ARTCHIVE

VISUAL COMMUNICATION DESIGN OF SIGNAGE IN THE GENTALA ARASY JAMBI TOURIST AREA

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INFO ARTICLE

ABSTRACT

Gentala Arasy Tower is an icon of Jambi City and a tourist destination that residents and domestic tourists widely visit. The government targets Jambi as one of the provinces that makes the tourism sector one of the priorities for regional development. However, the infrastructure in the tourist area is not yet adequate to encourage this achievement, one of which is the absence of signage or a sign system and directions in the Gentala Arasy area. Signage is one of the important facilities to support the mobility of tourists or even residents who have never visited and do not know what is in the Gentala Arasy tourist area. The design of signage in the Gentala Arasy tourist area is expected to help tourists easily access tourist locations and public facilities properly and communicate important information while in the tourist area. The signage design is not only intended as a sign system and directions but also as a strengthening of the image and visual identity of the Gentala Arasy tourist area. The signage design uses bright colours with sans-serif typography so that visitors can easily recognise and read the signage, along with the information content and signs. The placement of signage in the tourist area is adjusted based on the category of form and function.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one sector that contributes to regional income and the growth of the community's economy. In addition to the material benefits, the tourism industry can build or improve the image of a place or region through management and contributions from various parties. Through the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, the Government seeks to encourage the creation of quality tourism through sustainable tourism development.

"Sustainable tourism is the development of a tourism concept that can provide long-term impacts, both on the environment, social, cultural, and economic for the present and future of all local communities and visiting tourists." Destinasi wisata berbasis sustainable tourism di Indonesia. (2021, November 12). Retrieved on November 6, 2024 from the article: www.kemenparekraf.go.id/hasil-pencarian/destinasi-wisata-berbasis-sustainable-tourism-di-indonesia.

Jambi is one of the provinces that prioritizes the tourism sector for regional development. Its natural diversity and cultural heritage have great potential to attract both domestic and foreign tourists. Tourist destinations like the Muaro Jambi Temple, Geopark Merangin, and cultural destinations like the Gentala Arasy Tower show that Jambi has tourism assets and can compete globally.

Gentala Arasy Tower was built in the cultural heritage area of Seberang Jambi City, namely in Kampung Arab Melayu, Pelayangan, Jambi City. There is a Jambi cultural museum inside this 80-meter-high tower, which presents hundreds of artefacts and collections of historical facts from Jambi in the past, especially the history of the arrival and development of Islam in Jambi Province. One of the monumental ones is the Al-Qur'an Mushaf Melayu Jambi, measuring 125 x 180 cm. The combination of Arab (Islamic) and Malay cultures is the philosophy underlying the construction of the tower's architecture. The character and beauty of the two cultural heritages are reflected in every corner, making it a visually appealing structure.

Since its inauguration in 2015, the Gentala Arasy Tower has become one of the icons of Jambi City and a tourist destination that both local residents and domestic tourists visit widely. In addition to the central tower, the Gentala Arasy tourist area also has several other destinations that are no less interesting to visit, such as the Gentala Arasy pedestrian, the Gentala Arasy Museum, souvenir centres, and two-dimensional reliefs of the spread of Islam. The public facilities available include an Amphitheater, prayer room, and toilets.

However, it is regrettable that this tourist spot, which is always crowded with visitors, does not have a sign system or signage; even based on documentation obtained through the internet and field surveys, no traces or signs of signage were found in this area, even though signage is one of the important infrastructures to facilitate

the mobility of tourists or even residents who have never visited and do not know what is in the Gentala Arasy tourist area. According to Spillane (1994:69), the fulfilment and creation of infrastructure are two ways to create a suitable atmosphere for tourism development.

The existence of signage at tourist locations is an important element that helps the goals and achievements of tourism activities. Based on its nature, which can communicate meaning and commands through visual language, the function of signage, apart from being a tourist location infrastructure, is also considered capable of supporting the role of tour organizers or tour guides in communicating important information that tourists need to know. In contrast, in the tourist area, especially natural tourism areas and tourism with a large area and many facilities available. According to Yoeti (1997:2), Tourism development must align with national development, as planned by the Government through the Ministry.

METHOD

The method underlying this research and design is qualitative. A qualitative method is an approach that focuses on observing the object of research in depth. According to Moleong in Herdiansyah (2010:9), qualitative research is scientific research that aims to naturally understand a phenomenon in a social context by prioritizing the process of deep communication interaction between researchers and the phenomenon being studied. So, the main achievement of using this method is the richness of descriptions that explain the condition of the problem.

