

Homestay Marketing Innovation Through Design Thinking Approach: Case Study Of Ari Homestay In Selong Belanak

Anak Agung Ngurah Sedana Putra¹⁾, Indra Laksamana²⁾
^{1,2)} Lombok Tourism Polytechnic

*Corresponding Author
Email: sedana.putra@ppl.ac.id

Abstract

Homestay is a type of accommodation directly managed by the community in a tourist destination and intended to be sold to tourists within a specific time frame to learn about local wisdom and certain customs of the local community. This research was conducted at one of the homestays close to the special economic zone and the Mandalika Circuit tourist destination, Ari Homestay. This research is based on the owner's lack of understanding regarding the marketing strategy used by Ari Homestay. This study aims to develop a marketing strategy at Ari Homestay utilizing a design thinking approach consisting of five (5) stages: Empathize, Define, Ideate, Prototype, and Test. The method used in this study is a qualitative approach that is descriptive through the stages of observation, interviews, and documentation. The final result of this study presents a strategic breakthrough in marketing through online travel agents by choosing the AirBnb platform to register homestays and significantly expand market reach.

Keywords: *Homestay, Design Thinking, Marketing Strategy*

INTRODUCTION

West Nusa Tenggara Province is a region that has stunning natural beauty and is one of the favorite tourist destinations for tourists in Indonesia and abroad; besides that, it is also one of the places for super-priority tourism development in 2021 (Rahman, Mulyadi & Abjadi, 2023). The super-priority destination in question is the Mandalika Circuit, which is located in the Mandalika Special Economic Zone. The Mandalika Circuit often holds international events such as Moto GP and World Superbike (WSBK), which will undoubtedly increase tourist visits to West Nusa Tenggara, especially Mandalika, for both local and foreign visitors. The West Nusa Tenggara Tourism Office recorded the number of tourist visits to West Nusa Tenggara in the period January to August 2019 as many as 2,390,889 visitors, consisting of 1,429,768 local visitors and 961,131 foreign visitors (Wulung et al., 2020). This certainly positively impacts business actors engaged in the accommodation business, such as Hotels, Villas, and Homestays. These business actors are required to be able to provide comfortable, safe, clean accommodation and be able to attract tourists to stay.

Putra (2022) explained that a homestay is a residence where some of the beds are intended to be sold to tourists for a certain period to learn about the local wisdom and customs of the local community. Homestays are in great demand by tourists because, in addition to providing the uniqueness of local culture, they also have more affordable prices than luxury accommodations such as hotels (Artina.S, Taviprawati & Darsiah, 2020). In the Mandalika area, homestays serve as accommodation for visitors who want to see the presence of local people at the tourist location and enjoy the Moto Gp event.

The homestay owners in the Mandalika tourist area do not understand how to manage their homestays, especially in terms of the marketing strategies used, so the homestays have few enthusiasts. This is because the owners lack the knowledge or procedures for handling the property they own and lack adequate knowledge of computer-based information system management or adequate governance techniques (Bahari et al., 2023). Ardiansyah et al. (2023)

emphasized that currently, many homestay owners do not understand how to manage a homestay properly and correctly, such as in terms of promotion, maintenance, and management of the homestay itself. Based on this, the concept of design thinking needs to be applied to find the best solution to this problem. Setyono in Miswanto et al. (2023) explains that design thinking is a way of solving a problem by understanding the needs of the individuals involved, framing the situation for the orientation of potential users, creating ideas in brainstorming meetings, and implementing ideas through prototypes and testing.

Design thinking is critical because humans are the focal point of change interactions, focusing on perception, collaboration, rapid learning, thought representation, prototyping, ideas, and business examination, which influence business development and techniques (Aman, Supriyanto & Putri, 2020). Design thinking can also be utilized as a social development that is carried out to help contribute to the type of progress in society by using predetermined stages to make an object a model that most people consider normal as the correct answer to a problem (Alfatiha & Sukoco, 2021).

