

## **Komunitas Aleut and History-based Tourism in City Branding: The Case of Bandung, West Java, Indonesia**

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— *Review of* —  
**Integrative  
Business &  
Economics**  
— *Research* —

### **ABSTRACT**

**Purpose** – This study aims to explore the contribution of the Komunitas Aleut community with a historical issue to tourism strategy and city branding. This study takes the case of Bandung, Indonesia, which has been known for its food and scenery. Bandung also has several well-known historical sites and buildings. Komunitas Aleut explores other unpublicized Bandung heritage to study about those sites and buildings further.

**Design/methodology/approach** – This paper is based on a case study of the Komunitas Aleut community and its relationship with history-based tourism and city branding. This paper provides brief information about Komunitas Aleut and its programs and theoretically explores history-based tourism and city branding. This paper explains the trend shifting in Bandung's tourism that is associated with the program of Komunitas Aleut, which brought history issues in its activity.

**Findings** – Komunitas Aleut has found a role for historical sites that brand the city.

**Value** – The paper explores themes that are considered strengths of Bandung: strong community, heritage, and programs initiated by the community.

Keywords: heritage tourism, city branding, brands, marketing

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background and Context**

Cities compete with one another for attention, investments, visitors, and shoppers. Globalization has led to a situation in which big cities compete with other big cities and diverse competitors half way around the world. This global competition is no longer limited to big cities where the headquarters of multinational corporations are located but also include small cities/towns with unique characteristics. Small places can also be confronted with competitors located in other continents given technological advances and market deregulations (Gelder and Allan, 2006).

Our decisions, whether buying an everyday product or relocating a company, are partly rational and partly emotional. No human activity is excluded from this rule. The brand images of cities underpin the emotional part of every decision connected with those places, thereby affecting the rational part of the decision. Branding is a tool that can be used to define a place and attract positive attention amid information abundance. However, a common misconception is that branding is simply a communication strategy, a tagline, a visual identity, or a logo. Branding is a strategic process for developing a long-term vision for a place that is relevant and compelling to key audiences. It influences and shapes positive perceptions of a place.

Place branding comes from the place itself and its people. Kavaratzis (2004, p. 70) gave an explicit definition.

City branding is understood as the means both for achieving competitive advantage in order to increase inward investment and tourism, and also for achieving community development, reinforcing local identity and identification of the citizens with their city and activating all social forces to avoid social exclusion and unrest.

Several studies have stated that place branding explores different perspectives, such as the creation of a perceived value (Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2006), the relation and differences with place marketing (Kavaratzis, 2004), and branding geographies (Pike, 2011). The role of heritage tourism in city branding can be another subject of exploration. Cultural heritage, which is one of the foremost strategies in promoting cities, has been frequently used, especially in countries with deeply rooted cultures (Hocaoglu, 2015). How important is tourism in terms of branding cities? What makes people want to visit or stay? The World Tourism Organization mentioned that growth was strongest in Asia and the Pacific (+6%), where the number of international tourists grew by 14 million to reach 248 million. Spearheading this growth was Southeast Asia (+10%). Moderate results were seen in South Asia (+5%), Oceania, and Northeast Asia (+4% each) (World Tourism Organization Annual Report, 2013).



**Figure 1.1 International Tourism Prospects 2030 (UNWTO Annual Report, 2013)**

UNWTO also stated that tourist arrival will increase by 4% per year between 2010 and 2020. Therefore, the tourism industry is a promising sector of a country, thereby bringing a challenge to this industry. Many cities may have more to offer to tourists than residents. Thus, maintaining their tourism status is vital. Some cities are rich in culture, history, and attractions that make them great tourist destinations.

Cultural heritage is a part of the tourism sector that has not been explored in Bandung, Indonesia and has the potential to brand the city. A big problem in Bandung's tourism industry is that it was previously known for its shopping attractions, food, and scenery. Few people know that Bandung showcases a rich culture and heritage. Moreover, many communities with different backgrounds make Bandung diverse. These communities often help Bandung's branding in their own way even though they are not related to any government institution. Distribution stores and food trucks are some communities that shape Bandung as a city of clothing or food. Place branding has become an abstruse concept. It differentiates what it is and what it is not. This condition makes the concept and practice dynamic controversial and leaves room for novel ideas and new questions, such as the contributions of the local community. This paper discusses Komunitas Aleut's activities related to heritage tourism and its contribution toward city branding.

