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## INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION (IMC) PRACTICE IN TOURISM: LESSONS LEARNED FROM BUKITTINGGI, INDONESIA

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**Abstract:** Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) is the strategic coordination of marketing activities to deliver clear and consistent messages across all forms of communication, including advertising, promotion, public relations, social media, and direct marketing. It is particularly important for supporting the recovery of the tourism sector during unexpected global disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic. This study investigates the practice of IMC in Bukittinggi (Indonesia) and provides insights for other places looking to rebound from a tourism downturn. Quantitative and explorative studies were used to explore how stakeholders implement IMC strategies to revitalize tourism. A total of 100 questionnaires were distributed, of which 86% met the specified criteria. The data were then analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with Partial Least Squares (PLS). Four tourism organizations were also researched to ensure an IMC process. Four variables: sales promotion, advertising, direct selling, and public relations were evaluated using 24 indicators that were related, but did not contradict each other. The study discovered a significant correlation between IMC and aspects of sales promotion, advertising, and public relations in understanding tourism development strategies. The study's findings suggest a necessity to enhance the direct selling component. Consequently, it is essential to adjust external aspects to enhance the strategy for the IMC component within the tourism sector. It was assessed that integrating the assessment results with external elements would clarify the consistency of IMC in enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of tourism sector administration.

**Keywords:** integrated marketing communication (IMC); tourism management; communication; tourism development; Bukittinggi (Indonesia)

### 1. Introduction

The coordination of numerous communication and marketing elements to achieve consistent targets across all available channels by maximizing tactical elements, including advertising, public relations, direct marketing, sales promotions, online communications, and social media, is known as integrated marketing communications (IMC) (Kim et al., 2004; Kitchen et al., 2008). Through the evaluation of coordinated, measurable, and persuasive communications with targeted potential consumers over time, its incremental development leads to solid planning (Cornelissen, 2001; Kitchen et al., 2004). Additionally, the objective is

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to establish value for the agreed-upon brand to generate long-term benefits (Batra & Keller, 2016).

The IMC approach is crucial for marketing management professionals to accomplish their maximum objectives with a funding system that is both cost-effective and efficient (Holm, 2006; Swain, 2004). Consequently, digitalization practices have led to a transformation by optimizing opportunities for consumer interests and preferences (Gesualdi, 2019), as well as by ensuring accessibility and a broad reach for simultaneous marketing. In practice, numerous institutions and organizations establish communication disciplines by incorporating strategies into the primary function of marketing communication (Eagle et al., 2007; Gurău, 2008). Similar to Kerr et al. (2023), in their investigation of non-profit organizations and community groups in programmatic terms from an IMC perspective, this concept has been adopted as a method of organizational integration to enhance internal capabilities.

Liang and Wang (2023) discovered IMC practices at the South Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which is responsible for institutional information, in formal spaces such as government. These practices highly focus on promoting tourism and culture to the international market by demonstrating friendly community behavior. Conversely, the Chinese government prioritizes transparency in public information by promoting education, tourism, and culture (Chi, 2021; Su et al., 2019). Also, Iyer et al. (2014) identified IMC as a strategic framework for competitive differentiation of religious aspects in India. This was demonstrated through a survey of 568 Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Sikh, and Jain organizations located in seven states of India. The survey was conducted to examine the response of religious-based communication services to product use and competition from competitors.

Based on these findings, it is evident that the unique character, structure, and culture of each organization, institution, and entity influence the presentation. It is implied that the items disseminated to the public are distinctive components not possessed by other competitors (Kitchen et al., 2008; Martin & Capelli, 2018). The fundamental idea of communication is exemplified by this standard framework, which implicitly acknowledges the relationship between methods and consistency across various kinds of implemented communication. Consequently, advertising practices, sales promotions, and publicity are incorporated with a broad spectrum of special modifications, including the means and techniques for communicating messages and how the message is received by consumers, particularly in the tourism industry. The interdependence of each component of the communication and marketing instruments is also underscored, which is necessary to comprehend the potential and promote the concept of integration that could be implemented as a subsequent marketing initiative (Rashkova et al., 2023).

