

# City Branding Implementation as an Effort of Increasing Tourism Performance

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## Abstract

For a region, City Branding is an image pertained to a particular area to gain a respectful position to be known worldwide. Many cities in Indonesia have tried to implement this strategy, but there are only few of them successfully built the brand. This research attempted to determine possible City Branding strategies to be implemented by stakeholders as an effort to develop tourism image. In carrying out this research, primary data were used and analyzed using Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP). The results emphasized an idea for the success of City Branding to promote tourism, namely improving and providing safe and comfortable infrastructure for tourists, particularly the transportation control. It implies that there should be readiness for the local physicality and resources as the priority prior to promotional activities. Therefore, stakeholder synergy and cooperation are the key to brand the city as a tourist destination. With regard to these findings, this research provides a new contribution for the development of tourism economic theory in which it confirms that tourism development can be supported through marketing and promotion through city branding.

## Keywords

Analytic Hierarchy Process, City Branding, Participation, Tourism

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## Introduction

For a region, city brand is an identity or a brand attached to a region (Herstein, 2012). As presented by Simon Anholt in a book entitled "The Anholt -- GMI City Brands Index. How the world sees the world's cities" that defines City Branding as the government effort to create the identity of place and area, and then promote it to either the internal or external public (Kasapi & Cela, 2017; Luthfi, 2018). City Branding has started to be widely spread and become a worldwide trend nowadays (Green, Grace, & Perkins, 2016; Herstein, 2012). Such a condition is due to the fighting over another between regions and areas to find strong positioning to be famous in the world (Green et al., 2016; Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005). Moreover, the implementation of regional autonomy makes the regions more active in exploring any potential they own to create the City Branding as an effort to facilitate the promotion and to provoke any investment to the areas (Braun, 2012; Jan Herget, 2015; Kasapi & Cela, 2017). In other words, a region will find many advantages if it is able to create the City Branding. Besides some advantages in the form of awareness, reputation, and good perception on a tourism destination, City Branding can also become the alternative of foreign exchange earnings of a country or region due to the instability of income from the export-import sector, the natural wealth resources, or the population productivity. The increase in income has been proven in many regions one of which is in Glasgow City with "Scotland with style". This country has produced a profit amounted £11.000.000 using this way. In order to become the income alternative of a region, a potential that should be highlighted in this City Branding is the one not edible by age.

Some cities in Indonesia have applied this concept to improve their tourism sector. Some examples of City and related to their icons (Castillo-Villar, 2016; Green et al., 2016). The City Branding formulation of Semarang City has been pioneered since several years ago, starting from "Semarang Kota Atlas", "Semarang Pesona Asia", until "Semarang Setara" and the last one has Branding in Indonesian cities are as follows: "Enjoy Jakarta" by Jakarta, "The Never Ending Asia" by Jogja, and "The Spirit of Java" by Solo. The City Branding is found through many ways and steps one of which is through empirical research. Not many cities in Indonesia have started yet and have succeeded in building a brand for themselves, whereas, as explained previously, City Branding has many advantages involved the society role through a City Branding of Semarang City logo creation competition held by the Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda) of Semarang City in 2011. The appointed mythologic animals "Warak Ngendok" as the City Branding logo of Semarang shows the meaning of unity of the three majority ethnics existing in Semarang those are Javanese (goat icon), Arabians (Buroq icon), and Chinese (dragon icon). The "Variety of Culture" tagline accompanying this warak completes the message desired to be delivered by the government of Semarang City about the cultural diversity in this city.

City Branding of Semarang city could not run as expected. This was worsened by the policy direction of the city government that always changed everytime the regional leader changed. Whereas, besides for tourism destination, city brand can also be used to provoke the investment and to activate the regional economy (Green et al., 2016; Herstein, 2012; Jan Herget, 2015). This basic concept needs to be mutually understood by the city government as the decision maker and by the stakeholders. According to Hultman (2016) and Henninger, Foster, Alevizou, and Frohlich (2016), the cities will realize the benefit of branding through an integration that relate the city brands to the key targets and the stakeholders. Moreover, the integration requires a suitability between physical and psychological needs of the stakeholders and the functional and symbolic attributes of the city brand. Meanwhile, the effectivity of City Branding can be seen from City Branding hexagon created by Simon Anholt (Luthfi, 2018), in which there are six aspects in the effectivity measure of city branding as follows: 1. Presence; 2. Potential; 3. Place; 4. People; 5. Pulse, and 6. Prerequisite.

