Branding of Ternate City

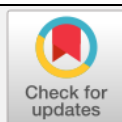## Johan Fahri [1],* , and Fichriyanto M. Ahmad [2,]

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ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

City branding has become a massive effort by many cities as tourist destinations to promote the city nationally and internationally. Ambon City, the Capital of Maluku Province, known as the "City of Music," and the City of Solo with "Solo the Spirit of Java," are examples of city branding. In North Maluku Province, Ternate City has a long history of colonialism, international trade, and a developing city. Unfortunately, inconsistencies still exist in how the city should be known. This study aims to identify and define city branding by using the constructivist grounded theory method. The themes identified were quality tourism, economic value, community engagement, stakeholder consensus, legendary ancient leadership, and historic and renowned commodity. Six main themes are theoretically based on how to branding Ternate city and involving seven important participants. These themes are then used to define the branding of Ternate City. Current research offers a testable model to brand a place or city based on the identified subjects. At the same time, potential future studies are also suggested regarding the weaknesses of the current study.

1. Introduction

In the last two decades, several cities have made strategies city branding or promoting the identity of the city, such as cities in Indonesia, Solo with the tagline "The Spirit of Java", Bandung with the tagline "Paris Van Java", Ambon with the tagline "City of Music", Banyuwangi with the tagline "The Sunrise of Java", Batu with the tagline "Shinning Batu". Abroad, New York with the tagline "I love New York" is very worldwide. The country's role is very strong in the city's branding strategy because city branding is an effort to build the identity of a city or region to increase local and international tourist visits, boosting the economy by inviting the attention of investors and city branding popularizing the city or region. For example, Malaysia has used the city branding concept with the tagline "Malaysia Truly Asia".

Anholt (2007) defines city branding as part of the study of communication science primarily as a function of public relations by interpreting city branding as the image management of a destination through strategic innovation and economic, commercial, social, cultural, and government coordination. Moreover, Anholt (2007) defines city branding as an effort by the government to identify cities, countries and introduce internal and external publics. This understanding is reinforced by another opinion that Kavaratzis (2008) expressed that city branding generally causes imagery, exactly what and how the image is formed, and the communication aspects that are done in the process of image management. In other words, image management is needed to brand a place, a city, or even a country.

Ternate, a city in Indonesia, is seen as a unique place in many aspects. Ternate City is the capital of one of the municipalities in the North Maluku Province. This province is the region that has the highest number of islands. This leads to a unique Ternate City as an island city. At the same time, Ternate City has been experiencing the high speed of development and urban areas while maintaining its beauty of nature and assimilation for many ethnicities along since the Sultanate of Ternate era that has been known worldwide for centuries. A developing and populated city, Ternate City is questioned its concept of city branding.

City branding is also a task and collaboration of all city's stakeholders. The responsibility for the success of city branding is on the city's internal public, including the city government, the private sector, the entrepreneurs, the interest group, and the people of the city. The priority in city branding is to enable the city's potential to be valuable and functional. The government must also communicate the benefits or usefulness of any development in its area to the community. In conveying the development messages, the government must have credibility, attractiveness, hope, and feeling to influence the community to follow the government's goals to implement development.

However, the concern towards branding of Ternate City was triggered by two major events held in Ternate, the Indonesian Creative Cities Festival (ICCF) and national student community devotion (*Kuliah Kerja Nyata Kebangsaan* or KKNK) in 2019. ICCF activities in Ternate are utilized by SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises) in Ternate to promote at ICCF locations in The Fort Oranje Ternate area where at least 70 SMEs are utilizing the activity to introduce their products. The SMEs products promoted are typical products of Ternate City, such as processed nutmeg fruit, bamboo crafts, and Batik crafts, namely Batik Tubo. Its motifs raise various local wisdom in Ternate. SME actors promote their products at ICCF to be widely known and increase sales in the local market and national and international markets due to ICCF activities attended by participants from over 200 cities in Indonesia. There are even representatives from several countries such as Spain, Portugal, Australia, and the United States. This ICCF activity encourages the development of the creative economy through the involvement of commodity-

sharing communities in Ternate. ICCF organizers in 2019 are the second after the first in Yogyakarta in 2018 (Antara News, 2019).

