

Smart City Branding: Kota Manado

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The SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) have seventeen development priorities for UN member countries. The eleventh goal is to build inclusive, safe, durable, and sustainable cities and settlements. Thus, Indonesia's smart city branding should align with the SDGs' sustainable city concept. Indonesia's 34 provinces are divided into 98 cities and 416 districts. The Ministry of Communication and Information Technology of the Republic of Indonesia drives the country's intelligent city initiative. In 2017, Manado City became one of Indonesia's first 100 smart cities.

This article uses a qualitative approach with exploratory research by observation-visiting Manado, relating with the people, meeting and interviewing government officials and tourism experts, and then triangulating it with an internet news articles search. It can be inferred that the idea of smart city and city branding is considered a top-down policy from the central government. Policymakers and the Manadonese tourism community work in isolation, resulting in "diversity in harmony" remaining a slogan rather than being promoted as a solid brand.

The findings, diversity in harmony, truly serve as the DNA of Manado. However, intelligent city branding requires a collaborative effort from a visionary government, the tourism community, and the inhabitants.

Keywords: city branding, SDGs, smart city, Manado

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Introduction

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have seventeen areas that become references for countries that are members of the United Nations to carry out development. The eleventh goal of the SDGs is to build cities and settlements that are inclusive, safe, durable, and sustainable. This goal operationally has small targets to be achieved by 2030, including: (i) By 2030, ensure access to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services for all and improve the quality of slum settlements; (ii) By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improve road safety, by increasing public

transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children -children, people with disabilities and the elderly; (iii) By 2030, promote inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable settlement planning and management in every country; (iv) Strengthen efforts to protect and preserve the world's cultural and natural heritage; (v) By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially reduce the direct economic losses associated with global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the

poor and the being in a vulnerable situation; (vi) By 2030, reduce the adverse environmental impacts per capita in cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management; (vii) By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, and green public spaces, especially for women and children, the elderly and persons with disabilities; (viii) Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning; (ix) By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusiveness, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and developing and implementing, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, and holistic disaster risk management at all levels; (x) Support least developed countries, including through financial and technical assistance, in building sustainable and durable buildings using local materials (Sustainable Development Goals, n.d.). The Ministry of Communication and Information Technology of the Republic of Indonesia is the motor for implementing smart cities in Indonesia. Thirty-four provinces in Indonesia are divided into 98 towns and 416 districts. Manado City is included in Indonesia's first 100 smart cities, starting in 2017. In North Sulawesi province, Tomohon City is included in the first 25 intelligent city batches, while Manado City is in the second smart city batch. This paper discusses Manado's smart city branding strategy since 2018 and the role of digital communication in branding the city of Manado to become an empowered and globally ready region. It aims to produce a branding campaign pattern for Manado City that can be used as a framework for evaluation and duplication in 500 other cities throughout Indonesia, specifically in the dimension of smart branding in smart cities, according to the smart city guidebook from Kominfo.

Literature Review

This research is structured with a framework of thinking starting from a brand management strategy. Traditionally, a brand is a set of mental associations

that customers have which give value to a product or service (Keller, 1998). Kapferer (2012) defines brands as having financial value because brands create assets that stick in the hearts and minds of customers, distributors, and opinion leaders. The manifestations of these assets include brand awareness, belief in exclusivity, excellence, valuable benefits and emotional bonds. Objects that can be managed into a brand are not limited to products, services, people or individuals, and destinations to a country. While the brand referred to in this paper is a CITY, and this concept is then known as city branding. The title of this research is SMART CITY BRANDING: KOTA MANADO. It consists of two main concepts, namely smart city and city branding. The smart city concept is a city development that emphasises the importance of innovation to solve each city's problems by utilising ICT technology, sensors, technology, and data analytics as a supporting factor to facilitate problem-solving (enabling factor). A smart city is formulated in the guidebook for preparing an intelligent city master plan by the Director General of Informatics Applications (aptika) of the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology of the Republic of Indonesia). Smart City-based development provides a vast space for innovation to solve problems faced by local governments, communities, businesspeople, the world of education and various other stakeholders. So, the Smart City initiation that appears is a partial solution that closes the door for innovation and further development.

