

# VISUAL BRANDING ON INDONESIAN TOURISM DESTINATIONS: DOES IT AFFECT TOURISTS?

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## Abstract

This study was conducted to reveal the interactions of the visual components of branding in Indonesia's tourism destinations with tourists' perceptions and affection. Shapes, colours, and slogans influence the perception of tourism destinations' characteristics, affecting tourists' choices in planning trips. A qualitative descriptive visual analysis was applied to review logos from a semiotic perspective. Sem-PLS analysis was used to uncover the relationships of the shape, colour, and slogan variables, involving data collected from 216 respondents. The study revealed that landscapes became the most common symbol in Indonesia's visual branding of tourism destinations. Shape and colour were significant factors in building tourist perceptions of the characteristics of the tourism destinations, but the slogans were not. The perception of visual branding was found to influence travellers' affection regarding interests, destination selection, and travel planning. This study contributes theoretically to the study of visual branding of tourism destinations by confirming the stimulus-perception-affection theory in the context of tourists. This study focuses on visual branding design for destination management organizations (DMOs).

**Keywords:** visual, branding, logo, destination, tourism

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism industry entities are sensitive to exogenous factors, such as political stability, natural disasters, and pandemics, due to their effects on the level of destination income from visitors (Chung et al., 2020; S. Park et al., 2020). In 2020 there was clear evidence that the Covid-19 pandemic dramatically harmed global tourism, with world tourism visits in May 2020 down by 98% compared to the previous year (UNWTO, 2020). Understanding these characteristics,

developing the tourism industry requires synergy between stakeholders and rebuilding a safe and comfortable tourism image (Hassan & Mahrous, 2019).

One of the essential parts of tourism development is the image aspect of tourism destinations, as many studies link this factor to tourists' visit intentions and behaviour (Afshardoost & Eshaghi, 2020). Tourism destination managers from the private sector, communities, local governments, and countries have realized the importance of destination imagery with efforts to build

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destinations not only physically but also in terms of imagery, which is operationalized through the branding of tourism destinations (Danylyshyn et al., 2020). As a form of product, tourism destinations have brands created by their managers to strengthen their competition on global, regional, and national scales (Perkins et al., 2020). Furthermore, tourism destinations' branding is visualized through a logo chosen with specific criteria to represent its image (Rowley & Hanna, 2020).

A logo, as a representation of the brand of a tourism destination, has a structure and shape arranged in such a way as to be part of the visual communication between sender and receiver, between the manager of the tourism destination and the target market (Adamus-matuszyńska et al., 2021). As the tourism industry arises from travel activities, destinations and target markets are geographically distinct, thus requiring effective communication and providing information about the product offering, character, and uniqueness of the tourism destination. The branding logo of a tourism destination is arranged to carry out the communication function (Tsaur et al., 2020).

The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy of the Republic of Indonesia has issued a Ministerial Regulation on the branding logo of ten tourism destinations in Indonesia (Kementerian Pariwisata Republik Indonesia, 2017). In the regulation, the form and use of the branding logo of the tourism destinations of Bali, Bandung, Banyuwangi, Jakarta, Bunaken-Wakatobi-Raja Ampat, Yogyakarta-Solo-Semarang, Lombok, Makassar, Medan, and the Riau Islands are valid nationally and internationally. Establishing these logos aims to increase the marketing value of the tourism destinations and strengthen the previously established Wonderful Indonesia and Pesona Indonesia logos. The government believes these destinations are superior tourism development areas requiring special attention. Branding and co-branding are applied in Indonesia's tourism marketing strategy practised in the global tourism industry (Rowley & Hanna, 2020).

In particular, the branding of 10 destinations by the government can be reviewed as a destination marketing intervention, where the Central Government has determined the brand on a top-down basis. Destination management organizations in the region act as operators without providing solid ideas, as if this branding effort is made bottom-up. This policy is seen as a contradictory condition where regional authorities in Indonesia should manage tourism affairs autonomously. This study reveals the effectiveness of branding policy in the 10 Indonesian tourism destinations regarding the visual components and perceptions of built-in tourists' minds.

Research on branding tourism destinations has been widely conducted, with the topic of study, tourism destination branding being associated with creative-innovative processes (Trinchini et al., 2019), traveller's memory of destination logo (Slak Valek, 2020); the existence of symbolic and narrative representations on tourism destination websites (Gretzel & Collier de Mendonça, 2019); the existence of symbolic and narrative representations on tourism destination websites (Danylyshyn et al., 2020); stakeholder contributions in tourism destination branding (Perkins et al., 2020); and the important influence of logos and slogans in Asia-Pacific tourism (Tsaur et al., 2020). This study represents a roadmap for tourism destination branding that reveals the phenomenon of branding design, visualization, and branding-related behaviour.

