

Cultural Tourism and City Branding in the Connected Age: The Case of Cities in Vietnam

(Pelancongan Budaya dan Penjenamaan Bandar pada Era Penyambungan: Kes Bandar-bandar di Vietnam)

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ABSTRACT

Cultural attractions can help cities get away from a seasonal pattern of tourism, focus on higher-income visitors. Hence, cultural tourism has a strong relationship with city branding. Given a city cannot build separate brands for its different stakeholders, city branding aims to tourists who might be investors or residents in the future. However, the understanding of the searching trend of online travelers is still limited. This study investigates tourism searching patterns and keywords volume related to cultural information through search engines and social media. The research sites include different tourism regions of Vietnam, which are Hanoi, Hue, Danang, Hoi An and Ho Chi Minh. Successful examples of creative cities all over the world are reviewed for technological platform-based communication in three different levels: primary, secondary, and tertiary. The findings show the dominance of central Vietnam cities as a tourism cluster. The study suggests implications for Danang city to use new technologies for city brand communication more effectively.

Keywords: Culture; cultural tourism; city branding; city image; digital communication

ABSTRAK

Tarikan budaya dapat membantu bandar menjauh dari corak pelancongan bermusim, memberi tumpuan kepada pengunjung berpendapatan tinggi. Oleh itu, pelancongan budaya mempunyai hubungan yang kuat dengan penjenamaan bandar. Oleh kerana sebuah bandar tidak dapat membina jenama yang terpisah untuk pemangku kepentingannya yang berbeza, penjenamaan bandar mensasarkan pelancong yang mungkin menjadi pelabur atau penduduk di masa hadapan. Walau bagaimanapun, pemahaman mengenai tren carian pelancong dalam talian masih terbatas. Kajian ini menyelidiki corak carian pelancongan dan jumlah kata kunci yang berkaitan dengan maklumat budaya melalui enjin carian dan media sosial. Laman penyelidikan merangkumi pelbagai kawasan pelancongan di Vietnam iaitu Hanoi, Hue, Danang, Hoi An dan Ho Chi Minh. Contoh-contoh bandar kreatif yang berjaya di seluruh dunia ditinjau untuk komunikasi berasaskan platform teknologi dalam tiga tahap yang berbeza: utama, menengah dan tinggi. Hasil kajian menunjukkan dominasi bandar-bandar Vietnam tengah sebagai kluster pelancongan. Kajian ini mencadangkan agar bandar-bandar Danang menggunakan teknologi baru untuk komunikasi jenama bandar yang lebih berkesan.

Kata kunci: Budaya; pelancongan budaya; penjenamaan bandar; imej bandar; komunikasi digital

INTRODUCTION

According to Turner and Freiermuth (2017), travel and tourism have an important role in the economic development of cities/countries. In Vietnam, the direct contribution to GDP is 9.3 bn USD (4.6% of total GDP, 38th in world ranking) in 2016, and forecast to rise by 6% pa from 2017-2027. The employment total contribution of Travel and Tourism is 7.3% of total employment (4,003,000 jobs, including indirectly supported jobs). This figure is expected increased to 7.5% in 2027 (equivalent to 4,544,000 jobs). Among 185 countries, Vietnam is ranked as the 38th country in long-term growth as forecast in the period between 2017 and 2027. The visitor exports generate 51.9% of direct GDP contribution as compared to 48.1% for domestic travel spending. Foreign visitor spending is estimated to grow by 6.4% pa

to 368,679 bn VND in 2027. Besides sea-island tourism, MICE tourism, in comprehensive planning in Vietnam tourism development to 2020, the vision to 2030, cultural tourism (heritage tourism included) is one of the most important sections since culture places as the flagship of sustainable city development.

As compiled by Richards and Munsters (2010), almost studies focus on cultural tourists' behavior during and after their visits. Additionally, there is a lack of researches to consider cultural tourism in connection with city branding. Therefore, this study aims to explore city brand images through understanding cultural tourists' behavior mainly before the destination experience. Remarkably, keywords analysis – a research tool commonly used by web developer – is firstly adapted in city branding to define users' search patterns. It is time-saving and has the ability to approach big data

of users through digital channels. The keywords list can represent the cultural characteristics of localities to help them in positioning properly. The research scope is cities in three Vietnam regions – Hanoi, Hue, Danang, Hoi An, Ho Chi Minh city. The keywords analysis method is adapted by using Keywordtool.io. Some implications are also proposed for these cities, especially Danang – the representative of regional tourism in central Vietnam.

LITERATURE REVIEW

CULTURAL TOURISM

Cultural tourism can be defined as tourism related to cultural facilities, such as “heritage site, historic cities, and art attractions, such as festivals” (Towse 2010). Resources like monuments, museums, visitor attractions, art galleries, cinemas, concert venues, theatre are manifestations of a cultural city. These resources are used by the resident and the local visitor, holidaymaker, business, conference delegate, city worker without connection between city workers and monuments (Ashworth & Page 2011: 10).

According to Smith (2009), cultural tourism is a multi-disciplinary subject in an international context related to history, politics, society, geography. Nowadays, cultural tourism is a diverse tourism term led by culture. Cultural tourism is viewed as an instrument allowing the identity-forming of new plural-ethnic/state configuration (Lanfant 1995). For this aspect, identity can be considered as a type of product need to be placed in relation to others.

