Designing Brand Identity with a Mascot Media from Tapanuli Selatan Regency as a Tourism Promotion

Roy Hanafi Rambe, Rani Hermita
Universitas Potensi Utama, Medan, Indonesia
Email: royhanafifirambe08@gmail.com
Correspondence: royhanafifirambe08@gmail.com *

KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Tourism Department; Visual Identity; Design; mascot	The South Tapanuli Tourism Office is an institution engaged in tourism. This library is present to provide services, guidance, management of Tourism, documents, and archives. However, the existence of the South Tapanuli Tourism Office until now has not had a strong attraction for visitors because it does not have a visual identity. Therefore, a visual identity design was made at the South Tapanuli Regional Tourism Office using a 2D mascot as the main media. The mascot created later has a message, impression, and philosophy as a new spirit for the South Tapanuli Tourism Office. With the presence of the mascot of the South Tapanuli Tourism Office, it is hoped that it will be able to make the tourism office better known to the public with its visual identity.

Introduction

Tapanuli Seletan is a regency in North Sumatra, Indonesia. The capital city is Sipirok. This regency was originally fairly large and had its capital in Padang Sidempuan. Then, Padang Sidempuan City Expanded so that the capital was moved to Sipirok. This fairly large district has very promising tourism potential (Rambe, 2021; Valentina & Tando, 2018; Zhang et al., 2021). However, there are still many tourist attractions that are not known to tourists, so with, the South Tapanuli Tourism Office wants to develop tourism through brand identity in the form of mascots that can be used to show the existence and characteristics of South Tapanuli (Fairfield, 2021; Wheeler, 2012).

After many years the South Tapanuli Tourism Office does not yet have a mascot as a brand identity that the wider community can recognize. The promotion used is still lacking, and simple to build tourist destinations in South Tapanili (Ardhi, 2013; Dicki & Husni R, 2023; Siregar et al., 2021). The location of South Tapanuli in the tourist destination of North Sumatra Province makes the Regency not the only tourist destination in the province. So it is necessary to create a mascot that can characterize South Tapanuli compared to other districts to attract more people.

Brand identity in the form of mascots can be used to show the existence and characteristics of South Tapanuli (Vincent, 2024). A visual identity that presents the characteristics of South Tapanuli as a tourist destination that is equal to other districts will certainly increase the community's positive image, which will affect promotional efforts for South Tapanuli tourist destinations.

Based on the description above, the author needs to design a brand identity in the form of a mascot from South Tapanuli with the title "Designing Brand Identity with Mascot Media from South Tapanuli Regency as a Tourism Promotion" to introduce South Tapanuli Tourism to the public and tourists. So that it can display the characteristics of South Tapanuli Regency, work on new promotions, make it easier for tourists to recognize South Tapanuli Regency, and increase regional income profits with the media designed by the author. The idea that will be worked on by the author is to design a South Tapanuli Tourism mascot that combines the value of the Batak angkoal culture, namely the bulang hat and asam cekala (kecombrang) with asam cekala as the mascot, and designs the mascot to be a contemporary mascot.

The objectives of designing the South Tapanuli Tourism Office's mascot are to attract tourists to visit tourist attractions in South Tapanuli, increase the regional income of South Tapanuli, and strengthen the office's identity.

Research Methods
Data Collection
Data plays an important role in designing a visual identity for the mascot of the South Tapanuli Tourism Office. Data about the South Tapanuli Tourism Office in the North Sumatra region was obtained by observing the location, looking at facilities, vision, mission, and developing technology. This data is very useful to help the author in making the work. The author performs two techniques in data collection, namely as follows:

1. Primary Data

Primary data in this study was obtained from field observations and interviews. The author conducted field observations directly to see all parts of the library. In addition, observations were made to collect data and information needed by the author related to mascot design at the Tapanuli Selata Tourism Office needed. Then, in the interview: This interview was conducted so the author could get deeper information about the object he wanted to research. The author's interview process was to ask directly with Mr. Saftar Harahap, the Head of the South Tapnuli Tourism Office.

