

Social Marketing Communication in Fostering Local Community Acceptance of Tourism Village Development: A Case Study of *Gampong Nusa, Aceh*

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – This study examines how social marketing communication strategies were used by the Nusa Tourism Institute (Lembaga Pariwisata Nusa) to build community acceptance toward the development of Nusa Tourism Village in Aceh Besar. The transformation of Nusa from a conventional rural settlement into a community based tourism destination did not occur quickly. Early reactions were marked by strong resistance driven by concerns over cultural change, religious norms, and stereotypes about visitors.

Method – Using a qualitative case study approach, this research explored the process through which community attitudes shifted from rejection to acceptance and eventually to active participation. Data were collected through in depth interviews with local leaders, LPN administrators, UMKM actors, and residents

Findings – The findings show that acceptance emerged through a gradual communication process shaped by the components of the 7P social marketing mix. LPN introduced community based halal tourism as the core idea, built positive perceptions through education and demonstration, and used social media to display observable benefits. These stages of change align with the Theory of Planned Behavior, where attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control strengthened in parallel until residents felt confident and capable of participating. The study concludes that culturally sensitive social marketing can reduce social resistance and support the development of sustainable community based tourism.

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INTRODUCTION

The tourism sector is one of the primary drivers of economic growth capable of improving community welfare, particularly in rural areas (UNWTO, 2022). In Indonesia, the community-based tourism (CBT) approach has increasingly been adopted as a model for developing community-oriented tourism destinations. CBT positions local communities as the principal actors in the planning, decision-making, implementation, and distribution of tourism benefits (Goodwin, 2009). However, in practice, the development of community-based tourism does not always proceed smoothly. One of the major challenges frequently encountered is local community resistance toward the very idea of tourism itself, particularly during the initial stages of development. In fact, the success of CBT is highly dependent upon the level of acceptance and support from local residents, as tourism cannot function without community consent (Mason, P., & O'Mahony, 2020).

Various studies indicate that local communities in several regions of Indonesia have demonstrated resistance to tourism development in their areas due to concerns that it could undermine cultural values, trigger social change, and create economic inequality. Such resistance commonly manifests in fears regarding the influx of external cultures, shifts in social norms, and distrust toward external actors (Cole, 2011; Tosun, 2000; Putri, 2019). In societies with strong social structures and deeply rooted traditional values, resistance may become even more complex as it is directly linked to cultural identity and preserved systems of belief. Local communities often perceive tourism as a catalyst for social transformations that may not be acceptable to all members of society (Rana, S., Ghafor, A., & Aziz, 2018).

A similar phenomenon can also be observed in Gampong (village) Nusa, located in Lhoknga District, Aceh Besar Regency. Gampong Nusa is recognized as the first tourism village in Aceh. Initiated by the local community, Gampong Nusa has evolved into one of the most prominent community-based tourism (CBT) villages in Aceh. At present, Gampong Nusa has established the Nusa Tourism Institution (Lembaga Pariwisata Nusa/LPN), which serves as the governing body for the tourism sector in the village and simultaneously acts as the initiator of the Nusa tourism village. Nevertheless, the transformation of Gampong Nusa into a community-based tourism village was far from easy. Based on preliminary research findings and field interviews, during the early stages of tourism village development, the community exhibited considerable resistance toward the idea of tourism. This resistance was not merely passive; it also emerged in the form of verbal opposition, the spread of negative opinions through word-of-mouth communication, and an unwillingness to participate in tourism-related activities. Some community members perceived tourism as being synonymous with immorality, promiscuity, and practices inconsistent with Islamic Sharia principles and Acehnese customs. Furthermore, suspicions arose that tourism development would only benefit certain groups, thereby generating social jealousy within the community. These conditions indicate that resistance in Gampong Nusa represented an accumulation of concerns regarding threats to local identity, including cultural values, religious norms, social experiences, and perceptions of threats toward local identity.

Community participation in the development of Nusa Tourism Village has undergone a lengthy process. The turning point began in 2006 following the tsunami disaster. It was not until 2012 that the community began independently managing tourism activities through the LPN. By 2021, Gampong Nusa had gained wider recognition and was included among the Top 50 recipients of the Indonesian Tourism Village Award (Anugerah Desa Wisata Indonesia). The journey toward developing Gampong Nusa into a community-based tourism village involved at least three stages: the absence of participation, indirect participation, and ultimately direct participation. This

transition is particularly noteworthy, especially in understanding how changes in community behavior toward the innovation of tourism village development occurred.

Although numerous studies have examined community resistance in tourism development, there remains a lack of research specifically explaining how communication strategies are capable of transforming rejection into acceptance. In the context of community-based tourism, the success of tourism is fundamentally determined by the social support of local residents. One relevant approach for explaining strategies aimed at changing local community attitudes is the theory of social marketing and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). The concept of social marketing provides a comprehensive framework for explaining how an idea is introduced, negotiated, and eventually accepted by society. Social marketing emphasizes behavioral change through message design, audience segmentation, communication channel selection, and the formulation of anticipated social benefits (Kotler, P., & Lee, 2011). Therefore, the concept of social marketing may be utilized to understand how the tourism village concept was promoted to the community, particularly amidst strong initial resistance.

Meanwhile, TPB serves as a theoretical basis for explaining the process through which communities accept the concept of a tourism village. TPB explains how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control influence people's intentions to either accept or reject an idea (Ajzen, 1991). Attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived control also influence the willingness of communities to participate in tourism village initiatives (Pramudyawardani, B., & Hartono, 2018). In the case of Gampong Nusa, this theory is used to examine the factors contributing to changes in local community attitudes after the tourism village concept was introduced and promoted.

