The Existence of Mickey Mouse as the Walt Disney Company’s Mascot in the Global Value Chain Perspective

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Abstract
This article analyses the existence of Mickey Mouse as the mascot of the Walt Disney Company based on global value chain perspective. As the official mascot of Walt Disney Company, Mickey Mouse has been well-established since 1928 to the present day, its artwork having been produced as motion pictures, television series, comics, books, and theme parks. Its existence has made Walt Disney Company as one of the most successful multinational companies that dominate the entertainment industry in the world. Earlier studies have explained that the existence of a company’s mascot in the entertainment industry is perpetuated by the company’s strategy through branding and supply chain management. However, in the global value chain, previous studies have not yet discussed companies by their mascots, focusing only on the business activities in the industry. Therefore, this article analyses the mascot of the Walt Disney Company: Mickey Mouse, in building the company into the global economy using the global value chain perspective. Nonetheless, the branding strategy and supply chain management correlate to one of the global value chain elements, the input-output structure. The perpetuation of the existence of a mascot is supported by other global value chain elements, namely the local institutional context and geographic scope.

Keywords: global value chain, Mickey Mouse, mascot, entertainment industry, Walt Disney Company

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INTRODUCTION

Mickey Mouse has developed into a globally iconic and popular character since the 20th century. Furthermore, Mickey Mouse’s existence has brought success to the Walt Disney Company, which settled as one of the Hollywood studios that dominate the global entertainment industry. At the 90th anniversary of Mickey Mouse, the Walt Disney Company created Mickey Mouse: The True Original global public campaign, including in Indonesia, to adjust its existence in the world entertainment industry. In this campaign, the Walt Disney Company collaborated with retailers and international brands in launching Mickey Mouse-related new products, a photo contest on social media, selling merchandise, fashion week, exhibitions and parades with Indonesian characteristics, especially referring to Batik. Therefore, Mickey Mouse’s 90th anniversary was an important moment for the Walt Disney Company to settle its position in dominating the global economy.

Later, Mickey Mouse became the official mascot of the Walt Disney Company. This company has created a variety of cartoon characters, including Mickey Mouse. Mickey Mouse has been chosen as the official mascot as it could save the company from bankruptcy. Mickey Mouse was the first original work from the Walt Disney Company released in 1928 to the public. Ub Iwerks and Walt Disney created Mickey Mouse in 1928, which became an instant hit in the same year. Other Big Six members also have animal mascots as well as Walt Disney, such as Warner Bros with Bugs Bunny and Universal Studios with Woody Woodpecker. Nevertheless, the two mascots of the company are not single mascots like Mickey Mouse. First, Warner Bros has animal mascots besides Bugs Bunny, namely Daffy Duck, Tweety Bird, Sylvester, and Porky Pig (Thomas 1990). Second, Woody Woodpecker is an unofficial mascot of Universal Studios, where the mascot is a representation of Universal’s theme park in Florida (Erik 2011). Later, Mickey Mouse became the first cartoon character to be included in the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 1978, followed by Bugs Bunny in 1985 and Woody Woodpecker in 1990 (Hollywood Chamber of Commerce 2012). If compared to other studios, Walt Disney only has one mascot, Mickey Mouse.

As an iconic character, Mickey Mouse grows with thousands of licensed products, such as motion pictures, television series, videos,
comics, books, and others. Everybody in the world knows and loves Mickey Mouse. It could be seen in the Mickey Mouse’s 88th birthday celebration, travelling the world to greet fans through his videos and social media (Walt Disney Company 2016). Mickey Mouse has changed people’s ideas about mice: from animals that live in dirty places and spread disease, into a beloved character which brings joy that makes people love Mickey Mouse. Mickey Mouse’s pleasant character makes him one of the most recognizable images in the world (Suddath 2008). Indeed, Mickey Mouse’s existence perpetuates the Walt Disney Company. Based on this case, this article attempts to answer the following question: how does the Walt Disney Company perpetuate the existence of its mascot?

Previous studies about the perpetuation of the existence of company mascots can be categorized into two aspects: through branding strategy and supply chain management. In the first, the company puts the mascot as a public figure for the company’s strategy to expand its business, because the mascot is an effective way to build a good rapport from customers (Palermo and Matusitz 2014; Robbins 2014; Mohanty 2014; Paioa and Arunrangsiwed 2016). Nonetheless, these four previous studies put more emphasis on the branding strategy for developing company products. The way to maintain the sustainability of the company’s mascot, an effective branding process is supporting by the high quality of marketing strategies and company services. The unique and innovative of marketing strategies and good company services can change according to lifestyle, value systems, and customer behaviour. It will make customers satisfied in enjoying the brand and be loyal to the company (Gribor and Milovanov 2017; Veljković and Kaličanin 2016; Brown 2014; Loureiro, Sarmento and Bellego 2017).

In the second model, the product of an industry is organized by the supply chain management, which controls product and prices (Lee 2011; Madudova 2017; Wangungu and Gichira 2014). Nevertheless, the supply chain management is included in the value chain. The value chain sees the company’s position in the business area and geographical scope of the company. The relationship between companies has important strategic roles in the market adapted to each region (Peppard and Rylander 2006; Memedovic et.al, 2008; Grimes and Sun 2016; Leppäaho and Pajunen 2017).

Related to the global value chain, previous studies have not yet discussed the company by its mascot that only views its consequence
of the business in the industry. However, the global value chain is only used to viewing the business activities that have consequences for the survival of a company. Therefore, this article analyses the mascot of the Disney Company, Mickey Mouse, in building the company into a global economy using the global value chain perspective.