The concept of city branding itself is an extension of place branding. Place branding is marketing strategies to promote localities to improve their reputation and attract residents' attention, tourism, and investment (Paganoni, 2015). The management of a city's brand lies with the government and, of course, the city community. City brand management also requires collaboration between the public and private sectors. Meanwhile, Keith Dinnie, editor of *City Branding: Theory & Case* (2011), revealed three main concepts in managing city brands: brand architecture & brand attributes, network approach and sustainability. Meanwhile, brand communication also depends on a city's three target audiences, including

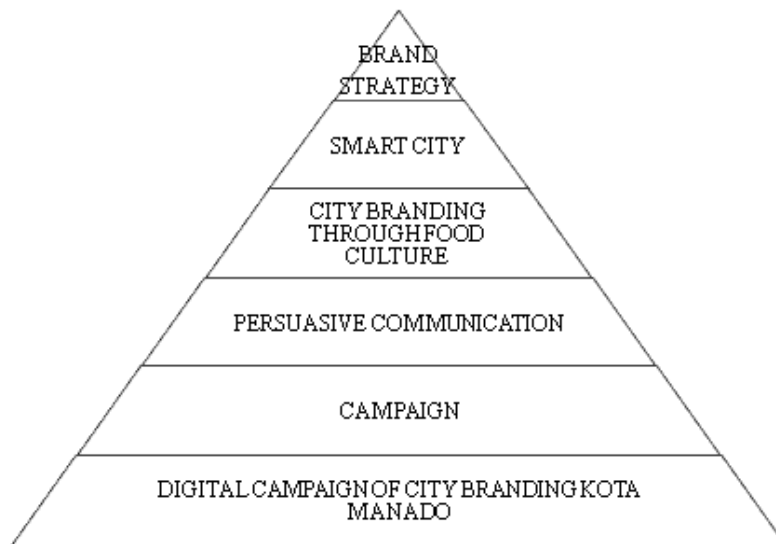


Figure 1 Road Map Research

city dwellers, tourists (both domestic and foreign) and internal stakeholders.

A city's branding strategy using food and beverages is a strategic step considering that apart from food being a basic need every day, food and cooking traditions are also the basis for the identity and culture of community groups. The food industry is an indicator of economic growth, and how food is consumed is part of the experience economy, which is very closely related to the tourism growth of a city or even a country. The branding strategy of an area related to food should be understood the same as the branding strategy of a book, film or drama, which is essentially a process of telling a story about who we are, where we come from and most importantly, what kind of person we will become (Dinnie, 2011). Each food brings the audience to certain symbols, icons and regional identities. Indonesia should be proud because we have a variety of typical culinary or iconic culinary. The term gastro branding emerged as an activity or process that puts forward names, terms, symbols, designs, or a combination of these by using marketing communication to identify everything related to food (Irwansyah, 2020).

From some of the definitions above, city branding is an effort to identify the local advantages of a city (in Indonesia, we have cities and districts), which are

then promoted to specific target audiences. The local government initiates efforts to encourage this locality, but it also requires cooperation between the government and the private sector and empowering the people in the city. Sustainability involves the work of all parties, so the city branding research roadmap can be described as follows:

Nation Branding

The main elements of globalisation are apparent in the realm of national governance. Nation branding is an expression of global nationalism, i.e. the belief by federal governments that the nation's future consists of finding a "beneficial role" to play in a globally integrated economic system. Under the rubric of global nationalism, national identities are recognised more in terms of their suitability for capital appeal than their cohesive or collegial nature. Cohesiveness and a sense of belonging follow from the nation's fitness to the attractiveness of capital because state policies and corporate practices are mutually configured to support economic growth as an engine of citizen welfare. The conceptual apparatus of neoliberalism combines the utopian vision of property ownership with individual freedom, placing it as the "central value of civilisation." This teaching is embedded in enforcing

three economic practices: liberalisation, privatisation and stabilisation. Furthermore, these technocratic actions are advocated as a solution to cultural and political problems, presented as the only necessary response to the inevitable forces of globalisation. This solution is called neoliberalism when globalisation is presented as an economic problem.