Previous studies concerning Gampong Nusa have largely focused on aspects such as tourism management, the implementation of CBT concepts, tourism development models, and the development of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) within Gampong Nusa (Atiqah, 2025; Hanum & Isya, 2018; Majidah, 2022; Munawar, 2023; Yusrizal & Nuraini, 2025; Rizki, 2024; Jadidah, 2023). This study, however, seeks to examine how social marketing communication strategies successfully transformed community attitudes from rejection to acceptance and collective tourism management. It also aims to explore the process through which such acceptance occurred. Specifically, this study aims to: (1) analyze the social marketing communication strategies employed by the Nusa Tourism Institution (LPN) in fostering local community acceptance toward the development of Nusa Tourism Village; and (2) explain the dynamics of community attitude changes from resistance to acceptance. Practically, the findings of this study are expected to serve as a reference for village governments, tourism institutions, and non-profit organizations in designing communication strategies that are more effective, participatory, and culturally sensitive in efforts to establish sustainable tourism destinations.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using a case study method. The selection of this method is based on the research focus, which centers on a specific object, namely community acceptance within Nusa Tourism Village. Through this method, the researcher seeks to examine in depth how the Nusa Tourism Institution (Lembaga Pariwisata Nusa/LPN) promoted the concept of Nusa Tourism Village and how the behavior of the local Nusa community evolved from rejection to active participation in the implementation of community-based tourism (CBT). Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews. Informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique based on the following criteria: (1) native residents of Gampong Nusa; (2) individuals who understood the development of Gampong Nusa both before and after its transformation into

a tourism village; and (3) individuals involved in the process of developing Nusa Tourism Village. This study involved eight informants representing the LPN, village leadership, local residents of Nusa, and tourism academics, as described in Table 1.

Table 1. List of Research Informants

NO	NAME	DESCRIPTION
1	Nurhayati	Head of the Nusa Tourism Institution
2	Mustafa	Social Media Manager of @GampongNusa
3	Sanusi	Village Head of Gampong Nusa
4	Abdullah	Local Resident of Nusa
5	Annisa	Local Resident / MSME Actor of Gampong Nusa
6	Ashabul Yamin	Tourism Communication Academic

The data analysis technique employed in this study follows the interactive analysis model of Miles and Huberman, which consists of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, 2014). During the data reduction stage, interview transcripts and observation notes were coded according to major themes aligned with the conceptual framework adopted in this study. Subsequently, the coded data were analyzed to identify patterns, similarities, and differences among informants, thereby generating a comprehensive understanding of the transformation of Nusa Tourism Village. The data presentation stage was carried out through thematic matrices and descriptive narratives to facilitate interpretation. Data validity was strengthened through source and method triangulation, as well as member checking with the participating informants.

In this study, the concepts of social marketing and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) are employed both as theoretical foundations and analytical tools in interpreting field data. First, the concept of social marketing refers to the 7P framework (Product, Price, Place, Promotion, Personnel, Process, and Presentation), which is utilized to identify and categorize the communication strategies implemented by the Nusa Tourism Institution (LPN). Operationally, each element is analyzed as follows. Second, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is used to analyze the dynamics of changes in community attitudes and behaviors toward tourism village development. Operationally, the three principal constructs of TPB are used as categories of analysis, namely: Attitude, identified through community views, perceptions, and evaluations of tourism, whether positive or negative; Subjective Norms, analyzed through the influence of social figures such as *teungku imum* (religious leaders) and village heads, as well as social pressures affecting community decisions; and Perceived Behavioral Control, identified through the level of community self-confidence in participating, including perceptions of capability, knowledge, and access to resources. These three constructs are employed to examine the process of behavioral transformation within the community, from stages of rejection and acceptance to active participation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Tourism Stereotypes from the Perspective of the Local Community of Nusa

Gampong Nusa was one of the villages severely affected by the 2004 tsunami. During the recovery period, the arrival of numerous NGOs and foreign volunteers provided new experiences for the local community while simultaneously opening their perspective toward the village's

potential as a space for education, culture, and tourism. From this situation emerged the initial idea proposed by Rubama and several other community figures that Gampong Nusa possessed the potential to be developed into a tourism village. However, the journey toward gaining community acceptance was not immediate. The Nusa Tourism Institution (Lembaga Pariwisata Nusa/LPN) required years to convince residents that tourism would not eliminate the cultural identity they had long upheld.

“We faced many obstacles in developing Gampong Nusa into a tourism village, and one of the greatest challenges came from our own community, who perceived tourism as a form of immorality and unsuitable for implementation in this village,” (Nurhayati, Interview, 24 June 2025).

Since the initial stage of the initiative, some members of the community expressed disagreement. Resistance emerged both openly and through everyday word-of-mouth conversations. The Head of LPN explained:

“Sometimes some community members would talk behind our backs through word of mouth, discussing things that did not align with their way of thinking and expressing their concerns regarding the development of this tourism village,” (Nurhayati, Interview, 24 June 2025).

The strongest opposition within the community was generally rooted in fear. If Gampong Nusa transformed into a tourism village, there were concerns that the customs and traditions long preserved by the community would gradually fade as more visitors arrived. For some local residents at that time, tourism was synonymous with entertainment, excessive leisure, and activities perceived as lacking social value.

“Many people in the community at that time did not understand the concept of tourism or what a tourism village actually meant,” (Sanusi, Interview, 5 July 2025).

