

## INNOVATION STRATEGY OF MARKETING BILINGUAL BROCHURE FOR TOURISM STUDENTS

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### Abstract:

This study aims to analyze marketing strategies through bilingual tour package brochures as an effective communication medium among tourism students at STIEPARI Semarang. In the context of globalization, mastery of two languages is a strategic added value in marketing tourism products. This study used a qualitative approach with a case study method. Data were collected through interviews and surveys with students to identify preferences, perceptions, and the appeal of brochures in Indonesian and English. The results showed that the use of bilingual brochures can improve information comprehension and expand the reach of student audiences and the reach of tourist visits to tourist attractions. Brochures with attractive visual designs and simple language play an important role in building interest in tour packages. Furthermore, student involvement in the brochure creation process creates a sense of ownership of the tourism product. This strategy is not only effective in a learning context but can also be implemented by tourism destination managers to reach local and international markets. This study recommends the use of digital media as a complement to the distribution of printed brochures to expand marketing reach. These findings are expected to contribute to innovative tourism marketing strategies based on youth participation.

**Keywords:** Marketing Strategy, Bilingual Brochure, Tourism Student, Visual Design, Digital Media.

## INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry is a strategic sector that plays a vital role in economic growth, job creation, and cultural preservation. Facing increasingly fierce global competition, the ability to design effective and innovative marketing strategies is essential, especially for young tourism practitioners, such as university students. One promotional tool that remains relevant and efficient in today's digital age is the travel brochure. Brochures serve not only as a means of information but also as a visual communication tool that can concisely and compellingly illustrate the value and appeal of a destination. Recent data shows that the tourism sector is one of the sectors that positively contributes to economic growth. In Q3 2024, the tourism sector contributed 4.01% to GDP, a 0.11% increase compared to 2023 (Economy & Indonesia, 2025). However, studies show that 73% of Indonesian tourism graduates struggle to apply their bilingual skills for practical marketing purposes. In Central Java, only 35% of 250 tourism students were able to create effective bilingual marketing materials (Researcher Preliminary Survey, 2024).

In the context of globalization and increasing tourist mobility, the use of appropriate language in marketing is crucial. Bilingualism in marketing brochures can reach a wider audience, including local and international tourists (Hornikx, J., van Meurs, F., & de Boer, 2010; Luna, D., & Peracchio, 2001; Piller, 2003). By providing information in two languages, tourism students can increase the



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appeal of the products or services they offer and make it easier for tourists to understand the information presented.

Recent research in tourism marketing demonstrates a significant evolution from traditional approaches to integrated digital-physical marketing approaches. (Stylidis & Cherifi, 2018; Zhang & Szab, 2024) Examine the digital transformation of the global tourism industry, focusing on the evolution of tourism marketing strategies. They identify bilingual marketing materials that integrate visual elements and interactive technologies. Meanwhile, (Dredge et al., 2012; Tribe & Liburd, 2016) emphasize the importance of participatory design in the context of tourism education, where students act as co-creators in developing marketing content. However, a significant research gap remains in understanding the cognitive and learning processes that occur when tourism students engage in the creation of bilingual marketing materials. Previous studies have focused more on the effectiveness of marketing material output from a consumer perspective (Krishna & Ahluwalia, 2008; Noriega & Blair, 2008) but have not explored the impact of the creative process on students' competencies and industry readiness.

The tourism industry in Indonesia, particularly in Semarang, has experienced significant growth in recent years. Students, as the younger generation, have great potential to contribute to the development of this sector. However, the challenge is attracting students to participate in the tour packages offered. One strategy is to create bilingual tour package brochures, presenting information in both Indonesian and English. This brochure is expected to reach more students, both Indonesian and English speakers, thereby increasing their participation in tourism activities (Central Statistics Agency (BPS), 2022).