In September 2019, this event was officially opened by the Mayor of Ternate, Burhan Abdurahman, accompanied by the General Secretary of Indonesia Creative Cities Network (ICCN), Arief Budiman. In this ICCF activity, Ternate was recorded as the world record by MURI for Gugu Gia Si Kololi activity, which was 42,000 participants who "hugged" Mount Gamalama hand in hand for 7 minutes. In the MURI's record, it has not existed in this world that did the same. The activities of tens of thousands of people holding hands are a form of a shared determination to continue strengthening Indonesia's unity (Tribunnews.com, 2019).

The second event was the national student community devotion (*Kuliah Kerja Nyata Kebangsaan* or KKNK). This event was a program of the Directorate General of Learning and Student Affairs of the Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education in collaboration with the Indonesian State Higher Education Chancellor Council (*Majelis Rektor Perguruan Tinggi Negeri Indonesia* or MRPTNI), conducted once a year interchangeably by Cooperation Agency - Western Region State Universities (*Badan Kerja Sama - Perguruan Tinggi Negeri* or BKS-PTN *Wilayah Barat*) and Consortium of State Universities - Eastern Indonesia (*Konsorsium Perguruan Tinggi Negeri - Kawasan Timur Indonesia* or KPTN-KTI), involving all public universities in the country, and even some private universities that are interested and meet the criteria as set out in this standard operational manual. At this event, most students from outside Ternate do not know the existence of Ternate City due to the city does not yet have an identity or brand. This aims to make the people of Indonesia know that there is one area with culture, beautiful tourism, a history of the sultanate, and historical relics of colonialism that must be visited.

During those events, the researchers were stunned by a lack of knowledge of the visitors about the City of Ternate and various branding for the city. While some visitors know the city of its spectacular views, others were interested in its culture and Sultanate or Kingdom of Ternate's culture and heritage. Others were keen on Portuguese' fortresses around the island and their stories around them. Therefore, it can be said the City of Ternate does still not have solid branding.

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This point of questioning is how the city should be branded, which led to a search for other specific literature. Two scientific papers have been produced concerning the branding of Ternate City. The first related study was by Mihardja et al. (2020), who proposed storytelling as a strategy for city branding. Unfortunately, this approach is seen more highlighting the glorious past of the Kingdom of Ternate and neglect the present development of the City. In particular, how the stories can align with the city's roadmap toward a vibrant and developing city in the region.

Another study by Erlangga (2016) examines factors contributing to city branding to promote Ternate City. This unpublished study tested ten variables: environmental cleanliness, security, shopping, nature, vehicles, social ties, brand awareness, culture, local economic potential, and architecture. Among these, the city's nature, brand awareness, and local economic potential were the dominant factors. Unfortunately, government officials judged these variables (factors) are 150 respondents who work at the municipality's agencies. Community voices were absent in examining those factors, including the dominant ones.

Those major events and the limited number of scientific works provided an opportunity to enrich the discussion on branding a place or a city, especially Ternate City.

2. Research Methodology

2.1. Constructivism in Grounded Theory Approach

The literature review gives a theoretical context for a study but is not a methodological guide since it does not contribute to a thesis or provide a basis for analysis (Klopper, 2008). Although the literature is not checked to produce a conceptual article, the literature is used in the grounded theory method to explain, endorse and expand the definition and middle-range theory developed by the study.

These brief examples are important to set the standards of the literature for this current research and how they work for interpretation and discussions at a later level. This is especially true when this current research refers to the four-research paradigm by Burrell & Morgan (1979, p. 22) and used interpretivism as a basic paradigm in using a qualitative approach.

In a more specific approach, this research used Charmaz's constructivist grounded theory. In her constructivist aspect of the method, both the researchers and the researched construct the grounded theory from a real context (Charmaz, 2014). Both parties have an almost equal comprehension of the constructed topic.

2.2. Population and Sampling

In implementing grounded theory in this research, several steps were employed, as summarized in **Figure 1**. The process of the research was initiated by searching for potential participants. The participants were purposively selected based on their relevance. As one of the researchers was a community member, the one had sufficient information regarding the potential participants and could be approached and obtained their official agreement and be involved in this current study. Once these people were identified, they were approached to have formal approvals as participants/informants. The participants were then interviewed at their earliest convenience.