City Branding frequently brings us top-down branding strategy, which places the city planning above and makes the rules affect the local stakeholders perception (Bonakdar & Audirac, 2020; Herstein, 2012). Such conditions occur because City Branding is used as a strategy in the urban planning (Bonakdar & Audirac, 2020). As conducted by Batu City government with its tagline KWB (Kota Wisata Batu), the Regional Government of Batu City makes the branding to introduce Batu as the Tourism City so that tourism places are built either marine tourism or artificial travel. Even the major's office can also be turned into tourism object due to the light luxury at night. This policy will take a risk of not working if all the stakeholders do not know and understand the policy direction arranged.



The stakeholders' perception either the local one or the consumers (stakeholders buy in) also contribute to the role of branding success of a place's City Branding (Henninger et al., 2016). For example, people in Europe or United State of America recognize Bali more than Indonesia. If the stakeholders buy-in is very important to realize the city brand aspiration, the critical concern of this part is much more required (Henninger et al., 2016). In other words, the supply and demand sides should match in order to reach the vision and mission of City Branding as targeted by the government of Semarang City. This is in accordance with a research of Gómez (2018), which states that City Branding strategy should be defined carefully because it can bring more challenges than advantages due to a confusion of country's brand and the society, and the confusion appears in any chance. For example, different delivery of various messages to the stakeholders may bring the lag of coordination among the institutions, or promoting activities for branding of a country or province may bring a confusion on brand promotion strategy for a city (Herstein, 2012). Every message should be made with the same direction. Therefore, the aim of this research is to have the right strategy determined by the tour service provider as the stakeholders to improve City Branding as an effort to increase the tourism image in Semarang City. The urgency of this research is the needs of giving a description and information for the stakeholders about the concept of City Branding and the tourism image in cities having the same aim to increase the tourism sector performance.

## Methods

In order to reach the aim expected, this research uses the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) method as an approach to determine the improvement priority of tourism sector performance through the implementation of City Branding of Semarang City. This method is almost the same as the method conducted by (Kuo, 2017) to evaluate the steps of a policy in reaching the aim expected in Taiwan country. The information are found from the keypersons or the resource persons that are selected to provide the data and information related to City Branding for the tourism improvement in Semarang City. Keypersons are those having capacities and competence in planning and tourism sectors of Semarang City.

The steps that should be conducted in this research follow the method in AHP analysis as follows:

### 1. Hierarchical Arrangement

The problems going to be overcome are outlined to be elements those are criteria and alternative, then they are arranged to become hierarchical structure.

### 2. Estimation of Criteria and Alternative

To have pairwise comparison, (Saaty, 1983, 1990) makes a comparison scale called fundamental scale that is derived based on psychological research on individual ability in making a pairwise comparison towards some elements being compared. The comparison scale can be seen in table

**Table 1.**

Pairwise Comparison Scale

| Intensity of Interest | Definition                                          |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| 1                     | Both elements are <u>the same important</u>         |
| 3                     | One element is <u>a little bit more important</u>   |
| 5                     | One element is <u>obviously more important</u>      |
| 7                     | One element is <u>very obviously more important</u> |
| 9                     | One element is <u>the most important</u>            |
| 2,4,6,8               | If feeling doubt between two adjacent values        |

### 3. Priority Determination

For each criteria and alternative, it requires to have pairwise comparisons. The relative comparison values are processed to determine the relative rank of all alternatives. Both qualitative or quantitative criteria can be compared in accordance with the determined judgement to produce the weight and priority calculated with matrix manipulation or using math completion.

#### 4. Logical Consistency

All elements are logically grouped and consistently ranked in accordance with the logical criteria.