Discussion of logo branding as a top-down policy product reviewed from the effectiveness of visual design has not been extensively conducted. Most studies have considered the utilization, implications, and visualization of the Wonderful Indonesia branding logo as country branding for Indonesian tourism (Hakim, 2020; Indra, 2020; Nasution et al., 2020; Nuzululita et al., 2019; Wibowo & Febrita, 2020). Practically, tourism destination branding policies must be studied amid the post-Covid-19 pandemic conditions, where tourism destinations are encouraged to restore tourism by relying on archipelago tourists. It is believed that the

results of this study will fill the knowledge gap regarding the decision-making process of tourism destination branding development.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Destination Branding**

Tourist destinations as non-tangible products are a unity of multi-dimensional aspects that provide a unique experience to their visitors (Chi et al., 2020). This uniqueness must be formed into destination branding to distinguish one destination from another. Destination branding has been applied as a marketing communication medium on the scale of sites, cities, regions, and countries; it is used to increase tourist visits (Dinnie, 2017). Destination branding comes from the integrated destination marketing formula, whose focus of the study is devoted to how a destination image is built intentionally by its manager through match-making destination resources to opportunities that arise in its external environment (Adamus-matuszyńska et al., 2021; Pike, 2004). In line with (Bramwell, 2015), who provides the view that: (1) destination branding is the theory of promotion of a place to tourists; (2) it can be studied semiotically; (3) and can be expanded into efforts to indoctrinate the value of destination wisdom to tourists.

In the broader context, destination branding has been found (Avraham, 2018) to be a tool used to fight stereotypes of a tourism destination based on the concept of “destination image” (John L. Crompton, 1979, p. 18), which is defined as “the sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a person has of a destination”. The image of a destination in the minds of a communal market group encourages a shared perception of natural and social resources, the quality of experience, the risk of visitation, and the prevailing prices in the destination. Perception has more urgency than reality because perception influences the actual behaviour of consumers (Kotler et al., 2019; Kotler & Keller, 2016); therefore, tourists’

perception must be managed to maintain visits to the destination.

A finding from the study of (Foroudi et al., 2018) shows that digital destination branding is a key factor contributing to building awareness of the destination’s character, affecting travellers’ likelihood to revisit the place effectively and to recommend it. Destination branding that is good in the minds of tourists will be able to provide satisfaction and build loyalty (S. W. Lee et al., 2020). From the perspective of DMO, destination branding is built through visual perception via form, colour, and slogan elements to improve users’ sensory and affective experience of a destination. (Lojo et al., 2020).

### **2.2 Destination Logo and Slogan**

Logos serve as visual clues for speedier processing and global recognition of brands across languages and cultures, whether stylized renderings of brand names or more abstract designs (Kohli et al., 2007). A logo becomes an essential visual element in the branding of tourism destinations; it becomes a marketing instrument equipped with visual elements in slogans, colours, and structures (Adamus-matuszyńska et al., 2021; Séraphin et al., 2016). The combination of logo elements represents the most crucial relationship between logotype, brandmark, and tagline (Alina Wheeler, 2013). In graphic design studies, this interrelation is realized technically through proportion, placement, spacing, colour, typeface, and background (Adamus-matuszyńska et al., 2021). A logo becomes the key element of brand identity, visually representing the essence of what the brand represents. Logos have the potential to serve as a focal point of relationships for customers, communicating and reinforcing the brand’s core values (Kaur & Kaur, 2019; C. W. Park et al., 2013).

In the concept of the tourism destination logo, the elements of markers (shapes, colours, structures, and slogans) are formulated in such a way as to build a perception of the characteristics of the tourist

destination (Avraham, 2018; A. H. Lee, 2020; Lupu et al., 2021). Logo components (colours, shapes, structures) and slogans integrated as visual branding build associations with the brand it represents. This is to do with the findings (Paraskevaïdis & Weidenfeld, 2021), whereby logos become the dominant part of verbal and non-verbal communication in human life.

The global primary markers in the form of shapes and colours in the logo have been applied according to destination characteristics (Lourenção et al., 2020; Rowley & Hanna, 2020). This application is widely seen in the symbol of waves and coconut trees for beach tourist destinations and trees and green for mountain destinations, identified in studies (Govers et al., 2017) which have reviewed the utilization of landscape in the formulation of destination branding. In other forms, endemic animal forms have become one of the inspirations of logos for tourist destinations in various places. This concept aligns with applying logos to manufactured products or companies, which is much more established than the concept of the tourism destination logo (Wilson, 2020). The selection of shapes and colours in a logo is unique, representing the product's character to build perception and awareness in the minds of consumers. The selection of shapes in tourism destination logos is arranged in such a way as to be easily recognized, understood, and precisely perceived according to the character of the destination it represents. The practical shape of the logo is judged by its ability to build a proper perception of the tourism destination (Rowley & Hanna, 2020).