Primary research data were obtained through field observation results, namely in the Gentala Arasy tourist area. Observations were conducted starting from the entrance located on Raden Pamuk St., Pasar Jambi, the Gentala Arasy pedestrian area, and the main area of the Gentala Arasy tower located in Kota Seberang Jambi to determine strategic points for placing signage.

The collected observation data were then analyzed using the SWOT data analysis technique, namely Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Threat, supported by descriptive analysis. This analysis technique is used to identify the cause of the problem. Depicting the analysis results helps in formulating the problem and finding solutions.

SWOT Analysis

1. Strength

The vast and strategic Gentala Arasy Tower tourist area is in the centre of Jambi city. It is surrounded by supporting sectors such as the primary market, mall, street food, and souvenir centres. Gentala Arasy Tower is easily accessible from various directions using motorbikes, cars, and tourist buses.

2. Weakness

No signage in the Menara Gentala Arasy tourist area communicates important information to visitors, but there is a sign system that guides to various tourist locations and public facilities.

3. Opportunity

The design of signage in the Gentala Arasy tourist area is hoped to help facilitate tourists' mobility in accessing tourist locations and public facilities appropriately and communicate important information while in the tourist area.

4. Threat

The lack of signage in the Gentala Arasy tourist area can affect visitor satisfaction and lead to miscommunication of important information.

Analysis Conclusion

Based on the results of the SWOT analysis, it can be concluded that the presence of signage in the Gentala Arasy tourist area is significant and is one of the factors that influences the image of the tourist area. Signage design solves visual communication problems that fill visitors' needs for information and locations in the tourist area, offering convenience in finding locations and knowing the directions to the location. In addition to being a tourist infrastructure, signage also has the potential to increase the economy around tourist locations, especially those directly integrated with tourist locations or managed by tourist providers, through directions or information boards that direct visitors to the souvenir centre.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Signage in tourist areas is a critical infrastructure; in addition to being a medium of information, signage also creates conducive and orderly tourism activities. Properly designed signage will be an attraction and have an identity that represents the tourist attraction so that it will effectively build a good image and reputation. In addition to functioning as an information provider and directional indicator, signage also plays a role in communicating various other forms of information, such as warnings, operational, and interpretive. (Calori & Vanden-Eynden, 2015:5)

Important functions of signage include:

1. Identification is a tool for identifying a place or destination in an environment.
2. Directional, a tool for indicating the direction of a particular place or destination.
3. Warning: a sign that warns of a danger or safety procedure that must be followed.
4. Regulatory and Prohibitory is a sign that informs of regulations and prohibitions and aims to regulate visitor behaviour at the location.
5. Operational, a sign that explains procedures or operational procedures.
6. An interpretive is a communication tool that helps visitors understand the meaning or information in a place. It usually contains historical information, maps, artefacts, etc. (Calori & Vanden-Eynden, 2015, p. 93).

Based on its form and application, signage is divided into several types:

1. Freestanding or ground-mounted signage installed or standing on the ground.
2. Suspended or ceiling-hang signage that is hung from the ceiling.
3. Projecting or flag-mounted signage installed like a flag, usually installed upright or vertically on the wall.
4. Flush or flat wall-mounted signage installed flat or attached to the wall.

Design Process

The main idea of this design concept is to facilitate visitors through a visual communication design approach in the form of signage. The main principles applied to the design concept include:

1. Informative

The location information on the signage is in Indonesian, making it easy for visitors to understand. The information represents important locations or destinations in the tourist area. Some signs also use additional pictograms on toilets, signs prohibiting littering, and prohibitions on climbing pedestrian fences. Using pictograms is intended to provide ease of understanding for local and foreign tourists.

2. Clarity

Clarity is divided into two types. The first is clarity in choosing the type and size of the signage font. Signage design uses sans-serif typography because this type of letter has a firm character and a high level of legibility or readability. Looking at functional developments, sans-serif letters are considered the perfect choice because they are easier to read (Sihombing, 2001, p. 53). The text size is adjusted based on the placement point of the sign and the reading distance of the text by visitors; for example, directional signs use large text sizes based on the need so visitors can read the signs and descriptions from a maximum distance of 20 meters. Kusrianto (2007:191) wrote that typography must be able to communicate in its strongest form, clarity, and legibility.

The second clarity is the use of colour for signage and its placement. A combination of contrasting colours, such as light and dark, has a high clarity and readable value. All signage uses the same colour, namely yellow as the background and black as the text colour, except for the prohibition signage, which combines red and white to provide more emphasis and attention.