### Result and Discussion

The achievement of the research objectives are conducted using the analysis of determining the strategy priority order on City Branding implementation for developing the tourism in Semarang City using the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) Model. As explained previously, AHP method is used to select the criteria and alternatives in order to reach the objectives/goals (Saaty, 1990). Based on the identification result from the respondents, it can be seen that the image of one place can be changed from the first unknown place by making criteria and sub-criteria that determine how the City Branding implementation in improving tourism in Semarang City will run. There are 4 criteria in this system those are Promotion, Institutional, Human Resources, and Infrastructure. From each criteria, alternatives of sub-criteria can be made to be priority (Figure 1).

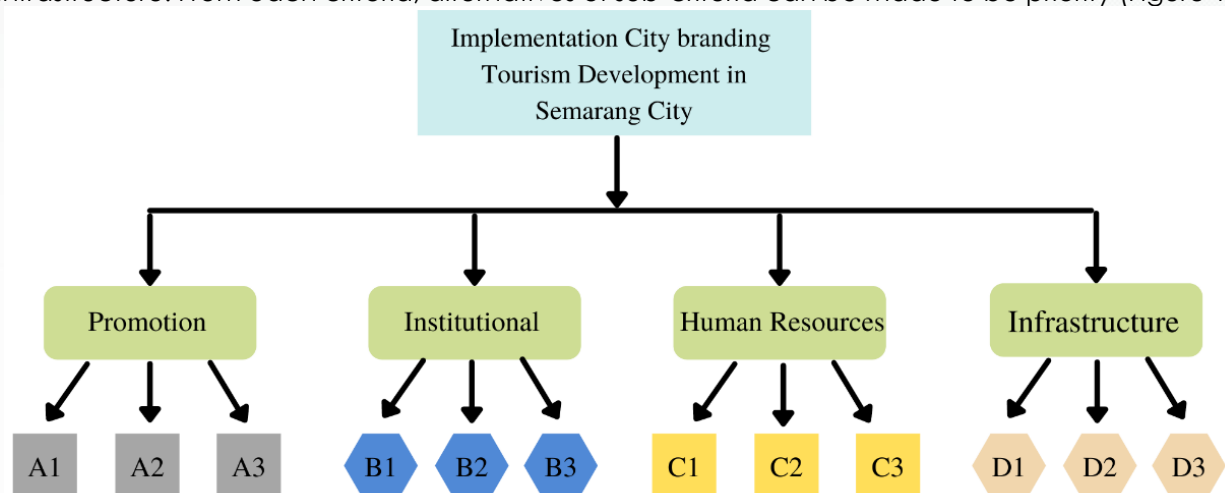
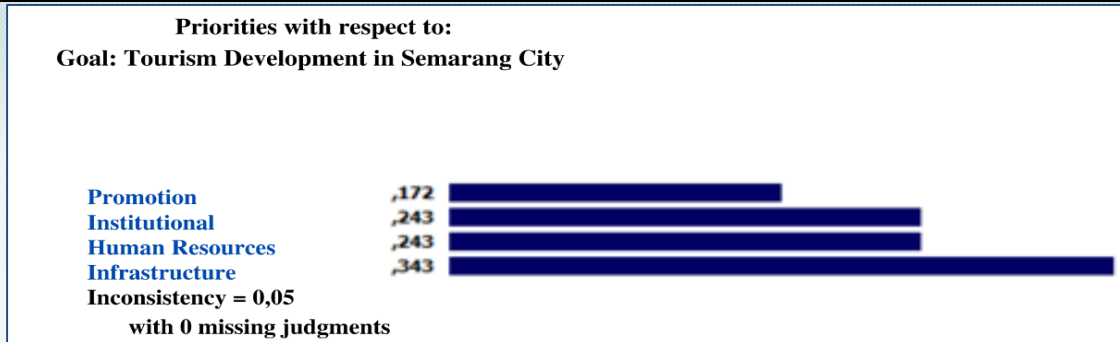


Figure 1. Flow Diagram of Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP)

Description:

- A1 : Promotion Innovation
- A2 : Increase in Promotion Intensity
- A3 : Holding events as promotion media
- B1 : Increase in participation among stakeholders
- B2 : Increase in management transparency
- B3 : Strengthening synergy among institutions
- C1 : Training on management and tourism governance
- C2 : Training on promotion and marketing by utilization of information technology and communication
- C3 : Coaching and training in innovation
- D1 : Increase in tourism object facilities
- D2 : Improvement of supporting infrastructure (roads, parking, sign post, etc)
- D3 : Order of Transportation

The development of tourism sector requires the involvement of multisectors also many kinds of programs and policies, one of which is by determining the City Branding concept as a promotion media. By determining City Branding, the tourism character of Semarang City will be much clearer and firmly focused. Besides, this concept will also make the tourists closely understand the tourism in Semarang City. Based on figure 1, the result of AHP analysis on the whole criteria can be seen in figure 2.