The Village Head of Gampong Nusa added that resistance was also influenced by the community’s lack of understanding regarding the concept of a tourism village. During the early stages of development, those who rejected the tourism village concept held stereotypes that tourism activities were incompatible with Acehnese cultural values and Sharia norms, which constituted their social identity. As expressed by the Head of LPN, Nurhayati, some residents perceived tourism as “immorality,” “mixing between men and women,” and something capable of “corrupting the youth.” There were also concerns that the presence of tourists would introduce foreign cultural values deemed incompatible with local traditions. At the time, many believed that foreign tourists would bring lifestyles contrary to local values.

On the other hand, a small portion of the community also assumed that the management of the tourism village served only the interests of the LPN and that the benefits generated from the tourism sector in Gampong Nusa would be enjoyed exclusively by the institution itself.

“There were also people who initially thought that tourism was only for the interests of the LPN and that the benefits of the tourism village were intended solely for the LPN, when in fact that was not the case. Our goal in developing this tourism village was purely for the benefit of the village and for the welfare of the people of Nusa,” (Nurhayati, Interview, 24 June 2025).

Such assumptions eventually gave rise to social jealousy and concerns that only certain groups would benefit from the development of tourism in Nusa. Conditions such as these commonly emerge during the early phases of social innovation, particularly when information is unevenly distributed and communities are not adequately involved. Limited understanding of operational processes caused some residents to hesitate in participating because they felt they lacked the knowledge or capability to manage tourism activities. What occurred within the Nusa community aligns with research on social stereotypes. Hilton and von Hippel (1996) explain that stereotypes often emerge when societies encounter something new, particularly when information is limited or when the new idea is perceived as conflicting with the community's core values. In traditional societies, stereotypes also function as protective mechanisms aimed at preserving group identity and cultural stability. Hobsbawm (2006), through the concept of invented tradition, argues that communities with strong traditions generally resist innovations they perceive as threatening cultural integrity.

Within the context of tourism, these findings are reinforced by the study of Tse (2022), which demonstrates that stereotypes toward tourists frequently arise from collective experiences and concerns regarding shifts in social values. Such stereotypes are commonly found in traditional communities, particularly when tourism is associated with behaviors considered distant from local traditions. Studies conducted in conservative tourism villages in Indonesia, such as Baduy, Toraja, and Wae Rebo (Setiawan, 2019; Yudhistira, 2021), also reveal similar patterns in which initial resistance emerged because tourism was perceived as introducing external lifestyles incompatible with community values.

In the case of Gampong Nusa, the strength of Acehese cultural values became an important factor shaping these stereotypes. Acehese culture highly upholds social order, gender segregation, and customary regulations governing daily interactions. Concerns that tourism could "blur traditional customs" frequently emerged during interviews. These findings are consistent with studies by Setiawan (2019) and Rana, Ghafor, and Aziz (2018), which indicate that communities with strong customs and cultural values tend to reject new social ideas because traditions are viewed as a fortress of identity.

In addition to cultural values, Islamic Sharia norms also played a significant role. Aceh possesses a Sharia-based legal framework that influences how society evaluates new activities. Tourism activities were frequently associated with the potential for violations of Sharia principles. A study by Alfitri (2021) demonstrates that the legitimacy of religious leaders strongly influences Acehese society's acceptance of social innovation. In the context of Nusa, changes in community attitudes began to occur when village religious leaders, known as *teungku imum*, offered conditional support and explained that tourism could be implemented as long as religious principles were maintained. Another contributing factor was the community's limited understanding of the tourism village concept.

"The community still had limited understanding regarding tourism. As managers, we simply continued moving forward while continuously guiding the community regarding what they should do if they wished to participate," (Annisah, Interview, 29 June 2025).

According to Taylor and Susan (2013), individuals tend to develop stereotypes when confronted with situations beyond their understanding or control. This uncertainty becomes reinforced through everyday conversations that gradually develop into collective prejudice. On the other hand, the village's social structure also played a role. Since information was initially centralized within the LPN, perceptions emerged that tourism only benefited certain groups. This perspective aligns with Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1981), which states that groups who feel excluded are more likely to reject innovations in order to preserve their group identity.

Stereotypes were also reinforced by inherited narratives regarding foreign tourists. Stories concerning promiscuity, clothing considered inconsistent with Sharia norms, and modern lifestyles created the perception that outsiders posed a threat to cultural identity. The concept of cultural threat perception illustrates that stereotypes are easily formed when communities feel their identity is threatened by the presence of external groups (Stephan & Stephan, 2000).

All of these dynamics demonstrate that tourism stereotypes in Nusa did not emerge merely from a lack of understanding regarding tourism, but rather from a complex intersection of cultural values, religious norms, historical experiences, social dynamics, and perceptions of threats to local identity. Understanding this context became an essential foundation for the communication and social marketing strategies employed by the LPN to transform community perceptions in the subsequent stage.

Social Marketing Communication Strategies of LPN in Building Community Acceptance

Community acceptance toward the development of the tourism village in Nusa did not emerge instantly; rather, it required a lengthy process undertaken by the LPN and village leaders to ensure that residents understood, accepted, and eventually participated in the development of the tourism village. In their efforts to build community acceptance, the LPN adopted a communication approach based on social marketing. Wahyuni, in her book *Strategi Jitu Mengatasi Masalah Sosial di Indonesia*, explains that social marketing is a strategy aimed at addressing social issues developing within society (Pudjiastuti, 2016). Social marketing refers to the application of marketing principles and techniques designed to influence society voluntarily to change behavior for the benefit of both individuals and the wider community (Kotler, Roberto, & Lee, 2002).

