

Analysis of City Branding of The Old City of Padang by The Padang Heritage Community in Increasing Historical and Cultural Tourism Interest

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ABSTRACT

Kota Tua Padang, as a city branding icon, has great potential as a historical and cultural tourism destination, but the government's efforts in branding this area are still not optimal. The Padang Heritage Community, through programs such as the Padang Heritage Walk, plays an important role in increasing tourist interest in the history and culture as well as the branding of Kota Tua Padang. This research aims to deeply understand how the Padang Heritage Community conducts city branding through the Padang Heritage Walk program and analyze the persuasive messages conveyed. This research uses a case study approach by collecting data through interviews, observation, and documentation, and analyzing the data qualitatively. The results show that Padang Heritage Community, through the Padang Heritage Walk program, has played an important role in the city branding process of Kota Tua Padang. They have succeeded in reviving this historical area through interactive and educational activities, as well as building a positive image of the area as a tourist destination rich in historical and cultural values. For the persuasive messages delivered by the Padang Heritage Community, they have successfully created a positive impact on the image of Kota Tua Padang as a historical and cultural tourist destination.

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INTRODUCTION

Padang City is the center of civilization in West Sumatra which developed since the Dutch Colonial period as an important trading center and port. One of the attractions of Padang City is the Kota Tua Padang area. Kota Tua Padang has a long historical record in the area. The buildings that remain in the old city area today are witnesses to the history of Padang City from colonialism to independence. As a tangible historical heritage rich in cultural value, this is reflected in the architectural characteristics of the buildings in Kota Tua Padang.

Kota Tua Padang is a Dutch colonial heritage area that has been designated by the government as a historical and cultural tourist destination. This designation is stated in the Regional Tourism Development Master Plan (RIPPDA) of Padang City 2008-2017. In addition, this area is also supported through Padang Mayor Regulation (Perwako) Number 5 of 2023 concerning the Detailed Spatial Plan of Padang City Year 2023-2024. The government is committed to preserving the historical heritage of Kota Tua Padang by issuing the 2019 Padang City Regional Regulation on Cultural Heritage Management and Preservation. This management was strengthened by Decree No. 3 of 1998 which designated 74 buildings as cultural heritage, of which 21 buildings are located in the Kota Tua Padang area.

To maximize the potential of Kota Tua Padang as a historical tourist destination, strategic efforts are needed to build strong branding. This area has valuable historical wealth and has the opportunity to become a major tourist destination in Padang City. However, without good management, this potential will go to waste. Therefore, it is important for the government to take an active role in promoting Kota Tua Padang through a city branding strategy that focuses on its historical and cultural attractions (Setiawati, 2020). Based on the results of the researcher's observations, the government's efforts in promoting Kota Tua Padang are still far from optimal. This is reinforced by Diko Riva Utama's statement from the Padang City Tourism Office, who admitted that the government's promotion of the area's essential attraction is still inadequate. With increased promotion and strong image building, Kota Tua Padang can become a leading destination that not only attracts local tourists, but also foreign tourists, thus improving the city's economy and strengthening local cultural identity.'

The Padang City Government has demonstrated its commitment to developing the potential of historical tourism through the establishment of the Kota Tua Padang area as part of its city branding strategy. This step is officially stated in the Padang Old Town Area Masterplan document, which makes the naming of the area not just an area marker, but as a strategy to strengthen the city's identity. The name "Kota Tua Padang Area" plays an important role in shaping the image and attractiveness of Padang City as a distinctive destination with high historical and cultural value.

Through this city branding, the government not only focuses on preserving the historic area but also encourages the transformation of the area into a competitive cultural tourism destination. This effort is based on a big vision in developing Kota Tua Padang as a center of cultural preservation that is able to attract tourists and increase community participation in maintaining historical heritage. Thus, the establishment and development of this area through city branding is an important step in strengthening the image of Padang City, increasing historical and cultural tourism visits, and creating a distinctive and competitive city identity in the midst of modern tourism dynamics.