Businesses and corporations “not only” collaborate closely with state actors but even acquire a substantial role in writing laws, determining public policies, and setting regulatory frameworks. In this context, the state engages in a balancing act that must strengthen its authority by reducing tax and regulatory structures to enforce a free market that becomes a consensus. Adopting public-private partnerships is one vivid example of this balancing act.

The two main elements above, globalisation and neoliberalism, organise today’s thinking about nations in different but familiar ways. The representation of countries through time has revealed the close relationship between commerce and culture, morals and markets, and national and global. If nation branding represents business transformation in articulating national identity, then this novelty explains what makes nation branding refer to commercialisation, corporatisation, or commodification (Aronczyk, 2013).

City Branding

Cities are part of the state, so the commercialisation of cities requires a strategy. Cities have always been something of a brand, though not necessarily well-managed. It is still rare for a city to be perceived as relevant to its services, production, attributes, reputation, visual associations and stories that significantly influence the decision to visit. Middleton (2011) claims that in a world where cities and regions compete aggressively for investment from the public and private sectors, it will consider professionally managing city branding. Brands in the context of city branding are lenses through which information is viewed and provide criteria that influence tourist decisions (Middleton, 2011).

Modern marketing began to spread to local governments in the 1970s. However, at that time, its transfer from the business sector to the public sector was

unsuccessful, and urban marketing was difficult to understand conceptually and practically. Traditional marketing cannot provide the correct answer for the city as a product, how to determine the market for the city, and how to understand the target consumer for the city (Kavaratzis, 2004). A basis for discussing city branding, a refined perspective on place emerged as part of a critical discussion of urban entrepreneurship through a re-imaging analysis of localities, urban transformation and post-industrial development, operationally relegated to large-scale physical redevelopment, grand events and cultural regeneration (Antti-roiko, 2014).

Destination Branding

In 2004, Hankinson conducted research on destination branding, which resulted in the category of image attributes related to history, heritage, and culture that could shape the image of a tourism destination brand. Then, in 2005, Wisansing researched destination branding, examining various components of destination branding in Malaysia. The results of this study conclude that all products require a brand to attract customers. In this context, Malaysia has elements that contribute to the success of destination branding: a strong brand, firm commitment and positioning, marketing capabilities, and unique tourism products. In 2006, Peterson researched destination branding, resulting in several studies from laboratories, museums, works of art, and culture. This research study concludes that a good national brand construction will construct an excellent social image. A good social image will be created if state and destination brands are properly nurtured. The social image of the state brand is created by building good destinations such as museums, city parks, festivals, tourism events, hotels, good restaurants, public readiness for tourist arrivals, smooth transportation, and attractive souvenir products. In 2007, Rufaidah researched destination branding, concluding that a destination brand consists of visual elements, strategic issues, tactical issues, sound, logos, and so on, based on the nation’s philosophy, all the country’s advantages, wealth, and soul. In 2008, Lusi researched destination branding in Surabaya, Indonesia, which concluded several things: First, Sparkling

Surabaya is the result of branding made by the Surabaya Tourism Promotion Brand as a city representative. Second, Sparkling Surabaya has a global, modern, and brilliant meaning in every area throughout the day, representing the modern Surabaya community in a big city. Third, Sparkling Surabaya is a power relationship between the city government businesspeople and tourism task force officials in Surabaya to form a social image of Surabaya destinations (Burhan, 2017).

Digital Branding

Digital branding is a marketing communication activity that aims to share information about a brand with the public through digital media, such as the company's website and social media.