Yellow was chosen as the primary colour of the signage because it represents the visual identity of the Gentala Arasy tourist area, which uses a lot of yellow and green colours on the central tower and surrounding buildings. Yellow also has a high brightness level (Sanyoto, 2010, p. 53), so it can attract visitors' attention and is easy to find both day and night. Because the Gentala Arasy tourist area is open 24 hours, except for the museum.
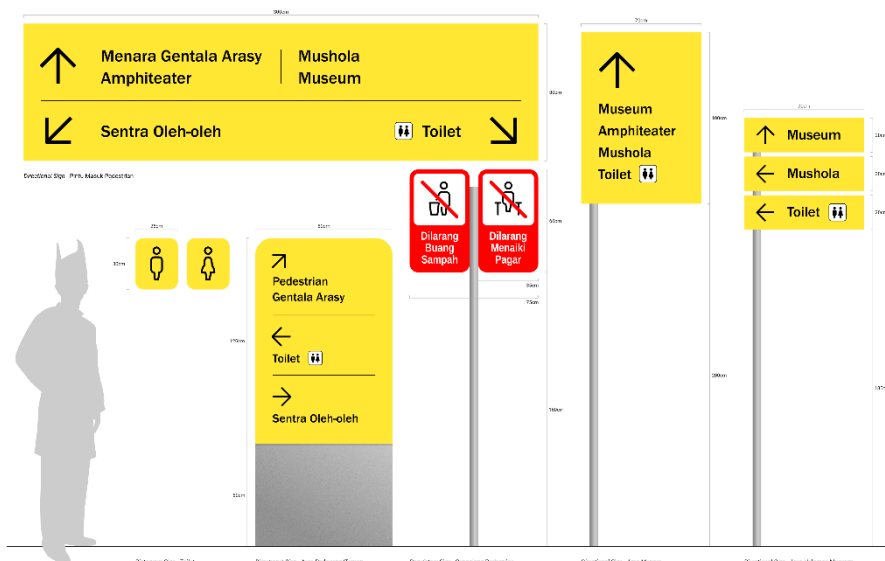
Figure 1. Signage design for the Gentala Arasy tourist area
Source : Aryadwipa A. Faradhiga, 2025

The placement of signage is adjusted based on its category of form and function. The category that functions as directional consists of ceiling-hang and ground-mounted signs. A ceiling-hang sign is located in the lobby of the pedestrian entrance on Raden Pamuk St., becoming the first signage to inform visitors of the direction to the Gentala Arasy tower, museum, amphitheatre, souvenir centre, prayer room, and toilet.
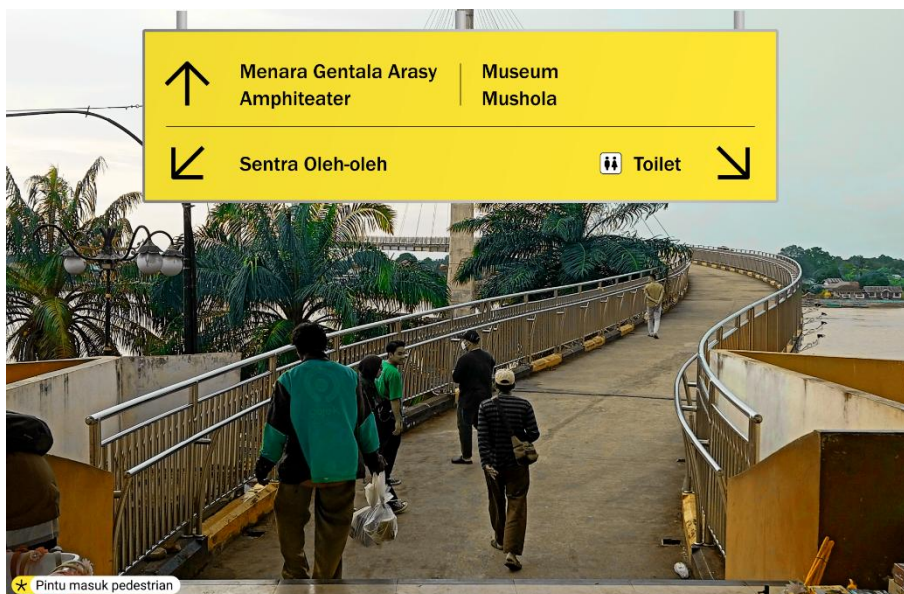

Figure 2. Prototype of signage placement in the Gentala Arasy tourist area
Source : Aryadwipa A. Faradhiga, 2025

