

Branding of North Sulawesi tourism through the hexagon of competitive identity

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Abstract This research was motivated by the disappointment of the North Sulawesi Provincial Government, and its people because none of the tourism destinations in the area was included in the list. Phenomenally, North Sulawesi Province in 2018 was named as the Province with best tourism performance in Indonesia, and in middle of 2019, the Likupang Tourism Special Economic Zone in North Sulawesi was designated as one of the five Super Priority Tourism Destinations. This study used the constructivist paradigm with qualitative research methodology aimed to analyse the success of a local government in tourism branding. The theoretical framework of Nation Brand Hexagon was adopted to the provincial level, i.e., the hexagon of competitive identity was used as the parameter to evaluate the outcomes of Branding North Sulawesi Tourism. The core finding of this study was the intertwining of three factors to support the success of North Sulawesi tourism branding, namely: lobbying to the central government, multi-stakeholder involvement management, and integrated marketing communication. This study aimed to understand the importance of Government Marketing for branding North Sulawesi Tourism through the Hexagon of Competitive Identity, namely: governance, investment and immigration, tourism, exports, culture and heritage, and people. From these findings, it can be concluded that the North Sulawesi Provincial Government has performed optimally and simultaneously the hexagon of competitive identity needed in branding its tourism destination, in doing its roles as a lobbyist, as a marketer, and as Catalyst of North Sulawesi Tourism Branding.

Keywords: tourism branding; competitive identity; government marketing; integrated marketing communication; outcome measurement

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INTRODUCTION

Nation Branding as commercial brand management can be applied to show how places can build and sustain their competitive identity. There has been more and more interest in the idea that countries, cities and regions can build their brand images (Anholt, 2011). Tourism is the backbone of every country consisting of tourists, tourist destinations, travel, industry and so on, with the hope of increasing the country's foreign exchange income (Devy & Soemanto, 2017:34). Bali has been a world-class tourism destination in Indonesia for decades. However, Indonesia is much more than Bali island alone. It is filled with many more exciting and unique destinations in other islands spread across the archipelago of over 17,000 islands. Tourism is Indonesia's key driver for economic development, and The Indonesian government is focusing on increasing the number of foreign tourists. The reality is that Bali alone cannot accommodate over 20 million foreign tourist arrivals; therefore, The Indonesian government initiated to establish ten new tourist destinations to replicate the economic effects of tourism in Bali nationally. The Indonesian government, through the Ministry of Tourism, has launched ten 'New Bali' destinations, which will be the prioritised areas for tourism development (Haryanto, 2019:27) to become new icons of Indonesian tourism. The determination of these ten Priority Destinations was initiated by President Joko Widodo at the Indonesia Cabinet Meeting on 4 January 2016. Later, the Indonesian government decided to prioritise four of the ten Priority Destinations with a sharper focus on tourism development, namely: Lake Toba, Borobudur, Mandalika, and Labuan Bajo (Subandi & Putra, 2018:12).

There were disappointments among the North Sulawesi Provincial Government and its people because none of the tourism destinations in the area was included in the list, regardless of some famous tourist destination in North Sulawesi. For example, the Bunaken National Park in North Sulawesi was not included in ten tourist destinations in Indonesia. Bunaken is the first marine national park in Indonesia and is a very popular diving spot among both local and international divers because of its rich sea biodiversity. Likupang in North Sulawesi was only one of the five Leading Destinations that were also ready to be developed by the government but were positioned below the ten Priority Destinations (Muttaqin, 2016). Eventually, the Likupang Special Economic Zone for Tourism in North Sulawesi was decided through a limited meeting on 15 July 2019 as one of the Super Priority Destinations (Kiolol, Moniaga, & Rompas, 2019:670).

This study used the constructivist paradigm with qualitative research methodology, aimed at analysing the success of a local government in tourism branding. The theoretical framework of Nation Brand Hexagon was adopted to the provincial level, i.e., branding of North Sulawesi Tourism through the Hexagon of Competitive Identity. The Nation Branding Theory stated that the association network

influences the behaviour of external consumers (tourists, investors, international students, migrants) towards a country based on their interactions with one or more of the hexagon of competitive identity, namely: governance, investment and immigration, tourism, exports, culture and heritage, and people in the country (Matiza & Slabbert, 2020).

Figure 1. Nation Branding Theory



Source: Zeineddine & Nicolescu (2018)

When applied to the North Sulawesi tourism branding, the framework of the Hexagon Nation Branding would have six factors, also known as the hexagon of competitive identity, namely: governance (public opinion about provincial government competency and fairness as well as its perceived commitment to global and national issues); exports (the public's image of products and services from North Sulawesi); tourists (the level of interest in visiting North Sulawesi and the draw of natural and human-made attraction); investment and immigration (the power to attract people to live, work or study in North Sulawesi and how people perceive North Sulawesi's quality of life and business environment); culture and heritage (the global and national perception of North Sulawesi heritage and appreciation for its contemporary culture); and people (North Sulawesi people reputation for competence, openness and friendliness and other qualities such as tolerance).

Through the perspective of nation branding, tourists shape their perception of the place. The resulting image can affect cognitive, affective, and conative behaviour of tourists to that place as a tourist destination. Several previous studies formed the basis for the development of this research. Guaita Martínez et al. (2019), through their research, compared the seasonal level of rural destination groups with coastal and urban destinations. This analysis concluded that the

annual level of stability in rural tourism is not far from the stability of urban tourism, which is the most stable, because seasonality is much higher in coastal destinations. Situmorang et al. (2019) revealed that there is a complicated relationship between indigenous peoples and policymakers; one reason is because of the presence of local vendors. Srihadi et al. (2016) pointed out that significant differences were found between the four groups in terms of age, race, employment status, number of previous trips to Jakarta, and travel companion (Wijaya & Furqan, 2018). The purpose of this preliminary study was to identify the perceptions of tourists regarding their understanding of climate-related disaster risk issues and their effects on coastal tourism activities.

The four previous studies departed from how the tourism improvement sector involved various aspects ranging from coastal and urban side studies, community culture, to the analysis of target markets in tourism. This research was more specific to how North Sulawesi develops tourism as a whole which to revive the economy of the local community. As for supporting this research, table 1 presents the state of the art of the research.