2.3. Data Collection and Analysis

The primary data were the transcripts generated from the interviews of the research participants. The interview was conducted using an unstructured interview because all the potential participants had similar characteristics and similar interests and knowledge of how the city should be known. Importantly, all the participants were two similar questions in every interview: "1) how important is the city branding of Ternate City?; and 2) what do you think about implementing branding of Ternate City by considering culture and tourism aspects?" The probing technique was also employed to explore deeper explanations by asking more questions to the participants when they tended to provide shorter answers (Whiting, 2008). The interviews were then digitally recorded and transcribed in a verbatim way.

Once the transcripts were available, the coding process was continued. The processes consisted of initial (open) coding, focused (selective) coding, and theoretical coding. This coding process has raised the abstraction level and should still represent the real data. To ensure this, a continuous comparative review was performed simultaneously as other supportive notes (memos) were reviewed when interviewing the participants. The constant comparative analysis uses unmistakable coding and theoretical techniques to consistently produce evidence (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).
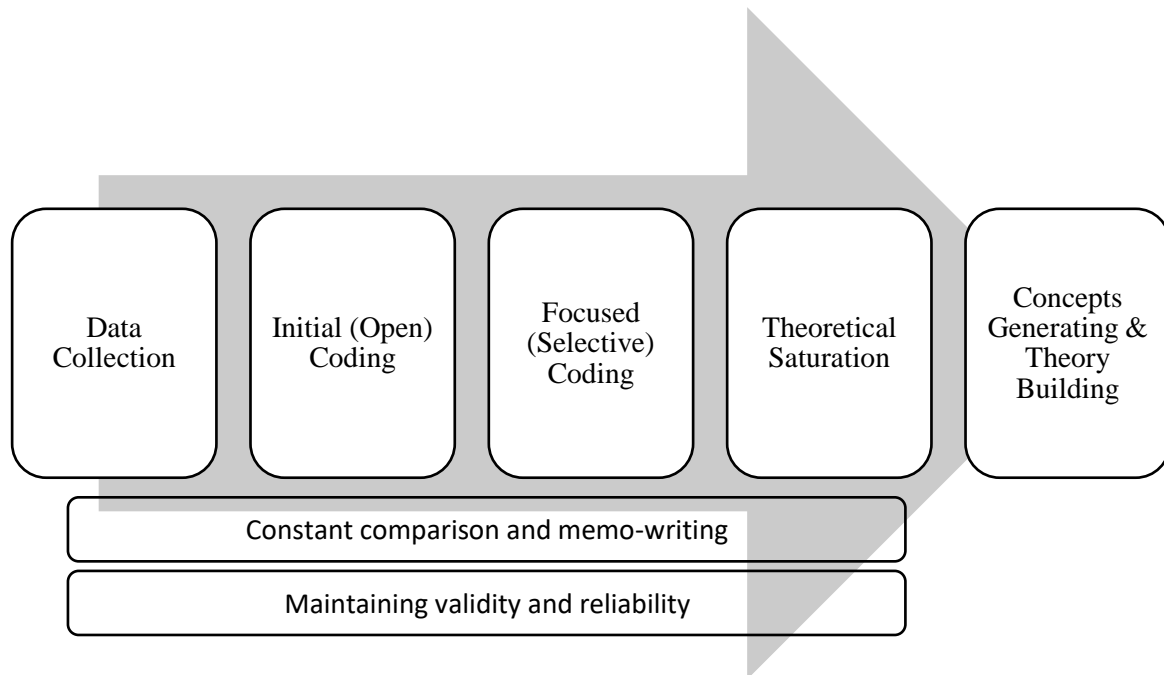
Figure 1. Using Grounded Theory (Illustration from Charmaz, 2014, p. 18)

2.4. Validity and Reliability

As seen in **Figure 1**, the procedures must be proper and efficient. Maxwell (2012) recommended using contrast, feedback, triangulation, and quasi-statistics to guarantee the relevance of the findings. In terms of reliability, reliability components by Long & Johnson (2000, pp. 30-31), consisting of stability, accuracy, and equivalence, were used in this study. Along with constant comparative analysis and memo-writing, they were required to ensure that the defining feature of citizen satisfaction could be conceptually produced.