Mentioning cultural tourism, especially without commoditization, Getz (1994) highlights the role of authenticity in relevance to post-tourist experience. Two typical types of authenticity (artifacts, artificial attractions) are covered by heritage tourism and arts tourism, respectively, as proposed by some scholars (Richards 2001; Zeppel & Hall 1992). In general, cultural tourism can be understood as ‘all movements of a person to specific cultural attractions... outside their normal place of residence’ (Richards 2005) to satisfy their cultural needs. Among cultural tourism sectors, arts tourism is more experience-oriented than heritage tourism (Zeppel & Hall 1992). However, in terms of cultural production, it is difficult to distinguish them (Smith 2009).

CITY BRANDING BASED ON CULTURAL TOURISM

The concept of a nation brand is proposed by Anholt (1998) regarding the provenance of exported brands. In place branding, Govers (2011) states that a multi-brand strategy seems not to be adapted to place, and cooperation between cities as regional brands is needed. Depending on which place is focused, place branding can become nation branding or city branding. Among

place branding trend, cultural/entertainment branding spread widely all over the world, contribute to forming the city’s image (Kavaratzis 2005). As said by Sevin (2017), place branding and city branding are usually used yet distinctly. In the city branding process, tourists are considered external stakeholders who are invaluable co-creators. Notably, cultural tourists are the notable target audiences of many cities, which are promoted via cultural manifestations (museums (Paris, London), architecture institutes (Rotterdam, Singapore, Taipei), art (Birmingham, Beijing, Hong Kong)). They have ‘higher levels of income and education’ to pay for the experience as compared to ordinary visitors (Towse 2010).

In the transition context from industrial cities to cultural cities, Jensen and Richardson (2005) and Florian (2002) figure out that urban branding is attached to a creative class, cities of culture, knowledge, and entertainment. City branding is thus overlapped with urban branding in localities with high urban growth. The interrelationship between cities and tourism is discussed in the work of Ashworth and Page (2011). Cities need tourism, and cities are the origins and the destination of most tourists as well. Furthermore, to attract the creative class people (current/potential cultural visitors) who look for high-quality experiences, cities should put culture in the heart instead of solely based on physical attractions (Florian 2002).

Manuela et al. (2009) define the linkage between cultural attractions in a city with tourism offers in the case of Milan’s brand image (sights, sounds, touch, taste, and smell). Cities should differentiate themselves based on artistic, architectural, and cultural heritage to get away from creating the pattern of seasonal pattern tourism and enhance its reputation. Similarly, Italian destinations (Florence, Rome, Venice) are popular with international heritage tourism, while European destinations (Barcelona, Berlin, Vienna) are successful cases in terms of cultural attractions. According to Green et al. (2010), the host culture is a component of the event and destination image. Also, Fernández-Cavia and Huertas-Roig (2010) recognize cities brand themselves positively based on specific events (except political events or any private attraction).

Place images also are affected by TV shows, diplomacy, popular culture, tourism advertising. Although negative place images already existed in one’s mind, a person can still travel to a place because of attractive promotions. At the same time, internal city branding toward residents must also be positive. Hence, the city brand needs to be built based on ‘the sense of place and identity of the local population and societal actors’ (Govers 2011: 229, 230). This base is connected to the genetic approach of culture as the classification of Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) concerning society, individuals, environment, and artifacts. Turku, the old capital cultural city of Finland, is another evidence of the contribution of cultural tourism on city branding, increases city awareness, nurture a long-term relationship with city visitors (Hakala &

Lemmettyinen 2013). This contribution is obviously in the case of creative city projects in Yokohama's Koganecho neighborhood in Japan studied by Sasajima (2013). From an entrepreneurial perspective, cultural activities that usually aim to visitors also contribute to investors' attraction. Besides, travelers can be seen as temporary residents, not only are influenced by cities' reputation but also influence their brands.

Festivals and events are the most prominent attractions of cultural tourism destinations. Quinn (2005) indicates that festival growth (vehicles of urban generation or fixers of city image problems, i.e., Glasgow) expresses city branding to use cultural facilities needed to attain competitive advantages in the global market. A study of Absalyamov (2015) shows that the cultural heritage of a host-region also is positively affected by mega-event in the case of Kazan city (the 3rd capital of Russia). The event 2013 Summer Universiade brings many opportunities for the capital city of the Republic of Tatarstan to create its positive image (infrastructure and local business improvement). The correlation between event image and destination brand is supported by the co-branding approach of Xing and Chalip (2006). Also, according to Arnegger and Herz (2016), events include mega-events, hallmark events, local community events, or periodic events that have interconnection with a certain place. The significant impact of the Eurovision Song Contest (ESC) is considered a cultural mega-event calculated by the authors in the case of Azerbaijan (the image is improved after the event). Overall, media coverage related to the event also affect people's destination knowledge and visiting intention even they do not attend the event. Dave and Bart (2013) supply the supplemental fact that long-term positive image of the host city in event attendees' perception will only remain if having a connection between the event and the city aspects. Besides, the city brand attitude of residents can be improved through cultural mega-events experiences (Vila López, Kuster Boluda, & Marín Aguilar 2016).

