



# EVENING CULINARY TOURISM: THE PUBLICITY OF MERDEKA WALK MEDAN

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## ABSTRACT

*Publicity is very important to evening culinary tourism information in Merdeka Walk Medan, North Sumatra to increase the number of local and foreign tourists who visit and enjoy the evening atmosphere and menus. A Public Relations Officer has the means to carry out his/her duties such as a publicity agent. Publicity is carried out to the public, and the public is needed to inform about the products or services offered by government agencies, organizations, companies, or individual to attract local and foreign tourists to visit the aforementioned evening culinary tourism. The method used in this paper is a qualitative; focusing mainly on the role of Public Relations Officer who uses mass media to publish events held at Merdeka Walk and also publishes a variety of menu that reflects the taste of the region and its ethnicity. Internet-based social media plays an important role in publicity. Through social media, people can be made aware of the beauty and convenience of culinary locations at Merdeka Walk. Social media, thus, results in boosting the popularity of this culinary tourism, and it shows that the effects of the publication have been felt.*

**Keywords:** Publicity, Evening Culinary Tourism, Public Relations.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This research focuses on the problem of scattered negative publicity which is detrimental to the development of tourism and the lack of proper functioning of Public Relations Officer in a culinary tourism location at Merdeka Walk. In addition, the purpose of this study is to try to explain the function of the field of tourism service, Public Relations Officer, in relation to the publicity of Merdeka Walk. This research is useful to overcome the problem of publicity for the development of evening culinary tourism. This research is initiated with an assumption that the functions of publicity and public relations carried out by a Public Relations Officer are still not optimal. This means that an improvement is needed. As made evident by prospective tourists who come to evening culinary attractions, publicity is an activity to disseminate information about places in tourist sites to tourists, which is done in mass media by the media, not by an institution or an organization intentionally.

The function of Public Relations Officer as a representative of an institution or organization is to communicate tourism well to prospective tourists and the community. Especially around tourist sites', Public Relations Officer must be able to establish good relations with the public and mass media so that harmony between the public and the institution's or organization's policies is created. Publicity is an important means to form a positive response in the eyes of the public. Therefore, media relations is an important point for Public Relations Officer to get public attention in the media, because publicity is closely related to media relations. Tourism communication as a process of delivering messages is processed into information and then submitted by a Public Relations Officer to prospective tourists by generating a positive response from a certain period of time to reach the destination. Persuasive and educative communication seeks to change behavior, attitudes, responses, and perceptions to form positive public opinion and support and give benefit in increasing the number of local and foreign tourists.

The culinary tourism area of Merdeka Walk is located at the city center, at Jl. Medan City Hall, on the West side of Merdeka Square. Merdeka Walk can also be reached by public vehicles because the position is right at the zero point of Medan. This tourist attraction needs improvement with the help of Public Relations Officer. Innovative aspects such as menus and tourist locations, in particular, need improvement so that the place can leave a lasting impression on tourists. Therefore, through Public Relations Officer, publicity as a tourism communication process is very important.

Publicity should be considered for the development of tourism, especially for Merdeka Walk culinary tourist site in Medan. Decisions made by tourists on where to go depends on publicity, since publicity is an activity to tell prospective tourists concerning culinary products, the richness of menus, comfort, security, completeness, events, and conditions of culinary nightlife. Publicity produces an image, and it is inseparable from the media that can introduce the condition of the tourism area. Publicity is more effective than advertising, but since the institution has a weak control over the spread of publicity, the responsibility of a Public Relations Officer is urgently needed. The current phenomenon is that tourists believe more in publicity than news that has been processed as an advertisement.

Publicity contains high credibility in the eyes of the media because the public believes publicity more than the information provided directly by the institution. Publicity that produces positive information about tourist sites can potentially increase the number of tourists. Publicity's credibility is an important message because of its intangible nature of tourism product that can also support the development of regional tourism programs, particularly the culinary evening in Merdeka Walk.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1. Publicity

Publicity is part of a Public Relations Officer's duties, and it will be effective if improvements on the product, service, comfort, security, and innovation of menus are made. Creation and innovation are offered to prospective travelers to make a positive impression. In other words, it is the publicity's responsibility in promoting on the mass media that emphasizes a one-way communication process. Public relations expert Lawrence & Dennis Wilcox state that as information, publicity is free of charge but cannot be controlled by an institution whose effects form a reputation that can potentially lead to positive or negative actions when the information is published. It is the concern of the tourism agency responsible for massive publicity activities, conducted by Public Relations officer who has the tools of activity (PR tools) (Pinasang, 2015). According to Lesly (1992: 6), publicity is the spreading of message that is designed correctly to achieve objectives through certain media from organizations and individuals without a specific payer on the media. On the other hand, according to Newson, Truck, and Kruckberg (2004: 215), publicity is the news of a person, product, or service that appears in space and time processed by the media in the form of featured news, editorial context, or program.