### 1.2 Problem Identification

Cultural heritage is a part of the tourism industry that has not been explored in Bandung, but it can shape Bandung's branding compared with other tourist destinations. The problems identified are as follows:

1. How does Bandung formulate its branding strategy?
2. What are Komunitas Aleut's programs?

### 1.3 Theoretical Framework

Cultural heritage is a popular strategy for promoting a city or destination. It has been used in countries with a strong culture. If city branding involves the creation of perceived value (Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2005) and increased competitiveness by bringing tourism and investment to achieve community development and reinforce local identity (Kavaratzis, 2004), then Komunitas Aleut and heritage tourism are contributing to Bandung's branding.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 City Branding

The real definition of place branding remains unclear. Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2005, p. 507) stated that:

Unfortunately there is no single accepted definition and the marketing experts have often compounded the problem by their attempts to elaborate. Currently, there is at least a general agreement in the marketing literature that the brand is more than an identifying name given to a product.

Therefore, place branding should include the true meaning and value of all the variables of the place and not only its regular logo or slogan. Places that use place branding may compete with one another. Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2005, p. 507) explained that:

Our contention however is that place branding is not only possible, it is and has been, practiced consciously or unconsciously for as long as cities have competed with each other for trade, populations, wealth, prestige or power. In the marketing literature, it is acknowledged that the brand and the product are not synonymous. At its simplest, the difference refers to the added values that branding attributes to the product.

However, numerous variables must be considered with regard to the added values of a city, one of which is heritage tourism. The role of Komunitas Aleut in cultural heritage exploration shows that it is responsible for Bandung's city branding by exploring cultural heritage through heritage tourism.

Cultural heritage tourism (i.e., heritage tourism or diaspora tourism) is a branch of tourism oriented toward the cultural heritage of the location where tourism occurs. The National Trust for Historic Preservation in the United States defines heritage tourism as "traveling to experience the places, artifacts, and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past," and "heritage tourism can include cultural, historical, and natural resources." Heritage tourism involves visiting historical or industrial sites that may include old canals, railways, and battlegrounds. The overall purpose is to gain an appreciation of the past. It also refers to the marketing of a location to members of a diaspora who have distant family roots there.

City branding can increase the economic development of a country and develop communities and local identity; this differentiates city branding from place marketing (Andersson and Ekman, 2009) and from just a slogan and a logo (Kalandides, 2011). Literature on place branding explores different avenues, such as branding geographies (Pike, 2011), the creation of a perceived value (Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2005), the relation and differences with place marketing (Kavaratzis, 2004), place image and identity (Anholt, 2010; Kalandides, 2011, 2012), place management (Parker et al., 2001), and urban planning and urban regeneration (Paddison, 1993; Dijk and Holstein, 2007; Eshuis and Edwards, 2012). Research on heritage tourism in city branding can be another subject of exploration.

## 2.2 Heritage Tourism

Bandung has been known as Parijs van Java given its beautiful scenery and delicious food. Lembang has the Tangkuban Parahu Mountain and Maribaya. These tourism destinations offer nice scenery and fresh cool air, which make them ideal places to visit that offer a different atmosphere from the city. The north of Bandung has Ciwidey and Pangalengan. The green scenery includes a tea farm and strawberry fields. People can visit shopping centers, food trucks, and restaurants, which include low-budget and fancy restaurants.

Visitors who come to Bandung often search for what is popular. They look for good food and scenery around Bandung. However, the old days have passed, and brand new days with different ideas and concept have begun. Community plays an important role in generating these concept and ideas. Aside from finding good food and scenery, visitors attempt to learn Bandung's characteristics in the creative environment, which are brought by different communities spread around Bandung. This trend shifting transpired a few years ago. Visitors began searching for different and anti-mainstream tourist attractions in communities. One of these communities is Komunitas Aleut.

Komunitas Aleut uses history as its main concept. People from this community employ a unique method with a concept called Aleut (walking hand-in-hand) to explore and develop a love for Bandung. This history-based tourism is a new concept of enjoying Bandung that is different from what travel agents suggest.