Colour as a genuine part of the logo has been widely researched and has become one of the main topics in the science of signs (Foroudi et al., 2017; Jin et al., 2019; Yu et al., 2020). Colour proxies captured by travellers' memories closely relate to the perception of their experience and build perceptions of tourism destinations (A. H. Lee, 2020). The selection of colours on the logo of tourist destinations serves as a visual binder, has the interpretive ability of the

tourist experience offered, and provides a strong symbolic message for service in the tourist destination (A. H. Lee, 2020; Slak Valek, 2020; Yu et al., 2020).

As a staple part of destination branding, the slogan is used to reinforce the positioning statement of a brand (Keller et al., 2015; Kotler et al., 2019). Slogans are words that are easy to remember, pick up, and pronounce and often have rhymes in a particular language (Kohli et al., 2007). Slogans are closely related to the logo elements, establishing unity of the visual package of destination branding. An effective slogan is measured by its ability to shape perceptions of the respective tourism destination, persuasion of visits, and its independent functionality (Lourenção et al., 2020; Wilson, 2020).

### **Hypothesis Development**

H1: The shape of the logo has a significant effect on the perception of tourists

H2: Logo colours have a significant effect on tourist perception

H3: Slogans have a significant effect on tourist perception

### **2.3 Tourist Affection**

The branding of tourism destinations aims to build tourists' perceptions following the purpose of DMO, ultimately increasing interest in visiting, actual visits, and loyalty to the destination (Avraham, 2018; Balakrishnan, 2009; Ruiz-Real et al., 2020). Branding as a marketing tool is first formulated to build awareness of the existence of destinations (Chi et al., 2020) by building a perception of the region's characteristics and providing a solid association in the minds of tourists regarding the experience they can gain. This transformation can be reviewed as a process of sensory-perception-affection and memory that continues to repeat. In this repetition, the brand image of tourism destinations is increasingly gaining a place at the top of tourists' minds, impacting their loyalty to a tourism destination (Chen et al., 2020; Huerta-Álvarez et al., 2020).

Affection in the tourist visit is seen as purchasing a tourist trip since it involves the development of interests, travel planning, and actual visits to tourist destinations (Akgün et al., 2020; Wong et al., 2018). Interest is built by the characteristic association of a destination. At the same time, the more technical act of travel planning is strongly influenced by the associations of the perception of the experience to be gained. Thus, it is strongly suspected that the visual elements formed in the brand image of tourism destinations have a significant relationship to the actions of tourist travel through the formation of perceptions and associations in the minds of tourists.

### Hypothesis Development

H4: Perception affects affection

### 2.4 Conceptual Framework

This study seeks to uncover conceptual models that link the visual elements of tourism destination branding to tourist affection mediated by perception. Four hypotheses are proposed to confirm concepts and theories related to the visual design of destination branding and the attitude of tourists, as portrayed in Figure 1.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

Semiotic visual analysis reveals the structure of the mark on the branding logo of ten Indonesian tourist destinations (Rose, 2001), interpreting the elements of colour, form, and slogan into a narrative. This method is considered appropriate for transforming logo visualization's sensory capture into a perception of signs and symbols. The results of this analysis will be combined with the findings of the perception expressed by the respondents.

The study also sought to measure the model of the relationship of visual branding elements of 10 (ten) tourist destinations in Indonesia with variables in tourist behaviour through a survey approach by developing a list of questions as the primary data collection instrument. The questionnaire, designed with a 5-point Likert scale from 1-5, was distributed online via social media in June-September 2021. The study sample consisted of Indonesian residents who had been asked a selection question whereby they were required to confirm that they had seen one of the 10 (ten) logos of the Indonesian tourism destinations. From the 306 responses collected, 216 responses met the criteria. This number is considered sufficient to be analyzed through SEM-PLS; with five variables studied, the desired number of samples is 100 (i.e.,  $20 \times 5 = 100$ ) (J. Hair et al., 2017).