2. Secondary data

Secondary data is all information data obtained in this research. The author has conducted interviews and collected several journals and e-books to strengthen the data and become a reference in this work. Some of the journals that the author took as references include." Visual Study of Mascot Character Design "DIMAS-TI" by Alifaprilina Olivine and Arianti Andini Setya, (2021), and "Visual Study of Character Design in Malang City Mascot" by Dimas Rifqi Novica, 2021 as a guide in making works.

Data Analysis
Data analysis has many facets and approaches, including various techniques with various names. The data analysis that the author uses is the SWOT (strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats) method as follows:

Table 1. SWOT Analysis

Strength	1. The South Tapanuli Tourism Office is the only South Tapanuli Tourism institution
	2. Provide a wealth of information about tourism destinations in South Tapanuli district

	3. Services and systems at the South Tapanuli Tourism Office that are already digital-based.
	4. Under the auspices of the government, it is certain that it has extensive contacts.
Weakness	1. There is still a lack of public interest in visiting the South Tapanuli Tourism Office to discuss Developing South Tapanuli Tourism
	2. The Tourism Office is less active in organizing events and activities.
Opportunities	Since the South Tapanuli Tourism Office does not yet have a visual identity, having a mascot at the South Tapanuli Tourism Office will make the library easier to remember and be recognized by the public.
Threats	The threat of this mascot is that there may be temporary euphoria, so it is hoped that library managers can use mascots to create library events and activities.

The creative idea of designing a visual identity for the South Tapanuli Tourism Office's mascot is to strengthen the library's identity by creating a mascot that represents the image of South Tapanuli and describes the Tourism Office in the South Tapanuli area. The concept is expected to form a unique identity for the South Tapanuli Tourism Office.

Results and Discussion
Description of Work

From the 9 manual alternative sketches, the author chose 3 manual alternative sketches, which continued with the sketch digitization process. After digitizing, the author again chose one of the final digital sketches, digital sketch 3. This mascot was chosen because it was considered capable of representing the message and purpose that the author wanted to convey through its visuals (DeSantis, 2018; Nugroho, 2015; Proctor et al., 2023; Rustan, 2013).

a. Bright Colors (Red, Yellow, Black, and White)
   Red: May symbolize the spirit, courage, and dynamism that reflects the strength of South Tapanuli culture, especially the spirit of its people in welcoming tourists. Yellow is often associated with warmth, friendliness, and joy. It could symbolize the hospitality of the local people of South Tapanuli to tourists. Black, May symbolize strength, constancy, and a strong cultural identity. This color may reflect the stability and traditional roots of the region. White: Symbolizes purity, cleanliness, and openness, emphasizing the value of honesty and integrity in tourism management.

b. Axe in the Hat: The axe can symbolize a traditional tool associated with local wisdom or local occupations, such as agriculture or crafts. In the context of tourism, it could represent the rich cultural heritage of South Tapanuli. It may also symbolize courage and the ability to protect the area's cultural and natural treasures.

c. Red Robe: The red cape suggests that the mascot is a hero or guardian. The mascot symbolizes South Tapanuli's role as the guardian of cultural heritage, natural beauty, and environmental sustainability that must be preserved for future generations. In addition, the red cape can signify the region's enthusiasm for moving forward and developing its tourism potential.

d. Big Smile and Cheerful Attitude: The mascot's cheerful demeanor and big smile show warmth and hospitality. This is a clear message that the people of South Tapanuli welcome tourists with open arms and want to provide a positive and enjoyable experience. It can also symbolize optimism and hope towards developing tourism in the region.

e. Hat with Yellow Detail: A hat with yellow and black detailing may represent elements of local culture, perhaps inspired by traditional clothing or symbols that are significant to the people of South Tapanuli. This element can be used to show pride in the unique local culture.

f. Mascot Movement (raised arm): The movement of the arm raised upwards gives the impression of an energetic and dynamic mascot, as if inviting or guiding tourists to explore the natural and cultural beauty of South Tapanuli.

g. Large Hand Shape: A big hand can symbolize strength and the capacity to welcome everyone well. It emphasizes that South Tapanuli is ready to receive tourists with superior service.

