

## ENHANCING BANYUMARO RIVER TUBING TOURISM WITH MERCHANDISE DESIGN

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### ABSTRACT

This community service research focuses on strengthening the attractiveness and identity of Banyumaro River Tubing tourism through a systematic merchandise design strategy. The study is grounded in the understanding that tourism destinations require a strong visual identity and tangible promotional media to improve visitor experience and brand recognition. Banyumaro River Tubing, as a nature-based tourism destination, has significant potential; however, the absence of distinctive merchandise and visual branding limits its promotional reach and memorability among visitors. Therefore, this research applies a design-based methodology that integrates tourism branding principles with participatory community engagement. The research methodology employs a design thinking approach consisting of several structured stages: problem identification, user and context analysis, concept development, design prototyping, and evaluation. The initial stage involves mapping the tourism identity of Banyumaro River Tubing through observation, interviews with tourism managers, and documentation of local cultural and natural elements. These findings are then translated into a merchandise design concept that reflects the character of the destination. The design development stage includes the creation of visual symbols, typography, and graphic elements that represent the river tubing experience. Prototypes are subsequently evaluated through stakeholder feedback to ensure relevance, usability, and market appeal. The study concludes that merchandise designed through a contextual and participatory methodology can strengthen tourism branding, enhance visitor engagement, and support the sustainable promotion of Banyumaro River Tubing.

**Keywords:** Environmental Awareness, Merchandise, Sustainable Tourism, Banyumaro River Tubing

## A. INTRODUCTION

One significant area that supports the national economy is the tourist industry. There is a lot of potential in East Java's tourism industry. (Susilawati et al., 2020) The Covid-19 pandemic had a significant influence on the tourism industry during the outbreak. During the Covid-19 outbreak, tourism revenue in the Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park (TNBTS) region fell precipitously. This resulted from TNBTS's one-year closure of the Mount Bromo and Semeru regions. In the region of Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park, non-tax state revenues, or PNBPN, have declined. (Kompas, 2020) Prior to 2020, the entire PNBPN was 22.8 billion rupiah, but it dropped to 6.4 billion rupiah. 2,800 locals who rely on tourism in the TNBTS area for their livelihood also experienced negative effects. They started a variety of companies, including motorbike taxis, lodging, and jeep rentals. Some of them also worked as street vendors.

Located in four regions (Lumaang, Malang, Probolinggo, and Pasuruan) and covering an area of over 50 hectares, Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park (TNBTS) in East Java Province is a popular tourist destination because of its breathtaking natural landscape, which attracts both domestic and foreign visitors. There are many amazing places in TNBTS that you can visit. One of them is Mount Bromo which has a number of instagram photo spots, including Pasir Berbisik, Savannah, and Bromo Crater which are so amazing and pleasing to the eye. In Bromo there are also Tengger tribe people. Visitors can see an interesting spectacle here, namely during the Kasodo Festival. The essence of this event is to ask for blessings from the Almighty so that the harvest is abundant and away from disease disasters.

Visitors can fly into Juanda Airport in Surabaya, East Java, to go to TNBTS. To go to the Bromo tourist area, travelers can order a car from the airport. The Surabaya–Pasuruan–Wringinanom–Mount Bromo route is the one that tourists will use to get there. It takes two to three hours to make this trip. In addition, travelers can reach Mount Bromo via the 53-kilometer Malang–Tumpang–Gubuk Klakah–

Jemplang-Mount Bromo route. Another option is the 83-kilometer Malang–Purwodadi–Nongkojajar–Tosari–Wringinanom–Penanjakan route. (Kempalan.news, 2020)

Wringinanom (Dewi Anom) Tourism Village is in Malang Regency, East Java, and is the entrance to the Bromo Tengger Semeru tourist route via Malang which has several tourism potentials including education, culture and adventure. (Kompasiana.com, 2018) Wringinanom Tourism Village is a potential agricultural, plantation and livestock area. The area located 850 meters above sea level makes the atmosphere peaceful. Situated on a slope of 26% with a temperature of 14C-26C every day, the village area reaches 817.75 Ha. Biologically, the land in this village is fertile and provides benefits to the community in the agricultural or plantation sector, as well as animal husbandry. Apart from offering natural beauty and economic potential in the form of agricultural horticultural products, Wringinanom Village offers educational, cultural, and adventure tourism for tourists. (Probolinggo kab., 2020) As an educational tourist attraction, Wringinanom Village has orange picking agro, handycraft sandals, knitting crafts, and a dairy cattle industry. As a cultural tourism, there are cultural offerings of puppet masters, Karawitan, Pencak Dor Bromo. And from Adventure tourism, tourists can enjoy the excitement of river tubing, outbound, camping, final offroad, tracking Mount Bromo and Mount Semeru. (Brown & Chalmers, 2003)

