


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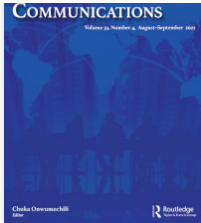
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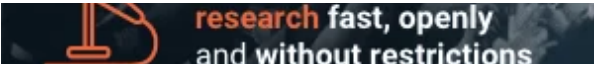
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“Dream Now, Travel Tomorrow”: Communicating the Nation Branding of Indonesia through Tourism-Based Social Media

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the use of tourism-based social media to communicate the idea of nation branding. By using Indonesia as a case study, this research aims to provide research contexts of demographic, historical, and contemporary challenges of social media and nation branding. The research project aims to answer three important objectives. Those are to investigate the pattern of tourism-based social media, the narratives behind the pattern, and the implications to the concept of nation brand of Indonesia. This study adopts a typology of photographic representations by using photos, videos, captions, and hashtags from tourism-based social media. The findings demonstrate the complexity and nuances of Indonesia's nation branding from the narrative of a dreamy place through visual imageries and written texts, the discursive portrayals of people, place, and politics, and the trajectories of the past. This study implies that Indonesia's brand is portrayed using tranquil and rural imageries, the exoticism of local identity, the symbols of authority in tourism, and the historical nuances of the nation. This concludes that the nation branding discourse and practices of Indonesia become a part of the dynamic struggle and negotiation of nation identity, culture, and governance, which define and redefine the collective and individual meanings of the country.

KEYWORDS

Communication;
Indonesia; nation
branding; social media;
tourism

Introduction

During the period of lockdown, whereby mobility and travel are limited, social media are still increasingly used to promote countries, destinations, islands, and people (Pachucki et al., 2022). Tourism-based social media has been utilized to emphasize and retain the memories of prospective visitors to help the imagining of going on vacation to specific destinations or countries in the foreseeable future (Kwok & Muñiz, 2021). Social media are increasingly being used too as a tool to inform new travel policies, adaptation (Flew & Kirkwood, 2021), crisis procedures (Yudawati et al., 2022), and interactivity (Ratriyana, 2021), with audiences from across the globe, to keep them dreaming about a country to visit once the COVID-19 pandemic has diminished.

In the pandemic situation, social media is used as a center stage to position the nation branding. On a global level, the government manages social media for purposes of

diplomacy, tourism promotion, and the dissemination of information, which places nation branding as an important strategy (Eshuis & Klijn, 2012). The theoretical lenses of nation branding work to reinforce the importance of communicating the soft power programs and diplomacy efforts during the pandemic by utilizing the opportunity of this 'new normal' through the medium of technology (Lee, 2021). Nation branding is one of the ways of focusing public attention on a nation which may emphasize its strength factors such as investment, tourism, or even for purposes of geopolitics. Morgan and Pritchard (2000) for example, argue that to bring visitors to a nation, the government must be able to convey a message which can win hearts and minds through specific brand positioning aimed at new visitors. In tourism, nation branding becomes a strong tool because it helps to integrate a set of marketing activities and communication tools through symbols, names, logos, images, and words, which can differentiate one nation from another (Ritchie & Ritchie, 1998; Blain et al., 2005). To help build and maintain nation branding, governments draw upon social media as a way to inform, shape, and invite people to visit a place (Koh & Liew, 2022). Although tourism and nation branding can be embedded in the brand concepts (Ekinici & Hosany, 2006; Park & Petrick, 2006) by using a similar approach, such as consumer goods and services (Olins, 2002; Kotler & Gertner, 2002; Anholt, 2002; Papadopoulos & Heslop, 2002), nevertheless, skepticism still exists to criticize the complexity and multi-attributed objects of places and people (Pike, 2005).

Furthermore, the concept and applications of nation branding have been contested among academia in the study of place, media, and representation. Critics debate the very real possibilities of control from national authorities in regions using various methods in the name of nation branding—activities such as using messages, managing public image, propaganda, and enforcing national policy (Kaneva, 2011; Gudjonsson, 2005; Anholt, 2006). Nation branding is also defined as collections of discursive messages aimed at building nationhood for both domestic and/or international audiences through marketing and branding paradigms controlled by specific ideological or pragmatic means (Kaneva, 2011). Finally, politics and cultural notions on the country of origin have influential, discernible impacts on the stereotype and brand of a nation (Kotler & Gertner, 2002). In relation to this 'country-of-origin' image (Kotler & Gertner, 2002), it is important to question how political and cultural factors are not only controlled but also synchronized with the perception of nation brands across different places and people.

This article is structured in several parts. First, the literature review identifies the extension of scholarly discussion on nation branding, and how scholars who study Indonesia engage in this discussion. From here, gaps in the literature and research projects related to nation branding at large, and of Indonesia inclusively, are visible for the current research project to fulfill. Next, the analytical methods of the research are discussed, along with the ways data sets are collected and examined. The findings section presents the typology of representations among different social media posts to establish the multiple interpretations of nation brand and identity. As a result, it demonstrates the implication of these interpretations on the nation's control over brand and identity.

The study of nation branding and tourism social media

Addressing the complexities of a nation, the study of nation branding has developed a wide variety of models and case studies to be implemented. Recent research projects

discuss the influence of social media in shaping the public discourse and raising public awareness of socio-political agendas, especially in nation branding contexts by looking at their interactions with followers and the narrative generated from them in China (Li & Feng, 2022). The project emphasized the need of imbuing authenticity with engagement, featuring valued-based content, interactivity, creativity, and intrinsic motivations within an ethical communication mechanism especially when it comes to sports (Li & Feng, 2022). Another project aims to investigate how cultural heritage information leverage country branding and contributes to developing a competitive identity (Nobre & Sousa, 2022). The study explores the roles performed by public entities to attract visitors to heritage sites and encourage the engagement of the different ‘actors’ in cultural heritage experiences in Portugal while developing its brand identity. Some other researchers also explore the role of tourism within the context of cultural heritage in the construction of nation branding (Kavoura, 2012; Labadi, 2007; Newland & Taylor, 2010; Ryan & Silvano, 2009; Murti, 2019). These projects not only answer the significance of ‘why study nation branding?’ but also ‘what is achieved by using nation branding as a concept?’ (Gudjonsson, 2005). This concept explores how people learn to associate, expect, feel, and remember a nation by using images and written texts from tourism and heritage (Anholt, 2007). Another research project emphasizes the need for shared national symbols, traditions, and cultural artifacts to co-create meaning around their nation brand (Miño & Austin, 2022). At many levels of analysis, nation branding campaigns can be used as a way to show how government can act as the *facilitators of dialogue* among different publics within a country to find points of convergence and divergence around what constitutes the identity of their nation (Miño & Austin, 2022). This perspective of the study is crucial since many critics have identified the one-way approach in which the governments started hiring the services of a group of branding and marketing experts as Aronczyk (2013) called the elites of “transnational-promotional class” to aid them in the creation and execution of nation branding campaigns. Meanwhile, many more studies asked for a more facilitative, reflective, and co-creating process in developing nation branding through social media’s participatory culture. This approach can put citizen participation as the core of the initiative and make the nation branding can be more effective and inclusive (Pamment & Cassinger, 2018). This will allow people to reflect and think about their national belonging, identity, and about who and what they are as a country.

To examine the concept of nation branding, it is pivotal to investigate from elements of identities, purpose, and equity of a nation. These elements lead to further discussion of the media and local people’s perspectives, as the main sources of information in this current research. Firstly, to answer the media issue comprehensively, Anholt (2007) suggests that a nation should express its identity through logos, slogans, landmarks, and national monumental symbols distinctively (Anholt, 2007; Holt, 2004; Sumaco & Richardson, 2011). Secondly, among these cultural heritage spaces, the local people are the ones who must decide *which* culture they would like to perform as the best representation of the shared uniqueness of their nations (Newland & Taylor, 2010; Waterton & Watson, 2010). In fact, local people are a significant resource to understand the shared values of nations’ identities and purpose(s). Nation brand equity is a powerful positioning of a brand and the asset value of a nation’s reputation (Anholt, 2007; Holt, 2004). Aaker (2009) establishes strong discussions in brand equity which

could be seen and applied in the nation branding contexts which consists of the brand awareness of the nation, the perceived quality of the nation, the association of the nation brand, and finally the loyalty toward the brand. These tools also help to see in which area, social media tourism can play its role in building and shaping brand equity and investigating the risk and/or weakness of the current nation's brand position and communication. Thus, by investigating those elements, the aim of this project is mainly to establish some key communication concepts of nation branding through social media as a tool for promoting tourism that shapes the identity of Indonesia.

Specifically, in the study of communication, nation branding can be seen through multiple perspectives. For example, nation branding is a set of campaign activities and public communications to present ideas about state and nation (Marat, 2009). Nation branding can also be investigated through the visual regime applied by the state to establish their authoritarian purpose, or, presence, through symbolic manifestations in public spaces, especially tourism destinations (Graan, 2016). The regimentation of nation branding through public memorials and monuments encompasses meaningful information inherent to nation-branding projects of successive governments which may be implicated within national history, public space, and means of governance, through meta-semiotic ways (Graan, 2016). Thus, Kaneva (2011) argues that it is important for communications scholars to look at nation branding through a critical and cultural studies perspective by investigating the historical nuances of authority and nationhood which may be central to the studies of nation and commodification, public spheres, spaces, and places.

Further, there are three areas of identification in the domain studies for communicating nation branding. Firstly, based on Kaneva's study (2011), the domain of technical-economic considerations concerns capital accumulation and economic growth (i.e., marketing, management, and tourism). Also, there is a political domain that primarily looks at the national images of nation-states via diplomatic and geopolitical aspects (i.e., international relations, public relations, or international communication). Finally, there is the cultural approach which includes the study of media and cultural identities. Scholars with this focus tend to elaborate on critiques of nation branding discourse and practices as a part of the dynamic struggle and negotiation of nation identity, culture, and governance, which define and redefine the collective and individual meanings of nation brands themselves.

Social media have also become a medium of choice through which national identity and culture are spread and informed. For example, a study conducted by Moya and Jain (2014, p. 410), investigates how countries use various approaches to gain an advantage over competitors in the aspect of the trade, tourism, and foreign investment. Thus, countries need to manage their image and reputation through media. Not only through mass media, but also by the use of social media to gain a good image and reputation. Social media can also be used as a form of public diplomacy to utilize public opinion to create a brand (Harris, 2013). It is also important that correct information and the right image are portrayed through social media (Harris, 2013). Another study, conducted by Algan and Kaptan (2021), investigates how Turkey's Government uses national celebrities who have gained worldwide popularity as a means to strengthen their nation's brand. A study by Abbasi and Khan (2022) also shows how Pakistan utilizes social media to brand the nation through religious tourism and social media.

Embarking on these previous studies, the current study attempts to examine how the Indonesian government utilizes social media to promote its tourism landscape for nation branding in the time of COVID-19.

Study setting: historical trajectories of Indonesia’s nation brand

Indonesia is used as a nation context in this research primarily because of its abundant demographics aspect which will be beneficial for the purpose of studying the tensions of the synchronization of the nation brand. In fact, there are more than 1,331 tribes and 320 ethnic groups spread across 375 regencies/municipalities (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2010). These demographic differences have been the challenge of controlling the nation’s brand in representing the complexity of identity in the nation. Henceforth, Indonesia as a brand is constantly challenged by the diversity of the population, not to mention the tensions of sharing the collective meaning as it continues to be re-negotiated and addressed in the future. Taking its cue from major academic works identifying the most distributed slogans, taglines, brands, and campaigns, this step demonstrates how Indonesia, as a post-colonial nation, developed its branding—from naming through to brand publications—derived from a legacy of the past (Table 1).

Throughout the historical trajectory, the most important milestone was during the New Order era in which nation-building is programmed widely. During the New Order era, President Soeharto applied more pressure on Bali, emphasizing its role as one of Indonesia’s main tourism destinations. *Sapta Pesona*, or, principles in tourism (security, orderliness, cleanliness, comfort, beauty, hospitality, and thoughtfulness) were widely distributed. Bali still appeared—or were exploited as—the dominant icon of mass tourism for the nation. This situation not only helped in the emergence of antagonism in ‘national culture’, but to regional culture as a Javanese-centric and central government strategy to dominate other cultural practices like Bali (Picard, 1990). After many more nation brands along the history, the tagline of ‘Wonderful Indonesia’ then was re-launched as a nation brand of ‘Wonderful Indonesia’ in 2014 until current, during President Joko Widodo’s early administration era. This branding then called upon the image of the *Garuda* once more, but in silhouette, with five feathers in color (green, purple, orange, blue, and magenta). The brand values then are set to pushing the legacy of Soeharto era *Sapta Pesona*, or, the Seven Wonders,

Table 1. Historical data of nation branding in Indonesia.