Table 1. State of the Art

Title of Scientific Article	Author and Year
An analysis of the stability of rural tourism as a desired condition for sustainable tourism	(Martínez et al., 2019)
Friend or Foe? The complex relationship between indigenous people and policymakers regarding rural tourism in Indonesia	(Situmorang et al., 2019)
Segmentation of the tourism market for Jakarta: Classification of foreign visitors' lifestyle typologies	(Srihadi et al., 2016)
Coastal Tourism and Climate-Related Disasters in an Archipelago Country of Indonesia: Tourists' Perspective	(Wijaya & Furqan, 2018)

Source: Data processing by researchers

It is believed that when one reached a competitive identity, the mission in nation branding is achieved. It is also noted that success was only possible with the collaboration of various stakeholders, ranging from decision-makers, the private sector, investors, assisted by the involvement of residents. The international reputation of a country is considered to be managed positively and adequately once there is cooperation between various sectors of the country (Zeineddine & Nicolescu, 2013).

Using the Nation Branding Theory, i.e., the hexagon of competitive identity applied to the provincial level, the purpose of this study was to identify the success factors of North Sulawesi Provincial Government in building North Sulawesi's tourism branding and reputation within the 2016-2019 period. The North Sulawesi Provincial

Government's strategic efforts to build North Sulawesi's tourism branding were assessed in this study as well as the drivers and motivations among the tourism sector stakeholders in North Sulawesi and Jakarta to be involved in branding its tourism destination.

As the baseline of this study, several studies conducted in 2016 or earlier on North Sulawesi tourism, particularly on Bunaken National Park as one of the tourist destinations in the Province were reviewed. Researchers consider the branding of National Sulawesi tourism heavily depending on the image and reputation of its tourist destination like Bunaken National Park. Oroh et al. (2015) considered that Tourism Promotion and Service Quality of Tourism Objects have a significant positive influence and contribution to the tourist satisfaction in Bunaken Marine Park attractions. The Bunaken Marine Park attractions should have paid more attention to the factors of Tourism Promotion and Service Quality of Tourism Objects (Bagindo et al., 2016). The role of the tourism sector is increasingly important in line with the development of the Indonesian economic structure leading to the services sector.

METHODOLOGY

The data sources of this study consisted of material and recorded presentations and discussions which were mostly attended directly by the researcher; in-depth interviews with informants, both in Jakarta and in Manado; local media coverage and books on North Sulawesi tourism; and, discussions in several WhatsApp Groups about North Sulawesi tourism (Fernando et al., 2019). In-depth interviews were conducted by the researcher in Jakarta and Manado, with informants from a Manado-based online media, Koran Sindo Manado (representing media stakeholders), from Manado College of Tourism Economics (representing tourism education institution stakeholders), from the Association of Indonesian Tourism Academics and Practitioners (representing practitioner and tourism academics stakeholders, mostly originated from North Sulawesi), from a cultural-based mass organisation, namely Kawanua Family Harmony known as "*Kerukunan Keluarga Kawanua*" (representing community stakeholders), from the North Sulawesi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (representing business stakeholders), and from the Provincial Government of North Sulawesi. There were six informants interviewed.

North Sulawesi tourism is also an exciting topic of discussion at the WhatsApp Groups of Iluni UI Sulut (the University of Indonesia Alumni from North Sulawesi). Local media coverage about tourism in North Sulawesi were mainly observed from three local, Manado-based, most popular online media, namely: sindomanado.com; manado.tribunnews.com, and beritamanado.com. The book written by Dino Gobel, entitled "The Gate Opener - Olly Dondokambey's Breakthrough in Building Tourism in North Sulawesi" was used as a source to confirm North Sulawesi Governor's statements in the

National Public Lecture held at University of Indonesia Salemba Campus on 23 August 2019. Testimonials from the key stakeholders in North Sulawesi tourism were also cited from this book. The research activity took place from the beginning of August 2019 until mid of March 2020, through the presence of the researcher in several Public Discussions on improving the reputation of tourism and investment in North Sulawesi. The researcher also observed the Tomohon International Flower Festival (TIFF) held in early August 2019.

Januarti & Wempi (2019) stated data collection methods that would be carried out, including a combination of various techniques, namely: document and presentation material search, publications related to North Sulawesi's tourism reputation in print and electronic media, participatory observation in several public discussions - face-to-face and online through the WhatsApp Group, and in-depth interviews. Ulfa & Marta (2017) stated the collected data then were analysed qualitatively, using the Integrated Marketing Communication approach, especially the government marketing, emphasising on destination branding by the North Sulawesi Provincial Government.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This was research on tourism marketing communication, so it was necessary to review several important terms, scope and definitions related to tourism, including differences in tourism terms in Indonesia language; definition and types of tourists; tourist destinations and attractions; and tourism facilities and infrastructure. The primary references were the Indonesian Law No. 10/2009 concerning Tourism, and the Government Regulation No. 50/2011 concerning the 2010-2025 Indonesian Tourism Development Master Plan. In this research, tourism will be reviewed as an integral part of national development which is carried out systematically, planned, integrated, sustainable, and responsibly while protecting religious values, the culture that lives in the community, environmental sustainability and quality, and national interest. The success of tourism development in an area is supported by four pillars, namely: the tourism industry, tourism destinations, tourism marketing (promotion), and tourism institutions (people, rules, and organisations). Because the interactions in the scope of tourism mentioned above were part of tourism marketing communication, this paper would review the success of enhancing North Sulawesi's tourism reputation, particularly the integrated marketing campaign aspects of North Sulawesi Provincial Government.

In 2017, tourism was one of the five development priority sectors announced by President Joko Widodo's administration. The Indonesian Minister of Tourism at the time, Arief Yahya, stated that "Tourism is the easiest and cheapest contributor to GDP, foreign exchange and employment" (Author, 2017). For Indonesia, Tourism is 10% of National GDP, and this is the highest percentage among

Southeast Asian countries. The tourism sector is the fourth largest foreign exchange earner (9.3%), and in terms of growth of foreign exchange has the highest percentage (13%) (Author, 2017). At the limited meeting on improving Indonesia's tourism ranking on 17 February 2020, President Joko Widodo stated that Indonesia's tourism competitiveness ranking in the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index is getting better each year. In 2015 it was ranked 50th, then in 2017 it went up to 42nd, and in 2019 it went up again even though it was only slightly, ranked 40th (Sofia & Cindiyara, 2020).

