

**CITY BRANDING: A GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION MODEL
IN MARKETING LOCAL POTENTIAL IN CENTRAL JAVA
(A Case Study on the Three Cities' Branding: Surakarta, Semarang &
Pekalongan)**

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Abstract

The main problem many regencies/municipals encounter in local autonomy currently is how to improve the local competitiveness for the potential it has to be managed maximally. The low competitiveness is due to, among others, either investors' or tourists' less awareness on the local potential. For that reason, branding attempt is the considered as an appropriate option. In practice, branding as a local marketing activity is frequently entrapped in the organization of brand name, logo and tagline so that it has neither been integrated into the local planning nor been the spirit of local development. It potentially wastes the APBD (Local Income and Expense Budget) cost, while the effect has not been felt yet by the society. This research was an expansion of previous dissertation research conducted by author. The objectives of research were (1) to identify city branding; (2) to identify the collaboration pattern of stakeholders in city branding management; (3) to map the constraint and the effect of city branding implementation; and (4) to formulate the general model of city branding management for regency/municipal areas. The result of research showed the branding taken by 3 (three) cities in Central Java still emphasized more on logo and slogan aspects. Planning and communicative strategy had not touched yet the more comprehensive and local differentiation-based aspect. The branding taken had involved the stakeholders but had not collaborated maximally because the role of government was still very dominant. The constraints encountered in the problem included the limited human resource, marketing mindset and local leadership consistency. Meanwhile, the effect of branding was recognized as sufficiently significant that improves the awareness. The common model of city branding management was successfully organized from the experience of three cities that had taken branding.

Keywords: branding, marketing

INTRODUCTION

The main problem many regencies/municipals encounter in local autonomy currently is how to improve the local competitiveness for the potential it has to be managed maximally. The low competitiveness is due to, among others, either

investors' or tourists' less awareness on the local potential. One of strategic attempts to improve the local potential competitiveness is to take marketing attempt through branding. Branding once known for product and service now is used widely to market an area, at both local and state levels. A marketing practitioner, Hermawan Kertajaya (2005), even stated that today city branding is a mandatory thing to be done by any city that wants to raise its degree. City branding focuses generally on attracting the investment, tourism and trading potencies.

The Committee for Monitoring Local Autonomy (2013) stated that local marketing becomes a popular approach as an important instrument to strengthen the local economy and global competitiveness. An area marketed attractively will trigger the dynamic of new industrial and job opportunities growth. In turn, local income will also increase, so that the local population's life quality may also increase.

Some areas have taken branding: Jakarta with Enjoy Jakarta, Surabaya with Sparkling Surabaya and Jogja with Jogja Never Ending Asia. Such the attempts are also taken by such cities in Central Java as Solo, Semarang, and Pekalongan. Briefly, the branding profile in those three cities is presented in the table below.

	<i>SOLO</i>	<i>SEMARANG</i>	<i>PEKALONGAN</i>
<i>Slogan</i>	<i>The spirit of Java</i>	<i>Variety of Culture</i>	<i>World's city of Batik</i>
<i>Logo</i>			
<i>Launching</i>	<i>February 14th, 2007</i>	<i>December 7th, 2012</i>	<i>April 1st, 2011</i>
<i>City's Vision</i>	The manifestation of Solo city as a cultural on resting on trading, service, education, tourism, and sport potencies	The manifestation of Semarang city as Trading and Service City based on culture toward a prosperous community	The manifestation of an environment-oriented Service City toward a religiosity values-based Civil Society

Unfortunately, despite some branding, in practice the local marketing activity is frequently misguided and entrapped into an organization of name, logo and tagline so that it has neither been integrated into the local planning. As a result, the local area features only slogan but ignores that branding actually contains a promise that should be fulfilled and manifested in the progress of city's

development. On the other hand, branding is frequently criticized for wasting APBD (Local Income and Expense Budget) cost, while the effect has not been felt yet by the society.

In the previous study (dissertation), the author still found many problems with the implementation of branding in Solo city, particularly that pertaining to the main aspects in city branding practice such as: brand planning and development; institutionalization and leadership; interaction with stakeholders, promotion strategy and evaluation (Rahmanto, 2012). In that study, it was also recommended to find an in-depth description on city branding practice, so that a research is required with broader coverage by comparing the branding practices in other local areas to get a more general communication theory in order to develop an Indonesian typical communication theory of city branding.