Publicity is one of the techniques commonly used in Public Relations (PR), making any publicity function primarily Public Relations functions, i.e. keeping positive image, handling negative publicity, and increasing the effectiveness of the elements in the promotional mix. Kriyantono (2016: 41) defines publicity as all information or action that brought individuals to be known to public (any information or actions that brings a person to public notice). The activities of the agencies are related to the spread of business (it is the activity of the company to report its own business news). All activities of the Agency are to introduce the product to the public through mass media (any activities of introducing the company and or its products to a large number of people through the mass media). Publicity, according to Herbert, is executed by a particular media, which is distributed through and to meet the public interest without paying the media (a message purposefully planned, executed, and distributed through selected media to further the particular interest of the client or organization without specific payment to the media). Otis Baskin et al. define publicity as a term that refers to the publication of news about the organization or the individual, who does not have to pay for time or space (a board term that refers to the publication of news about an organization or a person for which time or space was not purchased). Publicity as information is used by the media due to news value. This information placement is uncontrolled because the source does not pay for the reporting (Cutlip, Center, and Broom, 2011). From the definitions, it can be concluded that publicity is information that comes from other sources because the information has news quality, so the media believe that it will get a response from the public if they consume the information and it is free. The full rights to information belong to the publishing media, meaning that the source cannot control the development of information. Because of this, a Public Relations Officer needs the competence to write the information clearly and fulfill the journalistic rules containing 5W + 1H, namely: (What; Who; When; Where; Why and Who) so that the information is in accordance with the reality that exists and can be loaded by mass media in accordance with expectations and rules so that it can also build public opinion.

The principle in publicity is "let someone else tell your story", which means that it is you yourself who will tell other people to outside parties. But, as subsequently told by the media, it can be an analogy that to "let someone else tell your story" is when the institution performs the delivery of press releases to the media, the press conference, and press tour to the media, and then the news media will load it afterwards. The moment this publicity uses Public

Relations with the goal of keeping information about the institution can be carried out. It can evolve rapidly and touch the opinions and responsibility of the parties which require the rights of publicity because nature contains high credibility in the eyes of the media audience. Public confidence is of utmost importance to create the credibility of an institution.

Previous publications have been examined in researches conducted by experts. Printed publicity is potentially more credible than print ads (Lord and Putrevu 1993; Cameron 1994; Hallahan 1999). It can be believed that the publicity is more credible, persuasive, or effective than the marketing ads cited in the literature (Gartner 1993; Kotler, Bowen, and Makens 1996; Ries and Ries 2002) but without any substantive empirical support. Hallahan (1999: 339) reports that 2 studies support publicity whose messages are more reliable than advertisements, 7 are not consistent, and 3 have problems that are their own results. Hallahan concluded, "the evidence shows the news does not outperform the advertisement evenly". The location of Merdeka Walk Medan attracts the attention of prospective candidates for visiting tourists. Thus, Public Relations Officer should monitor and evaluate the place periodically in order, as well as the product, service, comfort, security, and menus. Corrective actions should be undertaken if needed. Planned improvements must be done at Merdeka Walk Medan in accordance with the program already applied before to have a more sense of responsibility to the public. This is in tune with the way the mind of Gifford's Work with Arthur Page who was born on 10 September 1883 as the editor of the World's Work, who believes that from the standpoint of broad public policy, the first criterion used in assessing a large company is their service is to the public (Aruman, 2018). This is so that the information generated will have a positive effect in conferring on an evening culinary tourism. Princess (2017: 4) also says that in order to achieve the image, Public Relations Officer needs to do publicity to avoid misperceptions that may occur either from the media or the audience.

