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Marketing Communications for Tourism Development in Ecoethno Leadcamp Site

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Abstract

Tourism is a critical sector for national, regional, and rural development, providing job opportunities and increasing income for communities, governments, and private sectors. The success of tourism development requires integrated marketing communications that showcase the natural and socio-economic potential of the region, including its tourist attractions. This study examines the marketing communications strategy of Ecoethno Leadcampsite, a camping ground-based tourist spot in Pangalengan, Bandung Regency, West Java Province. The study used a qualitative case study method with data collected through direct observation, interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGD), and documentation. The results reveal that Ecoethno Leadcampsite's marketing communications strategy for tourism development is successful in establishing public relations by empowering the surrounding community to become partners, direct marketing, personal selling, and sales promotion with Word of Mouth to fellow tourists and partners, including the use of social media. The study also suggests that Ecoethno Leadcampsite can increase collaboration with educational institutions by developing educational-based tourism or tourism locations in nature conservation, socio-economic, culture, and character building that is creative, productive, and innovative.

Keywords: ecoethno, marketing communications, social media, tourism, apprenticeship program

1. Introduction

Tourism is one of the important and strategic sectors in national development at the local level in rural areas with many tourist villages having unique and interesting characteristics such as nature-based tourism or eco-tourism, agriculture-based tourism or agro-tourism, and education-based tourism or e-tourism.

Tourism in rural areas is developing a lot with the concept of village tourism or tourist villages which are the leading destinations for each region and are useful for creating jobs, especially for the younger generation with the development of services and providing tourism such as games and agility or outbound, entertainment, photo spots, and small businesses. and middle class culinary, cafe, lodging, and restaurants.

The development of tourist villages has also increased community income as well as village and regional income sourced from taxes, levies, shop, and lodging rentals, and culinary (*Analisis Strategi Pemasaran Objek Wisata Kebun Binatang Kasang Kulim Kecamatan Siak Hulu Kabupaten Kampar* | *Jurnal Ekonomi Kiat*, n.d.; Nurhajati et al., 2018; Prastiani et al., 2020; Risman et al., 2016; Widya Setiyanti & Ir Dwi Sadono, 2011).

Based on the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy in Indonesia's Tourism & Creative Economy Outlook in 2019, the tourism business has successfully contributed Rp. 280 trillion in foreign exchange, an increase of 3.7 percent from 2018 achievements. Tourism villages in 2022 based on information from the 2022 Tourism Village Network in Indonesia recorded 3,625 consisting of natural tourism, cultural tourism, artificial tourism, and tourist attractions.

According to the Central Statistical Agency in 2022, the development of tourism during the Covid-19 pandemic decreased in 2018 data to 1,405,600, in 2019 slightly decreased to around 1,377,100, and in 2022 to 164,100 due to restrictions on community social activities in all fields. However, in 2021 tourism will increase by 12% compared to 2020. Then in 2022 as many as 260 million to 280 million tourists will contribute to the tourism sector's Gross Domestic Product of 4.3 percent.

There are unique and interesting tourist destinations with the ecotourism segment that provides entertainment, refreshing, and comfort. Tourist destinations that give eco-tourism nuances include Ecoethno as a camping ground-based tourist spot with the concept of private campsite, leadership, environment, awareness, and culture (Ismaya et al., 2023).

The tourist destination, namely Ecoethno Leadcampsite, is one of the tourist attractions in Pangalengan, Bandung Regency, West Java Province, which can survive during the Covid-19 pandemic. The strategy is with marketing communications through the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology program on the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) Program from 2021 to 2022.

So that the involvement of Ecoethno Leadcampsite as an MBKM internship place to develop the tourism business during the Covid-19 Pandemic as a marketing communication strategy to promote the excellence, uniqueness, and characteristics of tourist destinations, so that potential tourists have definite, complete, and accurate information.

Marketing communication has the aim of introducing by providing information and persuading to form consumer trust, so that the products offered are purchased and in demand by consumers (Gadzali, 2023), and can even participate in marketing these products with their testimonials to other potential consumers (Kusniadji, 2016; Pemasaran et al., 2021; Teguh et al., 2022; Valos et al., 2016; Wijaya et al., 2022).