Yunus (2019) mentioned ten guidelines for improving brand image through digital branding: (i) Providing a road map for long-term planning, (ii) understanding the digital branding hierarchy and managing it appropriately over time, (iii) Identify well the identity of the customer and create a brand strategy, (iv) Realise brand equity and sales are two different things, (v) Brand belongs to the customer, not the creator of the brand, (vi) Brand strategy needs to consider the attributes of its CEO, (vii) Building an efficient brand can be realised through brand association, (viii) The categories of technology used in digital branding are created by customers and external parties, not by the company, (ix) The rapidly changing environment demands that marketers can quickly adapt to internal and external, (x) invest time to understand the technology. (Yunus, 2019)

The purpose of this research:

1. The research team wanted to identify Manado's local advantages within the brand architecture framework, which became the city's brand attributes.
2. What has been done within the city branding framework for Manado since it was declared a smart city in 2018?
3. Within the city branding framework, what has not and needs to be done by the city of Manado?
4. Any successful and sustainable brand communication strategies are carried out with specific target audiences.

5. As part of the recommendations, this study aims to provide strategies, especially digital campaigns, to implement the city branding concept consistently and sustainably. This campaign strategy can later become a tool for evaluating the success of city branding and can be duplicated in other cities in Indonesia.

Research Methods

Units of analysis can be individuals, groups, or organisations (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). This research's unit of analysis is a city (organisation): Manado, the capital of North Sulawesi, which has been declared a smart city since 2018. In this case, the Manado city government is a source of information because the initiative to campaign for the first 100 cities to become smart cities in Indonesia is an initiative of the government as the policyholder.

The research is exploratory by nature, which is essential, and it aims to obtain information regarding matters related to the progress of the smart city of Manado after three years of being a smart city.

Data collection is carried out in 3 ways: interviews with three key informants. The criteria for key informants are individuals who hold positions in local governments, understand the concept, and are responsible for implementing smart cities and city branding. The second way is through a literature study on Manado city data obtained from various sources and case study literature on areas successfully implementing city branding inside and outside Indonesia. The third is internet research related to campaigns, writings or photos about the city of Manado since it became a smart city in 2018. We collected data from the internet based on the mainstream mass media, namely Tempo, Kompas, Detik, Liputan 6, and Metrotvnews, typed in 3 keywords, namely: kota Manado, smart city Manado and Manado diversity in harmony (based on the interview with tourism government official "Diversity in Harmony" is the central theme to visualise Manado as a smart city).

Based on the type of research, this study is a qualitative study with an exploratory nature that aims to find specific ideas, ideas, phenomena or symptoms. The process has no particular structure and occurs randomly. The data type is qualitative, with methods

including case studies, bibliographic research, interviews and observations. In this type of research, the researcher participates in the events or conditions under investigation. Researchers often ask WHAT questions to dig for more profound information. For this reason, the results of qualitative research are the depth of the researcher's analysis. In general, the nature of the exploratory study is creative, flexible and open, and the data obtained are detailed, allowing for new theories or concepts to emerge if research results from conflict with the ideas and images used. We visited Manado in November 2021. Travelling within Indonesia is allowed with specific and strict health protocols. We experienced the city as both researchers and travellers. We interviewed key informants Erwin Simson Kountu, SH (Pembina IV/a, Kepala Dinas Kominfo) and Dra. Neivi Lenda Pelealu, M.Si (Pembina Utama Muda, IVC, Kepala Dinas Pariwisata). Additional interview is with Abdiel O Bajen – Kepala bidang pemasaran dinas pariwisata Kota Manado, while expert informant is a writer and lecturer of De La Salle University of Tourism located in Manado as well-Yelly A. Walansendow, SE, S.ST.Par, M.Si.

Discussion

As mentioned in Figure 3 above, city branding is part of the six pillars of the smart city in Indonesia (Direktorat Jendral Aplikasi Informatika Kementrian Komunikasi dan Informatika, 2017). It is called smart branding. As the second pillar, smart branding consists of 3 elements: appearance, business, and tourism. In terms of appearance, Manado is already well-known for several things: BUNAKEN, which is the heaven of divers and the house of plenty of sea creatures.