Similarly, the image of a mega-event is affirmed to have effects on destination image at all construct, sub-construct, factor levels with cognitive, affective, overall dimensions in the case of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games (Lai 2018). Five types of relationships between event image and destination image include correlational, intersecting, causal, inclusive, and irrelevant. The evidence is shown through studies of Lyon's Tennis Grand Prix, an amateur bicycling event, the 2004 Athens Olympic Games, the 2010 Shanghai Expo, the football games, the 2012 Guangzhou Asian Games. Although the influences are not the same, affective image dimensions are dominant.

CULTURE-LED CITIES IN A DIGITAL ERA ALL OVER THE WORLD

Digital cities are considered as 'a set of web pages in the framework of a city/commune' (d'Udekem-Gevers 2001). When researching digital Belgian towns, d'Udekem-

Gevers (2001) analyses city/commune websites in terms of context, technical modes of functioning, information, and communication. More briefly, the framework and the real content of the sites are objects to analyze.

Kavaratzis (2004) proposes a framework for city image communication (primary, secondary, and tertiary) in the context of city branding, based on the interaction between the internal city and external city. The primary one communicates city actions regarding landscape strategies, infrastructure projects, organizational and administrative structure, behaviors. Secondary one refers to promotional practices such as advertising, symbol usage of a city. Tertiary communication expresses a word of mouth communication, which is similar to UGC (User Generated Content) messages.

According to Fernández-Cavia and Huertas-Roig (2010), the World Wide Web today is the primary tool for city brand communication. However, the official cities' web sites are often limited in terms of the interaction between users, lead to a lack of city brand communication, dominated by functional elements instead of emotional aspects. Furthermore, there is a tendency of building more than one brand per city shown in some cases such as Barcelona (adventurous, friendly, diverse, cosmopolitan, innovative), Edinburgh (friendly, imaginative, diverse, innovative), Amsterdam (creative, diverse, cosmopolitan, innovative), Toronto (creative, imaginative, innovative). Additionally, almost tourist cities still focus on interactivity type of consumer-message (especially interactive travel organizers) instead of consumer-marketer and consumer-consumer.

As argued by Govers (2011), place branding is affected by popular media that can create a social network in which residents and visitors interact with each other and enhance the brand of a city. Social media is the more efficient digital mean of communication toward city governments, a lesser budget, wider spread, and much easier to show presence (Sevin 2017). However, the author concerns the different platforms of employment since tourism-related information often be shared through generic sharing websites (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) and tourism-specific websites (TripAdvisor, Booking.com). The former type might affect travel decisions because of the frequency of visits, even without a travel plan. Considering technology as supplementary, the trend of creating material space supported by online art museum – an attraction of cultural visitors – is discussed by Herzog (2010: 25, 26). The digital city concept is proposed as space-based on a technology platform that allows information exchange.

Xiang and Gretzel (2010) investigate the extent of travel-related content searches through social media by search engines with a framework that expresses online traveler, online tourism domain, and search engine interactions. Five main types of social media, as mentioned, are virtual community sites, review sites, personal blogs, and blog aggregators, social networking sites, media sharing sites. Search results for nine U.S cities show that virtual communities are the most popular

one (40%), next followers are consumer review sites (27%), blogs (15%), social networking sites (9%), and media sharing sites (7%).

Recognizing the smart, creative, knowledge city concept in the narrow sense is similar to the informational city concept in a broader mind (Fietkiewicz & Stock 2015). The authors agree that places spaces in parallel with flows spaces form an informational city, of which development is mentioned in studies of Kaja and Sandra (2014) with characteristics related to technology, knowledge and culture, information flow. Four Japanese megalopolis cities include Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto, and Yokohama, are considered the most proper ones for investigation because of their digital, smart, or knowledge infrastructures.

Mentioning new technologies applied for cultural tourism, Garau (2017) divides platforms into three different types: informative, connection, and integrated. Not merely display information as informative platforms, connection platforms take the role of mediation between suppliers and users. Integrated platforms offer further interactions. Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) can

be used to track tourists' actual transactions through their smartcards. Additionally, other achievements are virtual reconstruction, the geolocation of user, and the presence of tags, cameras, sensors for guidance presented through projects especially in Europe such as i-MIBAC Voyager (Italy), ARCHEOGuide (Greece), Streetmuseum (London), Digital Pen (New York), Smart Glasses (San Francisco, Paris). The smart city concept, as a result of this, must be linked with urban cultural tourism (refer to Table 1).

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

Given that identity helps cities position themselves in the minds of their stakeholders, understanding the image of cities perceived by their "audiences" can define how strong the brand is. The more connected the city image is to local culture, the more successful a city's communication is, and the city owns a sharp brand image as a result.