In practice, marketing a local area is not easy. Branding made by a city requires a complex strategy in order to actually benefit the local area. To bring about a strong, characteristic brand, some studies and in-depth analyses are required in order to communicate a city's vision, mission, specific condition and comparative advantages. Branding a city requires an integrated, sustainable and dynamic process because it involves the city's stakeholders.

For that reason, a research on city branding practice as one of local government's innovation forms is very important to conduct in order to provide a description on how the practice can be implemented effectively and efficiently. Avoid merely wasting budget of billions rupiah for funding the branding without significant outcome.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Only few studies have been conducted on branding a city in Indonesia. In international academic vocabulary, however, we can see that topic of branding or marketing attempt by a city/an area develops sufficiently rapidly. It can be seen from the emergence of many articles in such prestigious scientific journals studying the topic as *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, *Journal of Place Management and Development*, and *Journal of Brand Management*. But most of those articles are based on economic

science and city layout. Considering this phenomenon, the author is interested in studying the city branding activities by the local government viewed from the communication perspective. Several studies have been conducted concerning the topic of research, as explained in the following.

A research is entitled *Success Factors of Place Marketing: A Study of Place Marketing Practice in Northern Europe and The United States* (Seppo Rainisto, 2003). This study aimed to evaluate the most determinant factors in an area's successful marketing and how these factors are used in local development. In his conclusion, the author stated that strategic marketing can be applied to local area marketing; similarly the corporate marketing tool can be transferred into local area marketing. A place can be branded by means of developing and communicating the area's attraction.

Another study is entitled *How the World Sees the World Cities* (Simon Anholt, 2006). In this study, Anholt measure a city using six indicators called city brand hexagon including presence (presence, popularity, and contribution); place aspect (physical, comfort, beauty); potential (economic and education potential aspects). This study concluded that the cities studied had a gradually fluctuating brand image. When a city's brand image is up, it is not because of advertisement or marketing but reflection on such the place's real transformation in its condition, people, policy and opportunity. Advertisement and marketing cannot make a bad city apparently good; according Anholt, it is a propaganda rather than brand management, so that marketing is useless and not influential.

Meanwhile, a study entitled *Planning Process of City Brands: A Case Study of Taipei City* by Kristina Karvelyte & Jui-Hui Chiu (2011) specifically studied the framework of city development as brand and its application. Using case study with semi-structured interview and content analysis, Karvelyte & Chiu examined Kotler's marketing planning theory. The result showed that this theory could be applied only partially, so that it was modified, including for leadership effect, communication between public and private stakeholders.

Kertajaya (2005) showed the reasons of why any area should make city branding: to put the effect in the mind of market target (investors or tourists); to generate awareness and sense of belonging internally; to be a factor differentiating

one area from another; to explore the city's unique selling point; to embed a strong identity to a city; and to invite or to offer the city's advantages to the target market.

Meanwhile, according to Morgan & Pritchard (2004), brand development for an area consists of five steps:

- 1) Market investigation, analysis, and strategic recommendation
- 2) Brand identity development
- 3) Brand launching – communicating vision
- 4) Brand implementation, and
- 5) Monitoring and evaluation.

In addition to formulating such the steps in local branding practice, Morgan & Pritchard (2004) also mentioned that the characteristic of successful local area branding is the fulfillment of following aspects: well-funded; vision based on intensive research; care and discipline in communicating brand; partnership and alliance; and forward looking, innovative and committed managers.

Meanwhile, the government communication in the term of City branding, as suggested by Kavartzis (2004: 67-69), can be seen as a form of image communication involving three communication aspects:

- 1) primary communication, is all of city's appearances like landscape strategy, infrastructure, bureaucracy, and entire behavior or action pertaining to the city;
- 2) secondary communication, is a formal intensive communication usually known in marketing practice encompassing the following promotion tools: advertising, sales promotion, public relations and publicity, personal selling, and direct selling. The choice of promotion tools is highly dependent on the characteristic of message and on the target audience to be achieved.
- 3) tertiary communication, related to word of mouth, confirmed by media and competitor communication that cannot be controlled by marketers. Overall, the branding process and the two controlled communication type aims to generate and to strengthen the positive tertiary communication, particularly in the urban members of society who become the target audience and most important marketers of city all at once.