This social marketing approach served as a conceptual foundation for understanding how the LPN mobilized the community under a shared vision and mission, transformed perspectives, and ultimately fostered voluntary participation. As an institution established to improve community welfare and realize village self-reliance, the LPN played a central role in transforming community behavior. Even before the LPN was formally established, there was already recognition of Gampong Nusa's potential as a tourism village through its natural resources and the capacities of its people.

“The LPN exists as a coordinating platform for inclusive tourism development without diminishing the local values within society. On the contrary, we are promoting the concept of halal tourism based on local wisdom,” (Nurhayati, Interview, 24 June 2025).

The LPN viewed the community as playing an essential role in developing the tourism sector in Gampong Nusa, thereby ensuring that the village would not depend on external parties in managing tourism. Before this ultimate objective could be achieved, however, the LPN first needed

to eliminate the negative stereotypes circulating within society, transform public perceptions, and eventually encourage acceptance of the tourism village concept. This study employs the marketing mix concept proposed by Kotler and Lee (2011), which consists of seven comprehensive elements: Product, Price, Place, Promotion, Personnel, Process, and Presentation.

The first element is product. In social marketing, the “product” offered is not a commercial commodity aimed at generating profit, but rather an idea, understanding, and set of values intended to address social issues. In this context, the social product managed by the LPN was not merely tourism as a commodity, but also knowledge and new perspectives regarding the collective management of village potential. These products were conveyed by the LPN through various methods in order to build awareness that tourism development in Gampong Nusa could improve the quality of life of local residents economically, educationally, and in terms of environmental and cultural preservation.

Within the framework of social products, there are two categories: tangible objects and intangible objects. This study focuses primarily on intangible objects. Given the broad scope of tourism village development, discussing tangible objects comprehensively would require extensive elaboration beyond the limits of this study. Nevertheless, tangible objects in this study refer to all equipment and materials utilized by the LPN in developing Nusa Tourism Village.

Regarding intangible objects, the first social product introduced by the LPN was the idea or concept itself. Kotler and Lee (2011) divide ideas into three aspects: belief, attitude, and value (Pudjiastuti, 2016). The idea proposed by the LPN was “The Development of a Tourism Village Based on Sharia Principles and Local Wisdom.” In relation to the belief element, the LPN promoted the notion that “tourism is not always negative” and that “the development of Nusa Tourism Village can improve community welfare.” These ideas reflected the LPN’s efforts to encourage society to become more open toward new ideas and move beyond the narrow assumption that tourism was inherently harmful. In addition, the LPN emphasized that with the existence of a tourism sector in the village, residents could transform any of their skills or resources into tourism products.

“We hope every member of the community can explore their own potential. If someone wants to turn their home into a homestay, we provide that opportunity. If someone is skilled in traditional dance, we showcase regional dance performances. If someone is talented in making traditional Acehese cakes, we package those as part of tourism products based on local wisdom,” (Nurhayati, Interview, 24 June 2025).

These ideas were communicated both directly and indirectly by the LPN through informal discussions among residents as well as regular village meetings conducted at the village meunasah (community hall). Furthermore, the Head of the LPN encouraged all LPN members to help disseminate these ideas whenever they had opportunities to engage with members of the community who opposed the concept.

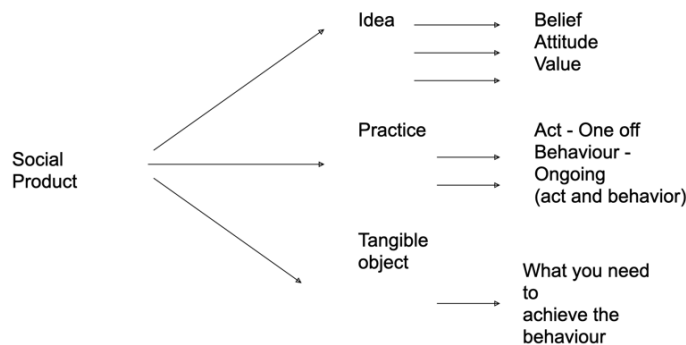
The next idea related to attitude. The LPN promoted the importance of community participation in the development of Nusa Tourism Village and emphasized that “Nusa Tourism Village belongs to everyone.” This aspect focused on shaping the attitudes local residents should adopt toward the tourism village concept. By promoting the importance of participation, the community was encouraged to understand how they should respond to and engage with the

initiative. The notion that Nusa Tourism Village belonged collectively to the community was also directed toward groups holding stereotypes that tourism benefits would only be enjoyed by a small number of individuals.

“We want the community to understand that the benefits of village tourism are actually for the people themselves. That is why we always encourage them to participate. If they choose to be involved, they too will benefit based on their own skills and resources, whether through dancing, cooking, weaving, establishing MSMEs, or producing souvenirs. Essentially, we want to help promote all of these,” (Sanusi, Interview, 5 July 2025).

Finally, the value promoted by the LPN was the belief that “tourism can strengthen local wisdom.” In this aspect, the LPN was not solely oriented toward tourism as an economic resource but also emphasized that tourism grounded in local wisdom could reinforce cultural preservation and Sharia values. This value was perceived as being the closest to the worldview of the local community.

Regarding social products in the form of practice, the LPN emphasized the behaviors and actions required from the local Nusa community to realize the primary vision of developing a tourism village based on Sharia principles and local wisdom. The social practice expected by the LPN was the active participation of Nusa residents in tourism village development. Participation could take various forms, such as attending meetings or socialization sessions when invited, while residents possessing skills rooted in local wisdom could contribute directly to the implementation of community-based tourism activities.