The mascot can convey the message of spirit, hospitality, and the strength of culture and nature that the South Tapanuli Tourism Office wants to highlight. The bright colors, big smiles, and elements such as the axe and red cape can all symbolize the warmth of the people, the richness of the culture, and the strength in maintaining and promoting tourism in this region.

Ethnic elements are incorporated into the mascot by adding a typical Batak angkola hat on the mascot's head and South Tapanuli ornament motifs on several parts of the mascot's body. This mascot is named "Si Parta," which is an abbreviation of "Si tourism South Tapanuli," with the aim of giving the impression and message that the mascot symbolizes togetherness, progress, and an invitation to cultivate South Tapanuli tourism.

As for the explanation of the colors in the mascot, the dominant colors contained in the mascot are red and black. Red in the mascot symbolizes unity, fun, and enthusiasm. That way, it can be concluded that the black color in the mascot is expected to reflect better strength in the South Tapanuli tourism office and the community, improve the identity of South Tapanuli tourism, and maintain performance and service to every visitor. While the yellow color in the mascot is intended to symbolize luxury, it will always be an honest, clean, and reliable archive management institution.

For the font selection in the name Si Parta, the author chose the Lyncer Bold font because it has a luxurious, simple, classic appearance but also a modern appearance.

1. Main Media

The main media the author uses in designing a mascot for the South Tapanuli Tourism Office as a visual identity is a 2D digital mascot. Later, the mascot will be made in the form of Portable Network Graphics format or commonly abbreviated as PNG because it is easier for libraries to add mascots to the designs they want to create and publish both through social media and print media.

2. Supporting Media

The supporting media used included a 135 x 80 cm styrofoam standee with a sticker on the front, which was placed strategically to attract visitors' attention. In addition, an A3 poster made of luster provides information on the mascot's philosophy, while a 160 x 60 cm X-Banner contains motivational sentences to attract readers. Merchandise is also part of the promotional media, such as t-shirts with mascot screen printing, hats that showcase typical South Tapanuli designs or writings,

and key chains with Si Parta mascot images, which are expected to be attractive souvenirs for visitors (Enterprise, 2016).
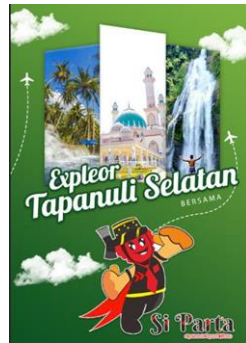

Figure 1. Standae

Figure 2. Poster

Figure 3. X-Banner

Figure 4. T-shirt, hat and pin merchandises

Discussion
Works Questionnaire

At this stage, the author distributes questionnaires online through Google Forms to find out the public's response to the mascot of the South Tapanuli Tourism Office. The way to distribute questionnaires is by utilizing the author's social media to spread Google form links such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp. This questionnaire is very important for the author to know the success rate of the work produced.

1. Based on the data obtained from the table above, there are 52 names of respondents who have been willing to fill out a questionnaire to design the mascot of the South Tapanuli Tourism Office. A total of 32 respondents were male, and 20 respondents were female. From the data table above, it can also be seen that the age range of respondents ranges from 7 to 46 years. The most dominant age of the respondents was 22 years (30.7%), with a total of 16 respondents. In addition, most of the respondents were students, with a total answer of 18 respondents (34.6%).
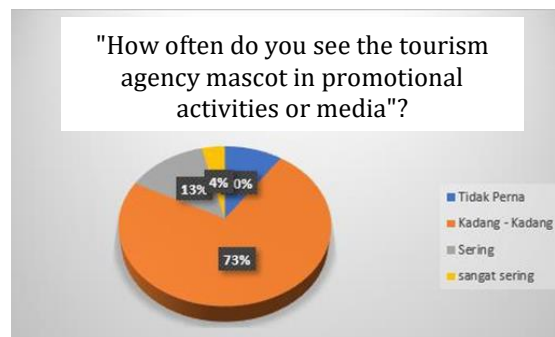2. Based on the question, "Do you know the mascot of the tourism office in your area?"