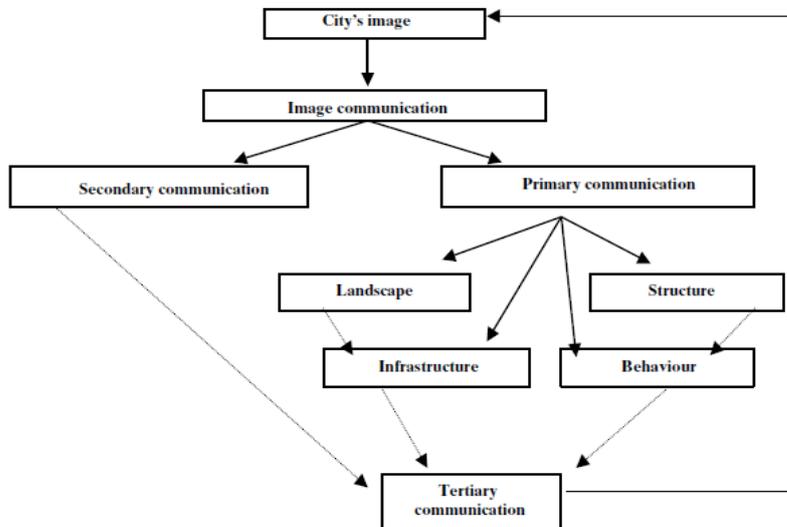


Figure 1.1 City Branding Communication Model (Kavaritzis, 2004: 67)

Morsing and Schultz (2006: 142) formulated a communication framework for the stakeholders that can be approached using a variety of contextual and dynamic strategies. Such the strategy starts from the linear to the interactive one. They said that in the communication with stakeholders, the relationship between message sender and receiver needs a commitment to involving the stakeholders in sense-giving and sense-making process. They also divided the type of relationship with stakeholders into three: informing, responding, and involving.

In communicating with the stakeholders, Cornelisson (2008: 54) describes the level of communication with stakeholders starts from informational strategy, persuasive strategy to dialogue strategy. The three strategies will exert effect of awareness, understanding, involvement and commitment. Dialog strategy, according to Cornelisson, is characterized with the participation of stakeholders in active consultation and decision making. Such the involvement is intended to reach consensus and or mutual benefit rather than to achieve personal interest.

METHOD

3.1 Research Approach

This study was a descriptive qualitative research focusing on an investigation on the human beings' way of interpreting their social life and their attempt of probing taste, motivation, and selective experience. The qualitative method, according to Daymon & Holloway (2008: 4), tends to be related to subjective characteristic of social reality, so that this method has good ability of producing conception from the performers' perspective and of enabling the author to see a variety of things as the performers do. A research with qualitative method provides descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from the observable people or behavior (Moleong, 2009).

This study employed a multi-case design that according to Yin (2011) will provide a stronger evidence of research. In this study, what case means is the city branding activity made by local government. It is called multi-case because the case unit analyzed in this study consists of more than one case: branding in three areas (Solo, Semarang and Pekalongan).

3.2 Research Location

This study was taken place in three areas/cities that have made city branding: Surakarta (Solo), Semarang and Pekalongan Cities. Those three cities were selected because they have implemented branding intensively and they have geographical proximity with the author thereby facilitated the implementation of research.

3.3 Sampling technique

This study was a qualitative one so that sampling technique used was purposive sampling, in which individuals becoming informant in this study were selected with certain criteria or purpose from the author; for example they were selected based on the theoretical concept used, the author's personal curiosity, the empirical characteristics, and etc (Daymon & Holloway, 2008).

3.4 Data Source

The data source in this research consisted of informants, places and events, and document/archive. The primary data source in this research was the individuals involved in city branding process consisting of local government elements,

particularly in: Local Development Planning Agency (*Badan Perencanaan Daerah* = Bappeda); Tourism Service; Communication and Informatics & Public Relations Service; Trading and Investment Service. In addition, the informants also consisted of individual from the cities' stakeholders from the elements of: Commerce and Industry Chamber (*Kadin*); Tourism Travelling Company Association (*Asita*); Hotel and Restaurant Association (*PHRI*); and local media manager.

3.5 Technique of collecting data

Meanwhile, the techniques of collecting data used were in-depth interview, focus group discussion (FGD), observation and document analysis.