Framework of Social Product (Kotler & Lee, 2011)

The second aspect proposed by Kotler and Lee (2011) is price, which may be categorized into monetary and non-monetary forms. Monetary forms include village budget allocations used to support the tourism village development process, such as operational needs of the Nusa Tourism Institution (LPN) or the provision of facilities. Meanwhile, non-monetary forms refer to the time invested in tourism development programs in Gampong Nusa across different activities carried out repeatedly, including village deliberation meetings, routine LPN meetings, skills training, and community assistance in carrying out their respective roles.

In addition, the community also underwent cognitive and emotional processes in accepting the new ideas introduced by the LPN, which naturally required time to evaluate the potential benefits of adopting such values. Therefore, price is not merely related to material expenditure, but

may also be viewed as a form of social investment, psychological adjustment, and cultural adaptation that the community must undertake in order for the tourism village to operate sustainably.

The third aspect is place, namely the channel through which the LPN delivers its social products. In social marketing, the dissemination of messages related to community-based tourism involves three distribution models: One Step Flow, Two Step Flow, and Multi Step Flow. In the One Step Flow model, information is delivered directly by the LPN to various stakeholders. The LPN employed a personal approach toward village officials such as the village head and *teungku imum* as religious leaders. Furthermore, the LPN also communicated directly with the community through formal forums such as village deliberations, evaluation meetings, training sessions, and community-based tourism workshops. Through this approach, the LPN as communicator was able to explain its ideas comprehensively without intermediaries.

Meanwhile, the Two Step Flow model can be observed when the LPN first conveyed messages to key figures such as village officials, members of the LPN management board, or tourism guides. These figures subsequently relayed the messages to other community members through informal communication methods such as door-to-door interactions, religious activities, cultural events, and other informal gatherings. This two-way communication pattern proved effective because it utilized everyday language that was easy to understand and because the information was delivered by trusted community figures.

Furthermore, the LPN also implemented the Multi Step Flow model, in which messages were disseminated through broader communication networks before ultimately reaching the community. This included the use of social media platforms such as Instagram to strengthen communication networks through account collaboration features and media exposure regarding the awards received by Gampong Nusa.

“We often post on Instagram about Nusa’s achievements, such as ADWI (Anugerah Desa Wisata Indonesia/Indonesian Tourism Village Award) and Gampong Nusa winning first place at the ASEAN Homestay Award during the ASEAN Tourism Award. We package these achievements into content, and many residents of Nusa respond positively to it,” (Mustafa, Interview, 27 June 2025).

Social media subsequently became one of the primary platforms used by the LPN to influence local community behavior, gradually transforming attitudes from rejection to awareness and eventually acceptance. Mustafa, administrator of the Instagram account *@gampongnusaku*, explained that many residents only realized how attractive the tourism destinations in Gampong Nusa were after viewing the Instagram content.

“In the early days when Gampong Nusa became a tourism village, many people disliked it, and some were indifferent toward our tourism activities. However, over time they gradually began to accept it, and eventually they started supporting tourism promotion through social media. I noticed this change increasing after they watched the videos I uploaded on Instagram *@gampongnusaku*, and now many people help share Nusa tourism content with others,” (Mustafa, Interview, 27 June 2025).

Within the Multi Step Flow communication strategy, it may be concluded that the achievements and tourism activities carried out by Gampong Nusa became initial information that

was then packaged into various forms of communication, processed by the LPN, disseminated through social media, forwarded through WhatsApp groups and village opinion leaders, and subsequently spread further to others. Through this three-directional communication process, education occurred continuously and organically without requiring direct control.

The fourth aspect is promotion. Essentially, the promotional strategy initiated by the LPN did not take the form of conventional advertising, but rather a communication strategy or method of marketing social products in order to build community acceptance. This promotional strategy combined several approaches such as education, interpersonal communication, exemplary conduct, and religious legitimacy, all implemented through three communication process models developed from the hierarchy of effects model proposed by Lavidge and Steiner, namely Learn–Feel–Do, Feel–Learn–Do, and Do–Feel–Learn (Alan, 2013). These three models illustrate how communication processes in promotional activities may be structured according to the sequence of change or focus intended to be achieved within society. Knowledge (cognitive), attitude or feeling (affective), and behavior (behavioral) became the three primary focuses targeted by the LPN. However, the LPN applied these three process models according to contextual needs and circumstances. All three communication models can be identified within the social marketing practices of the LPN.

The Learn–Feel–Do approach can be observed through the LPN’s efforts to first address the cognitive dimension by increasing public understanding. This included emphasizing the values of social benefit (*khairunnas anfa’uhum linnas*, “the best people are those most beneficial to others”) and the importance of cultural preservation. The Learn–Feel–Do approach was primarily directed toward children and adolescents. Through the internalization of these values, children grew up developing pride in their local culture, which ultimately encouraged them to participate in tourism village activities as junior guides or drivers of traditional cultural activities.

Subsequently, the Feel–Learn–Do approach emerged within the framework of interpersonal communication focusing on togetherness and emotional closeness. The LPN management routinely opened spaces for dialogue to accommodate community aspirations through personal and persuasive approaches adjusted to local values. These interactions fostered feelings of appreciation, acceptance, and inclusion within tourism village management. Such feelings became positive factors in enhancing community understanding regarding tourism and encouraging them to accept and participate in tourism activities.