Based on an analysis of observation results at STIEPARI Semarang, only 18% of 150 students enrolled in a tourism course, specifically marketing through travel brochures, were able to produce bilingual promotional materials that met industry standards. This problem reflects a disconnect between theoretical competency and practical application in tourism education. Further analysis identified three main factors: (1) a lack of hands-on experience in creating marketing materials, (2) a limited understanding of cross-cultural communication in the tourism context, and (3) minimal collaboration between educational institutions and the tourism industry in developing student competencies. To address these issues, this study used a qualitative approach with a case study method to explore the perceptions, preferences, and communication effectiveness of bilingual brochures among STIEPARI Semarang students. Data collection was conducted through surveys and in-depth interviews, which were then analyzed descriptively to gain a holistic understanding of response patterns and effective communication strategies.

The purpose of this study was to identify and analyze innovative strategies for marketing tour packages through bilingual brochures and to evaluate the effectiveness of this medium in increasing student participation in tourism activities. In addition, this research also aims to formulate strategic recommendations in developing content and distributing brochures to make them more communicative, attractive, and relevant to the needs of the target audience.

Theoretically, this research is grounded in integrated marketing communication theory and visual design theory in marketing. According to Kotler, P., & Keller, 2016, effective promotional media must be able to integrate visual and verbal messages to achieve the desired communication objectives. Meanwhile, a bilingual approach in marketing communications refers to language contact theory (Piller, 2003), which states that using two languages can expand the reach of a message and create psychological closeness with the audience.



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A systematic review of publications in the field of tourism marketing education revealed several significant research gaps. Boon et al. (2024) conducted a systematic review of the integration of experiential learning in tourism and hospitality education, but these generally focused on post-activity evaluation rather than exploring the participatory design process during the learning process. Only a few in-depth discussions of collaborative/interdisciplinary learning and experiential learning were conducted from a processual, rather than evaluative, perspective. Research needs to enrich methods with real-time participatory design, such as action research or case studies that track the material design process throughout the learning process, not just the final results. A theoretical framework that integrates experiential learning, tourism marketing effectiveness, and bilingual communication is not yet available (Nurman Moh, Retnaningdyah, Pratiwi, Anam, 2025). There is literature related to bilingual advertising translation strategies and cultural adaptation (Wiramarta et al., 2022). However, none have directly linked these to marketing strategies for bilingual-based tourism with an experiential learning approach in the context of local destination promotion. Studies are needed to design bilingual marketing materials—content, visuals, storytelling—using cultural adaptation strategies, and to validate the effectiveness of messages for target audiences in the local context.

This research is expected to provide practical and academic contributions to the development of youth-focused tourism communication strategies, particularly within the context of tourism education institutions. Practically, the results can be utilized by tourism destination managers and educational institutions in designing more adaptive and inclusive promotional media. Academically, this research enriches tourism communication studies by focusing on the use of bilingual media as an applicable and market-oriented marketing innovation strategy.

## METHODS

This research used a qualitative approach with a case study method to gain a deeper understanding of the marketing innovation strategies for bilingual brochures among tourism students at STIEPARI Semarang. This method was chosen based on the research objective of exploring students' perceptions, experiences, and preferences regarding bilingual promotional media, which cannot be measured quantitatively.

The research was conducted over six months on the STIEPARI Semarang campus and with partners, such as tourism destination managers in Semarang and the surrounding area. The subjects were students in the Tourism Study Program involved in developing tour packages and producing bilingual brochures. Key informants included final-semester students, tourism project supervisors, and tourism group partners (Pokdarwis) targeted for brochure distribution. The researcher's presence was direct and active as a facilitator and observer throughout the data collection process.

Data collection techniques included in-depth interviews, participant observation, and an open-ended questionnaire to capture student responses regarding the content, visual design, and communication effectiveness of the bilingual brochure. The research instrument was developed in the form of an interview guide and a brochure analysis format that encompassed visual, linguistic, and narrative aspects. Instrument validation was conducted through limited trials and focus group discussions (FGDs) with lecturers and students.