3.6 Data Analysis

The data analysis is an important step in the attempt of seeing the findings of research. This research employed an interactive model of analysis (Miles and Huberman, 1992: 16-20). This model consists of data collection, data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing/verification).

3.7 Data Validity

Validity is the credibility of elaboration, conclusion, explanation, interpretation or other discussion forms. There are three aspects of validity: internal validity, generalization and relevance levels (Daymon & Holloway, 2008: 140).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In line with the multi-case research design, this study involved three cases: the constructions of city branding in Surakarta, Pekalongan, and Semarang. Considering the result of research, it could be analyzed that there were similarity and difference of construction in branding application. The following is the comparison of branding management in three cities based on planning and development, communication strategy, institutionalization, stakeholders collaboration, and branding evaluation aspect.

Brand Planning and Development

Solo	Semarang	Pekalongan
is an elaboration of the Mayor's mission and contained in RPJMD (Local Middle-Term Development Planning) 2010-2015. There	Directly related to RPJMD particularly in the third mission, to realize the local independency and competitiveness. No	Contained in RPJMD particularly in the term of improving the local areas' competitiveness. The Pekalongan Mayor's

is a law governing it, Mutual Regulation of Regent and Mayor. No strategic plan. The initiative of city brand formulation from BKAD	approval from the local head (previous Mayor). The approval was stopped because the former mayor was stumbled with corruption case related to bribing the member of Local Legislative Assembly, the alternate mayor had not taken some measures yet related to branding establishment.	Regulation Number 30 of 2011 about Pekalongan City Branding. No strategic plan.
Slogan through prize contest. Visual design through pitching.	Logo and slogan through price contest. The winner had been established but no certainty of using brand.	Beginning with prize contest but then using consultant service. The resulted design was then consulted with the public.

Communication Strategy

Solo	Semarang	Pekalongan
There is a guidance of brand application but not sufficiently comprehensive related to city branding aspect. There is no standardized and massive promotion material made by the municipal government. Using event as the application of branding.	New application in the municipal's official website	There is guidance of brand application but not sufficiently comprehensive related to multi-sector municipal development. There is a standardized and massive promotion material made by the municipal government, despite still limited to pin, sticker, and city marker. Using promotion application such as pin, sticker and city marker.
No city gateway but there is billboard of activity event	Not applied. Old slogan, <i>Semarang Setara</i> , is still used in the gateway.	Brand is applied to gateway as well as physical markers of city like signboard of <i>balai kota</i> (City Hall).
There is government's official website	There is website of Semarang municipal government.	There is government's official website.

Institutionalization and Stakeholders Collaboration

Solo	Semarang	Pekalongan
There is a change from previous Regional Brand into City Brand. No SKPD responsible for it, but it is applied more to the cultural and tourism activity. It does pertains specifically to branding; the portion is	Is conducted by the Bappeda of Semarang City. No coordination because it has not been established.	It was implemented by Economic Division of Pekalongan City Local Secretary by involving other SKPDs (Local Government Activity Unit): Disperindagkop and Dishubparbud. There is

more for cultural and tourism service as the organizer of event.		coordination through the local heads. The branding form worked on is in line with the main duty and function of each SKPD.
The priority of funding for Prize contest and Logo Visualization Pitching is < 50 millions rupiah Less sustainability because of government's less firm commitment. It relies more on the public.	Writing Academic Text and the present of branding prize contest is about 200 millions rupiah. No decision on which branding is used. The existing branding is still a mix of <i>Semarang Setara</i> and <i>Semarang Pesona Asia</i> .	Prize Contest and Logo Visualization Pitching cost > 50 millions rupiah. Still continuous and intense enough, but still limited to pin and sticker media.
The stakeholders are highly involved and endorse the brand, particularly the business performers	The stakeholders are skeptic with the brand sustainability and doubt the quality of judging result	Is still not visible, conducted more by the local government. The public assumes that brand is intended for only the servants of city government. The public only applies the brand.
Participation and consistency of brand using by stakeholders are less consistent with existing guidance. There is a gap between government and stakeholders about the definition of brand as the representation of city.	The participation has not been apparent because it had not been implemented. But in the prize contest step incompactness is still found but public test has not been conducted yet. " <i>Semarang Pesona Asia</i> " does not represent the strength and potential it has today. Meanwhile, " <i>Semarang Setara</i> " does not represent the strength and potential it has today. Slogan logo tends to impress the Semarang city's condition of being left behind other cities.	Consistent enough with the existing guidance. There is similarity of interpretation by stakeholders toward a positioning of Pekalongan as Batik City.