The prospect of Indonesia's tourism sector in the future is more clearly marked by the alignments of government policies in the sector. Tourism, as the core business of Indonesia's economic development, and the development of ten new destinations in Bali is a government policy in the pro-tourism sector (Jahid, 2019). Bali is the leading tourist destination in Indonesia, and more foreign tourists have visited Bali than any other destinations in Indonesia.

Table 2. Foreign Tourists to Indonesia and Bali

Year	Foreign Tourists to Indonesia (millions)	Foreign Tourists to Bali (millions)	Bali Visit's percentage (%)
1994	4.0	1.0	25
1999	4.6	1.4	30
2004	5.3	1.5	28
2009	6.3	2.4	38
2014	9.4	3.8	40
2019	16.1	6.3	39

Source: Bali Provincial Statistics Center (BPS, 2020)

The Indonesian government also implements a strategy for marketing, through Branding, advertising, and Selling. There were National Branding, Regional Branding, and Local Branding; where National Branding was distinguished between "Wonderful Indonesia" for foreign tourists and "*Pesona Indonesia*" for domestic tourists. Branding through Wonderful Indonesia was quite significant in attracting Chinese tourists which increased by 42.22% in 2017 but have not been quite successful in other countries. Through the branding, the Ministry of Tourism has not succeeded in realising 15 million foreign tourist arrivals by the end of 2017 (Makhasi, 2017). For advertising, tourism advertising was created by the customer, by product and by event; while for selling, was done through travel mart, direct sales and festivals.

Government Marketing

The term 'marketing' is generally used to discuss the efforts made by the business sector; however, in this paper, the marketing that would be discussed was the effort made by the government sector, namely the North Sulawesi Provincial Government. Therefore, in the discussion about marketing, it is necessary to bridge the use of

all the terms 'Corporate' to be applied to 'Government.' This research would focus on the role of marketing in the government sector.

There were seven essential differences between marketing in government and the private or corporate sector, namely: resistance to marketing as a legal tool; lack of marketing institutionalisation; differences in targets between the private sector and the public sector; payment differences within the organisation; differences in customer or client services; differences in developing strategies around 4P's; and, differences in the decision-making environment. Because of these differences, the application of marketing approaches in the private sector needs to be adapted for the government sector (Çakar, 2020).

Table 3. Success Role as Lobbyist in North Sulawesi Tourism Branding

Hexagon of Competitive Identity - Outcomes as Lobbyist	
Governance	<i>(public opinion about provincial government competency and fairness as well as its perceived commitment to global and national issues)</i> President Joko Widodo visited Manado twice in 2019, showing reliable support from Central Government.
Culture & Heritage	Likupang as one of the five super-priority destinations <i>(the global and national perception of North Sulawesi heritage and appreciation for its contemporary culture)</i> Tomohon International Flower Festival (TIFF) as one of Calendar of Event Top 10 Wonderful Indonesia
Exports	<i>(the public's image of products and services from North Sulawesi)</i> The North Sulawesi Province has made a significant contribution for foreign exchange earnings from tourism
Investment & Immigration	<i>(the power to attract people to live, work or study in North Sulawesi and how people perceive North Sulawesi's quality of life and business environment)</i> North Sulawesi in 2017 as one of the One Belt One Road (OBOR) corridors.
People	The promotion of the Immigration Office in Manado Airport <i>(North Sulawesi people reputation for competence, openness and friendliness and other qualities such as tolerance)</i> Lobbying and negotiation were the basis of the successful development of North Sulawesi's tourism reputation.
Tourists	<i>(the level of interest in visiting North Sulawesi and the draw of natural and human-made attraction)</i> The first flight from Manado to China mainland was successfully realised on 4 July 2016, after completing lots of fierce lobbying to the Central Government.

Source: processed by researchers from media and presentation materials

Marketing leadership in the government sector is inseparable from the dynamics of the relationship between the political elite and its people. As one of the crucial aspects of 'political marketing,' an effective communication from a leader is needed to balance two conflicting aspects, namely: listening to the public voice to stay popular and making decisive decisions in order to lead effectively.

There were three criteria needed for marketing in the government sector, namely: responsiveness, leadership, and credibility, where each criterion has a communication goal that supports the quality of marketing leadership in the government sector (Elder, 2016). Government marketing responsiveness was supported by three communication objectives, namely: communicating them to listen to the public; communicating respectful acknowledgement of public concerns and criticism; and, communicating the emotional bond between them and the public. Government marketing leadership is supported by two communication objectives, namely: communicating the power of leadership; and, communicating leadership competence. While the marketing credibility of the government is supported by two communication objectives, namely: communicating honesty; and, communicating authenticity and connection.

Reputation building through branding by cities, regions and countries adopts the same branding strategy as the branding of household products to differentiate and emotionally connect with potential tourists visiting their regions (Czernek-Marszałek, 2020). The management of destination reputation must also consider contemporary issues such as digital platforms, social networks, and public relations and media.

Government marketing in the tourism sector is closely related to the country's reputation. A study examined the role of the country's reputation in moderating the influence of tourism advertising for the country as well as attitudes towards the government and its citizens. A country's reputation scale was expressed in three dimensions: leadership, investment, and culture; where leadership moderated the effectiveness of tourism advertisements for visiting a country and attitudes towards the government of that country (Fullerton & Kendrick, 2017). Power played an essential role in building an influential reputation in a cooperative network and is therefore vital in planning and decision making. Interpretations of influence and power vary between stakeholder groups and must be considered as perceptual and not just structural concepts (Sterchele, 2020).

Tourism is expected to give a positive impact on Indonesian tourism, particularly for the region itself. So, attention is necessary from the local government, community and private sector in developing the potential of tourism in their respective regions. The development of tourism which was carried out by the North Sulawesi Governors in the last three decades (1985-2015) became a valuable lesson as well as motivation for Olly Dondokambey, who served as the Governor of North Sulawesi for the 2016-2021 period, accompanied by Steven Kandouw as Vice Governor. The achievement or success of the building of North Sulawesi's tourism reputation is indeed the result of 'breakthrough' by Governor Olly Dondokambey and Vice Governor Steven Kandouw in three years (2016-2019); however, this achievement was also supported by the foundation formed over three

decades (1985-2015) by the previous Governor who also sought to improve tourism in North Sulawesi. The successful development of North Sulawesi's tourism reputation in the era of Olly Dondokambey - Steven Kandouw's leadership was depending on the intertwining of three components, namely: integrated marketing communication; management of stakeholders' involvement; and, lobbying. However, all North Sulawesi Governors had played a significant role in branding the North Sulawesi tourism in during their leadership.

