



Durian Culinary Products Based on Local Food as a Culinary Tourism Attraction in Medan City

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Abstract. As the capital of North Sumatra, Medan City has an image that is quite attached to durian culinary destinations. This can be seen from the many culinary businesses that make durian their flagship product so that it can become an icon of culinary tourism in Medan. This study aims to identify the characteristics of the attractiveness, management, and promotion mix of culinary tourism products in three leading durian outlets in Medan City: Ucok Durian, Pelawi Durian, and Durian Ucok Tanjung. The method used in this study is exploratory qualitative with data collection techniques using in-depth interviews, observations, literature studies and documentation. The advertising promotion mix involves social media, print media, electronic media, and *display signs*. The *sales promotion* method is offered through *free trials*, discounts, and attractive promos during the durian season. Managers carry out The personal selling method whenever they fill in trade shows and festivals. The *public relations method* is carried out through collaboration with durian agents, being a seminar and media resource person, and becoming a sponsor for an activity.

Keywords: Durian, Ucok, Marketing Mix, Promotion, Terrain

INTRODUCTION

Culinary tourism based on local food ingredients generally utilizes the potential of a region's superior commodities to be commercialized into tourist attractions (Ira. *et al.*, 2019). Local food consists of food ingredients, both sources of carbohydrates, vitamins, proteins, and minerals that are processed and developed based on the potential of regional and cultural resources of a region (Ministry of Agriculture, 2009).

Durian is a tropical fruit product with a high economic value for farmers' income, agribusiness needs, and the country's foreign exchange. This is because durian has a high selling price, species diversity, technological readiness, and availability of land resources, as well as potential market demand for durian domestically and abroad (Ministry of Agriculture, Directorate General of Horticulture, 2013 in Kristiana & Wahyudi, 2018).

The production level is relatively high in Indonesia, making durian one of the most consumed fruits by the public. The following is the level of durian consumption in Indonesia in 2018–2022:

Table 1 Durian Consumption Rate in Indonesia

Year	Consumption a week (kg/capita/week)	Consumption a year (kg/capita/year)
2018	0,041	2,138
2019	0,032	1,693
2020	0,045	2,372
2021	0,007	0,368
2022	0,011	0,555
Growth	50,95%	50,95%

Source: Food Consumption Statistics 2022

Based on Table 1 above, it can be seen that the average growth rate of per capita durian consumption in one week in Indonesia is 50.95%, and the average growth rate of per capita durian consumption in one year in Indonesia is 50.95%. This number is expected to increase along with the increase in national durian production (Pusat Data dan Sistem Informasi Pertanian 2014).

As the capital of North Sumatra, Medan City has an image that is quite attached to durian culinary destinations. This can be seen from the many culinary businesses that make durian as their flagship product; both durian consumed directly and durian which is processed into various culinary products such as durian *pancakes*, durian soup, durian compote, and others (Perangin Angin, 2020). Durian culinary business innovation in Medan City is growing with many durian business people who provide a place to eat durian with the concept of a permanent restaurant (Lubis, 2020). Some recommendations for places to eat durian and processed durian products that are famous in Medan City are Ucok Durian, Pelawi Durian, and Durian Ucok Tanjung.

Ucok Durian became a must-visit culinary destination and entered the *itinerary* of many travel agencies in Medan City until the sentence "Do not say you have been to Medan if you have not stopped by Ucok Durian" which was then used as the *tagline* of this business. Ucok Durian operates 24 hours a day and provides durian throughout the year, so visitors can enjoy durian obtained from various regions in North Sumatra at any time, even

when it is not durian season. This is one of the uniqueness of Ucoc Durian as a culinary tourism destination in Medan City.

LITERATURE

Ucoc Durian, Pelawi Durian, and Durian Ucoc Tanjung are culinary products based on the wealth of local food ingredients that make durian a tourist attraction in Medan. Using culinary products based on local food ingredients as a tourist attraction is one of the keys to developing food-based tourism. This is also a significant way to promote local culinary wealth and increase the sustainability of agricultural production and the income of local farmers (Dhora & Dionizi, 2014).

Based on these problems, further studies are needed on managing culinary tourism products based on local food as a culinary tourism attraction. The study of culinary tourism is generally oriented to the perspective of demand, such as motivation, perception, and preference of tourists in conducting culinary tourism (Sthapit *et al.*, 2020; Sudiartha *et al.*, 2020; Mak, 2020; Chamoli *et al.*, 2021; Mitchell & Hall, 2003; Ulah *et al.* 2022; Su, 2018; Levyta *et al.* 2022).

METHOD

This research uses an exploratory, descriptive research method with a qualitative approach. The author adopts exploratory qualitative research methods to explore data comprehensively through observation, interviews, documentation studies, and surveys regarding the attractiveness and management of durian culinary destinations in Medan City. Descriptive data analysis using NVivo 14 software through the stages of *data input*, coding, exploration, visualization, and presentation of data. The features used are *Matrix Coding* to understand a concept from data that has been categorized and data exploration using the *Text Search feature* to understand the meaning and relationship between words that appear most often.