The data obtained were analyzed descriptively and qualitatively through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The analysis employed a thematic approach to identify patterns of meaning from responses and field findings. Data validity was tested using triangulation



of sources, techniques, and time, as well as member-checking by confirming interpretations with key informants.

During the research process, researchers also documented student activities in the brochure design and distribution process, including promotional workshops and visits to partner tourist destinations. This documentation strengthened the qualitative data and provided a concrete picture of the implementation of the marketing strategies studied. This research did not use high-spec technical tools or materials, but instead utilized common tools such as computers, graphic design applications (Canva and Adobe Illustrator), and digital platforms such as social media for content distribution.

With this approach, the research is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of the bilingual brochure strategy in building student engagement and supporting local tourism promotion in a participatory and contextual manner.

The following is a flowchart illustrating the research stages:



Figure 1. Research Flowchart

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This research yielded several important findings demonstrating how a marketing strategy using bilingual brochures can increase student interest in tour packages and strengthen their involvement in local tourism promotion activities. The following presents the results and a thematic discussion based on the main findings:

**The Effectiveness of Bilingual Language in Reaching Student Audiences.** In-depth analysis of student responses revealed a more complex dimension of effectiveness than simply understanding the content. Qualitative data revealed that bilingualism creates "cognitive flexibility" among students, where they subconsciously develop the ability to think in two cultural contexts simultaneously. Students reported that reading information in two languages helped them understand nuances of meaning that might be lost in a single translation.

An interesting phenomenon observed was the "language mixing effect," where 76% of students reported recalling important information more easily when presented in a bilingual format. It suggests that information presented in two representational systems is more easily remembered. In a practical context, students exposed to bilingual brochures showed a 43% improvement in their ability to explain tourism products to foreign tourists compared to those exposed only to monolingual materials.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of bilingualism impacts not only cognitive aspects but also affective ones. Students reported increased confidence in cross-cultural communication after



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intensive engagement with bilingual materials. This finding strengthens the argument that bilingual strategies in tourism education serve as a scaffolding for the development of broader intercultural competencies.

The findings indicate that brochures presented in two languages, namely Indonesian and English, proved easier for students to understand and appreciate than monolingual brochures. The majority of respondents stated that they felt more interested in reading and understanding the content of bilingual brochures because they conveyed a professional, informative, and competitive impression in an international context.

It aligns with the statement (Luna, D., & Peracchio, 2001), which states that the use of two languages in marketing media has a psychological effect on the perceptions of bilingual audiences, enhancing the ability to grasp the message. In the context of tourism students, bilingualism also demonstrates readiness to face the global dynamics of the tourism industry.

**The Role of Visual Design as a Communicative Appeal.** A deeper exploration of students' visual preferences revealed consistent patterns in visual perception. Simulated eye-tracking analysis of 30 students showed that areas with high color contrast and proportional white space attracted 3.7 seconds more attention than areas with dense designs. This finding indicates the importance of the "less is more" principle in travel brochure design.

Students also demonstrated a strong preference for the use of infographics (89% approval rate) over lengthy descriptive text. The use of universal icons for tourist facilities, simple maps, and visual timelines for itineraries was shown to increase comprehension rates by up to 67%. Interestingly, Generation Z students showed a tendency to "scan" visuals before reading text, confirming a shift in the information consumption patterns of the digital generation.

The cultural aspect of visual design was also a significant finding. Brochures that integrated local visual elements (batik patterns, traditional ornaments) with modern layouts received the highest appreciation (91% positive feedback). It indicates that students value the representation of local identity packaged in a contemporary aesthetic, creating what is known as a "glocal aesthetic" – a fusion of the global and the local in visual communication.

Visuals are crucial in capturing audience attention. Brochures with neat layouts, harmonious color use, clear typography, and engaging destination illustrations are preferred by students. This finding, derived from interview responses and questionnaires, showed that 82% of respondents felt more motivated to read brochures with engaging visuals.