**Figure 2.** Analysis Result of Criteria in City Branding Implementation to Develop Tourism in Semarang City

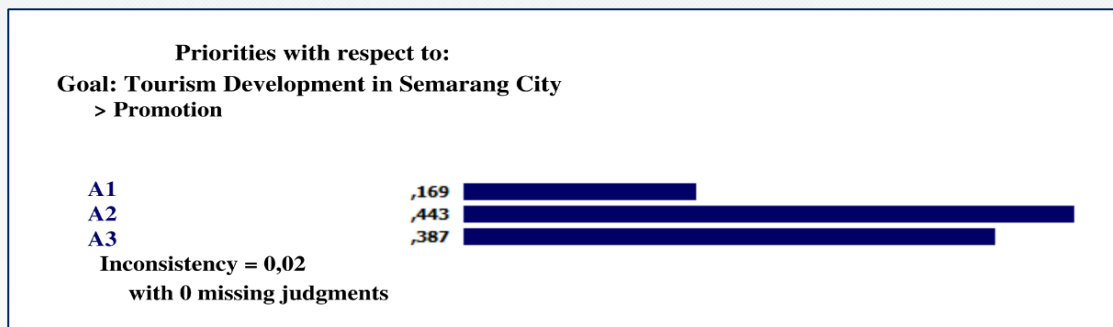
Based on figure 2, it can be seen that from the criteria of developing tourism in Semarang City with City Branding the most prioritized one is the infrastructure criteria with the score of 0.343 or 34.3%. It is followed by human resources criteria with the score of 0.243 or 24.3%. And the last priority criteria is promotion with the score of 0.172 or 17.2%. Infrastructure is an important aspect in tourism development when implementing City Branding (Hanna, Rowley, & Keegan; Jan Herget, 2015). By having adequate infrastructure, an access to tourism destinations will be easier so that it will increase the number of visit. Infrastructure is the most prioritized criteria because this criteria is usually the most considered by the tourists when visiting certain tourism objects. Tourism infrastructure in Semarang City has actually been adequate. It can be seen by the availability of tour bus which routes pass some tourism objects in Semarang. However, some other tourism objects far from the center of city are not reachable yet. Other problem that still becomes the obstacle in the infrastructure is the narrow road access and some damaged road points. To support City Branding, infrastructure aspect needs to have the main concern, because it requires special infrastructure that represents specific feature to brand one location. For example, nowadays Semarang City builds many infrastructure in Kota Lama area. It is conducted to brand the areas in Semarang especially Kota Lama as a historical tour location. Some infrastructures built are Kota Lama museum, cafeteria, Polder Tawang revitalization, Taman Srigunting, pedestrian area, photo spot, and revitalization of all old buildings from Dutch heritage. Other important aspect is human resources.

Adequate and qualified human resources become the key to success in tourism branding (Green et al., 2016; Jan Herget, 2015). The stakeholders involved in tourism branding of Semarang City have owned good qualities but the promotion and branding in remote tourism objects are not maximum yet due to the minimum assistance from the central, so it needs reachable assistance to the remote areas. For example, Semarang City tends to be branded as the historical, cultural, and regional tourism area whereas there are agropolitan areas in Gunungpati and Mijen districts but they have no good branding yet. The next aspect is institutional. This aspect has important role in tourism management (Henninger et al., 2016). Tourism institutional aspect in Semarang City is started from the governmental offices to the tourism conscious groups (Pokdarwis). The existence of tourism management institutions is expected to be a pillar in tourism branding. However, the institutional in some tourism objects cannot maximumly run and even there are some that have no Pokdarwis yet. It needs a synergy among the tourism management institutions to have mutual collaboration in making tourism object branding in Semarang City. Another aspect that is no less important is promotion. The visitors' interest in visiting the tourism is started from the information they receive (Gómez, 2018). When the information looks interesting, the visitors will be interested and vice versa. Therefore, promotion becomes very important in building an image of tourism object (Braun, 2012; Castillo-Villar, 2016). Tourism object promotion in Semarang City has been incessantly conducted in various ways and media. But the promotion has still constrained by limited infrastructure that support the promotion such as internet network, official promotion account, and promotion special admin. Promotion role in City Branding is very important. It is because promotion will make tourism branding more recognized. Finally the tourists will understand more about the local wisdom values from tourism in Semarang City.