DISCUSSION

1. Characteristics of the Attractiveness of Durian Culinary Tourism Products in Medan

Based on the coding results using NVivo 14 software, data visualization of the characteristics of the attractiveness of durian culinary tourism products in Medan City was obtained as follows:

c) Quality and Food Value

The quality and value of food products offered by Ucok Durian, Pelawi Durian, and Durian Ucok Tanjug outlets can be seen in durian products, product packaging, durian distribution, and product delivery services. Durian provided by the manager is durian that matures in trees and comes from various gardens in North Sumatra with diverse and distinctive taste characteristics: sweet, bitter, and a combination of sweet and bitter, dry or alkaline textures, white, or yellow with various sizes.

The manager provides processed durian products such as peeled durian, meat, and *pancakes*. Ucok Durian is a culinary destination that provides the most complete processed durian products from other outlets. There is a list of supporting menus ordered by visitors, such as cendol durian, durian juice, fruit juice, and other drinks. Durian that visitors do not choose will be processed into seedless durian meat products or directly processed into various durian preparations such as *pancake* filling, durian juice, and durian cendol. Durian meat will be sold and distributed to various durian-processed actors in Medan City and outside Medan City.

d) Food Cultural Aspect

The products offered by durian outlets in Medan City as a culinary tourism attraction are local durians from various regions, especially North Sumatra. Local durian voters are based on durian fruit, which has varied taste, color, and texture advantages, especially the combination of sweet and bitter flavors that characterize Medan durian. The use of local food ingredients to be processed into culinary tourism products will undoubtedly be a connecting bridge between local people and their cultural roots so that the value of local wisdom of the community will be reflected in durian fruit and durian culinary preparations offered to tourists.

As a culinary destination visited by many tourists, Ucok Durian not only provides durian products and processed durian but also provides souvenir products of other typical Medan foods such as passion fruit syrup, sidikalang coffee, kamaojo layer cake, candied guava, and other Medan specialties. In addition to food souvenir products, the manager also provides a shop that sells souvenirs in the form of souvenirs designed with the theme of Medan City.

2. Management of the Attractiveness of Durian Culinary Tourism Products in Medan City

Based on the coding results using NVivo 14 software, data visualization of the attractiveness of durian culinary tourism products in Medan City was obtained as follows:

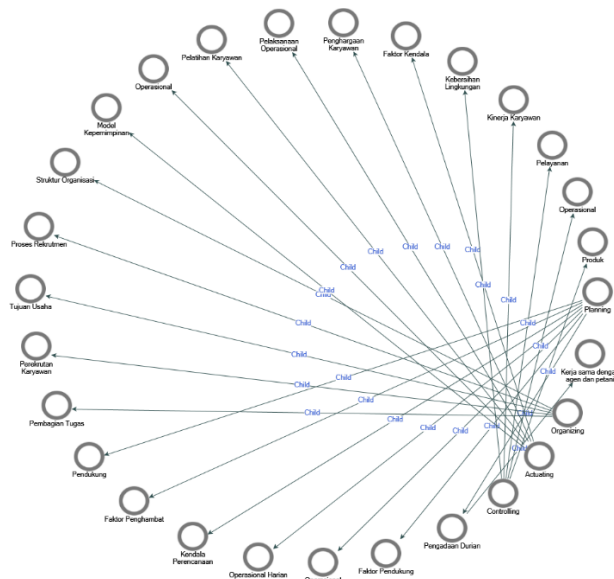


Figure 2 Project Map Management of Durian Culinary Tourism Product Attraction in Medan
 Source: Source: Author analysis, 2023

a) Planning

Business planning begins with managers procuring daily durian fruit stocks through agents or directly through durian farmers in various regions of Sumatra. Durian agents are of two types: agents or officers from durian shops whose job is to search, purchase, and deal directly with durian farmers or intermediaries throughout the area. Furthermore, external durian fruit agents or agents sell durian from farmers' crops and spread in various regions in Sumatra. The network of cooperation with many durian agents in Sumatra began to be built by the managers of the three durian outlets since starting the durian business, where the managers made agreements with many agents or farmers to sell their crops to durian outlets in Medan City so that the daily durian fruit stock at the outlets will always be fulfilled.

b) Organizing

The organizational structure applied by the manager is to divide the position of workers only based on duties and responsibilities without any level or level of position. The division of duties of employees consists of fruit sellers or fruit retailers, namely people who have knowledge, experience, and the ability to distinguish the characteristics of durian, and the task is to select durians for guests. Furthermore, some servers are in charge of serving and meeting all guest needs while at the outlet. Officers who process durian *pancakes*, durian meat separates durian from seeds, officers who make various drinks and supporting products, and cashiers. The needs of these positions vary depending

on the scale of the durian outlet business. Workers are divided into two or three shifts to support businesses that operate for 24 hours.

c) *Actuating*

Durian store owners apply a democratic leadership model and family management system to all employees. The principles applied are to be fair to all rights and obligations of employees, involve employees in decision-making, and reward employee performance. The owner provides training and motivation on selling, such as the service system, hospitality, and how to choose durian to employees directly without any special training classes or *group discussions*.

d) *Controlling (Pengawasan)*

The manager's supervisory function begins with supervising the durian fruit procurement process. The manager observes the development of durian orchards with agents and farmers via telephone or visits durian orchards directly in various regions to make agreements and map fruit harvest times. The owner will send an agent or trust officer to make transactions and supervise the process of shipping durian to the store. When it is not durian season in North Sumatra, the manager will buy durian fruit from outside North Sumatra so that it will require a longer delivery time. To maintain the quality of durian, durian will be sent using a particular truck with a cooling engine.