Public Relations experts agree with the concept of Arthur W. Page. Policy-making institutions need to consider the effect on their public. This can be done either when the Vice President of Public Relations is ideally in institutions and is actively involved in decision making. PR Executive is to advise on the direction of the institution of public perception and the effect of the perception (Vivian, 2008). The researches provide an explanation that Tourism Office has also been doing publicity in the event of Tourism city of Medan. Activities are performed by Public Relations Officer with the purpose of bringing forth a message of quality information which will then be published, which is conducted by the Public Relations Officer Department of Medan Tourism.

## **2.2. The Details of the Task of Public Relations in the Development of Tourism**

Activities conducted a Public Relations Officer for the development of tourism information publicity is done on multiple tasks. As said by Kriyantono (2016:23), the work performed by Public Relations Officer can be abbreviated as PENCILS: 1. Publication Publicity, namely introducing institutions to the public, for example, creating a script in the spread to the media newsletter or articles; 2. Events, namely organizing the event or activity in an effort to form an image by, for example, television station NET TV that broadcasts Indonesian Choice Award in 2016 on Net TV's 3rd anniversary by inviting international singers such as Jessie J., Darwin, and Imo; 3. News, namely producing a piece of writing that disseminate information to the public, such as press releases, newsletters, and news. Therefore, a Public Relations Officer is required to master the techniques of writing; 4. Community Involvement, namely creating programs that are intended to create community involvement or the surrounding communities by, for example, holding an annual race for the community surrounding Hotel Santika in commemoration of the independence of the Republic of Indonesia. Public Relations Officer is

also expected to position the company as a part of the community. He/she is also expected to show a sense of belonging to the community; 5. Identity-Media, namely fostering relations with the media (press), which is very important for gaining media publicity. Media partners and Public Relations Officer in this case, need one another. The media needs a Public Relations Officer as news source and Public Relations Officer takes the media as the means to spread information as well as to shape public opinion; 6. Lobbying, namely making efforts of persuasion and negotiation by many parties. Public Relations Officer often needs this expertise in the event of crisis management in order to achieve an agreement between parties; 7. Social investment services, namely creating programs which benefit interests and social welfare, by for example, providing relief funds on "Trans TV Care Central Sulawesi" to build houses for the victims of Palu earthquake and Tsunami on 29 September 2018. Included here is the program of Corporate Social Responsibility.

Public Relations Officer has detailed everyday tasks every day, which is also part of his/her responsibilities towards the institution. The details of his/her work are to run the PENCILS mentioned previously (Publication & Publicity; Event; News; Community Involvement; Identity-Media; Lobbying and Social investment). What is urgently needed, which is also a crucial element in an institution or organization for developing regional tourism, is to develop an independent location for evening culinary activities in Merdeka Walk. The work of practitioners of Public Relations Officer is in contrast to marketing. Marketing emphasizes on product sales (selling the product), whereas Public Relations Officer emphasizes on reputation (selling the image).

### **2.3. Public Relations Officer of Tourism Office in Medan**

If PENCILS is applied, the potential of evening culinary activities can be improved. Experts define Public Relations Officer as follows: 1. John E. Marston: "Public Relations Officer is planned, persuasive communication designed to influence significant public" (Public Relations Officer is persuasive and have well-planned communication activities designed to influence the public significantly); 2. Frank Jefkins: "Public Relations Officer is a system of communication to create a goodwill" (Public Relations Officer is a communication system to create goodwill); 3. Tony Greener: "Public Relations Officer is a positive presentation of an organization to the whole public"; 4. The First World Forum of Public Relations Officer: "the practice of Public Relations Officer is the art and science of the process of analyzing trends, predicting its consequences, providing counseling to the leadership of the Organization, and implementing a planned program that will serve the interests of the Organization and the public"; 5. Cutlip, Center & Broom: "Public Relations Officer is the management function that builds and maintains good relationships between organizations and is helpful with the public, which affects the success or failure of the organization"; 6. Grunig and Hunt: "Public Relations Management is communication between institutions and organizations with the public."