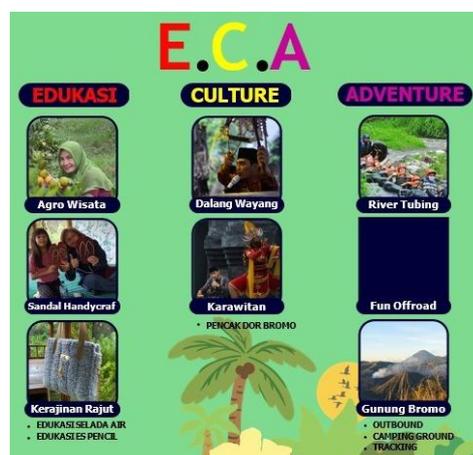


Figure 1. Tourism Potential in Wringinanom Tourism Village

One of the potentials is the charm of a river which is very interesting to visit, the river is Banyumaro (figure 1). This river is located in Kunci Selatan Hamlet, Wringinanom Village, Poncokusumo District, Malang Regency, East Java. Banyumaro Adventure is a favorite tourist attraction from the Wringinanom Tourism Village which provides river tubing tours. River tubing itself is an activity along a river, similar to white water rafting, but using rubber tires. This activity is very popular and loved by the public. Nothing other than because it is challenging and tests your adrenaline. Banyu Maro, taken from the Javanese word "maro" which means to divide or split, the river was initially split into two, because as weather changes such as rain caused the volume of river water to increase, then the river flow that was split into one, but the name is still Banyu Maro until now. To get to the Banyu Maro location, Wringinanom village, Poncokusumo district, from Malang city it can take around 45 minutes. Road access can be used by motorbikes, cars and minibuses. Banyumaro Adventure tourism offers unspoiled views, so it is very suitable for refreshing to reduce fatigue due to daily activities, plus the fast river currents challenge your adrenaline, with the increase in water flow it will add to the excitement when doing these water sports.



**Figure 2.** Tourist Activity in Banyumaro River Tubing

To enhance a tourism destination's identity through merchandise design, a key strategy is to ensure that the products authentically reflect the unique cultural, historical, and geographical attributes of the destination. This involves collaborating with local artisans and designers to create items that incorporate regional materials, traditional craftsmanship, and iconic symbols. For instance, integrating local motifs or landmarks into the design of souvenirs and apparel not only highlights the destination's distinctiveness but also provides visitors with a genuine connection to the place. By maintaining a focus on authenticity and quality, the merchandise becomes a meaningful representation of the destination's identity, helping to establish a strong and memorable brand.

Another effective strategy is to leverage storytelling and thematic consistency in merchandise design. Crafting products that tell a story about the destination or celebrate its heritage can make the merchandise more engaging and memorable for visitors. This approach involves developing a cohesive theme across various product lines, ensuring that each item contributes to a larger narrative about the destination. Additionally, strategic placement of merchandise in high-traffic areas such as visitor centers, local shops, and online platforms can amplify the destination's identity and reach a broader audience. By aligning product design with the destination's branding efforts and creating a unified shopping experience, destinations can reinforce their identity and attract more tourists.

For a tourism village, merchandise design is essential in creating a unique and memorable visitor experience. Thoughtfully designed merchandise captures the essence of the village's local culture, traditions, and natural beauty, providing visitors with tangible reminders of their visit. Items such as handcrafted souvenirs, apparel, and artisanal goods can showcase the village's distinctive characteristics and stories, making the experience more immersive. This connection through design not only enhances the visitor's enjoyment but also encourages them to share their positive experiences with others, thereby boosting the village's appeal and attracting more tourists.

In addition to enhancing visitor experiences, well-designed merchandise serves as a strategic tool for economic growth and branding. By offering high-quality, locally-inspired products, tourism villages can generate additional revenue streams and support local artisans and businesses. Effective merchandise design also contributes to building a strong, recognizable brand for the village, differentiating it from other destinations. This branding helps to create a lasting impression, fostering repeat visits and word-of-mouth promotion, which are crucial for sustaining and growing the village's tourism sector.