This article aims to apply a global value chain perspective to study the existence of the company mascot with the case of Walt Disney Company’s mascot—Mickey Mouse—in the entertainment industry. Building upon the company strategy on maintaining the mascot, this article analyses the existence of company mascot based on the global value chain elements are input-output structure, geographical scope, and local institutional context. The strategies to perpetuate the existence of a company mascot such as branding and supply chain management are included in an input-output structure. Then, the local institutional context and geographical scope will show how many countries have taken part in supporting the existence of the multinational company mascot on a regional and global scale. The global value chain processes based on the value of the company is responsible for developing the company in the global economy.

RESEARCH METHOD

This article is written based on the qualitative approach, in particular, document study. These documents used in this article include journal articles, official institution websites, news portals, essays, and videos. Document study is often used in the qualitative research. Document study is a research method reviewing or evaluating document in both printed and electronic materials (Bowen 2009). Document study also helps to identify the phenomenon and find a suitable concept to guide the researcher (Achwan 2015). This method could be differentiated from other general field research in terms of data collection, which is data including text and images as private or public documents are not collected directly from the field, but instead are collected by different ways of collection such as printed and electronic materials. Furthermore, the analysis of this method is different from other qualitative research, which is analyzing texts and images based on content, structure and coherence (Bowen 2009; Marvasti 2004; Creswell 2017). This method is also different from action research, especially soft systems methodology-based action research, in the sense that the former is purely dealing with
reality, while the latter is dealing with both reality and actuality of real world (Checkland and Scholes 1989; Hardjosoekarto 2012).

It focuses on Mickey Mouse as a subject. The subject was chosen because Mickey Mouse had been a mascot for 90 years, and he had helped building the Walt Disney business empire until now. This article uses data source triangulation by using multiple sources data in the same phenomenon, such as journal articles, news portals, official institution website, essay, and videos. This aims to justify the credibility of the data by provides cross-data validity on the dataset over time and across media (Patton 1999; Altheide 2000; Bowen 2009). However, this article has the limitation: limited specific information about the phenomenon of the study and biased pieces of information in those documents.

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

Global Value Chain

Global value chain is an approach used to view economic globalization, which is characterized by a value chain (Achwan 2014:63). Furthermore, the global value chain describes a full of range activities of the company to bring a product starting from its conception to the final product in the context of economic globalization. This chain focuses on the sequence of tangible and intangible value adding activities from the conception to the final product. The global value chain operates to understand how the global industry can be organized in the structure and the dynamics of the actors involved in that industry. The global value chain uses a tool to see patterns of global production, networks, and actors by geographic scope. The key points of the global value chain are the international company’s management and the strategies used by the state and other stakeholders to keep their position in the global economy (Gereffi 2016). Moreover, the global value chain could identify more detail about global production, standards, technologies, processes, and markets in a specific industry than any other perspective. Therefore, the global value chain could also identify the existence of company mascot as value addition of the company in the global economy (Gereffi 2011).

The global value chain has six elements: input-output structure, geographical scope, governance structure, upgrading, local institutional context, and stakeholders (Gereffi 2016). In this article, there are three
elements that will analyse the existence of a mascot from a multinational company:

1. An input-output structure is a process that describes a set of values in the main activities/segments, starting from making the concept until the final product. This structure operates also to identify the dynamics or structure of the company in the global value chain.

2. Local institutional context can be identified as the formation of participation from the state at each step of the value chain, which is seen from its local, regional, global policies. The local institutional context has embeddedness to social institutions dynamics. A local context can be institutionalized and commodified by an industry similar to the society’s acceptance of these values.

3. The geographic scope is the key point for analyzing global demand and supply. The global value chain operates on every geographic scale, such as local, national, regional, and international. This point is seen based on the participation of several countries in the competition to gain profit in the global economy.

Those three elements are the main elements of the global value chain that will explain the process of a mascot’s existence perpetuation. Those elements describe the detail of the transformation of raw materials into final materials, the scope of expansion of the products, and institutionalization of the industry’s value chain embedded in society (Gereffi 2011). Therefore, these elements enable a company to maintain its mascot in the global economy. First, the input-output structure represents the global value chain carried out by the company. The company’s mascot use as value addition in this structure starting from making the concepts, production, distribution, marketing until the product consumed by the public. Furthermore, the local institutional context is shown by the rapid development of the company’s business in the global economy which characterizes by the mascot as value addition of the company. Later, the geographic scope element is able to see the existence of the company’s mascot from the market scope such as the numbers of countries participating in the company’s business and the company’s revenues by region (Baldwin 2013; Hernandez and Pedersen 2016). These three processes are configured to maintain the company’s position in the global economy. This configuration process has an important role in the lead company to increase its profits by the value addition of the company (Hernandez and Pedersen 2016).
short, the global value chain enables perpetuation of the existence of the company’s mascot in the global economy.

The Mascot in the Global Value Chain

The mascot is a personification symbol of the value and quality referring to the company’s identities. For example, Mickey Mouse is one of the iconic mascots in the world (Bishop 2015). Thus, a mascot has an important role in the growth of industrialization which makes modern companies become more friendly and trustworthy by its customers. According to Lury (2004), the mascot has functioned as a medium of interaction between customer and company. The funny form of a mascot is recognized by people about company’s value in its product and drives people to become interested in purchasing a company’s product so that the funny mascot makes economic exchanges smooth. Another role of a mascot is reproducing and maintaining the multinational company’s identity through socialization by defining an object to indoctrinate individual beliefs and actions (Cayla 2013). This mascot becomes an important value for giving the best impression to company entities in both small and large companies. Later, the company’s mascot will be successful or not determined by how the company acts in regulating the business brand, both tangible and intangible brand.