Table 4. North Sulawesi Strategic Tourism Development from 1985 to 2015		
Governor	Period	Initiatives for Tourism
C.J. Rantung	1985-1990	Popularising " <i>Fesbudaton</i> ", the Bunaken & Lake Tondano Festival; The concept of integrated tourism area development; Tasik Ria Tourism Development Center (TTDC)
	1990-1995	
E.E. Mangindaan	1995-2000	Development of supporting infrastructure and tourism business areas; 100-hectare boulevard area resulting from the Manado Bay reclamation project
A.J. Sondakh	2000-2005	Bukit Kasih tourism object, Kanonang Village (symbol of religious harmony)
S.H. Sarundajang	2005-2010	Integrated tourism management is more prioritised; North Sulawesi Promotion through MICE (Meeting, Incentive, Convention, Exhibition); World Ocean Conference (WOC); Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI), ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF); Manado City leading on MICE Tourism
	2010-2015	
O. Dondokambey	2015-2020	Launch tourism as a revenue-generating program; Work on the Asia Pacific tourism market, especially China; Strategy for involving tourism stakeholders

Source: Compiled by the researchers from Gobel (2018)

North Sulawesi tourism promotion is only effective if the facilities and infrastructure related to the comfort and security of tourism destinations in North Sulawesi were available. The acceleration of the construction of facilities and infrastructure is only effective if there is an involvement of tourism stakeholders and strong policy support from the Central Government.

Integrated Marketing Communication

Integrated Marketing is a mixture of public relations or publicity; advertising; sales promotion; and marketing to promote organisations, products, and services. There is a need to be skilful in various fields such as marketing, advertising, sales promotion and public relations. Integrated Marketing Communication is a communication process consisting of planning, creation, integration, and implementation of

various forms of marketing communication (advertising, sales promotion, publicity releases, events, etc.) of a brand that was given within a specific time to the target customer or project to influence the behaviour of the target audience (Bassano et al., 2019). There were various perspectives and emphasis on Integrated Marketing Communication, for example: combining offline and online with social media in marketing communication; integrated marketing communications advertising, promotion, and other forms (Fullerton & Kendrick, 2017); and, viewing advertising and promotion from the perspective of integrated marketing communication.

The future of advertising and marketing communications would be marked by the increasing diversity of new digital media choices in addition to traditional media and communication choices that already exist. When designing integrated marketing communications, there were seven selection criteria to consider, namely: coverage, cost, contribution, commonality, complementarity, cross-effects, and conformability. Integrated marketing communication tools consists of media advertising, direct response and interactive advertising, place advertising, store signage and point-of-purchase advertising, trade and consumer-oriented promotions, event marketing and sponsorship, marketing-oriented public relations and publicity, and personal selling.

Regional Tourism Branding

From the North Sulawesi Provincial Regional Development Planning Board document, one of the missions undertaken was increasing the number of tourist visits to North Sulawesi and North Eastern Indonesia with one of the objectives being: creating North Sulawesi branding. One of the goals to achieve was the realisation of North Sulawesi as the gateway to Eastern Indonesia tourism. The North Sulawesi Provincial Government used Integrated Marketing Communication strengthened by the involvement of stakeholders in the tourism sector through the North Sulawesi Branch of the Association of The Indonesian Tours and Travel (ASITA), which reached the hospitality and culinary industry, creative industry, tours & travel, diving centres, souvenir shops, tourist guides, land and sea transportation, restaurant & café, event organisers, entertainment, etc. This is similar to the marketing efforts undertaken by the Raja Ampat Culture and Tourism Office which were successful in using a combination of promotions which included advertising, sales promotion, public relations, personal selling, direct marketing and internet marketing.

To build the reputation of North Sulawesi tourism, the North Sulawesi Provincial Government intensively conducted various promotions ranging from national branding, regional branding, to destination branding. These promotion and communication efforts were carried out through providing ample information about various attractions, tourism packages and tourism event calendars for

domestic and foreign tourists. For example, the Manado City Tourism Office held a series of events for the whole of 2019. For the whole year, there were always attractions to attract tourists. This bustling Calendar of Events is only from Manado City, one of the 15 Regencies and Cities in North Sulawesi Province. In the Closing Ceremony of the Manado Fiesta 2019 on 4 August 2019, the legendary singer Iwan Fals acknowledged the beauty of North Sulawesi by saying that "this province has ten heavens." Only a few days after the Manado Fiesta Festival, the researcher had the opportunity to attend the Tomohon International Flower Festival in the City of Tomohon on 8 August 2019, which was held after the Kawanua International Business Forum on 7 August 2019 at the Danau Lino Hotel. The researcher had the opportunity to directly observe and interact with dozens of Ambassadors from other countries who participated in a series of events in Tomohon. Most of them were first timers in visiting North Sulawesi. They were very impressed and admired the beauty of all tourism destinations they visited. They planned to visit again with their families and friends.

The increasing reputation of North Sulawesi tourism has attracted foreign media coverage. In December 2019, Governor Olly Dondokambey received a visit from the CEO of Naning TV and Hunan Rednet. This visit was intended to seek opportunity for cooperation in promoting the North Sulawesi tourism in China, which, according to them, was very attractive to Chinese tourists.

Figure 2. Local media coverage on the Chinese Media visit to North Sulawesi Governor

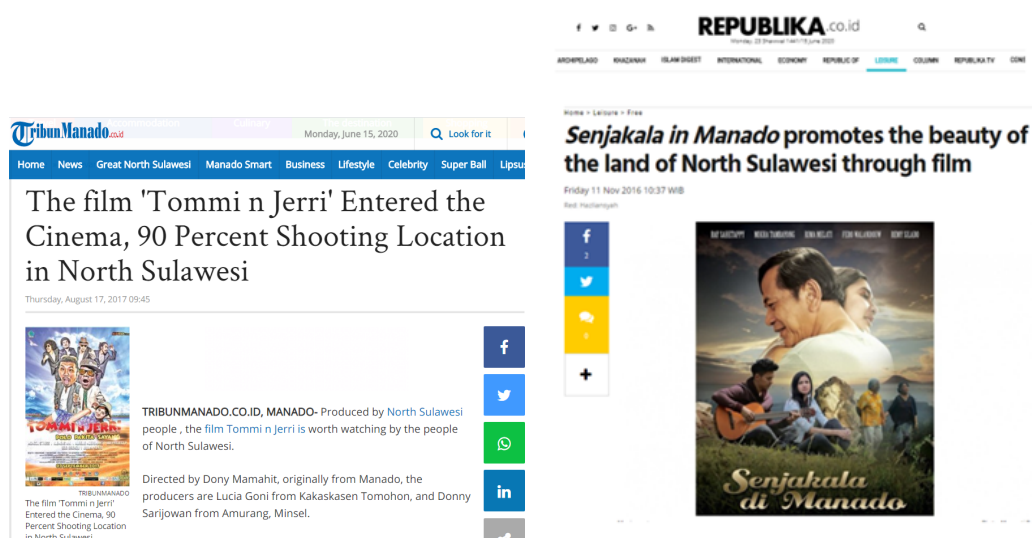


Source: Author Compilation (2020)