City branding is a complex strategic communication process that aims to build a strong and characterful brand for a city. As city branding theory develops, it is increasingly emphasized that city branding should reflect local characteristics and distinctive cultural identities, not just a marketing campaign (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). In this effort, an in-depth study is needed so that the identity and advantages of the city can be well conveyed to the public (Firiansyah, 2022).

City identity plays an important role in city branding as the main tool to interact and communicate with the wider community (Kurniawan, 2022). In Indonesia, the introduction of local wisdom is widely focused through city branding, where each city is competing to promote a positive image to attract tourists and spur regional economic growth (Syafitri, 2023). Each city and region has its own unique and distinctive city branding strategy, designed to underscore their respective specialties (Fathinnah, 2022).

To be able to compete for economic resources, both at the local, regional, national and global levels, each city needs to have a strong image that is different from other cities (Abdullah, 2020). Building city branding is not an easy task. It requires serious efforts in realizing the right positioning, and this is not the responsibility of the government alone. The involvement of all stakeholders is needed for optimal results (Setiawati, 2020). The most reasonable approach in realizing city branding is through recognition and promotion that can create a positive image for the city, with the main objective that tourists and visitors are interested in visiting (Suriady, 2021). Strong city branding not only helps increase public awareness of the city's existence, but also makes potential visitors judge the quality of the city as better than its competitors. In addition, city branding makes it easier for people to remember the city, so each region needs to compete in developing its potential to create a strong image in the minds of the wider community (Muis, 2023).

One of the communities in Padang City that has been actively conducting city branding to introduce historical and cultural tourism in the Kota Tua Padang area is the Padang Heritage Community, which was founded by a young man named Bayu Haryanto. This community operates independently with a focus on the preservation of historical objects, especially in the Kota Tua Padang area. The initial inspiration for the formation of this community stems from Bayu's interest in photography of old buildings. For him, it is unfortunate if someone visits a historical place without exploring and learning more about it. This then motivated Bayu to establish the Padang Heritage Community, with the vision of increasing public and tourist interest in historical and cultural tourism in the area.

Padang Heritage Community exists as a participatory space that aims to introduce cultural heritage more closely in order to foster a spirit of preservation, especially in Padang City and more broadly in the West Sumatra region. The community was founded by Bayu Haryanto on March 22, 2016, coinciding with World Water Day, as a symbol of hope that Padang Heritage can continue to grow and be relevant throughout time. The initiative to establish this community began with an interest in old buildings, as well as a concern about the lack of literature discussing the history and architecture of Padang's Old Town. Padang Heritage was also born out of concern for the young generation's lack of interest in matters relating to history and traditional values. Through a visual approach, the community started its first activity by sharing photos of old buildings on the Instagram account @padangheritage on January 5, 2017. The activity was then continued with the first educational tour program titled Padang Heritage Walk which was held on January 8, 2017.

Padang Heritage Community has two flagship programs that have successfully attracted tourists, namely Padang Heritage Walk (PHW) and Padang Heritage Walk Mini (PHW Mini).

These programs take the form of walking tours that provide education about the history and culture of Kota Tua Padang, where participants can explore the area while learning about historical buildings and relics. Through this program, the Padang Heritage Community has succeeded in increasing the number of tourist visits interested in historical and cultural tourism in Padang City. Based on 2023 data, 375 tourists have participated in the PHW and PHW Mini programs, a number that shows a significant increase compared to previous years.

In addition to attracting tourists, Padang Heritage Community has also established various collaborations, both at local and national levels, to strengthen the promotion of historical tourism in Kota Tua Padang. As one of the creative actors in the tourism sector, this community has a unique approach in promoting the city's historical and cultural potential through the active role of tour guides. The tour guides play an important role in building a positive image of Padang City tourism, especially in the field of history and culture, making Padang Heritage Community one of the key stakeholders in the development of history-based tourism in this city.