The MBKM program aims to improve student competence, both soft skills, and hard skills so that they have experience, knowledge, and skills to be better prepared to face the demands and challenges of the world of work (Mardiana, 2023). Then from the Ecoethno Leadcampsite party also benefited from the presence of students carrying out the MBKM internship program such as forming a promotion and marketing team while expanding the work network, when the internship students have finished and return to campus and their regions they will become tourism promotion agents. Furthermore, developing digital media for marketing promotions that are interesting, innovative, and up-to-date helps promote Ecoethno Leadcampsite to become increasingly known to the public.

Tourist visitors in the last five years (2018-2022) at Ecoethno Leadcampsite, namely 751 visitors in 2018, and 831 visitors in 2019, but in 2020 and 2021 due to the Covid-19 Pandemic there has been a decrease to only an average of 38 people, then in 2021, it will start to increase again by 242 people and in 2022 as many as 563 visitors.

So it is important and interesting to conduct a study on the marketing communications of Ecoethno Leadcampsite as a unique and attractive tourist destination as a partner of the MBKM program from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology to support increasing student competence to be better prepared in the world of work. The purpose of this study is to identify and analyze important elements in Ecoethno Leadcampsite marketing communications for the development of Ecotourism.

2. Methodology

The research uses a case study qualitative research method to construct experiences, understandings, and uses of several individuals or groups, which originate from social and humanitarian factual realities (Creswell, 2016). The research location is in the Ecoethno Leadcampsite which is located on the outskirts of Situ Cileunca, Cibuluh Village, Pulosari Village, Pangalengan District, Regency. Bandung, West Java Province. Consider having a location at Ecoethno Leadcampsite as a tourist spot that can survive the Covid-19 pandemic and as a partner in the Merdeka Learning Campus program from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology.

The research used a case study research method as an in-depth study of events, environments, and certain situations to reveal in-depth and understand something. According to Creswell (2016), a case study is research to explore a distinctive and unique phenomenon (case) in certain times and activities such as processes, events, and programs from a community of social groups, institutions, or institutions. Data and information are collected in detail and in-depth through observation, collection of important documentation, and open, closed, and in-depth interviews with informants over a certain period.

The case study method according to Creswell (2016) has characteristics, namely: (1) Carry out the process of identifying an event or phenomenon "case" to be studied; (2) The case is a "system bound" by time and place; (3) Case studies in their data collection use various sources of information in depth and detail about an event (4) Researchers need a process and time in constructing (understanding and exploring) an event and context as a case.

The technique of determining research informants through a purposive sampling technique for those selected with the consideration of being able to provide important information and data that is relevant to research objectives (Sugiono, 2018). The research informants used purposive sampling to determine representative and competent research subjects to provide information, data, and analysis in accordance with the research objectives. The informants selected at the initial stage of the research were 30 MBKM students who did internships using the descriptive questionnaire distribution. The second stage was a deepening of the results of the first stage of research through verification and triangulation of data

sources from Ecoethno Leadcampsite management, namely managers, tour service staff, as well as promotion and marketing staff which is 60 workers, then 10 informants were selected as coordinators of the promotion and marketing team from students who carried out internships at Ecoethno Leadcampsite for the period from August 2021 to January 2022. Collecting data through participant observation, documentation, in-depth interviews, and Focus Group Discussion (FGD).

Analysis of research data uses an interactive model (Ismaya et al., 2023; Miles, M.B., & Huberman, 2019), namely collecting and reducing data, then categorizing and making conclusions. The data analysis is completed by using the NVivo application as one of the CAQDAS (Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software) software programs (Tummons, 2014) to process and analyze mixed methods data to create categorization. NVivo was developed by Qualitative Solution and Research (QSR) International, which is the first company to develop qualitative data analysis software. The term Vivo is taken from the terms of the two grounded theory research experts in the form of 'in-vivo' which means carrying out coding activities based on real data experienced by participants.

The existence of NVivo allows researchers to organize, store, and efficiently retrieve data using an easy coding process. In this study, the NVivo used by researchers was NVivo 12.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Development of Ecoethno Leadcampsite

Ecoethno is a camping ground-based tourist spot located in Pangalengan, Bandung Regency which has the concept of developing aspects of leadership, understanding self, getting along with others, communication, managing, working in groups, learning to learn, and making decision processes. Ecoethno relies on the Campsite's natural beauty media in the form of hills, lakes, and forests with the guidance of experienced facilitators and human resource development experts for motivation, refreshment, and team cohesiveness. So that Ecoethno has also had activities for the development of human resources based on the natural and cultural environment since 1997, then in 2017 Ecoethno built a simple camp, called Ecoethno Leadcampsite.