Another marketing tool to promote the North Sulawesi's tourism was through movie production, such as: *"Tommi N Jerri Polo pa Kita Sayang"* (an Indonesian comedy film released in 2017, where 80 per

cent of the film were shot in North Sulawesi, especially in Manado) and another 2016 comedy entitled "*Senjakala di Manado*" (the first widescreen film whose the whole shooting process was located in North Sulawesi, especially around the city of Tomohon). These two comedian movies were promoted on local and national media, and have successfully attracted many visitors to North Sulawesi, especially around the cities of Manado and Tomohon.

Figure 3. Local and national media coverage on the North Sulawesi promotion movies



Source: Author Compilation (2020)

However, the researcher found that there was still a lack of access to information about North Sulawesi tourism, especially on social media. This finding is in line with research conducted at the Department of Tourism and Culture of the City of Manado (Berhanu & Raj, 2020) which found that the use of communication media in tourism promotion activities did not make tourism promotion run well. This was caused by, among others, the lack of funds to finance operations, problematic network systems, there were lack of IT and design expert permanent employees in the organisational structure, as well as inadequate office facilities and infrastructure.

This area for improvement on lack of social media and website updates regarding tourism destinations by North Sulawesi Provincial Government was confirmed during in-depth interviews with a local mass media editor and a tourism college lecturer. A study focusing on the website and Instagram design as the primary access to information distribution of a legacy hotel in Surabaya indicated that the design of innovative digital marketing communication strategies could be made with a management calendar, content formulation system, updated website features, optimised Instagram and following the Teguh & Ciawati (2020).

Indonesia, as the biggest of Social Media user on Southeast Asia, has been rapidly changing on Social Media Platform. Since 2012, the trend became Twitter and instant messaging. Another study was done using a qualitative approach to explore the depth reason on how the Indonesian Youth create the meaning of Social Media usage. The study concluded that young users of social media use group chat as a means of personal communication (peer to peer). They ignored the context in which group chat is a public area where everyone can access it and interpret the content of the message themselves (Susilo & Putranto, 2018).

The lack of social media and website updates by North Sulawesi Provincial Government has been strongly supported by the promotional strategy undertaken by the Ministry of Tourism Marketing Division through the Instagram account @indtravel as a tourism promotion media throughout Indonesia -including North Sulawesi- by carrying out several stages, namely: content creation; platform determination; program planning; program implementation; monitoring; evaluation (Atiko et al., 2016). In front of the millennials from North Sulawesi, the former Minister of Tourism Arief Yahya stated that the Tourism 4.0 could not be separated from millennial and digital, because around 51 per cent of inbound travellers to Indonesia were millennials and 70 per cent of tourists search and share via digital (Atiko et al., 2016). Therefore, the involvement of the millennials in North Sulawesi has to be increased and optimised.

All of the above supports have triggered the Provincial Government of North Sulawesi through the Department of Tourism which in 2017 initiated a collaboration with Baidu, China's biggest search engine to promote North Sulawesi's tourism potential. Then in 2018, the Manado City Government, through its Tourism Office, signed an MOU with Baidu Indonesia. Operating in the same space as Google, Baidu (BIDU) is China's largest internet search engine with over 80 per cent of the country's search queries. This means that all information about North Sulawesi tourism would be published so that Chinese and other Asian tourists can access information as a reference for their travel.

A critical aspect of regional tourism branding is platform determination. Since the main targeted tourists to visit North Sulawesi come from China, it is a very strategic branding decision not to adopt exclusive halal tourism branding. North Sulawesi Province has several Muslim-majority districts in Bolang Mongondow region, and half of the residents in the city of Manado now were Muslims. Furthermore, Indonesia is the largest Muslim country in the world; therefore, most of the domestic tourists were Muslims. However, the Manado City branding is strategically chosen as "Harmony In Diversity" and not using the exclusive halal branding. The development of "Indonesia The Halal Wonders" tourism brand could possibly lead to positive and

negative possibilities. Tourism halal markets tend to lose the customers that were not Muslim travellers (Winarti, 2017).

Table 5. Success Role as Marketer in North Sulawesi Tourism Branding

Hexagon of Competitive Identity - Outcomes as Marketer	
Governance	<p><i>(public opinion about provincial government competency and fairness as well as its perceived commitment to global and national issues)</i></p> <p>North Sulawesi was nominated as the "The Rising Star" in Indonesia Tourism, with 600% growth of foreign tourist arrival in the period of 2015-2018.</p> <p>North Sulawesi was chosen as the Best Tourism Performance Province out of 34 Provinces in Indonesia</p>
Culture & Heritage	<p><i>(the global and national perception of North Sulawesi heritage and appreciation for its contemporary culture)</i></p> <p>A visit from the CEO of Naning TV and Hunan Rednet who seek opportunity for cooperation in promoting the North Sulawesi tourism in China, which, according to them, was very attractive to Chinese tourists.</p>
Exports	<p><i>(the public's image of products and services from North Sulawesi)</i></p> <p>North Sulawesi Branding as "The Gateway To Asia Pacific" in Trading, Investment and Tourism</p> <p>The Manado City reputation as MICE City</p> <p>MOU with Baidu, the largest search engine in China.</p>
Investment & Immigration	<p><i>(the power to attract people to live, work or study in North Sulawesi and how people perceive North Sulawesi's quality of life and business environment)</i></p> <p>The development of the tourism sector in North Sulawesi has given a positive impact to property entrepreneur who has a business asset in Manado</p>
People	<p><i>(North Sulawesi people reputation for competence, openness and friendliness and other qualities such as tolerance)</i></p> <p>Manado City Tourism Office held the 2019 Calendar of Events from the beginning to the end of the year involving all local people.</p> <p>Develop Kanonang Village as a symbol of religious harmony.</p> <p>Manado City branding as "Harmony In Diversity." They are not adopting exclusive halal tourism.</p>
Tourists	<p><i>(the level of interest in visiting North Sulawesi and the draw of natural and human-made attraction)</i></p> <p>It can be seen from the foreign tourist arrivals - especially from China mainland - continue to increase, both from the number of tourists, length of visit and the total expenditure spent.</p> <p>Foreign tourists and domestic tourists take action to travel to North Sulawesi.</p>