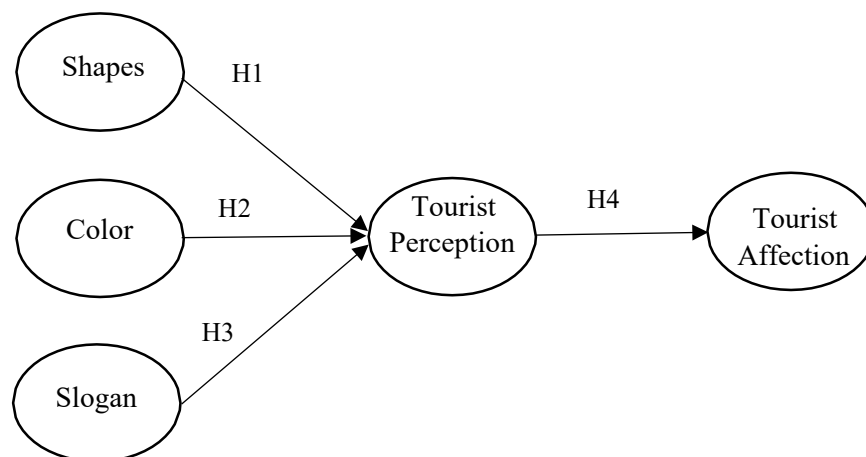


Figure 1 Proposed Model

The hypothesized model was tested using partial least squares analysis. The data were processed using the SmartPLS version 3.0 statistical software package (Ringle et al., 2015). Unlike CB-SEM, this analysis avoids concerns with small sample sizes and non-standard data; it can estimate complex research models with numerous intermediate, latent, and observable variables, particularly structural models, and is appropriate for studies predisposed to prediction.

Descriptive statistics on respondent profiles revealed that 47% of respondents were men while 53% were women. Meanwhile, 28% of respondents were aged 26-55 years, 58% were aged 18-25, and 15% were over 55. Regarding their level of education, 5% of respondents were educated to the high school level, 58% at Diploma or Bachelor's level, and 37% at to postgraduate level. The professional background of respondents included 37% government employees and 6% entrepreneurs, while 55% of respondents were students, and 2% worked in categories other than those mentioned, as presented in Table 1.

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1 Visual Analysis

The establishment of the logo of the ten leading tourist destinations was analyzed to reveal the visual meaning, interpreting each tourist destination logo to become the study's object. The semiotic approach translates the structure of the signs, colours, and slogans applied to each logo.

The logo uses a visual sign (icon, index, symbol) in combination with a verbal slogan, e.g. "Bali the Island of Gods" (Figure 2.). The logo structure consists of *Meru*, Flowers, and Islands, each meaning Balinese life, namely that it is religious, beautiful, and provides geographical significance. The slogan Of Bali, the Island of Gods, aligns with the nickname of this destination. It seeks to provide positioning of tourist products that blend the community's spirituality with the target market. This slogan also shows the harmonious relationship of the Balinese people with God, the environment, and fellow humans (*Trihita Karana*).

**Table 1.** Respondent Profile

Variables	Category	Respondents Proportion	Respondent (n=216)
Gender	Male	47%	102
	Female	53%	114
Age	18-25	58%	126
	26-55	28%	60
	> 55	14%	30
Qualification	Senior High School	5%	12
	Diploma	58%	126
	Postgraduate	37%	78
Occupation	Government Employees	37%	78
	Entrepreneurial	6%	12
	Student	55%	120
	Others	2%	6
Recognizable Logo	Bandung	39%	84
	Bali	22%	48
	Jakarta	31%	66
	Yogya, Solo & Semarang	8%	18

Source: research data, 2021



**Figure 2** Bali Destination Logo the Island of Gods

Each colour has its meaning in harmony with the colour scheme of “Wonderful Indonesia” and “Pesona Indonesia” as the parent logo. Orange symbolizes innovation, desire for change, and openness; blue symbolizes universality, peace, and consistency; green symbolizes creativity, eco-friendliness, and harmony; purple symbolizes imagination, faith, and unity of the soul; and magenta symbolizes balance, sensitivity, and practical thinking.



**Figure 3** Destination Logo “Stunning Bandung”

The logo of the tourist destination Bandung (Figure 3.) applies a visual sign (index-symbol) and verbal component in the form of the slogan “Stunning Bandung: Where the Wonders of West Java Begins”. The logo structure consists of a crown, pistil, and traditional Sundanese weapon, “kujang”, that carries the meaning of the beauty (in nature and smoothness of speech/friendliness), authenticity, and creativity of West Java, with cheerfulness, beauty, and adventure, full of sensations that blend harmoniously. Kujang symbolizes the peculiarities of the Sundanese people, who are dynamic, creative, brave, and unique but still hold firm to the dignity of customs and culture. The use of blue symbolizes universality, peace, and consistency; green

symbolizes creativity, eco-friendliness, and harmony; orange symbolizes innovation, desire for change, and openness; purple symbolizes the power of imagination, faith, and unity of the body-soul; and magenta symbolizes balance, sensitivity, and practical thinking.