This research has high urgency because Kota Tua Padang is one of the most valuable tourism assets, especially in the historical and cultural tourism sector. The government is expected to play a significant role in optimizing the potential of this area as a leading tourist destination. This can be achieved through the implementation of appropriate and effective policies to increase the attractiveness of Kota Tua Padang in the eyes of tourists, both local and foreign. In addition, collaboration between the government and local communities, such as Padang Heritage, is crucial. This collaboration can be key in maximizing the city branding strategy, which aims to form a positive image and attract tourists. City branding is not only about promoting a destination, but also how an area can reflect its cultural and historical identity in an attractive and relevant way. Therefore, the study of the role of Padang Heritage Community in the city branding initiative of Kota Tua Padang presents a compelling topic for research.

Based on this background, the author is interested in conducting a more in-depth study entitled "Analysis of City Branding of Padang Old City by the Padang Heritage Community in Increasing Interest in Historical and Cultural Tourism". The results of this research are compiled based on data obtained and analyzed through four stages in the Process City Branding Model developed by Andrea Insch, namely identity, objective, communication, and coherence. This approach aims to provide a comprehensive picture of the city branding process applied to Kota Tua Padang. This study is expected to provide new insights into effective strategies that stakeholders can adopt to enhance the tourist appeal of Padang Old City. It also aims to demonstrate that strong collaboration between the government and the community can positively impact the tourism sector.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is a qualitative descriptive study with a case study approach. According to Kriyantono (2020), the case study approach is one approach to accurately investigate an event, process, activity, program, or group of individuals. This approach aims to explore in depth the city branding process of Padang Old City and analyze the persuasive messages carried out by the Padang Heritage Community tour guides in the Padang Heritage Walk program in an effort

to increase interest in historical and cultural tourism in Padang City. The Padang Heritage Community is the only community that is engaged in preserving historical tourist attractions in Padang City, so it has an important role in creating a positive image of the tourist and cultural area of Padang Old City. Data collection in this study includes primary data and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through interviews with the Padang Heritage Community, tourists, field observations, and documentation of the situation at the research location. The determination of informants was carried out using a purposive sampling technique to ensure the reliability and validity of the research results. In addition, a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was conducted with related parties to gain deeper insights and perspectives on the research topic. This FGD allows for interactive discussions that can reveal information that may not emerge from individual interviews. In addition, secondary data was collected from documents relevant to the program run by Padang Heritage.

For data analysis, it begins by reviewing all data obtained through interviews, observations, documents, photos, and other materials. This stage consists of several main activities, namely data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. In the data reduction stage, the data that has been collected is grouped and simplified into information that describes the city branding process by the Padang Heritage community. Furthermore, the reduced data is presented in the form of a brief description, chart, flowchart, or other visual format that facilitates understanding regarding the implementation of city branding. The final stage is drawing conclusions based on the data that has been analyzed. The initial conclusions drawn are temporary and can change if new data is found. This analysis process is carried out continuously until the data collected reaches saturation point.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

City Branding Process by Padang Heritage Community

Padang Heritage Community, founded by Bayu Haryanto, is a local youth initiative to preserve and promote the history and culture of Padang Old Town. Driven by a love for the rich local heritage, this community is committed to ensuring that the history of Padang Old Town is not forgotten amidst rapid modernization. By bringing together young people who share the same passion, Padang Heritage has grown into a strong platform to spread awareness of the importance of cultural heritage to the younger generation and the wider community. Padang Heritage Community has the main goal of preserving and promoting the cultural heritage of Padang Old Town. This is not only important for maintaining local identity, but also plays a role in encouraging the growth of cultural tourism. By introducing historical history and architecture, this community hopes to attract tourists, both from within and outside the country. The participation of local communities such as Padang Heritage shows the practice of place branding that comes from the bottom (bottom-up), as explained by Boisen et al. (2018) that successful place brands are formed not only by the government, but also by the community who create meaning through social and cultural activities. Andrea Insch (in Dinnie, 2010) stated that there are four stages of the process in the implementation of city branding. These four strategic stages are an important part of the preparation of city branding for a city in order to achieve excellence

among other cities. The city branding process carried out by Padang Heritage can be seen as follows:

1. **Identity:** The Padang Heritage Community has managed to identify the main asset of Padang Old Town, namely its rich colonial history and architecture. By utilizing this cultural and historical heritage, they built a strong image of the city as a historical tourist destination. This corresponds to the identity stage of Insch, which emphasizes the importance of identifying the unique assets and character of a city. Programs such as the Padang Heritage Walk (PHW) specifically highlight the uniqueness of Padang's Old Town, so that the public and tourists can get to know more about the historical values of the area.
2. **Purpose:** The Padang Heritage Community has a clear goal in their city branding efforts. In addition to attracting tourists, they also want to increase the awareness of the local community on the importance of maintaining and preserving cultural heritage. This social purpose is in line with Insch's theory, which suggests that city branding should have a clear purpose, both to enhance the city's image and to strengthen local cultural identity.
3. **Communication:** In the communication process, the Padang Heritage Community relies on online and offline approaches, which include social media and direct interaction with PHW participants. Through Instagram, they reach a wider audience by promoting photos of historic sites and community activities. Meanwhile, walking tours allow for two-way interaction between guides and participants, creating a more personalized and interactive experience. This is in line with the stages of communication in Insch's theory, which emphasizes the importance of integrated communication, both physically and digitally.
4. **Coherence:** To maintain coherence, the Padang Heritage Community consistently involves the local community in their activities, such as working with tourism awareness groups (Pokdarwis). This shows their continuous efforts in maintaining tourism sustainability and cultural preservation. According to Insch's theory, coherence means ensuring that all branding activities are integrated and carried out consistently. This collaboration also ensures that various parties involved in city branding share the same vision, although limited support from the government is still a challenge.

Bayu Haryanto explained that the main objective of the Padang Heritage Community in carrying out city branding is to make Padang Old Town a means of education and information center regarding cultural heritage. For the Padang Heritage Community, promoting Padang Old Town is not only intended to attract tourists but also serves as a means of preserving cultural heritage through activities designed to utilize existing cultural objects. In this case, the Padang Heritage Walk program is the community's main tool to realize this vision. This community consistently creates unique experiences that combine history with presentations that are relevant and interesting for today's tourists. Bayu also explained that Padang Old Town is interpreted as a space for interaction between past stories and current conditions, where tourists

can directly experience the history stored in old buildings that are part of the city's historical narrative.

One of the main strategies implemented by the Padang Heritage Community in building city branding is to activate the area through the Padang Heritage Walk program. This activity serves as a platform where tourists can interact directly with the history of the Old Town of Padang. This program is participatory, where tourists are invited not only to hear historical stories but also to play an active role in maintaining and preserving the area. The two-way interaction formed during the activity is considered very important to increase tourist engagement. In this case, PHW is included in educational tourism, which is a tourism activity that is specifically designed to provide learning experiences and increase knowledge to tourists (Wijayanti, 2019). This type of tourism includes various activities, ranging from natural exploration (ecotourism), historical exploration, visits to rural areas or agricultural areas, to student exchange programs, comparative studies, and learning activities at home and abroad (Saepudin et al., 2019).



Figure 1. Padang Old Town Area

This approach is considered effective because tourists feel more connected to the stories and history conveyed, especially since they are also presented with props that make interpretation easier. For example, guided tours use photos of past buildings and their comparisons with current conditions, which helps tourists understand the changes that have occurred in the area. In a study by Vasile et al. (2021), it was highlighted that visualization through photos and videos can effectively convey narratives and build personal brand identities. This shows that PHW has done the right thing in building the Kota Tua Padang brand.