The Do–Feel–Learn approach may be understood as a communication strategy emphasizing exemplary conduct or direct action by LPN administrators in implementing tourism activities. In this context, LPN officials became figures who embraced all layers of society, while the involvement of children as junior guides served as concrete evidence that tourism could be carried out successfully without neglecting cultural customs and religious values. When community members became directly involved in managing tourism activities, such as preparing homestays or welcoming guests, they experienced satisfaction, self-confidence, and economic benefits. Through these experiences, a deeper understanding emerged that community-based tourism could generate positive changes capable of strengthening village self-reliance.

On the other hand, the LPN also constructed positive narratives to encourage social acceptance, such as highlighting the village's growing recognition at both national and international levels. Through these various approaches, the promotional efforts carried out by the LPN were not merely informative, but also emotionally engaging through persuasive methods deeply rooted in the cultural identity of the local community.

The fifth aspect is personnel. Personnel here refers to all parties involved in the development of Nusa Tourism Village. As a village implementing community-based tourism, Gampong Nusa involved all elements of society in the dissemination of tourism values and practices. First, the LPN assumed the role of coordinating tourism activities and delivering messages to the local community. Community leaders reinforced these messages through moral and customary legitimacy, thereby enabling broader social acceptance of the tourism initiative. At the implementation stage, village residents consisting of women, youth, and even children acting as junior guides demonstrated the direct benefits of tourism to other residents and visitors through communication by action. In such a process, the people of Gampong Nusa did not merely function as recipients of information, but also as active "social communicators" disseminating values, strengthening shared understanding, and maintaining the sustainability of the tourism village.

The next element of social marketing is process, namely the stages undertaken by the LPN in transforming community behavior. The transformation process within the community did not occur instantly, but rather passed through several stages, beginning with rejection and eventually leading to the willingness to accept the tourism concept in Gampong Nusa. The processes undertaken by the LPN were as follows:

1. Process 1: After recognizing the resistance emerging from certain members of the local community, the LPN conducted personal religious-based approaches toward village officials such as the village head and *teungku imum* as religious leaders. Ultimately, the village religious leaders supported tourism activities based on the view that tourism could operate within the boundaries of Sharia principles.
"Yes... regarding whether something is *halal* or *haram*, the *teungku imum* remains the role model. Since the *teungku imum* supported it and we remained within the framework of Sharia, we therefore established clear limitations as well," (Nurhayati, Interview, 24 June 2025).
2. Process 2: Consistently, the LPN also carried out interpersonal communication and audience sessions with the village community. At this stage, the LPN opened spaces for broad and open dialogue with the community through large-scale village deliberation meetings by explaining what a tourism village was, its benefits, and its compatibility with Sharia values. Within these forums, the LPN also accommodated community aspirations in the form of criticism, suggestions, and collective decision-making regarding tourism village development. This process was conducted consistently and eventually led the community to gradually accept Gampong Nusa as a tourism village.
3. Process 3: One of the strategies implemented by the LPN to further strengthen local confidence in tourism development in Gampong Nusa was capacity building, both at the individual and institutional levels. Capacity-building strategies became an important

component in ensuring that the local community recognized the seriousness of the LPN in developing Nusa Tourism Village.

“We frequently conduct guide training, homestay training, marketing workshops, and similar activities in collaboration with Bank Indonesia. In addition, the Tourism Office also organized activities in Nusa, such as inviting representatives from other villages to stay in Nusa and conducting homestay training here,” (Nurhayati, Interview, 24 June 2025).

4. Process 4: Utilization of digital technology in disseminating social products: the LPN consistently distributed content through the social media account @gampong nusaku. Through this process, many members of the community eventually expressed appreciation and ultimately participated in helping the LPN promote tourism in their village.

The final aspect of social marketing theory is presentation. Community acceptance of a new concept is highly dependent upon how the social product is presented. Presentation itself constitutes a strategy concerning how a product is packaged or displayed in order to be accepted by society and appear attractive to tourists. Within this presentation strategy, Gampong Nusa was presented by the LPN as a Sharia tourism village. This strategy was intended to ensure that all community members understood that the existence of Nusa Tourism Village would not violate the ethics and regulations applicable within the village. In addition to Sharia tourism, culture-based tourism also became an important identity of Gampong Nusa.

“Hospitality is the primary and most important aspect in tourism implementation. For example, in introducing traditions such as kenduri ceremonies and traditional games, we present them while upholding hospitality by inviting tourists to participate directly, thereby creating a warm and familial image that fosters closeness,” (Nurhayati, Interview, 24 June 2025).

The presentation strategy was implemented directly by the LPN through tourism regulations and through social media by uploading content aligned with the agreed identity of the village. This approach proved effective, as previously explained within the place element, where many residents only realized the beauty of their village after seeing tourism-related content uploaded on the @gampong nusaku account.

From the perspective of social marketing, the communication strategies employed by the LPN demonstrate that social change within society is not solely based on large-scale tourism development, but rather on how behavioral transformation occurs through the dissemination of social products. In her study, Hanifah Atiqah (2025) explained that “According to the RPJM of Gampong Nusa for the 2023–2024 period, the population of Gampong Nusa amounted to 1,047 individuals, and approximately 70% of the community participated in tourism-related activities.” Therefore, the transformation of community attitudes from initial rejection to active participation serves as evidence that social marketing was implemented effectively. Through the integration of the seven social marketing elements, Product, Price, Place, Promotion, Personnel, Process, and Presentation, the LPN successfully established a sustainable, religiously grounded, and culturally rooted community-based tourism ecosystem. Participation by community groups or organizations

in tourism development aims to improve community living standards (Wijaya, Yuliani, & Hasan, 2021; Yuliani, 2022). Therefore, it is essential to continuously ensure that community organizations function effectively.