Figure 5. Diagram of Questionnaire 1

Source: Google Form

Based on the diagram above, 35 respondents (67.3%) answered "Yes" and 17 respondents (32.7%) answered "No". So, with these results, the author has a great opportunity to introduce the mascot of the South Tapanuli Tourism Office.

3. Based on the question "How often do you see the tourism agency mascot in promotional activities or media"?

Figure 6. Diagram of Questionnaire 2

Source: Google Form

Based on the diagram above, 5 respondents answered "Never" (10%), 38 respondents (73%) answered "Sometimes", 7 respondents (14%) answered "Often", and 2 respondents (4%) answered, "Very Often". This shows that most respondents still rarely see the mascot of the South Tapanuli Tourism Office.

4. Based on the question, "Do you feel that the mascot reflects the culture and identity of the region well?"
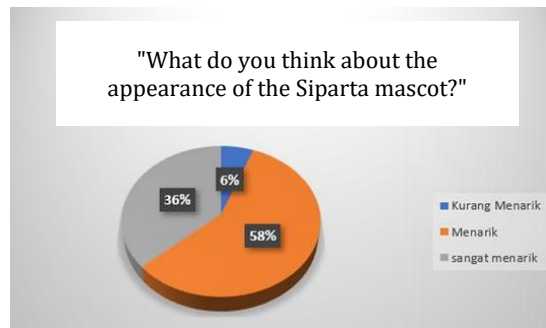
Figure 7. Diagram of Questionnaire 3

Source: Google Form

Based on the diagram above, 49 respondents (94.2%) answered "Yes," and 3 respondents (5.8%) answered "No." These results prove that the author has a great opportunity to make the mascot a visual identity at the South Tapanuli Tourism Office.

5. Based on the question, "What do you think about the appearance of the Siparta mascot?"

Figure 8. Diagram of Questionnaire 4

Source: Google Form

Based on the diagram above, 3 respondents (5.8%) answered "Less Interesting," 30 respondents answered "Interesting," and 19 respondents (36.5%) answered "Very Interesting." These results prove that the author succeeded in creating works that attracted the attention of others.

6. Based on the question, "Does the mascot make you more interested in visiting tourism destinations in the South Tapanuli area?"
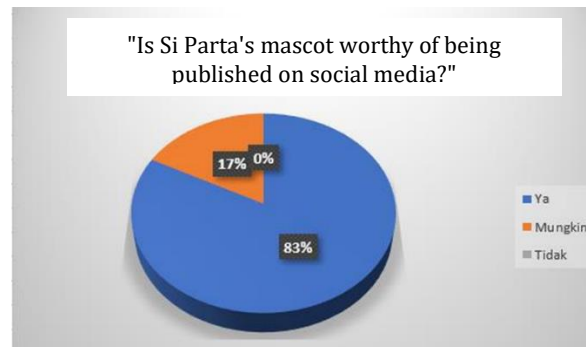

Figure 9. Diagram of Questionnaire 5

Source: Google Form

Based on the diagram above, 37 respondents (s71.2%) answered "Yes", 15 respondents answered "Maybe", and 0 respondents (0%) answered "No". These results prove that the

author's mascot work has the opportunity to increase interest in visiting the South Tapanuli Tourism office.