Ecoethno owns Lake House land, Outbound, a Camping Area, a Community Development Area in the form of gardens, and a Lake Cottage. Ecoethno designed an open nature management training ground, with various activities such as employee and family gatherings, harvesting and gardening activities, hiking, cycling, paddling on the lake, shooting, weddings, and other outdoor activities for children and adults.

Ecoethno Leadcampsite has been able to survive at a time when many businesses and tourism destinations have experienced a decline and even close since the Covid-19 pandemic. Even though tourists who came to the Ecoethno Leadcampsite between 2020-2021 during the Covid-19 Pandemic experienced a decrease in numbers, around an average of 170 to 223 visitors per month, Ecoethno still has monthly tourists.

Ecoethno Leadcampsite is one of the tourist attractions that are of interest to tourists who want to take a vacation and forget about urban excitement. Its location which is on a plateau 1550M above sea level and beautiful is the hallmark of Ecoethno in attracting tourists.

Ecoethno also has other characteristics that can attract tourists, namely as a tourist spot that empowers the surrounding community. Various Ecoethno tourism programs and packages are carried out in collaboration with the surrounding community, to increase employment and increase knowledge related to tourism for the community around Ecoethno. So that Ecoethno becomes better known, supported, and in demand by the public.

According to the development of tourist attractions, there are three main components of a tourism product (3A), namely attractions, amenities, and accessibility. First, an attraction is something that becomes an attraction in the form of natural, cultural, or artificial attractions, which can cause a feeling of satisfaction, comfort, and pleasure to tourists. Both amenities are various forms of supporting facilities in the form of infrastructure that can be used by tourists to meet their needs during their tour. Third, accessibility is the strength level of a tourist destination in terms of being accessible to tourists (Kajian Ilmu dan Pendidikan Geografi et al., 2022; Susianty et al., 2022).

Based on the 3A tourism development, Ecoethno Leadcampsite has fulfilled all three components.

a. The attractions provided at Ecoethno already consist of many tourism options, as follows: nature tourism located on the edge of Situ Cileunca, cool nature, and outbound activities. Camping, gathering, and outbound activities are camping activities by the lake that can create fun entertainment as well as strengthen relationships between colleagues and extended family because they are carried out in the open. Water tourism such as kayaking, rafting, swimming with buoys, around Situ Cileunca by boat, and fishing.

b. The amenities provided at the Ecoethno Leadcampsite have also met the needs of tourists, such as bathrooms with water heaters, tents and equipment, canteens, lake houses, lake cottages, prayer rooms, and parking lots. Then tourists

can pick available vegetables or fruit and take them home, Calung and Pencak Silat entertainment arts, photo spots, bonfires, and archery, along with health protocol facilities during the Covid-19 pandemic. Tailormade leadership program to train participants in leadership aspects through tailor-made activities specifically designed based on the needs of tourists. Then the results will be implemented in in-game activities and training activities. Short Programs can be selected by tourists who only have a short time to visit. The activities can be in the form of harvesting in vegetable or fruit gardens, visits to dairy farms, hiking to tea gardens, and vegetable gardens, Paddling village on the lake, circumnavigating Situ Cileunca using a small boat with a maximum of 5 to 10 people. Special Programs for tourist activities, such as off-roading, paintball, archery, and rafting.

c. Accessibility Ecoethno can be easily accessed from the city of Bandung, about 2 hours drive by car to the Ecoethno Leadcampsite tourist site. The Ecoethno Leadcampsite address can also be found on Google Maps, and directions for directions are also available on the official Ecoethno website. Tourists who come to Ecoethno are also picked up by boat from the parking lot to Ecoethno tourist spots.

3.2 Marketing Communication Media

Media promotion and marketing are important factors in tourism development. The media used in the marketing communication process at Ecoethno consist of Word of Mouth, print media, and social media.

a. Word of mouth is a one-way communication process related to an assessment of non-commercial brand products, organizations, and services. Word of Mouth is very effective as a public relations media and as a form of communication between one individual and another regarding a product or service with the process of conveying messages that both the giver and the recipient of the message. (Agustine & Prasetyawati, 2020; Dwyer, 2007; Kirk et al., 2022; Lin & Ching Yuh, 2010; TaniguchiYuko et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2022). Word of mouth is one of the most frequently quoted terms in marketing because it describes informal communication as well as recommendations from consumers regarding products and services. This process engenders credibility, thus having a large impact on sales as well as the brand. Ecoethno Leadcampsite uses word-of-mouth media by utilizing extensive owner relationships and visiting clients so they can market products in the form of Ecoethno tourist attractions to acquaintances, as well as closest colleagues with interpersonal and group communication.