Year	Era	Government	Brand for the nation
1700–1943	Dutch Colonial era	Vereeniging Toeristenveerker	Java the Wonderland
1942–1945	Japan Colonial era	Asia Raja	3A (Japan the Light of Asia, Japan the Protector of Asia, and Japan is the Leader of Asia)
1946–1967	Independence struggle and Old Order	President Soekarno	Jawa Baroe, Indonesia Raja, Indonesia Merdeka!
1968–1998	New Order (President Soeharto)	President Soeharto	Sapta Pesona or Seven Charms
1999–2003	Reformation Era	President Abdurrahman Wahid and President Megawati	Visit Indonesia
2004–2020	Post Reformation Era	President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and President Joko Widodo	Indonesia Ultimate in Diversity, Wonderful Indonesia (Sapta Pesona or Seven Wonders)

(Source: Table by Author, 2020).

with slightly different principles: *aman*, *tertib*, *bersih*, *sejuk*, *indah*, *ramah tamah dan kenangan*, or security, order, clean, cool, beauty, friendly, and memory. These brand values were distributed, communicated, and infused into many tourism destinations from cities to villages through training and competitions (Murti, 2019b), and by using the community-organized body of *Pokdarwis* or *Kelompok Sadar Wisata* (*Tourism Awareness Group*) (Murti, 2019a).

Method

The current research project would like to address three research questions. These questions are utilized to explore the nuances and complexity of social media in tourism with nation branding. The questions are:

RQ1: How is the pattern of tourism-based social media communicate the nation brand of Indonesia?

RQ2: What are the narratives behind the pattern which are offered to the prospective tourists

RQ3: How do the pattern and the narratives implicate the concept of nation brand of Indonesia?

The current research project uses three ways of looking at the communication of Indonesia nation branding through tourism-based social media. Firstly, the research utilizes content analysis to map the nation brand narratives in social media quantitatively. The study divides the content analysis into two parts which consist of imageries (photos and videos) and textual (caption and hashtag) findings. This step is useful because it provides insight into the predominant images and texts which are displayed in social media. Secondly, by looking at some samples of the quantitative data, the study then analyzes the pattern of images and text appearances. This is helpful to explore the cluster of data and visualization of discursive images and texts. The main purpose is to look at how the images and texts are specifically portrayed and how they can narrate the brand of the nation. Thirdly, the researchers reflect on the historical trajectories of Indonesia's nation branding. From here, the researchers then draw the lines of similarities and differences which may or may not be applied by the nation historically with the recent practice of social media. Some previous research projects which also study nation branding suggest looking at the past trajectories in order to reflect the current nuances as a way to make sense of the context (Brown, 2003; Foulcher, 1990). This method is important to track down the trajectories of practices that are correlated, similar, and perhaps inspired by past practices in a nation case (Graan, 2016; Kavoura, 2012).

Content analysis to map the nation brand narratives in social media

Adopting Hunter's photographic investigation (2008), this study investigates the pattern of thematic analysis. The current research project attempts to explore the ways to communicate nation branding from the 'inside' of the nation, for the 'external' or 'international' audience. The category of nation branding is used in a way to form a model to understand a nation's significant dynamics and communication channels

(Gudjonsson, 2005). As such, there are four main categories under constant consideration throughout this study: i) the people and their culture; ii) politics, structure, government, and policies; iii) the economy, industries, companies, and brands; iv) geography. These four categories of nation branding were adopted from Gudjonsson's work (2005) and have created multiple representations of the nations.

As a way to collect data, over a 6-week period, three undergraduate students assisted the researchers to collect visual data from an Instagram account. They were communications students who had already taken social media and quantitative classes. They were trained in understanding the concept of visual and textual databases in a social media context, then taught to code them into sets of databases in Excel. They tested on over 38 visual and textual data to make sure of their intercoder reliability. The researchers used Cohen's Kappa to check the results of the interrater analysis which showed their reliabilities as convincing, with a 'good' agreement (Kappa = 0,710 with $p < 0.001$) (Landis & Koch, 1977; O'Connor & Joffe, 2020).

The current research project chooses Instagram as the social media data because of two reasons: government utilization of media and interactivity. Firstly, the government of Indonesia uses Instagram as its main channel for photos, videos, and texts for promotional purposes. The government uses Twitter as textual information and the Website as a comprehensive information site. This study uses Instagram because it provides opportunities for both images and texts which can be seen as an integral aspect of promoting the nation. The current research project chose an Instagram account @wonderfulIndonesia which is officially managed by Indonesia's Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy. "Wonderful Indonesia" is a national campaign launched by the ministry to promote Indonesia's tourism commencing in 2011. Previously, the ministry used the term "Visit Indonesia". Upon completion of the research, their total followers were at 744 thousand users with 3,386 posts. The focus of this research project was on Instagram posts dated from February 2020 until February 2022 (25 months). The time span was chosen based on the starting period of COVID-19 in 2020, to two years after, when the tourism condition was in a better state. There are a total of 756 photos and videos about Indonesia's tourism and 80,3% of them consist of visual images rather than videos. This shows that users' preferences for images are still very strong on Instagram when compared to TikTok or YouTube. Secondly, the project chooses to use Instagram due to the interactivity of the media. There is a total of 4 million likes and 64 thousand comments which shows the level of interactivity on Instagram as being quite significant. However, the amount of content, along with interactivity, was lower by comparison when the pandemic occurred in early 2020. Indonesia had been affected by COVID-19 in February of that year, which saw economic activity slow drastically. Thus, from February until November 2020 (10 months), total Instagram posts were only 15% of total posts in 2 years, while interactivity was at an all-time low (under 20% of the total number).

Portrayals of thematic data

To make the quantitative data useful, some samples of the data can be utilized for the purpose of the interpretation step. This step is helpful to know how the numbers in quantitative data come into being, how it is delivered, and what kind of nuances that the images or words offered to the study of nation branding. The researchers looked

deeper into the portrayals of each image (photos and videos) or written text (caption and hashtag). By codifying similarities between the patterns, the researchers were able to locate the thematic concepts prevalent across varying data. The researchers then looked at previous research projects which are similar or different with the interpretation to ensure the narrative of the nation brand is consistent and/or different.

Findings

The findings demonstrate the complexity and nuances of Indonesia’s nation branding through tourism social media from three aspects. The complex data can be found through the imageries and written texts, the discursive portrayals of people, place, and politics, and finally the trajectories of the legacy from the past.

Communicating the nation branding in tourism through imageries

Based on the content aspect, this research project divides them into four topic areas: economics, politics, people, and geography. The dominant social media posts are related to the topic of geography (63,5%) and people (54,8%). While the topic of politics and economics wasn’t popular. In addition, content about tourism during COVID-19 was only 14 posts during February–June 2020 (Table 2).

The Instagram account showed the lowest interest in posting about the economy (11.2%) and politics (3.1%). On the economic aspect, there was some content about the industry which covered farming (n=32) and industrial location (n=2). Meanwhile, on aspects related to resources, user content showed a focus on aspects of hospitality (such as restaurants, hotels, museums) (n=48), events (n=2), and transportation (n=1).

Meanwhile, on the political aspect, the Instagram of Wonderful Indonesia only posted content related to officials’ pictures (n=4), political events (n=1), and general information (n=4). The other aspect of politics revolved around COVID policies. Interestingly, the information about COVID-19 was covered but in a very small number (n=14). This number indicates that the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy’s Instagram account tried to focus not on issues of the pandemic, but rather, more into the aspect of tourism.

The ‘people aspect’ is a significant feature of Indonesian tourism, with culture at the forefront of its understanding. The theme of cultural tradition is usually shown by way of buildings (architecture) (n=48) and clothing (n=19). However, the cultural event is also an interesting story including experiences of village life (n=13) and cultural events (n=25). Besides nature, the ‘people aspect’ has also become a viable tourist interest because Indonesia is widely known for its culture. Heritage buildings and villages are two vital aspects of Indonesia’s tourism. It has become integral to the notion of identity as shown in—and through—the audience.

Table 2. Content of social media based on four topics.

Economy		Politics		People			Nature		Total
Industry	Resources	Political structure	COVID policies	History/heritage building	Traditional clothes	Cultural event	Sea/water	Land	
34	51	9	14	48	19	38	395	148	756
4.5%	6.7%	1.2%	1.9%	6.3%	2.5%	5%	52.2%	19.5%	100.0%

(Source: Table by Authors, 2021).

Table 3. Nature theme in @wonderfullIndonesia.

Water tourism	Nature							
	Water based				Land based			
	Sea	Islands	Beaches	Desert	Park	Cave	Mountain/forest	Total
62	52	135	146	7	16	32	93	543
11.4%	9.5%	24.8%	26.8%	1.2%	2.9%	5.8%	17.1%	100.0%

(Source: Table by Authors, 2021).

Lastly, the most popular, preferred content on social media is Indonesia’s nature itself. It grabbed a total of 71.7%. Water-based tourism is the most prominent (n = 395), with beaches (n = 146) and islands (n = 135) proving to be the most common topic. Whilst land-based tourism came in second (n = 148), with its content about mountains/forests as the most exclusive theme (n = 93) (Table 3).

People and nature are the two most dominant imageries which the government tries to show through social media. It encapsulates the ways in which Indonesia’s nation branding is mostly represented by the portrayals of nature or places (especially beaches and islands) and the cultural activities of the people (such as activities in the heritage buildings). These aspects strengthen the identity of Indonesia as a tropical and archipelagic nation. These imageries also strengthen the cultural identity of the nation.

Communicating nation branding in tourism through written texts

In the written text data, the researchers use captions and hashtags to explore the written expression of Indonesia’s nation brand from tourism social media. To understand the main idea in a caption, we divided the paragraphs/sentences, based on the word choices, into verb, adjective, and parabolic terms.

The imaginary adjectives

Adjectives are words that add a strong descriptive aspect to language and give the audience more information about an object. It could be based on color, size, shape, condition, etc. Many adjectives were used in the captions, however, some adjectives were used more frequently than others. For example, ‘stunning’ (=105), ‘amazing’ (n = 74), ‘perfect’ (n = 65), and ‘beautiful’ (n = 56) were used in many of the captions used to describe posts about the ‘nature’ of Indonesia (Table 4).

In addition, some parabolic terms are also used to strengthen the idea of the beauty of a place. There were several parabolic terms that were frequently used, such as ‘hidden gem,’ the ‘island of God,’ ‘magnificent mountain,’ and ‘feast your eyes.’ Parabolic captions such as ‘feast your eyes,’ ‘heavenly scenery,’ ‘pristine blue waters,’ and ‘vast milky sands’ are commonly used to explore the emotional and/or affective aspects of the texts. Some additional adjectives also in use, such as ‘mesmerizing views,’ ‘stunning scenic views,’ ‘amazing pictures,’ and ‘excellent sports’ make use of similar linguistic devices.

Hashtag as a collective term for nation branding and COVID-19 progress

Further to aspects of branding as outlined thus far, there were a variety of hashtags that have been used across posts sourced for this study. The hashtag is used to put more sentiment and position into a post via social media. It will make your post easier to find, as well as link it to other posts which share the same hashtag, or, topic (Table 5).

Table 4. Adjectives used in captions sampled.

Adjective verb	Number	Adjective Verb	Number
Incredible	28	Pristine	40
Unique	25	Hidden	15
Magnificent	29	Mesmerizing	16
Exotic	27	Natural	28
Magical	38	Stunning	105
Gorgeous	36	Exciting	20
Lush	45	Astonishing	17
Spectacular	39	Wonderful	19
Perfect	65	Enchanting	25
Beautiful	56	Tropical	27
Amazing	74	Majestic	26
Total = 2,639			

(Source: Table by Authors, 2021).

Table 5. Hashtag usage in @wonderfulIndonesia.

Hashtag	Numbers
#WonderfulIndonesia	553
#IndonesiaBucketList	335
#FromIndonesiawithLove	303
#TravelTomorrow	71
#ThoughtfulIndonesia	64
#Indonesia	61
#ItstimeforBali	60
#Bali	46
#DreamNow	41
#StayatHome	32
#WonderfulThingsAwait	26
#Travel	23
#Tripofwonders	12
Total	2,187

(Source: Table by Author, 2021).

Table 6 above shows that the hashtag #WonderfulIndonesia had the highest use (n = 553), followed by #IndonesiaBucketList (n = 335) and #FromIndonesiawithLove (n = 303). The hashtag #WonderfulIndonesia is the primary hashtag found in every post. However, other hashtags, such as those that follow, have perceivably different usage/s due to how and where they are situated and positioned during COVID-19. #TravelTomorrow (n = 71), #ThoughtfulIndonesia (n = 64), #DreamNow (n = 41) and #StayatHome (n = 32) are special hashtags which were created during COVID-19. It is a way to share the story and encourage the audience to keep calm and stay at home whilst still checking for their next destination: When the condition is better, they seem to read, you can go to the destination which is already on your bucket list.