Ari Homestay is one of the homestays in Selong Belanak. This homestay is in Selong Belanak Village, Praya Barat District, Central Lombok Regency. The distance from Ari Homestay to Lombok International Airport takes about 35 minutes, and from Ari Homestay to the Mandalika circuit is about 30 minutes. This proves that Ari Homestay should be able to attract tourists if there is an event such as Moto GP in the Mandalika tourist area because its location is quite close to the Mandalika tourist area. The Special Economic Zone, in addition to this homestay's location, is also directly adjacent to Selong Belanak Beach with a distance of about 2 minutes.

Based on the results of observations that have been carried out at Ari Homestay, there are problems with the marketing strategy used. Many tourists do not know about Ari Homestay, where the primary marketing strategy still uses conventional marketing strategies, namely word of mouth. Hence, the information owned by Ari Homestay is less accessible to the wider public or tourists and is the main factor causing low tourist visits to Ari Homestay. Based on the results of the observations, several homestays around Ari Homestay generally use modern promotions, namely through digital media such as online travel agents. In addition, Ari Homestay is a new homestay, so it is necessary to develop the marketing strategy used. Ari Homestay started operating in September 2023; the number of rooms sold so far is only eight.

Innovation in marketing strategies is one way that tourism business actors, especially homestay businesses, can reach a broader target of tourists. Given Ari Homestay's strategic location, close to the Selong Belanak Beach tourist area, many tourists may visit Ari Homestay if it has the right marketing strategy, such as using digital marketing through online travel agents.

Developing marketing strategies can be practical in increasing tourist visits to Ari Homestay. The foundation of a business's ability to increase market share is through marketing (Sunardi et al., 2022). Kotler and Armstrong in Sunardi et al. (2022) explain that marketing is characterized as an organizational function and a collection of procedures that establish customer relationships to generate profits for the company. In previous research, Alfatiha & Sukoco (2021) and Ochktavia & Hayuningtyas (2022) have proven that design thinking can be an alternative to developing marketing strategies. Sutresno & Singgalen (2023) have also proven and used the design thinking method in designing a marketing website for exceptional interest tourist destinations in North Halmahera Regency.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research was conducted at Ari Homestay, located in the Selong Belanak tourist area and close to the Mandalika circuit tourist destination. The data analysis technique used in this study is descriptive qualitative. This study provides a picture of reality based on field information closely related to the examination object. The information is then combined and investigated subjectively by giving a picture, translation, or understanding of these realities. The data in this study were collected using direct observation results at Ari Homestay by observing existing problems, especially in the marketing strategies used, then conducting interviews with the homestay owner (Mr. Ari) as well as the manager of Ari Homestay regarding the marketing strategies used, in addition to documenting activities during the research at Ari Homestay about the marketing strategies used, so that there is support related to the implementation of the study.

The data analysis technique has several stages, including stage one, namely data reduction, which thoroughly examines the data collected from in-depth interviews with sources such as homestay owners. These are then identified to become essential discussions. The second stage is that the data is collected. The data is presented by collecting data from the reduction results in the initial stage, then arranged in a narrative format to make it easy to understand. The third stage is to verify the data or draw conclusions by reviewing the data taken and comparing it with specific theories. This test aims to verify the accuracy of the analysis results and produce reliable findings

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Ari Homestay is one of the homestays located in Selong Belanak. This homestay is in Selong Belanak Village, Praya Barat District, Central Lombok Regency. This homestay has 4 (four) total rooms with standard room types that use double beds, managed or managed directly by the homestay owner without using employees. The room's price is IDR 250,000 / night without breakfast and IDR 350,000 / night with breakfast included. Based on the results of observations and interviews that have been conducted with the homestay owner, the results obtained are the low number of tourist visits caused by the marketing strategy used, which is still by word of mouth, as conveyed by the owner of Ari Homestay (Mr. Ari) as stated in the following interview excerpt.

"The biggest obstacle I feel is the low number of tourist visits and the difficulty of reaching a wide range of tourists because, so far, the average guests who stay at my homestay are tourists who have rented my surfboards. The marketing strategy I am currently using is still word of mouth, which I apply to every tourist visiting my surfboard rental shop in the Selong Belanak Beach area." (Homestay Owner, February 18, 2024).