Similarly, the definition of Public Relations Officer issued by the American Association of Public Relations Society (The Officer of the Public Relations Society of America/PRSA) as stated by Kasali (2006) is that "Public Relations Officer is the distinctive management function which helps establish and maintain lines of communication, mutual understanding, acceptance, and cooperation between an organization and its number; involves the management of problem issues; helps management to keep informed on and responsive to public opinion; defines and emphasizes the responsibility of management to serve the public interest; helps management keep abreast of and utilize effectively change, serving as an early warning system to help anticipate trends and user research and sound ethical communication as its principal tools". Kasali (2006) also mentions that the definition mentions some elements on the activity of

Public Relations Officer, which include: 1. Running the program that is well-planned and continuous for the improvement of organizational management; 2. Running the partnership between organizations with their public; 3. Monitoring awareness, opinion, attitude, and behavior both within and outside the Organization; 4. Analyzing the impact of the policies, procedures, and actions against the public; 5. Adjusting the policy, procedure, and action which is found to give rise to conflicts over the wishes of the public in an organization; 6. Conducting management consulting in making new policies, procedures, and actions which is beneficial between the organization and the public; 7. Establishing and maintaining a two-way communication between organizations and their public; 8. Making specific changes upon awareness, opinions, attitudes, and behaviors both within and beyond the organizational environment; 10. Generating new relationships and or keeping relationships between organizations and their public.

Public Relations Officer in the regional development of tourism functions when he/she is competent at the time of the work required and is able to do so optimally to support the purpose of the mission and vision of the Agency and ensure the interests of the public. The function of a Public Relations Officer can be seen in the statement by Kriyantono (2016: 21) which mentions that a practitioner of Public Relations Officer is to 1. Maintain harmonious communication with the public (maintain good communication); 2. Serve the public interest well (serve public's interest); and 3. Maintain the behavior and morality of the institution (maintain good morals and manners). While the function of a Public Relations Officer in general, as expressed by Rex F. Harlow (1988), is divided into two: 1. As a Method of Communication that serves as a series or system of typical communication activities; and 2. As a State of Being (realization) of the function that embodies communication activities that are institutionalized in the form of the section, Division, or Bureau. Meaning there are leading the institution. While the functions of Public Relations Officer according to Cutlip and Center (2006) are to: 1. Support management activities so that achieved the goals of the institution; 2. Create a two-way communication which is reciprocal with dissemination of information from the institutions to the public and transmit public opinion to the institution; 3. Act as public servants as well as provide input to the direction of the institution to the public interest; 4. Build relationships harmoniously from the Agency with the public, both internal and external relations of the institution.

It can be said that a Public Relations Officer is one of the functions of modern management that is inherent in the management of institutions whose goal is to create mutual understanding, mutual appreciation, mutual trust, and good will to gain public support for the creation of the corporate image for an institution or company. The Public Relations functions of a Public Relations Officer can develop tourism, particularly at Merdeka Walk.

Page says that "Public Relations function the most in our business ...[and] is turning the spotlight on ourselves and saw that Public Relations is actually located in any way of doing the job for the public interest. We should try to see which way the public interest goes and where it will take us. Public Relations should be as the first person to understand the problem before the public". Page also says that publicity cannot change the facts, publicity may act as a loudspeaker to broadcast good service, but their effectiveness fades if any bad service occurs. Public Relations Officers' task is not about how much publicity they made or created, but about the goodness felt by communities and companies.

#### **2.4. Evening Culinary at Merdeka Walk Medan**

Evening culinary is located at Merdeka square. It is right on the city square of Medan, North Sumatra, Indonesia. It is located in the area of Kesawan, and is the zero point of Medan.

Administratively, it is set in Medan Petisah. Merdeka square is surrounded by numerous historic buildings of the colonial Netherlands East Indies, including the post office, Hotel De Boer (Dharma Deli), the old Town Hall Building and the House of de Javasche bank (Bank Indonesia). Around it, there are Trembesi trees, which have been there since colonial time. The square has been there since 1872, and the Court has been actively used since 1880. At the time, its name is de Netherlands Esplanade. Various historic events took place at the Merdeka square, like welcoming ceremonies, namely welcoming the pilots who landed first in battle on 22 November 1924. In 1942, the name was changed into Fukuraido the Esplanade which also means "the field in the middle of the city". Its function remains the same, as the location of the formal Government. Culinary evening was established in 2005 during the administration of Drs. H. Alex S.E., Ak., MBA (born in Medan, North Sumatra, 19 May 1955; age 63 years), who was the Mayor of Medan from 2000 to 2008.