Up until September 2021, the main hashtag used was #WonderfulThingsAwait (n = 26) because the tourism situation was beginning to open wider than previously before. Restrictions were being lifted, and international flights were becoming active once more, therefore, this hashtag was used to ask tourists to come to Indonesia. By the end of the year, the Ministry positioned tourism in Bali as the major tourism destination in Indonesia. Thus, the hashtags #ItstimeforBali (n = 60) and #Bali (n = 46) are up, even now, until 2022. In addition, some destinations are starting to be promoted once more, such as #EastNusaTenggara (n = 10), #Lombok (n = 12), #WestNusaTenggara (n = 11).

Indeed, objective and parabolic terms are commonly used in social media captions. However, since @wonderfulIndonesia tries to set up tourism campaigns through social

Table 6. Table related to the hashtag of the region in Indonesia.

No.	Hashtag of region	n
1	#Bali	46
2	#BaliHandaraGate	1
3	#Bandung	1
4	#BangkaBelitung	1
5	#Bangli	2
6	#Banjar	1
7	#BanyanTreeBintan	1
8	#BanyumalaTwinWaterfalls	1
9	#Banyuwangi	1
10	#Batam	2
11	#BelitungIsland	1
12	#Berau	1
13	#Bintan	4
14	#Borobudur	2

(Source: Table by Author, 2022).

media, captions should present the ideas about state and nation too (Marat, 2009), rather than only using sugar-coated words. Further studies around critical and cultural identity are needed to create different, yet meaningful captions for use across all official Instagram accounts.

Portrayals of place, people, and politics

The second step of this study is looking at the thematic pattern. Through this, the study also finds three discursive aspects. The study discovers that place, people, and politics are the main material of nation brand of Indonesia in social media. The description below will show how specifically the portrayals of place, people, and politics are displayed both as images and as texts. The questions in the next step are not only about what the most dominant images are but also about how these images portrayed the dominant narratives of the nation.

Place: tranquil agricultural and rural nation

The place aspect which is portrayed in this study shows two of the most dominant categories: the tranquility of the agricultural landscape and other rural tropes. These two aspects draw upon commonalities in representation in regards to tranquility, in which the trope of the images appears with no human in sight, only one person, or the small set of tourists for whom the image is directed.

The agricultural aspects are commonly shown as rice fields, terraces, and plantations, meanwhile, the rural shown as wooded areas dotted with resorts or swimming pools located in tranquil, isolated rural areas. Consistently the rurality and tranquility are represented by the isolation of places, accentuated by the exclusion of the human image, 1–2 tourists, or only an animal. The place is almost always taken from a bird's eye perspective (using professional drones), or at the tourists' gaze, which strengthens the imageries from #DreamNow and brings the audience to an imaginary, idyllic place of Indonesia. The absence of humans and animals in the most part creates the illusion of creating a contrast with the type of urban audience's everyday life which is full of people with high and fast-paced mobility (Zhou, 2014; Murti & Ratriyana, 2021). The

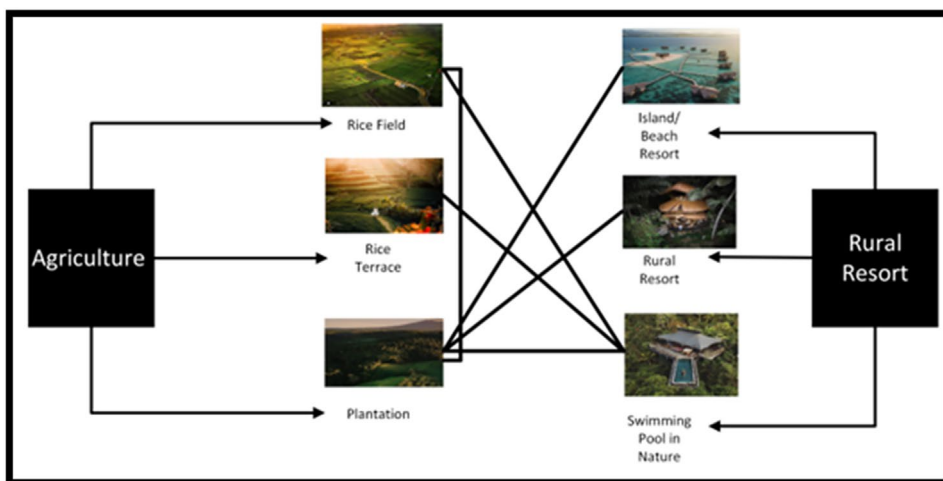


Figure 1. Connectivity between agricultural images and rural resort.
(Source: Author's work collecting images from @WonderfulIndonesia)

objectives are to provide space for the audience to perceive a peaceful state of mind and a tranquil ambiance which is free of worries (Cohen, 2004; Murti, 2020) (Figure 1).

The figure above shows that there are eight nature features found to be most prevalent across social media. Those are water tourism, sea, islands, beaches, desert, park, caves, and mountains (with forests). However, all these nature features compose similar ways of portraying the nation: tranquility, calm, isolation, rural, and nature—those recurring main themes indelibly linked to notions of 'Indonesia.'

People: the exoticism of local identity

The exoticism of local identity is portrayed through three distinctly recognizable categories: local people in close proximity to the heritage/historical building, wearing traditional clothes, and conducting cultural events. The photos which were portrayed here emphasize the traditional face of Indonesia. They described Indonesia as a nation that has strong traditional cultural ties to identity. People were portrayed in the circle of traditional activities despite the fact that Indonesia also has a modern culture. Some images show people standing/walking among heritage building sites, such as walking in a temple. Some show people who live in traditional houses wearing traditional clothes. Whilst others still show people engaged in cultural events, such as praying on a Nyepi day in Bali, a Hindu holiday where women bring offerings on their heads, donned in traditional clothes. Images featured show Indonesian people with no casual dress, no make-up, and no luxury environment, living in rural areas. On the one hand, it represents a dreamy world, where people can envisage the imagined world of 'Indonesia.' On the other, it is not a complete representation of *Indonesia*—the reality—with people who live in these traditional circles, making up a small part of the nation. Indonesia has other communities that live an urban lifestyle, with modern jobs, modern clothes, transportations, and the like. But seldom are they ever represented here (Figure 2).

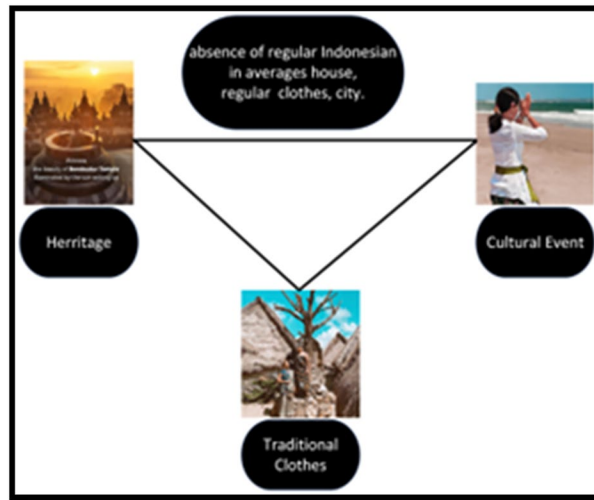


Figure 2. Connectivity between heritage, cultural events, and traditional clothes.
(Source: Author's work from collecting images from @WonderfulIndonesia)

From the data above, it shows that Indonesia tries to offer a cultural aspect to international tourists. It also shapes Indonesia with a stereotype as an exotic place, or, an 'exotic other.' These dreamy images offer to western people an aspect of a dreamy place positioned solely as a commodity that can be consumed. The dreamy images in one way show good aspects of Indonesia, but in another way, this positioning is unrealistic. Tourists imagine Indonesia as an exotic place with a tranquil ambiance and tradition. However, when they come to Indonesia, they see modernity, alongside messiness, and even poverty, which are not featured in narrations through social media.

Politics: spectacle(s) of political power

The spectacle of political power is portrayed via symbolic attributes of authority or ministry. Officials appear to show that tourism-based social media has become a tool for the executive body to promote its power. Tourism-based social media cannot be detached from political purposes used to promote themselves, with the activities of their authorities across these platforms. Tourism-based social media has become a political tool not only to promote tourism but those behind the tourism sectors, politically and institutionally, within government bodies (Figure 3).

This finding is consistent with previous research which identifies authorities in Indonesian tourism contexts as a salient discourse achieved through symbols, officials, and events through which they showcase their own policies and programs (Murti & Ratriyana, 2021); this includes the logos which appear in social media to show the aspect of nation, authority, and ownership of posts, events, even places. Tourism, in this case, cannot be separated from notions of nationhood, national pride, the nation branding of 'Wonderful Indonesia,' or even national policies toward tourism. This formal, symbolic, and regulatory approach shows there is a recognition from within the nation-state, political and domestic, that when we discuss 'nation brand' in the

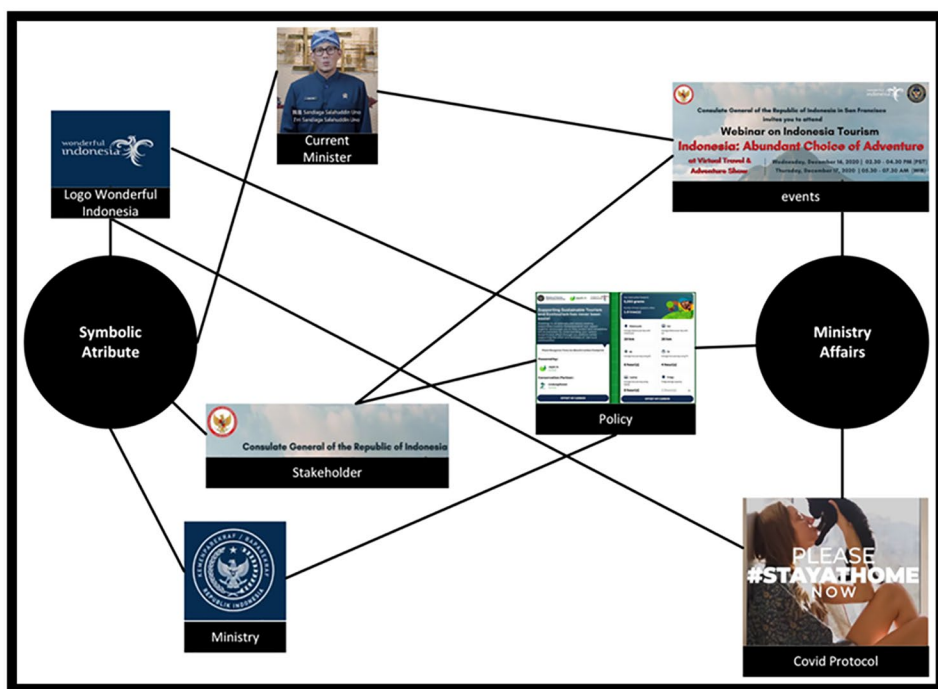


Figure 3. Connectivity between symbolic attributes in images and Ministry Affairs.
(Source: Author's work collecting images from @WonderfulIndonesia)

context of tourism, power and/or authority is present (Murti, 2019; Ratriyana et al., 2021). Identity and ownership of authority can also be seen frequently to promote tourism in social media. Hence, tourism-based social media shows the (inter-)connections between tourism and the symbolic manifestation of nation-state. In this sense, social media further becomes a tool in which the government can show their 'existences' (i.e., presences) and broadcast the symbolic identities of a nation (Anderson, 1991; Anholt, 2007; Holt, 2004; Sumaco & Richardson, 2011).

Historical trajectories

The nation brand of Indonesia, in relation to tourism identity, can be seen as traceable to its colonial past. There are many codes of symbolic identity such as tagline ($n=63$), slogan ($n=553$), brand ($n=118$), campaign, and patterns of images that demonstrate nation brand. It is in line with Anholt (2007), who suggests that a nation can express its identity/ies through some tools, for example, logos, slogans, landmarks, and monumental symbols (Anholt, 2007; Holt, 2004; Sumaco & Richardson, 2011). This research also finds that the New Order national project has been reused by the government as a nationwide project through a similar brand of wonderful Indonesia and that still features Bali as the dominant icon for tourism as expressed through 'nation.' For example, Balinese attributes are used in representations of landscape patterns, such as rice terraces, which exist in the Balinese landscape, along with the rural resort, which is mostly available for foreign tourist consumption, along with locals who live in close

proximity to its temples. Another example is the use of hashtags which make Bali become the dominant hashtag throughout the posts. This shows that current government initiatives still reuse, rehash, and draw upon the brand ideas going back to the Suharto era.

Discussions

This paper finds its basis in three main pivotal questions. Those are to investigate the pattern of tourism-based social media, the narratives behind the pattern, and the implications to the concept of nation brand of Indonesia.