Related to the global value chain, the mascot is an important value addition in the input-output structure. The input-output structure can identify the process of adding a set of the industry’s value from the making a concept until it is formed into the customer’s goods (Gereffi 2016). In this way, the mascot is used in the process of building up a concept of the company brand formed up to the marketing process. The mascot represents a set of the industry’s value in the global value chain. Later, the mascot is designed by reflecting the company’s vision and can be understood by its stakeholders, such as managerial, workers, and customers. This process is done through institutionalization. According to Brown (2011), the mascot is useful for making the company easily remembered by its customer. Moreover, mascots can be a bridge for business to its customer either by introducing products or services (Hoolwerff 2014).

The company’s mascot is usually used in marketing strategies because of its reputation, which will impact the company’s image and makes customers purchase its products or services (Pairoa and Arurangsiwed...
The company mostly uses animal mascots as a common form such as tigers, lions, bears, and others. According to Cayla (2013), many companies put their mascots in the highest position by providing detailed rules (Brown 2014). For example, Mickey Mouse, with his eternal charisma, is always surrounded by several characters such as Minnie Mouse, Donald Duck, and Goofy.

THE HISTORY OF MICKEY MOUSE’S EXISTENCE AS WALT DISNEY MASCOT

Walt Disney Company has created many popular cartoon characters in the world, including Mickey Mouse which chosen as the official mascot of this company. Mickey Mouse is well-known as a multi-billion global brand because it has earned 180 billion dollars in the stock market (Schlekser 2016). This mascot is a symbol of happiness, ease of making people laugh, and hard working (Sackey 2017). Mickey Mouse is present in a variety of Disney films with the various characters which has won the hearts of people of any age. Mickey Mouse’s charisma was created by Walt Disney (Kalra 2017). This mascot characterizes the Walt Disney Company’s vision that is to become one of the world’s leading providers of the entertainment. This symbol also represents one of the Walt Disney Company’s visions: happiness through the entertainment industry, such as films, theme parks, and consumer products. This vision statement shows that the industry’s strategic management of leadership targets and provides an overview of the nature of the business (William 2017).

Since its first appearance in 1928, Mickey Mouse has brought the Walt Disney Company to immediate hits. Mickey Mouse’s first cartoon, Steamboat Willie, has stolen the public’s attention. Furthermore, the Walt Disney Company developed Mickey Mouse into several products such as television shows, motion picture, comic strips, video games, and theme parks. In 1931, Mickey Mouse made a live-in-person show in Los Angeles, the show entitled Mickey Mouse Idea. In 1935, Mickey Mouse was designed using Technicolor. In 1937, Disney Studios produced a short Mickey Mouse film with form and sound improvements and added some new characters such as Pluto, Donald Duck, and Minnie Mouse. In the same year, Disney Studios launched an animated film with a longer duration, soundtrack, and combining Technicolor that was entitled Snow White. In 1942, Mickey Mouse short films received
Academy Awards nomination as the best-animated films. In the 1950s, Mickey Mouse expanded the industry into a theme park, comic strip, and variety show entitled Mickey Mouse Club. In 1978, Mickey Mouse became the first cartoon character to get a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in recognition of his career in the entertainment industry. In the 1990s, Mickey Mouse also ventured into merchandise products that increased the business growth. In the 2000s, Mickey Mouse has also appeared in the Kingdom Hearts video games characters, and television series such as Mickey Mouse Clubhouse, and Mickey and the Roaster Racer.

The success of the Walt Disney Company could not be detached from Mickey Mouse. Walt Disney Company reminds the public that “it’s all started with a mouse.” Mickey Mouse’s copyright can reach as much as 8 billion U.S dollars every year (Hurtado 2015). Walt Disney Company maintains the existence of the Mickey Mouse through supply chain management and branding strategy. Therefore, Walt Disney Company protects Mickey Mouse by law through copyright before producing various branded products (Nielson 2017). The goal is to prevent the public from using Mickey Mouse without Disney’s permission such as fake products. The Walt Disney Company had anti-piracy policies to protect every character in its intellectual property especially Mickey Mouse, which in the form of the name, brand, and other renowned possession affiliated with the Walt Disney Company (Walt Disney Company n.d.). The Disney-branded product is managed by supply chain management (Walt Disney Company 2015). The company integrated the product design into the supply chain. It provides opportunities to maximizing benefit for the company through company image (Khan et al. 2016).

Furthermore, the other way to maintain Mickey Mouse as an official mascot is the branding strategy to keep the brand on top. Disney’s core branding is creating happiness through the magical experiences (Adamson 2014). According to Kennedy (2014), Walt Disney builds a brand through branding strategies that put Mickey Mouse as the mascot, such as product sales, and advertising with cooperation through media and publications. Here are the branding strategies implemented by Walt Disney Company:

1. Creating a world of its own through Disney Company’s vision: in a way creating the happiest place on earth.
2. Doing promotion in accordance with the philosophy that Disney World would be a good place to find happiness and knowledge. The older generation can reminisce, and the younger generation get inspiration for the future as the hope in the world.