Bunaken is a well-known sea park in North Sulawesi. BOULEVARD is another iconic place near Laut Sulawesi, the city's iconic area of one-stop shopping malls and culinary and sports centres. Boulevard is a place where communities and tourists come for gathering, sporting, shopping and enjoy Manadonese delicious meals:

God Bless Park, or Taman Berkat, strategically lies on Boulevard; it is the centre of activities for the people of Manado city; people use it for

diversity, just like what Lenda said earlier, for religious harmony because hands are praying there, a sign or identical to togetherness in spiritual connection. However, it is also used as a location or a place for activities for young people for sports infrastructure; there is also sports infrastructure: skateboarding, basketball courts, climbing walls, everything there. [Kountu, 2021]

Thus, Bunaken and Boulevard are among the city's landmarks and must-visit when tourists travel. There were also numerous symbols, logos, and slogans/taglines when we searched the internet. Some of the photos and news articles were written or taken from iconic places in Manado, for example, the statue of Jesus Christ gives a blessing, the waterfront city at the Malalayang beach and the raising of our national flag, “merah-putih” at the base of Manado Bay. At the same time, the rest of the news articles about symbols or slogans were political news about the elected governor, newly-elected mayor and vice mayor of the city and the winning political party. It is unfortunate, though, that we did not meet with the mayor or vice mayor. Another element of smart branding in Manado, the city based on the Kominfo model, is business. We do not gather essential data on this dimension; however, we focus on data we received during interviews and field research. A tourism government official stated that few unique handicrafts or home industry products in Manado could have economic value. True, they sell lots of things, and I visited several souvenir shops (one is open 24 hours). Unfortunately, they are not iconic enough to be branded. Some of the products even were not initially made in Manado. Instead, they were imported from outside Manado:

Then MSMEs or superior products from Manado are more culinary, to be honest, if we talk about MSMEs or craft products, especially more imported from Java and then written “Bunaken” which is a lot in shops in Manado. There are also local craftsmen, but they are less competitive in quality and work; I do not know, maybe because of the characteristics of

Manado people who are not too meticulous in exploring small things.[Pelealu, 2021]

Home industry or small and medium enterprises are not endorsed or branded in this sense. Whereas we know that craft is something that tourists bring back to their homes and display in their hometowns, even handicraft is something that tourists tell other people when they share their experience about a particular destination. Therefore, the craft must be professionally managed in the tourism industry. On the field in the city of Manado, we found that coconut shells have the potential to be branded as the iconic craft of Manado, even Sulawesi Utara. Sulawesi Utara, the province, is known as *Bumi Niyur Melambai* (the earth of coconut palm waving). We also received zero findings from an internet news search about Manado handicrafts. Different testimony was mentioned by an expert informant who was excited and passionate about the home industry and SMEs. She explained that the government -both local and central- were highly supporting the SMEs of Manado city, the products ranging from food, snacks and handicrafts:

At the time of the pandemic, MSMEs were on the rise ... when the pandemic occurred, the most affected were tourism service businesses, then the tourism ministry of Pak Sandiaga Uno worked with the provincial tourism office, the Manado city tourism office, and other cities in Indonesia, training or several times holding training for MSME participants, they boosted, training activities were continuous, I know precisely this because my friends are there ... so both in the city, in the province, then there is more from the cooperative, trade office, it carries out like that. Even though this is an entrepreneur, MSMEs have been around for a long time, but they intensified during this pandemic; the simplest example is that we can look in the next room; some exhibitions are made in collaboration with retail entrepreneurs or owners of, for example, trading places, they hold continuous; they make exhibitions, then provide opportunities for the community to please, for instance, if I like cooking, we cre-