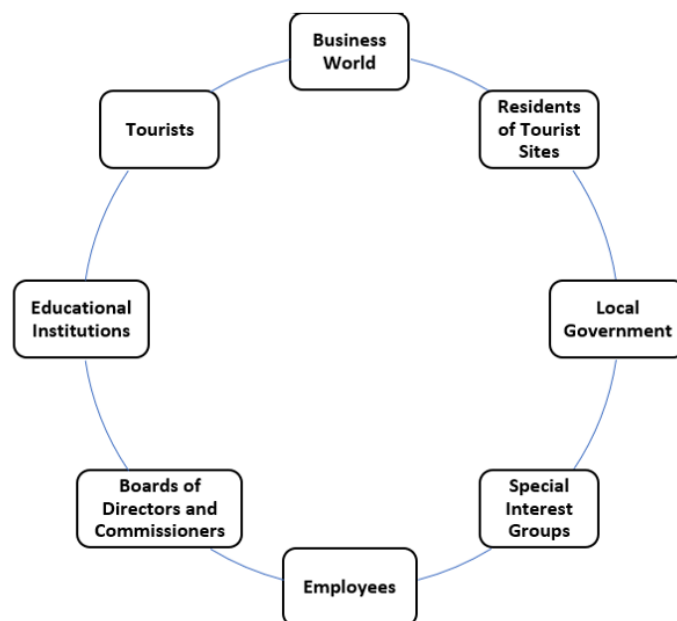
Source: processed by researchers from media and presentation materials

Knowing the term of city branding and city image is regarded as significant since they were able to affect the post-visit behaviour of tourist. Quantitative research with descriptive approach and path analysis showed the variable of city branding was considered as it is effective to be one of tourism promotion strategies in Manado to attract the tourist interest. Variable of city branding affect the city image positively and significantly (Endey et al., 2018).

Multi-Stakeholder Involvement Management

Involvement of tourism stakeholders is managed through three strategic decisions, namely: attraction, integration, and management. There were stages in the involvement, namely: place arrangement; recognition of the capacity of stakeholder involvement; stakeholder relationship management; pursuing goals that can be achieved; influencing implementation capacity; and, monitoring stakeholder involvement (Waligo et al., 2013). There were eight main groups of tourism stakeholders, namely: the business world; residents of tourist sites; local government; special interest groups; employees; boards of directors and commissioners; educational institutions; and, tourists.

Figure 4. Eight Main Groups of Tourism Stakeholders



Source: (Waligo et al., 2013)

Coordination of stakeholders and tourist destination branding showed interrelations. Internal communication and the socialisation process were fundamental activities that must be considered by the leaders of a destination marketing organisation (DMO) if they want to grow the commitment of stakeholders to destination branding (Sugathan & Ranjan, 2019). The complexity in managing the tourism network requires a balance between external pressures and internal expectations. Therefore, to enhance the ability of destinations to create unique, authentic and high-quality tourist experiences, stakeholder management perspectives were needed based on networks, personal relationships, trust, and reciprocity (van der Zee et al., 2017), integrated marketing campaign activities to increase tourism and investment, strengthened by a variety of lobbies conducted by the North Sulawesi Provincial Government to the Central Government, which ultimately led to a change in the priority of

developing tourist destinations. The North Sulawesi Provincial Government also managed the involvement of stakeholders related to tourism.

Regarding the success of the lobbying and negotiation, the researcher had the opportunity to see the presentation from Governor Olly Dondokambey, which is similar to what was written in the Dino Gobel book. These successes include lobby and negotiations with Rusdi Kirana, the owner of the Lion Air Group, to open direct flights from several cities in mainland China to Manado, without any funding from the Provincial Budget. The first flight was successfully carried out on 4 July 2016, after completing lots of fierce lobbying to the Central Government. In addition to supporting the opening of direct flights, Rusdi Kirana also immediately set up a Tours & Travel company to serve tourists from China, which is known as MM Travel.

Figure 5. The opening of direct flights from mainland China to Manado



Source: North Sulawesi Governor presentation material

An important outcome was the permit and license on direct flights from China to Manado. The lobbying for such permit and license including an approach to the Minister of Transportation, Ignatius Jonan, which was very tough, because until two weeks before the D-Day on 4 July 2016, licensing had not been granted. As the result of lobbying to President Joko Widodo, Vice President Jusuf Kalla, and Megawati Soekarnoputri, eventually obtained endorsement to improve North Sulawesi tourism by opening direct flights from China to Manado, which eventually smoothed the licensing matters with the Minister of Transportation. Lobbying efforts then continued to the Minister of Law and Human Rights, Yasona Laoly, to include the Sam Ratulangi Airport Manado as an airport that can provide Visa on Arrival, similar to Jakarta's Soekarno-Hatta Airport, Medan's Polonia Airport, Denpasar's I Gusti Ngurah Rai Airport, Padang's Minangkabau Airport, and Surabaya's Juanda Airport. After the Visa on Arrival provision was obtained, then the lobbying efforts continued back to the Ministry of Transportation in order to have a permit for 24-hour

operation in Sam Ratulangi Airport Manado so that it could be operated day and night, which was successfully obtained.

Breakthroughs made by Governor Olly Dondokambey gave a positive impact that is interrelated in building the reputation of North Sulawesi not only in the tourism sector but also in investment and trade. Positioning the North Sulawesi as the gateway to the Asia Pacific for Trade, Tourism and Investment, through a series of successful lobbying and negotiations, an inaugural flight from China to Manado was made on 4 July 2016. After the inaugural flight, North Sulawesi tourism continues to experience an increase in the number of foreign tourists, especially from various cities in China; increase in the length of stay; and increased spending during their trips in North Sulawesi. The implication related to the Hexagon of Competitive Identity were shown in Table 3 (Outcomes as Lobbyist), Table 5 (Outcomes as Marketer), and Table 6 (Outcomes as Catalyst). On these tables, the actual outcomes related to the North Sulawesi Tourism branding for each component of the hexagonal were shown.