3. The personality-driven brand making Mickey Mouse as the ‘face’ of the company, by promoting Disneyland, be hosted on ABC TV, which then make Mickey as a storyteller and salesmen.

4. As a promotion, beginning with Mickey Mouse, then licensing sale to generate thousands of products with the Mickey Mouse character.

5. Using the media, such as cable TV channels ESPN and ABC, Radio Disney station, by promoting the personality of the Disney Company and new films.

DISNEY’S MICKEY MOUSE IN THE GLOBAL VALUE CHAIN PERSPECTIVE

The perspective of the global value chain is widely used by economic actors—industries and companies—and even policy makers for the development of a country. This perspective is used to see development by economic actors and countries by the geographical side (Frederick, 2016). This perspective sees the implications of such activities on global trade, expansion of the network, the industry to gain profit, and maintain the product quality or resources owned by the industry/company (Gereffi and Fernandez-Stark 2011; Bain 2010; Sturgeon, Biesbroeck, and Gereffi 2008; Curtains and Gereffi 2001; Dedrik, Linden, and Kraemer 2009; Christian et al. 2011; Ozturk and Terhorst 2010). This perspective has evolved into the shape of the global economy, for example, commodities (Bain 2010), automotive industry (Sturgeon, Biesbroeck, and Gereffi 2008), jeans apparel (Curtains and Gereffi 2001), electronics (Dedrik, Linden, and Kraemer 2009), and tourism (Christian et al. 2011; Ozturk and Terhorst 2010).

This article analyses the global value chain in the entertainment industry because it has not been discussed previously, especially Walt Disney Company. In an earlier study, the Walt Disney Company was only viewed based on the value chain in the business activities that are complex to see the consequences of business in entertainment services for the sake of profit earned (UK Essay 2013). Therefore, this article analyses the mascot of the Disney Company’s, Mickey Mouse that is in building the company into a global economy using the global
value chain perspective. Earlier studies have generally emphasized two elements of global value chain such as governance and upgrading. In this research, the existence of Mickey Mouse as a mascot is seen through the three elements of the global value chain, namely input-output structure, local institutional context, and geographic scope.

The Input-Output Structure

This section describes the process of the making of the Mickey Mouse’s concept, the production, distribution, marketing, until the service of final products can be consumed. Starting from the success of Mickey Mouse in the entertainment industry, now the Walt Disney Company has 5 business segmentations: the network media, theme park and resort, entertainment studio, and interactive media (UK Essays 2013).

Creating the Mickey Mouse concept became the first starting point as major value addition in an input-output structure. As Parr, the concept starts with the process of research and development, then develops by adjusting the right brand name (Stern 1992). The Mickey Mouse logo was created in 1928 by Walt Disney and UbIwerks. Mickey Mouse was developed from a rabbit named Oswald—belonging to Universal Studios—to the Mickey Mouse shape with yellow shoes, red pants, and two large white gloves.

The concept of Mickey Mouse was born during the Great Depression. So, Mickey Mouse brought the concept of happiness, which eventually made people want to live happily like Mickey Mouse. The making of Mickey’s concept is still new in the film industry, especially in Hollywood. This concept brings an animated concept combined with other compositions such as music and sound. At that time, the Hollywood film industry was developing silent movies, so that Mickey Mouse brought a new concept to entertain people. However, the initial form of Mickey Mouse was not a mouse, but a rabbit because it was everyone’s favourite animal at that time. Firstly, Disney made Oswald get an instant hit by the public because the concept of animation was still new. Nevertheless, the creating of animation at that time was still quite expensive, then Oswald was taken over by Universal Studio because it wanted to increase its profit. Later, Disney kept the concept of Oswald, but removed its ears, so it became a mouse (Kraemer 2016).
Instead, Mickey Mouse could follow Oswald the Rabbit’s success in its debut film Steamboat Willie, which became an instant hit in 1928. The triumph of Mickey Mouse at that time in the entertainment industry was also supported by its personality, which brings happiness to everyone who sees it. At that time, there were no animated films that carried optimistic comedy values. Mickey Mouse’s personalities were inspired by Charlie Chaplin, who was a success in the film industry in a comedy style. This is under Disney’s statement, “and we thought of a mouse that would have something of the wistfulness of Chaplin.” (Rowney 2018). Chaplin brought the inspiring stories that make the public very entertained. Therefore, Mickey Mouse was made with gestures like Chaplin that made the public impressed since its debut in Steamboat Willie. The concept of comedy brought by Chaplin and Disney was different from the social situation prevailing in America such as sex and politics they brought friendly values in that concept. Thus, people adore this concept, especially as an entertainment icon character for children.

They created stories that represent American universal value such as optimism, hardworking, adaptability, a sense of humor and being humble (Jackson 2003). These values were maintained by Walt Disney represented through Mickey Mouse. This value was also reflected in the name Mickey Mouse itself, such as being humble and fun. Mickey Mouse was a goodwill character, which could fit with every culture and language. Mickey Mouse’s shape continues to be refined from black and white into red shorts with two white or yellow buttons, yellow shoes, two large white gloves, and wide ears. People can easily recognize Walt Disney Company through Mickey Mouse’s ears. Therefore, Mickey Mouse represents a symbol of materialism, because it has personality under the culture of the United States, has optimism, a sense of possibility and innocent commodification into various products—cartoons, films, theater, merchandise—and it sells massively, so that bring huge profits to the Walt Disney Company.