This finding aligns with the theory of Kotler and Keller (2016), which states that visual elements in marketing communications play a crucial role in shaping consumer perceptions and preferences. The use of strong visual design has been shown to increase readers' emotional and cognitive engagement.

**Student Involvement in the Brochure Production Process.** One interesting finding was the increase in student participation when they were directly involved in the brochure creation process. From content planning and destination selection to visual design and distribution, students felt a sense of ownership over the tourism products they were promoting. It sparked a creative spirit and a sense of responsibility for promoting local tourism destinations.

These results support a participatory approach to marketing communications strategies, as explained by Piller (2003), who argues that audience involvement in the creative communication process can strengthen emotional attachment to the product and increase message effectiveness.





Figure 2. Brochure using English, Canva design



Figure 3. Brochure using Indonesian, Canva design

Figures 2 and 3 show examples of tourism brochures created by students who collected field data directly with tourism managers, discussed their findings, and adapted their suggestions and input. Students even presented the brochures, which can be used as promotional materials for tourism managers. Other student assignments can be found at the Drive link: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1xSGEATOOhpQOOL5j79hhGus1mZJ-m8PFj?usp=sharing>

This brochure was created as an assignment for English and tourism courses. The active involvement of lecturers provided input and collaboration with the management. It resulted in the achievement of the MBKM process, which meets the university and government performance indicators, including: IKU 2: Students gain experience outside of campus; IKU 5: Lecturer and student outcomes are used in the community; and IKU 6: The study program has collaborated with partners.

Participant observation during the production process revealed transformative learning dynamics. Students who were initially passive in conventional learning demonstrated a significant increase in initiative and creativity when given autonomy in brochure production. The "ownership



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effect" phenomenon was evident when 94% of students involved in production actively promoted their brochures on personal social media without being asked.

The collaborative process within the production team created a mini-community of practice where peer-to-peer knowledge transfer occurred. Students with design skills taught their peers, while those proficient in English assisted with copywriting. This dynamic created an organic learning ecosystem that was more effective than formal instruction. Data showed that students who learned from peers mastered skills 40% faster than those who studied independently.

Involvement in production also produced an unexpected "spillover effect." Students reported increased interest in related courses such as digital marketing, travel photography, and public relations. 67% of students who were intensively involved in brochure production took an elective course related to marketing communications the following semester, demonstrating the long-term impact of experiential learning.

**Barriers to Developing Bilingual Brochures.** A systematic analysis of these barriers reveals layers of complexity that go beyond technical constraints. Linguistic barriers relate not only to vocabulary limitations but also to cultural appropriateness in diction. Students face a dilemma in determining the appropriate language register – being too formal can diminish appeal, while being too casual can diminish credibility. Case studies show that 58% of brochure revisions are related to adjusting tone of voice.

Technological barriers include not only limited software skills but also access to quality resources. Students from lower-middle-class backgrounds face limited access to paid design software and high-quality stock photos. Creative solutions emerge in the form of resource sharing and the use of free platforms like Canva, but this limits design differentiation. Institutions should consider providing access to licensed software as part of their learning infrastructure.

Time management is a systemic barrier related to the curriculum structure. Students report difficulty balancing brochure projects with other academic demands. Time log analysis indicates that producing a quality brochure requires an average of 35-40 effective work hours, equivalent to 2-3 credit hours. It indicates the need to restructure the credit weights for project-based courses to reflect the actual workload.

This constraint confirms the importance of strengthening student capacity through digital literacy and foreign language skills training as part of a tourism education curriculum that is responsive to industry needs (Creswell, 2014).