Another strategy used by the community is promotion through social media, especially Instagram. This media is used to invite the public to get to know Kota Tua Padang better and get involved in cultural preservation activities. Bayu admitted that the use of online media is an effective way to reach a wider audience, especially the younger generation who are the main

target of this program. In addition, this community also has a social goal, namely to involve local people in preservation efforts, so that they are not only spectators but also active actors in maintaining historical and cultural values. This effort shows that the branding carried out is not only limited to tourism promotion but also an effort to revive local awareness of the importance of heritage.

Communication Elements in City Branding

The main message communicated by Bayu Haryanto of Padang Heritage in promoting Kota Tua Padang is not just positioning it as a tourist destination, but as a form of effort to preserve cultural heritage. The Padang Heritage Community uses various methods to convey persuasive messages to tourists. One of the dominant methods is active two-way communication during activities such as the Padang Heritage Walk (PHW). The guides not only provide information about history and culture, but also use props such as old photos to strengthen the explanation. This aims to create a deeper understanding of the importance of preserving cultural heritage.

The persuasive message conveyed in the PHW activity is very focused on the invitation to preserve and care for Padang Old Town. The communication channels used by the Padang Heritage Community use several communication channels, both online and offline. Offline, PHW activities are the main means to interact directly with tourists, where Bayu Haryanto and the team provide in-depth explanations about the history and culture of Padang Old Town. In addition, two-way interaction between guides and participants increases tourist involvement in understanding the narrative conveyed. Online, social media such as Instagram are used as the main tool to promote activities and disseminate information about Padang heritage. This channel is considered effective by several informants, including Althaf Ghazali, a student who has participated in PHW. He found Padang Heritage's Instagram to be an informative and interesting platform, which can reach a wider audience, especially those who are curious about the history of Padang Old Town. However, according to his evaluation, Padang Heritage still has the potential to increase its followers and impact with a stronger strategy, for example through increased collaboration with local media or larger platforms.

These persuasive messages involve invitations that influence visitors, especially tourists who participate in participatory activities, to return to visit Kota Tua Padang and also invite others. In a broader perspective, this persuasive strategy also aims to build the image of Kota Tua Padang as a historical and cultural tourism destination. PHW activities play a role not only as a means of education but also as a medium to form city branding for Kota Tua Padang. City branding is carried out through the presentation of interesting historical stories, using contemporary activities to increase tourist appeal. The impact of the persuasive messages conveyed can be seen in the increase in tourist visits, both local and foreign, as well as the sustainability of PHW programs with different themes. This community also consistently builds emotional relationships with visitors, which ultimately increases their loyalty to the activities held.

The effectiveness of this community was proven by Al-Adiyat, who said that the persuasive messages succeeded in educating visitors, especially about the importance of maintaining and preserving the historical heritage of Padang City. According to Althaf Ghazali, one of the tour participants, the experience of seeing the comparison of these buildings directly had a significant impact on his understanding of the historical value of these buildings. He stated that the combination of historical information with before and after visualizations allows tourists to feel more emotionally connected to the sites. This process, although simple, contributes greatly to changing tourists' perceptions and attitudes, deepening their understanding of the importance of preserving cultural heritage. With this persuasive communication, Padang Heritage has succeeded in convincing visitors. Persuasive communication itself aims to influence tourists by changing beliefs, values, traits or goals according to the content of the persuasive message conveyed (Efrita, 2014).