According to Grönroos (2006), the tourism marketing concept is divided into three primary categories: strategic principles, empirical phenomena, and structural framework. Each category is associated with a unique network of natural knowledge. Rossiter (2002) emphasizes the empirical phenomena and structural construction in identifying potential tourism markets. This is achieved by predicting and considering market offers and requirements and establishing a consistent connection between consumer needs and service providers. Additionally, it is imperative to consider the phenomena's structural efficiency and uncertainty to anticipate human incapacity and predict the flow of the national and global tourism markets.

After the COVID-19 pandemic was declared over, the competition to develop tourism destinations became intense (Villacé-Molinero et al., 2021; WHO, 2022). Concurrently, stakeholders endeavored to apply lessons from prior disasters and identify prospects for future tourism (Sharma et al., 2021). The stakeholders, specifically in tourism sector have consistently sought to change public perceptions that have been altered due to the pandemic through various strategies (Hannam, 2002; Sharpley, 2000), including integrated communication through digital platforms and online and offline media. Lenggogeni et al. (2022) assert that the prodromal phase is characterized by alterations in tourist behavior, which induce feelings of extreme anxiety regarding social interactions with others. Consistent recovery is required to re-attract tourists to participate in tourism activities, as a result of these behavioural and emotional changes.

Although there is a preference for virtual tourism experiences on digital platforms (Lu et al., 2022), this does not provide a sense of gratification as it involves the process and direct experience of traveling. Conversely, they endeavor to suppress their negative sentiments due to their prohibition from engaging in tourism activities (Wang & Zhai, 2023).

It is crucial to implement a comprehensive and integrated communication strategy during the recovery process in tourism sector to expedite the physical and mental development, reconstruction, and well-being of the population. This is contingent upon collaborative schemes and interactive communication among stakeholders, as emphasized by Bhaskara et al. (2021) in their study of the tourism management strategy in Bali, Indonesia, and Rastegar et al. (2021) in their study of responsible framework for equitable tourism. Subsequently, stakeholders collaborate to implement IMC to alleviate the delay caused by disasters and other occurrences. Consequently, it is important to prioritize and integrate a tourism communication and network system, as recommended by previous experts such as Jiang et al. (2019) and Jiang and Ritchie (2017).

This study endeavors to provide a more comprehensive examination of successful IMC practices in the context of local-scale tourism, as learned from Bukittinggi. This is evident in the consistent rise in the number of visitors participating in tourism activities. Furthermore, Bukittinggi was previously classified as a destination that required a lengthy journey by land (typically 2–4 hours) and was accessible via ports and airports, as well as the absence of public transportation options like trains. Nevertheless, the number of visitors increased by 14.46–22.28%, reaching 1.6–2 million annually between 2022 and June 2024 (Anggraeni, 2024). This demonstrates the effective strategy of stakeholders to emerge from the downturn and to advocate for the re-promotion of available resources and innovations in order to maintain production. In accordance with the predetermined plan, the outcome is the implementation of IMC practices in Bukittinggi.

This research is crucial in assessing the value of interactive and IMC, which is generated by the capacity of stakeholders to communicate the potential of their local destinations through IMC. The capacity to disseminate post-pandemic tourism necessitates a prudent concept that enables the development of suitable innovations. The concept and policy that destination resources and administrators should prioritize the health, safety, and security of visitors over awareness issues are included in previous recommendations (Purnomo et al., 2022; Tuti et al., 2022).

Lastly, there is a scarcity of research available to evaluate IMC practices in the local tourism sector. In order to address the research gap, this study employed a quantitative

approach to investigate how visitors are drawn to travel to Bukittinggi and what factors influence their decision. This is achieved through tourism sales promotions, destination advertising, direct sales, and public relations.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Study area

Bukittinggi, a city situated in the highlands of West Sumatra Province, Indonesia, is renowned for its rich cultural heritage, scenic landscapes, and historical significance (Wibowo & Khoiruddin, 2020). Bukittinggi is uniquely positioned geographically between two volcanoes—Mount Marapi and Mount Singgalang—contributing to its cool climate and picturesque vistas. These natural features and cultural assets established Bukittinggi as a prominent tourist destination (Mirsa et al., 2022).