7. Based on the question, "Is Si Parta's mascot worthy of being published on social media?"
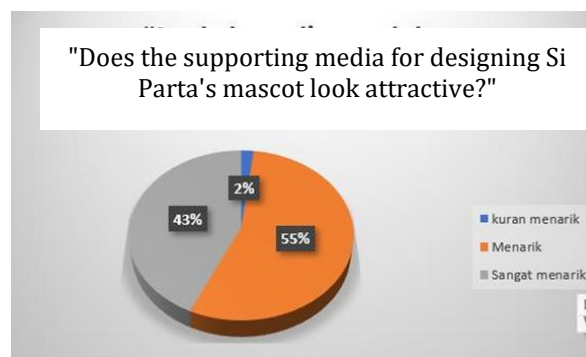

Figure 10. Diagram of Questionnaire 6

Source: Google Form

Based on the diagram above, 43 respondents (82.7%) answered "Yes", 9 (17.3%) respondents answered "Maybe", and 0 respondents (0%) answered "No". These results show that the mascot made by the author is suitable for display on social media.

8. Based on the question, "Does the supporting media for designing Si Parta's mascot look attractive?"

Figure 11. Diagram of Questionnaire 7

Source: Google Form

Based on the diagram above, 1 respondent (2%) answered "Less Interesting," 28 respondents (54.9%) answered "Interesting," and 22 respondents (43.1%) answered "Very Interesting." So, from the results above, the author succeeded in creating attractive supporting media for works.

9. Based on the statement, "Give an assessment based on the mascot work above"

Figure 12. Diagram of Questionnaire 8

Source: Google Form

Based on the respondent assessment diagram above, a range of values ranges from 6-10 points. A total of 2 respondents (3.8%) answered "6", 4 respondents (7.7%) answered "7", 14 respondents (26.9%) answered "8", 19 respondents (36.5%) answered "9", and 13 respondents (25%) answered "10". So, from the results above, the highest answer is point 9 with 19 respondents (36.5%). This proves the respondents' satisfaction with the mascot design at the South Tapanuli Tourism Office that the author.

10. Based on the statement, "Give your criticism and suggestions based on the mascot work above"

Critique:
1. Color composition:
   - Red and Yellow are dominant and give an energetic impression, but their use on large elements such as the body and robes can quickly tire the eyes.
   - The black on the hat and lower garment provides good contrast, but the black background may slightly drown out other black details (such as on the sleeves).
2. Hat Design:
   - The hat design is busy with the combination of black, yellow, and gray lines on the axe. This can distract from the mascot's face, which should be the main focus.
3. Layout of elements:
   - The axe in the hat could be more obvious, as it currently looks like part of the hat and could be mistaken for a regular accessory instead of an essential tool for the character

Suggestions for Improvement:
1. Color Adjustment:
   - Consider adding neutral or darker colors to balance the strong reds and yellows. For example, you can use gray or dark blue on some of the outfit to give it a softer variation.
   - The black color on the hat can be reduced or replaced with a lighter variation of gray to give a light and not too heavy impression on the top of the mascot.
2. Hat and Axe Repair:
   - To make the axe more prominent, improve the design or layout of the axe so that it is more clearly visible as a tool held or used by the mascot. It can also be moved to the hand or given more prominent details.
3. Facial Proportions and Details:

- The part of the face with a cheerful and friendly impression can be further emphasized by providing more space around it (e.g., shrinking or simplifying the hat) to draw attention directly to the mascot's expression.
4. Additional Accessories:
  - If this mascot character has a specific story, adding accessories that support the character (other than the axe) will help to strengthen the mascot's identity, such as a certain badge or logo.

The criticisms and suggestions from the respondents mostly showed a response in the form of respondents' satisfaction with the design of the work made by the author. In addition, some respondents also gave constructive feedback on the work.