TABLE 1. Technological platforms applied in creative cities

Reference	City/Nation	Channel/Platform	Audience	Description
Schuler (2005)	Seattle	SCN – web-based community network www.scn.org	All	A free public-access computer network for exchanging and accessing information.
Carroll (2005)	Blacksburg, USA	BEV – Web-based community network www.bev.net	Residents, businesses, visitors	An electronic house for community groups of all sorts offers some online services.
van den Besselaar and Beckers (2005)	Amsterdam	DDS – (De Digitale Stad) Virtual public domain www.dds.nl	Habitants, inhabitants	A global virtual community allows inhabitants to build their virtual houses on the city domain, encourages information exchange, innovation, IT services.
Linturi and Simula (2005)	Helsinki	Helsinki Arena 2000	Inhabitants, habitants	Creates electronic communication routes, links the physical and virtual events.
Sevin (2017)	Amsterdam	www.iamsterdam.com	Visitors, residents, businesses	Great place to live and work with beautiful museums and neighbourhoods listed, instructions for relocation.
Garau (2017)	Italy	www.luoghigiottoitalia.it/en/	Tourists	Customized tours across six cities – Padova, Milan, Bologna, Florence, Assisi, Naples – Italy to discover Giotto.
Garau (2017)	Italy	Tuscany+	Tourists	Information of monuments and services around, co-creative offers.
Garau (2017)	Trento	RFID for festival	Visitors	Evaluates and analyzes actual behaviours of tourists based on the movements and preferences.
Clarizia, Lemma, Lombardi, and Pascale (2017a)	Salerno (Italy)	Mobile Context-aware app	Tourists	An app is similar to CyberGuide, Sensay, AnonySense, SOCAM, GeoNotes that supply customized services and resources based on tourist's position and global profile.
Clarizia, Lemma, Lombardi, and Pascale (2017b)	Different towns in Italy or abroad	Adaptive telling app	Visitors, revisitors	An app similar to FaTe2, Wikinovel, Casting that gives visitors their own tailored story based on their visiting places and information from Facebook, Google Places and TripAdvisor.

Source: Authors' summary

This causality is explained by Zenker (2011). On the basis of his model, this study develops a framework to demonstrate city branding in the digital environment (Figure 1). In which, digital communication channels and hashtags are equivalent to place communication and place word-of-mouth, respectively. Target audiences here are cultural tourists whose place perception is reflected through their keywords search patterns using the search engine.

USER-GENERATED CONTENT (UGC) ANALYSIS METHOD

In tourism and hospitality research, user-generated content (UGC) has been widely spread (Lu & Stephenkova 2015) despite it mainly focuses on after-sale experience. Nowadays, hashtag – a combination between a hash (#) and a keyword – is used to organize the discussion about specific topics (Small 2011). The hashtag-driven analysis, therefore, is popular, especially on political issues (Lai et al. 2015). In other words, an exploratory analysis of keyword-hashtag networks can identify patterns of people’s thoughts (Hamed 2014).

According to Woosley et al. (2008), consumer behavioral preferences using keywords can be understood by the business for their marketing purposes. Similarly, users search and repeat searches to locate their desired information via keyword-driven search engines that store categorized keywords data (Jones & Cooper 2013). In a keyword list, the most relevant keywords appear first (Baker 2004). Since keywords are words that reflect culture and society (Durant 2008), understanding them is the power of businesses. Nevertheless, keywords research tools are only applied by practitioners to select the most competitive words that match their potential customers’ search. Typically, keyword analysis belongs to Search Engine Optimization (SEO) techniques to detect words or phrases, their synonyms for the best content reflection (Ontario 2013). By focusing on clusters of industry-specific keywords, synonyms, long-tail modifiers, they can expand search opportunities (ToTheWeb LLC, 2018). As stated by Ochoa (2012), keyword research aims to find relevant words that can link users to specific sites. Given that city branding borrows principles of

corporate branding, keywords analysis can be used to dig cultural tourists’ insights to know how culture-based place images of localities are formed. Furthermore, this time-saving method can quantify qualitative data that have not been appeared in earlier studies that mentioned by Richards (2011).

RESEARCH PROCESS

After investigating how Vietnam cities brand themselves through digital channels, this study quantifies the trend of using hashtags, keywords related to the cultural tourism of Vietnam cities. English is chosen as the language used through the Google search engine. After collecting keywords by using Keywordtool.io, noise filtering is conducted to categorize keywords. All keywords are defined concerning the city brand name. In other words, they are combinations between the name of cities and cultural contents. Then, the long-tail keywords can be added. Keywordtool.io helps in looking for keywords through Keyword suggestion and Related keywords offerings. For example, after typing ‘da nang museum’, 20 unique keywords are suggested, such as Danang museum, cham museum Danang, Danang museum of cham sculpture, Danang military museum, and so on. The set of these keywords, then are saved as excel format to filter noise.

Furthermore, the search volume and trend of every keyword are displayed in the results. Then, keywords are grouped into cities and cultural tourism content. The noise filtering and classification must be ensured by understanding the keyword meanings related to the cultural characteristics of each town. On the next stage, supplement keywords will be added to improve the keywords set. This task needs knowledge in the city culture of researchers. After categorizing keywords, the researcher can define the number of keywords in every subject, the average searches per month, the increase/decrease trend as compared to the previous year. The researcher also knows which the most popular content on every subject related to cultural tourism is. Then, the comparison between cities in Vietnam is made regarding keywords quantity, average searches, searching trend growth.