Bukittinggi spans an area of 25.24 km<sup>2</sup> (9.75 sq mi) at an elevation of 930 m and is home to approximately 123,000 residents (BPS, 2021), a figure that is relatively modest when juxtaposed with adjacent regions in Indonesia (Mirsa et al., 2022). Moreover, it exhibits a tropical rainforest climate (Af) as classified by the Köppen-Geiger system, marked by persistently high humidity levels and substantial annual precipitation, with an average temperature of 19.3 °C and a total rainfall of 4295 mm (Data, 2025; Mulia & Handayani, 2024).

Due to its unique environment and sparse population, Bukittinggi has emerged as a highly desirable destination for domestic and international travelers. A study from Mair et al. (2016), Rather (2021) and Sharma et al. (2021) has clarified that environmental factors, population density, and climate play a significant role in shaping tourists' choices of destinations. Therefore, it is imperative to analyze how Bukittinggi utilizes its current resources to entice potential visitors. A study by Syawal and Satrianto (2025) indicates Bukittinggi's tourism competitiveness has improved in several indicators following the COVID-19 pandemic. Notably, the infrastructure development indicator increased from an average of 31.13% before the pandemic to 50.25% afterwards, reflecting significant enhancements in infrastructure. On the other hand, they found that the openness indicator (OI) rose from 0.301 to 1.469, suggesting increased accessibility and appeal to tourists. These developments underscore Bukittinggi's strategic role as a gateway for travelers exploring the broader West Sumatra region, further cementing its significance in the province's tourism sector.

The economy of the city is primarily fueled by tourism, agriculture, and commerce, with local businesses frequently accommodating the requirements of both residents and tourists (Purnawan & Putri, 2024). Also, the traditional market, handicrafts, and local cuisine are essential tourist attractions (Ginting et al., 2021). The Jam Gadang clock tower, the former Dutch colonial fort and cultural festivals that occur annually further contribute to its status as a tourist destination. The city's population is primarily Minangkabau, with a strong cultural connection to Islam and the adat (customary law), which significantly impacts the general atmosphere and local practices.

Bukittinggi provides an intriguing case study in the context of IMC due to its reliance on tourism and local branding. As a tourism-driven city, the city's presentation to domestic and international visitors is significantly influenced by incorporating communication strategies across various platforms, including traditional advertising and digital marketing. The

combination of historical landmarks, natural attractiveness, and rich culture renders it a distinctive subject for investigating the effective application of IMC to promote tourism, enhance local branding, and ensure sustainable economic growth in the context of global challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

## *2.2. Research design*

In the research design, the identification was made using quantitative and exploratory investigations, based on an assessment of variables and indicators to grow the tourism sector and link the IMC theory in Bukittinggi. Statistical calculations are performed using a structural equation model (SEM). Hair et al. (2014) elaborate the statistical calculation analysis method which can deliver accurate values when investigating social phenomena, as well as guaranteeing that the results can be applied to future perspectives. This research was carried out in several stages.

First, field research was conducted in Bukittinggi, as an area for tourism. This is because the region is rich in historical, social, and traditional cultural significance, and has exceptional tourist destinations such as mountain tourism, canyons, and colonial history (Anggraeni, 2024; Sitoresmi, 2022).

Second, the theory and practice of IMC as proposed by Cornelissen (2001) and Holm (2006) are evaluated in relation to strategies for achieving their objectives. This theoretical framework is then integrated with tourism development theories presented by Hannam (2002) and Sharpley (2000).

Third, there is a recognition of the connection between conditions, processes, and consequences, which is why quantitative data is employed to investigate IMC practices in the tourism sector. The correlation is that the involvement of numerous stakeholders in IMC practices can influence the future development of tourism.

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative and exploratory methodologies to comprehensively understand tourism IMC in Bukittinggi. The exploratory component involves in-depth interviews and content analysis to capture the tourism sector's perceptions, contextual factors, and strategic practices. This exploration serves as a foundational phase, guiding the development of relevant constructs and hypotheses for the quantitative phase.

Afterwards, quantitative phase is employed to establish a connection between the values of tourism IMC variables, which are analyzed using rigorous statistical procedures. This allows for the mathematical determination of the level and pattern of development and the identification of the strengths and weaknesses inherent in Bukittinggi's tourism IMC efforts.

The mixed methods were chosen to capitalize on the strengths of both approaches: the depth and contextual richness of insights and the generalizability and empirical validation provided by quantitative analysis, thereby ensuring a more holistic and robust evaluation of the research problem.