The text “Bandung” is larger than “Stunning” to emphasize the impression of Bandung as a superior centre of attention and the destination. Bandung is expected to be the main gateway for tourism to West Java. The word “Stunning” (charming) means to leave a positive and memorable impression on the community and the harmony of nature, culture, and society in Bandung and West Java. The slogan “Where the Wonders of West Java Begins” means Bandung positions itself as the gateway to West Java’s charm in terms of being a transportation hub with an excellent civilization, reflecting the friendliness of the population.



**Figure 4** Banyuwangi Tourist Destination Logo

The Majestic Banyuwangi logo applies visual signs in icons and verbal signs (Figure 4.). The logo consists of a shining sun shape referring to Banyuwangi’s Sunrise of Java; along with mountain, sea waves, blue fire, elephant “Oling” batik motifs, and the typical style of Gandrung dance. Overall, these signs illustrate the natural and cultural charm of Banyuwangi. Orange symbolizes innovation, desire for change, and openness, while the colours of the elements that blend (including the orange colour of the sun) give the impression of being colourful, cheerful, and friendly. The slogan “Majestic” means that Banyuwangi is an Indonesian destination with magnificent, majestic, and magical natural beauty, and a great and fascinating ancestral heritage, offering a fascinating tourist experience.



**Figure 5** Enjoy Jakarta Destination Logo

The logo of Jakarta (Figure 5.) provides a visual sign in the form of an icon or symbol, and the verbal sign “enjoy Jakarta” is also applied to the destination logo. The logo structure consists of the shape of the National Monument as a symbol of Jakarta, while the shape of the fire that is above the five lines symbolizes the five areas of Jakarta (Central Jakarta, North Jakarta, South Jakarta, West Jakarta, and East Jakarta) that live and move agilely and quickly as a symbol of progress. Fire also symbolizes the urban life of Jakarta, which has endless energy. The five lines also symbolize that Jakarta is a place for diverse races and cultures and a rapidly growing city. The use of colour has the meanings of blue symbolizing universality, peace, and consistency; green symbolizing creativity, eco-friendliness, and harmony; orange symbolizing innovation, desire for change, and openness; purple symbolizing the power of imagination, faith, and unity of the body-soul; and magenta symbolizing balance, sensitivity, and practical thinking. The slogan ‘Enjoy Jakarta’ is written in lowercase letters to symbolize humility and openness. This slogan describes Jakarta, which offers a variety of unique experiences in tourism, such as shopping, modern tourism, and distinctive and diverse culture. Overall, combining the logo with the slogan gives rise to the meaning that Jakarta is a city that always lives and never stops moving.



**Figure 6** Bunaken-Wakatobi-Raja Ampat Destination Logo

The destination logo in Figure 6 uses visual signs (Icon, Index) and verbal signs. The structure of Indonesia’s three leading marine tourism destinations illustrates the destinations’ underwater beauty, natural wealth, and culture, relating to the diversity of characteristics, wealth, and uniqueness owned by each destination. The use of blue, green, orange and red demonstrates the diversity and beauty of the underwater nature in these destinations and the strength of the marine culture embraced by the local community. Text using black and prominent colours strengthens the impression of Bunaken, Wakatobi, and Raja Ampat as the centre of attention and prime destinations. The use of font types in line with Wonderful Indonesia is intended to connect the leading brands and sub-brands of Indonesian tourist destinations.



**Figure 7** Java Cultural Wonders Destination Logo

The logo in Figure 7 is used in Jogjakarta-Solo-Semarang (Joglosemar) destinations as a destination branding unit, applied type visual sign in the form of symbols or icons and verbal signs. The logo structure consists of the shape of Borobudur Temple, which was chosen as the signature product of the Joglosemar tourism destinations. The level of form from the bottom up manifests the concept “*kamadhatu-rupadhatu-arupadhatu*”; it reflects the diverse levels of human life. The application of orange symbolizes innovation, desire for change, and openness; blue symbolizes universality, peace, and consistency; green symbolizes creativity, eco-friendliness, and alignment for green; magenta symbolizes the power of imagination, faith, and unity of the body and soul; while purple symbolizes balance, sensitivity, and practical thinking. The slogan “Cultural Wonders” demonstrates



the ability to unite all the tourism potentials in the Joglosemar area, representing the power of Joglosemar cultural tourism, located in the “Heart of Java Island.”



**Figure 8.** Wonderful Riau Islands Destination Logo

The destination logo in Figure 8 applies icons, indexes, and symbols, as visual signs, in combination with the verbal sign of the “Wonderful Riau Islands” slogan. It represents the Malay culture as one of the cultural elements preserved through games in the Riau Islands. This form reflects impressions and represents the strength of marine tourism and island cruising in the Riau Islands. The shape of the waves becomes a presentation of the dynamics of the life of the islanders. The seven waves describe the seven districts or cities in Riau Islands Province and the marine diversity and cultural arts typical of the Malay people in the Riau Islands. The colour blue symbolizes universality, peace, and consistency, while the slogan “Wonderful Riau Islands” refers to the natural and cultural wealth and the charm of the stunning natural beauty in every corner of the Riau Islands.



