a management process that requires constant updates where the company's performance will be compared with the best companies (Ajelabi & Tang, 2010, p. 2)

Benchmarking Wheel

There are five stages of the benchmarking process which is usually called the benchmarking wheel (Paulus & Devie, 2013): 1. Plan: Assess the company's performance according to a predetermined period and determine the company's performance that will be compared with the company chosen to be a reference for the company's performance. 2. Search: Looking for companies with the most potential as partners to benchmark. 3. Observe: Collect various information
regarding the key success factors of benchmark companies as a reference for company performance. 4. Analyze: Analyze the information that has been collected from the benchmark company to see the comparison of differences in performance with that company. 5. Adapt: Develop and implement a company performance improvement program and evaluate the company performance improvement program that has been implemented.

METHODOLOGY

This research uses qualitative methods with a case study approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the factors that influence the success of alun-alun SMEs in Kediri. Qualitative methods were chosen because the focus of this research was to understand the context, perceptions and experiences of respondents involved in managing the square. A case study approach was used because this research focuses on alun-alun SMEs in Kediri as a representative research object.

Data was collected through interviews with related parties, such as the tourism office, square managers, and SMEs around the square. This interview aims to obtain their views on the factors that have contributed to the increase in visitor numbers at the square. Interviews can be conducted face-to-face or by telephone, depending on the respondent's availability. Apart from interviews, data was also collected through direct observation in the square which was the focus of the research. This observation was carried out by observing activities in the square, such as the number of visitors, the facilities provided, and the activities held there (Sugiyono 2016). Direct observation provides a more in-depth picture of the actual conditions in the square and provides valid data to analyze its influence on tourist visits.

After the data was collected, analysis was carried out by identifying patterns, themes and relationships between factors that influence the success of SMEs in the Kediri square. The results of this analysis will be used as a basis for formulating potential strategies to increase the number of visitors at the Kediri square. By using qualitative methods and a case study approach, this research is expected to provide rich and in-depth insight into the factors that can increase the number of visitors to the square in the field of culinary (Creswell and Poth 2016). This research can also provide valuable guidance for local governments and Kediri square managers in developing effective strategies to increase tourism and local economic growth.

RESULTS

Squares in Malang and Surabaya have been successful examples in increasing the number of visitors, and these efforts can provide inspiration for the development of squares in Kediri. Through in-depth research, several key strategies have been identified that can be the basis for developing Kediri Square into a more attractive and popular tourist destination. One strategy that can be adopted is the development of various facilities that are attractive to visitors, field culinary. It is hoped that Kediri Square understands the importance of meeting the needs and desires of visitors by providing innovative and interesting rides.
By considering the characteristics and preferences of potential visitors, the Kediri square can add various entertaining and challenging rides, such as children's playgrounds, family recreation areas, or even sports arenas and offers facet unique culinary delights that visitors can enjoy. Apart from that, the development of distinctive and unique culinary facilities can also be an additional attraction, so that visitors can experience local culinary delights while enjoying the atmosphere of the square.

Effective promotion is also a key factor in increasing the number of visitors. Alun-alun Kediri has utilized the potential of social media and the official website to reach a wider audience (Basri and Siam 2019). In this case, the Kediri square can follow in these footsteps by optimizing the use of social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook and Twitter to promote activities, events and the unique attraction of the square. with involving local SMEs as internal support activity that. Interesting content such as photos, videos and positive visitor testimonials can be used to build potential visitors' interest and desire to visit Kediri Square. Apart from that, collaboration with local influencers or regional celebrities can also increase exposure and create buzz on social media (Basu and Bhola 2022). Increasing security and comfort must also be a focus in developing the Kediri square. SMEs in the square have paid attention to this aspect by increasing the presence of security officers and repairing damaged facilities for the comfort of tourists. For enjoy beauty culinary delights in Kediri. Likewise, the Kediri square needs to carry out a thorough review of the security and cleanliness of the area, as well as ensuring that existing facilities are in good and adequate condition. Apart from that, the development of a good traffic management system and organized parking will also provide extra comfort for visitors (Basri and Siam 2019).

Not only that, collaboration with related parties around the square can have a positive impact in increasing the number of visitors. Kediri Square has succeeded in building synergy with tourism actors, and SMEs around. In this case, the Kediri square can establish partnerships with hotels, restaurants, souvenir shops and other tourist attractions around the square area. This collaboration can create attractive and mutually beneficial tourism packages for all parties, as well as increase the attractiveness of Kediri Square as a comprehensive tourist destination. All done with innovating on social media and digital transformation for SME sustainability (Abudaqa, Alzahmi, and ... 2022).

