Indonesia Gastronomy Brand: Netnography on Virtual Culinary Community

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Abstract: Indonesia is popular on diversity of culinary and food on ethnic and place basis. The potential of culinary and food become gastronomy brand has been proposed as a part of national brand representation. Gastronomy brand could be a part of vital life, history representation, tradition and culture universally and emotionally. This study used netnography analysis on specific virtual Indonesia culinary community and food lover group. The community posted pictures or images and text's comments or descriptions about any culinary and food items on google + (googleplus group). This study found that insider type of observed community member could give strong ties to other types of community member about any food of Indonesia. The posting of insiders could also influence and affect other members' loyalty to involve on discussion of gastronomy products. The insiders provide more data and facts about traditional food products that could become a part of gastronomy brand from Indonesia.

Key words: Gastro brand, gastronomy brand, insider, netnography, virtual culinary community

INTRODUCTION

The initiative of Indonesia nation brand could be projected from Indonesia tagline: "Wonderful Indonesia" and "Remarkable Indonesia". The first tagline "Wonderful Indonesia" is the promise to give new pleased experience on human and natural aspects of Indonesia tourism. While the second tagline "Remarkable Indonesia" is a worldwide campaign to attract foreign investment to Indonesia. The effort of Indonesia government to build nation brand have been recognized from promoting tourism, business and investment sectors.

Unfortunately, at the international level, Indonesia position is still below 20 countries that have good country brand index. FutureBrand published Country Brand Index 2014-2015 that decided Indonesia at 66th rank at the world wide level and at 14th rank at the Asia Pacific region level (Moore, 2015). In addition, the finding showed that the respondents have strong association related to Indonesia when they recalled air travel brand. As the result, air travel brand could make important contribution toward building country brand perceptions.

Furthermore, FutureBrand report showed that the weakness from Asia-Pacific region perspective including Indonesia is about political freedom, business and tolerance, value for money, resort and lodging. Indonesia has below 10% on average purpose score and below 25% on average experience score on country brand perception

(Moore, 2015). At the same time, the study indicated that one of unexplained weakness is about food dimension on country brand index. Asia-Pacific region including Indonesia has only got 25% on food dimension. It means food product from Indonesia has low authentic, quality and uniqueness. In addition, the respondents have also low desire to buy products made in the country (Moore, 2015).

In contrast, Indonesia got three prestigious award from United Nation World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) in 2016. The first award was achieved by Banyuwangi district for innovation in public policy governance category; the second award was given to Garuda and Coca Cola Amatil Indonesia as the first runner up for innovation in enterprise category and; the third award was given to Yayasan Karang Lestari that become the first runner up for innovation in non-profit organization. It was also reported that Indonesia has 47th rank on Competitiveness Index about Wonderful Indonesia on World Economic Forum.

Indonesia also got three World Halal Travel Awards (WHTA) in World Halal Tourism Summit, Abu Dhabi and got five nominations from 14 categories (Rafikasari, 2015). Lombok received two awards for World's Best Halal Tourism Destination and World's Best Halal Honeymoon Destination categories. Indonesia Sofyan Hotel Group also got award for World's Best Family Friendly Hotel. Other five nominations of WHTA for Indonesia come

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from World best family friendly hotel, World best cultural destination, World's best culinary destination, World's best halal honeymoon destination and World's best halal tourism destination categories.

In response to FutureBrand report and the achieved award from UNWTO and WHTA, this study focused on the food dimension and nomination of WHTA for World's best culinary destination. Until now only a few study about food and culinary become gastronomy brand[7]. The studies of gastro brand as nation brand mostly come from government perspective (Febrina and Irwansyah, 2014; Lestari and Aprilia, 2013).

Therefore, this study focused on community perspective about gastronomy grand. The main research question is how the community especially online or virtual community construct the awareness of local culinary as a food of nation brand. Other research question is how member of virtual community understand the importance of traditional food as gastronomy brand.