## *2.3. Data collection*

Interview questions were posed to four distinct tourism groups, each consisting of twenty individuals (government-provincial and local, tourist guides, businessman or entrepreneurs, and organizations). The study also examined the communication and interaction patterns employed to entice tourists to visit Bukittinggi. The group's ideas are employed to identify patterns in tourism development through problem-solving. This process is primarily

characterized by the statements, remarks, and discussion of the respondent group's ideas. It is crucial to evaluate this section from the perspective of groups responsible for the phenomena that transpire in their environment.

Afterwards, between June and October 2024, 100 questionnaires following the research statements were delivered to respondents. The measurement was based on the Likert scale from 1 to 5, which indicated the range from strongly disagree to strongly agree. This implied that respondents expressed their opinions and willingly agreed to participate in the research. Each respondent understood the regulations and guarantees governing the confidentiality of personal data and information. As a result, they were willing to participate, which made it easier to carry out scientific studies and generate knowledge in the social sciences.

By the data filtering process implemented following the results of the previous questionnaire collection, 86 questionnaires were deemed valid due to their compliance with the assessment criteria. Conversely, 14 questionnaires were deemed to have failed due to their failure to adhere to the established provisions and incomplete statements from respondents. Additionally, SEM with a partial least square (PLS) basis was employed to conduct statistical calculations using SmartPLS 4.1.0.3 software.

By dividing the respondents into two categories: the younger generation group, which consisted of individuals aged 15 to 30 years (64.44%), and the adult group, which consisted of individuals aged 31 to 45 years (35.56%), the age criteria and threshold were established. The initial stage demonstrated that respondents comprised the majority, with 68.12% designating themselves as married and having completed the higher education, 31.88% as unmarried, 11.48% as having completed high school, and 20.4% as students.

Following the guidelines established by Hair et al. (2014), structural modeling analysis was conducted by investigating three testing steps: hypothesis testing, the outer model, and the inner model. The relationships between numerous variables were assessed through the calculation of regression paths in this method. Bandalos (2002), Hannam (2002), and Sardeshmukh and Vandenbeberg (2017) employed general limits to generate effect sizes, specifically  $F^2 = 0.150$ . The statistical power was evaluated using the Cronbach alpha setting of 0.6, composite reliability of 0.70, and average variance extracted (AVE) above 0.50 from the basic settings by Chin (1998). In addition, the study employed the  $p$ -value limit of .05 to establish the significant threshold value, as determined by Scheines et al. (1999).

The evaluation of the inner or structural model involves testing for multicollinearity using the variance inflation factor (VIF), with a threshold of  $< 5$ , as well as assessing path coefficients,  $p$ -values, confidence intervals, effect size ( $F^2$ ), coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ), predictive relevance ( $Q^2$ ), and Goodness of Fit (GoF) (Hair et al., 2019). A VIF value below 5 indicates no multicollinearity between constructs, whereas values above the threshold suggest the need for model re-specification (Haque et al., 2024).

Subsequently, the engagement of all variables: promotion ( $X_1$ ) advertisement ( $X_2$ ), direct selling ( $X_3$ ), and public relations ( $X_4$ ) was examined in relation to path significance, path coefficient,  $p$ -value, upper and lower limits of effect size ( $F^2$ ), as well as the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ),  $Q^2$ , and GoF.

Finally, iterative processing was employed to evaluate each research variable through two forms of manipulation: calculating values based on indicators and latent variables and explicitly assessing the relationships between latent variables by evaluating external estimates. The significance of the endogenous variable IMC was assessed using the

Bootstrap PLS method. The utilization of IMC is classified as an endogenous variable influenced by a combination of exogenous variables derived from observed elements such as sales promotion, advertising, direct marketing, and public relations.

3. Results

3.1. Evaluation of measurement model

PLS algorithm is computed to determine the results of the external screening evaluation. The calculation is declared valid to satisfy practical measurements and is based on the consistency of the use of indicators for each variable. Each outer loading is declared legitimate after being measured using its binding indicators, indicating that it can be accepted with a value exceeding 0.70 (Table 1).