In Merdeka Walk, there is a location that will be used as a point of developing culinary tourism in Indonesia, especially in Medan. Evening culinary tourism that serves drinks on the menu is a product that has important value in the tourism industry. The food and beverage business currently contributes around 19.33% of the total tourism industry income from foreign tourists who come to Indonesia. The costs required to spend food and beverage are the second largest expenditure after accommodation, whose contribution reaches 38.48% of the total expenditure of foreign tourists. The contribution of food and beverage products increasingly and significantly supports tourism with the development of food tourism which emphasizes activities/adventures to consume various types of regional speciality food/beverage (Tanico, Dafila et al., 2016: 1).

Culinary evening is potential in Indonesia, especially in Medan, as it has a great potential to become the world's richest culinary tour with 17% of the flora and fauna in Indonesia and 5,340 food recipes (Arief Yahya in Sik Asik Trimirasti, 2017). Culinary evening in Indonesia is very big in food tourism because it has a wealth of menus (ethnic and cultural). The development of food tourism is also an opportunity for the local people to develop typical regional food and drink so it can be known more among the people of the world so as to increase the attractiveness of foreign tourists. Culinary evening is large enough to motivate foreign tourists to come to the city of Medan which will give an increase in income to the tourist industry of the region, as well as economic and social empowerment of the local communities. Without directional planning, the negative effects of the development of evening culinary tourism in Medan are changes on the social and cultural aspects. Especially if the tourist product is local or there is no clear tourism concept. In relation to this, Mathieson and Wall (1982) states that "the socio-cultural impacts are browsing impacts on the people of the host communities of their direct and indirect associations with tourist". Clearly, from the statement it can be seen that without a good handling of tourism, there will be no good impression towards the development of regional tourism. The development of food tourism also opens its market in the country.

Culinary tourism is an increasingly important topic for many purposes. Seen as a means to attract tourists and potentially distinguish destinations and attractions by way of association with certain products and cuisine, food is also considered as an opportunity to generate added value from tourism through the system of local and agricultural supply chains and local food systems. From the perspective of regional development, culinary tourism has also seen some of the ways in which the reciprocal relationship between food and tourism will contribute to economic prosperity, the environment, and social and community destinations, from the manufacturer. It tests the ways in which tourism and food can mutually add value from fork to plate. See, for example, cheese, craft beer, noodles, grapes; attractions, restaurants, and events; and a variety of

regional examples, such as champagne, Hong Kong, Jamaica, Margaret River, South of Sweden, and Tuscany (Hall, C.M. and Gössling, S. Eds, 2016).

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

The methodology used is a qualitative descriptive method that discusses objects, conditions, and facts by making a systematic, factual and accurate description, analysis or measurement. Facts are related to semi-structured and in-depth interviews on culinary tourism publicity. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner, with community relations and interviewing Public Relations Officers from the Medan Tourism Agency. The informants were: Susanto, Anes Syahputra, and Andhisyah Dwi Setyo. The interviews were conducted to reveal the results of the study. Nazir (1988) states that descriptive methods are used to regulate human status, objects, and conditions that were set, or influences that occur in the present class. The descriptive research objectives are to make a systematic, factual, and accurate description, analysis, or analysis, facts, characteristics and relationships between the phenomena investigated. Sugiono (2010) with a descriptive method for knowing and analyzing the effects used to make a broad context. Whitney (1960) is used as a descriptive method for finding the right facts.

### **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1. The Link between Public Relations Officer with Publicity on Culinary Tourism Development of Merdeka Walk of Medan**

The results showed that the publicity carried out by the Public Relations Officer who is competent at his works then generates the development of evening Merdeka Walk culinary tourism in Medan. This is related to the function of Public Relations that uses mass media to publish the event held at Merdeka Walk and also publishes potential innovations that reflect a diverse menu of regional and ethnic tastes. Even internet-based social media was used in publishing news about the beauty and comfort provided by the culinary pleasures at Merdeka Walk. Furthermore, it indicates the most effective publicity function on how to attract prospective tourists to visit Merdeka Walk.

Culinary evening in Merdeka Walk is one of the tourist sites located in the city of Medan. Its location is right at the point of zero city of Medan, but most tourists know more about Wajir compared to Merdeka Walk. Therefore, the institutions improve the function of Public Relations to carry out its monitoring and evaluation service, comfort, security, and completeness of facilities to provide culinary innovation, menus, and the implementation of quality event with the goal of making the location known.

To achieve this goal, Public Relations Officer must apply PENCILS on making publicity.

