

## Local Food as a Tourism Brand for the Regional Area: The Case in Bangka Belitung Indonesia

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### ABSTRACT

Regional brands are essential to provide an image to tourists and provide an identity for residents. More and more countries or regions are using food as a brand because local food reflects its culture and potential and can create a pleasant impression. However, the discussion on choosing local food as a regional brand is still limited. The purpose of this study is to identify local food as a brand in the Bangka Belitung region. There are two essential steps in selecting a regional brand, selecting local food and analyzing local foods for their local brands. Two hundred sixteen residents participate in choosing local food as a brand. The sampling method is the snowball method. The questionnaire was submitted online. Residents choose five food items as a brand. The proximity of raw materials, processing sites, places of sale, and their history and culture are used for food analysis. The food proposed is local food chosen by the residents. The contribution of this research is the method of selecting local brands.

Keywords: local food, regional branding, tourism brand, residents

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Local food is very strategic for marketing destinations (Okumus & Cetin, 2018; Lee & Arcodia, 2011 ; Balakrishnan et al., 2008). Local food memberi kontribusi kemampuan bersaing berkelanjutan (Rand & Heath, 2006). Local food provides a multiplier for the destination's economy (Nwokorie, 2017) and strengthening local agricultural sector (Rand & Heath, 2006), creating job opportunities and promoting cross culture understanding (Kivela & Crotts, 2006). Local food as a brand can protect and strengthen the identity of the destination, and to change the place (Berg & Sevón, 2014).

Local food is often used to promote destinations (Hashimoto & Telfer, 2006; Du Rand et al., 2003; Okumus et al., 2018; Jang & Eves, 2019). Several countries use culinary as a brand of their nation (Zhang, 2015) for example, Japan uses Shushi is a Japanese brand; South Korea uses Kimchi as its brand ambassador (Zhang, 2015).

In culinary tourism, local food is essential. For tourists, local food provides unforgettable memories (Sthapit, 2017), create a strong image (Stone et al., 2018 ; Zain et al., 2018) (Sahin, 2015; Sahin, 2015; Lee & Arcodia, 2011; Hankinson, 2004) that encourages tourists to come, increase customer spending (Williams et al., 2014; Kivela & Crotts, 2006). Local

food offers cultural experiences (Kivela & Crofts, 2006; Sert, 2019) and influences revisit intention (Sert, 2019).

Food provides a complete sensory experience, thus encouraging tourists to revisit (Pu et al., 2019). Local food cannot be imitated perfectly so that it becomes a differentiator from other destinations (Kurt & Dluzewska, 2018; Su & Horng, 2012; Horng & (Simon) Tsai, 2010) .

Based on this positive image, tourists will be motivated to find information about food in the destination to be visited. Therefore, it is advisable to appreciate and promote the product. Destinations must create their local food WOM to increase tourists' desire to visit (Chen & Huang, 2019).

Indonesia has many destinations. Six destinations are categorized as national super-priority destinations, ten national priority destinations, and the number of regional destinations means that local destination brands are increasingly important. Regional destination brands can be a competitive advantage for regions in the national and even international arena. Regional destination brands are considered more useful by tourists, industry, government, and society. Besides, Indonesia has 1340 ethnic groups (Walujo, 2011) each of which has its specialties, and in Indonesia, regional food is more popular than Indonesian food (Kubo, 2009).

The Province of Bangka Belitung is a relatively new destination in Indonesia. The number of tourists in Bangka Belitung is relatively low compared to other provinces. In 2014 the number of tourists was 285,529 people. For tourism to be a driving force for the SME economy, the Regional Government of Bangka Belitung targets 500,000 tourists in 2019. To achieve the target, Bangka Belitung Province needs to develop a "brand" as a marketing communication tool because the brand culture is proven to be a useful promotional tool.