Cultural heritage tourism (i.e., heritage tourism or diaspora tourism) is a branch of tourism that is oriented toward the cultural heritage of the location where tourism occurs. The National Trust for Historic Preservation in the United States defines heritage tourism as "traveling to experience the places, artifacts, and activities

that authentically represent the stories and people of the past,” and “heritage tourism can include cultural, historical, and natural resources.”

Heritage tourism involves visiting historical sites that include old buildings or streets. It aims to enhance people’s appreciation of the past. Michigan State University states that heritage tourism is a new combination of words to look at tourism planning more comprehensively. It affirms that people regard significant elements of places as important to preserve and pass on to future generations. Heritage tourism also shows that people are dedicated to caring for these resources and sharing them. Heritage tourism is an active, engaging, and ongoing process that involves community residents, organizations, civic institutions, and governments working together.

Heritage tourism can be attributed to historical events that have been dramatized to make them entertaining. For example, a historical tour of a city uses a theme, such as a local hero or local attributes from the past. Heritage tourism focuses on certain historical events. Its aim may not be the presentation of accurate historical facts. Moreover, heritage tourism can be seen as a blend of entertainment, education, preservation, and profit.

Heritage travelers appreciate taking part in a wide variety of activities when they are traveling. Approximately 17 percent of travelers participate in four or more activities compared with 5 percent of all travelers. Other activities such as visiting state/national parks, participating in culinary activities, sampling artisan food and wines, visiting farmers’ markets, and enjoying unique dining experiences rank highly with this target audience. The Mandala study found that heritage travelers look for more than just museums or historic sites. They are interested in “experiences where the destination, its buildings, and surroundings have retained their historical character...as well as lodging that reflects the local culture.” Combining experiences at historical sites with complementary attractions is an effective strategy in using heritage tourism to increase tourists’ length of stay and tourism expenditures.

### **3. OBJECTIVES AND BENEFITS OF THE RESEARCH**

#### **3.1 Objectives of the Research**

The objectives of this research are:

1. To identify the branding strategy of tourism that Bandung has applied.
2. To determine Komunitas Aleut’s activities and programs and understand how they contribute toward Bandung’s branding.

#### **3.2 Benefits of the Research**

The benefits of this research are:

1. The research can increase and implement the knowledge and awareness about heritage tourism and city branding.
2. The research can contribute to problem solving related to branding strategy and tourism industry in Bandung.
3. The research can contribute in establishing the roadmap of Komunitas Aleut that can be advantageous for Komunitas Aleut and Bandung.
4. The research can contribute to the development of science, especially in the field of city branding.

### **4. RESEARCH METHOD**

The interpretive perspective method or qualitative research is used. Bevir and

Kedar (2008) stated that interpretive methodologies encompass an experience-near orientation that views human action as meaningful and historically contingent.

1. A literature review on heritage tourism and city branding is conducted in relevant studies that specifically deal with marketing, city branding, and cultural heritage.
2. A case study method that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context is conducted. Yin (2003:7) explained that “case studies are the appropriate strategy to follow when examining contemporary events, when the relevant behaviors cannot be manipulated, that is when the researcher has little or no control over the set of events studied.”  
The activities include collecting various types of primary and secondary data. For the secondary data, the present study investigates academic literature from Bandung’s city government about marketing and tourism activities along with reports on relevant past research. This study focuses on Komunitas Aleut’s archives about their accomplishments, activities, and methods. The second part is the collection of primary data. A direct observation of the city and community’s activities takes place in a particular way considering the unique characteristics of Bandung and Komunitas Aleut.
3. Komunitas Aleut is included in the primary data collection. For the observation, the researcher positions himself as a participant, who will observe as a part of the community.
4. A research report is written, which combines the researcher’s understanding of the relevant theory, previous research, and the results of the present empirical research.

## **5. RESULTS**

### **5.1 Bandung and its Branding Strategy**

This paper explores Komunitas Aleut’s activities related to heritage tourism and its contribution toward Bandung’s city branding. After a brief information of Komunitas Aleut and its programs, the exploration of theories about heritage tourism and city branding is continued. Trend shifting and tourism activities are explained and associated to the programs of Komunitas Aleut, which brings historical issues. Bandung is the capital of West Java, Indonesia. It is Indonesia’s third largest city in terms of population.