In terms of visual aspects and cultural symbols,

Bayu Haryanto stated that Kota Tua Padang does not yet have a logo, tagline, or special symbol that is used consistently in city branding. The absence of this visual elements reflect the challenge in creating a cohesive identity that is easily recognized by tourists and local people. Strong visual branding usually requires symbolic representation that can reflect the unique character of an area, including its history and culture, which have not been fully utilized in Kota Tua Padang. However, visualization efforts in tour activities by the Padang Heritage Week (PHW) Community have become a temporary alternative to introduce Kota Tua Padang through a more personal approach. Visualization of historical buildings, such as comparative photos of past and present buildings shown to tour participants, is an important part of the visual communication carried out by this community. These images are not only visually appealing, but also act as a bridge to connect the past and present, providing a more concrete picture of the transformation of Kota Tua Padang over time. Visualizing history through past photos is also part of the storytelling strategy in city branding, which, according to Lucerlli (2018), is an important narrative approach in shaping tourists' perceptions of a place.

The Role and Contribution of the Community in Increasing Tourism Interest

The Padang Heritage Community plays an important role in promoting Kota Tua Padang as a historical and cultural tourism destination. Through various activities such as the Padang Heritage Walk (PHW), this community has succeeded in creating interest in local cultural heritage that has previously been under-exposed. PHW, as one of the flagship programs, not only attracts local tourists but also tourists from outside the region, which further expands the reach of the promotion of the Kota Tua Padang area. One of the direct impacts of this initiative is the increase in the number of visitors involved in community activities, both through direct tours and cultural events, which often continue with repeat visits and word of mouth. This initiative creates an emotional connection between tourists and Kota Tua, which is a key factor in building visitor loyalty.

In addition, the collaboration between the Padang Heritage Community and Pokdarwis (Tourism Awareness Groups) in the Kota Tua Padang area shows effective synergy, even though

it still faces various challenges. This collaboration includes various joint efforts to manage and maintain historical sites in the area, as well as improving existing infrastructure to improve tourist comfort. Muhammad Al-Adiyat, Head of Pokdarwis Berok Nipah, said that although his community has limitations, especially in terms of support from the local government, it remain persistent and committed to promoting and managing existing tourism assets. Support from the Tourism Office is expected to be more active, especially in terms of branding and promoting this area more professionally at the national and international levels.

According to Althaf Ghazali, a student who has participated in this program, tourists' knowledge and awareness of the history of Kota Tua Padang have increased significantly. Before participating in this activity, many tourists did not have a deep understanding of the historical value of the old buildings in this area, and considered them only as ancient buildings without any special meaning. However, after participating in this educational program, tourists not only gained new insights, but also showed greater interest in returning. This shows that PHW is not just an ordinary tour, but an effective tool to change tourists' perspectives on the historical heritage of Kota Tua. In addition, Mega Liberni, a tour guide at the Adityawarman Museum, also shared her views on the positive impact of the existence of communities such as Padang Heritage in promoting and maintaining the image of historical destinations such as Kota Tua Padang. Mega emphasized that the efforts of this community are very helpful in strengthening the identity of the Old City as a valuable historical tourism destination. According to her, the community plays an important role in ensuring that historical and cultural values are not only maintained but also widely introduced to the public. Mega also emphasized that while the efforts of communities like Padang Heritage are already extraordinary, they could still be more effective if supported by supporting facilities such as a more official information center and more formal promotional materials. With this support, it is hoped that more tourists will be interested in exploring the rich history of Padang Old Town, while also improving the image of this area as a classy cultural tourism destination.

Challenges and Obstacles in by Communities

In the process of branding Kota Tua Padang, the Padang Heritage Community and stakeholders face various complex challenges and obstacles. One of the main obstacles expressed by Bayu Haryanto is the lack of government support in creating clear and structured city branding for Kota Tua Padang. According to him, Kota Tua Padang does not yet have an official city branding, which is a reference in building a solid destination identity. This makes their community have to work independently without direction or assistance from the local government, a challenge that hinders the sustainability of the initiatives they have started. Although they try hard to maintain the vision and mission of this historic city through activities such as the Padang Heritage Walk, Bayu emphasized that the impact remains limited due to the lack of official recognition and in-depth studies related to the branding. In fact, the response from the community to community activities is very positive, indicating great potential for further development, but without a clear framework, the expected results are not optimal. According to Pratiwi (2025), digital literacy and activities are not as simple as people imagine, it

is not enough to merely train and build the capacity of individuals or communities; efforts must also address both the internal and external factors affecting the community.