b. Print media is used as a means of conveying information or messages such as newspapers, tabloids, and magazines. Based on the results of observations and interviews, the print media used at Ecoethno as a medium for information communication, promotion, and marketing consist of leaflets and brochures in hardcopy form which are given to visitors or tourists. Then put up banners and banners around tourist sites that need repair or make new ones because they look unclear and are old or worn out.

c. Social media is an interaction between personal communication that is shared between individuals (to be shared one to one) and public media to anyone and anywhere (Baird & Parasnis, 2011; Peters et al., 2013; Seo et al., 2019). Developments in internet technology have made social media a massive medium of communication and cannot be separated from daily activities to provide information to each other, entertainment, business, and educational media.

A large number of social media users is currently used as a promotional and marketing communication medium for many companies, including Ecoethno Leadcampsite. Ecoethno Leadcampsite uses various social media such as Whatsapp, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tiktok, Youtube, Website, and Linktree. However, there needs to be special staff for social media promotion and marketing managers who sometimes still haven't updated the information, content, and pictures of tourism activities. Because based on data sourced from a digital literacy status survey by Gatra media in 2021-2022 that there were 191 million social media users in Indonesia at the beginning of 2022 which increased by 12.35% from 2021 as many as 170 million users. The highest number of WhatsApp application users was 95.9%, Facebook media 80.4%, and Youtube 72.2%.

3.3 Integrated Marketing Communications

This research novelty is focused on marketing communications at Ecoethno Leadcampsite comprehensively through NVivo analysis and the Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) study approach consisting of elements of advertising, sales promotion, public relations, personal selling, and direct marketing.

The development of Ecoethno Leadcampsite tourist destinations can be analyzed using an integrated marketing communication theory approach as an effort to form a positive and consistent image to optimize promotion and marketing to the public. There are five marketing communication mixes, namely advertising, sales promotion, public relations, personal selling, and direct marketing (Kotler, P., & Keller, 2012).

a. Advertising is a part of promotional activities aimed at attracting audiences or consumers by conveying information related to a product in an attractive way for the benefit of the company. Advertising is carried out using various paid media, such as print media, radio, television, and social media. So advertising can make a product reach

more people more broadly, to improve the image and income of a product. Ecoethno Leadcampsite does not use advertisements in its promotional activities. This is because Ecoethno is still focusing on developing its tourist attractions first, both in terms of tour packages, facilities, human resources, and tourism management. Ecoethno still relies on promotions with social media Instagram and Whatsapp as well as Word of Mouth as the main promotional media, so advertising is deemed unnecessary. The use of social media and Word of Mouth which is not paid for is considered more effective than using advertisements.

b. Sales promotion as part of marketing communications to introduce and develop product quality by holding exhibitions, demonstrations, price coupons, and providing product samples to potential customers. So consumers want to try to buy goods or products that can later provide arguments, assessments, and justifications as a form of testimony to improve product quality. Ecoethno Leadcampsite uses sales promotion as a marketing communication process that is carried out when visitors and clients are traveling. This is considered to be more effective because it does not expand outside the tourist area, but directly visitors and clients who come to tourist spots are used by sales promotions to help promote to colleagues and families of visitors or clients. Sales promotions carried out by Ecoethno are in the form of discounts given to visitors and especially clients who have subscribed. Ecoethno also uses sales promotion activities by holding events in the form of educational tour packages for students as management leadership.

c. Public relations in the marketing communication process is important because it can expand market share, and relations, and develop trust and corporate image. Public relations also play a role in dealing with various rumors or events that are considered detrimental to the company. Ecoethno Leadcampsite has seven personnel as public relations staff who directly have interactions and connections to build closeness and loyalty of tourists or clients. PR coordinates and interacts regarding the selection of tour packages, as well as the need for other facilities with tourists, then coordinate with residents regarding tour packages, facilities, partnership permits, empowerment programs, and building a good image.

Analysis of the study using one software CAQDAS (Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software) which is used to analyze qualitative research data (Silver & Lewins, 2010) said that the advantages of using CAQDAS software are efficient data management and transparency in analysis.