Social media was originally considered as a tool that allows people to interact and communicate with their family and friends (Nuseir 2018). Nowadays social media (SM) is known as a significant marketing tool for businesses. Therefore, researchers around the world are interested in studying the impact of Social Media Marketing (SMM) on various aspects of business. Due to rapid technological advances, the business world has realized the effectiveness of utilizing SM to interact and connect with their consumers. According to (Oktoriana 2021) social media as a marketing tool that offers opportunities for business people to market their brands, products and services. As well as (Munir et al. 2021) mentioned that businesses consider the use of social media in marketing important to increase profits and strengthen their market position. Since social media allows for feedback and communication between businesses and consumers, it allows businesses to exploit social media platforms in changing customer
buying habits and behavior and strengthening brand equity. Another importance of SMM tools is their low costs compared to high profits (Crammond et al. 2018).

This approach will not only increase the number of visitors, but also have a positive impact on the preservation and development of Kediri's cultural heritage. By combining educational aspects and promotion of local culture, the Kediri square can become a forum that supports the preservation of local traditions and wisdom. Through introduction and appreciation of local culture, local communities and visitors can participate in maintaining and developing Kediri's cultural heritage for future generations. UKM owners operating in the culinary sector also provide economic activity lessons obtained from the community through employment activities, soft skills training, and ways to develop potential in maintaining business continuity. By combining educational aspects and promotion of local culture, the Kediri square can become a forum that supports the preservation of local traditions and wisdom. Through introduction and appreciation of local culture, local communities and visitors can participate in maintaining and developing Kediri's cultural heritage for future generations. UKM owners operating in the culinary sector also provide economic activity lessons obtained from the community through employment activities, soft skills training, and ways to develop potential in maintaining business continuity. They provide a contribution to the community as support for the learning process from the implementation of a planned program so that it is hoped that the program can run and develop in the future (Alnawas and Farha 2020). This is in line with the opinion expressed (Susanto et al. 2023) which states that UKM must have a strong commitment to learning, and have a shared vision. UKM players are also monitored through mentoring and coaching which can now be carried out online which is expected to increase the interest of UKM players in learning how to manage a business. This is because innovative SMEs will tend to have a shared vision from both the owner and employees so that there is good cooperation between each party. (Rakshit et al. 2022).

In order to achieve success in increasing the number of visitors to Kediri Square, there needs to be commitment and close cooperation between the local government, tourism actors and the local community. This collaboration involves various parties who have an important role in developing and promoting SMEs in Kediri Square as a destination interesting culinary tour. The local government has a strategic role in providing policies that support the development of the Kediri square, such as good space planning, efficient facility management, and adequate budget allocation. Apart from that, tourism actors, such as travel agents, tour operators and accommodation managers, also have an important role in promoting Kediri Square as an attractive tourist destination. (Bodlaj and Cater 2022). They can integrate the Kediri square in their travel packages, provide complete and accurate information to tourists, and collaborate with related parties to improve the quality of service and visitor experience.

No less important, active participation and support from the local community is also a key factor in the successful development of Kediri Square SMEs. The community can become tourism ambassadors who provide a warm welcome and information to visiting tourists. They can also act as local traders who provide unique and typical Kediri products to tourists. In this case, improving the quality of products and services is important, so that people can build a good reputation and increase the attractiveness of Kediri Square as a friendly and attractive tourist destination.

Strategic steps must be taken carefully and thoroughly to ensure success in increasing the number of visitors to Kediri Square. A thorough planning stage, including market analysis, identification of strengths and weaknesses, and
determining a clear target audience, will be a strong basis for developing an effective marketing strategy (Alhakimi and Mahmoud 2020). The use of accurate data and information regarding potential visitor profiles, tourist preferences and tourism trends is also an important factor in making strategic decisions.

Periodic evaluations also need to be carried out to ensure the effectiveness of the efforts that have been made. By carrying out regular monitoring and evaluation, local governments, tourism actors and local communities can find out the impact of the policies and programs that have been implemented. This evaluation can include measuring the number of visitors, level of tourist satisfaction, local economic income, and the resulting environmental impact (Gao and Hafsi 2019). The results of this evaluation can be a basis for making necessary adjustments and improvements to achieve better results in the future.

In conclusion, increasing the number of UKM visitors to Kediri Square requires commitment and close cooperation between the local government, tourism actors and the local community. In developing the Kediri square, it is important to consider strategic steps, involve all parties involved, carry out regular evaluations, and take inspiration from the experience of other successful squares. By doing this, Kediri Square has great potential to become an increasingly attractive tourist destination and make a positive contribution to the development of tourism in the field of tourism, culinary in that area.