3. Results and Discussion

The results were derived from the analysis of 7 informants' transcripts. The process followed the one in **Figure 1**. In other words, transcripts, as the primary data, were used to initiate the analysis by coding them. The coding was sentence-by-sentence coding to obtain the basic theme for each sentence. As the coding escalated, the level of abstraction for the themes also increased. This process moved from initial coding to the focused (selective) coding. The coding then increased their analyses into theoretical coding, where their similarities and relevance examined the sub-themes to the extant literature. Importantly, when data reached saturation, new information no longer appeared from the interviews (transcripts). This process can be summarized in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Identified Themes

No	Sub-themes (Focused Coding)	Theme (Theoretical Coding)
1	**1.1.a. The** most visited tourist attraction shape people's perceptions. **1.3.a.** Attraction facilities. **1.4.a**. History of the attraction. **2.1.a**. Recognizing the tourism organs of	Quality of Tourism

No	Sub-themes (Focused Coding)	Theme (Theoretical Coding)
	Ternate City. **3.3.b**. Enhanced attractions facilities and city potential. **7.1.a**. Ternate has beautiful mountains and seas. **7.2.a.** Ternate has beautiful tourist attractions and cheap rates. **4.1.d**. Ternate city is a city of spice, culture, and tourism that attracts its identity**.**	
2	**2.2.a**. Factors to form city branding.. **2.2.b**. It takes assessment and expert from the factors that make up city branding. **2.3.b**. government collaboration to form city branding. **3.1.a.** Creative economy for city branding activation. **3.1.d**. Development must be directed. **3.3.a.** Support from the government. **4.1.b.** The people in Ternate are family. **5.1.a**. According to the architect is tangible first after it turns into intangible. **5.5.b.** Strengthens identities, and logos, and symbols. **5.6.b.** Ternate city must strengthen its identity.. **2.3.a.** The main potential branding of Ternate City. **3.2.a.** Ternate City potential for city branding. **3.4.a.** Creative economy contribution to tourism. **2.3.d.** Long discussion to discuss city branding. **5.3.b.** That branding should be strong on the image. **5.4.a.** City branding is important because it strengthens identity. **5.3.c**. City branding is important because of its economic value.	Economic Value
3	**3.5.b.** Ternate's community network was instrumental in shaping city branding. **3.5.c.** The ICCF plans to bind communities and grow the creative economy and promote the city. **4.1.c**. People of Ternate are very social. **3.4.a.** Creative economy contribution to tourism. **3.1.a.** Creative economy for city branding activation.	Community Engagement
4	**3.5.a.** People are difficult to collaborate with. **5.1.b.** The architecture that is designed for the city will eliminate the authenticity of the city. **5.2.a.** Ternate has faded because of the architect's work. **5.3.a.** Development faded because of political interests. **5.3.d.** City branding is not important according to conservation. **3.1.b.** There is no master plan for Ternate City. **5.4.b.** Ternate City has lost its identity. **5.5.a.** There is a debate if spice as city branding. **5.3.d.** City branding is not important according to conservation. **6.4.a.** Tourism cannot be used as a principal identity in Ternate. **5.3.d.** City branding is not important according to conservation.	Stakeholder Consensus
5	**4.1.a.** The perception of people outside Ternate is the Sultanate or the Islamic Kingdom. **6.1.a.** Ternate is the largest sultanate area in Indonesia	Legendary Ancient Leadership

No	Sub-themes (Focused Coding)	Theme (Theoretical Coding)
6	**7.1.b.** Ternate is a unique City. **6.3.a.** Sultan Babullah was a great sultan because he controlled dozens of countries. **6.2.a.** Sultanate and spices that must be highlighted. **3.4.b.** It has a strong history. **5.6.a.** Branding should be more to the intangible aspect. **6.4.b.** The Sultanate of Ternate and spices is the vanguard for the identity of Ternate City. **6.1.b.** Ternate is inseparable from the sultanate and spices. **3.5.d.** Spices are the identity for Ternate City. **7.2.b.** Ternate is a fascinating city.	Historic and Renowned Commodity

Table 1 summarizes the process of identifying themes that were constructed from seven essential participants. The identified themes were quality of tourism, economic value, community engagement, stakeholder consensus, legendary ancient leadership, and historic and renowned commodity. In other words, this current study suggests that in branding a city, these elements are required. Interestingly, a recent review by Oguztimur & Akturan (2015) the literature of city branding falls under four main categories: (1) city branding concept, processes, and measurement; (2) branding strategies; (3) social urbanism; and (4) branding culture and tourism. Nonetheless, as this current research is concerned about its generalizability, a preliminary statement can be proposed that these four categories align with the identified themes yet need to be more evident in a wide range of samples/respondents, including relevant stakeholders. This type of current study used an inductive approach.