ate and market it, now who wants, for example, making chips, then we can try it, coconut chips, we do not think about it; the trainers come, both from the city and the province, then they provide opportunities for the community to please, for example, if I like cooking, we make it. We market it, now who wants, for example, making chips, then we can try coconut chips, we do not think about it. Well, they bring in offline and online trainers to train and provide provisions for young entrepreneurs because yesterday, I was also allowed to be a resource person for one of the training from the tourism office. So they encourage the community so that they can make and create something that can be assisted. The simplest example is also in our service environment; during the pandemic, we immediately started three groups—the most minor, medium, and medium- to sell all kinds of activities from the community. Likewise, on campus, during a pandemic, everything is smoother to make this make that and me because I have made a book during a pandemic too; that is what I feel. I participated in the exhibition. I asked the Minister of Tourism to give a speech to members of the DPR, to the Regent and mayor of North Sulawesi, and many gave speeches for my book and appreciation quotes for my book. Manado is famous for roa, tuna, fried bananas, and many more. Well, there are also crafts and coconut husks made into flower pots. There are pandanus hats made when we go to hot tourist attractions and wear them; it is good, fantastic. Then there are bags made of plastic materials that are also recycled or maybe new items to train those who may be used to carrying boats because there are many guests, bringing tourists, because there are no tourists anymore, so at home, besides catching fish, the mothers can cook. The fathers can make bags or other crafts.[Walansendow, 2021]

Thus, the home industry was very enthusiastic, ranging from food products to crafts, there were exhibitions, and souvenir shops are quite a lot in Manado.

Nevertheless, iconic products such as coconut shells should be branded and promoted by the city, such as pearls from Lombok and Ambon, weaving textiles from Nusa Tenggara and noken bags from Papua, etc. The raw materials of coconut shells are galore. Still, our findings indicate that this business was not managed professionally to become Manado's iconic handicraft and create economic value for the people. Therefore, in finding localities in brand architecture and attributes, Manado is best and concentrates only on place/destination branding and culinary. At the same time, the craft was not given high priority; our internet search result confirms it. Tourism is the third element of smart branding from the smart city model of Manado the city. Our interviews and internet findings show that nature is Manado's prioritised destination. It has Bunaken and Boulevard in Jembatan Soekarno and Jendela, Indonesia. People can experience paragliding on Tetempangan Hill, and the newest one is called Gunung Tumpah. We were recommended to visit Gunung Tumpah as the local government is promoting it; however, when we requested local people to drive us to Gunung Tumpah, unfortunately, they had never heard of the place called Gunung Tumpah. In August 2018, there was a campaign about Tomohon City celebrated as the city of flowers, and it was such a big and happy festival- full of flowers. In July 2019, President Mr Joko Widodo enacted the Likupang district to become one of the super-priority destinations of Indonesia, along with Danau Toba, Borobudur, Mandalika and Labuan Bajo. To visit Likupang and Tomohon, one must arrive in Manado, the province's gateway to North Sulawesi. The expert informant also suggests that Manado possess diversity in its nature (it has mountain, sea, beach, and underwater):

The first is, of course, the beach, the sea... starting from Malalayang to Tuminting, then towards Bunaken, not on the island, just on the outskirts; everything passes through the sea coast, not to mention in Bunaken on several islands of Bunaken, Siladen, Nain, it is also very rich in beauty, the beach and the sea are also under the sea, underwater... many fish and sea animals are unique in the waters in

Manado City... then the second is, of course, the beauty of the mountains. There are places such as lakes, rivers, and waterfalls here completely... There are many unique fishes and sea animals in the waters of Manado City... Then the second is, of course, the beauty of the mountains, then places such as lakes, rivers, and waterfalls here are complete ... in Manado, there is everything, eat it all. Manado has it all; that is why we went to Davao yesterday. I said that Davao is inferior to Manado... but why did we go outside when Manado itself has much potential that we can see... maybe Manado people themselves are bored. However, friends from other regions in Indonesia will be satisfied because Manado is quite small; we can only reach it in an hour without traffic jams. Well, you can get a lot from there... you can see the mountains, the sea, the beach, and all kinds of beauty in North Sulawesi province, especially in Manado.[Walansendow, 2021]