Table 6. Success Role as Catalyst in North Sulawesi Tourism Branding
Hexagon of Competitive Identity - Outcomes as Catalyst

Governance	<p><i>(public opinion about provincial government competency and fairness as well as its perceived commitment to global and national issues)</i></p> <p>The involvement of tourism stakeholders both in Manado and Jakarta has proven to be very effective in branding North Sulawesi's tourism.</p>
Culture & Heritage	<p><i>(the global and national perception of North Sulawesi heritage and appreciation for its contemporary culture)</i></p> <p>The production of a comedy film in 2016 "Senjakala di Manado", which shooting location was 100 per cent in North Sulawesi, especially around the city of Tomohon.</p>
Exports	<p><i>(the public's image of products and services from North Sulawesi)</i></p> <p>In 2018, North Sulawesi was the only Province in Indonesia that can reduce poverty because it is supported by the tourism sector.</p>
Investment & Immigration	<p><i>(the power to attract people to live, work or study in North Sulawesi and how people perceive North Sulawesi's quality of life and business environment)</i></p> <p>The Lion Air Group opened direct flights from several cities in mainland China to Manado, without any funding from the Provincial Budget.</p>
People	<p><i>(North Sulawesi people reputation for competence, openness and friendliness and other qualities such as tolerance)</i></p> <p>Tourism stakeholders (business, profession, community) took action to participate in exploring opportunities to advance actively.</p>
Tourists	<p><i>(the level of interest in visiting North Sulawesi and the draw of natural and human-made attraction)</i></p> <p>North Sulawesi tourism is progressing and has resulted in positive impacts on the community, especially the travel entrepreneurs in North Sulawesi.</p>

Source: processed by researchers from media and presentation materials

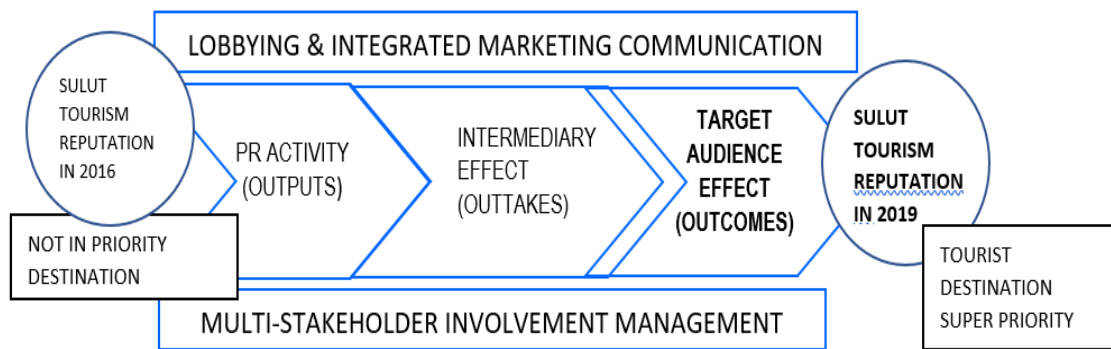
Above appreciations and testimonials were quoted from a book written by Dino Gobel, the Expert Staff to the North Sulawesi Governor for tourism development. However, from the in-depth interviews with several informants in Manado, the trickle-down effect of the rapidly increasing number of tourists has not reached many small and medium enterprises as well as existing tours and travel agents. Many players in the tourism sector in North Sulawesi were still feeling left behind and only got a small portion of the increasing tourist visits, particularly from China mainland.

Reputational Building Measurement

The measurement and evaluation of the success of a communication or public relations program began to be subject to the study of experts, practitioners, and academics who were members of several Public Relations organisations during the Barcelona Principles declaration in 2010.

The Barcelona Principles of 2010, which involved six world communication and public relations associations, determined the seven principles expected to be the standard for public relations and communication practitioners - both from the private sector and from the government sector - to measure effectiveness programs implemented. Goal setting and measurement were fundamental to communication and public relations; Measuring outcomes is more recommended than simply measuring outputs; Effects on organisational performance can and must be measured if possible; Measurement and evaluation require both: qualitative and quantitative methods; AVE (Advertisement Value Equivalence) is not a communication value; Social media can and must be measured consistently with other media channels; Measurement and evaluation must be transparent, consistent and valid. A framework known as the AMEC Valid Metrics Framework is the application of the Barcelona Principles 2.0 for various fields of communication, including reputation building. This study examines the success of the North Sulawesi Provincial Government in building a reputation for regional tourism (reputation building) with this framework. One of the Barcelona Principles mentioned above: measuring outcomes is more recommended than simply measuring outputs. This principle also applied to measure the success of a regional branding program. There were three measures often used, namely the outputs, the outtakes, and the outputs.

Figure 6. Outputs-to-Outcomes Model of North Sulawesi Tourism Branding



Source: process model developed by researchers

Outputs - Many outputs were done in building the North Sulawesi tourism reputation through content creation, traditional media engagement, social media engagement, stakeholder engagement, events and exhibitions as well as seminars and conventions.

Some content creations were derived from the national branding for tourism such as "Wonderful North Sulawesi Sea"; and some were developed based on the regional strength for regional branding, for examples: "North Sulawesi As The Gateway To Asia Pacific"; "Manado: Harmony In Diversity". The North Government Provincial Government is actively carrying out the media engagement through media gathering, media visit, bringing reporter to exhibition abroad, and press releases to printed and electronic media. For social media engagement, it is not optimum yet but supported by the Ministry of Tourism. More influencers from the region or originated from North Sulawesi were still required to optimise social media advertising.

The outputs in terms of stakeholder engagement could be seen from the efforts made by North Sulawesi Provincial Government to facilitate and to involve in various programs organised by 15 Districts/Municipalities; by the Business & Professional Associations; by Communities; and by Local Universities. Categorised as outputs also were the events and exhibitions organised by North Sulawesi Provincial Government, such as: Launching Of North Sulawesi Calendar of Events (among others: Bunaken Enchantment Festival, Lembeh Strait Enchantment Festival, Tomohon International Flower Festival, Manado Fiesta Festival, etc.), Sulut Expo 2019 at SMESCO Building; Manado PPI 2020 (Exhibition of Leading Product, Tourism, and Regional Investment); and North Sulawesi Tourism Travel Fair 2020. There were also Seminar & Convention done such as AIS (Archipelagic & Island States) Start-up & Business Summit 2019.; Kawanua International Business Forum 2019; Public Lecture 2019 at University Indonesia Salemba Campus; Tourism Development Panel Discussion at SMESCO Building during the Sulut Expo, and many others.