RQ1: How is the pattern of tourism-based social media communicate the nation brand of Indonesia?

To answer the first research question, the communication of 'nation brand' and of social media geared toward tourism, is marked by two examinations of images and words (the hashtag). Through images, Indonesia's brand is portrayed using tranquil, agricultural, and rural imageries, spectacles of political power through symbols and official attributes, and the exoticism of local identity. Images such as rice fields, plantations of agriculture in rural areas, along with logos shaped by the face of the authority, local heritage, and the conducting of cultural events witnessed by political figures, highlight the implementation of complex patterns of national imagery marketed toward foreign tourists. Meanwhile, through words, Indonesia's nation brand, through tourism-based social media, is communicated through promotional words which use imaginary aspects of Indonesia. The adjective and hashtag as collective terms, or, tools, function to help viewers to 'dream' about the nation. Promotional verbs such as enjoy, visit, blessed, amazed, exotic, and enchanting, coupled with hashtags such as #dreamnow and #WonderfulIndonesia, are examples of word use called upon to encourage an imaginary state of mind. However, the creators of such slogans should also be aware that the objective of creating this dream destination impacts sometimes can be unrealistic or it can (mis-)represent the real situations of tourism destinations. As nation branding is about how a nation is portrayed and imagined through a range of different images and captions, nation brand could be shaped by internal, as well as external actors. Thus, in the world of social media-based tourism, the agent behind the 'Wonderful Indonesia' image tries to shape the imagining of Indonesia through the visual landscape, people, culture, and words for an audience abroad (Kavoura, 2012; Newland & Taylor, 2010; Ryan & Silvanto, 2009). Additionally, Kotler and Gertner (2002) add an argument that people may change their prior perceptions of a nation, then adjust what they expect by visiting the area, to confirm expectations through tourism. Tourism-based social media, therefore, facilitates expectation, as well as perceptions, through words and imagery (Kotler & Gertner, 2002; Anholt, 2007). This research project was able to open up the discourse of imageries used across social media by interrogating the pattern of imageries used in the representations of people and places.

As an implication, the social media tourism pattern shapes the public discourse and raise public awareness by strengthening the identity of landscape and culture. As a landscape, Indonesia is consistently projected as a nation of tropical paradise, agricultural beauty, and rural or isolated nature (Ryan & Silvanto, 2009; Murti, 2019). This finding has been consistently showing in the patterns through images and words

which help people to learn, associate, expect, feel, and remember a nation (Anholt, 2007) and similar to other researchers' findings. However, the dominant images then are problematic because these do not offer the imbuing authenticity of Indonesia landscape (Li & Feng, 2022) in the postmodern world with cities and vibrant development. The pattern only accommodates the western elites of "transnational-promotional class" (Aronczyk, 2013) to project the creation and execution of nation branding campaigns but not yet offer the facilitators of dialogue among different publics within a country to find points of convergence and divergence around what constitutes the identity of their nation (Miño & Austin, 2022). The pattern in social media has not developed the facilitative, reflective, and co-creating process through social media's participatory culture. Therefore, the ways people reflect and think about Indonesia are still homogenous and tend to show a single story instead of diverse and inclusive. This then implicates the narrative behind the pattern.

RQ2: What are the narratives behind the pattern which are offered to the prospective tourists

The research project then answers the second inquiry in how these portrayals in social media create narratives which are offered to prospective tourists. The tranquility of the landscape facilitates an imagining of Indonesia as an agricultural, rural, and tranquil nation which helps build the dream about Indonesia through hashtags such as #dreamnow. The usage of words such as "pristine," "mesmerizing," "magical," and "enchanting," mostly function as a communicative device to encourage a (homogeneous) nation image. These then shape the expectations and feelings of the nation to be agricultural, rural, and tranquil. The question remains whether this image is circulated as a tourism commodity, a reality, or just images utilized to portray unrealistic, idyllic imaginations in the minds of the tourist-consumer. Further, this pattern may also lead to disappointment among tourists when they visit an Indonesia that cannot, and as yet, does not fit the image. Indeed, Morgan and Pritchard (2000) argue that to bring the visitor to a nation, the government must convey the message that it can win over the hearts and minds of the prospective visitor. However, realistic objects and messages should also be conveyed by understanding the negotiation of nation complexity and multiple identities of its places and people. These identities may not only be about tranquil and rural imageries, but also Indonesian urban settings, street vendors, modern buildings, and/or regular Indonesians, who live in a regular/modern type house (not traditional), which in our observation, appears absent in the social media environment of 'Wonderful Indonesia' (Murti, 2020; Murti & Ratriyana, 2021). The communication of nation branding through tourism-based social media shows only an exclusive, limited, portrayal focused solely on certain aspects of expectation, rather than the realistic diversity of Indonesia as a complex nation. Furthermore, the absence of local people, as situated in the modern city: the vibrant, educated, young, and not traditional, demonstrates an exclusion of these groups from the tourism aspect of nation identity. The main question is why this type of imagery is absent. Previous research projects (Murti, 2020; Murti & Ratriyana, 2021) which indicate similar findings in tourism brochures of 448 regions in Indonesia argue how Indonesian tourism still embraces the postcolonial paradigm of tourism by which only the exoticism of locals and rurality become interesting imageries for western tourists to come to the global south.

RQ3: How the pattern and the narratives implicate the concept of nation brand of Indonesia?

To answer the third question, this study also found that communication of an Indonesian nation brand has not yet moved on from historical trajectories. The complex and diverse nation identity should be accommodated in more tourism imageries, not only to promote said diversity but to provide an inclusive approach to understand Indonesia as a whole. The nuances of diversity and identity in Indonesia can be displayed through a series of imageries and words which address aspects of the diverse identity displayed throughout social media. This study will be a useful tool for policymakers to evaluate the diversity, and representation (that is, the exclusion and inclusion of groups within tourism) portrayed in social media (Anholt, 2007; Holt, 2004; Sumaco & Richardson, 2011). Eventually, the logos, slogans, landmarks, and local people's portrayals, then shape the nations' identities. This built the nation brand equity which is powerful and consistent positioning both as assets value and risk. The risk will push Indonesia to preserve and perform the imagined pictures and words distributions to avoid the disappointment of tourists. Aaker (2009), through its brand equity model, shows how important it is to be consistent in building the brand. Since the brand awareness of the nation has been built through patterns of landscape and people, the tourists need to perceive this quality of images such as tranquil beaches, isolated rural, clean nature, and people around cultural heritage. Other than that, can be seen as inauthentic, staging, or even commoditization if it is only available for expensive and elite tourists. Furthermore, loyalty toward the brand can be at risk when the patterns are not consistently appeared in the reality.

Finally, the prominence of agriculture, tranquil, exotic local people with traditional place and attributes, becomes the parity of Indonesia's nation brand. Nevertheless, it is also a burden for Indonesia to show the consistency of the image, and across the onsite experience, in order to fulfill the expectations of tourists coming to Indonesia. If this fails, or these imageries can only and exclusively be obtained by elite tourists, there will be many disappointments or complaints by tourists who expected 'the dream.' These findings are also in line with Kavoura (2012), who explained that the tourist experience can open opportunities for creating or changing peoples' perceptions within the context of cultural heritage tourism. The risk of Indonesia's tourism social media is that it tries to portray the local culture, at the same time, too often it displays an unrealistic condition of Indonesia. Many studies have noted and noticed this unrealistic condition represented/re-presented far and wide across the social media landscape, especially through Instagram portrayals (Pesaresi & Abbasian, 2022; Scholl-Grissemann et al., 2019). Still, the nation branding discourse and practices of Indonesia become a part of the dynamic struggle and negotiation of nation identity, culture, and governance, which define and redefine the collective and individual meanings of nation brands themselves (Kaneva, 2011).

Conclusion

Communicating the nation branding should be attained as a set of campaign activities that include the diverse reality, representation, and inclusion, that draws from the

diverse ethnicities, landscapes, people, development, relationships, and current/contemporary conditions of a nation. As a recommendation from the result of this research, communicating nation branding should be a continuous and consistent message from online to offline and vice versa. The message should not static, and/or only follow what usually works, without evaluating the current developments within representations of the nation's emerging imageries, per se. With the current selective visual regime, in the Instagram of Wonderful Indonesia, social media space becomes a technical and economic tool to promote the nation. The nation brand of Indonesia, in this case, also has political dimensions as present in representations of Indonesia for other countries.

Coinciding with what Kaneva (2011) argues, that it is important for communications scholars to look at nation branding through critical and cultural studies perspectives. The cultural approach works to elaborate the complexity of nation brand, as a part of discursive identity and negotiation of a collective meaning of Indonesia that should be explored and expressed. As such, through the findings of this research project, government and communicative agencies can conduct more thorough research in selecting current Indonesia, that is, the representation of its complex components of people and place which should be portrayed in social media as both imaginings, or, idyllic, as well as realistic, and embracing more the idea of diversity and representation of various region of Indonesia.

Finally, this study recognizes its own limitations due to the limits of data sets. This study was conducted through a content analysis of social media, drawing on the imagery found to be most prominent in the official Instagram account of 'Wonderful Indonesia.' Therefore, future studies can work to discover more about communication approaches or logic at work from the people behind tourism-based social media and its imagery on the images they publish, what kinds of images they select, and what kind of symbols to use qualitatively. More work also needs to be done in understanding the perceived quality of nation branding from the audience's perspectives through surveys and/or other quantitative measurements toward the association, awareness, and loyalty of the nation brand. This may lead to information on how tourism imageries are not just communication tools, but also, powerful tools culturally, politically, and globally working to shape the nation brand and the public discourses. Understanding the different contexts of tourism social media of other nations, and comparing them to Indonesia, might also yield more insightful data, rich theoretical knowledge, and comparative information on the complexities of nation brands as seen through Indonesia.

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Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are openly available in: Monash University Library created by Ina Ratriyana and Desideria Murti. This dataset is taken from instagram account @wonderful.indonesia which is managed by Ministry of Tourism, Republic of Indonesia. The data covered 2years of Instagram posts during COVID-19. Please check on <https://doi.org/10.26180/20486919.v1>

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Sab 03/12/2022 08.50

Kepada: Desideria Cempaka Wijaya M., S.Sos, M.A. <desideria.murti@uajy.ac.id>

02-Dec-2022

Dear Dr Desideria Murti:

Your manuscript entitled "'Dream Now, Travel tomorrow": Communicating the nation branding of Indonesia through tourism-based social media" which you submitted to The Howard Journal of Communications, has been reviewed. The reviewer comments are included at the bottom of this letter.

I regret to inform you that the reviewers have raised serious concerns, and therefore your paper cannot be accepted for publication in The Howard Journal of Communications. However since the reviewers do find some merit in the paper, I would be willing to reconsider if you wish to undertake major revisions and re-submit, addressing the reviewers' concerns.

Please note that resubmitting your manuscript does not guarantee eventual acceptance, and that your resubmission will be subject to re-review before a decision is rendered.

You will be unable to make your revisions on the originally submitted version of your manuscript. Instead, revise your manuscript using a word processing program and save it on your computer.

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Because we are trying to facilitate timely publication of manuscripts submitted to The Howard Journal of Communications, your revised manuscript should be uploaded by 01-Apr-2023. If it is not possible for you to submit your revision by this date, we will consider your paper as a new submission.

I look forward to a resubmission.

Sincerely,
Dr Onwumechili
The Howard Journal of Communications
conwumechili@howard.edu

Comments from the Editors and Reviewers:

Reviewer: 1

Comments to the Author
Dear Author(s),

First, I would like to congratulate you for highlighting nation branding in the Indonesian context. The article needs some consideration. In this regard, you should:

The article strictly needs English language editing.
The abstract does not contain citations. Please remove.
The abstract needs thorough revisions. It lacks structure and needs to follow the APA style.
Citations are poorly added. The author needs to revise them
Have you cited any work regarding nation branding in the current era? There is much empirical evidence, yet some recent studies might have worked and defined it too.

"Indonesia is used as a national context in this research primarily be.." needs to be in a separate heading. You should add some details about social media in Malaysia and national branding for a clear understanding.

The authors have numbers from pandemic lockdown to nation branding, Indonesia, and article structure. There is an inconsistency, and all these paragraphs must be consistent accordingly. As nation branding, in the Indonesian context, is discussed in " The historical aspects of nation branding in the tourism of Indonesia," omit these details from the introduction and adjust them here under this heading.

You need to add limitations and recommendations.

Regards

Reviewer: 2

Comments to the Author

Dear author,

I would like to thank you for this interesting paper and topic. But I would like to mention some points,

1- in the literature I think you missed some studies and models about brand image and brand personality such as Aaker module.

2- Need some justification why you chose instagram instead of other Social media platforms .

3- Need to justify your research methods to the readers.