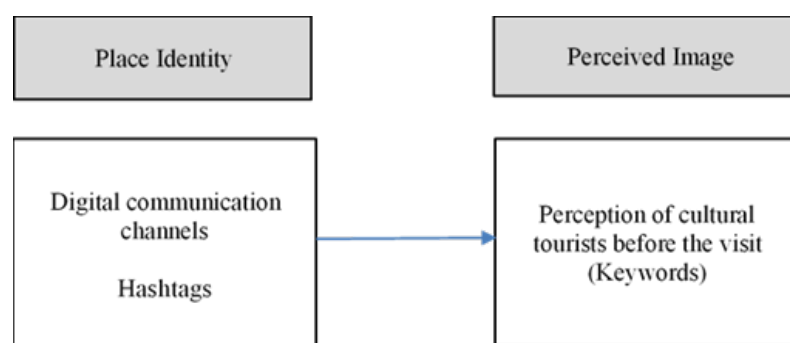


FIGURE 1. Research framework for digital city branding
 Source: Developed by the author from Zenker (2011)

RESULTS

DIGITAL COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Hanoi, Hue, Danang, Ho Chi Minh city are salient representatives of Vietnam regarding tourism and city branding. Five cities promote themselves through their official websites, apps serving tourism needs, social media. With efforts of the Vietnam government to promote the image of Vietnam Timeless charm, the information of all cities and towns can be found at the official website vietnamtourism.vn since 2016 with the elegant display ('Places to go' tab). In the tab 'Things to do', culture, art, and entertainment appear in almost activities. Trip recommendations and requirements are very useful for visitors. Heritage tourism is an indispensable component. Visitors can experience a virtual tour through texts, images, sounds, videos from the Northern to the Southern. Ten Instagram accounts (photographers) are introduced to follow include @trantuanvietsui, @nhanlephotography, @milesOfsmiles, @hlinhngg, @quinnryanmattingly, @dinhvietphoto, @rdeboodt, @vietnamfoodstylist, @soaipham, @rehahn_photography. As can be seen, Vietnam has chosen visual communication to create memorable city images in the visitors' mind.

Additionally, every city has an official website as a web portal with the suffix gov.vn after the city name. Almost these websites have traditional displays in which information, government documents, news, events are regularly updated (primary communication). There is a lack of graphic design, interaction, and city brand identification. Besides the official websites, the Central has some additional tourism websites (Table 2). The tourist website dananafantasticity.com focuses on the induced image (with graphic, functional conceptional aspects) at the secondary communication level as compared to the remaining cities. However, it is not easy

to gain emotional conceptional purpose. Despite the slight consistency (multi-brand, over one logo), Danang is better in communicating the image of the external city (a city of mind regarding society, a way of living, culture) than the inner city.

Similarly, all the cities have fan pages run by themselves. It is beneficial to reach visitors' emotions. Hoi An dominates posting content through social media in English, followed by Ho Chi Minh and Danang city.

HASHTAGS

Marketing principles can be adapted for tourist behavior with five stages in the purchase process. In order to search destination information, potential visitors can use digital utilities as the most convenient tool to decide their journey. As mentioned earlier, social media is the most useful way to promote the city image. Along with an increasing trend of social media usage, the tourist cities in Vietnam have been using these kinds of channels as the cheapest tool of city branding. Using hashtags has been becoming popular among electric users. As can be seen in Table 3, all hashtags of five tourism cities belong to three different areas of Vietnam – #vietnam attaches Hanoi (the north), Hue, Danang, Hoi An (the central), Ho Chi Minh (the south).

Hanoi has a strong connection with Ho Chi Minh - the second biggest city and some Asian places such as Thailand, Taipei-Taiwan. Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon is the former name) is in relevance with business activities and become familiar in Japanese with hashtags ホーチミン (Ho Chi Minh), ベトナム (Betonamu – means Vietnam). In the middle, hashtags related to Danang and Hoi An focus on travel much more than Hue. Almost hashtags for Hue are about makeup art, even #maquillage – a Spanish word means makeup. English is the main language used by social media users. In spite of the smallest popularity of Danang hashtags, all these words reflect the appropriate

TABLE 2. Communication channels of Vietnam cities

	Hanoi	Hue	Danang	Hoi An	Ho Chi Minh
Websites	Hanoi.gov.vn	www.thuathienhue.gov.vn dulichhue.com.vn visithue.vn huefestival.com	danang.gov.vn danangfantasticity.com	hoian.gov.vn hoiantourism.info www. hoianworldheritage.org.vn	www.hochiminhcity.gov.vn
Apps	ThangLong app, Bus WebGPS	Hueinfo, inHue, Festival Huế	InDanang, Chatbot	HoiAn Local Guidebook	Vibrant Ho Chi Minh City
Facebook	Hanoi Creative City (@hncreativecity)	Huế City (@huecity.net), Thừa Thiên – Huế (@CityHue), Du Lịch Huế (@huetourism)	Danang City – Vietnam (@danangcity123), Danang – FantastiCity (@Dnang.sk), Danang FantastiCity* (@visitdanang)	Visit Hoi An (@VisitHoiAn), Hoi An Travel Guide: Coast Vietnam (@coastvietnam)	Ho Chi Minh City (@hcmc.sgn)
Twitter	No official account	No official account	Danang FantastiCity (@visit_danang)	No official account	HCMC Travel Guide (@HCMC Guide)