**Figure 9.** Friendly Lombok Destination Logo

The logo of Lombok Island (Figure 9.) uses visual icons, indexes, and verbal signs. The logo consists of a mountain shape, sea waves, a seabed, and bright sun. The overall blend of elements and colours indicates cheerfulness, friendliness, and friendship, symbolized by the shining sun, waves, mountains, and seabed, which represents the charm of the beauty of Lombok’s natural contours. These forms also represent a

beautiful sunset view of the sea or at the top of a mountain that has become Lombok’s natural tourist attraction. The word “Friendly” in the slogan “Friendly Lombok” displays Lombok as a tourism destination that provides comfort in facilities, services, and community hospitality to all foreign and domestic tourists.



**Figure 10.** Logo Explore Makassar

The logo in Figure 10 applies icon signs, symbols, and verbal signs. The logo consists of a Phinisi Ship that symbolizes the maritime identity, culture, and success attached to Makassar. It is interpreted as connectivity with the international world and the readiness of the people of Makassar to welcome foreign tourists with friendliness at the threshold of the balance of history and modern civilization. The letter ‘K,’ Sulawesi Island, under “Key,” describes Makassar as the key (gate) of the Sulawesi entrance. The word “Explore” used in the slogan “Explore Makassar” indicates that Makassar has a variety of charming tourist destinations, including a range of natural charms, culture, culinary experiences, and modern tourism.



**Figure 11.** Logo Colorful Medan

The destination branding of Colorful Medan uses the visual signs of icons, symbols, and verbal signs. The structure of the logo consists of “Ulos” cloth that stretches and forms the letter ‘M’ representing the word Medan (capital of North Sumatra). Batak’s distinctive Uulos fabric, made by weaving, is the pride and identity of the people of North Sumatra. The pattern and colour of the fabric refer to the primary colours of the Wonderful

Indonesia brand, describing the diversity of tribes and ethnicities in Medan, which is an attraction with tourism potential. The dynamic shape of the fabric illustrates the diversity of cultures and the natural wealth of Medan, a tourist magnet. The slogan “Colorful” indicates that Medan offers a ‘colourful’ and ‘rich’ tourist experience to arouse tourists’ desire to visit. The visualization of the fabric stretching reinforces this impression and meaning.

## 4.2 Quantitative Analysis

### 4.2.1 Measurement Model

To use the Smart PLS data processing, bootstrapping of 5000 people was conducted to assess the reliability and validity of all constructs. The convergent validity, reliability, and discriminant validity of all constructs were evaluated to confirm the

reliability and validity of the measurement model. First, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) ensured convergent validity for all constructs. To confirm the measurement model’s reliability and validity, one item was removed from the colour construct (Co1), two items were removed from the tourist perception construct (Per1 and Per2), and one item was removed from the shape construct (Sh4). All items loaded adequately inside their theoretical structures, as shown in Table 2, with a statistical significance of 0.05. PLS (J. F. Hair et al., 2018) was then used to examine the composite reliability of each construct, with each construct demonstrating a higher degree of reliability than the required criterion of 0.70.

The Fornell-Larcker criterion assesses discriminant validity by comparing an individual construct’s AVE to all other constructs. According to the results of

**Table 2.** Assessment of the Measurement Model

Constructs	Items	Factor Loadings (>0.7)	CR	AVE
Shapes	Sh1	0.817	0.915	0.641
	Sh2	0.771		
	Sh3	0.754		
	Sh5	0.876		
	Sh6	0.800		
	Sh7	0.780		
	Colour	Co2		
Co3		0.866		
Co4		0.800		
Slogans	Slo1	0.736	0.913	0.726
	Slo2	0.908		
	Slo3	0.893		
	Slo4	0.861		
Tourist Perception	Per3	0.826	0.930	0.727
	Per4	0.882		
	Per5	0.855		
	Per6	0.868		
	Per7	0.830		
Tourist Affections	Afe1	0.904	0.960	0.856
	Afe2	0.932		
	Afe3	0.942		
	Afe4	0.922		

Note: Co1, Per1, Per2, and Sh4, were removed to ensure the reliability and validity of the measurement model

discriminant validity testing, the square root of each concept's AVE should be larger than the correlation of the construct with other latent variables. Cross-loadings of all the items were also examined. The results demonstrate that each within-construct item loading was greater for the measured construct than its cross-loadings on the other items, indicating that the measurement model's discriminant validity was acceptable (J. Hair et al., 2017).