The ground-mounted sign at the entrance of the market area directs visitors to climb the stairs to the pedestrian entrance lobby, while the sign located at the end of the pedestrian walkway and in the front yard of the museum is further signage that directs visitors to the museum, amphitheater, prayer room, and toilets.
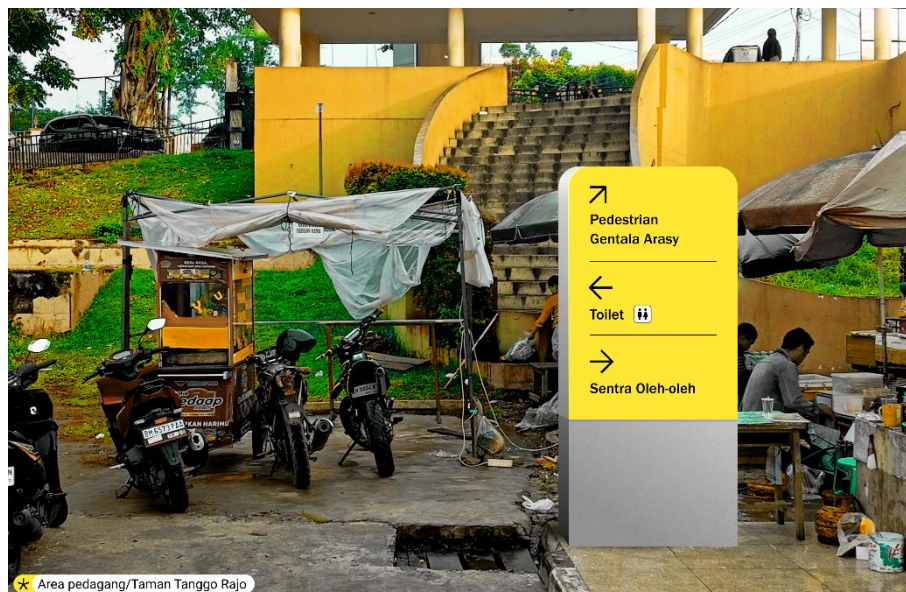

Figure 3. Prototype of signage placement in the Gentala Arasy tourist area
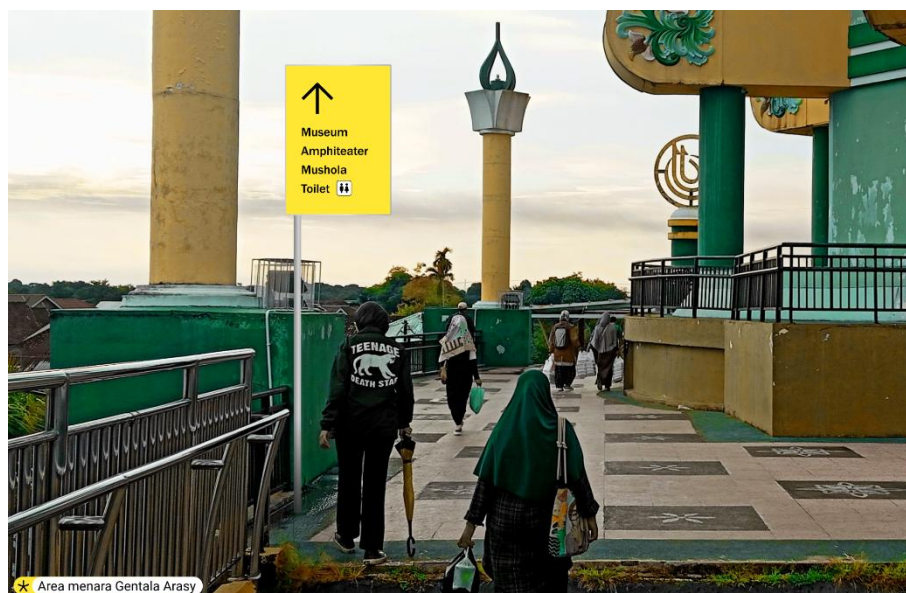Source : Aryadwipa A. Faradhiga, 2025

Figure 4. Prototype of signage placement in the Gentala Arasy tourist area
Source : Aryadwipa A. Faradhiga, 2025

The category that functions as regulatory consists of ground-mounted signs for signage prohibiting littering and prohibiting climbing pedestrian fences. The category that functions as identification consists of wall-mounted signs for signage placed in toilets.

CONCLUSION

The design of visual communication signage in the Gentala Arasy tourist area is a solution step that aims to help realize a sustainable tourism-based destination by completing tourism infrastructure and instruments. The existence of signage in tourist attractions cannot be ignored, considering the many benefits achieved. Signage plays a role in supporting the achievement of conducive and orderly tourism activities.

Strengthening the image and visual identity of the Gentala Arasy tourist area is realized through the use of yellow colour applied to each sign, which is supported by the use of sans-serif typography so that the existence of signage, along with the content of information and signs, is easily recognized and read by visitors. The placement of signage in the tourist area is adjusted based on the category of form and function.

In addition, other factors support the success of visual communication, such as adequate lighting in the signage area and regular maintenance by both visitors and authorized parties. Without the support of awareness and shared responsibility, signage is only considered a single-use property that is waiting to become obsolete.

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