4- Why you dont use questionnaire to generalise the study ? (I am not asking to do so, but just mention that in the recommendation)

good luck

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Journal: *Howard Journal of Communications* UHJC

Article ID: UHJC 2169086

Dear Desideria Murti,

We are delighted that you have chosen to publish your article in *Howard Journal of Communications*. I will be your Production Editor and will work with you to oversee the production of your article through to publication. My contact details are given at the end of this email.

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Dear Desideria Cempaka Wijaya Murti,

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Dear Desideria Murti,

Thank you for your email and my apologies for the delayed response. We will update the reference corrections as per your suggestion and proceed further.

Regards,

Arun

Howard Journal of Communications

From:desideria.murti@uajy.ac.id

Sent:19-01-2023 07:30

To:noreply.tandf.smartproof@kwgglobal.com,arunkumar.r@kwgglobal.com

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Subject:Re: Bls: UHJC_2169086-Author query

Dear Arun,

Here is our response:

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2. Koh, 2011: please delete

3. Hosany et al., 2006: please change it to Ekinici & Hosany, 2006

Reference: already written

4. Aronczyk, 2013: please use the detail below

Reference: Aronczyk, M. (2013). Branding the nation: The global business of national identity. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

5. Aaker, 2009: please use this version and delete Aaker (1992) from the reference.

Reference: Aaker, D. A. (2009). Managing Brand Equity. London: Simon and Schuster.

6. Harris 2013: please use the reference below

Reference: Harris, B. (2013). Diplomacy 2.0: The Future of Social Media in Nation Branding. Exchange: The Journal of Public Diplomacy, 4(1), 17-16.

7. BPS, 2010: it is written in the reference as Statistik, B. P. (2010). Mengulik Data Suku di Indonesia. <https://www.bps.go.id/news/2015/11/18/127/mengulik-data-suku-di-indonesia.html>

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Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS) (2010). Mengulik Data Suku di Indonesia.

<https://www.bps.go.id/news/2015/11/18/127/mengulik-data-suku-di-indonesia.html>

8. Erwida, 2011: please delete

Thank you for your email.

Regards

Desideria CW Murti, S.Sos., MA, Ph.D

Lecturer in the Department of Communication Sciences
Universitas of Atma Jaya Yogyakarta
Jalan Babarsari 44 Yogyakarta 55281 Indonesia
Mobile. +6282134415750

International Publications:

Murti, D. C., & Nur Ratriyana, I. (2022). The Playground of Big Tobacco? Discourse Network Analysis of the Cigarette Advertising Debate and Policy in Indonesia. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 01968599211072438.

Murti, D. C. W., & Ratriyana, I. N. (2021). Parade of diversity: Representations of places and identities of Indonesia through tourism brochures. *International Journal of media & cultural politics*, 17(2), 139-159. (New) https://doi.org/10.1386/macp_00045_1

Murti, D.C.W. (2021). Home and Away: Australian Traveller's consumption of everyday village life in Indonesia. *Tourism Culture and Communication*, 21, 180-202. USA: Ingenta Connect. (New) <https://doi.org/10.3727/194341421X16213644579337>

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Murti, DCW. (2019). [Single, Seventies, and Stuck": A Discourse Analysis of the "Leftover Women" or Sheng Nu in China in the Blogosphere](#). *Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication*, 35(1) 2019: 41-56 <https://doi.org/10.17576/JKMJC-2019-3501-04>. E-ISSN: 2289-1528

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Murti, DCW. (2013). [Keyboard action end up political party: Understanding the intertwining relations of social media activism, citizenship, and the dynamics of democracy in Indonesia](#). *Online Journal of Communication and Media Technologies*, 3, 2, 32. ISSN: [1986-3497](https://doi.org/10.17576/JKMJC-2019-3501-04)

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We would be grateful if you could reply by tomorrow.

Please reply to all recipients of this message.

Thank you very much for your help.

Kind regards,

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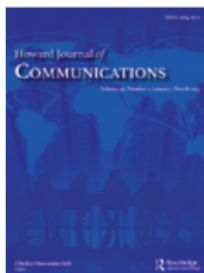
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Desideria Cempaka Wijaya Murti, Ina Nur Ratriyana & Immanuel Dwi Asmoro

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Desideria Cempaka Wijaya Murti^a, Ina Nur Ratriyana^{ab}  and Immanuel Dwi Asmoro^a

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the use of tourism-based social media to communicate the idea of nation branding. By using Indonesia as a case study, this research aims to provide research contexts of demographic, historical, and contemporary challenges of social media and nation branding. The research project aims to answer three important objectives. Those are to investigate the pattern of tourism-based social media, the narratives behind the pattern, and the implications to the concept of nation brand of Indonesia. This study adopts a typology of photographic representations by using photos, videos, captions, and hashtags from tourism-based social media. The findings demonstrate the complexity and nuances of Indonesia's nation branding from the narrative of a dreamy place through visual imageries and written texts, the discursive portrayals of people, place, and politics, and the trajectories of the past. This study implies that Indonesia's brand is portrayed using tranquil and rural imageries, the exoticism of local identity, the symbols of authority in tourism, and the historical nuances of the nation. This concludes that the nation branding discourse and practices of Indonesia become a part of the dynamic struggle and negotiation of nation identity, culture, and governance, which define and redefine the collective and individual meanings of the country.

KEYWORDS

Communication;
Indonesia; nation
branding; social media;
tourism

Introduction

During the period of lockdown, whereby mobility and travel are limited, social media are still increasingly used to promote countries, destinations, islands, and people (Pachucki et al., 2022). Tourism-based social media has been utilized to emphasize and retain the memories of prospective visitors to help the imagining of going on vacation to specific destinations or countries in the foreseeable future (Kwok & Muñiz, 2021). Social media are increasingly being used too as a tool to inform new travel policies, adaptation (Flew & Kirkwood, 2021), crisis procedures (Yudarwati et al., 2022), and interactivity (Ratriyana, 2021), with audiences from across the globe, to keep them dreaming about a country to visit once the COVID-19 pandemic has diminished.

In the pandemic situation, social media is used as a center stage to position the nation branding. On a global level, the government manages social media for purposes of

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diplomacy, tourism promotion, and the dissemination of information, which places nation branding as an important strategy (Eshuis & Klijn, 2012). The theoretical lenses of nation branding work to reinforce the importance of communicating the soft power programs and diplomacy efforts during the pandemic by utilizing the opportunity of this 'new normal' through the medium of technology (Lee, 2021). Nation branding is one of the ways of focusing public attention on a nation which may emphasize its strength factors such as investment, tourism, or even for purposes of geopolitics. Morgan and Pritchard (2000) for example, argue that to bring visitors to a nation, the government must be able to convey a message which can win hearts and minds through specific brand positioning aimed at new visitors. In tourism, nation branding becomes a strong tool because it helps to integrate a set of marketing activities and communication tools through symbols, names, logos, images, and words, which can differentiate one nation from another (Ritchie & Ritchie, 1998; Blain et al., 2005). To help build and maintain nation branding, governments draw upon social media as a way to inform, shape, and invite people to visit a place (Koh & Liew, 2022). Although tourism and nation branding can be embedded in the brand concepts (Ekinci & Hosany, 2006; Park & Petrick, 2006) by using a similar approach, such as consumer goods and services (Olins, 2002; Kotler & Gertner, 2002; Anholt, 2002; Papadopoulos & Heslop, 2002), nevertheless, skepticism still exists to criticize the complexity and multi-attributed objects of places and people (Pike, 2005).

Furthermore, the concept and applications of nation branding have been contested among academia in the study of place, media, and representation. Critics debate the very real possibilities of control from national authorities in regions using various methods in the name of nation branding—activities such as using messages, managing public image, propaganda, and enforcing national policy (Kaneva, 2011; Gudjonsson, 2005; Anholt, 2006). Nation branding is also defined as collections of discursive messages aimed at building nationhood for both domestic and/or international audiences through marketing and branding paradigms controlled by specific ideological or pragmatic means (Kaneva, 2011). Finally, politics and cultural notions on the country of origin have influential, discernible impacts on the stereotype and brand of a nation (Kotler & Gertner, 2002). In relation to this 'country-of-origin' image (Kotler & Gertner, 2002), it is important to question how political and cultural factors are not only controlled but also synchronized with the perception of nation brands across different places and people.

This article is structured in several parts. First, the literature review identifies the extension of scholarly discussion on nation branding, and how scholars who study Indonesia engage in this discussion. From here, gaps in the literature and research projects related to nation branding at large, and of Indonesia inclusively, are visible for the current research project to fulfill. Next, the analytical methods of the research are discussed, along with the ways data sets are collected and examined. The findings section presents the typology of representations among different social media posts to establish the multiple interpretations of nation brand and identity. As a result, it demonstrates the implication of these interpretations on the nation's control over brand and identity.

The study of nation branding and tourism social media

Addressing the complexities of a nation, the study of nation branding has developed a wide variety of models and case studies to be implemented. Recent research projects

discuss the influence of social media in shaping the public discourse and raising public awareness of socio-political agendas, especially in nation branding contexts by looking at their interactions with followers and the narrative generated from them in China (Li & Feng, 2022). The project emphasized the need of imbuing authenticity with engagement, featuring valued-based content, interactivity, creativity, and intrinsic motivations within an ethical communication mechanism especially when it comes to sports (Li & Feng, 2022). Another project aims to investigate how cultural heritage information leverage country branding and contributes to developing a competitive identity (Nobre & Sousa, 2022). The study explores the roles performed by public entities to attract visitors to heritage sites and encourage the engagement of the different 'actors' in cultural heritage experiences in Portugal while developing its brand identity. Some other researchers also explore the role of tourism within the context of cultural heritage in the construction of nation branding (Kavoura, 2012; Labadi, 2007; Newland & Taylor, 2010; Ryan & Silvanto, 2009; Murti, 2019). These projects not only answer the significance of 'why study nation branding?' but also 'what is achieved by using nation branding as a concept?' (Gudjonsson, 2005). This concept explores how people learn to associate, expect, feel, and remember a nation by using images and written texts from tourism and heritage (Anholt, 2007). Another research project emphasizes the need for shared national symbols, traditions, and cultural artifacts to co-create meaning around their nation brand (Miño & Austin, 2022). At many levels of analysis, nation branding campaigns can be used as a way to show how government can act as the *facilitators of dialogue* among different publics within a country to find points of convergence and divergence around what constitutes the identity of their nation (Miño & Austin, 2022). This perspective of the study is crucial since many critics have identified the one-way approach in which the governments started hiring the services of a group of branding and marketing experts as Aronczyk (2013) called the elites of "transnational-promotional class" to aid them in the creation and execution of nation branding campaigns. Meanwhile, many more studies asked for a more facilitative, reflective, and co-creating process in developing nation branding through social media's participatory culture. This approach can put citizen participation as the core of the initiative and make the nation branding can be more effective and inclusive (Pamment & Cassinger, 2018). This will allow people to reflect and think about their national belonging, identity, and about who and what they are as a country.

To examine the concept of nation branding, it is pivotal to investigate from elements of identities, purpose, and equity of a nation. These elements lead to further discussion of the media and local people's perspectives, as the main sources of information in this current research. Firstly, to answer the media issue comprehensively, Anholt (2007) suggests that a nation should express its identity through logos, slogans, landmarks, and national monumental symbols distinctively (Anholt, 2007; Holt, 2004; Sumaco & Richardson, 2011). Secondly, among these cultural heritage spaces, the local people are the ones who must decide which culture they would like to perform as the best representation of the shared uniqueness of their nations (Newland & Taylor, 2010; Waterton & Watson, 2010). In fact, local people are a significant resource to understand the shared values of nations' identities and purpose(s). Nation brand equity is a powerful positioning of a brand and the asset value of a nation's reputation (Anholt, 2007; Holt, 2004). Aaker (2009) establishes strong discussions in brand equity which

could be seen and applied in the nation branding contexts which consists of the brand awareness of the nation, the perceived quality of the nation, the association of the nation brand, and finally the loyalty toward the brand. These tools also help to see in which area, social media tourism can play its role in building and shaping brand equity and investigating the risk and/or weakness of the current nation's brand position and communication. Thus, by investigating those elements, the aim of this project is mainly to establish some key communication concepts of nation branding through social media as a tool for promoting tourism that shapes the identity of Indonesia.

Specifically, in the study of communication, nation branding can be seen through multiple perspectives. For example, nation branding is a set of campaign activities and public communications to present ideas about state and nation (Marat, 2009). Nation branding can also be investigated through the visual regime applied by the state to establish their authoritarian purpose, or, presence, through symbolic manifestations in public spaces, especially tourism destinations (Graan, 2016). The regimentation of nation branding through public memorials and monuments encompasses meaningful information inherent to nation-branding projects of successive governments which may be implicated within national history, public space, and means of governance, through meta-semiotic ways (Graan, 2016). Thus, Kaneva (2011) argues that it is important for communications scholars to look at nation branding through a critical and cultural studies perspective by investigating the historical nuances of authority and nationhood which may be central to the studies of nation and commodification, public spheres, spaces, and places.

