



## SINERGITY OF DESTINATION MARKETING AS DEVELOPMENT EFFORT OF THE MICE TOURISM SECTOR IN MAKASSAR CITY

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### Abstract

This study aims to develop marketing synergies of MICE (meeting, incentive, conferences, exhibition) destinations in Makassar, especially through tourism branding strategies to achieve optimal development. Tourism Branding is identified as a strategic step to improve marketing in Makassar. This study uses qualitative approach for data collection techniques through interviews, observation, and documentation. The results show that the city of Makassar as a MICE destination faces the complexity of marketing that requires synergy between government, industry, and community. The government is designing an innovative marketing ecosystem with a focus on gastro tourism, and optimizing potential requires synergies through marketing information management, and a Quadruple Helix innovation model to increase competitiveness in the MICE tourism sector. The role of collaboration and partnership is very important in the development of MICE tourist destinations. The integration of Marketing Information Management in the Quadruple Helix innovation model strengthens Makassar's position as a competitive and sustainable MICE tourism destination in Indonesia. The sustainability of MICE tourism in Makassar is considered important and complex, especially in MICE. The need to maximize the management of marketing information systems by involving the Quadruple Helix innovation model in supporting sustainability efforts with full support from government, academia, industry, and community.

**Keywords:** *Marketing, Mice, Quadruple Helix Model.*

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Makassar as the center of development in eastern Indonesia, has a strategic role as the main gateway to eastern Indonesia. Adequate infrastructure makes Makassar as a driver of regional development. Urban planning and marketing, as described by (Djunaedi et al., 2018), interrelated with municipal marketing supporting regional development plans. In the context of marketing, Makassar adopted the strategy of city branding as a form of development of a growing city. The goal of city branding is to shape the image of the city in the minds of the target audience, involving the construction of a city brand with elements such as position statements, slogans, icons and other media. City branding and tourism have a strong relationship, because city branding strategies can help attract tourists and improve the city's image as a tourism destination (Jojic, 2019). Over time, the concept of city branding has received increasing attention from both academics and policymakers as many cities compete globally to attract tourists, investment and talent. Although Makassar has implemented city branding as a smart city and tourism branding with the slogan #MakassarKotaMakanEnak which focuses on culinary wealth, this effort still needs to be strengthened with unique destination marketing strategies, synergies between stakeholders, and awareness of the potential of MICE among government, business people, and the community. Some of the obstacles in attracting tourists significantly include a shortage of PCO professionals, low levels of security, lack of stakeholder support, and inadequate promotion (Hikmah & Nurdin, 2018; Nasrullah et al., 2019). The facilities, accessibility, and support of MICE organizers need to be developed, in accordance with the findings of (Nawing, 2012). This study aims to develop a MICE tourism development strategy in Makassar with a focus on the concept of smart tourism destination and support for city branding.

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MICE tourism development in Makassar is considered not optimal, and city branding has not been fully effective in attracting tourists. Therefore, this study is crucial to provide in-depth insight into the factors that affect the performance of the MICE tourism sector and develop strategic recommendations to improve the attractiveness of destinations. At present, research on MICE Destination Management has not investigated the authority of MICE activity management in finding a competitive market position (Lee, 2022). The development of a unique destination marketing strategy, tailored to the infrastructure, markets and products available in the destination, is required. Recommendations from stakeholders and the community are expected to guide the creation of appropriate strategies to support the recovery and transformation of the MICE tourism sector (Rwigema, 2020). This study is urgent because it is necessary to further explore the quality and role of stakeholders and communities in the disintermediation of MICE in Destination Management Companies (Rojas-Bueno et al., 2023). With a focus on destination marketing strategies, this study is expected to make a positive contribution in improving MICE tourism in Makassar. Although a number of studies have proven the positive impact of city branding on increasing the number of tourist visits, there is still a lack of adequate research investigating MICE Destination Management and MICE activity management authorities in finding a competitive market position in Indonesia, especially in the city of Makassar. Within the framework of MICE tourism development in Makassar, this study is important to identify integrated marketing strategies of MICE tourism, the role of collaboration and partnership of MICE tourism destinations, and the sustainability of MICE tourism in order to provide recommendations for the government, stakeholders, and the community in order to increase the attractiveness of destinations and support the branding of Tourism Makassar.