Bangka Belitung Province has biological wealth in the form of livestock, fish, vegetables, seasonal fruits and fruit crops, and various plantation products. The problem is that food will become a brand. This study aims to identify the food of Bangka Belitung as the brand.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Destination branding is crucial in destination marketing. However, since the early 1990s, it is still a matter of debate, and there has been no agreement. Ruiz-Real et al. (2020) are looking for definitions of destination branding by examining destinations and branding, while Hanna et al. (2020) reviewed this through discussion of place branding and destination branding. These studies still show that there is no definition of the accuracy of the meaning of destination branding. The authors define it based on their scientific discipline. Goulart Szejnberg & Giovanardi (2017) concluded the discussion of place branding based on marketing, tourism, and urban. Place branding in marketing considers place as a brand, so it needs brand management. Place branding in tourism considers a place as a destination that needs to be branded to attract tourists. From an urban perspective, a place must be branded that reflects an attractive place for various stakeholders.

According to UNTWO (<https://www.unwto.org/glossary-tourism-terms>), "destination of a tourism trip is defined as the place visited that is central to the decision to take the trip." Therefore, destination branding in this study uses a study of place branding and destinations

from a marketing and tourism perspective. The terms place branding and destination branding are often interchangeable (Greaves & Skinner, 2010).

Ritchie & Ritchie (1998) defined a destination brand as “a name, symbol, logo, wordmark or others graphic that both identifies and differentiates the destination; furthermore, it conveys the promise of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination; it also serves to consolidate and reinforce the collection of pleasurable memories of the destination experience. ” This definition was corrected by Blain et al.(2005) to become "Destination branding is the set of marketing activities that (1) support the creation of a name, symbol, logo, wordmark or other graphic that readily identifies and differentiates a destination; that (2) consistently convey the expectation of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination; that (3) serve to consolidate and reinforce the emotional connection between the visitor and the destination; and that (4) reduces consumer search costs and perceived risk. Collectively, these activities serve to create a destination image that positively influences consumer destination choice”.

Saraniemi (2009) defines destination branding as "holistic, dynamic, co-created and committed identity management, based on core values of the destination and its stakeholders both on the demand and supply side, to build a promise uniquely associated with the place. ". From this definition, identification management and image formation are important processes. According to Saraniemi (2009) "destination identity referencing to the" core "of the destination; the internal aspects of the brand. Identity is further conceptualized in the study, "while destination image is" a mental association held by a tourist. " Destination identity is determined by destination structure, destination strategy, communication, stakeholders, culture, and environment.

Destination branding is the process of creating a destination image that differentiates it from other destinations (Greaves & Skinner, 2010). Zenker and Braun (2010) in Beckmann & Zenker (2012) defined place branding as "a place brand is the networking of associations in the customer's mind based on the visual, verbal, and behavioral expression of a place, which is embodied through the aims, communication, values, and general culture of the place's stakeholders and the overall place design. "

Place branding describes the reciprocal relationship between culture, identity, and image. Place branding emphasizes cultural understanding, which then becomes an identity. Identity forms an image. The image creates an impression of identity and subsequently the implant identity of cultural meanings and symbols (Kladou et al., 2017).

Danylyshyn et al.(2020) concluded that destinations are geographic areas with resources that motivate people and make people feel the need to come to that area. Danylyshyn et al.(2020) define destination branding as "a symbolic construction intended to create" additional "meaning or meanings of a territory," through a brand destination process, namely brand identity, brand image, and brand purpose (Danylyshyn et al., 2020). Brand identity is a process of visualizing the attractiveness of a destination with the characteristics of brand identity as having a particular image, has meaning, is related to the destination, which becomes an identity.

The purpose of a destination brand is to build a destination image, to package destinations in attractive tour packages, to create a main image in the market to the global market, to form

an image of the experience that will be obtained when visiting these destinations (Ooi & Pedersen, 2017). The role of the destination brand as a brand element as an identifier to leave an impression on others, the brand element as an identifier to reflect the image of others, the brand element as a vehicle to reflect the identity embedded in the culture, the brand element as a vehicle for conveying cultural understanding, influence on behavioral intentions (Kladou et al., 2017).