Another interesting point is shown by Soltani et al. (2017) that indicates a reverse perspective. The study shows how city branding impacts local tourism, which in turn forces the industry to increase its quality. This study has a different perspective than a seminal study by Rabbiosi (2015), where city branding should highlight the tourism industry, including products and well-known venues.

In terms of economic value, the identified theme seems to add another perspective in city branding literature. In comparison, Kwok et al. (2018) see the economic value and city branding as equal priorities in some cities. Goess et al. (2016) and Tataroğlu et al. (2015) argue that city branding increases added economic value. In other words, the current study offers a different direction of a causal effect. This currents study's finding aligns with de Jong et al. (2018), where the area's economic value has impacted city branding.

Furthermore, it has been realized that the literature discusses more on how stakeholder engagement in city branding (Casidy et al., 2019; Henninger et al., 2016; Hultman et al., 2016). This current study leans more on community engagement because it seemed the community is an informal entity, not governmental groups, and less powerful in the decision-making process. Hudak (2019) argues that genuine participation in the branding process extends beyond simply exploring what people want their community brand to look like to promote initiatives by people that organically improve, evolve, and expand the location's brand. In this sense, this study's findings emphasize the community's function and engagement in Ternate City's branding and not solely the municipality government.

Having discussing community engagement, the finding also indicates certain voices from informal that were likely to be less powerful in branding the city. The community groups and the government of Ternate City then needed to have a consensus on branding the city. The

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findings suggest that the informal groups and the government have not reached what Ternate should be known for, nationally and internationally. Both parties need to balance the modern aspects of the city while maintaining the city's glorious pasts. Several recent studies have also identified this concern (Alexander & Hamilton, 2016; Besana et al., 2020; Henninger et al., 2016). In other words, the finding—stakeholder consensus—emphasizes recent studies where a city has more than one unique characteristic, either as a modern hub or a heritage of glorious past.

Speaking about the glorious past, Ternate was an Islamic Sultanate, dated back to 1517. History has made Ternate well-known worldwide, especially for European countries looking for spices, especially clove and nutmeg. In reality, the Sultanate is still running today, but as a cultural entity within the Republic of Indonesia. This then led to brand the city by using its long historical stories, and this was able to a legendary leadership, such as Sultan Babullah. In other words, this current research demonstrates an element of branding a city by using the stories of its ancient leaders who were well-known around the world at that time. This current study aligns with Sumardi et al. (2018) study where Kingdom Blambangan in Central Java enabled creativity and city branding growth. Another study by Chandan & Kumar (2019) indicates a spirit to live the lost kingdom up again and brand the city.

The last identified theme was a historic and well-known commodity. As highlighted early, nutmeg and cloves were the main commodities hunted by many countries over centuries. Importantly, this has been extensively discussed in the literature (Anderson, 1962; Arnold, 2005; de Vos, 2006), where the 'exploration' to search for the source of these spices led to imperialism and colonialism. This current research then provides evidence of how these commodities could brand the City of Ternate. In other words, there is an absence of branding a place or a city using long-historical and world-known commodities.

By discussing how the City of Ternate should be branded, this current research came to a point where the identified themes were used to define city branding for Ternate. The city of Ternate should be branded as a city that has quality in the tourism industry, economic value, wide community engagement, stakeholder consensus in shaping the city's development roadmap, local wisdom from legendary leaderships, as well as a historic and renowned commodity.