## **2. IMPLEMENTATION METHOD**

This study is a qualitative research type of case study that examines the synergy of destination marketing as an effort to develop the MICE tourism sector in Makassar. The location of this study was conducted in the city of Makassar, South Sulawesi province. This study has focus and limitation only on integrated marketing strategy of MICE tourism, collaboration and partnership role of MICE tourism destinations, and sustainability of MICE tourism. This research used informants consisting of: Head of the Makassar Tourism Office, Makassar Legislators in charge of Economy and Finance, Head of the Destination Promotion Division of the Indonesian Hotel and Restaurant, Head of the Association of the Indonesian Tours and Travel Agencies (ASITA) South Sulawesi, Professional Exhibition Organizer (PEO) and Professional Conferences Organizer (PCO), Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in Makassar, Communities involved in MICE activities. Informants were chosen because they know and experience firsthand the implementation of MICE in Makassar and can provide complete, comprehensive, and in-depth information about the problems being studied. Therefore, researchers chose research informants not on the number of numbers, but on the capacity of informants in providing the information needed.

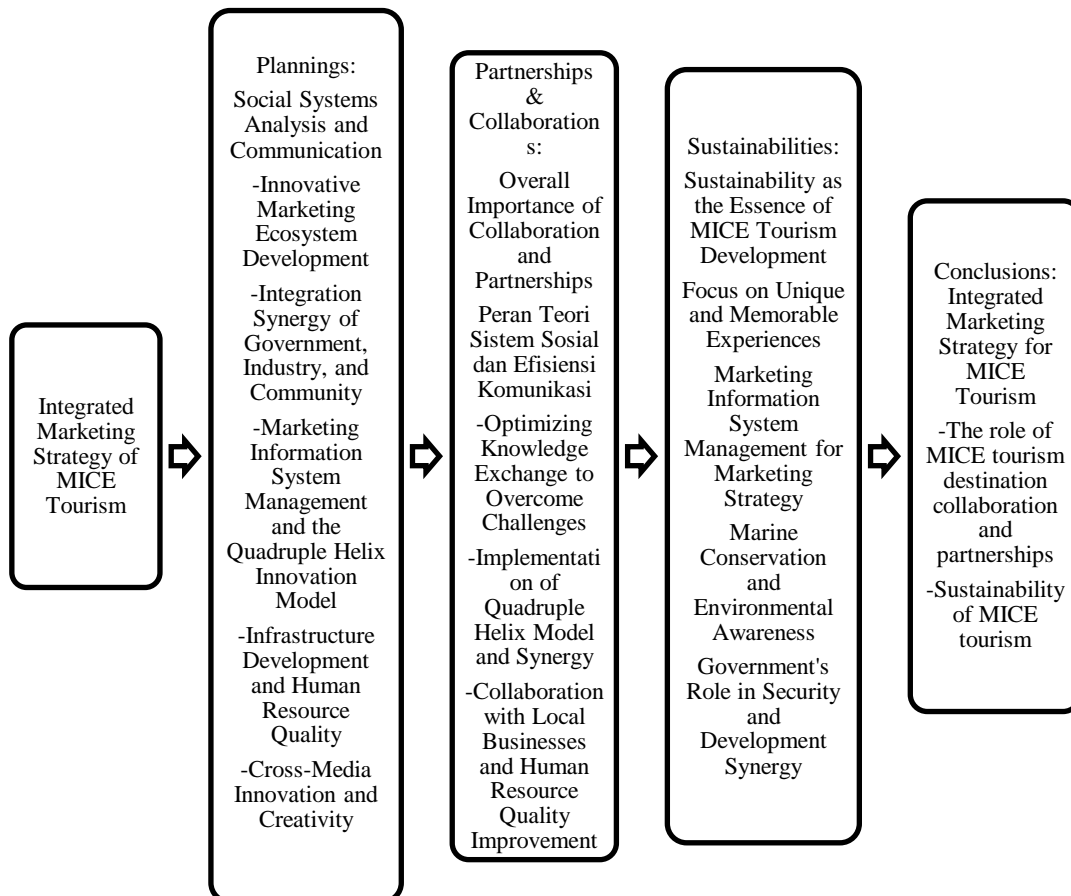
Data collection techniques are done through interviews, observations, and documentation. Furthermore, the data collected were analyzed by Qualitative Analysis of the Spradley model, namely: domain analysis, taxonomic analysis, component analysis, and theme-culture analysis (Samsu, 2017). Then proceed with data Validation using data triangulation techniques, member checking, and auditing.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In terms of developing the MICE tourism sector in Makassar City, the role of collaboration and partnership has a significant impact on tourism sustainability. Although marketing efforts have been undertaken by influential institutions, their success depends on cooperation between the government, stakeholders and local communities. Maintaining a balance between attracting tourists and maintaining local identity requires the involvement of all parties. The integration of customs



such as *sipakainga'*, *sipakalebbi'*, and *sipakatau* with the #MakassarKotaMakanEnak tourism branding creates a unique harmony, increasing tourist attraction while still enriching local culture. Therefore, this concept can be illustrated through a flow chart that shows how synergies between the city government, stakeholders and the community form an entity for sustainable growth in the MICE sector. This flow chart visualizes the interactions and linkages between these elements in supporting sustainable growth in Makassar City's MICE sector.



