



## Community Rules in City Branding Communication (Study on “Boyolali Smile of Java” city branding in Boyolali, Indonesia)

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### **Abstract**

City branding has become a practice carried out in various countries including Indonesia. Cities in Indonesia are trying to increase their competitiveness through city branding. The success of city branding has been achieved by several big cities in Indonesia, small cities and several districts have implemented city branding as a strategic policy. Boyolali is one of the regencies that has recently also carried out city branding. With the approach of the Kavaratzis city branding communication model, this study wants to describe the role of the community as a stakeholder in city branding of Boyolali Regency. The methods used were interviews and documentation, the informants in this study consisted of the government side and several community activists in Boyolali Regency. Data were analyzed using data analysis techniques Miles and Huberman. The results showed a lack of community involvement in the planning and implementation of city branding. However, these communities eventually became part of the Boyolali city branding tertiary communication. The activities carried out by these communities were finally able to become a branding tool for Boyolali, which not controlled by the government.

**Keywords:** *City Branding; Community; Tertiary Communication; Boyolali*

### **Introduction**

City branding is currently known as a term generally used to describe regional promotional activities, both in tourism and investment (Adhiatma, 2015). In Europe, competition between major cities has increased over the past decade. Many countries in other parts of the world have also successfully promoted themselves through attractive city branding and are able to highlight their characteristics (Hazime, 2011). Several cities in the world are successful with city branding, one of which is Amsterdam with “I Amsterdam” which is re-branding. Amsterdam has managed to occupy a position as one of the top five cities in Europe based on brand strength and cultural assets (Aruman, 2018).

Indonesia has started to take similar initiatives to increase the competitiveness that had weakened in the fields of tourism, investment and trade (Yuli, 2011). Many cities in Indonesia have done city branding, many have succeeded and some have failed. The failure of city branding has been experienced by the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY) in its branding “Jogja Never Ending Asia” until

finally DIY did –re-branding to become "Special Jogja" which can be said to be a success today (Yuli, 2011). Another example of the success of city branding in Indonesia is the city of Surakarta (Solo), which has the brand "The Spirit of Java", Kota Batu with "Shinning Batu". Apart from cities, several districts in Indonesia are also doing city branding. In 2017, Malang Regency launched the branding "The Heart of East Java" (Damayanti, Ulfah, & Rahayu, 2017).

Likewise Boyolali Regency, since 2010 Boyolali Regency has started branding activities as an effort to introduce Boyolali to outside audiences. The tagline "Boyolali Smile" used as branding, this agreed in the technical guidance (*bimtek*) 2 Smart City Boyolali in September 2018. The tagline "Boyolali Smile" itself can broadly interpreted this tagline expected to become the identity of the friendly life of the Boyolali people and represented Boyolali that always want to move forward.

Building a city branding strategy requires the involvement of the whole communities. This is certainly not to be the task of any single organization. City branding requires the participation of all stakeholders that can provide diverse perspectives on problems in a city. The participation of stakeholders both government, intellectuals, artists, cultural figures, media, educational institutions and society in general will make city problems mapped well and ease the process of implementing city branding (Adhiatma, 2015). One of the most influential stakeholders in city branding is the community. Because this community indirectly represents society. There are many communities in Boyolali District, but only a few are involved in city branding, which are mainly community formed and assisted by the government called as cluster. With this background, this study wants to see and describe the role of community in city branding communication of Boyolali Regency.

## **Methods**

This research was conducted in September 2019 using a qualitative descriptive method to explain the role of community in city branding communication in Boyolali Regency. We used semi-structured interviews with an interview guide that allow open-ended questions and make room for question and answer development. Briefly, we explore how the role of community in supporting city branding communication in Boyolali Regency, and what are the benefits and impacts of having this community. The interview data were analyzed using the data analysis model of Miles and Huberman where data analysis was carried out interactively and continuously.

## **Literature Review**

There are three types of city branding formulations conducted by the government in cities in Indonesia. First, the top-down system model implemented by the government. Second, the city branding process that comes from the private sector. Third, city branding that formulated jointly between the community and the government (Damayanti et al., 2017). The most important part of the success of city branding is the synergy of the three.

City branding requires a good collaboration of philosophy and its implementation, many cities fail in implementing city branding when trying to impose a top-down approach in building a city branding (Adhiatma, 2015). Several studies have shown that city branding often only runs top-down without involving the community in its planning, which often causes the city branding effort to fail.

City branding can be said as a strategic process to communicate the image of the city to stakeholders, including the public, investors, tourists and others. A study in three regions in Central Java

showed that the branding that was carried out had involved stakeholder participation but had not collaborated optimally, because of the role of the government that was too dominant (Rahmanto, 2015).