## Analysis of Alternatives

### Analysis of Alternatives in Promotion Criteria.

Based on AHP analysis of alternatives in promotion criteria, the result can be seen as follows:



**Figure 3.** Result of Analysis of Alternatives in Promotion Criteria

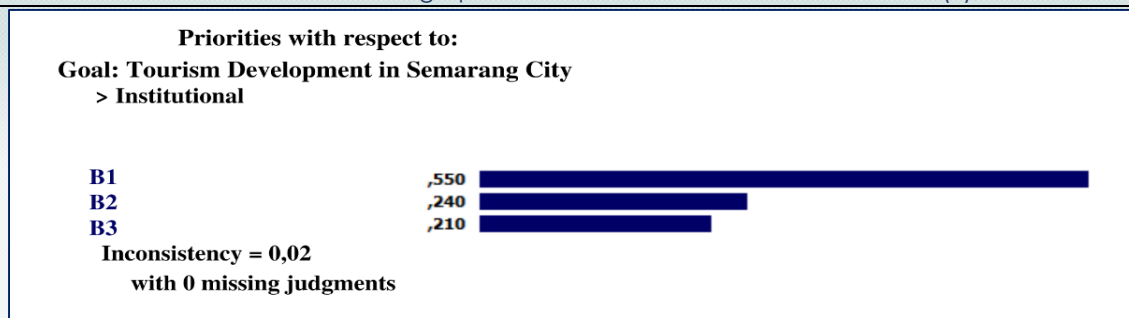
Description:

- A1 : Promotion Innovation
- A2 : Increase in Promotion Intensity
- A3 : Holding events as promotion media

Based on figure 3, it can be explained that the main priority alternative in promotion criteria is the increase in promotion intensity with the score of 0.443. The second priority is the holding of events as promotion media with the score of 0.387 and the last priority is the promotion innovation with the score of 0.169. All this time, tourism promotion has been incessantly conducted by the related governmental offices or the management of each tourism. However, it still has less intensity because the incessant promotion is only conducted in certain time such as in the national holidays or in the anniversary of Semarang City. Besides, promotion through events has also been conducted but not optimally yet because the visitors of events are mostly the local community so this cannot reach the wider society yet. It needs a good promotion innovation via the social media or other media in interesting ways so that it can reach wider society. Promotion intensity needs to be increased to encourage the society to know more about Semarang City, especially the interesting spots. This can be conducted because if a city determines a city branding, it needs comprehensive and inclusive brand community (Sahin, 2011). Therefore, the branding of Semarang City needs to be conducted to create an image as the historical, shopping, cultural tourism city, so it needs to promote more and more. The promotion intensity can be incessantly increased using the strength of social media and influencer service. Besides, it needs to be encouraged to use Word-of-Mouth (WOM) as one alternative. WOM may empirically make the City Branding more recognized by the society because WOM communication can be a solution in a tight competitive situation with the involvement of many stakeholders, such as local community, local businessmen, visitors, and governmental high officers (Kavaratzis, 2004; Simpson, 2008). Even more when the visitors or society feel satisfied with the goods or service provided. The second one is by frequently holding events that invite many audience to make them know more about tourism in Semarang City. It can be conducted by music events, entertainment, or a collaboration with television station. Moreover in this pandemic era in which many events are limited a lot, so that holding events in electronic or virtual media can be the alternative.