From Rejection to Active Participation

The journey of Gampong Nusa toward becoming a tourism village was not a brief one. Following the 2004 tsunami, the arrival of numerous volunteers and NGOs began to open new perspectives regarding the village's potential as a space for community-based tourism. However, the idea was not immediately accepted by the community. During the initial stages, resistance emerged from various directions, particularly among local community groups who perceived tourism as a threat to the cultural identity and Sharia values they sought to preserve. The LPN recalled how some residents expressed objections through word-of-mouth conversations, questioning "what benefits would come from transforming Gampong Nusa into a tourism village" and arguing that tourism merely brought excessive entertainment and leisure activities. The Head of the LPN explained that the greatest form of resistance stemmed from the perception that tourism represented "immorality," "mixing between men and women," and something that would "corrupt the youth." These stereotypes reflected the extent of community concern regarding potential social change.

Some residents also developed suspicions that the management of the tourism village would only benefit certain groups. The Head of the LPN explained that some community members viewed tourism as "belonging to the LPN," thereby intensifying social jealousy and strengthening resistance. Lack of understanding regarding the operational mechanisms of the tourism village caused many residents to feel unprepared and even afraid to become involved. Such resistance is highly common in communities experiencing social change. Research on social stereotypes by Hilton and von Hippel (1996) demonstrates that resistance often emerges when communities confront unfamiliar concepts they do not fully understand. Within traditional societies, stereotypes function as protective mechanisms preserving long-standing cultural values and the status quo. This concept aligns with Hobsbawm's (2006) perspective regarding invented traditions as mechanisms for maintaining group identity, as well as Tse's (2022) findings illustrating how stereotypes toward tourists emerge from fears of shifting social values.

In Nusa, these stereotypes were reinforced by Acehese culture, which highly values social order and regulates interactions between men and women, as well as by Sharia norms serving as the moral framework of society. Alfitri's (2021) study demonstrates that the legitimacy of religious leaders plays a decisive role in determining the acceptance of social innovation in Aceh. Therefore, it is unsurprising that before the *teungku imum* openly expressed support, many residents chose to reject the initiative.

"After the *teungku imum* stated that tourism could be implemented as long as social boundaries were maintained, the community gradually softened and began accepting tourism activities," (Nurhayati, Interview, 24 June 2025).

During the initial stage, the social marketing strategy employed by the Nusa Tourism Institution (Lembaga Pariwisata Nusa/LPN) focused on delivering messages aimed at correcting negative perceptions and aligning tourism values with the cultural and Sharia values upheld in Nusa.

This approach was clearly reflected through various forms of personal audiences, socialization activities conducted at the meunasah, and the dissemination of narratives emphasizing that tourism could be implemented without abandoning religious and customary values. The key message promoted was that “tourism can be carried out within the framework of Sharia principles and tourism can strengthen local culture.” This message was reinforced with concrete examples such as restrictions on nighttime activities, gender-separated spaces, and dress regulations for visitors. This reframing of the message gradually enabled residents to perceive tourism not as synonymous with unrestricted entertainment, but rather as a means of preserving culture, improving family economies, and even serving as an educational platform for younger generations.

The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) explains that an individual’s intention is influenced by three primary variables: attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. These three variables gradually evolved, resulting in a transformation whereby the community, which initially rejected tourism, eventually not only accepted it but also actively participated in its implementation.

When community members realized that tourism was not entirely contradictory to religious and cultural values, the attitude component began to shift. When the *teungku imum* stated that tourism activities “could be implemented as long as proper boundaries were maintained,” subjective norms also began to change. Meanwhile, homestay training, tour guide training, MSME mentoring, and community involvement in tourism events increased residents’ perceptions of their own capabilities.

Subsequently, subjective norms played a significant role in changing the behavior of the local Nusa community, particularly because the social structure at the time remained strongly dependent upon the authority of the *teungku imum* and the village head. During the initial phase, part of the community’s rejection stemmed from the fact that respected figures had not yet openly expressed approval. After the LPN conducted personal approaches toward the *teungku imum* and village officials, the legitimacy granted by religious leaders became a major turning point.

The Village Head of Nusa also emphasized the importance of “clarifying information” for residents in order to eliminate suspicions that tourism represented the agenda of a particular group. Once information became more evenly distributed and public figures openly expressed support, social norms gradually shifted from rejection toward acceptance. These findings are consistent with Alfitri’s (2021) research on Acehnese society, which concluded that the legitimacy of religious leaders constitutes a primary driving force in the acceptance of social innovation. Within the framework of TPB, this shift in subjective norms caused residents to perceive supporting tourism as a socially appropriate action.

Over time, tangible evidence of economic benefits further reinforced these changes. Positive attitudes strengthened when residents observed direct advantages, such as increased household income through homestays, educational tourism packages, and the purchase of local products. This positive attitude aligns with TPB findings indicating that changes in beliefs regarding the consequences of an activity directly influence attitudes (Ajzen, 1991). Community-based tourism (CBT) studies also demonstrate that concrete evidence of economic benefits often becomes the strongest catalyst for attitude change within rural communities (Goodwin, 2017).

When homestays began operating successfully and household incomes improved, residents who had initially rejected tourism gradually began offering their own homes to be converted into homestays. Mrs. Nurhayati explained that several individuals who had once been among the strongest opponents eventually became active participants in various tourism-related activities. The Village Head also stated that after the management of the tourism village was transferred to the Village-Owned Enterprise (BUMG) and roles were distributed more equitably, participation increased significantly due to a stronger sense of ownership.