Designing merchandise for Banyumaro River Tubing presents several challenges that must be addressed to effectively enhance the overall tourism experience. One major challenge is ensuring that the merchandise resonates with the diverse preferences of visitors while accurately representing the cultural and natural heritage of the village. Balancing traditional craftsmanship with modern design trends can be difficult, as tourists may seek authentic local products that reflect their experiences. Additionally, there is a risk of oversaturation in the market if similar goods are offered by competing vendors, which can dilute the unique identity of Banyumaro River Tubing. This necessitates a careful and strategic approach in product development to create distinctive items that not only appeal to tourists but also reinforce the village's brand as a sustainable destination. Another significant challenge lies in sourcing materials and production methods that align with sustainability principles, which are increasingly important to eco-conscious travelers. Many existing merchandise offerings may rely on non-eco-friendly materials or production processes, undermining the village's commitment to sustainable tourism practices. Designing merchandise that minimizes environmental impact while ensuring quality and durability requires collaboration with local artisans who adhere to sustainable methods. Furthermore, logistical issues such as inventory management and pricing strategies can hinder effective implementation of a successful merchandise program. By addressing these challenges, Banyumaro River Tubing can enhance its tourism offerings through thoughtfully

designed merchandise that promotes local culture, supports sustainability, and ultimately enriches the visitor experience.

## **B. IMPLEMENTATION AND METHODS**

It is anticipated that this community will enhance the well-being of service partners by addressing the issues that have been identified by partners based on the previously developed situation analysis. Lectures, discussions, and training simulations are the methods employed.

### **Lecture and Discussion Method.**

First, the community partners in this community empowerment activity will receive lectures and counseling on the following topics:

- a. Digital marketing potential for tourism products and services through website platforms/information systems/social media;
- b. Counseling regarding social media platform strategies like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube.

The discussion method used in this activity is done in an attempt to better understand the issues that partners face and, hopefully, to find solutions for these issues together.

### **Training Method.**

The following learning and training resources are used in demonstration and training activities, which are follow-up tasks completed by community empowerment team in relation to previously completed lectures and discussions:

- a. Training in managing information systems and digital platforms for branding and marketing
- b. Training to create promotional content using a simple application
- c. Training to promote tourism services through the development of merchandise

If tourist actors in the Banyumaro River Tubing who are partners in this community empowerment project wish to expand the reach of tourism marketing, these three training programs are highly beneficial. Therefore, it is possible that foreign tourists would visit the Banyumaro River Tubing area in addition to local ones.

## **C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Preparation Stage for Community Service Activities**

The preparation stage of the community empowerment involves several key steps to ensure a well-structured and effective study. First, a literature review is conducted to analyze existing studies on tourism merchandising, sustainable souvenirs, and branding strategies for adventure tourism. Next, field observations and surveys are planned to assess the current state of Banyumaro River Tubing tourism, including visitor demographics, preferences, and market trends. Engaging with local stakeholders, such as tourism operators, artisans, and community representatives, is also essential to gather insights and foster collaboration. Additionally, the research framework is developed, outlining objectives, methodologies, and data collection techniques to ensure a systematic approach. By carefully preparing these aspects, the research aims to create merchandise designs that not only enhance the tourism experience but also contribute to local economic and cultural sustainability.

### **Preparing a Banyumaro River Tubing Logo**

In this Community Empowerment program, the team proposed the Banyumaro River Tubing Logo (figure 3). A logo for a tourism village serves several important functions as follows: First logo as brand identity. The emblem gives the tourism a distinctive identity that sets it apart from other locations. It helps to establish a brand that can be recognized and remembered by potential visitors. Second is for Visual Representation. A logo visually represents the essence of the Banyumaro River Tubing, capturing its attractions, culture, and values. It communicates what the tourism is about at a

glance. Third, logo can Attracting Visitors. An appealing logo can attract tourists by piquing their interest. A well-designed logo can evoke emotions and create a sense of curiosity about the tourism. Fourth, consistency Across Marketing Materials. The logo is a key element that should be used consistently across all marketing materials, including websites, brochures, social media, and signage, helping to create a cohesive image. Fifth, Building Trust and Credibility. A professional and attractive logo can enhance the credibility of the tourism object, making it appear more trustworthy and appealing to potential visitors. The last one is Communication. A logo can communicate essential information, such as the type of tourism experience offers (e.g., adventure, relaxation, cultural experiences), in a visual format.