Source: Compiled by the author - May 2018

TABLE 3. Vietnam cities Hashtag trends

	Ha Noi	Hue	Danang	Hoi An	Ho Chi Minh
Visualized hashtags					
Languages used	English 65%, Vietnamese 21%, Unrecognized 6%, French 3%, Spanish Castilian 3%, Italian 2%	English 55%, Spanish Castilian 12%, French 11%, Portuguese 10%, Unrecognized 9%, Vietnamese 3%	English 54%, Indonesian 17%, Unrecognized 12%, Vietnamese 9%, Japanese 6%, Tagalog 2%	English 72%, Unrecognized 11%, Vietnamese 8%, Spanish Castilian 4%, Japanese 3%, Dutch 2%	English 60%, Vietnamese 12%, Japanese 11%, Unrecognized 7%, Spanish Castilian 7%, French 3%
Spelling variants used	Hanoi 59%, hanoi 37%, HaNoi 2%, HANOI 2%	hue 51%, Hue 33%, HUE 16%	danang 45%, Danang 34%, DaNang 18%, DANANG 3%	hoian 57%, HoiAn 36%, Hoian 7%	HoChiMinh 52%, hochiminh 45%, Hochiminh 3%
Popularity	50.2%	44.9%	38.8%	38.4%	40.1%

Source: Collected by the authors through hashtagify.me - May 2018

image of Danang, such as cuisine (#fishandchips, #food), entertainment (#infotainmentawards), nature (#beach) and benefit from regional tourism (#Hoian, #hue).

However, social media is one of the digital channel generated by the user. The negative information about cities can spread even much faster than the positive one since users can search by a simple click on the hashtag. Cities can keep balance by creating positive cultural contents actively not only limited on Facebook. Cultural tourists tend to share their cultural experiences through social media after the visits. The hashtags used by them are the significant viral sources.

KEYWORDS ANALYSIS

In total, there are 1933 keywords explored. Table 4 expresses 210 keywords merely related to city brand name (volume keyword), average search volume per month (the third column), and the growth of these keywords as compared to the previous year (trend). In terms of city brand name, the average search volume per month of Ho Chi Minh is highest, followed by Danang, Hanoi. However, the searching trend of Hanoi capital is much higher than in Ho Chi Minh. This number for Hoi An ancient town is increased strongly within the recent year.

Table 5 shows a specific searching trend in cultural tourism, including museums, festivals and events, iconic buildings, cuisine, nightlife, leisure, art, park, nature, handicraft village. As can be seen, Hoi An attracts the attention trend of cultural tourists by the museum (26.03%). Not as diverse as the others, Danang is only popular with ‘Cham museum/cham museum Danang’ (27%/56%).

Regarding festivals and events, the searching trend reflects the tourism development of Danang as a festival

TABLE 4. Average searches per month on city brand name

City	Volume Keyword	Search Volume (Average)	Trend (%)
Hanoi	20	822.5	78.90
Hue	34	355.88	13.44
Danang	37	1133.51	12.81
Hoi An	58	757.76	26.03
Ho Chi Minh	61	4147.5	25.77

and events center with the highest searching growth (157.14%) as compared to the decreased tendency of the two biggest cities. Danang celebrates many international festivals and events but still has not marked the featured ones in visitors’ memories. Also, the neighborhood is famous with some festivals such as Hue festival 2018, Hoi An lantern festival, Hoi An full moon festival 2018. This is an advantage for Danang to attract international cultural tourists since the international airport is built in Danang. However, visitor retention is always a noticeable issue in this city. Hence, central Vietnam cities have been focused on branding themselves as memorable images that can be formed through visual identifications such as iconic buildings. Danang is ranked as the first position in searching volume per month, followed by Hoi An and Hanoi, respectively. Danang is famous for bridges across the Han river, the lady buddha statue – the symbol of residents’ spirit. Heritage tourism also develops in Hoi An ancient town with the highest trend of 48.78% and My Son sanctuary, which are linked to each other since belonging to Quang Nam province. Japanese bridge and Hoi An market are considered symbols of Hoi An toward visitors (search volume 720, trend 83%).