This transformation reflected not merely passive acceptance but a transition toward active participation. Changes in attitudes occurred as residents began recognizing economic benefits, while social norms shifted through support from local leaders and village institutions. Simultaneously, residents felt increasingly capable of participating through MSMEs, homestays, and cultural attractions.

Community members began engaging as local guides, artisans, homestay operators, MSME actors, and organizers of tourism package activities. Such participation represents a defining characteristic of community-based tourism, in which communities are not only involved in operational activities but also in decision-making, supervision, and benefit management. Field findings demonstrate that the people of Nusa progressed through stages commonly described in participation theory, beginning from non-participation, advancing toward indirect participation through moral support, and ultimately developing into direct participation through labor, time, and tangible contributions.

This transformation illustrates how communication strategies, social marketing, and the long-term efforts of village institutions succeeded in overcoming initial stereotypes, reshaping community perceptions, and building confidence that tourism would not damage cultural identity, but instead could strengthen community welfare without sacrificing the social values they upheld. The transformation also demonstrates how innovation agents such as the LPN, the village head, religious leaders, homestay mothers, and academic networks functioned as change agents who disseminated messages, mediated conflicts, and demonstrated the benefits of tourism. Their roles accelerated attitude change, restructured social norms, and increased community confidence regarding their ability to participate directly.

Through this long process, Gampong Nusa succeeded not only in building acceptance but also in fostering active participation that reflects the successful implementation of community-based tourism. Community transformation occurred not through coercion, but through dialogue, education, habituation, and tangible evidence that ultimately convinced residents that tourism could become part of the village's future without eliminating their cultural and religious identity.

Significant changes also occurred in the aspect of perceived behavioral control (PBC), namely the extent to which residents felt capable of managing tourism activities. During the initial phase, many residents admitted lacking confidence and considered tourism activities to be "the business of organizational people only." The village head explained that part of the rejection emerged because residents did not understand how the tourism village functioned and felt they lacked the capacity to become involved. Social marketing strategies were therefore directed toward enhancing community capabilities through homestay and service standard training, local guide

training, involving residents in events and communal work activities, mentoring MSMEs, and showcasing examples of successful families managing homestays. As technical capabilities and self-confidence increased, the community's PBC also improved. Within TPB, increased PBC enables individuals to transform intentions into concrete actions. Research by Mason and O'Mahony (2020) concerning CBT indicates that capacity building is a key factor enabling communities to move from passive acceptance toward active participation.

The emergence of active participation became evident through changes in community behavior observed both in data and interviews. Mrs. Nurhayati stated that residents who had once opposed tourism were now "even offering their homes to be used as homestays" and actively participating in training activities. The village head also explained that community participation increased after tourism management was returned to the BUMG and community involvement was broadened through deliberation forums and more equitable role distribution. These changes demonstrate that acceptance did not end at passive approval but developed into direct voluntary involvement. These findings are consistent with the confirmation stage within innovation diffusion theory and align with TPB, which asserts that when positive attitudes, supportive norms, and high PBC coexist, behavior becomes stable and sustainable.

The efforts undertaken by the LPN produced tangible results, although the process required considerable time. Change did not occur instantly but rather developed gradually. Intensive communication through meetings, education, and exemplary conduct by the LPN became the primary factors driving community transformation. In addition, collaboration between Gampong Nusa, government institutions, and academic networks also contributed significantly to this process.

- a. Change occurred gradually through intensive communication, meetings, education, and exemplary conduct demonstrated by tourism institutions, as well as collaboration with government and academic institutions.
- b. Key actors such as the Nusa Tourism Institution and local community figures played crucial roles as change agents who disseminated messages, mediated conflicts, and demonstrated the economic and social benefits of tourism.
- c. Social media and promotional activities further strengthened acceptance by presenting positive images of the village, cultural values, and community participation.

Changes in community attitudes and perceptions became visible as residents who initially rejected tourism eventually accepted it. Subsequently, perceptions emerged that tourism could serve as both an economic opportunity and a means of cultural preservation. This was followed by the development of community participation through active involvement in homestay management, MSMEs, tourism promotion, and collaboration among hamlets and institutions. Ultimately, these developments led to the formation of social acceptance in the form of internalization, whereby tourism became integrated into the identity of Gampong Nusa. To this day, this process has fostered social solidarity and collective pride toward the village.

CONCLUSION

The development of Nusa Tourism Village represents a form of social innovation that was initially rejected because it was perceived as threatening cultural values, religious principles, and local identity. Community acceptance did not occur spontaneously, but rather through a long process involving systematic social marketing communication strategies. The LPN utilized various elements of the 7P framework as a mechanism for introducing ideas, eliminating stereotypes, and demonstrating that tourism could be implemented without abandoning Sharia principles and local wisdom.

Changes in community attitudes occurred through three phases. During the initial phase, resistance emerged due to perceptions of cultural threat and suspicions that tourism would only benefit certain groups. During the transitional phase, residents gradually began accepting tourism after receiving education, observing the exemplary conduct of local figures, participating in training activities, and witnessing concrete economic benefits such as MSMEs and homestays. During the acceptance phase, active participation emerged, characterized by increased community self-confidence, stronger perceptions of capability, and a growing sense of ownership toward the tourism village program.

These findings confirm that social change within villages possessing strong cultural norms requires communication strategies that are carefully planned, participatory, and value-based. The LPN successfully functioned as a change agent capable of bridging traditional values with the demands of tourism development. Therefore, this study reinforces the understanding that social marketing constitutes an effective approach for building community acceptance and collaboration within the development of community-based tourism.

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