### Analysis of Alternatives in Institutional Criteria.

Based on AHP analysis of alternatives in the institutional criteria, the result can be seen in figure 4:



**Figure 4.** Result of Analysis of Alternatives in Institutional Criteria

Description:

- B1 : Increase in participation of stakeholders
- B2 : Increase in transparency in management
- B3 : Strengthening synergy among institutions

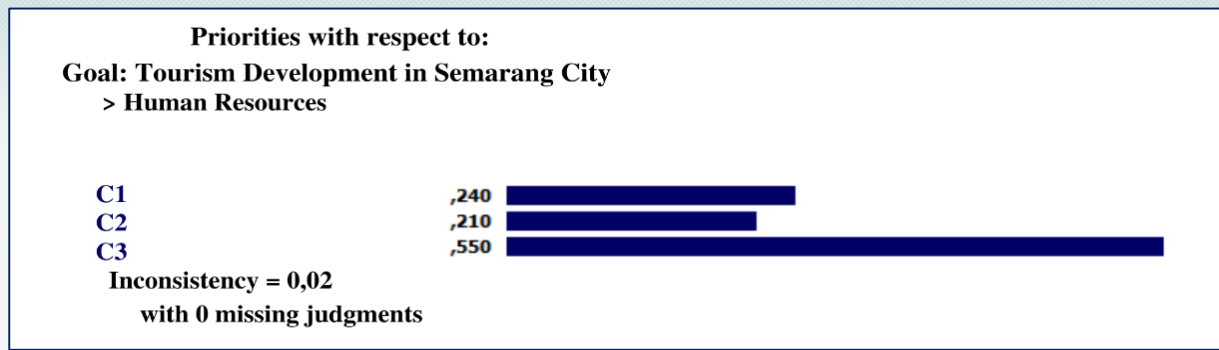
Figure 4 explains that there are three alternatives in the institutional criteria in which the most prioritized alternative is the increase in participation of stakeholders in increasing the City Branding of Semarang City with the score of 0.550. The effort of improving tourism in Semarang City involves various stakeholders, either the government, academics, businessmen, or society. It is important because the standards made should be in accordance with the Long Term Planning and the Short Term Planning. In other words, the city government should be able to reach the sustainable standard that has been set by the central government (de Jong, 2016; Henninger et al., 2016). In the implementation, the Government has conducted many efforts such as improvement in tourism infrastructure, increase in facilities, or increase in promotion. The academics have also conducted many dedications and also researches on tourism in Semarang City. However, there are still a few of the businessmen's involvement in tourism branding because indeed some tourism objects still rely upon the assistance of related offices and are still lack of the investors' involvement. It is because the investors have less interest in the unstrategic location of the tourism objects. Besides, the society's awareness of local tourism improvement also needs to be cultivated because some people still have no attention to the tourism improvement especially those living far from the tourism objects. The society can also play an active role in promoting the local tourism via the social media or other media.

Actually the role of tour and travel association is very important and indirectly contribute to the tourism improvement in Semarang City. Therefore, tour and travel association should not only promote tourism spots but should also be provided by any information about tourism branding of Semarang City. So it needs an involvement of the private sectors through activities like accomodation, transportation, trade, and many others. While the last alternative priority is the strengthening of synergy among the institutionals with the score of 0.210. The institutions involved in the efforts of improving tourism in Semarang City are from various parties either governmental offices, communities, or society. The institutions from governmental offices have invited other institutions to jointly improve the City Branding of Semarang City, but some of the Pokdarwis institutions in each tourism object still tend to compete each other to promote their own region. Such a condition certainly brings a bad image on the city branding building. Therefore, it needs a strengthening of synergy among the institutions so that the ego of each institution can be reduced. It needs to have the same vision and mission among the institutions to be oriented towards the same progress in improving the tourism branding in Semarang City. It is important because City Branding will be effective if there is a synergy among potential, place, pulse, presence, and prerequisite, as presented by Simon Anholt on City Branding hexagon (Luthfi, 2018).