The discriminant validity analysis using the Fornell-Larcker criterion analysis shows that the square root of Average Variance Explained (AVE) for each construct was greater than the variance between constructs. Consequently, it can be stated that there is discriminant validity between the constructs. Table 3 shows the results for discriminant validity in the model, the square root of the AVE of each construct is greater than the shared variance between the constructs. Table 3 demonstrates that none of the values exceeds the 0.9 cut-offs, indicating that all variable constructs are legitimate (Ringle et al., 2015). It can be said that discriminant validity is acceptable.

**4.2.2 Structural Model Analysis**

Figure 12 represents the path coefficients and R-squared values of the proposed model. The path coefficients represent the strength of the relationship between dependent and independent constructs, while R-squared values represent the variance explained by independent constructs. From Fig. 2 and Table 4, logo shapes significantly positively influence tourist perceptions ( $\beta = 0.774$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), thus supporting hypothesis H1. Logo colours also significantly influenced

tourist perceptions ( $\beta = 0,135$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), thus supporting hypothesis H2. The slogans did not significantly influence tourist perceptions ( $\beta = -0.051$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ), thus not supporting hypothesis H3. Tourist perceptions significantly influenced tourist affection ( $\beta = 0.747$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), thus supporting hypothesis H4. It is noted that the R-square value of shapes, colours, and slogans in tourist perception is 68.3%, while the R-square value in tourist affection is 55.6%. This demonstrates that tourist affection is strongly explained by the tourists' perception of the destination logos.

This study also analyzed the indirect and total effects between the variables to obtain complete and comprehensive findings to understand the interaction between logo, perception, and affection. The indirect effect test shows that colour and shape were found to have a significant effect ( $p < 0.05$ ), while the slogan was declared insignificant. In the total effect tests, it was shown that slogans have no direct influence on perception and have no significant indirect effect on affection. Meanwhile, the shape had the highest effect on total affection ( $\beta = 0.578$ ). This suggests that the visualization of shapes is more dominant in building tourist affection.

In this study, perception is a mediator that bridges the process of visual abuse by tourists in building their affection. From its role, perception is influenced by shape and colour and indirectly mediates traveller affection. This shows that the visual proposition of a logo design. will only effectively influence affection if it can build the proper perception and have a visual translation in common. The slogan was found to have no role in either direct or indirect interactions on this model. This can be understood as a

**Table 3.** Discriminant Validity of the Measurement Model

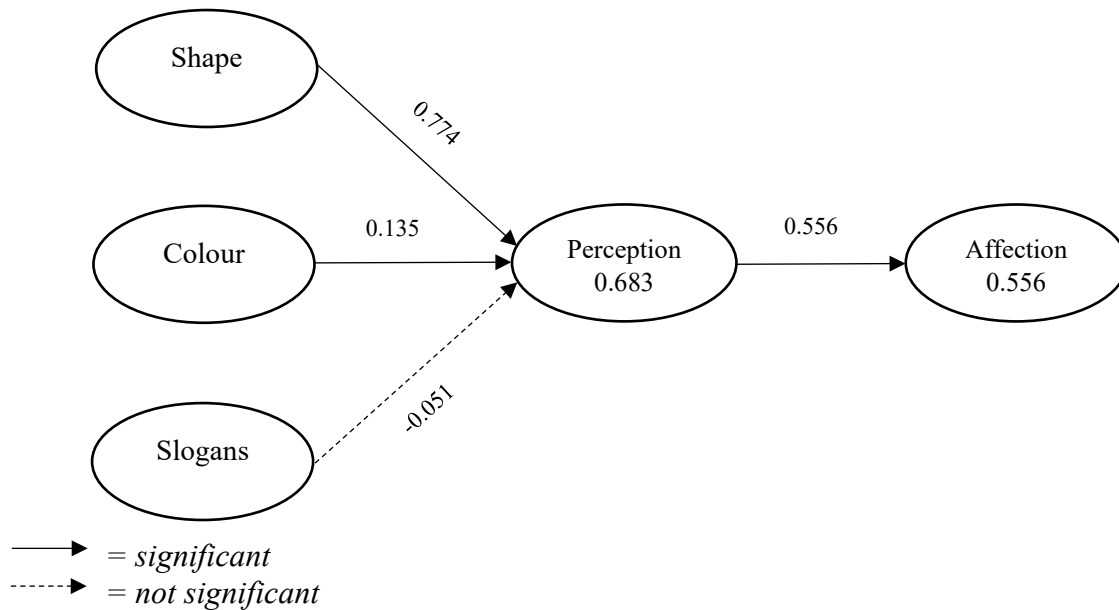
	Affection	Colour	Perception	Shape	Slogans
Affection	0.925				
Colour	0.373	0.820			
Perception	0.747	0.550	0.852		
Shape	0.746	0.577	0.823	0.801	
Slogans	0.553	0.619	0.470	0.565	0.852