Solo	Semarang	Pekalongan
Sufficiently significantly increasing the popularity; no increase in tourist number, but there is an increase in investment, particularly in hotel and shopping center sector. There is a pride of city and voluntarism attitude is	Has not arrived yet at the evaluation step because it is still in preparation step. There are several weakness of previous brand evaluated by Bappeda's study	Not significant enough. The branding is known by Pekalongan and surrounding people only. The effect is emphasized more on batik employers and written batik labeling. DPRD is developing the local regulation about branding

generated to promote the city.

that later will function as the sign of Pekalongan batik originality. There is a pride of city and voluntarism attitude is generated to promote the city.

Having compared the branding in Surakarta city with the ones in Pekalongan and Semarang Cities, the government communication model can be depicted generally as follows.

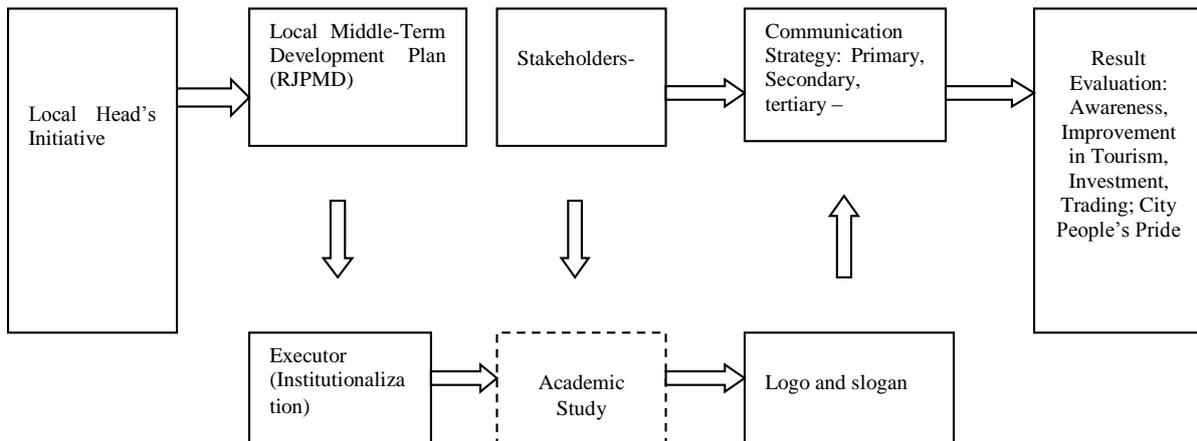


Figure 5.1 General Model of City Branding Management

The theoretical implication of research is that it confirms the branding process as the form of constructed social reality, so that it can be seen as both subjective and objective reality. In addition, the findings of research also confirm Kavaritzi’s city brand communication theory, by emphasizing on innovation aspect of local leaders, city appearance structuring, cultural event, and secondary communication.

The practical implication of research is that this case study can be the lesson learned suggesting that in local autonomy, the government can made branding as the rational option to introduce its area but it should have clear planning and purpose and involves the stakeholders collaboratively and dialogically. The branding policy should be accompanied with the strategic measures of marketing communication so that branding is not only quasi-imaging but the local marketing attempts leading to its people’s prosperity.

CONCLUSION

1. City branding in Central java still emphasizes more on logo and slogan, and has not touched yet the more comprehensive and local differentiation-based aspects.
2. City branding made by the three cities had involved sufficiently the stakeholders' participation in structuring step, but in implementation step, the stakeholders had not participated maximally yet to support the branding's success.
3. The constraints encountered in the problem included the limited human resource, marketing mindset and local leadership consistency

RECOMMENDATION

1. The municipal government should develop a brand implementing strategy based on city potential and structure an obvious institutionalization and outcome-based communication strategy.
2. The collaboration of stakeholders should be identified in the implementation plan so that there is 'duty' clarity for the stakeholders' support for the branding's success.
3. The problem of human resource can be dealt with by holding branding orientation training for the apparatus of related SKPD so that the branding implementation will run optimally.

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