The process of data analysis with NVivo in this study began with entering data from observations and interview findings obtained from informants, in the form of interview transcripts and participant observation results. All field data is processed by data coding or data coding. Constructing data coding has an important role in qualitative research, namely in the process of data analysis and determining the quality of data abstraction resulting from a study. The process of data coding in general can be started by searching for codes of meaning which are then grouped into several categories as a basis for determining themes. The final form of data coding in this study is data visualization in the form of word clouds, tree maps, and project maps.

The results of the Word Cloud model and Project map as a result of the NVivo application make it easier to identify and analyze data from interviews with informants, namely the most frequent, important, and strategically assessed statements or opinions shown in the number of informant opinions marked by the size of the words and the central position in the word cloud image. Then the project map also shows the relationship between informant opinions that are important and often said to be important elements that construct a case study in this case promotion and marketing at Ecoethno Leadcampsite.

Based on the results of observations and interviews with research informants about Ecoethno Leadcampsite marketing communications, it was found that words and sentences that often appear in the Word Cloud on the NVivo software application after experiencing the coding process can be seen in Figure 1 about the perceptions of ecoethno from students carrying out the internship. The results of Nvivo are the words that appear in the Word Cloud based on the number of words that appear in the coding on the nodes, namely "good ecoethno media", travel and marketing sites, then the words communication an apprentice student".

Then coding the word that appears the most in the results of the analysis of observations and interviews can also be available in the form of a Tree Map similar to the data generated by Word Cloud, the difference is in the form of visualization in the form of rectangles of various sizes.



Figure 1. Word Cloud Analytics Models

Source: Data processed Researchers (2022)

Based on Figure 1 generally, the public searches for more information with the word tourism on search sites on the internet, then the word student internship also appears a lot because Ecoethno Leadcampsite is used as a place for student internships which is an independent learning program and an independent campus from the ministry of education, culture, research, and technology. This student internship program needs to be maintained and even increased as a learning medium for the younger generation to build motivation and inspiration to become entrepreneurs in the field of tourism, then add knowledge, experience, and practical skills in managing tourist attractions.

Tourism management, in this case, the Ecoethno Leadcampsite, will also have the advantage of obtaining human resources from students as a young generation who are technologically literate, creative, and innovative, who can become marketing promotion agents and networks in tourism development (Adinugraha et al., 2022; Singh, 2009; Sugito et al., 2019; Sulaiman et al., 2022).

Furthermore, in the form of Project Maps which function to represent graphically the various themes and codes in the research data. Project Maps can make it easier to determine the essence of a research theme because the data displayed is in the form of relationships between codes in research. Project Maps as a result of data analysis, there are 3 main parts in this research, namely the development of Ecoethno Leadcampsite tourism, marketing communication media, and integrated marketing communications. These three main parts are interrelated and affect each other, as shown in Figure 2.

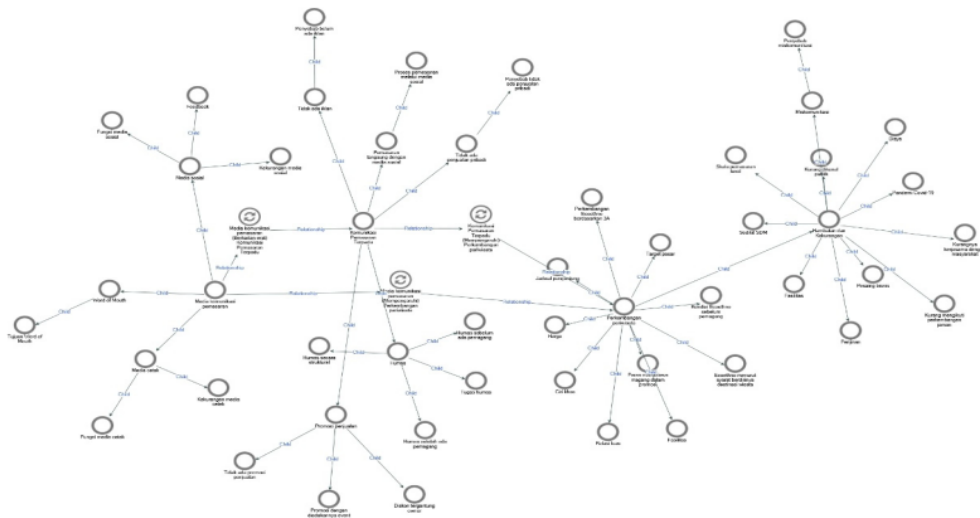


Figure 2. Project Map Analytics Models

Source: Data processed Researchers (2022)