Furthermore, the second process is production. The Walt Disney Company has 5 business segments such as studios, Disney interactive, network media, park and resort, and consumer products. These five business segments began since the success of Mickey Mouse’s debut to the public. The Mickey Mouse’s concept is the main reference value in every production process of the five business segments of the Walt Disney Company. The popularity of Mickey Mouse since Steamboat
Willie was used by the Walt Disney Company to gain huge profits by producing Mickey Mouse continuously into various forms of media such as short films, television series, theme parks, and merchandises. The various forms of products from Mickey Mouse build the dominance of the Walt Disney Company in the entertainment industry until the present. The development of the five business segmentations happened gradually, adjusting to market trends at that time. The Walt Disney Company developed its production at that time to provide post-war happiness values and the birth of the Baby Boomers generation, by combining entertainment elements with technology, so that Disney’s products became popular. The values of happiness and optimism are described through Mickey Mouse. Therefore, Mickey Mouse continued to be produced by expansion into various entertainment media because the Walt Disney Company realizes the cycle of consumerists, which invited their customers to feel the happiness perpetuated through Mickey Mouse. This is also supported by the American political-economic situation, capitalist democracy that making it easier for the entertainment industry to expand into popular culture.

The first Walt Disney Company’s business segmentation is the production of animation, by developing other compositions such as music, visuals, emphasizing storytelling of comedy. After animated films received awards like the Academy Awards, the Disney Company expanded its business to theme parks in Paris, Hong Kong, and Japan because it attracted the public with more than 115 million visitors since the beginning of the 21st century. Likewise, the development of other business segments, this expansion of production was created based on the lack of entertainment options and following trends in the public. In the strategy of producing goods and services, the Walt Disney Company put Mickey Mouse as the main value that makes the public able to create their own stories. Every Disney product offers happiness to its customers that refers to Mickey Mouse’s humble and fun personality. Mickey Mouse’s personality such as happiness and fun are produced continuously into various entertainment media, thus fostering the trend of the need for entertainment itself since the post World War because the pleasant image of Mickey Mouse has been internalized in society. Therefore, Mickey Mouse becomes the biggest money-making machine for Disney, with its products such as film, theater, drama and comedy, and theme parks. The company produces products and services
aggressively added by Mickey Mouse’s value for each business segment as a form of domination cultural imperialism in the world.

In the product development of Walt Disney business segments, this is referring to Mickey Mouse’s success. In maintaining the reputation of its business, the production process has managed by responsible supply chain (Walt Disney Company 2015). The supply chain has a process that will make the company product sustain and maximize the company’s profit. Indeed, the improvement of the product is well-served to the customer (Holweg et al. 2005; Stocchetti and Scatolla 2011). The Walt Disney Company ensure the ethics of production with the supply chain to improve labor conditions in production activities, make safety and integrity of products, and keep the environment sustain. For example, in film production, theme park, and consumer products. In creating films by combining storytelling and visual artistic technology, Disney provides different buildings, such as themes for each process, from the layout, image retrieval, and editing, to the post-production process. The concept of the theme park in the studio makes the workers able to create a creative culture while at the same time manage work-life balance (Walt Disney Studios n.d). In theme parks, the production process is starting from the use of costumes, the appearance that will be presented about the attraction. The production process here invites Walt Disney Company’s workers to create an entertainment experience together. The attractions displayed in the theme park are in accordance with films produced by Disney, so this attraction is familiar and can be entertained by the public. This theme park concept is becoming an instant hit since it was first opened to the public. Then, consumer products are produced with environmentally friendly materials. This is regulated by the supply chain so that the products safely used by the public while maintaining the sustainability of the environment (Mainwaring 2016).

There upon, the products are distributed for consumption by the public. The distribution of Disney products gained on a license. The development of this license began in 1930 when Mickey Mouse was adored by people. At that time, people wanted products related to Mickey Mouse. Nonetheless, Walt Disney could not support the high public demand for its products. Instead of that, the Disney Company created a license on branded products to fulfill the public’s request. This license becomes a distribution channel and could expand the market worldwide. Licensed products also have considerable benefits. This process is also supported by marketing and consumer loyalty
Furthermore, the Walt Disney Company invited other retailers to distribute Disney characters such as Mickey Mouse, Minnie, Marvel products, Cars, Star Wars, Winnie the Pooh and Toy Story through licenses. This license invites other companies to disseminate products with Disney valuable franchises according to character companies, television broadcasts, and films. According to the report of the Global Magazine License, the Walt Disney Company was crowned as the world’s leading licensor, with sales amounting to a total of 56.6 billion U.S. dollars in 2016. Examples of companies that use licenses from the Walt Disney Company include Forever 21, which issues her latest collection, Mickey and Co. For film products, Disney also gives licenses to America’s largest distributors. For consumer products, Disney distributes it through Amazon retailers, WalMart and McDonald’s (Askalany 2016).