Source: research data, 2021

**Table 4.** Results of the Structural Model Analysis

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path coefficient $\beta$	t-value	Result
H1	Shape $\rightarrow$ Tourist Perceptions	0,774***	14,035	Supported
H2	Colour $\rightarrow$ Tourist Perceptions	0,135***	2,481	Supported
H3	Slogans $\rightarrow$ Tourist Perceptions	-0,051	0,913	Not Supported
H4	Tourist Perceptions $\rightarrow$ Tourist Affections	0.747***	24,552	Supported

Note: \*\*\*p < 0.001



**Figure 12.** Results of the Proposed Model

Source: research data, 2021

weakness in setting the logo branding of Indonesian tourism destinations, as it does not function as a visual element that can affect perception and affection.

## 5. DISCUSSION

### 5.1 Theoretical Implications

This study has explained the relationship between the destination visual brand as a sign, the tourism destination, and tourists. These three aspects are interrelated in the dynamics between tourism destinations and their potential tourists. The visual brand is operated as a marketing tool by providing sensory stimulus, building the perception of destinations in a planned manner by providing stereotypes of meaning. With this, the study

confirms the concept of the tourism semiotic triangle (Echtner, 1999), where visual branding relationships in the form of advertising become an integral part of the efforts of tourism destination managers to communicate with their markets (John & De’Villiers, 2020; Lourenção et al., 2020).

Second, semiotically, this study revealed visual branding in 10 tourism destinations in Indonesia from the aspect of the ‘gestalt’ impression communicated by the advertisement and the meanings conveyed by specific signs (icons, indices, symbols). From the visual analysis that has been done, it is known that the application of landscape elements in the logo of tourism destinations in Indonesia remains the choice of marketers to communicate the promise of the experience tourists will receive when visiting. A study by

(Govers et al., 2017) has confirmed this where the landscape becomes a critical element of branding tourism destinations.

Third, the study revealed that the logo elements (shapes and colours) have significantly affected travellers' perceptions of the tourist destinations it represents. In the findings, the logo's shape becomes an aspect that significantly influences colour to tourists' perception. This can be a consideration for marketers to design the most recognizable logo shapes associated with tourism destinations (Beritelli & Laesser, 2018). Logo colour selection was found to influence travellers' perceptions significantly, supporting the study (A. H. Lee, 2020) where it was found that colour gives a strong suggestion to the perception of the characteristics of tourism destinations in actual tourists.

## **5.2 Managerial Implications**

This study reveals that the government's centrally-determined visual branding of tourism destinations on a top-down basis still has shortcomings in the effectiveness of its design. Slogans applied in visual branding can still be improved in function to provide a strong perception in the minds of tourists. The application of slogans should technically be able to persuade, strengthening the function of other visual branding components in influencing travellers' travel decisions. Beyond that, the formulation of visual branding can collaborate more to involve the aspirations of tourism actors in tourist destinations.

It is also known that Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) can pay more attention to the function of the tourism destination logo as a marketing tool. The perception built upon translating the logo in the minds of tourists can factually affect the trip's intention, interest, and planning. DMO must design an attractive, easily recognizable logo and publish it consistently to build a prime tourism destination.

The management of tourism destinations in Indonesia must be done by studying marketing communication patterns more

effectively. Some logos are unique but difficult to understand by the market. Shapes and colours are attractive and provide proper perception, but established slogans are elusive to the market. Slogans on Indonesian tourism destinations can be made in two languages, local and international, to market domestic and international destinations. Slogans also need to be aligned with the characteristics of tourism destinations collectively understood by DMO community markets and not only built as visual complements.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

Although the study has provided an understanding of the interaction between the visual branding components and the perceptions of and effect on tourists, it is realized that this study has limitations. First, the study analyzed visual branding actions in ten Indonesian tourism destinations. Further research can be extended to other destinations by comparing established and startup destinations to understand the visual effects model of branding further. Second, this study reveals the influence of the visual component of branding on tourists' perceptions but has not fully described the transformation of visual information that occurs in the minds of tourists so that it becomes an understanding and perception; this provides an opportunity for other studies that specifically uncover this process of visual information transformation. Third, the  $R^2$  calculated in this study indicates that other components still contribute to the relationship between visual branding, perception, and affection of tourists. This limitation provides study opportunities on other variables to further enrich the model of the relationship between visual branding and tourists as its audience.

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