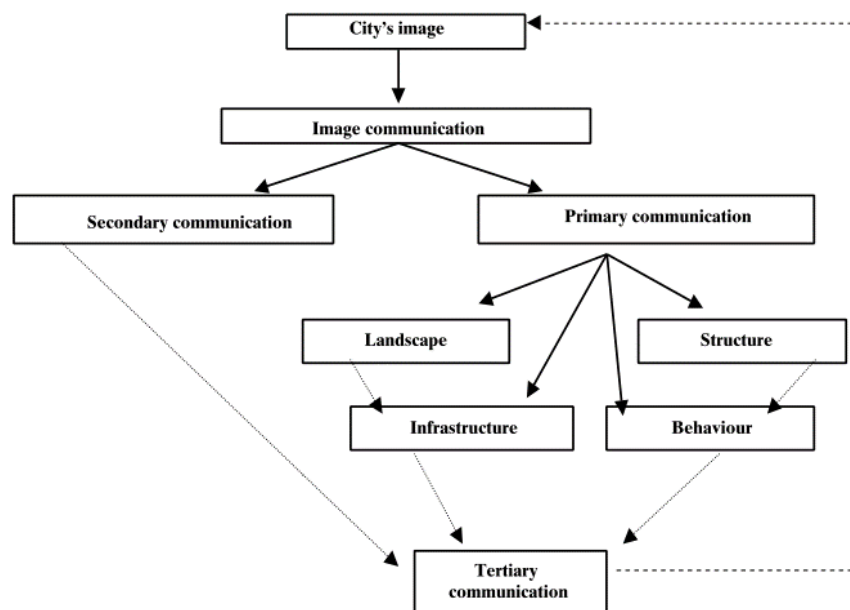
This study uses a city branding communication model approach Mihalis Kavaratzis. Kavaratzis defines city branding as a means to achieve the competitive advantage of a city including investment and tourism, community development and the identity of the city community (Kavaratzis, 2004). Kavaratzis suggests the role of communication in place branding which explains that city image / branding is communicated through three types of communication, namely primary, secondary and tertiary (Kavaratzis, 2004).

Primary communication refers to all out-of-town forms through which such forms or actions can send messages, but communication is not the main point (Benedek, 2017). Primary communication related to the communicative effect of the actions taken by a city. Primary communication divided into four areas, namely: landscape strategy, infrastructure, structure, behavior.

Secondary communication is communication that is formal and deliberate. Secondary communication most commonly occurs through marketing practices or through well-known media such as indoor and outdoor advertising, public relations, graphic design, use of logos, and so on.

Tertiary communication refers to word of mouth, strengthened by the media and competitors. Tertiary communication cannot controlled by the government. The entire process of branding and primary and secondary communication that can be controlled has the aim of generating and strengthening positive tertiary communication (Kavaratzis, 2004). The ultimate goal of the branding process, primary and secondary communication is to lead to positive tertiary communication (Benedek, 2017).

**Figure 1. City Branding Communication Kavaratzis (Kavaratzis, 2004)**



## **Result**

From the results of interviews and observations made, it is known that the Boyolali Regency Government has provided guidance to several communities in the industrial, tourism and economic sectors called as government-assisted clusters. However, in Boyolali District, many communities are active in carrying out activities that are beneficial to the community. One very active community is the Boyolali Project, which is engaged in inspiring events and activities. They indirectly carry Boyolali city branding through events it carries out outside the region.

There are still several other communities that are also active and move through events and media, but have not been involved in the city branding process in Boyolali Regency. Another example, the Boyolali Mobile Community is very active in playing a role in advancing education in Boyolali. Some of the taglines in Boyolali's branding that been carried out so far are "Boyolali Pro Investasi" and "Boyolali Smile of Java". "Boyolali Pro Investment" is the vision of the Boyolali government since 2010 until now. Then "Boyolali Smile of Java" is the tagline that was just agreed upon in 2017 as the branding for Boyolali Regency (Listy, 2017).

Based on the author's observations of some of these communities, they are actually better known and more integrated with society, especially millennials. This actually has its own potential for Boyolali Regency to develop city branding.

Furthermore, the results of interviews with respondents described the role of the community as a tertiary communication for Boyolali city branding. For the government, the existence of these communities is an extension of the government to convey various things related to Boyolali to a wide audience. The activities carried out by the community which also engaged in social media, especially related to certain events, will usually be seen by more people. Although there has been no coordination or communication between the government and these communities, they spontaneously participated in representing Boyolali's city branding through activities and content uploaded on their social media accounts. This is considered to be very helpful and beneficial to the government, even though there is no meaningful collaboration between these communities and the government or among other communities, but there is an interesting thing that between the social media accounts they have usually mark each other when uploading activities about Boyolali.

The results also explained several things that were considered by the community as the strengths and weaknesses of the community as a medium of communication in Boyolali city branding. The advantages of this community include: more direct reach to audiences through its activities and members. Another positive impact is that the government is helped by their activities that reach out to millennials, especially with the voluntary nature of their members. The lack of coordination with the government also sometimes causes unequal branding about Boyolali which is promoted by these communities.

The government hopes that they can facilitate and provide a forum for these communities to develop their creativity. Meanwhile, community activists also expect the same, so that the activities carried out by the communities in Boyolali can be integrated with the current Boyolali city branding, namely Boyolali Smile of Java.

## **Discussion**

The community in Boyolali Regency has indirectly become a part of the Boyolali city branding communication. The activities carried out by these communities are the manifestation of word of mouth on Boyolali city branding by continuing to develop creative and inspiring activities that involve many audiences, especially millennials. The strengths possessed by this community are very positive things and help the government in its efforts to promote Boyolali to a wide audience. Although the government cannot have controlled the flow of tertiary communication, attention and coordination from the

government to reach existing communities is felt to strengthen synergies in city branding communication in Boyolali Regency so that activities carried out by the community are more integrated with Boyolali city branding. This research is still limited to interviews and qualitative document so it is possible for further studies to see through participatory observation and ethnography so that a more complete picture of the role of the community in city branding is created.

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