Further, there are three areas of identification in the domain studies for communicating nation branding. Firstly, based on Kaneva's study (2011), the domain of technical-economic considerations concerns capital accumulation and economic growth (i.e., marketing, management, and tourism). Also, there is a political domain that primarily looks at the national images of nation-states via diplomatic and geopolitical aspects (i.e., international relations, public relations, or international communication). Finally, there is the cultural approach which includes the study of media and cultural identities. Scholars with this focus tend to elaborate on critiques of nation branding discourse and practices as a part of the dynamic struggle and negotiation of nation identity, culture, and governance, which define and redefine the collective and individual meanings of nation brands themselves.

Social media have also become a medium of choice through which national identity and culture are spread and informed. For example, a study conducted by Moya and Jain (2014, p. 410), investigates how countries use various approaches to gain an advantage over competitors in the aspect of the trade, tourism, and foreign investment. Thus, countries need to manage their image and reputation through media. Not only through mass media, but also by the use of social media to gain a good image and reputation. Social media can also be used as a form of public diplomacy to utilize public opinion to create a brand (Harris, 2013). It is also important that correct information and the right image are portrayed through social media (Harris, 2013). Another study, conducted by Algan and Kaptan (2021), investigates how Turkey's Government uses national celebrities who have gained worldwide popularity as a means to strengthen their nation's brand. A study by Abbasi and Khan (2022) also shows how Pakistan utilizes social media to brand the nation through religious tourism and social media.

Embarking on these previous studies, the current study attempts to examine how the Indonesian government utilizes social media to promote its tourism landscape for nation branding in the time of COVID-19.

Study setting: historical trajectories of Indonesia's nation brand

Indonesia is used as a nation context in this research primarily because of its abundant demographics aspect which will be beneficial for the purpose of studying the tensions of the synchronization of the nation brand. In fact, there are more than 1,331 tribes and 320 ethnic groups spread across 375 regencies/municipalities (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2010). These demographic differences have been the challenge of controlling the nation's brand in representing the complexity of identity in the nation. Henceforth, Indonesia as a brand is constantly challenged by the diversity of the population, not to mention the tensions of sharing the collective meaning as it continues to be re-negotiated and addressed in the future. Taking its cue from major academic works identifying the most distributed slogans, taglines, brands, and campaigns, this step demonstrates how Indonesia, as a post-colonial nation, developed its branding—from naming through to brand publications—derived from a legacy of the past (Table 1).

Throughout the historical trajectory, the most important milestone was during the New Order era in which nation-building is programmed widely. During the New Order era, President Soeharto applied more pressure on Bali, emphasizing its role as one of Indonesia's main tourism destinations. *Sapta Pesona*, or, principles in tourism (security, orderliness, cleanliness, comfort, beauty, hospitality, and thoughtfulness) were widely distributed. Bali still appeared—or were exploited as—the dominant icon of mass tourism for the nation. This situation not only helped in the emergence of antagonism in 'national culture', but to regional culture as a Javanese-centric and central government strategy to dominate other cultural practices like Bali (Picard, 1990). After many more nation brands along the history, the tagline of 'Wonderful Indonesia' then was re-launched as a nation brand of 'Wonderful Indonesia' in 2014 until current, during President Joko Widodo's early administration era. This branding then called upon the image of the *Garuda* once more, but in silhouette, with five feathers in color (green, purple, orange, blue, and magenta). The brand values then are set to pushing the legacy of Soeharto era *Sapta Pesona*, or, the Seven Wonders,

Table 1. Historical data of nation branding in Indonesia.

Year	Era	Government	Brand for the nation
1700–1943	Dutch Colonial era	Vereeniging Toeristenveerker	Java the Wonderland
1942–1945	Japan Colonial era	Asia Raja	3A (Japan the Light of Asia, Japan the Protector of Asia, and Japan is the Leader of Asia)
1946–1967	Independence struggle and Old Order	President Soekarno	Jawa Baroe, Indonesia Raja, Indonesia Merdeka!
1968–1998	New Order (President Soeharto)	President Soeharto	Sapta Pesona or Seven Charms
1999–2003	Reformation Era	President Abdurrahman Wahid and President Megawati	Visit Indonesia
2004–2020	Post Reformation Era	President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and President Joko Widodo	Indonesia Ultimate in Diversity, Wonderful Indonesia (Sapta Pesona or Seven Wonders)

(Source: Table by Author, 2020).

with slightly different principles: *aman, tertib, bersih, sejuk, indah, ramah tamah dan kenangan*, or security, order, clean, cool, beauty, friendly, and memory. These brand values were distributed, communicated, and infused into many tourism destinations from cities to villages through training and competitions (Murti, 2019b), and by using the community-organized body of *Pokdarwis* or *Kelompok Sadar Wisata (Tourism Awareness Group)* (Murti, 2019a).

Method

The current research project would like to address three research questions. These questions are utilized to explore the nuances and complexity of social media in tourism with nation branding. The questions are:

RQ1: How is the pattern of tourism-based social media communicate the nation brand of Indonesia?

RQ2: What are the narratives behind the pattern which are offered to the prospective tourists

RQ3: How do the pattern and the narratives implicate the concept of nation brand of Indonesia?

The current research project uses three ways of looking at the communication of Indonesia nation branding through tourism-based social media. Firstly, the research utilizes content analysis to map the nation brand narratives in social media quantitatively. The study divides the content analysis into two parts which consist of imageries (photos and videos) and textual (caption and hashtag) findings. This step is useful because it provides insight into the predominant images and texts which are displayed in social media. Secondly, by looking at some samples of the quantitative data, the study then analyzes the pattern of images and text appearances. This is helpful to explore the cluster of data and visualization of discursive images and texts. The main purpose is to look at how the images and texts are specifically portrayed and how they can narrate the brand of the nation. Thirdly, the researchers reflect on the historical trajectories of Indonesia's nation branding. From here, the researchers then draw the lines of similarities and differences which may or may not be applied by the nation historically with the recent practice of social media. Some previous research projects which also study nation branding suggest looking at the past trajectories in order to reflect the current nuances as a way to make sense of the context (Brown, 2003; Foulcher, 1990). This method is important to track down the trajectories of practices that are correlated, similar, and perhaps inspired by past practices in a nation case (Graan, 2016; Kavoura, 2012).

Content analysis to map the nation brand narratives in social media

Adopting Hunter's photographic investigation (2008), this study investigates the pattern of thematic analysis. The current research project attempts to explore the ways to communicate nation branding from the 'inside' of the nation, for the 'external' or 'international' audience. The category of nation branding is used in a way to form a model to understand a nation's significant dynamics and communication channels

(Gudjonsson, 2005). As such, there are four main categories under constant consideration throughout this study: i) the people and their culture; ii) politics, structure, government, and policies; iii) the economy, industries, companies, and brands; iv) geography. These four categories of nation branding were adopted from Gudjonsson's work (2005) and have created multiple representations of the nations.

As a way to collect data, over a 6-week period, three undergraduate students assisted the researchers to collect visual data from an Instagram account. They were communications students who had already taken social media and quantitative classes. They were trained in understanding the concept of visual and textual databases in a social media context, then taught to code them into sets of databases in Excel. They tested on over 38 visual and textual data to make sure of their intercoder reliability. The researchers used Cohen's Kappa to check the results of the interrater analysis which showed their reliabilities as convincing, with a 'good' agreement (Kappa = 0,710 with $p < 0.001$) (Landis & Koch, 1977; O'Connor & Joffe, 2020).

The current research project chooses Instagram as the social media data because of two reasons: government utilization of media and interactivity. Firstly, the government of Indonesia uses Instagram as its main channel for photos, videos, and texts for promotional purposes. The government uses Twitter as textual information and the Website as a comprehensive information site. This study uses Instagram because it provides opportunities for both images and texts which can be seen as an integral aspect of promoting the nation. The current research project chose an Instagram account @wonderfulIndonesia which is officially managed by Indonesia's Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy. "Wonderful Indonesia" is a national campaign launched by the ministry to promote Indonesia's tourism commencing in 2011. Previously, the ministry used the term "Visit Indonesia". Upon completion of the research, their total followers were at 744 thousand users with 3,386 posts. The focus of this research project was on Instagram posts dated from February 2020 until February 2022 (25 months). The time span was chosen based on the starting period of COVID-19 in 2020, to two years after, when the tourism condition was in a better state. There are a total of 756 photos and videos about Indonesia's tourism and 80,3% of them consist of visual images rather than videos. This shows that users' preferences for images are still very strong on Instagram when compared to TikTok or YouTube. Secondly, the project chooses to use Instagram due to the interactivity of the media. There is a total of 4 million likes and 64 thousand comments which shows the level of interactivity on Instagram as being quite significant. However, the amount of content, along with interactivity, was lower by comparison when the pandemic occurred in early 2020. Indonesia had been affected by COVID-19 in February of that year, which saw economic activity slow drastically. Thus, from February until November 2020 (10 months), total Instagram posts were only 15% of total posts in 2 years, while interactivity was at an all-time low (under 20% of the total number).

Portrayals of thematic data

To make the quantitative data useful, some samples of the data can be utilized for the purpose of the interpretation step. This step is helpful to know how the numbers in quantitative data come into being, how it is delivered, and what kind of nuances that the images or words offered to the study of nation branding. The researchers looked

deeper into the portrayals of each image (photos and videos) or written text (caption and hashtag). By codifying similarities between the patterns, the researchers were able to locate the thematic concepts prevalent across varying data. The researchers then looked at previous research projects which are similar or different with the interpretation to ensure the narrative of the nation brand is consistent and/or different.

Findings

The findings demonstrate the complexity and nuances of Indonesia's nation branding through tourism social media from three aspects. The complex data can be found through the imageries and written texts, the discursive portrayals of people, place, and politics, and finally the trajectories of the legacy from the past.

Communicating the nation branding in tourism through imageries

Based on the content aspect, this research project divides them into four topic areas: economics, politics, people, and geography. The dominant social media posts are related to the topic of geography (63,5%) and people (54,8%). While the topic of politics and economics wasn't popular. In addition, content about tourism during COVID-19 was only 14 posts during February–June 2020 (Table 2).

The Instagram account showed the lowest interest in posting about the economy (11.2%) and politics (3.1%). On the economic aspect, there was some content about the industry which covered farming ($n=32$) and industrial location ($n=2$). Meanwhile, on aspects related to resources, user content showed a focus on aspects of hospitality (such as restaurants, hotels, museums) ($n=48$), events ($n=2$), and transportation ($n=1$).

Meanwhile, on the political aspect, the Instagram of Wonderful Indonesia only posted content related to officials' pictures ($n=4$), political events ($n=1$), and general information ($n=4$). The other aspect of politics revolved around COVID policies. Interestingly, the information about COVID-19 was covered but in a very small number ($n=14$). This number indicates that the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy's Instagram account tried to focus not on issues of the pandemic, but rather, more into the aspect of tourism.

The 'people aspect' is a significant feature of Indonesian tourism, with culture at the forefront of its understanding. The theme of cultural tradition is usually shown by way of buildings (architecture) ($n=48$) and clothing ($n=19$). However, the cultural event is also an interesting story including experiences of village life ($n=13$) and cultural events ($n=25$). Besides nature, the 'people aspect' has also become a viable tourist interest because Indonesia is widely known for its culture. Heritage buildings and villages are two vital aspects of Indonesia's tourism. It has become integral to the notion of identity as shown in—and through—the audience.

Table 2. Content of social media based on four topics.

Economy		Politics		People			Nature		Total
Industry	Resources	Political structure	COVID policies	History/heritage building	Traditional clothes	Cultural event	Sea/water	Land	
34	51	9	14	48	19	38	395	148	756
4.5%	6.7%	1.2%	1.9%	6.3%	2.5%	5%	52.2%	19.5%	100.0%

(Source: Table by Authors, 2021).

Table 3. Nature theme in @wonderfulIndonesia.

Nature								
Water tourism	Water based			Land based				Total
	Sea	Islands	Beaches	Desert	Park	Cave	Mountain/forest	
62	52	135	146	7	16	32	93	543
11.4%	9.5%	24.8%	26.8%	1.2%	2.9%	5.8%	17.1%	100.0%

(Source: Table by Authors, 2021).

Lastly, the most popular, preferred content on social media is Indonesia's nature itself. It grabbed a total of 71.7%. Water-based tourism is the most prominent ($n=395$), with beaches ($n=146$) and islands ($n=135$) proving to be the most common topic. Whilst land-based tourism came in second ($n=148$), with its content about mountains/forests as the most exclusive theme ($n=93$) (Table 3).