Based on the Project Maps model, it can identify and analyze important aspects that can be used as marketing strategies. The most important and strategic element turns out to be Integrated marketing communications (IMC) (*Analisis Strategi Pemasaran Objek Wisata Kebun Binatang Kasang Kulim Kecamatan Siak Hulu Kabupaten Kampar | Jurnal Ekonomi KIJAT*, n.d.; Husnita, 2019; Kurniawan et al., 2018; Porcu et al., 2017; Torp, 2009; Tumer, 2017) namely establishing public relations to involve the surrounding community to become part of the managers or employees and partners for Ecoethno Leadcampsite as socio-economic empowerment of the community. Then the next important element is direct marketing and sales promotion with Word of Mouth to visitors or tourists so that they will help promote the travel experience to other potential tourists. Furthermore, personal selling to colleagues and partners, including advertising on social media.

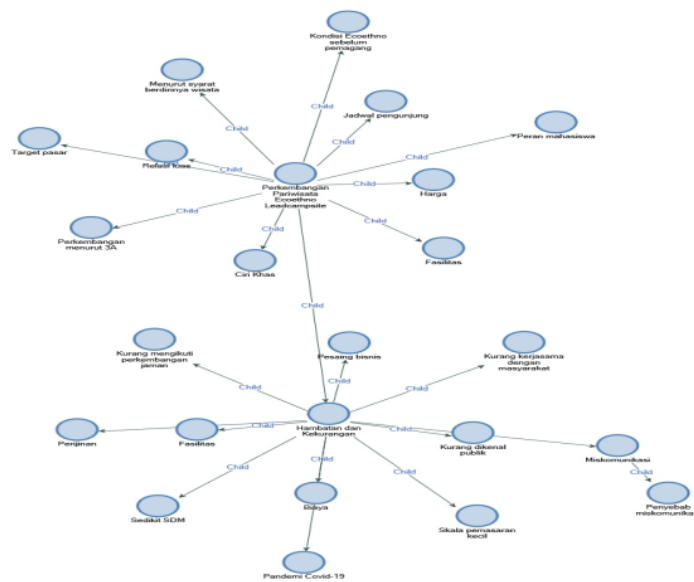
In the marketing communication media section, the researcher made a data visualization in the form of a Word Cloud, to see the words that often appear in the Ecoethno marketing communication media code in Figure 3. Based on the results of processing with NVivo, many words that often appear in marketing communication media codes mention Ecoethno as a unique jargon or brand, then social media is widely used as a source of information and as a strategy carried out by Ecoethno Leadcampsite, namely Instagram, Twitter and Tiktok Word. of Mouth. So internal marketing through small commercial advertisements is carried out by Ecoethno Leadcampsite.



Figure 3. Word Cloud of Development Models

Source: Data processed Researchers (2022)

Tourism development faced obstacles as well as challenges during the Covid-19 Pandemic due to social restrictions for mobilization, interaction, and economic transactions. As a result, there has been a decrease in income from tourist visits, culinary products, and lodging at tourist attractions which have been limited and even completely closed, especially during 2020-2021 (Adam & Info, 2022; Anggarini, 2021; Musa et al., 2022; Nugraha, 2021; Sulaiman et al., 2020; Tindakan et al., 2021; Tri Hardianto et al., 2021).



Source: Data processed Researchers (2022)

Tourism is an important and strategic sector in advancing national, regional, and rural development which can create jobs, and develop natural and socio-economic potential, including increasing income for the community, government, and private sector.

Ecoethno Leadcampsite provides a unique, interesting, and innovative tour camping around with the concept of private campsite, leadership, environment, awareness, and culture.

Ecoethno Leadcampsite needs to have something to buy aspect so that tourists can have memories, souvenirs, meaning,

and a collection of items that can be taken home. Ecoethno Leadcampsite needs additional human resources for staff to specifically manage social media and public relations as a promotion and marketing strategy.

Ecoethno Leadcampsite can increase cooperation with educational institutions in addition to apprenticeship programs as well as developing educational-based tourism or tourism locations for nature conservation, socio-economics, culture, and creative, productive, and innovative character building. Companies or the private sector can partner up for upgrading, refreshing, and healing management staff and company employees.

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