Furthermore, the next process is marketing. As the world’s largest entertainment business, Disney’s marketing process certainly has become one of the strategies to achieve its success. Mickey Mouse became an actor in changing the marketing system, relying on him as a product to target specific markets. Mickey Mouse as a global brand is perpetuated through branding. Branding strategy is a valuable component to create customer awareness in the marketing process (Anabila and Vitor 2014; Dumitriu 2012). Disney is well-known as a company with many products that have attracted many consumers’ hearts. Disney slowly grew as a large enterprise by forming the world entertainment industry. This is inseparable from the performance of creative workers in making new films, which can achieve the desired target. Disney uses an innovative strategy by creating a unique personalization to any consumers, promotion of sustainability, building time value, making consumers enjoy the stories presented and in accordance with the situation of humanity, then always creating new things and updating the theme, especially at Disneyland World. This strategy makes Disney have a unique marketing strategy, which is to make the characters created can live in consumers. Disney also became a leader in the advertising world by placing Mickey Mouse as its icon. The Disney Company also managed to make Mickey Mouse have a relationship with everyone globally. Reserved target any market is unique, that all walks of life ranging from infants to the elderly. Each generation is able to utilize all forms of entertainment services provided by Disney. This success began with utilizing storytelling as a marketing medium.
At last, a service is a form of Walt Disney Company product that is consumed by the public. Disney Company also has a commitment to serve its customers. For this company, customer service is one of the keys to achieving success. The Disney Company strives to make consumers comfortable with brand promises, brand experience, understanding audiences, training workers, forming strong interactions between workers and customers, and never rejecting what consumers want. This personal approach was chosen by Disney in providing its services, for example, personalizing consumers, creating magic with brand promises, and listening to consumers.

The brand experience makes a sense of brand is real. For example, Mickey Mouse always accompanies its customer whenever they do. It will make the customer dissolve and feel these characters in real life (Anderson 2016). Walt Disney Company operates brand promise approach to maintain customer loyalty. As Knapp (2008), the brand promise is a core practical of customer experience to get benefit and influenced in using goods or services (Anderson and Johansson 2011). Furthermore, consumers will feel satisfied and interested in the products or services provided by Disney (Jones 2015). Then, consumers can experience lasting miracle created by the Disney Company. All of these are done in accordance with the statement of the Boyles, “to ensure that the most magical place on Earth, remains that way” (Adamson 2014).

Mickey Mouse is one of the services that attract the public’s attention. This cute mouse is loved by any social class. Mickey products are associated with all social classes. Some Mickey Mouse products are intended for middle social class. Others, such as theme parks, are intended for the upper middle and upper classes, as can be seen by the price of the entry ticket, which increases every year. These products reflect the social conditions of the American society, of which 50% are from the middle class (Niles 2015). The increase in middle class is happening in other countries referring to the middle class in America, such as Germany, France and Japan. Therefore, Disney products are easily accepted by other countries, referring to the welfare of the United States. Then, to be institutionalized to the lower classes of society, Disney represented it through other characters such as Aladdin and Ratatouille by bringing a happy “poor” condition. These Disney values can also be institutionalized in other countries through the depiction of social classes. This description of social class reflects that it can shape cultural behavior institutionalized into an identity (Krauf, Piff, and Keltner...
These people by each social classes could express themselves to shape the behavior of consuming Mickey Mouse’s products.

For example, Margaret Thatcher, who called his parliament the Mickey Mouse Parliament, because it spread happiness. Then, Barack Obama, who was also happy with Mickey Mouse, especially on the Steamboat Willie film (Sandbrook 2008). Not only from the elite, Mickey Mouse is also loved by the middle-class society (looking at Mickey Mouse’s Birthday Surprise in 2017). For example, Iwagaki, from Japan, who collects Mickey Mouse items, even he has a Mickey Mouse themed car. Initially, he collected the items for his son, but over time, he intended to add to his collection and look for the limited series, until he liked it (Disney Career 2017). Next, a married couple who live in Ohio took part in a running race from Disneyland. They always attend the event by wearing the costume of Mickey and Minnie, because they love it (Disney Deutschland 2017). Later, Abbie and Kelsey, from London, both of them were happy to share outfit photos with Disney themes. They were also very enthusiastic about Mickey Mouse’s surprise, who came out with the current outfit trend (Disney Career 2017). It is also loved by low/working class society, as can be seen from Mickey Mouse coming into their workplace and residences, dancing with them on Mickey Mouse’s 88th birthday celebrates around the world (Disney Music Vevo 2016).

In sum, Mickey Mouse becomes an important value in the whole process of making a concept until it could serve as a product or service. This concept made by adding goodwill character and funny shape. Mickey Mouse’s popularity makes Disney had five business segments with different production processes. Then, these products are distributed through licenses. Plus, innovation in Disney’s marketing through storytelling, which makes these products have their own stories for everyone. Furthermore, the service is the main product of Disney Company, which makes public like Disney. Therefore, customer service makes people feel close to the company. This portrait could be seen in the enthusiasm of public who like Mickey Mouse. The whole process of input-output puts Mickey Mouse as the main value of the Walt Disney Company that maintains its existence in the entertainment industry as the mascot.
The Local Institutional Context

This section analyses the existence of Mickey Mouse based on the form of state participation in every stage of the input-output such as local and international. The local institutional context has attachments to dynamic social institutions. Local values can be institutionalized and commodified by an industry, as well as acceptance of these values by the community. Since Mickey Mouse was successful in the world, the Walt Disney Company expanded its business to various parts of the world.

Participation of other countries in this business is in the form of, for example, establishing factories and theme parks such as China and Hong Kong, establishing theme parks in Japan and France, and localizing Disney products such as films or television series under the country’s culture such as the Philippines and Australia. This opportunity makes Disney benefit from the international market. Besides gaining profits, the Walt Disney Company uses local cultures to attract interest from the local market, and gain acceptance from the public. Therefore, Walt Disney proved to be more popular than the traditional local culture, due to Westernization that reflects social, political, economic condition in that country which they were commercialized (Belkhyr 2012).