##### **4.1.1. Publication and Publicity**

Publicity is an important point in communication, because with the purposes of publicity, communication will be carried out to prospective travelers so that the place can be famous and people are interested in visiting Merdeka Walk. In doing the publicity, Public Relations Officer will write a press release about the communication process which has been employed by the media, both print and online such as online analysis, daily analysis, and alert from *Medan Pos*, *Tribun Medan*, and *tribunnews.com* with the expectation of a press release that can be loaded on the media.

Besides the activities that have been carried out, Public Relations tourism office was successful in organizing the 2015 evening culinary festival Merdeka Walk. It has succeeded in



making culinary as one of the economic driving factors of the community in Medan through the development of evening culinary tourism sector. Currently, Indonesia, especially in Medan, is known to host several events such as Games which was held at the evening culinary Merdeka Walk in November 2017. The participants who follow the Games were from a number of districts and cities in North Sumatra, Southeast Aceh Regency, and Pekanbaru. It now covers Riau, Riau Islands, Borneo, and Sumatra, along with foreign countries such as Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, Singapore, and Thailand. The event performed in July 2017 was located at Merdeka Walk with culinary and craft fair and also entertainment such as traditional dance, music, and acoustics as well as standup comedy. This event brought great advantages both for the society and the economy. The power of culinary tourism as tourist attraction was spread electronically and in print. Sponsorships from various domestic and multinational companies and business joined in and contributed to the local economy.

Publicity through media partners covered culinary bazaars and entertainment events such as traditional dance entertainment, band, acoustic music, and standup comedy. Evening culinary tourism events are also in demand. Therefore, business people and the local government continue to hold culinary tourism festivals in their respective cities. Culinary tourism events are culinary exhibits with cooking demonstrations and entertainment. This is to make people know about the culinary tradition in Medan, which aims to promote the culinary specialties of the city.

#### ***4.1.2. Event***

The event was planned with the aim to provide experience to the visitors. The experience must be able to leave a long impression to be stored in the memory of the visitors for a long time. Organizing events or activities as an effort to form an image is realized in a series of communication processes by making several changes and utilizing the area around Merdeka Walk to make it look nicer and more interesting so that it can motivate prospective local and foreign tourists to visit. The Medan City Government held an event entitled "Medan Culinary Festival" which was held at the Atrium Hermes Place Medan, from 30 September 2016 to 2 October 2016. In this event, I displayed 40 types of special culinary products of Medan. An event of Medan City Culinary Festival on Friday night at the former Taman Ria location was also held from 4-6 December 2015 with 40 kinds of entries from various ethnic groups. The culinary tourism industry also made the "Medan Ho Ciak Food Festival 2011" event on Sunday, October 16, 2011, which aimed to introduce different ethnic food menus in Medan, earned publications via Twitter and Instagram, and Info Medan net via Instagram. The Public Relations Officer changes several things that will be related to the messages and information that will be published to the public. And for that, the information on the website will be corrected: (Office of Communication and Information Medan, 2016).

##### ***4.1.2.1. Menu***

The list of foods that are complemented by the price of each is provided and displayed to attract customers and give value to the number of money and food. Increasing community needs and food consumption needs also require variants that are supported by the welfare of the community. Since this is also increasing, it therefore encourages the emergence of eating and drinking behavior outside of people's lifestyles, especially in urban areas such as Medan. Many families go to the Merdeka Walk in the evening to taste exciting new menus. This behavior can motivate the development of culinary attractions in Medan.

The menu will be improved so that it looks more interesting and gains the attention and interest of prospective tourists. The menus that are published online on [Tribun.Medan.com](http://Tribun.Medan.com)

seem relatively less attractive. It needs more touch up on the graphic design. The table wares hold be the ones meant to be used to place food on restaurant tables. Stylish and attractive table wares can induce appetite. For example, fork carving, knives carving of ice or fruit, plate cover, soup tureen, candelabra, oval silver plate, vegetable dish, vegetable bowl, sugar bowl, coffee pot, teapot, or cake/pastry(see Picture1):



(Picture 1. The menu at a restaurant at Merdeka Walk. (Source: [http://cdn2.tstatic.net/medan/foto/bank/images/makan\\_siang\\_20160613\\_120245.jpg](http://cdn2.tstatic.net/medan/foto/bank/images/makan_siang_20160613_120245.jpg), in the publish on Monday, June 13, 2016, 12:02, Editor: Liston Damanik, this article has been on [tribun-medan.com](http://tribun-medan.com), the author's uploaded on October 14, 2018)