Branding can increase destination efficiency, so destinations need brands that can increase tourist awareness and destination image. Local culinary can market Canada to penetrate the global market by identifying the destination's culinary identity and then determining the marketing (Hashimoto & Telfer, 2006). Du Rand et al. (2003) suggests identifying components of culinary and culinary tourism in destinations, establishing communication tools for marketing food.

To build destination branding, Du Rand et al. (2003) suggested four main steps: determining the product and destination market, positioning and comparing, determining the theme of tour packages and tourist routes, and promoting. Some aspects of food in a place, geographic environment, food and cuisine culture, food and people, food quality, dining places/restaurants, and food activities reflect the destination's identity (Lai et al., 2019). To determine culinary products as destination brands, it can be traced with the production and consumption approach described below.

To use culinary tourism as destination branding, Williams et al. (2014) suggest steps, namely evaluating local infrastructure for culinary tourism such as health and safety, transportation and communication, identifying resources that include local food and residents who are culinary experts, establishing identity culinary, create an experience, market and promote and seek feedback for improvement.

Based on (Du Rand et al., 2003 ;Hashimoto & Telfer, 2006 ;Williams et al., 2014), an essential step in destination branding is choosing local food as regional branding. Selected local food is food that reflects the local environment and culture. The residents are more familiar with their environment and culture; therefore, residents assess local food for regional brands.

The definition and meaning of local food vary, and there is no agreement. Granvik et al. (2017) concluded that local food is related to the activities of "production, processing, raw material and distance among stakeholders in the food chain." Gálvez et al. (2017) in Sert (2019) concluded that local food in a destination reflects a place, geography, climate, history, local culture, authenticity, and nostalgia. According to Eriksen, (2013) local products are determined by three domains: geographic proximity, relational proximity, and value closeness. Social activities reflect the close relationship between stakeholders such as farmers/fishermen and traders, traders and food processing companies/restaurants, and food processing companies and restaurants with consumers. Proximity value is the value of farmers/fishermen, processing companies, traders, and restaurants (Schmitt et al., 2018) using physical criteria: geographical distance and supply chain size, social criteria measured by the length of the supply chain, identity, and government. This study uses the location of raw material production, processing and sales, and history and culture.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

This research is descriptive. The steps for establishing regional branding are selecting local foods and assessing local foods to become regional brands. Respondents were asked to name five types of food proposed to be a tourism brand. The selected food results are then analyzed for raw materials, processing processes, places of sale, and the history and habits of the community using sources of information from interviews with food processing owners, restaurant and food shop owners, historical and cultural experts, and secondary data. Food brands are recommended based on the preferences of the population and the suitability of these criteria.

The questionnaire was distributed to residents online. This study uses snowball sampling, and the number of samples is 218. The ages of the respondents varied in gender, age, education, and residence. Respondents' ages varied. Female respondents were 51%, and male respondents were 49%. Respondents aged 20-29 years are 35%, respondents aged 30-39 years are 34%, and those old 40-49 years are 10%. Respondents' education varied, but most of them graduated from the undergraduate level, namely 53%, the second largest was graduated from high school as much as 20%, 16% had graduated from the master program, and 8% graduated from high school. The respondents also varied based on where they lived. Most of them live in Pangkal Pinang, namely 44%. Respondents who live in Bangka Regency are 21%, and in Central Bangka Regency it is 8%, others live in West Bangka Regency 6%, South Bangka 8%, Belitung Regency 7% and East Belitung 4%.

### 4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Bangka Belitung Islands are the 31st province in Indonesia, of which 79.9% of its territory is oceans, so that the catch of marine fish in this area is very abundant. In 2018, the oceanic fish catch was 228,524 tons with 45,435 fishers and 22,231 fishery households (<https://statistik.kkp.go.id/home>). There are 73 types of fish caught in this area, including small pelagic, large pelagic, and demersal fish consist of 38 families (Kurniawan et al., 2019).