3. Promotion Mix of Durian Culinary Tourism Products in Medan City

Based on the coding results using NVivo 14 software, a visualization of the promotional mix data for the attractiveness of durian culinary tourism products in Medan City was obtained as follows:

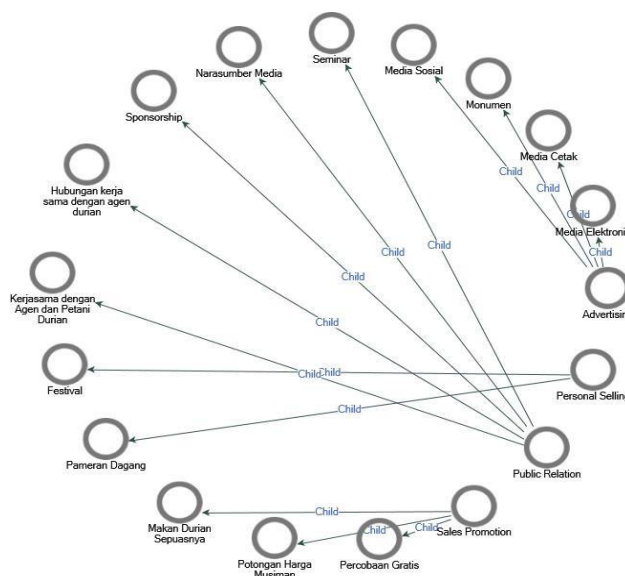


Figure 5.18 Project Map Promotion Mix of Durian Culinary Tourism Product Attraction in Medan

Source: Author's analysis, 2023

a) Advertising

The advertising method applied by durian culinary outlets in Medan City is to market their products and business activities through Instagram social media. Social media such as Instagram is considered the most accessible and cheapest marketing method for managers, where users only need mobile *phones*, data packages, and internet networks to operate the application. The manager often shares content in photos and videos of durian products, the environment, and visitor activities while enjoying durian at the location. Ucok Durian, the most famous durian outlet in Medan City, often collaborates with print and electronic media to market products and share inspiring stories of owners when building their businesses.

b) Sales Promotion

The sales promotion method used by durian culinary destinations in Medan City is to provide free or durian trials to customers who eat durian at the location. Many durian outlets with the concept of restaurants in Medan City popularized this method. The officer will choose the durian that visitors want to consume, and then visitors can try the durians first. If visitors feel dissatisfied with the taste, the officer will choose another durian until they get the one that best suits their preferences and tastes.

c) Personal Selling

Personal sales are not carried out and are specially prepared by durian outlet managers in Medan City. Managers meet and sell products directly only at certain times, such as when the manager is one of the booth fillers at a trade show or when participating in enlivening the festival. Officers will go around to meet visitors who come and make personal product offers to visitors.

d) Public Relation

Managers carry out the method of promotion through public relations in several ways. First, the manager establishes community relationships with the best durian agents and farmers in various regions in Sumatra for matters of procurement of durian fruit stocks. The manager also uses this relationship to promote his durian outlet business to agents and farmers in various regions in Sumatra.

CONCLUSION

1. The characteristics of the attractiveness of durian culinary tourism products in Medan City offer durian outlets developed with the concept of a complete restaurant and its attributes as an attraction. Physically, the manager offers decorations and themes that represent durian fruit, such as the use of yellow and green colors applied to walls, tables, chairs, and floors, as well as the addition of durian-themed ornaments that give a colorful feel. Durian outlets offer durian fruit and local durian preparations as products enjoyed on-site and taken home as souvenirs. In addition, the manager also provides other typical Medan souvenir products in the form of food and souvenirs.
2. The identical results of the management of durian culinary tourism products in Ukok Durian, Pelawi Durian, and Durian Ukok Tanjung found that all three were durian outlet businesses that were processed personally by the owner. Operational planning is carried out to procure durian fruit through cooperative relationships with agents and durian fruit farmers in all corners of North Sumatra and Sumatra to provide durian throughout the year. The owner established a durian outlet to take advantage of the wealth of durian crops in North Sumatra and make durian a superior culinary product in Medan.
3. Ukok Durian advertises through social media, print media, and electronic media and physically builds signs in the form of durian statues near the location to market its products. Furthermore, the manager implements sales promotions by providing *free trials* to customers, discounts, and attractive promotions every durian season. The manager makes personal sales whenever he participates in culinary exhibitions and festivals. The owner carries out the promotion method through public relations through cooperation with agents and durian farmers in various regions of Sumatra. In addition, *public relations* is carried out by the owner by becoming a speaker at a forum such as seminars, print and electronic information media, and actively sponsoring various *events*.

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