Bandung is the home of several Dutch colonial architectures. The charm of this city’s architecture is evident in the blending of modern and traditional concepts of every building. For example, Gedung Sate, which is named after small satay-shaped structures on the roof and is now used as the head office of the West Java Provincial Government and House of Representatives, is a mixture of Western and Eastern architectural styles. Residents of Jakarta often visit Bandung for their weekend vacation escape because of the city’s cool climate and proximity to Jakarta. These two cities are connected by a direct highway, which makes Bandung accessible. Bandung is also a popular shopping destination for Singaporean and Malaysian tourists because of its fashion products and cheap textile.

**Table 5.1 Bandung's Population**

<b>Year</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2014</b>
<b>Population</b>	<b>2,290,464</b>	<b>2,394,873</b>	<b>2,470,802</b>
<b>Population Density (per km<sup>2</sup>)</b>	<b>13,660</b>	<b>14,283</b>	<b>14,736</b>

**Figure 5.1 Gedung Sate**

In the mid-1990s, local entrepreneurs opened clothing stores along Cihampelas Street, which has become a popular tourist destination. Tourists come to Bandung to purchase fashion items because the city offers branded items for cheaper prices compared with those in other big cities. Moreover, several factory outlets have opened at Setiabudi Street, Riau Street, and Djuanda Street, which is now known as Dago. Bandung also has some popular shopping centers, such as Cihampelas Walk, Bandung Indah Plaza, Trans Studio Mall, and Paris van Java.

Tourists visit the Tangkuban Parahu Volcano, Patenggang Lake, and the Kawah Putih Volcano to experience Bandung's nature-based tourism. Bandung's mountain surroundings include Caringin Tilu, Puncak Bintang, Maribaya, and the famous Taman Hutan Raya Djuanda on the north of the city. International and domestic tourists usually visit Bandung's museums, namely, Indonesia Postal Museum, Sri Baduga Museum, the Geological Museum of Bandung, and the Asian-

African Conference Museum.

The present research found that Bandung has several work programs related to tourism with the aim of attracting domestic and international tourists. The function of Bandung's Bureau of Culture and Tourism is managing tourist destinations and attractions all over Bandung, such as hotels, restaurants, cafes, and factory outlets. The list of tourism destinations and attractions are as follows:

1. Shopping: 75 destinations
2. Culinary: 103 destinations
3. Nature-based: 5 destinations
4. Cultural Tourism: 19 destinations
5. Heritage Tourism:
  - a. Historical Buildings: 8 destinations
  - b. Museums: 8 destinations
6. Hotels: 40 destinations

Bandung also acquires a huge amount of income from taxes, which are generated from its tourism sectors, especially hotels and restaurants, which are the two most favored sectors in Bandung's tourism industry. The government exerts more effort to maintain these sectors because of the trade-offs. The observation also indicates that Bandung's Bureau of Culture and Tourism concentrates on developing *Kampung Wisata* (Tourist Village), which promotes Bandung's creative culture in suburban areas, and rehabilitates some of the existing museums and tourist destinations.

This condition has led to the insufficient exposure of heritage tourism compared with shopping or culinary destinations. However, Bandung, from east to west and south to north, has many interesting stories, and its buildings, houses, offices, and streets have considerable historical value.

Komunitas Aleut is a heritage-based community whose members have special interests in history. Community members familiarize themselves with Bandung's unpublicized heritage treasure through their unique programs.

## 5.2 Komunitas Aleut and its Programs

Bandung is composed of various communities with different backgrounds. Music, art, sports, and culture are some variables that form communities in this city. Each community has its own regular program. Communities can merge to gain more members or to make people curious. Merging their individual strengths enables them to craft unique and different programs that lead to their leadership in gaining members. All of the activities that they have initiated led to an important role in Bandung's branding.

Komunitas Aleut community brings a different perspective to Bandung's tourism. Komunitas Aleut is a non-profit community whose members are youth who show their love for their city through historical tourism. Aleut means walking hand-in-hand, which is their main method in appreciating history in a fun and popular way. Since 2006, Komunitas Aleut has attempted to make history increasingly familiar by including language and daily activities. Their weekly activities involve appreciating history through a "come, see, and learn" approach, such as visiting historical objects, watching historical movies, and listening to music.