From her statement, she implies that Manado possesses diversity in its nature. Tourism in Manado is also rich in its culinary tradition. The diversity of food, rich in spices and even several kinds of iconic drinks, indeed describes Manado as a city with diversity in food and beverages. "Nasi Kuning, es brenebon, bubur manado" (Yellow rice, iced brenebon, Manado porridge) are some of the city's iconic foods and are being reviewed in the news stories. Not to mention, 'extreme food' has also become the headline. Bats, snakes, field mice and dogs are categorised as extreme food and are sold commonly in traditional markets or restaurants. Manado is one city in Indonesia that serves this type of food, called extreme food, and it is sold in extreme markets. Religious tourism was written once in the national newspaper (*Sightseeing in Manado turns into an excursion to Tomohon (Bukit Doa, Danau Linow, Bukit Tetetana)*). However, we do not find a single article on the craft or handicrafts of Manado. Crafts can bring the slogan "diversity in harmony" into something tangible. Tourists can bring the crafts home besides photos and videos. Thus, the business element in smart branding of a city stays as

homework for Manado City. The idea of Manado's smart city is internalised in smart tourism. Moreover, the campaign was well-documented, as was Manado Fiesta. Newspapers have written a lot about it since 2018, and the slogan "diversity in harmony" is well-documented both on mass media and social media. (Manado Fiesta Official, 2020). However, based on in-depth interviews with three government officials and one tourism expert, the author found that the idea of a smart city, smart tourism, innovative branding and diversity in harmony remains merely a slogan you can uphold and later take down according to change in leadership. The city government thinks of "diversity in harmony" as past events and merely an event well-documented in mass media. In online news media, we found the slogan "diversity in harmony" mentioned along with the launch of Manado Fiesta when Manado was set to be a smart city back in 2018. On the other hand, the author considers that diversity in harmony is not only a slogan. It serves as the DNA of Manado City. Based on observations, literature reviews, and internet news searches, Manado has diversity in several dimensions; the city has rich tourist destinations and a variety of authentic food and beverages. "Bubur Manado" is one famous porridge available in almost every canteen. Based on field observation, tolerance is high within the city. Manado respects the diversity of religions despite the majority of inhabitants being Christians. Politically speaking, diversity in harmony plays a vital role in putting Manado as a role model city in Indonesia as a country. Indonesia has a slogan, "unity in diversity". If Manado plays its role by correctly branding the city, it serves as the miniature model of Indonesia, the country. Lastly, our expert informant, who functions as a tourism academician, SME practitioner, and book writer who also lives in Manado, poses a strong opinion when asked about smart city branding in Manado city:

As a lecturer, of course, I will also explain to my students to research this, because if we make the programme, I believe and believe it is expensive, so do not let the change of leadership, for example, then this good thing is not continued or not realised, it is a shame for us as aca-

demics who feel that this has been - they issued this must have gone through various meetings, They have spent much money, a lot of time and ideas, everything must have come out when discussing this programme, and we certainly hope that this will continue, because in the current era of digital, everywhere people are now, district cities have even followed the steps of the last Manado city, they took the initiative to become digital cities, for example, the city of Bitung. WelOtherties in Indonesia have used that, meaning they have followed this step or adopted it from the last Manado city. As I said earlier, let us monitor this good program to see whether it has ended or will continue, and I am sure that if the government is smart, they will use this because this will be something extraordinary for our city, not only in Manado but other cities in Indonesia. [Walansendow, 2021]

It implies that smart city branding has changed just as city leadership has. Where it puts the branding as merely a slogan, other cities even started to imitate Manado to become a digital city. Indeed, various tactics of city branding can be applied according to leadership. However, values, culture, and local wisdom are the same. Thus, it should be communicated consistently.

Our Internet News Search Concludes the Following

This internet search is based on news articles and photos released by mainstream media: Kompas, Tempo, Liputan6, BBC, detikcom, CNN, CNBC, and Antara News and Media Indonesia from 2018 to 2021 (roughly two years before the pandemic hit in 2020). In 2018, the city of Manado was declared a smart city. We did not receive any news about KRIYA (craft) at all; this confirms the statement from the Head of the Manado Tourism Office that no Manado city craft is superior. So, neither news nor the welfare of MSMEs in Manado is visible online. One business has emerged, namely Woloan's house (the location is not in Manado, and the item is not a souvenir that tourists can take home as a keepsake. It is a weakness, where the handicrafts of the community and improving the city's economy are

also strategies to increase brand awareness of Manado City when there are souvenirs that tourists can take home and not consume. According to the head of the tourism office's interview, *NATURAL TOURISM* is still the City of Manado's flagship product and the locality that the city government prioritises.