**Figure 1 Flowchart of Research Result**

### 3.1 MICE Tourism Integrated Marketing Strategy in Makassar City

Based on the research findings, Makassar as a growing tourist destination faces complexities in marketing, and the social system theory by Niklas Luhmann provides a relevant view. The social system between the government, industry as a stakeholder, and the community as a local community must be able to manage the complexity of information and interactions between elements such as tourist destinations, event/exhibition venues, accommodation, transportation, and meeting rooms. This explanation is in accordance with the view of (Kadirov & Varey, 2008) which states that “The interaction between the system and the surrounding environment is mediated by communication. In this context, communication refers to the process of information exchange between elements in social systems and other interrelated systems.” Therefore, the application of an integrated system, as described in Niklas Luhmann's social system theory, emphasizes that inter-organizational communication is a key element in shaping a positive image of tourism destinations.

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The Makassar Government designed an innovative marketing ecosystem by collaborating through discussion forums to regulations and establishing BAS (Branding, Advertising, Selling) mechanisms. In their branding efforts, they created the tagline "Makassar Kota Makan Enak" as an identity in tourism. The focus on food marketing as the main attraction for tourism has become a popular and profitable industry in the tourism segment, both regionally, nationally, and internationally. This approach is in line with research findings (Long, 2018), which highlight that culinary tourism projects consider food as more than a commodity, utilizing the meaning and emotional associations of food to influence individuals and cultures. In the context of Makassar's MICE tourism promotion, emphasis is placed on the values of culinary identity and history. Gastronomy tourism is considered a key element for tourists and a symbol of a region's cultural identity. Culinary heritage, as an integral part of cultural heritage, is recognized as having the potential to boost the tourism sector and support economic growth in a region (Lin et al., 2021). Furthermore, in the advertising strategy, various types of advertisements are used, both conventional and electronic, and selling is done through sales missions. The PESO model (Paid, Earned, Shared, and Owned Media) was also adopted in this marketing effort.

However, these potentials cannot be fully optimized without synergy from the government, industry as a stakeholder, and the community as a local community, because good management is needed to make the potential of MICE tourism effective (Nasrullah et al., 2019). It is important to recognize that in working on culinary as the main focus in efforts to market and develop MICE tourism in Makassar, support is needed through SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) as a basis for identifying management strategies that can increase MICE tourism activities in Makassar. The integration of local culture into the main elements of MICE destination branding creates a unique and memorable experience for MICE tourists.

In this context, marketing information system management, especially marketing intelligence, internal marketing information, and marketing communication, plays a central role in responding to and overcoming the marketing challenges faced in the development of MICE tourism in Makassar. Mehrabian and Russell's S-O-R theory suggests that consumer responses are not only influenced by direct stimulus from marketing, but also by internal and organizational factors. Although marketing tools and MICE strategies have been implemented in Makassar, the lack of promotion and appropriate strategies creates obstacles in attracting consumer interest. Innovative marketing strategies in the culinary field are a positive step, and it is necessary to integrate the development of the Quadruple Helix innovation model in increasing the effectiveness of responses to the market. Makassar's approach to analyzing the market and forecasting trends, with a focus on trends and innovation, is in line with Niklas Luhmann's social systems approach. The integration of these theories provides deeper insights into how Makassar can redefine its product and service excellence. By looking at the dynamics of consumer response, Makassar can more effectively position itself as a sustainable and innovative destination.

Due to limited resources, especially in the use of social media, Makassar needs to adopt the Quadruple Helix innovation model, which involves government, academia, industry, and society. This view is in line with research (Farida et al., 2017), which suggests that the Government can act as a creative industry driver and facility provider; academics can contribute knowledge, technology, and creative human resources; industry can develop its business by transferring knowledge and experience; and the community can be a partner in creative industry-related programs. In the face of growing MICE tourism business, innovative solutions are needed, and collaboration through this model can improve Makassar's competitiveness. By involving various marketing channels and applying cross-media creativity, as applied in marketing strategies, marketing efficiency and effectiveness can be improved.