This study observed especially on virtual community that love with Indonesia culinary and food. The community have 14,513 active members (Samudro, 2016). The community members have been posted their discussions, images, or comments since January 17, 2013 which created by Pangeran Samudro on google plus. Google plus has two core functions: communications and photos. Google plus could unveiled a significant redesign which focused on the groups, communities and collections functionality in order to give narrow service's scope into interest-based networking.

GASTRONOMY BRAND: TRADITIONAL CULINARY AND LOCAL FOOD OF NATION

Gastro brand is defined as "activity to recognize and appreciate food as material representation of experience to have emotional and cultural connection" while gastronomy brand is defined as "a name, term, symbol, design, all combined that involved in tasting, preparing, experiencing, experimenting, researching, discovering, understanding and writing about food". As a part of cultural brand (Chapple, 2013), country brand (Moore, 2015) and nation brand (DeSoucey, 2010), food dimension could be constructed as gastronomy brand.

Previous study showed that one of traditional culinary or food known as "nasi goreng" (fried rice) could become Indonesia gastro brand. Other studies showed that food is also related to gastro-tourism brand (Williams *et al.*, 2014) or gastro-related to tourist destinations (Fox, 2007; Hall and Mitchell, 2005; Kivela and Crotts, 2006; Hjalager and Richards, 2002). However, this study focused on new concept of gastronomy brand.

Gastronomy brand could be identified from name, term, symbol, design, or all combined (Aaker, 1996); form, color and dish composition as tangible aspect of food (Chernatony *et al.*, 1998); emotional dimension such as any mood, personalities and message while experiencing of eating food (Schnetzer, 1999) and cultural dimension of food taste and touch. Therefore, gastronomy brand could be comprised from any traditional culinary and local food name, term, symbol, design, all combined that involved in tasting, preparing, experiencing, experimenting, researching, discovering, understanding and writing about food of a nation.

As food of a nation, gastronomy brand could construct a symbol or representation of nation brand[7]. Moreover, Simon Anholt explained that food is one of dimension on cultural and heritage variable that constructed nation brand hexagon (Anholt, 1998). Moreover, previous study described that food especially natural food is one core brand identity to develop country brand (Florek, 2005). Other previous study identified that brand identity of traditional food could promote a country (Baker and Balmer, 1997). At the same time, agro-food products could promote country's tourism destination. Especially for nation with limited financial resources, smaller, or emerging, the country could highlight their national culture including food to represent and build nation-brand equity.

NETNOGRAPHY ON ONLINE CULINARY COMMUNITY

"Komunitas Kuliner Indonesia" (Indonesia Culinary Community) on Google plus was observed by netnography method. Netnography is adapted from ethnography which mostly used to study online communities[27] or unique contingencies of various types of computer-mediated social interaction (Schnetzer, 1999). The method is also referred to as web or virtual ethnography (Sumiala and Tikka, 2013). There are five steps to do netnography methods: making cultural entree; gathering and analyzing the data; ensuring trustworthy interpretation; conducting ethical research and; providing opportunities for culture member feedback (Kozinet, 2010) .

The first of netnography is a making cultural entree. The cultural entree was focused on traditional and local food. Traditional food is related to any food and consumption that passed and over the long-term duration of civilization (Zaine, 2010) through generation (Kristbergsson and Oliveira, 2016). Local food refers to food grown within 100 miles (160 km) of its point of purchase or consumption. Although, there are two types

of community on Indonesia culinary community of Google plus, this study only observed specifically on traditional culinary community. The community focused on posting and discussing about traditional and local food. These users as a part of community member shared their experiences and key information related to all sorts of tasting, preparing, experiencing, experimenting, researching, discovering, understanding and writing on traditional and local food of Indonesia. Moreover, other community online about Indonesia culinary was found not only focusing on Indonesian food but the community posted any different type of food or culinary which is not relevant with Indonesian food. Therefore, the focused cultural entrée in this study is about any posting of virtual community member on tasting, preparing, experiencing, experimenting, researching, discovering, understanding and writing on traditional and local food of Indonesia.