The main reason the owner of Ari Homestay still uses word-of-mouth marketing strategies is the owner's lack of understanding of the procedures for registering and marketing their homestay through digital media such as online travel agents (OTAs), which can be explained in the interview excerpt below.

"I still use word-of-mouth marketing strategy because I don't understand how to register my homestay through online agents such as online travel agents." (Homestay Owner, February 18, 2024).

To help Ari Homestay owners increase tourist visits, the author took the initiative to develop a marketing strategy by registering and marketing the homestay through an online travel agent. Marketing is the foundation of a business's ability to increase market share (Sunardi et al., 2022).

Based on the approval of the Ari Homestay owner, registration was then carried out with one of the online travel agents, namely Airbnb.

Based on the results obtained, the following are the stages of design thinking analysis carried out based on the results of observations and interviews that have been conducted:

- a. The empathize stage consists of observation and interviews conducted directly by reviewing and interviewing the homestay owner. At this stage, it was found that this homestay still uses word-of-mouth marketing, resulting in low tourist visits. In the digital era like today, taking advantage of technological advances is essential to not being left behind and to increase competitiveness between businesses. Digitalization in the travel industry is seen as one of the proper steps to overcome society's computerized culture and meet every need while traveling (Musyarrifani et al., 2022).
- b. During the defining stage, the author determines and describes the problems faced by homestay owners based on the insights obtained at the empathizing stage. The main reason that causes homestay owners to use word-of-mouth marketing is still the lack of understanding of reasonable and correct marketing procedures, primarily through digital media such as online travel agents (OTA). Digital marketing is essential at this time, considering the development of technology that continues to increase yearly; with digital marketing, hospitality business actors can also reach a broader target market (Laksana & Dharmayanti, 2018).
- c. The Ideate stage is the phase of determining the answer to the problem obtained in the previous stage. In this phase, the author determines the idea or brainstorming, which aims to find the best solution to the issues homestay owners face by developing a marketing strategy through an online travel agent (OTA), namely Airbnb. The author chose AirBnb because AirBnb is a platform that offers a different experience between property owners (hosts) and tourists or guests, namely by directly connecting customers with their owners (hosts) with a sharing economy system (Silaban, 2019). In addition, AirBnb charges a reasonably low commission fee compared to other online travel agents (OTAs), where AirBnb only charges a commission fee of 3% of the total room price.
- d. The prototype stage is developing a marketing strategy adjusted to the previous stages. It is the stage of realizing the ideas collected in the last stage (Oktaviani et al., 2023). The marketing strategy is registered through an online travel agent (OTA), Airbnb.

The Test stage is the last stage of the design thinking method series, which aims to receive input or feedback from the homestay owner regarding the prototype provided. This is by the statement from (Miswanto et al., 2023), which states that user input is essential to determine the advantages and disadvantages of the product so that it can be improved. At this stage, the author provides research results in the form of homestay marketing innovations through online travel agents, namely Airbnb, to Mr. Ari, the owner of the Ari homestay. The data the homestay owner requires to log in to the Airbnb online travel agent is also submitted at this stage. The data provided is in the form of an Airbnb account email and password. The homestay owner also responded well to developing the marketing strategy at this stage.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that the stages of developing a marketing strategy using the design thinking method. At the empathize stage, it is known that the main problem of this homestay is the low number of tourist visits caused by marketing that is still by word of mouth. At the define stage, the reason that caused the owner of Ari Homestay to use word-of-mouth marketing was the lack of understanding of the owner of Ari Homestay

regarding reasonable and correct marketing procedures, especially marketing through digital media such as online travel agents.

At the ideate stage, the idea is determined by developing a marketing strategy through the online travel agent Airbnb. At the prototype stage, Ari Homestay will be registered with the online travel agent AirBnb. Then, at the test stage, the data used to log in to AirBnb is provided to the owner of Ari Homestay.

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