TABLE 5. Categories of cultural tourism keywords

	City/Town	Volume Keyword	Search Volume (Average)	Trend (%)	Salient subjects
Museum	Hanoi	74	143.24	28.04	Hanoi art museum, museum of literature Hanoi, national museum of Vietnamese history, American war museum
	Hue	5	26	20	Hue museum of royal antiquities
	Danang	20	69	16.95	Cham museum
	Hoi An	8	108.75	147.75	Hoi An museum of history and culture, Hoi An war museum
	Ho Chi Minh	118	180.08	12.59	Ho Chi Minh city museum, museum of fine arts, war remnants museum
Festivals and events	Hanoi	34	42.35	-34.24	Event, festival
	Hue	7	10	57.14	Hue festival 2018
	Danang	7	34.29	157.14	Danang event, Danang festival
	Hoi An	10	94	37.5	Hoi An lantern festival, Hoi An full moon festival 2018
	Ho Chi Minh	20	23	-62.1	Event
Iconic buildings	Hanoi	88	246.59	22.68	Turtle tower, railway/train station, Đồng Xuân market, Ho Chi Minh mausoleum, Long Biên bridge, heritage house, St Joseph cathedral, church
	Hue	39	133.03	38.06	Hue citadel, Hue imperial, Emperor tombs
	Danang	11	320.91	44.09	Lady buddha, dragon bridge
	Hoi An	54	298.70	48.78	My Son holyland/ruins/sanctuary, Hoi An Japanese bridge, Hoi An market, Hoi An old houses
	Ho Chi Minh	291	108.38	5.12	An Dong market, Ben Thanh, Cho Lon/Binh Tay market, Saigon central post office, notre-dame basilica
Cuisine	Hanoi	77	166.88	11.14	Cuisine Viet restaurant, food market, local food tour, late night food, restaurants hanoi old quarter, food street
	Hue	20	69	13.3	Hue cafe, restaurant
	Danang	62	85.16	31.18	Local food, Danang breakfast, best coffee, (family/ seafood) restaurant, buffet, street food, street food tour
	Hoi An	42	285.48	47.24	Cooking class/school, food tour, taste of Hoi An, 9 grains, chicken rice, cafe, pho, (old town) restaurants, pancake, cao lau
	Ho Chi Minh	24	195	16.04	District 2, district 4, river cruise, restaurant
Nightlife	Hanoi	20	237.5	18.75	Bars, nightlife
	Hue	1	30	0	
	Danang	19	233.68	50.79	Night market
	Hoi An	25	77.6	34.8	Night market, ancient town at night
	Ho Chi Minh	43	96.28	-8.35	Ho Chi minh nightlife
Leisure	Hanoi	36	137.22	-2	Bar, rooftop bar, sky bar, sport bar, golf club
	Hue	6	20	50	Club, walking tour
	Danang	54	48.70	20.70	Bars, sport bar, casino, clubs, beach club, golf club, golf courses, golf resort, surfing, cinema
	Hoi An	4	195	8.25	Sport bar
	Ho Chi Minh	13	153.08	7.23	Golf, rooftop bar
Park	Hanoi	15	54	14	Lenin park, theme park
	Hue	16	91.88	30.44	Bach Ma national park (tour/trip),
	Danang	8	32.5	2.63	Theme park, Asia park, water park
	Hoi An	6	40	196	Impression theme park, terracotta park, water park, national park
	Ho Chi Minh	24	26.67	1.75	park, water park

cont.

cont.

Nature	Hanoi	46	72.17	3.89	Hanoi tour attractions, sightseeing, red river
	Hue	19	22.11	1.32	
	Danang	42	186.90	21.38	Beach, My Khe beach, cave, (Son Tra/monkey) mountain, Hai Van pass, Han river
	Hoi An	65	212.77	8.18	Beach, Cam An beach, caves, morning glory, mountain, river,
	Ho Chi Minh	6	110	3.5	Ho Chi Minh attractions
Art	Hanoi	51	64.33	0.12	opera house, theatre, water puppet theatre
	Hue	14	10.71	-39.29	
	Danang	15	12.67	-40.33	Review Danang
	Hoi An	17	22.35	14.06	Photo tour, photos, music
	Ho Chi Minh	96	41.25	-17.8	Asian landscape art, miss saigon music, Saigon performing art center, art gallery Saigon, Ho Chi Minh opera house, theatre Hanoi, water puppet theatre
Handicraft village	Hanoi	19	48.95	-29.21	Bat Trang ceramic/pottery village
	Hue	0	0	0	
	Danang	14	168.57	10.86	Non Nuoc stone carving village, marble mountain
	Hoi An	19	109.47	20.32	Silk village, Thanh Ha pottery village, gifts, lantern
	Ho Chi Minh	0	0	0	

Hoi An is also successful with cuisine features such as chicken rice, pancake, Cao Lau, leads the average volume and trend, followed by Ho Chi Minh and Hanoi. Despite this, Danang cuisine is more specific than these two biggest cities with seafood restaurants and street food. Similarly, in terms of nightlife, Hoi An is looked for through keywords about the legendary night, food tour by night, more diverse than the other cities with general contents such as night market, nightlife (even Danang attaining highest trend). However, Danang’s leisure activities are increased in central Vietnam (see more details in the last column of Table 5). Also, visitors

can experience culture in Bach Ma national park of Hue, Danang theme park, Danang water park, Hoi An impression theme park, Hoi An terracotta park, Hoi An water park. Among them, Hoi An owns the best keywords which are appropriate for the town promotion.