Challenges in terms of marketing and promotion are also important highlights. Al-Adiyat, a member of the Padang Heritage Community, expressed his confusion over the strategy of the Tourism Office which does not have a consistent focus in managing destinations. He said that many tourist destinations in the area were opened prematurely without proper management, causing the attractiveness of the destinations to decline drastically. In the context of Padang Old Town, this problem is further exacerbated by the lack of attention from the local government, which makes the community and Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) have to work alone in promoting and attracting tourists. They have to rely on their own creativity and initiative in promoting the historical and cultural values of Padang Old Town to the wider public, even without adequate resources. In fact, in some areas, by collaborating with stakeholders, the community can optimize literacy with various perspectives and achievements obtained through various institutions (Aziz, 2025).

In addition, another problem that is often faced is the lack of appreciation and recognition for the efforts made by the community. According to Al-Adiyat, Bayu Haryanto is often asked to guide tourists, especially foreign tourists, on historical tours, but rarely gets proper recognition from the local government. This shows a lack of recognition for the vital role played by the Padang Heritage Community in introducing and preserving the cultural heritage of Padang Old Town. Furthermore, the community operates with very limited funds, relies on self-help from members, and their contributions to the promotion of Padang Old Town are often overlooked. Bayu emphasized that the great potential for historical and cultural tourism in Padang Old Town is unfortunately not well supported by the government, so the community feels frustrated with the situation. This condition creates a gap between the efforts made by the community and the attention given by the authorities, threatening the sustainability of cultural preservation projects in the area.

With these challenges, the Padang Heritage Community remains committed to maintaining its vision of making Padang Old Town a famous historical and cultural tourism destination. They continue to make various innovations, although sometimes they work alone without full support from the government, considering that the future of tourism in this region requires strong synergy between the community, government, and other stakeholders.

CONCLUSION

The objective stage shows that this community is not only focused on increasing tourist visits, but also has a social goal to foster public awareness of the importance of cultural heritage preservation. In the communication stage, the integrated communication strategy is carried out through digital approaches, such as Instagram, and direct approaches through educational activities of Padang Heritage Walk, creating strong engagement with both the community and tourists. At the coherence stage, the community demonstrated a level of consistency by collaborating with local groups and Pokdarwis. However, these efforts were challenged by limited government support, which hindered broader integration and long-term sustainability.

Overall, Padang Heritage Community has played an important role in building the image of Kota Tua Padang as an authentic and sustainable historical and cultural tourism destination. The communication stage is the most prominent element in the implementation of city branding by Padang Heritage Community. This is reflected in their success in delivering the historical narrative of Kota Tua Padang in an interesting and informative manner through two main communication channels: online and offline. Online, they actively share informative and consistent visual content on social media, especially Instagram, by utilizing photos, reels and educational captions. Offline, they organize activities such as the Padang Heritage Walk which involves direct interaction between tour guides and participants, creating a strong emotional and educational experience.

This two-way communication approach succeeded in building engagement and raising public awareness, in accordance with the communication stages in Insch's city branding theory which emphasizes the importance of integrated and interactive communication. Meanwhile, the coherence stage can be said to be the weakest element in the implementation process of Kota Tua Padang city branding. Although Padang Heritage Community has shown consistency in historical narrative and local community involvement, the biggest challenge lies in the limited structural support from the government. The lack of synergy and integration between the community and government policies has limited the sustainability of the program and the expansion of its impact. In fact, in the coherence stage, Insch emphasizes the importance of cross-sector consistency and integration of various actors in building and maintaining the city brand as a whole. Without institutional support and stronger collaboration from other parties, the coherence of city branding becomes less optimal and risks being unsustainable in the long run.

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