#### 4.1.2.2. *Services Officer*

Fulfillment process through the activities of others which directly helps the media correct all that it takes for others as guests or buyers is called service. Any would-be travelers who intend to spend money urgently need the help of other people in that place to be able to enjoy the atmosphere. It can be realized without any problem, and thus it becomes sweet memories. Services and hospitality restaurant employees are desperately needed by prospective tourists. The hospitality and loyalty of employees will increase by providing training on communication skills with the theme of hospitality workshops in welcoming tourists and prospective customers at restaurants at Merdeka Walk.

#### 4.1.2.3. *The Comfort of Evening Culinary Tourism*

Medan, a metropolitan city along with its developments, will produce many changes to the security, comfort, and peace of the community. New and modern developments that serve as a culinary tourism center with cafes and offices are prevalent in the city of Medan today. Café sat Merdeka Walk are considered less comfortable because the visitors who are enjoying the food menu sit on a roofless cafe terrace and if it rains, they have to move to avoid rain without knowing where to go. In the future, a roof will be added so that it can protect tourists while enjoying the atmosphere of the place.

#### 4.1.2.4. *Security of Evening Culinary Tourism Location*

The cafes and restaurants are located at Merdeka Walk, where there are seats and places for visitors to walk. This disturbs the visitors who are enjoying the food, as it is too crowded. They are also at risk of getting pickpocketed because the position of the seats are right on the side of the road. In the future, there will be CCTVson the corner of every entrance and exit door as well as on the side of each cafe (see Picture 6):



(Picture 2. Dining area in front of cafes)

#### *4.1.2.5. Completeness and Ease of Facilities Related to Culinary Tourism*

Merdeka Walk is equipped with culinary attractions, sports location, a game park, and ATM galleries. It is close to the hotel, post office, and the parking lot. In the future, Money Changer kiosks will be added, and also places and special tourist clinics and media centers with competent officers who can speak English (see Picture 3):



(Picture 3. Source: <https://ceritamedan.com/author/redaksi>)

The location around the culinary tour of Merdeka Walk

#### *4.1.3. News*

The job of a Public Relations Officer is to produce written products to spread information to the public such as press releases, newsletters, and news. Therefore, Tourism Office will write a press release related to the communication process carried out. That way, information about evening culinary tourism can be conveyed to potential local and foreign tourists.

#### *4.1.4. Community Involvement*

To support the success of publicity with communication process, we plan to join or involve several communities namely the Upload Companion community. The number of members as of early February 2016 alone is 45,000 followers. The full UK upload photos can be viewed on your timeline, and you will immediately become a member. Indonesian Organic Community(KOI), the creation of a lack of public knowledge on food security in the market is the trigger that moves Christopher Emile Jayanata with the aim of sharing information through the community. Furthermore, Indonesia Food Blogger starts from the desire to create a forum that brings together Indonesian food bloggers around the world. Andrew Anne (an Navi jaya.com), Ellen Antheunis (rasa-indonesia.com), Elsie Suranto (blogspot.com), and Pepy Nasution (Indonesia. com) founded the Indonesian Food Blogger community (IDFB), in July 2011.

Besides that, it also involves the community around the evening culinary tourism location at Merdeka Walk in communication activities. It is hoped that there will be a sense of belonging to each of the activities held in the surrounding community and the community that is coupled.

#### **4.1.5. MediaIdentity**

To realize Media Identity, we foster relationships with the media (press) both online and offline, such as online analysis, Medan Analysis and Alert Daily, *Medan Post*, *Tribun Medan*, *tribunnews.com*, FM Radio 101.8 Mhz Beautiful Media Voice Handalan radio (Radio Smart FM / PM3TAB), 89.2 Mhz Radio Posapati Perkasa (PM3FBH), 96.3 Mhz Rothesay Broadcast Radio (Medan FM / PM3FBF), 97.1 Mhz Radio Sikamoni (PM3FEA), and 97.5 Mhz Prambors Radio/PM3FAO in the hope that the produced press release can be published in the media. To support the success of this communication and gather awareness and public attitudes, it is very important to get media publicity.