The average per capita consumption of fish/shrimp/squid/shells in the Bangka Belitung Islands products is higher than other regions in Sumatra and Java and exceeds consumption of rice, eggs & milk, chicken, and meat (Statistics, 2019). The fish is processed into side dishes, snack and seasoning. The side dishes from fresh fish are processed into *Lempah Kuning* and *Gangan* (fish soup), the popular dish among the residents. *Lempah Kuning* and *Gangan* are daily meals in households and are often found in local restaurants. Besides, fish is also processed with various spices from local are. Because the raw materials for products are from local areas, so these products are local (Schmitt et al., 2018; Eriksen, 2013) and are suitable for local brands.

Fish/shrimp /squid/shells are also processed into various snacks such as *Kerupuk*, *Otak-otak*, *Getas*, *Kericu*, *Kemplang* and others type of crackers. These foods are made at home for self-consumption and by micro, small, and medium-scale food processing companies. Most of them are produced based on experiences learned from generation to generation. These foods are often purchased by tourists for souvenirs or for personal consumption in local food stores and market not from producer. The proximity of fish auction places and fish markets to food

producers or restaurants and the distance between food producers and food shops, indicating a high degree of localization (Schmitt et al., 2018) so it is suitable for brand identity.

Fish is also processed as cooking spices such as *Rusip*, *Calok* and *Terasi*, fermented fish or shrimp. *Rusip* and *Calok* function as seasoning and side dishes, while *Terasi* is used for food seasoning. Food processing companies make these seasoning.

Local restaurants in Bangka and Belitung provide menus made of fish. They also offer various seafood menus and provide Bangka Belitung specialties, namely *Lempah Kuning* and *Gangan*. Several foods made from fish caught have been identified by Levyda et al. (2019). This food is authentic Bangka Belitung food because it uses raw materials produced and marketed in Bangka Belitung, often consumed by all residents, easy to get. Residents must be involved in determining their brand since they are the most critical stakeholders because the brand is the destination's identity, and it is the residents who know whether this identity suits them (Chan et al., 2019).

The resident's preferred brands are as follows

**Table 1. The Resident's Preferred Brand**

| Food                                 | Type of Food | The number of voters | Percentage of voters |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| <i>Lempah Kuning</i> (fish soup)     | Side dish    | 126                  | 58.33%               |
| <i>Otak-otak</i>                     | Snack        | 16                   | 7.40%                |
| <i>Gangan</i> (fish soup)            | Side dish    | 14                   | 6.48%                |
| <i>Rusip</i> (fermented fish)        | Seasoning    | 11                   | 5.09%                |
| <i>Lempah Darat</i> (Vegetable soup) | Side dish    | 10                   | 4.62%                |
| Others                               |              | 39                   | 18.08%               |
| Total number                         |              | 216                  | 100 %                |

Most of the population chooses *Lempah Kuning* as the Bangka Belitung brand. This conclusion supports the determination of this food as a non-material cultural heritage (<http://kwriu.kemdikbud.go.id/info-budaya-indonesia/warisan-budaya-tak-benda-indonesia/>). The food accommodates stakeholders such as fishermen and farmers, entrepreneurs, restaurants. The food also reflects marine and land products, fish from the sea, and spices from the land. They reflect the population's values, such as kinship and togetherness, because yellow spices are seen in families and formal events.

Food as a brand must also be different from other regions (Ritchie & Ritchie, 1998). Foods with fish as raw materials are commonly found in Indonesia. Still, each area has its special spices and cooking methods. Food as a local brand can show the difference in these things. After determining food as a brand, it may be necessary to add an image (picture), word(s) or sentence, or other graphic (Ritchie & Ritchie, 1998)(Blain et al., 2005) so that it is fast so that it is easily communicated to tourism stakeholders.

## 5. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Food as a brand is lovely because it has a complete sensory appeal. Local food brands are indispensable to introduce the culture and geography of the area. The selection of brands needs to involve tourism stakeholders, especially residents. The method of selecting brands using votes is excellent because it is easy to determine the brand's choice, but the population's voice will be divided if there are many types of food. In future research, it is recommended to make a two-tier selection. The experts' first selection is to determine the food selected as a brand and then conduct a selection involving residents.

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