Outtakes – based upon the above outputs, the North Sulawesi Provincial Government also made some outtakes. The breakthrough

impacts made by Governor Olly Dondokambey for North Sulawesi Tourism Development has inspired several books and articles, among others is the book written by Dino Gobel. The outputs also drove outtakes like the support and involvement of the critical stakeholders of North Sulawesi tourism in the events, exhibitions and seminars organised by the North Sulawesi Provincial Government. The positive coverage by local media, including the three primary local online media: Sindomanado.Com; Manado.Tribunnews.Com; Beritamanado.Com were part of the outtakes.

Furthermore, as the result of many outputs mentioned above, the former Minister of Tourism publicly endorsed North Sulawesi Tourism, through the Instagram Account @Indtravel administered by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy. Outtakes also obtained from the strong support from mass organisations such as Kawanua Family Harmony known as "*Kerukunan Keluarga Kawanua*," and supports from the millennial, which represented by the "*Nyong & Nona Sulut*" Group who published promotion on North Sulawesi Tourism through a social media platform genpi.co. Very impressive outtakes were the two comedy films which shooting locations took place in North Sulawesi, namely: "*Senjakala Di Manado*" (100% of the shooting located in North Sulawesi, around the City of Tomohon) and "*Tommi & Jerri Polo Pa Kita Sayang*" (80% of the shooting located in North Sulawesi, especially in the City of Manado). Important outtake was the visit from the CEO of Naning TV and Hunan Rednet in December 2019 to seek opportunity for cooperation in promoting the North Sulawesi Tourism in China. The cooperation with Baidu, as the largest search engine in China, was also considered as a breakthrough for North Sulawesi Tourism promotion among the Mandarin internet users.

Above long list of outtakes indicates the power and the influence of outputs in building a reputation, which cascaded down into broader promotions by external parties. However, the most important is the Outcomes, which is the accurate measurement of the success or failure of a marketing communication program.

Outcomes – North Sulawesi government and people have started to see the outcomes of the three intertwined success factors applied to the six elements of competitive identity in building the North Sulawesi tourism reputation. In the year 2019, the tourism sector in North Sulawesi started to enjoy the increased foreign and domestic tourists visit, their increased length of stay, and increasing expenses spent during their trip. North Sulawesi was nominated as the "The Rising Star" in Indonesia Tourism, with 600% growth of foreign tourist arrival in the period of 2015-2018.

Other outcomes can be identified, among others: the Manado City reputation has been chosen as MICE City; chosen as the Best Tourism Performance Province among the 34 Provinces in Indonesia; Central Government permit for direct flights from China; Central Government permit for 24-hour Sam Ratulangi Manado Airport

Operation; the significant increase of tourism essential stakeholders involvement; and Tomohon International Flower Festival (TIFF) was chosen as one of Calendar of Event Top Ten Wonderful Indonesia. All of these outcomes demonstrate the success of tourism branding program through the three intertwined efforts.

The most impressive outcome which would have trickle-down effects to the North Sulawesi regional economic and development was the Central Government decision in August 2019 to establish Likupang in North Sulawesi as one of the five super-priority destinations. With this decision, a huge budget would be allocated by the Central Government for tourism development in North Sulawesi. More investors would be interested in investing in the Special Economic Zone for Tourism at Likupang, North Sulawesi. In general, the assessment of success can be seen from the number of significant increasing foreign and domestic tourist arrivals; the longer length of stay of these tourists in North Sulawesi; and, the more money spent by tourists during their visit to North Sulawesi.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study provided academic contributions. First, this study was an application of the Nation Branding Theory on tourism branding at the provincial level. It enriched the previous studies at nation and city levels to build and sustain the competitive identity of North Sulawesi tourism. Second, this study emphasised the three intertwined factors to support the success of North Sulawesi tourism branding, namely: the lobbying to the central government, the multi-stakeholder involvement management, and integrated marketing communication. The success achieved by North Sulawesi Province within the three years is a phenomenal breakthrough in the tourism branding, from being excluded in the ten priority tourism destinations in 2016, to be chosen as the five super-priority tourism destinations in 2019. Third, this study aimed to understand the importance of Government Marketing which furnished by strong lobbying skill to promote regional branding on tourism. However, on the other side, there is still a lack of social media and website updates regarding tourism destinations by North Sulawesi Provincial Government.

The findings also provided managerial implications for regional government offices and the tourism-related business firms. First, the regional government officers must facilitate the involvement of all key stakeholders with fairness and openness in order to create a sense of belonging on building regional tourism branding. However, monitoring and evaluation of each marketing communication event should be done to avoid unhealthy competition among the tourism industry players. Second, tourism organisations should prepare themselves to improve the quantity and quality of their services, anticipating an increasing number of foreign tourists coming to North Sulawesi. Third, domestic and foreign investors take action to invest and to operate in North

Sulawesi. These actions and decisions demonstrate that any regional tourism branding has to obtain central government permit, support, and facilitation first to ensure tourism infrastructure development. However, lobbying to central government is typically closely related to political power, which was not discussed in this study.

This study illustrated the success of the North Sulawesi Provincial Government in playing its role as the lobbyist, catalyst, and marketer to build and enhance the reputation of North Sulawesi tourism. However, this study experienced some limitations. First, this study examined the six-element of Branding Hexagon in the framework of three intertwined success factors of regional branding in tourism. Future studies should focus on other aspects to understand the regional branding of tourism, such as the roles of digital media promotion for younger tourists. Second, the measurement of success related to the outputs, outtakes, and outcomes mentioned in this study were all qualitatively. Future studies could discover quantitative data to measure the success of regional branding in tourism. Third, data were gathered from the publication and news promoting the success of North Sulawesi Government under the leadership of Governor Olly Dondokambey, especially on his lobbying to Central Government. Although the researcher maintained the balance of quoting North Sulawesi Province Government sources and the primary sources obtained from in-depth interviews, the result of this study might not be generalised. Fourth, it would require a separate study, for example, using a Communication Audit, to find out which success factors were the most dominant among the three intertwined factors in North Sulawesi's branding in tourism.

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