Figure 3. Banyumaro River Tubing Tourism Logo

Creating a logo for a tourism village can be an exciting project. Here are some ideas to consider while designing Banyumaro River Tubing logo:

### 1. Nature Elements

In this tourism village logo incorporates elements that represent the natural beauty of the Banyumaro River Tubing, such rivers.

### 2. Cultural Symbols.

In this logo, use symbols or patterns that reflect the local culture or heritage, such as traditional local wildlife.

3. *Colour Palette.*

In this logo, the designer chooses colors that evoke the feeling of adventure tourism, such as greens and blue for nature or warm colors to signify a welcoming atmosphere.

4. *Font Style*

Select a font that complements the theme of the logo. In this logo using sans serif typeface could appeal to younger tourists.

5. *Iconography*

Consider including iconic features of adventure tourism, such as mascots that represent adventure tourism itself.

6. *Simplistic Design*

Aim for a design that is simple, unique, and memorable, allowing it to be versatile for various uses (signage, merchandise, digital platforms).

### **Banyumaro River Tubing Tourism Merchandise Design**

Merchandise design (figure 4) is the process of creating graphic designs or visual concepts for promotional products or souvenirs that are used to promote a particular brand, event, organization, or cause. The merchandise produced in this service activity is in the form of tumblers, t-shirts, keychains, and tote bags. The following are general steps in designing merchandise:

1. **Determine the Goal:** Start by determining the purpose for which this merchandise is created. The purpose of making Banyumaro River Tubing merchandise is to promote the brand of Banyumaro tourism itself. Understanding the goal will help determine the right message and aesthetic.

2. **Get to Know the Audience:** In this service activity, the target audience is teenagers, where teenagers really like designs that tend to use typography and use bright colors.
3. **Create a concept:** The idea for designing merchandise based on purpose and audience is to create merchandise designs that can be used by teenagers. This design process begins with hand sketches or using graphic design software such as Adobe Illustrator and Adobe Photoshop.
4. **Logo or Brand Identity:** this merchandise is used to promote a business or organization, so the logo is the main element applied in the merchandise. The logo must be clearly visible and easily identifiable, making it easier for the audience to recognize it.
5. **Colors:** Choose a color palette that suits your brand or event theme. These colors should work together visually and provide a consistent impression. This merchandise uses colors dominated by green, in harmony with Banyumaro River Tubing which has a natural and natural feel.
6. **Typography:** Choose a typeface (font) that suits the design style. This merchandise design uses a script typeface, but legibility is still very easy to recognize. This script letter gives a friendly and warm impression.
7. **Pay attention to product size and type:** Each merchandise product has different sizes and specifications. In this merchandise design, the tumbler has dimensions of 25 cm high with a diameter of 8 cm. The tote bag has dimensions of 30x25 cm. The keychain has a diameter of 8cm, and the t-shirt consists of various size variants ranging from S, M, to XL, with a logo application measuring 12x3 cm.
8. **Test Designs:** Before printing in large quantities, test merchandise designs by printing some samples or creating digital mockups to see how they will look in physical form.



**Figure 4.** Banyumaro River Tubing Merchandise Mockup

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the development of merchandise design for Banyumaro River Tubing represents a strategic opportunity to enhance the brand's identity and appeal. By creating merchandise that reflects the unique experiences and natural beauty of the river tubing adventure, the brand can forge a stronger emotional connection with its customers. Thoughtful design elements that incorporate local culture, scenic elements, and the thrill of the tubing experience can transform standard merchandise into memorable keepsakes. This approach not only elevates the customer experience but also promotes brand loyalty and encourages repeat business, contributing to the long-term success of Banyumaro River Tubing.

Furthermore, effective merchandise design can serve as a valuable marketing tool, extending the reach of Banyumaro River Tubing beyond immediate experience. Well-designed merchandise acts as a portable advertisement, allowing satisfied customers to share their experiences and promote the brand through their personal networks. This word-of-mouth marketing, coupled with visually appealing merchandise, can attract new customers and enhance the overall visibility of the brand. As the merchandise aligns closely with the brand's values and the unique aspects of the tubing experience, it positions Banyumaro River Tubing as a memorable and distinctive destination in the adventure tourism market.

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