During 12 months of virtual observation in 2015, this study gathered specific data on cultural entree about traditional food that was consistent on posting the community. The consistency of posting was analyzed based on how the member posted images and wrote about the taste, time of eating, link to discover the detail of food. The consistency of observation and analyzing is also focused on how the member got an experience of food making and serving.

This study found a specific member of online community who is consistent on posting the traditional food called "ANggara Anggaraeni". From the picture of avatar, the member could be identified as young female. She posted many traditional foods including the popular one which is known as "Karedok Asli Sunda". The posting become popular since the writing has been read 1,368 times.

The food could be a traditional culinary because she explained that "Karedok" is the title of food; "Asli" has a meaning of "original" and; "Sunda" is as a place where the food comes from. However, the food was not local food since the posting was not explained where and how to purchase or consume. She put the first statement about how fresh the food during the day. She gave the link of Karedok's recipe (www.arenamusik.com/hangout/resep-karedok-asli-sunda) and posted the image of food. The link specified on Peot's writing and explanation about the ingredient and how to make and serve the food. ANggara Anggaraeni discovered and shared the link of Karedok's recipe and images to the community. As a result, she got plus (+) 12 comments from other virtual community members. One of the comment is positive response and agree with her post ("Wuihhh siang2 karedok mntep sist...", Natt I (Chen), November 18, 2015).

This study found that the member community with the avatar like "ANggara Anggaraeni" is a part of insider. Insider is a type of persons in the virtual community which are similar to any members who are socially active and have strong interest in the community (Kozinets, 2012). This member type could affect and become good influencer among the community. The persons could be indicated from any posting of them which provide useful data about any traditional food of Indonesia. Their strong interest on traditional food of Indonesia gave enthusiastic of other members. As the result, their postings encouraged viewer or readers to give comments and joined the community. The insiders' posts endorse any traditional food become a part of gastronomy brand from Indonesia. They could increase the awareness of the importance of gastronomy by tasting, preparing, experiencing, or discovering the traditional food.

In term of ethical research of this study, the Indonesia traditional culinary as a part of virtual community member disclosed their presence publicly on the Internet. The researcher also disclosed himself by joining the community and being a part of community. As the result, any posting about Indonesia traditional culinary which was only seen by the community could be seen by any members including the new member who joins the community. Moreover, the community member agreed that their postings were not sensitive issues and they could be opened publicly. It can be indicated when the community member posted their messages, testimonies, recommendation of Indonesian traditional food to enhance and promote the food as a part of nation identity and nation brand.

Hence, any posting in virtual sphere about traditional food in the Indonesia culinary community could develop public communication media for exposing Indonesian gastronomy brand. As a part of public communication media, the community empower themselves to participate in developing the pride of nation from food or culinary dimension. In addition, the traditional food was inherited from ancient generation to speak and inform their symbols and activities as part of their previous existence with their future generation.

CONCLUSION

The specific online or virtual community which post regularly about local or traditional food could construct the important of culinary as a part of national identity. Moreover, the insider type of virtual community member could be an endorser for gastronomy brand especially

traditional culinary or food of Indonesia. Gastronomy brand was developed by insiders have strong ties, socially active, strong interest and enthusiastic on their posts.

Many new sites such as google plus have considered about the network and developed the site with group or community features. This opportunity makes any community to expand their interests globally. In term of gastronomy brand, the community which are gathered intentionally or not could promote the food, culinary or cuisine borderless and timeless.

Therefore, further study should observed other type of community member in the network of developing concept such as gastronomy brand. Since traditional food got more exposed and observed from the virtual community, there is also possibility to have further research on local food as a part of gastronomy brand. This study also recommends further research about the ingredient of local or traditional food. Moreover, the true or the real local culinary if the food is made in local ingredient.

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