Cronbach alpha value is greater than 0.6, indicating that the measurement model is statistically valid, and all the variables are reliable. The average test of the extracted variance or AVE of the assessed constructs is greater than 0.607. Specifically, the AVE's imply that it exceeds the minimum threshold of 0.5, following the requirements of Chin (1998) and Fornell and Larcker (1981).

Table 1. Outer Loading Result

Variable	Indicator measurement items	Outer loading	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	AVE
Promotion (X1)	Inviting interest and clear information (X1.7)	0.791	0.857	0.898	0.637
	Availability of cheap and premium travel packages (X1.2)	0.859			
	Offering interesting and complete experiences (X1.3)	0.805			
	My family and friends approve of my vacation choices (X1.4)	0.797			
	Feeling stressful planning a vacation (X1.6)	0.735			
Advertisement (X2)	Providing complete and interesting information (X2.1)	0.855	0.861	0.899	0.642
	Stimulating consumer demand (X2.2)	0.821			
	Building holiday preferences (X2.3)	0.803			
	Creative and innovative (X2.4)	0.768			
	Repeat-current messages (X2.6)	0.753			
Direct Selling (X3)	Personal encounter (X3.1)	0.816	0.856	0.885	0.607
	Cultivation with many types of relationships (X3.2)	0.764			
	Good-interest responses (X3.3)	0.797			
	Forcing and boring (X3.4)	0.775			
	Able to explain completely (X3.6)	0.739			

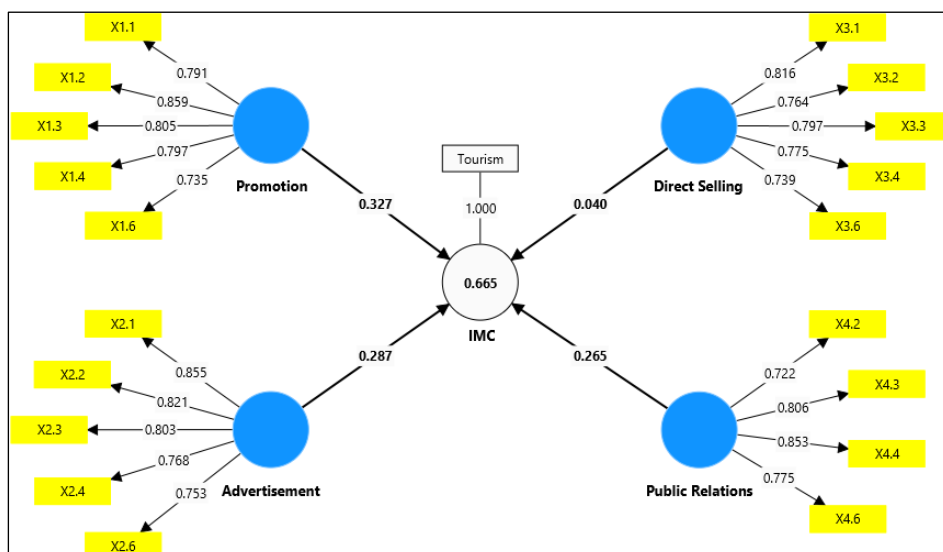
**Table 1.** Outer Loading Result (*continued*)

Variable	Indicator measurement items	Outer loading	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	AVE
			0.798	0.869	0.625
Public Relations (X4)	Counseling: management of public issues (X4.2)	0.722			
	Relations with the press and other organizations (X4.3)	0.806			
	Publicity: sponsorship of various programs (X4.4)	0.853			
	Lobbying: with policy makers to support or defeat policies (X4.6)	0.775			

*Note.* Data in the columns are from respondents and calculated with SmartPLS 4.0.1.3.

Based on Table 1, the findings are presented following the variables and indicators adopted by researchers from various literature and adapted to the context of ongoing research (Cornelissen, 2001; Hannam, 2002; Holm, 2006; Sharpley, 2000). The use of the variables and indicators that indicate no conflict to weaken other relevant coefficients has a significant impact. Each variable, indicator, and lane for each component has been applied to generate the results of tourism IMC. Hence, these results should be continuously evaluated to ascertain each value's positive and negative directions and significant and insignificant variability (Asmelash & Kumar, 2019).