However, culinary tourism, religious tourism, and crafts must improve because a city's branding includes all these elements. The Manado Association as the City of a Thousand Churches and *SULUT* as the province of Nyiur Melambai should appear in news reports from the national media. Likewise, news about Diversity in Harmony based on interviews is promoted to the audience as a tagline, although national news coverage is minimal/almost non-existent. News & photos about *DISASTER* also dominate the Manado keyword, and it is in the second top position after *NATURAL TOURISM* if we enter the keyword Manado. Emergency numbers for the public and tourists can be contacted when a disaster occurs/experiences and needs help, which must be communicated frequently concerning smart city branding. When searching for news regarding Manado in the last two years, it turned out that the internet also promoted other cities such as Tomohon, Tetempangan Hill, and Koha. Hence, digital campaign strategy plays an important and strategic role.

The arrival of President Jokowi and the First Lady, as well as other ranks of the central government, means that the central government is earnestly promoting super-priority destinations and *SEZs* in North Sulawesi, with the city of Manado as the entry point. News content is overwhelmingly dominated by natural or social disasters and the *COVID-19* pandemic. Twenty articles out of 100 collected pieces contain all the negative news about the *MANADO* keyword. For this reason, the role of the city government in providing access, facilities, and technology to help communities affected by disasters is vital. It includes frequent communication of emergency telephone numbers, which need to be known not only by the residents of the city of Manado itself but also mainly to be understood by tourists. Communication and Information Technology often disseminates the emergency telephone number for Manado on standby, namely 112. This is in line with the results of our interview with

the head of the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology of Manado City, Mr Erwin Simson Kontu, SH. Most articles were in the smart city category, which focused on developing infrastructure and technology to support Manado's progress.

The second most common news topic is natural tourist destinations, which aligns with the results of our interview with the head of the Manado city tourism office, Dra. Neivi Lenda Pelealu, M.Sc. Indeed, she emphasises Manado's superior natural wealth. Another notable occurrence that can be observed from the findings of an internet news search is that no visible or insignificant news discusses the involvement of the private sector with or within the city of Manado regarding natural tourism, culinary, religion, or intelligent cities.

An online news article (liputan6.com) in 2017 wrote that the implementation of intelligent city Manado is exemplary. They have mainly depicted the Manado Cerdas Command Centre (C3) photo. The author was given a chance to visit the Manado command centre and found the technology, human resources, and seriousness of the Kominfo Manado Office were highly beneficial to the people of Manado. The technology and budget allocated were significant to serve the people. We are in the middle of the pandemic; society needs information and communication technology. Moreover, the Manado Cerdas Command Centre is there to help. By doing this, the government is working mainly on smart city pillar number 1: Smart governance.

Based on an internet news search, interviews and a visit to Manado City in November 2021, we found that "diversity in harmony" serves as the *DNA* of the city. The government officials cleverly captured it, and the slogan truly reflects the city of Manado. However, the smart city idea appeared to be a top-down policy. The branding communication is not consistent. As a result, our internet news search indicates that the hype was only during the Manado Fiesta campaign, which was back in 2018. After the Manado fiesta event, the branding of Manado becomes obscure. If the smart city concept is applied by local government, it does not solely resonate with tourism or technology; instead, it reveals the city's *DNA* and maintains its in-

habitants' quality of life. The current local government does not see a smart city as a solution for Manado; instead, it is merely a slogan or a series of past events. Lastly, smart city pillar #1, smart governance, excelled in implementing *Cerdas* Command Center and Call Centre 112. However, pillar #2, innovative branding, still requires collaborative work: government, internal stakeholders, and inhabitants to attract tourists and investors. After all, there are three target audiences for smart city branding: inhabitants, tourists (from Indonesia and foreigners) and investors.

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