Figure 5.2 Komunitas Aleut's Programs

Komunitas Aleut was observed from December 2015 to January 2016. Komunitas Aleut has conducted several programs, whose posters are shown in Figure 5.2. The specific activities in every program in every week were identified during the observation.

The members of Komunitas Aleut organize their weekly activities in different routes and destinations. The activities are mostly held on Sunday mornings, but can also be held on different days for some special occasions. Komunitas Aleut's weekly programs are as follows:

1. The community chooses its destination and possible routes to be taken. The destination and routes are selected from the proposed literature or ancient story related to Bandung, which has been discussed in a book review activity held a week earlier.
2. After a story is chosen, the next activity is held on Thursday night. The members casually meet to discuss the meeting point and route to be taken along with some possible stop points. The route is planned based on the content of the script that has been discussed on the book review held several days earlier. The route is to be taken by foot because the essence of *Ngaleut* is walking together. The community publicizes the event on social media after the route has been formulated. The registration is open right after the poster is published. Participants must register first before they can join the program.
3. During the *Ngaleut* activity, which lasts for two to three hours on Sunday mornings, the participants can choose several stop points. The coordinator

from the community explains the stories of every stop point based on the book or script. The selected book or script is a non-fictional work that depicts the real situation in particular years.

4. In the last stop point, the coordinator reviews all of the information gathered from the activity and makes some conclusions about the trip. All of the participants are asked to share testimonies about their experience and make some suggestions or advice.

The results of these programs are remarkable, and the social impact is good. Many people seem curious about Komunitas Aleut and decide to join its programs. Media also play an important role in promoting Bandung through the story of Komunitas Aleut. People can learn more about Komunitas Aleut and Bandung through the media. This condition leads people to visit the city or at least puts Bandung at the top of their mind as a tourist destination. The government can take advantage of this situation by supporting Komunitas Aleut's programs to attract more visitors.

However, some problems were experienced during the activities.

1. **Lack of facilities and infrastructure.** The coordinator did not use any amplification tools in the activities. This concern confused the participants given the lack of information because the coordinator could not speak clearly under noisy circumstances.
2. **Lack of information about the route and stop points.**
3. **Transportation problem at the last stop point.** Participants have to look for their own mode of transportation to return to where their vehicles are parked.

Criticisms about Komunitas Aleut and their programs have not been discovered. However, the main question is on whether Komunitas Aleut actually aims to transform the reality of history. If Komunitas Aleut is interested in building an image, it should pay attention to its promotion and activities because the community is directly associated with Bandung.

Komunitas Aleut has made an important contribution in showing the other side of Bandung's heritage. It has helped in building an image of Bandung that is more authentic and distinguishable compared with other cities in Indonesia. It has enabled tourism to discover heritage that has been marginalized and was only discovered a few years earlier. If city branding involves the creation of perceived value (Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2005) and the increase of competitiveness brings tourism and investment to achieve community development and reinforce local identity (Kavaratzis, 2004), then Komunitas Aleut and heritage tourism contribute to Bandung's branding.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.1 Conclusions

The present research concludes that:

1. The local government and the Bureau of Culture and Tourism have not considered that heritage tourism is a branch of tourism that can be used to build Bandung's city branding. Although they have other interesting programs related to art and culture, no indications are evident that the

government moves toward the development of heritage tourism.

2. Komunitas Aleut maintains heritage tourism in their weekly program by walking together to appreciate what remains of ancient Bandung. Komunitas Aleut has been attempting to make history popular and fun.

## 6.2 Recommendations

For the Bureau of Culture and Tourism:

1. A city museum is needed where all the details of the city can be specifically explained, with contributions from Komunitas Aleut.
2. Unidentified historical sites must be mapped.
3. Interesting heritage tourism programs should be crafted.

For Komunitas Aleut:

1. A “*Ngaleut Kit*” must be made for every activity, which contains a route map, stop points’ information and description, photos related to the trip, an ID card, and mineral water.
2. An amplification tool must be used by the coordinator.
3. The *Ngaleut* route must be published a day before the activity begins to allow participants to prepare.
4. Shuttle service should be provided at the last stop point to bring tourists to the meeting point, where all the vehicles are parked.
5. The community’s organizational structure with the job descriptions of each administrator must be made.
6. A cooperative project plan must be crafted with the local government. The cost and other administrative issues must be discussed in the interest of Bandung.

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