The empirical results are pertinent to the research conducted by Rehman et al. (2022), as they demonstrate that 75% of the relationship between IMC and the four variables is determined to have a significant influence (Figure 1). This is due to the growing number of digital and media users, which compels individuals to integrate with the marketing communication methods they possess and the social necessity to establish their identity and support competitive competition collectively.



**Figure 1.** Measurement of variables and indicators of IMC tourism.



As previously stated, five of the twenty-four indicators (*X1.5*, *X2.5*, *X3.5*, *X4.1*, and *X4.5*) have been eliminated due to their inconsistent nature and subsequent declaration of invalidity. Nevertheless, the disseminated questionnaire data indicate that the other available indicators have a significant impact. The study's findings indicate that each indicator displayed is a compilation of numerous critical and significant issues in the integration of marketing communication in the tourism sector of Bukittinggi.

The results are also corroborated by the statements of the four groups interviewed, as they have experience capturing potential travelers' attention. There was indeed a high interest in tourism before the pandemic, but there was a lack of innovation in the tourism industry. Consequently, the products sold at the destination appeared to be saturated, making it challenging for tourists to articulate their reasons for returning to Bukittinggi. Nevertheless, stakeholders responsible for tourism development made immediate improvements by presenting new variants of reconstructed destinations and uniquely communicating them following the pandemic and the cessation of tourism activities.

Furthermore, enhancements are implemented to integrate marketing communication patterns that previously operated independently. It is capable of addressing the challenges associated with Bukittinggi tourism, which has experienced substantial growth and has generated novel tourist experiences, as well as fostering a desire to revisit other destinations in Bukittinggi. This is achieved by incorporating marketing communications conducted by stakeholders.

### *3.2. Evaluation of Structural Model*

The findings revealed that there was no multicollinearity in the computation, as the VIF value of every variable indicated that the parameter estimates in SEM PLS were strong and objective. Table 2 show the results of the inner model significance test applied using the path coefficient structural model with direct test results; so, described as follows:

(i) Sales Promotion (*X1*) substantially impacts Tourism IMC. The "sales promotion" variable's dominance in determining its identity and influencing IMC as an endogenous variable is undeniable. This presents an opportunity for managers in the marketing management space to foster their capacity to reach a broad market and dimension. The most significant method of preserving the identity of tourism IMC is sales promotion management, a prevalent practice in the context of promotional work. On the other hand, the findings indicate that conceptual promotion is crucial in elucidating destinations in various ways. For instance, it is crucial to offer limited promotions with premium facilities to pique the interest of tourists, thereby reflecting the significance of the promotion context in the decision to engage in tourism activities.

(ii) Advertisement (*X2*) significantly affects IMC Tourism. Previous study have provided similar explanations, such as Chang et al. (2019) which show the digital advertising is increasingly widespread and dominates life. Many conventional media are being marginalized because they are less effective and do not have a major effect on their marketing performance. On the other hand, many workgroups have significantly used digital and online advertising. It has become a competition to reach the interests of potential tourists.

(iii) Direct selling (*X3*) shows different results with an insignificant effect on IMC tourism. This is evidence that conventional practices are rare in the modern era; all work instruments

and human resources have been transformed to utilize communication channels integrated into one unit to find significant results. So, the concentration of direct selling becomes increasingly biased and is covered by other variables in and outside this study.

(iv) Public relations (X4). The findings demonstrate the importance of the direct impact of environmental conditions on establishing relationships with external parties. Their opportunities are greatly expanded because the dimensions of promotion, advertising, and other aspects may cease to exist. The pattern of relations and advertising of the promotion transactions through positive relationships will continue to be communicated through their daily activities. The positive impact is that the tourism work managerial party will be more streamlined and adapted to the destination environment, which will be disseminated.

Table 2. SEM result

	Original sample (O) path coefficient	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	F <sup>2</sup>	p-value	Path coefficient- Confidence intervals (95%)	
						2.5%	97.5%
Advertisement -> IMC	0.287	0.288	0.088	0.103	.001*	0.120	0.467
Direct selling -> IMC	0.040	0.056	0.065	0.004	.534	– 0.068	0.184
Promotion -> IMC	0.327	0.328	0.121	0.120	.007*	0.088	0.567
Public relations -> IMC	0.265	0.255	0.115	0.062	.021*	0.023	0.473

Note. \* Significant.