People and nature are the two most dominant imageries which the government tries to show through social media. It encapsulates the ways in which Indonesia's nation branding is mostly represented by the portrayals of nature or places (especially beaches and islands) and the cultural activities of the people (such as activities in the heritage buildings). These aspects strengthen the identity of Indonesia as a tropical and archipelagic nation. These imageries also strengthen the cultural identity of the nation.

Communicating nation branding in tourism through written texts

In the written text data, the researchers use captions and hashtags to explore the written expression of Indonesia's nation brand from tourism social media. To understand the main idea in a caption, we divided the paragraphs/sentences, based on the word choices, into verb, adjective, and parabolic terms.

The imaginary adjectives

Adjectives are words that add a strong descriptive aspect to language and give the audience more information about an object. It could be based on color, size, shape, condition, etc. Many adjectives were used in the captions, however, some adjectives were used more frequently than others. For example, 'stunning' ($=105$), 'amazing' ($n=74$), 'perfect' ($n=65$), and 'beautiful' ($n=56$) were used in many of the captions used to describe posts about the 'nature' of Indonesia (Table 4).

In addition, some parabolic terms are also used to strengthen the idea of the beauty of a place. There were several parabolic terms that were frequently used, such as 'hidden gem,' the 'island of God,' 'magnificent mountain,' and 'feast your eyes.' Parabolic captions such as 'feast your eyes,' 'heavenly scenery,' 'pristine blue waters,' and 'vast milky sands' are commonly used to explore the emotional and/or affective aspects of the texts. Some additional adjectives also in use, such as 'mesmerizing views,' 'stunning scenic views,' 'amazing pictures,' and 'excellent sports' make use of similar linguistic devices.

Hashtag as a collective term for nation branding and COVID-19 progress

Further to aspects of branding as outlined thus far, there were a variety of hashtags that have been used across posts sourced for this study. The hashtag is used to put more sentiment and position into a post via social media. It will make your post easier to find, as well as link it to other posts which share the same hashtag, or, topic (Table 5).

Table 4. Adjectives used in captions sampled.

Adjective verb	Number	Adjective Verb	Number
Incredible	28	Pristine	40
Unique	25	Hidden	15
Magnificent	29	Mesmerizing	16
Exotic	27	Natural	28
Magical	38	Stunning	105
Gorgeous	36	Exciting	20
Lush	45	Astonishing	17
Spectacular	39	Wonderful	19
Perfect	65	Enchanting	25
Beautiful	56	Tropical	27
Amazing	74	Majestic	26
Total = 2,639			

(Source: Table by Authors, 2021).

Table 5. Hashtag usage in @wonderfulIndonesia.

Hashtag	Numbers
#WonderfulIndonesia	553
#IndonesiaBucketList	335
#FromIndonesiawithLove	303
#TravelTomorrow	71
#ThoughtfulIndonesia	64
#Indonesia	61
#ItstimeforBali	60
#Bali	46
#DreamNow	41
#StayatHome	32
#WonderfulThingsAwait	26
#Travel	23
#Tripofwonders	12
Total	2,187

(Source: Table by Author, 2021).

Table 6 above shows that the hashtag #WonderfulIndonesia had the highest use (n = 553), followed by #IndonesiaBucketList (n = 335) and #FromIndonesiawithLove (n = 303). The hashtag #WonderfulIndonesia is the primary hashtag found in every post. However, other hashtags, such as those that follow, have perceivably different usage/s due to how and where they are situated and positioned during COVID-19. #TravelTomorrow (n = 71), #ThoughtfulIndonesia (n = 64), #DreamNow (n = 41) and #StayatHome (n = 32) are special hashtags which were created during COVID-19. It is a way to share the story and encourage the audience to keep calm and stay at home whilst still checking for their next destination: When the condition is better, they seem to read, you can go to the destination which is already on your bucket list.

Up until September 2021, the main hashtag used was #WonderfulThingsAwait (n = 26) because the tourism situation was beginning to open wider than previously before. Restrictions were being lifted, and international flights were becoming active once more, therefore, this hashtag was used to ask tourists to come to Indonesia. By the end of the year, the Ministry positioned tourism in Bali as the major tourism destination in Indonesia. Thus, the hashtags #ItstimeforBali (n = 60) and #Bali (n = 46) are up, even now, until 2022. In addition, some destinations are starting to be promoted once more, such as #EastNusaTenggara (n = 10), #Lombok (n = 12), #WestNusaTenggara (n = 11).

Indeed, objective and parabolic terms are commonly used in social media captions. However, since @wonderfulIndonesia tries to set up tourism campaigns through social

Table 6. Table related to the hashtag of the region in Indonesia.

No.	Hashtag of region	n
1	#Bali	46
2	#BaliHandaraGate	1
3	#Bandung	1
4	#BangkaBelitung	1
5	#Bangli	2
6	#Banjar	1
7	#BanyanTreeBintan	1
8	#BanyumalaTwinWaterfalls	1
9	#Banyuwangi	1
10	#Batam	2
11	#BelitungIsland	1
12	#Berau	1
13	#Bintan	4
14	#Borobudur	2

(Source: Table by Author, 2022).

media, captions should present the ideas about state and nation too (Marat, 2009), rather than only using sugar-coated words. Further studies around critical and cultural identity are needed to create different, yet meaningful captions for use across all official Instagram accounts.

Portrayals of place, people, and politics

The second step of this study is looking at the thematic pattern. Through this, the study also finds three discursive aspects. The study discovers that place, people, and politics are the main material of nation brand of Indonesia in social media. The description below will show how specifically the portrayals of place, people, and politics are displayed both as images and as texts. The questions in the next step are not only about what the most dominant images are but also about how these images portrayed the dominant narratives of the nation.

Place: tranquil agricultural and rural nation

The place aspect which is portrayed in this study shows two of the most dominant categories: the tranquility of the agricultural landscape and other rural tropes. These two aspects draw upon commonalities in representation in regards to tranquility, in which the trope of the images appears with no human in sight, only one person, or the small set of tourists for whom the image is directed.

The agricultural aspects are commonly shown as rice fields, terraces, and plantations, meanwhile, the rural shown as wooded areas dotted with resorts or swimming pools located in tranquil, isolated rural areas. Consistently the rurality and tranquility are represented by the isolation of places, accentuated by the exclusion of the human image, 1–2 tourists, or only an animal. The place is almost always taken from a bird's eye perspective (using professional drones), or at the tourists' gaze, which strengthens the imageries from #DreamNow and brings the audience to an imaginary, idyllic place of Indonesia. The absence of humans and animals in the most part creates the illusion of creating a contrast with the type of urban audience's everyday life which is full of people with high and fast-paced mobility (Zhou, 2014; Murti & Ratriyana, 2021). The

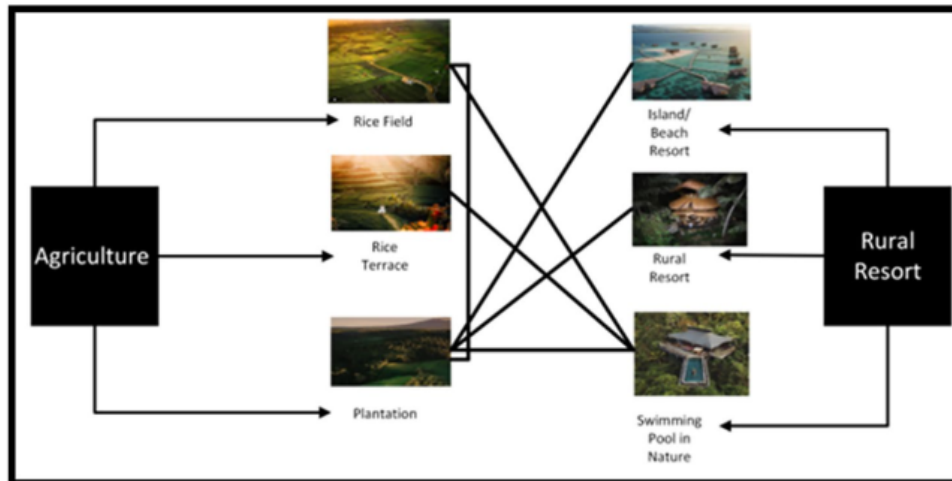


Figure 1. Connectivity between agricultural images and rural resort.

(Source: Author's work collecting images from @WonderfulIndonesia)

objectives are to provide space for the audience to perceive a peaceful state of mind and a tranquil ambiance which is free of worries (Cohen, 2004; Murti, 2020) (Figure 1).

The figure above shows that there are eight nature features found to be most prevalent across social media. Those are water tourism, sea, islands, beaches, desert, park, caves, and mountains (with forests). However, all these nature features compose similar ways of portraying the nation: tranquility, calm, isolation, rural, and nature—those recurring main themes indelibly linked to notions of 'Indonesia.'

People: the exoticism of local identity

The exoticism of local identity is portrayed through three distinctly recognizable categories: local people in close proximity to the heritage/historical building, wearing traditional clothes, and conducting cultural events. The photos which were portrayed here emphasize the traditional face of Indonesia. They described Indonesia as a nation that has strong traditional cultural ties to identity. People were portrayed in the circle of traditional activities despite the fact that Indonesia also has a modern culture. Some images show people standing/walking among heritage building sites, such as walking in a temple. Some show people who live in traditional houses wearing traditional clothes. Whilst others still show people engaged in cultural events, such as praying on a Nyepi day in Bali, a Hindu holiday where women bring offerings on their heads, donned in traditional clothes. Images featured show Indonesian people with no casual dress, no make-up, and no luxury environment, living in rural areas. On the one hand, it represents a dreamy world, where people can envisage the imagined world of 'Indonesia.' On the other, it is not a complete representation of *Indonesia*—the reality—with people who live in these traditional circles, making up a small part of the nation. Indonesia has other communities that live an urban lifestyle, with modern jobs, modern clothes, transportations, and the like. But seldom are they ever represented here (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Connectivity between heritage, cultural events, and traditional clothes.
(Source: Author's work from collecting images from @WonderfulIndonesia)

From the data above, it shows that Indonesia tries to offer a cultural aspect to international tourists. It also shapes Indonesia with a stereotype as an exotic place, or, an 'exotic other.' These dreamy images offer to western people an aspect of a dreamy place positioned solely as a commodity that can be consumed. The dreamy images in one way show good aspects of Indonesia, but in another way, this positioning is unrealistic. Tourists imagine Indonesia as an exotic place with a tranquil ambiance and tradition. However, when they come to Indonesia, they see modernity, alongside messiness, and even poverty, which are not featured in narrations through social media.

Politics: spectacle(s) of political power

The spectacle of political power is portrayed via symbolic attributes of authority or ministry. Officials appear to show that tourism-based social media has become a tool for the executive body to promote its power. Tourism-based social media cannot be detached from political purposes used to promote themselves, with the activities of their authorities across these platforms. Tourism-based social media has become a political tool not only to promote tourism but those behind the tourism sectors, politically and institutionally, within government bodies (Figure 3).

This finding is consistent with previous research which identifies authorities in Indonesian tourism contexts as a salient discourse achieved through symbols, officials, and events through which they showcase their own policies and programs (Murti & Ratriyana, 2021); this includes the logos which appear in social media to show the aspect of nation, authority, and ownership of posts, events, even places. Tourism, in this case, cannot be separated from notions of nationhood, national pride, the nation branding of 'Wonderful Indonesia,' or even national policies toward tourism. This formal, symbolic, and regulatory approach shows there is a recognition from within the nation-state, political and domestic, that when we discuss 'nation brand' in the

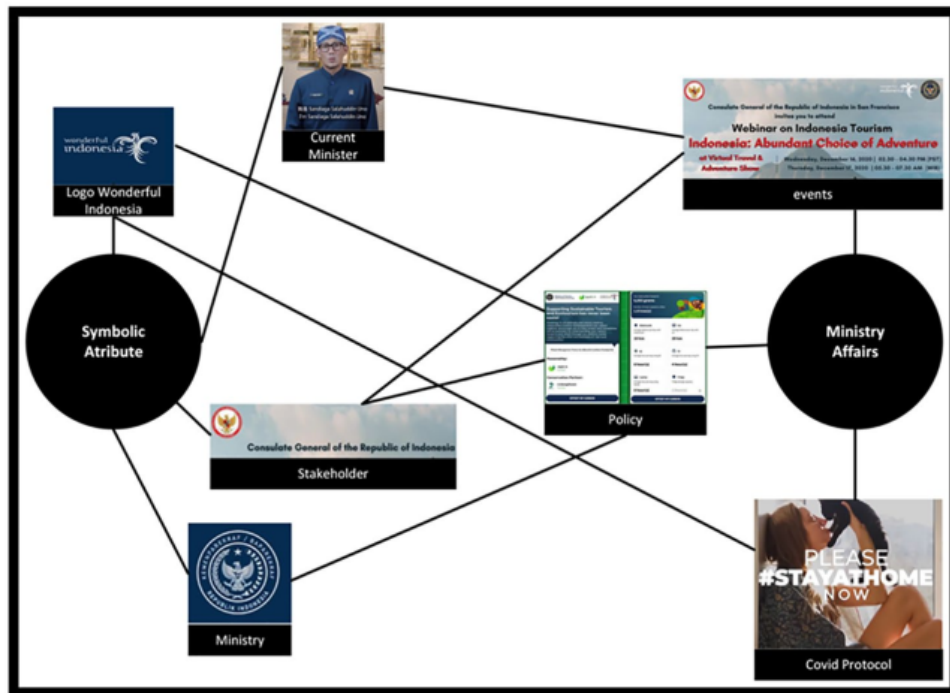


Figure 3. Connectivity between symbolic attributes in images and Ministry Affairs.
(Source: Author's work collecting images from @WonderfulIndonesia)

context of tourism, power and/or authority is present (Murti, 2019; Ratriyana et al., 2021). Identity and ownership of authority can also be seen frequently to promote tourism in social media. Hence, tourism-based social media shows the (inter-)connections between tourism and the symbolic manifestation of nation-state. In this sense, social media further becomes a tool in which the government can show their 'existences' (i.e., presences) and broadcast the symbolic identities of a nation (Anderson, 1991; Anholt, 2007; Holt, 2004; Sumaco & Richardson, 2011).