The proactive role of the industry as a stakeholder and the community as a local community, in line with the concept of S-O-R theory, adds an authentic touch to the organization of MICE events and generates direct economic benefits for local businesses. This creates an



environment that is responsive to environmental stimuli, such as the presence of MICE travelers. In this context, infrastructure development and human resource quality improvement are the focus, in accordance with marketing information management principles. Strong collaboration between the government, stakeholders and local communities, as described in the Quadruple Helix innovation model, is the key to success in developing the MICE sector and improving the overall tourism image of Makassar.

### **3.2 The Role of Collaboration and Partnership for MICE Tourism Destinations in Makassar**

Based on the research findings, the role of collaboration and partnership initiatives is crucial in developing MICE tourism destinations in Makassar. Involving the city government, industry as a stakeholder, and the community as a local community, this collaboration is the core of the communication system and collaborative strategy to improve Makassar's MICE tourism sector. The role of collaboration between the city government, industry as a stakeholder, and the community as a social community in the success of MICE tourism has been underlined in several studies related to the use of information and communication technology (Buhalis, 2020), the relationship with the management of MICE activities (Shin et al., 2017), and strategies in crisis recovery in MICE tourism (Rittichainuwat et al., 2020).

In this context, the social system theory proposed by Niklas Luhmann emphasizes the importance of effective interaction between the government, industry as a stakeholder, and the community as a local community in forming an efficient communication system. An optimized communication relationship between these elements is the basis for sustainable MICE tourism development. This concept is in line with the findings of research conducted by (Ostrowska-Tryzno & Muszyńska, 2018), which asserts that innovative thinking, careful planning, solid partnerships between stakeholders, and effective communication with tourists play a crucial role in coordinating sustainable development.

Collaboration within the MICE tourism sector in Makassar has brought about a number of challenges that need to be overcome while also providing opportunities for the development of the industry. Financial challenges and regulatory changes, for example, can be overcome by optimizing knowledge exchange between stakeholders, in accordance with the principles of the S-O-R theory introduced by Mehrabian and Russell. This principle is in line with research by (Pahrudin et al., 2023) that applies S-O-R theory in optimizing the challenges of tourist behavior to visit again. Event management that continues to grow requires effective coordination between stakeholders and improvements in regulations to maintain Makassar's competitive image in the MICE industry.

Through the optimization of knowledge exchange, the parties involved can become more responsive to changes in the evolving financial and regulatory aspects. In addition, increased coordination in the organization of events will help reduce risks and create a more supportive environment for the growth of the MICE tourism sector in Makassar. Therefore, the idea of collaboration is not only considered as a response to challenges, but also as a tool to optimize opportunities and achieve common goals in developing the MICE tourism industry in this city. This opinion is supported by research (Yoon & Wang, 2023) on the importance of partnerships among stakeholders as an integral part of sustainable development efforts in the MICE tourism sector.

Underutilized incentive opportunities, such as island visits, indicate growth potential that can be explained by social systems theory. Collaboration with SKPD (local government work units) and perseverance in overcoming infrastructure barriers reflect the application of integrated concepts in the Quadruple Helix innovation model. In the framework of MICE tourism in Makassar, this approach can help overcome challenges such as complex regulations, lack of coordination, and suboptimal understanding of market needs. The synergy between government, academia, industry and the community can form an environment that supports sustainable growth in the MICE tourism sector, in line with the views of (Setyanti, 2018) regarding the need to understand creative and innovative processes in business management, especially in the creative industry, which requires a Quadruple Helix model approach.

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The challenge of attracting consumer attention and competing with other MICE destinations can be overcome through collaboration with local businesses that have environmental awareness, reflecting the concept of S-O-R theory. Improving the quality of human resources through capacity building programs to support the sustainability of the MICE sector must be in accordance with the principles of marketing information system management. The government's function as a facilitator, as described in social systems theory, is also needed to overcome potential conflicts of interest between stakeholders in MICE destination marketing partnerships. Thus, Makassar can strengthen its position as a competitive and sustainable MICE destination in Indonesia through the integration of S-O-R theory and marketing information system management in the Quadruple Helix innovation model.

### **3.3 Sustainability of MICE Tourism in Makassar**

Based on the research findings, the sustainability of MICE tourism in Makassar is not only a complex topic, but also a decisive essence for the development of the area. Adopting Niklas Luhmann's social systems theory, this approach views sustainability as the result of complex interactions between the tourism system, society and the environment, all of which are interrelated. Makassar, as the gateway to eastern Indonesia, holds a strategic position that requires public education efforts to support its potential as the hub center of eastern Indonesia, especially in the field of hospitality, in line with Mehrabian and Russell's S-O-R theory concept. The choice to highlight the culinary aspect, especially in MICE, reflects Makassar's commitment to creating unique and sustainable experiences, where the stimulus (focus on culinary) is expected to stimulate a positive response from visitors or consumers of MICE tourism. This is in line with a study conducted by (Prasetyo & Maulani, 2017), which shows that developments in the tourism sector involve efforts such as infrastructure improvements, expansion of tourist destinations, and offering diverse types of tourism to visitors, including historical tourism, culinary tourism, and shopping tourism.