The integration of marketing communication in its interaction with Bukittinggi tourism activities is expanding rapidly, even though numerous other destinations employ the same approach. Nevertheless, an intriguing aspect of the IMC practice is that prospective travelers should refrain from negotiating their reasons for visiting and making repeat visits to Bukittinggi. Tourists may become tired and opt for new and diverse preferences to facilitate their enjoyment of tourism activities, exacerbated by the environmental conditions.

In line with prior studies, the structural model test results are consistent with the findings of Chang et al. (2019), Liang and Wang (2023), and K V et al. (2021). Their findings indicate that several critical dimensions influence public evaluation of IMC. Specifically, these include the effectiveness of promotional strategies, the reinforcement of messages through repetition coupled with updated information, the utilization of diverse instruments, devices, and communication media to target broader market segments, and the overall ability of marketing communications to capture public attention.

The research illustrated the internal measurement model by utilizing the provisions of Shmueli et al. (2019) to assess the model's applicability and goodness, as determined by the results of the quadratic effect,  $R^2$ , and  $Q^2$ . The results indicate that the exogenous variables have a joint influence on the endogenous variables, with an  $R^2$  value of 0.665 or 66.5%, which is on the rise. Also,  $Q^2$  demonstrates the predictive relevance of all latent variables to endogenous variables that exceed 0 following the laws of thumb (Chin, 1998). The results obtained are a  $Q^2$  value of 0.623, or good predictive relevance; the Standardized Root Mean Squared Residual (SRMR) value is 0.094, indicating that the size is suitable or acceptable; and the GoF value was 0.645, which signifies that it was classified as high.

Lastly, the quadratic effect or linearity test presented in Table 3 was calculated assuming the resulting value must be greater than or equal to .05 (*p*-value). The findings indicate that all variables used met the linearity assumptions relevant to IMC tourism in Bukittinggi.

Table 3. Quadratic effect result

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	<i>T</i> -statistics ( O/STDEV )	<i>p</i> - value	Note
QE (Promotion) -> IMC	0.010	0.027	0.069	0.140	.889	Linear
QE (Direct Selling) -> IMC	0.044	0.042	0.057	0.773	.440	Linear
QE (PR) -> IMC	-0.072	-0.076	0.055	1.299	.194	Linear
QE (Advertise) -> IMC	0.026	0.026	0.068	0.382	.702	Linear

#### 4. Discussion

The IMC tourism strengthening process has been influenced by three significant variables: promotion, advertising, and public relations. The results are consistent with the measurement model depicted in Figure 1. All the three variables have been tested; direct selling, which may have been conventional and subsequently combined or transformed with other methods. However, it requires further examination in multiple respects. We have identified vulnerabilities in the cooperation of local governments that do not foster flexibility and have an impact on innovation, which leads to inconsistent and uneven direct selling for marketing communication integration.

Fortunately, this does not impact other variables that share the same variable relationship. In research observations, travel and hospitality entrepreneurs implement direct selling more frequently than the Bukittinggi local government in the context of sharing experiences and direct selling to numerous agencies, institutions, schools, and other entities. This implies that the private sector does not operate independently and relies on formal institutions; rather, it promotes Bukittinggi tourism's sustainability by offering various travel packages at reasonable prices.

However, the findings also suggest that managing tourism resources and destinations is less effective in local governments and/or formal institutions with the authority to develop tourism. This is further substantiated by the objectives of formal institutions and local governments, which are exclusively intended for specific purposes and appear unconcerned with the implementation of the framework (Mair et al., 2016). The results are solely intended for the formality of accountability reports to leaders; however, the private sector, local communities, and tourism groups are responsible for operational management and sustainability (Fathani et al., 2023; Purnomo et al., 2022).

Additionally, it is not the case that the local government is not functioning and its authority is not required; rather, the government's sole role in conceptual and operational terms is insufficient to address the development and management of intricate tourism marketing communications. They offer opportunities to be dynamic by relying on non-governmental organizations to regulate tourism following environmental conditions. This is also corroborated by research conducted by Mulyani et al. (2021) and Rahmafritia et al. (2020), who contend that the success of tourism development is not solely dependent on a

single concept of governance, but rather on community awareness to cultivate its potential from within and be deeply rooted in managing it by its environment.