Historical trajectories

The nation brand of Indonesia, in relation to tourism identity, can be seen as traceable to its colonial past. There are many codes of symbolic identity such as tagline ($n=63$), slogan ($n=553$), brand ($n=118$), campaign, and patterns of images that demonstrate nation brand. It is in line with Anholt (2007), who suggests that a nation can express its identity/ies through some tools, for example, logos, slogans, landmarks, and monumental symbols (Anholt, 2007; Holt, 2004; Sumaco & Richardson, 2011). This research also finds that the New Order national project has been reused by the government as a nationwide project through a similar brand of wonderful Indonesia and that still features Bali as the dominant icon for tourism as expressed through 'nation.' For example, Balinese attributes are used in representations of landscape patterns, such as rice terraces, which exist in the Balinese landscape, along with the rural resort, which is mostly available for foreign tourist consumption, along with locals who live in close

proximity to its temples. Another example is the use of hashtags which make Bali become the dominant hashtag throughout the posts. This shows that current government initiatives still reuse, rehash, and draw upon the brand ideas going back to the Suharto era.

Discussions

This paper finds its basis in three main pivotal questions. Those are to investigate the pattern of tourism-based social media, the narratives behind the pattern, and the implications to the concept of nation brand of Indonesia.

RQ1: How is the pattern of tourism-based social media communicate the nation brand of Indonesia?

To answer the first research question, the communication of 'nation brand' and of social media geared toward tourism, is marked by two examinations of images and words (the hashtag). Through images, Indonesia's brand is portrayed using tranquil, agricultural, and rural imageries, spectacles of political power through symbols and official attributes, and the exoticism of local identity. Images such as rice fields, plantations of agriculture in rural areas, along with logos shaped by the face of the authority, local heritage, and the conducting of cultural events witnessed by political figures, highlight the implementation of complex patterns of national imagery marketed toward foreign tourists. Meanwhile, through words, Indonesia's nation brand, through tourism-based social media, is communicated through promotional words which use imaginary aspects of Indonesia. The adjective and hashtag as collective terms, or, tools, function to help viewers to 'dream' about the nation. Promotional verbs such as enjoy, visit, blessed, amazed, exotic, and enchanting, coupled with hashtags such as #dreamnow and #WonderfulIndonesia, are examples of word use called upon to encourage an imaginary state of mind. However, the creators of such slogans should also be aware that the objective of creating this dream destination impacts sometimes can be unrealistic or it can (mis-)represent the real situations of tourism destinations. As nation branding is about how a nation is portrayed and imagined through a range of different images and captions, nation brand could be shaped by internal, as well as external actors. Thus, in the world of social media-based tourism, the agent behind the 'Wonderful Indonesia' image tries to shape the imagining of Indonesia through the visual landscape, people, culture, and words for an audience abroad (Kavoura, 2012; Newland & Taylor, 2010; Ryan & Silvanto, 2009). Additionally, Kotler and Gertner (2002) add an argument that people may change their prior perceptions of a nation, then adjust what they expect by visiting the area, to confirm expectations through tourism. Tourism-based social media, therefore, facilitates expectation, as well as perceptions, through words and imagery (Kotler & Gertner, 2002; Anholt, 2007). This research project was able to open up the discourse of imageries used across social media by interrogating the pattern of imageries used in the representations of people and places.

As an implication, the social media tourism pattern shapes the public discourse and raise public awareness by strengthening the identity of landscape and culture. As a landscape, Indonesia is consistently projected as a nation of tropical paradise, agricultural beauty, and rural or isolated nature (Ryan & Silvanto, 2009; Murti, 2019). This finding has been consistently showing in the patterns through images and words

which help people to learn, associate, ⁵ expect, feel, and remember a nation (Anholt, 2007) and similar to other researchers' findings. However, the dominant images then are problematic because these do not offer the imbuing authenticity of Indonesia landscape (Li & Feng, 2022) in the postmodern world with cities and vibrant development. The pattern only accommodates the western elites of "transnational-promotional class" (Aronczyk, 2013) to project the creation and execution of nation branding campaigns but not yet offer the facilitators of dialogue among different publics within a country to find points of convergence and divergence around what constitutes the identity of their nation (Miño & Austin, 2022). The pattern in social media has not developed the facilitative, reflective, and co-creating process through social media's participatory culture. Therefore, the ways people reflect and think about Indonesia are still homogenous and tend to show a single story instead of diverse and inclusive. This then implicates the narrative behind the pattern.

RQ2: What are the narratives behind the pattern which are offered to the prospective tourists

The research project then answers the second inquiry in how these portrayals in social media create narratives which are offered to prospective tourists. The tranquility of the landscape facilitates an imagining of Indonesia as an agricultural, rural, and tranquil nation which helps build the dream about Indonesia through hashtags such as #dreamnow. The usage of words such as "pristine," "mesmerizing," "magical," and "enchanted," mostly function as a communicative device to encourage a (homogeneous) nation image. These then shape the expectations and feelings of the nation to be agricultural, rural, and tranquil. The question remains whether this image is circulated as a tourism commodity, a reality, or just images utilized to portray unrealistic, idyllic imaginations in the minds of the tourist-consumer. Further, this pattern may also lead to disappointment among tourists when they visit an Indonesia that cannot, and as yet, does not fit the image. Indeed, Morgan and Pritchard (2000) argue that to bring the visitor to a nation, the government must convey the message that it can win over the hearts and minds of the prospective visitor. However, realistic objects and messages should also be conveyed by understanding the negotiation of nation complexity and multiple identities of its places and people. These identities may not only be about tranquil and rural imageries, but also Indonesian urban settings, street vendors, modern buildings, and/or regular Indonesians, who live in a regular/modern type house (not traditional), which in our observation, appears absent in the social media environment of 'Wonderful Indonesia' (Murti, 2020; Murti & Ratriyana, 2021). The communication of nation branding through tourism-based social media shows only an exclusive, limited, portrayal focused solely on certain aspects of expectation, rather than the realistic diversity of Indonesia as a complex nation. Furthermore, the absence of local people, as situated in the modern city: the vibrant, educated, young, and not traditional, demonstrates an exclusion of these groups from the tourism aspect of nation identity. The main question is why this type of imagery is absent. Previous research projects (Murti, 2020; Murti & Ratriyana, 2021) which indicate similar findings in tourism brochures of 448 regions in Indonesia argue how Indonesian tourism still embraces the postcolonial paradigm of tourism by which only the exoticism of locals and rurality become interesting imageries for western tourists to come to the global south.

RQ3: How ¹ the pattern and the narratives implicate the concept of nation brand of Indonesia?

To answer the third question, this study also found that communication of an Indonesian nation brand has not yet moved on from historical trajectories. The complex and diverse nation identity should be accommodated in more tourism imageries, not only to promote said diversity but to provide an inclusive approach to understand Indonesia as a whole. The nuances of diversity and identity in Indonesia can be displayed through a series of imageries and words which address aspects of the diverse identity displayed throughout social media. This study will be a useful tool for policymakers to evaluate the diversity, and representation (that is, ⁵ the exclusion and inclusion of groups within tourism) portrayed in social media (Anholt, 2007; Holt, 2004; Sumaco & Richardson, 2011). Eventually, the logos, slogans, landmarks, and local people's portrayals, then shape the nations' identities. This built the nation brand equity which is powerful and consistent positioning both as assets value and risk. The risk will push Indonesia to preserve and perform the imagined pictures and words distributions to avoid the disappointment of tourists. Aaker (2009), through its brand equity model, shows how important it is to be consistent in building the brand. Since the brand awareness of the nation has been built through patterns of landscape and people, the tourists need to perceive this quality of images such as tranquil beaches, isolated rural, clean nature, and people around cultural heritage. Other than that, can be seen as inauthentic, staging, or even commoditization if it is only available for expensive and elite tourists. Furthermore, loyalty toward the brand can be at risk when the patterns are not consistently appeared in the reality.

Finally, the prominence of agriculture, tranquil, exotic local people with traditional place and attributes, becomes the parity of Indonesia's nation brand. Nevertheless, it is also a burden for Indonesia to show the consistency of the image, and across the onsite experience, in order to fulfill the expectations of tourists coming to Indonesia. If this fails, or these imageries can only and exclusively be obtained by elite tourists, there will be many disappointments or complaints by tourists who expected 'the dream.' These findings are also in line with Kavoura (2012), who explained that the tourist experience can open opportunities for creating or changing peoples' perceptions within the context of cultural heritage tourism. The risk of Indonesia's tourism social media is that it tries to portray the local culture, at the same time, too often it displays an unrealistic condition of Indonesia. Many studies have noted and noticed this unrealistic condition represented/re-presented far and wide across the social media landscape, especially through Instagram portrayals (Pesaresi & Abbasian, 2022; Scholl-Grissemann et al., 2019). Still, the nation branding discourse and practices of Indonesia become a part of the dynamic struggle and negotiation of nation identity, culture, and governance, which define and redefine the collective and individual meanings of nation brands themselves (Kaneva, 2011).

Conclusion

Communicating the nation branding should be attained as a set of campaign activities that include the diverse reality, representation, and inclusion, that draws from the

diverse ethnicities, landscapes, people, development, relationships, and current/contemporary conditions of a nation. As a recommendation from the result of this research, communicating nation branding should be a continuous and consistent message from online to offline and vice versa. The message should not static, and/or only follow what usually works, without evaluating the current developments within representations of the nation's emerging imageries, *per se*. With the current selective visual regime, in the Instagram of Wonderful Indonesia, social media space becomes a technical and economic tool to promote the nation. The nation brand of Indonesia, in this case, also has political dimensions as present in representations of Indonesia for other countries.

Coinciding with what Kaneva (2011) argues, that it is important for communications scholars to look at nation branding through critical and cultural studies perspectives. The cultural approach works to elaborate the complexity of nation brand, as a part of discursive identity and negotiation of a collective meaning of Indonesia that should be explored and expressed. As such, through the findings of this research project, government and communicative agencies can conduct more thorough research in selecting current Indonesia, that is, the representation of its complex components of people and place which should be portrayed in social media as both imaginings, or, idyllic, as well as realistic, and embracing more the idea of diversity and representation of various region of Indonesia.

Finally, this study recognizes its own limitations due to the limits of data sets. This study was conducted through a content analysis of social media, drawing on the imagery found to be most prominent in the official Instagram account of 'Wonderful Indonesia.' Therefore, future studies can work to discover more about communication approaches or logic at work from the people behind tourism-based social media and its imagery on the images they publish, what kinds of images they select, and what kind of symbols to use qualitatively. More work also needs to be done in understanding the perceived quality of nation branding from the audience's perspectives through surveys and/or other quantitative measurements toward the association, awareness, and loyalty of the nation brand. This may lead to information on how tourism imageries are not just communication tools, but also, powerful tools culturally, politically, and globally working to shape the nation brand and the public discourses. Understanding the different contexts of tourism social media of other nations, and comparing them to Indonesia, might also yield more insightful data, rich theoretical knowledge, and comparative information on the complexities of nation brands as seen through Indonesia.

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Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are openly available in: Monash University Library created by Ina Ratriyana and Desideria Murti. This dataset is taken from instagram account @wonderful.indonesia which is managed by Ministry of Tourism, Republic of Indonesia. The data covered 2 years of Instagram posts during COVID-19. Please check on <https://doi.org/10.26180/20486919.v1>

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