#### **4.1.6. Lobbying**

To support the success of communication, it takes a lot of money. Therefore, sponsorships have also been proposed to several institutions such as Bank BI, BCA, Telkom, and Pertamina.

#### **4.1.7. Social investment**

The communication process is more about introducing Merdeka Walk to potential tourists as an evening culinary destination to boost the welfare of the community around the place. It is expected that in the future if the evening culinary tour is known for its good condition and can attract potential tourists, the residents around Merdeka Walk can take advantage of this opportunity to open a business.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

Public Relations Officers who work professionally and competently, and the media as media relations (online and offline) can help develop tourism information and concern for the local government. The existence of Merdeka Walk evening culinary tourism, which was previously not well-known and popular, has now become popular due to the publicity of internet-based social media.

Some upgrades on its Medan tourist sites are required to improve Merdeka Walk: 1.The menus need improvements; 2. Service Officers need upgrading; 3. the convenience of the place needs fixing; 4. the security needs improving; 5. complete facilities and facilities related to evening culinary tourism need to be added. Improvements to these points can create positive perceptions for potential tourists so that positive news is published on the media. This publicity has the potential for the future development of Medan's culinary nightlife so that it is more famous for good image and is able to invite potential tourists to come back and prospective new tourists to visit.

Tourism Development conducted by Public Relations Officers with various actions as follows: 1. Publicity; 2.Event; 3.News; 4. Social Investments; 5.MediaIdentity; 6. Lobbying. From the results of interviews and analysis in this study, Public Relations Officer has planned to improve the work details that have not been implemented in order to facilitate the work of Public Relations Officers. This is done to develop tourism areas obtained through positive news stories uploaded by media crews at the evening culinary location of Merdeka Walk.

Advice from publicity researchers can also be applied by utilizing media on Instagram by creating a challenge in the form of photo posts in tourist areas with the most interesting captions such as #evening culinary hashtags or #fantastic Menu. The 10 best posts will be given a door prize in the form of tickets or vouchers to eat at the cafes at Merdeka Walk.

## NOTES

- i. A brief story of publicity as a Public Relations Officer was originally from the giant AT & T that needed someone who handled public relations in 1927. AT & T President Walter Gifford met Arthur Page an editor of World's Work magazine, and offered the position of Vice President. AT & T President, Walter Gifford, was a friend of Arthur Page, a magazine editor. Page was effective in *The New York Times*, January 4, 1927, reporting on Page's appointment with the title, Telephone Co. to Increase Publicity.
- ii. Culinary Evening is the contribution of food and beverage products that more significantly support tourism with the development of food tourism which emphasizes activities/adventures to consume various types of regional special food/beverage (Tanico, Dafila et al., 2016: 1).
- iii. The culinary tourist location of Merdeka Walk in Medan was inaugurated in 2005 by Drs. H. Abdilah S.E., Ak., MBA, the Mayor of Medan in the period of 2000-2008. It is located right in Medan City Square, North Sumatra, Indonesia, right in the center of the city at the zero points of Medan Administrative of Medan Petisah sub-district. Merdeka Square is surrounded by various historical buildings from the colonial era.
- iv. Publicity is all information or actions carried out by individuals, which will be known to the public (any information that brings a person to public notice); Business-related reporting activities (the activity of the company for reporting its own business news); All activities to introduce institutions, products to the community through mass media (Kriyantono, 2016: 41).
- v. Tourism communication has several main fields of study that can be developed as a field of study consisting of several fields, one of which is the communication of data. It is a human activity in conveying information about a trip to an area or tourist attraction that will be visited by tourists by enjoying the journey of an object to other attractions so tourists are interested and arrive at an action to visit (Burhan Bungin, 2015: 94).
- vi. An in-depth interview with Susanto, an employee of the Medan Pariwisata Office, was conducted on 4 July 2018 at the Dinas pariwisata office in Medan, North Sumatra.
- vii. An in-depth with Anes Syahputra, an employee of the Medan Pariwisata Office, was conducted on 7 July 2018 at the Medan City Tourism Office in North Sumatra.
- viii. An in-depth interview with Andhisyah Dwi Setyo, an employee of the Medan Pariwisata Office, was conducted on July 7, 2018, at the North Sumatra Tourism Office.
- ix. An in-depth interview with Wahyu Hidayat, the owner of an online media, was conducted on July 23, 2018, at Merdeka Walk, the culinary nightlife location of North Sumatra.

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