

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Indonesia is a country in Southeast Asia, which is crossed by the equator and located between Asia and Australia and it is between the Pacific Ocean which has 13 487 large and small islands. About 6,000 islands of them are uninhabited, which spread around the equator, which gives tropical weather. The position of Indonesia is located at coordinates $6^{\circ} \text{ N} - 11^{\circ}$ and $95^{\circ} 08' \text{ LS } ' \text{ E} - 141^{\circ} 45' \text{ BT}$ and lies between two continents, Asia and Australia. Indonesia contains of 300 ethnic groups, every ethnicity has cultural heritage that evolved over the centuries. It was influenced by the Indian, Arabic, Chinese, European and Malay culture. From this cultural heritage, Indonesia is used by the tourists as the interesting destination for traveling.

Tourism in Indonesia is an important economic sector in Indonesia. By 2009, tourism took the third ranks of the foreign exchange earnings after oil, gas and oil palm. According to Kementrian Kebudayaan Pariwisata RI, in 2010, the number of foreign tourists coming to Indonesia is around 7 million or 10.74% over the previous year that contributed the country for about 7603.45 million U.S. dollars. The development of the tourism sector in wider will also be an impact on improving the welfare society, economy and increase the degree of people's lives. No wonder if the government declared that tourism is one of the important sources of foreign exchange earnings in Indonesia.

Therefore, the province of South Sumatera as the 17th tourist destination for Indonesia has taken some steps of wisdom strategy in supporting and responding to the government plan of tourism expansion. South Sumatera has also enchanting beauty of nature, various arts, culture and the uniqueness of traditional custom in life of its ethnic. South Sumatera has beautiful forest with various birds and animals, ancient time historical remains and other fascinating things.

Besides the natural beauty and its historical story, South Sumatra province is also known as the most widely held international events. South Sumatra has hosted many big events that involve various countries in the last five years. It was started by Seagame which involved the countries in ASEAN, and Islamic Solidarity Games which involved 55 Islamic countries around the world.

The government starts to promote the tourism by providing the relevant information to the public about travel destinations in order to develop the tourism sector. It needs the internet as the media for sharing information of tourism objects. By this media, it allows the interaction between the users in more than one across nations without meeting in person. Internet makes it easy for us to communicate, such as Google which helps in searching the information and the required data. It has become the phenomenon while various groups such as students, collagens, officers, employer and so on in using the internet as a tool of communication and information seeking.

Social media begins with blogs, and social networking: Myspace; Facebook; LinkedIn, as well as microblogs: Twitter, Tumblr. The founders of each social media are trying to provide the features that can attract the users to use their social media. Social media can be very useful in providing the latest news. Not only that, the trend lately is that a number of people take advantage of emerging social networking as a promotional media. This step is a big opportunity for a country to be able to move the various fields of industry, especially tourism.

But the fact is, not everyone can take advantage of Internet technologies in promoting tourism in Indonesia, seen from the lack of an official website which provides complete information about tourism in Indonesia, which include location information travel, accommodation, and transportation. It is very influential to the growth of tourism in Indonesia

From the phenomena above, the writer wants to know the society's perceptions toward the official website in promoting the tourism objects. Therefore, in this paper, the writer will focus on "The Society's Perception toward the importance of the Official Website in Promoting Tourism Objects in South Sumatra" as the title of this paper.

1.2. Research Formulation and Research Limitation

1.2.1 Research Formulation

Social media is a media that is booming these days. Over the times, social media is used as a media for promoting the product because social media can promote products by posting detailed information on their products. Therefore, the writer would like to analyze the social media especially the official websites in promoting the tourism objects in south Sumatra.

1.2.2 Research Limitation

There are a lot of social media that are available to use. The writer limits the research to the official websites that are used by every tourism department in south Sumatra. It also includes the perception of society toward the official websites that is used by every tourism department in south Sumatra

1.3 Research Question

Consider to the research background, the writer analyzes:

1. What are the society's perceptions of official websites in promoting the tourism objects in south Sumatra?
2. How many districts in South Sumatra that still active in using the official website?

1.4 Purposes and Benefitsf

1.4.1 Purpose

The purposes of the paper are as:

1. To get the society's perception toward official website in promoting the tourism objects in south Sumatra.

2. To get the information how many districts in south Sumatra those are using the official websites.

1.4.2 Benefits

The writer hopes that this paper will give the information about the society's perception toward the official website in promoting the tourism objects and how many districts in south Sumatra use official websites in promoting its tourism object. This research is also expected to be useful for another tourism department as an additional input in promoting the tourism objects