This current study then proposes a model (Figure 2) as a form of its mid-range theory generated from a contextual identification of city branding aspects (the identified themes). This model is expected to be tested in a large audience (samples) with different characteristics, including those not originated from and living outside Ternate.
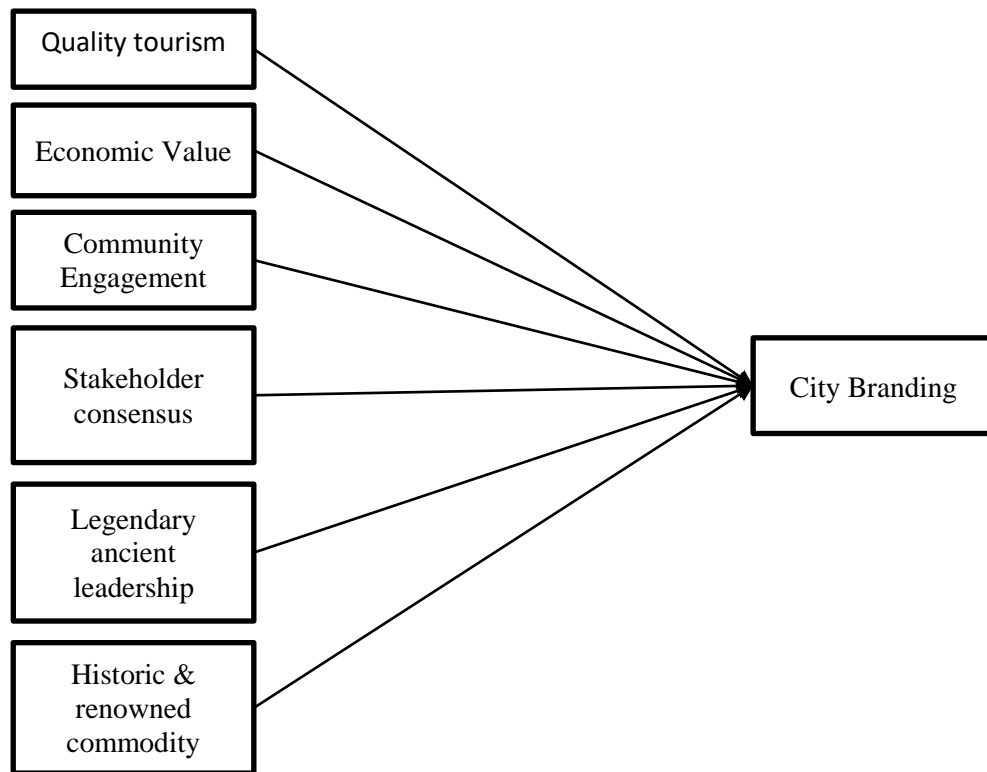
Figure 2. Elements in City Branding

4. Conclusion

Likely, there is still a limited number of studies on city branding that used a city having various characteristics such as Ternate City. This city is a vibrant as well as an urban hub where has been developing and evolving. Its spectacular views also surround this constant progress—an island city—that should balance development and maintaining its natural beauty. Also, Ternate City has been well-known for its long history of the Sultanate of Ternate. This means the city needs to balance between modern life and its rooted culture that has been living for centuries. These all blended characteristics led to a challenge on how to brand the Ternate City.

This current study took a preliminary approach by identifying the aspects that should be considered in branding the city. By using constructivist grounded theory, this research identified how six main aspects of city branding for Ternate. They are quality of tourism, economic value, community engagement, stakeholder consensus, legendary ancient leadership, and historic and renowned commodity. This finding then also leads to a mid-range theory for defining city branding for Ternate. Ternate City should be branded as a city that has quality in the tourism industry, economic value, wide community engagement, stakeholder consensus in shaping the city's development roadmap, local wisdom from legendary leaderships, as well as a historic and renowned commodity. As a result of forming the definition, a testable model is also proposed.

The testable model also indicates this current study's limitations and is expected to be improved in future studies. As a qualitative study, this current research is concerned about generalizability, so many respondents are needed to strengthen and prove the reliability of the identified themes (aspects) of city branding. Therefore, future studies are expected to test these themes in many samples (respondents) with a wide range of backgrounds, including those of

the visitors. The identified themes also need to be tested at different places and cities likely to have similar characteristics, including several cities in the North Maluku Province, such as Tidore, Jailolo, and Bacan. Apart from being less developed compared to Ternate, these cities have almost identical characteristics as Ternate does.

5. Acknowledgment

The authors are grateful to express gratitude to those who have had the pleasure to cooperate during this research.

6. Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors have declared no potential conflicts of interest concerning the study, authorship, and/or publication of this article,

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