Conclusion

Based on the results of research on the mascot of the South Tapanuli Tourism Office, the following conclusions can be drawn: 1) Mascot Effectiveness as a Tourism Visual Identity, the mascot of the South Tapanuli Tourism Office has succeeded in becoming a symbol recognized by local communities and tourists. The mascot design depicting elements of local culture, such as traditional clothing, flora, and fauna typical of the region, succeeded in creating emotional attachment and strengthening the visual identity of South Tapanuli tourism. 2) Research shows that using mascots in various promotional campaigns has increased brand awareness of tourist destinations in South Tapanuli. Tourists exposed to mascots tend to be more familiar with and interested in visiting this area, indicating that mascots play a significant role in attracting attention and increasing interest in visiting. 3) Public and Tourist Perceptions of the Mascot, the majority of respondents responded positively to this mascot, especially related to its ability to represent the cultural richness and natural beauty of South Tapanuli. However, there were suggestions that the mascot should be presented more frequently in physical form at tourism events and in digital promotional media to increase interaction with the public. 4) Recommendations for Mascot Development: To increase the positive impact of mascots on tourism promotion, it is recommended that the South Tapanuli Tourism Office expand the use of mascots in various promotional media, including merchandise and interactive activities. In addition, increasing the socialization of mascots through digital platforms and social media can expand the reach and appeal of these mascots, especially among the younger generation.

Overall, the South Tapanuli Tourism Office's mascot effectively strengthened the regional tourism image and became a potential promotional tool to increase tourist visits. This research provides a basis for further developing promotional strategies using mascots as the main element in regional tourism campaigns.

References

Ardhi, Y. (2013). *Merancang Media Promosi Unik dan Menarik*. Taka Publisher.

DeSantis, G. G. (2018). *Collegiate Symbols and Mascots of the American Landscape: Identity, Iconography, and Marketing*.

Dicki, N., & Husni R, M. (2023). Tourism Service Promotion Strategy in Aek Sijorni Tourism Development in Padang Sidempuan City. *International Journal of Cultural and Social Science*, *4*(2), 32–39. https://doi.org/10.53806/ijcss.v4i2.639

Enterprise. (2016). *Corel Draw Untuk Logo, Distro, dan Maskot*. Gajah Mada .

Fairfield, C. (2021). *Learning to Read Outside: The Vital Role of Feminist Literature in Creating Lively Futures Amidst Environmental Change*.

Nugroho, S. (2015). *Manajemen Warna dan Desain*. CV. Andi Offset.

Proctor, D., Dunne, G., & Flanagan, S. (2023). Towards a model of sports franchise leverage for destination marketing. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, *30*, 100829. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2023.100829

Rambe, D. S. (2021). *Implementation of South Tapanuli Regent Regulation Number 39 of 2017 concerning violence against children in Angkola Barat District, South Tapanuli*.

Rustan, S. (2013). *Huruf, Font dan Tipografi*. Gramedia Pustaka Utama.

Siregar, R., Sibarani, R., & Solahuddin, S. (2021). Strategy and Efforts for Environmental Management at Situmandi tourist attraction in North Tapanuli Regency. *Nveo-Natural Volatiles & Essential Oils Journal*, *8*(5).

Supriadi, O. A., & Arianti, A. S. (2021). Kajian Visual Desain Karakter Maskot "Dimas-TI." *TANRA: Jurnal Desain Komunikasi Visual Fakultas Seni Dan Desain Universitas Negeri Makassar*, *8*(1), 65. https://doi.org/10.26858/tanra.v8i1.19917

Valentina, A., & Tando, H. (2018). Gambaran Penggunaan Maskot sebagai Logo Bagi Merek (Studi Kasus: Dunia Fantasi). *Jurnal Muara Ilmu Sosial, Humaniora, Dan Seni*, *1*(2), 439. https://doi.org/10.24912/jmishumsen.v1i2.1465

Vincent, S. (2024). *Earth Polyphony: Law, Ecocriticism, and Eco-activism in Postcolonial India*. Lexington Books.

Wheeler, A. (2012). *Designing Brand Identity: an Essential Guide for the Whole Branding team*. John Wiley & Sons.

Zhang, H., Duan, Y., & Han, Z. (2021). Research on Spatial Patterns and Sustainable Development of Rural Tourism Destinations in the Yellow River Basin of China. *Land*, *10*(8), 849. https://doi.org/10.3390/land10080849