The process of institutionalization carried out by Walt Disney through glocalization, which uses an adaptation of local culture as the leading edge of Western values like American style, so that makes people can accept products in the American style. For example, Mickey Mouse has a different name in a certain place, such as in Italy, the name of this cute mouse is Topolino. In House of Mouse film, Mickey declared his full name i.e. Michael the Mouse. In the French comic entitled “La planète des cerveaux”, Mickey Mouse’s full name is Michael Theodore Mouse (Kalra 2017). In addition, in television series, Disney adapts local culture, to suit consumers in the country. In the other Disney films, such as Inside Out when getting into Japan, the language of instruction used is Japanese, and slipped a value such as children’s distaste for broccoli in Japan, or other examples of Iron Man 3 film, which uses Mandarin, when the film was released in China. Not only that way, Disney also adapts local market forms, for example in China, using Hong Kong popular stories when making films. This is to ensure the success of Disneyland in Hong Kong. Then, another form of adaptation, seen in Disneyland Paris, is by adjusting the style of the Parisian food menu served (Matusitz 2010). By consumer products side, Mickey
Mouse comics are translated into various languages, including Arabic, the character named Miki, and when celebrating Ramadan, Mickey Mouse also celebrates it in the stories form (Dalmuji 2011).

Then, a process of institutionalization—glocalization—also happened in Indonesia, for example in the clothing industry, Disney also collaborated with local Indonesian designers, then held a Disney fashion show by mixing elements with a distinctive Indonesian touch. Furthermore, on November 2018, Disney celebrates Mickey Mouse: True Original parade in Jakarta’s Car Free Day in which Mickey Mouse was wearing Batik and Koko shirts, like Abang Jakarta style and riding by a pedicab. This activity aims to greet Mickey Mouse fans in Indonesia, who received a warm welcome from Indonesian people, especially Jakarta (Detik.com 2018). Moreover, social media channels like the Disney Indonesia Instagram account use the Indonesian language in their captions. Additionally, Disney also invites famous Indonesian musician with Universal Music to present Disney’s soundtracks such as Let It Go, A Whole New World, Under the Sea, Beauty and the Beast, and so on, using the Indonesian language to convey motivational and pleasant messages on the soundtrack to Indonesian children.

The glocalization as institutionalization process is used as way to improving global standardized business strategies to fit in local values through adaptations (Svensson 2001). This brings Western Brands, like Disney, to emerging markets, through the adaptation of value such as local taste, attitudes and values, because the society is familiar with the local value (Smith 2012). These local values can adding to the company’s value that brings to the strategy of maintaining business in the process of production, distribution and marketing which accordance with the cultural and socio-economic background of the society (Grigorescu and Zaif 2017). Indeed, the institutionalization process through glocalization made Mickey Mouse able to adapt local values as the strategy to perpetuating its business by increase the accumulation of capital because it gets a targeted market that is in accordance with the cultural and socio-economic situation in the country.

After the process of institutionalization, then the Walt Disney Company commodified local culture of many countries into a more universal by tucking Mickey Mouse shapes as a way to change a more American style. The form of commodification is through adaptation to the local culture. This can be seen from the set of stories, classic figures in the country, local values or local stories. Many stories adapted
by Disney such as Moana from Hawaii, The Story of Hercules from Greece, Lion King with African illustrations, Ratatouille with French background, Snow White and Rapunzel claimed from Western Europe, Aladdin with Middle Eastern characteristics, Frozen with Norwegian values, Pinochio from Italy, and Mulan with a Chinese background (Arbeiter 2014). Then, in these films, a hidden Mickey Mouse is inserted intentionally. This is done not only in films, but also in several other Disney products such as theme parks, properties, TV series, and others. It has become a tradition for Disney workers, such as animators and theme park officers. The icon usually appears in the form of a logo. The purpose of hidden Mickey Mouse is so that people can still enjoy Mickey Mouse in various backgrounds of Walt Disney products (Daily Mail UK 2015).

The commodification of local values above can be useful for the business sustainability. Business uses local culture resources to become the economic resources. The local culture reproduced by expressing identity. This will make the business more powerful in the economic global sector due to persona commodification (Butten 2008; Proschel 2013). Mickey Mouse became an actor which successfully represented American culture into a universal culture. Mickey Mouse was developed into a variety of products, and exert influence on Disney derivatives business, which was accepted by the community with adapting local culture (D Forbes 2003). Mickey Mouse acts as a representation of the commodification of culture to develop products, marketing in order to reach the market segmented by social classes aggressively (Schneider 2003; D Forbes 2003).

The input-output structure expands through the local institutional context. The number of the countries that participate in the business of Walt Disney Company affects by local adaptation strategies. Any shape ranging from adjustments in lifestyle, language, local stories, local value, and using the country’s background. Besides being adopted, the local value is commodified by Mickey Mouse to be a universal value. This is illustrated through some other Disney stories, which slipped Mickey Mouse symbolism. Therefore, the existence of Mickey Mouse could be perpetuated through the local institutional context.
Geographic Scope

This section analyses the existence of Mickey Mouse and the Walt Disney Company in local, regional-scale, even international. For this geographic scope, we can see how many participating countries to support the business activities of Disney, that is an indication of the location of the company, revenue, and a global strategy that is used. The success of Mickey Mouse as a mascot of the Walt Disney Company has built into the world’s most reputable company. Through this success, Walt Disney Company implemented a global strategy to different countries through implementing policies adapted to the country. The Walt Disney Company interested in developing his business on a global scale, to make it as a dominant company in the entertainment industry (Beattie 2017). Distribution of location becomes important to gain an advantage by using local resources. Some benefits gained from this location expansion are building demand-supply relations gaining benefit in terms of scope and creating the economic exchanges between Governments (Hernandez 2011).