### **Analysis of Alternatives in Human Resource Criteria.**

Based on AHP analysis on alternatives in Human Resource criteria, the result can be seen in figure 5 below:





**Figure 5.** Result of Analysis of Alternatives in Human Resource Criteria

Description:

**C1** : Increase in tourism management and governance

**C2** : Increase in promotion and marketing with utilization of information technology and communication

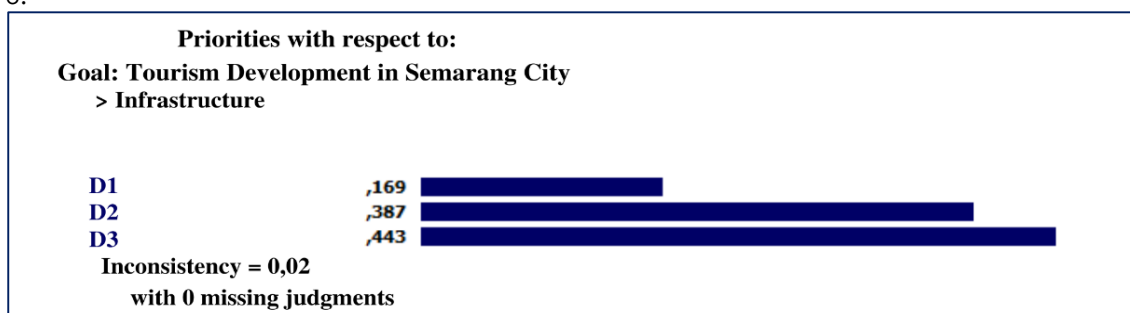
**C3** : Coaching and training in innovation

Based on figure 5, it can be seen that the most prioritized alternative in the Human Resource criteria is coaching and training in innovation with the score of 0.550. All this time the Human Resource of tourism management in Semarang City is already adequate both in terms of quality or quantity. However, the Human Resource of tourism management is still lack of quality especially in innovating, moreover the capacities to perform City Branding, as known that the recent tourism progress is commonly affected by the innovations offered by the tourism objects (Kasapi & Cela, 2017). The more innovative the facilities and service are offered, the more visitors will be interested. This can be implemented such as by innovating in making instagrammable photo spots, games in the tourism objects, and many others. Abilities in branding the location actually have a very vital role. Commonly some tourism objects are less innovative in changing the photo spots so when the visitors come to the tourism object they usually have no wish to revisit due to no spot photo progressive changing. The innovations in tourism management should be increased in accordance with the existing improvement and following the recent trend in order to increase the tourist attractions.

The last priority alternative is trainings on promotion and marketing by utilizing the information technology and communication with the score of 0.210. All this time the tourism object managers in Semarang City have been used to utilize the existing technology in promoting and marketing the tourism. However, the promotion and marketing they have conducted are not maximum yet due to not leading to the optimal promotion and marketing. They commonly do the promotion and marketing only in certain time using less innovative ways so it cannot invite the tourists yet. Therefore, it needs to provide trainings on promotion and marketing by utilizing the appropriate technology in order to reach the optimal result. The training on promotion is none other than to introduce the Semarang City tourism with its branding as the cultural and shopping tourism.

### Analysis of Alternatives in Infrastructure Criteria.

Based on AHP analysis to the alternative in infrastructure criteria, the result can be seen in figure 6:



**Figure 6.** Result of Analysis of Alternatives in Infrastructure Criteria



Description:

**D1** : Increase in tourism object facilities

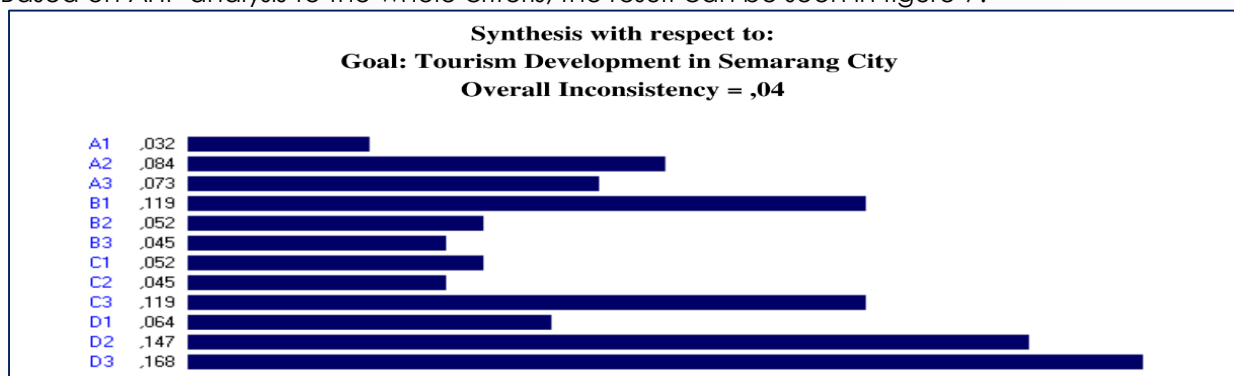
**D2** : Increase in supporting infrastructure (roads, parking, signpost, etc.)