This pattern has been extensively implemented in other destinations, including Bandung, West Java, where the IMC system is managed by tourism-loving community groups (Wahyuni et al., 2021). Additionally, rural tourism has experienced significant growth due to consistent community involvement in Yogyakarta and Banyuwangi, Indonesia (Ahsani et al., 2022; Kia, 2021).

As a result, the debate from previous discussions must still be assessed in both horizontal and vertical dimensions, as the government's biased role can threaten tourism. Therefore, it is also crucial to enhance the government's flexibility value by addressing its weaknesses. It is crucial to be receptive to collaborating with private parties, tourism groups, and local community groups to unlock innovation lanes jointly (Kitchen et al., 2008; Lew, 2014). In general, equitable distribution of tourism marketing and communication can yield the most sustainable and optimal outcomes, as well as the potential to enhance other beneficial effects (Grönroos, 2009; Kerr et al., 2023).

Also, the propagation of the tourism IMC concept is highly significant in its impact, as it ensures consistency of communication across online platforms, including social media and websites, which is crucial for a broad audience. In practice, the integration of marketing communications in offline and online promotional spaces can be achieved through standard convergence, but with an adaptive approach to accomplish cross-media promotion divergence. As a single strategy for identifying positive opportunities through the consistency of marketing communications in international brands, Rashkova et al. (2023) also implemented a similar approach.

Tourism IMC in Bukittinggi is characterized by a design, criteria, and objectives based on the government's dominance of awareness in controlling pressure. This has led to big changes in tourism development and was made possible by using good marketing and communication integration strategies, which can be used as examples for places like the ones in the study.

Nevertheless, it is not improbable that the dominance generated by qualitative and quantitative results may differ from that of other studies that employ the same method, but have distinct objectives (Putera et al., 2025; Rashkova et al., 2023; Robina-Ramírez et al., 2022). The results of the ongoing research solely emphasize the success of tourism IMC practices with four primary variables. The results demonstrate the development of marketing communication integration on a local scale with relatively high tourism intensity. This integration is crucial in differentiating values and benefits for the dynamics and social transformations that have undergone significant changes in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. It will continue to evolve in response to the phenomenon of social change in the future.

Developing learning and literacy skills among marketing communication integration management workers is fundamental for driving future transformations. These competencies are anticipated to strengthen workers' commitment to continuous learning, promote proactive efforts in ensuring tourist safety, and enhance their capacity to address emerging local challenges, including natural disasters and social vulnerabilities.

This perspective aligns with the findings of prior research, such as Cohen and Cohen (2012) and Hannam (2002) on tourist security and internal management; Holm (2006), Kerr et al. (2023) and Rossiter (2002) on communication transformation strategies; and

Cornelissen (2001), Hannam (2002) and Kitchen et al. (2008) on the dynamics of community behavior in facilitating tourism mobility.

## 5. Conclusion

A unique perspective on the successful incorporation of marketing communications into tourism practices in Bukittinggi, West Sumatra, Indonesia, was presented through this research. The phenomenon of social change within the tourism sector—shaped by the digitalization era and the recovery from pandemic-induced decline—can be more comprehensively understood based on these findings.

Particular concern has been given to promotion due to its dominance over all interrelated variables, without undermining one another. The comprehension of the practice of the four essential variables in tourism IMC practices—and their interrelation with other variables—has been enhanced by these results. Additionally, a convergence between offline and online approaches has been observed, characterized by a modern and adaptive nature. Conversely, this study is becoming increasingly intriguing, particularly the necessity of reconsidering the direct selling pattern that fails to generate a substantial impact as the foundation for tourism IMC practices.

Literacy on the benefits of marketing communication integration in the tourism sector—aimed at identifying potential tourists while still considering security, destination readiness, control, internal shocks, the possibility of social disasters, and natural disasters based on managerial implications—was provided by our findings. The study has several limitations, including the fact that it was conducted exclusively in the Bukittinggi area with a relatively small number of respondents.

However, the potential of this component in the context of IMC tourism could be further enhanced by applying sequential exploratory methods or comparative studies involving a larger sample size and additional variable-indicator instruments. The resulting findings must be integrated and presented cohesively when describing two objects within the same phenomenon.

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