The extension of the geographical scope could reach a wider market size to enjoy the Disney Company’s products to different continents, like Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Asia-Pacific, to Latin America. The extension of the geographical scope characterizes Disney products in the country, and several branch offices based in California, USA. For example, Asia-Pacific with the first screening film Snow White in the 1930s, and the construction of resorts, theme parks, film studios in China and Japan. Europe, the Middle East, and Africa have contributed for 80 years in building a family entertainment industry, such as a theme park in France. Later, the Disney Company brought digital products, live-action films, theatre, and other products to Latin America. The presence of various Walt Disney Company products originated from Mickey Mouse, which can bring the success of Disney products to various countries (Bates 1999).

This global strategy could make a map inter-regional headquarter networks with other divisions at the local and global levels. The geographic location is not a hindrance to business expansion. It reflects the existence of economic activity from the side i.e. based on geographic region (Ghemawat 2005). Now, Disney also has several branch companies throughout the world. The following branches of the Walt Disney Company in the entire World are: Argentina, Australia,
Austria, Belgium, Bahamas, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Philippines, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Poland, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, UK, US, Vietnam (Disney Career n.d). The existence of these branches determines the extent to which various countries can fit companies under their socio-political system. Its headquarters office remains in developing countries. This can improve business performance in building the fastest-growing market. This increase in the potential to enhance profit depends on the context of institutional (Khanna, Palepu and Sinha 2005).

The success of the Disney Company as a multinational company earns up to a billion US dollars in revenue by region per region. In 2017, the United States and Canada became the largest contributor (41.88 billion US dollars), followed by Europe (6.54 billion US Dollar), Asia-Pacific (5.075 billion US dollars), and finally, Latin America by 1.64 billion US dollars (Statista 2018). Income obtained from several regions can strengthen the position of this company in the economic capitalistic of other countries (Baladi and Choi 1995). This revenue has implications for the global economy, financial market and geopolitical (Ro 2015). The size company’s position in the global economy can be seen in the profit, assets and corporate values (DeCarlo 2012).

The Walt Disney Company’s success in global economic competition opens the opportunity to expand market networks, especially local markets. Disney Company gets 25% of its revenue from the international market (Forbes 2012). The House of Mouse a.k.a Walt Disney Company gets this position in the global economy starting with Mickey Mouse, thereby creating a global brand. However, the position of the Walt Disney Company is not very developed in some territories such as China and India (Fraser 2011; Holt, Quelch and Taylor 2004).

In sum, the existence of Mickey Mouse makes Walt Disney could expand its business widely. It views numerous of branch offices and scope of Disney products throughout the countries, which makes Walt Disney Company gain profit from many regions of the world. The widespread geographical scope of this company can adjust to the socio-political conditions of other countries through the implementation of the global strategy. On the other hand, this success supported by the central location of Walt Disney in the developing country, the United States.
So, Disney’s business could extend all continents while inviting the country to contribute to the perpetuating of the Walt Disney Company. This makes Mickey Mouse could be perpetuated Walt Disney Company in the entertainment industry through geographical scope.

CONCLUSION

The existence of the mascot is illustrated that has an important role in bringing success to a company, like the Mickey Mouse case. Through Mickey Mouse’s 90th anniversary celebration worldwide including in Indonesia, this means that its existence as a mascot shows the position of the Walt Disney Company to dominate the world entertainment industry. Therefore, Mickey Mouse became an important factor in making the position of the Walt Disney Company withstand in the global economy, particularly its dominance in the entertainment industry. In previous studies, the existence of a mascot kept by branding strategies and the mascot developed through the supply chain.

In this article, the existence of mascots like Mickey Mouse as Walt Disney Company’s mascot has proven that perpetuated through three elements in the global value chain perspectives. These elements include input-output structures, institutional local contexts, and geographical scope. The process of branding and supply chain is in the structure of input-output in production and marketing. The overall process of input-output put Mickey Mouse as the main actor in producing a wide range of product services of the Walt Disney Company, until liked by people in the world. This is what makes Mickey Mouse remaining as the Walt Disney’s mascot because of has scored enormous profits for the Walt Disney Company. This success supported by the context of institutionalization and geographic scope. The institutionalization process successfully is done by way of adapting to local culture, so this strategy used by the company for the expansion of its business to different countries. The extent of Disney’s business scope at the global level has marked by the many Walt Disney branch offices, revenue contributions per region, and the spread of Walt Disney products such as theme park in almost all countries in the world. The existence of Mickey Mouse as a mascot has created the success of the Walt Disney Company in the entertainment industry.
The global value chain perspective is applicable to identify the position of multinational companies in the global economy through mascots, or other corporate identities such as company names and brands. In addition, the global value chain perspective also could be used by economic actors—industry and companies—to continue developing or maintaining their position in the global economy.

Furthermore, document study could be the best way to generate information in the documents, such as the public document, and Internet web-based document (Kaplinsky 2000; Closs, Speier and Meacham 2010). According to Liu and Mei (2016), the documents could visualize the evolution disciplines of the global value chain. It is useful not only for the researcher but also the policy maker. In this article, document study could be used for identifying the existence of company mascot in the global economy by global value chain perspective. Source validation strategies could help the analysis process. Later, some pieces of information of documents assembled to fit together which relevant to this study.

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