**D3** : Order of Transportation

In figure 6 it can be seen that the order of transportation becomes the main priority in infrastructure criteria with the score of 0.443. It is because transportations in some tourism objects are not orderly yet so it disturbs the comfort and safety of travelling to the tourism destinations. For example, the traffic congestion is often occurred in Kota Lama tourism object and disturbs the visitors travelling to that tourism object. The order of transportation is very required as related to the existing tourist attractions. If the transportation is orderly and neatly arranged, it will increase the existing tourist attractions. The last priority alternative in infrastructure criteria is the increase in tourism object facilities. Some tourism objects in Semarang City have owned adequate facilities, but some still have no adequate facilities such as parking area, toilet, food stall, trash bin, and other supporting ones. Those with less adequate facilities needs special concern by completing them in order to attract the tourists to visit in the tourism objects. In tourism branding, some alternatives of common transportations need to be introduced, such as shuttle bus, then also free bus to take the tourists to certain location points. These facilities are available and being improved, but it takes time and needs innovations to attract the tourists.

### Analysis of Alternatives from the Whole Criteria.

Based on AHP analysis to the whole criteris, the result can be seen in figure 7:



**Figure 7.** Result of Analysis of Alternatives from the Whole Criteria

Description:

A1 : Promotion Innovation

A2 : Increase in Promotion Intensity

A3 : Holding events as promotion media

B1 : Increase in participation among stakeholders

B2 : Increase in transparency in management

B3 : Strengthening synergy among institutions

C1 : Trainings on management and tourism governance

C2 : Trainings on promotion and marketing with technology information utilization

C3 : Coaching and training in innovation

D1 : Increase in tourism object facilities

D2 : Improvement in supporting infrastructure (roads, parking, signposts, etc.)

D3 : Order of transportation

Based on figure 7, it can be explained that if comparing the alternatives from the whole criteria, the most prioritized one is the order of transportation with the score of 0.168. Order of transportation is considered very important because it has big effect in increasing the tourist interest. Tourism branding can also be started from the existing order of transportation. It will make the tourists more comfortable to visit and feel no disappointed so they may come to revisit the tourism object next time. On the other hand, chaotic transportation will make the tourists disappointed and have no wish to revisit.

The second priority alternative is improvement of supporting infrastructure such as roads, parking areas, signposts, etc. with the score of 0.147. Some tourism objects in Semarang City still have inadequate and damaged road access especially to the suburban tourism objects. This certainly will reduce the tourists' interest to visit. Some also still have no adequate parking area so it needs improvement. Signposts to the tourism objects also need to be improved to facilitate the tourist in visiting so they will not get the wrong direction. Therefore, the branding on supporting facility service on the way to cultural tourism needs to be encouraged more in order to create the safe, orderly, and comfortable city image.

## Conclusion

The success in developing city branding as a means of developing tourism requires various parties, both regional and national levels. According to the findings, this research found that the city physical readiness and local resources become significant strengths of the successful City Branding. In addition, several possible strategies to do are such as improving and providing safe and comfortable infrastructure for tourists, transportation control, designing attractive tourism destinations with the help of solid participation from public communities and creative human resources, and broadcasting information through innovative promotions. Apart from its practical contributions, the current research also enriches the existing tourism economic theory, namely by adding city branding marketing and promotions to support the development of tourist attractions besides the aspects of attraction, infrastructure, facilities, and hospitality.

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