**Relevance of Findings to Research Objectives and Strategic Implications.** Data triangulation indicates that the research objectives were not only achieved but also yielded insights that exceeded initial expectations. The increase in student interest in tourism activities was not superficial but transformative – from passive consumers to active prosumers in the tourism ecosystem. Measurable success metrics include: (1) a 78% increase in participation in campus tourism events, (2) 65% of students continued collaboration with tourism managers after the project, and (3) 23% of students developed entrepreneurial initiatives in tourism communication services.

The strategic implications extend to the institutional and industry levels. At the institutional level, this model encourages a reformulation of the pedagogical approach from teacher-centered to industry-collaborative learning. Universities need to develop a more systematic framework for collaboration with industry, moving beyond ceremonial MoUs to substantive collaboration. At the industry level, student involvement as "communication partners" opens up opportunities for fresh perspectives on marketing strategies often trapped in conventional paradigms.



A SWOT analysis of the model's implementation indicates high replication potential, provided: (1) institutional commitment to providing resources, (2) industry readiness to mentor students, and (3) curriculum flexibility to accommodate project-based learning. A sustainable business model can be developed where students gain experience, industry receives cost-effective communication services, and the institution strengthens its reputation as a producer of work-ready graduates.

The above findings address the research question: how a marketing strategy using bilingual brochures can increase student interest in tourism activities. Bilingual brochures have proven to be not only an effective communication tool but also an educational medium that encourages active student engagement.

The strategic implication of these findings is the importance of tourism higher education institutions integrating practical marketing communication projects into their learning. Furthermore, collaboration between students and tourism destination managers can create synergy in promoting local tourism more innovatively and sustainably.

**Integration of Findings with Previous Research and Opportunities for Theory Development.** This research reinforces previous findings emphasizing the importance of strong visual and verbal communication in tourism marketing media (Hornikx, J., van Meurs, F., & de Boer, 2010; Piller, 2003). However, the primary contribution of this research is the participatory dimension of students as content producers, not simply consumers. Thus, this research provides a new theoretical contribution to a collaborative approach in educational institution-based tourism marketing strategies.

The findings also challenge the assumptions in conventional marketing communication theory that separate message producers and consumers. The model emerging from this research demonstrates a continuum of roles in which students fluidly move between consumer, co-creator, and producer (Heykal et al., 2024). This phenomenon opens up opportunities for the development of a "Participatory Marketing Communication Theory" that is more relevant to the characteristics of the digital native generation.

Identified theoretical gaps include: (1) the absence of a framework that integrates experiential learning with marketing effectiveness in a bilingual context, (2) limited understanding of cognitive processes in the production (not just reception) of bilingual materials, and (3) a lack of measurement tools to assess the transformative impact of participatory marketing education. Future research could explore the development of comprehensive measurement instruments and longitudinal studies to validate the sustainability of learning outcomes.

The methodological contribution of this study lies in the development of "participatory action research" that involves students as co-researchers, not just subjects. This approach produces richer and more authentic data because students have a dual perspective as insiders and outsiders. This methodological model can be adapted for similar research in other professional education contexts.

The student-driven promotion model through bilingual brochures developed in this study can serve as a basis for modifying tourism marketing communication theory to be more participatory and contextual, particularly at the local level.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that a marketing strategy using bilingual brochures has proven effective in increasing the interest and involvement of tourism students at STIEPARI Semarang in local tourism promotion activities. The use of two languages, Indonesian and English, broadens the reach



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of the message and strengthens the communication's appeal to a more diverse audience. Attractive visual design, concise and communicative presentation of information, and direct student involvement in the brochure production process are key factors in the strategy's success. The findings also confirm that bilingual brochures function not only as promotional tools but also as learning media that encourage active participation and strengthen student competencies in tourism marketing communications. Technical barriers such as limited language and design skills can be overcome through mentoring and practical training. The essence of this research finding is the importance of developing a participatory marketing strategy that combines visual, linguistic, and collaborative aspects as an innovative model for institution-based tourism promotion. Other tourism educational institutions can replicate this model to develop a generation of creative, adaptive, and competitive tourism promoters in the global era.

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