**DISCUSSION**

From the results of this research, it can be concluded that benchmarking is an effective strategy in increasing the number of visitors to the main square in Kediri. By benchmarking squares in other cities that have been successful, Kediri can learn from these successful experiences and adopt strategies that have been proven effective. (Osano 2019). Through the benchmarking process, Kediri can identify the key factors that have driven the success of the square in other cities and apply them in the appropriate context in the Kediri square. One of the main benefits of benchmarking is that Kediri can learn from other people's experiences and avoid mistakes that have been made before. By analyzing successful approaches for SMEs in other squares, Kediri can identify strategies and tactics that are effective in attracting visitor interest. For example, developing attractive facilities, increasing promotions through social media and official websites, increasing visitor security and comfort, as well as increasing cooperation between related parties around the square.

Apart from that, research also shows that cooperation between related parties is very important in increasing the number of visitors to the square. This collaboration involves local governments, tourism actors, local communities and the general public (Paul 2020). The local government has an important role in creating regulations that support the development of Kediri square SMEs, providing adequate budgets, and facilitating cooperation between various parties. Tourism actors, such as travel agents and accommodation managers, can play a role in promoting Kediri Square to tourists and providing quality services. Local communities and the general public can also act as tourism ambassadors who provide a warm welcome and information to visiting tourists.
Within the framework of this collaboration, there are several things that need to be considered. First, good coordination between related parties is very important so that all efforts can be carried out in an integrated and effective manner. Regular meetings, discussion forums, and public consultations can be a forum for sharing information, agreeing on steps to be taken, and solving problems that may arise. Second, having the same understanding regarding the vision and objectives of developing Kediri Square SMEs is also very important. With a common vision, related parties can work synergistically to achieve the desired results. Third, the active involvement of the local community in the process of developing the Kediri square is also a key factor in the success of efforts to increase the number of UKM visitors (De 2020). By involving the local community, they will have a sense of ownership and pride in Kediri Square SMEs, so they will be more enthusiastic in promoting them and providing good services to tourists.

Apart from cooperation between related parties, the use of technology and innovation can also be a supporting factor in increasing the number of visitors to Kediri Square UKM. In the digital era like now, the use of social media, official websites and other information technology can be an effective means of promoting local SMEs Kediri square to tourists. By optimizing presence on digital platforms, Kediri square can reach a wider audience and build an attractive image for tourists in the field culinary. In addition, the application of technology can also improve the visitor experience in the square, for example through tourist guide applications, increasing information accessibility, or the use of augmented reality technology to increase visitor interaction and engagement.

In conclusion, benchmarking strategies and collaboration between related parties have an important role in increasing the number of visitors to Kediri Square. By learning from the experience of successful plazas in other cities, Kediri can adopt effective strategies and avoid mistakes that have been made previously. Through close collaboration between the local government, tourism actors and the local community, Kediri Square can become an attractive tourist destination and is in demand by tourists. The use of technology and innovation can also be a supporting factor in increasing the number of visitors. By implementing these strategies, it is hoped that Kediri Square can achieve success in tourism development and make a positive contribution to economic growth and development of the city of Kediri, or called Tofu City as a whole.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It can be concluded that this research reveals several effective strategies in increasing the number of visitors to SMEs in the Kediri square. One strategy that can be adopted is benchmarking, namely by studying and learning from the experience of successful squares in other cities. By identifying the key factors that have influenced the success of the square SMEs, Kediri can adopt strategies that have been proven effective and implement them with adjustments that suit local uniqueness and needs. Apart from that, cooperation between local governments,
tourism actors and local communities is also an important factor in increasing the number of visitors.

With close cooperation and good coordination, all parties can work synergistically to achieve the desired results. The use of technology and innovation can also be a support in increasing the number of visitors, such as the use of social media, official websites and other information technology to promote Kediri Square and improve the visitor experience. By implementing these strategies, it is hoped that Kediri Square can achieve success in developing tourism and make a positive contribution to economic growth and development of the city of Kediri as a whole.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

For study furthermore give hope in development research This with addition various research objects and variables like Quality Services, Market Orientation, Sustainability, Digital Marketing, Purchase Intention, Customer Loyalty and so on in order to get mark classification more in something research.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Saying accept love to all lecturer majoring in the doctoral science program management at Malang State University. Always give motivation for can active in writing various research papers and non-research papers, so can give more value to yourself researcher.

REFERENCES