It is hoped that tourists who visit get their own experience and are difficult to forget. Because the visiting experience that exists in tourists will lead to re-election or not. This is very much based on previous visits to make loyal tourists. The increasing experience felt by tourists means that the more memorable the MICE agenda to Makassar. It is not impossible that consumers will tell positive things to other consumers of the MICE tourism industry in Makassar. Although the regulation and licensing of MICE is regulated by the Tourism Office, some activities, such as music events, present challenges in providing the best experience. In this context, marketing information system management, especially marketing intelligence and internal marketing information, can provide deep insights to overcome obstacles and improve marketing strategies. In line with this, (Mandal, 2021) argues that the proper implementation and effective utilization of marketing information system management will help companies develop customer relationships, expand business, and achieve business excellence in the long term.

Efforts to increase marine tourism attractions in Makassar raise questions about sustainability and environmental impact. However, it also opens up opportunities to support marine conservation and environmental awareness through education. The Quadruple Helix innovation approach, involving government, academia, industry and the community, can be the foundation for integrating these efforts holistically. Similarly, seamless connectivity is a crucial factor in MICE delivery, but infrastructure availability, including standardization of meeting spaces and transportation, also plays a significant role. In the face of these challenges, the application of the Quadruple Helix innovation model provides opportunities for better collaboration between the various parties involved. The safety of the city is of course also a major concern, with the government playing a key role in shaping people's awareness to be good hosts. In this case, marketing communication can be used as a tool to increase destination awareness and image, creating a safe and attractive environment for MICE participants. It is also explained by (Francisco,



2017) that safety and security issues are a threat to MICE tourism destinations. Perspectives on the synergy of MICE tourism development certainly vary, but maximizing the role of government as a facilitator is considered key in shaping public awareness.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This research explores the integrated marketing strategy of MICE tourism in Makassar using Niklas Luhmann's social systems theory. The complexity of MICE destination marketing requires effective interaction between government, industry and the community. The Makassar government has designed an innovative marketing ecosystem with a focus on food branding, incorporating the meaning and emotional associations of food in culinary tourism projects. Nonetheless, synergy from government, industry, and community is still needed for potential optimization. SWOT analysis was used to identify MICE tourism development strategies, with marketing information system management, especially marketing intelligence, playing a central role in overcoming marketing challenges. Adoption of the Quadruple Helix innovation model is important to overcome resource limitations by involving government, academia, industry and the community. This collaboration is expected to improve Makassar's competitiveness in the MICE tourism business, with a focus on infrastructure development and improving the quality of human resources. The role of collaboration and partnership in the development of MICE tourism destinations in Makassar is crucial, reflecting the core of communication systems and collaborative strategies. Niklas Luhmann's social theory highlights the importance of effective interaction in forming an efficient communication system. Collaboration challenges, such as regulatory changes and financial issues, can be overcome through knowledge exchange in accordance with the principles of S-O-R theory. Collaboration is not only a response to challenges, but also a tool to optimize opportunities and achieve common goals in developing the MICE tourism industry in Makassar.

The integration of S-O-R theory and marketing information system management in the Quadruple Helix innovation model can strengthen Makassar's position as a competitive and sustainable MICE destination in Indonesia. The sustainability of MICE tourism in Makassar is pursued through Niklas Luhmann's social systems theory approach. Understanding sustainability as the result of complex interactions between the tourism system, society, and the environment guides community education efforts to support Makassar's potential as the hub center of eastern Indonesia. The focus on culinary aspects, especially in MICE, reflects Makassar's commitment in creating unique and sustainable experiences, stimulating positive responses from MICE visitors. Event management requires effective coordination between stakeholders and improved regulations. Marketing information system management, particularly marketing intelligence, can provide deep insights to overcome barriers and improve marketing strategies. A Quadruple Helix innovation approach involving government, academia, industry and the community can be the foundation for integrating these efforts holistically. The sustainability of marine tourism in Makassar opens up opportunities to support marine conservation through education, with the Quadruple Helix innovation model providing opportunities for better collaboration between the various parties involved, while city safety is a major concern that can be strengthened through marketing communications. Perspectives on the synergy of MICE tourism development vary, but the government is considered key in maximizing its role as a facilitator, involving academia, industry and community sectors to create balance and make Makassar a sustainable MICE destination.

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