In terms of nature, central Vietnam is dominant. Hoi An is famous for preferential nature, including beaches, rivers, mountains. Interestingly, although Hai Van pass is the shared landmark of Danang and Hue, these keywords appeared along with Danang, not Hue. Regarding art, Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh confirm themselves as the art centers of Vietnam. In the central, Hoi An is ranked as

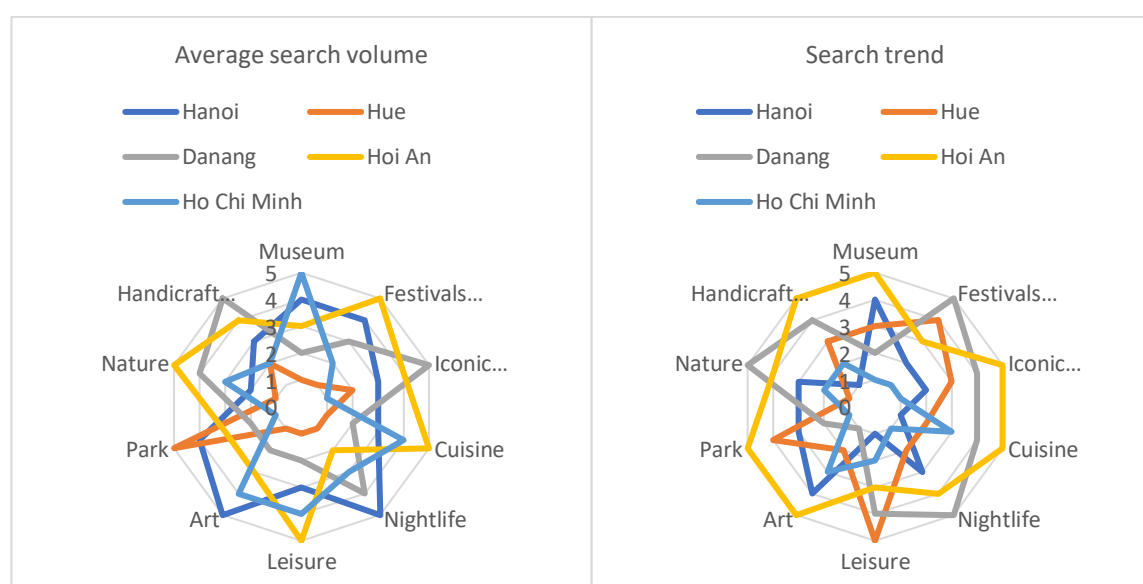


FIGURE 2. Search pattern comparison in cultural tourism

the first one with keywords related to photography and music. Despite fine arts education developing, Hue has not taken advantage of this to brand herself. Hue and Ho Chi Minh also disappear on handicraft village searching trends. In relevance with every place, these keywords reflect the reality of cultural features in Danang and Hoi An (Non Nuoc stone carving village, Hoi An silk village, Thanh Ha pottery village, gifts, and lantern). As can be seen in Figure 2, generally, central Vietnam can take advantage since they aim at regional cultural tourism.

Overall, there is a gap between the way place identity of Vietnam cities depicted by digital channels of the government and how cultural tourists perceive place brand. As can be seen, hashtag is the emerging tool that has not been paid attention by the city image-makers. In the most straightforward way, Konecnik Ruzzier (2013) agrees with Kapferer (1998) that the brand identity is viewed at the supply-side perspective in which we must know who we are before knowing how we are perceived. In the study of Gómez, Fernández, Molina, and Aranda (2018), visitors see the city quality as a destination with a specific competitive advantage. Similarly, this study figures out the cultural attractions of every locality to differentiate itself while preserving the shared culture of Vietnam. Besides the regional tourism cluster in Central Vietnam, Hanoi can keep on following the thousand years of civilization (museums, art) while Ho Chi Minh city deserves as a vibrant city with art and cuisine.

IMPLICATION

With appropriate brand images of localities mentioned above, the city governors need to reconsider the city reputation they promote. For instance, towards Ho Chi Minh city, “the city of gratitude” seems not fit its cultural attractions. Generally, Vietnam cities should take advantages from digital communication channels and social media that illustrate a consistent culture-led image. Let take Danang – a pioneer in city branding – as an example hereafter:

As compared to the neighborhood, Danang city’s image communication is quite efficient. However, the utilities of digital channels need to be exploited more effectively. Danang needs to consider the identification of the city to ensure consistency through websites, Facebook, Twitter, apps since a town should not promote more than one brand image. Danang can not orient as a worth-living city, an entrepreneurial city, a fantastic city at the same time. One memorable and meaningful logo with a slogan is sufficient for Danang. Basing on culture, Danang can harmonize the benefits between residents and non-residents. This orientation is also appropriate to the international trend of cities all over the world. Furthermore, Danang can position herself in a competitive and cooperative relationship with Hue and Quang Nam (more specific is Hoi An).

The web portal of Danang (<https://danang.gov.vn/>) needs to be improved as a digital marketing tool. The

website needs to have directional maps to enhance users’ experience. Primary communication related to landscape and infrastructure should be reformed. The city should declare heritage planning, urban design architecture, green spaces, public spaces. In addition to the modification of logo usage for secondary communication, Danang should increase graphic design usage instead of too many traditional photos. Interactivities need to be encouraged to enhance the emotional conception toward different stakeholders. Interactivity can be improved by using a search engine, user support, display option customization, virtual reality display, multimedia integration, virtual leaflets. The city even can create an official Youtube channel, a virtual community for users, or activate the interactive function linked to users’ social media accounts.

Besides, Danang needs to be more active in using search engine optimization (SEO), social-cultural hashtags relevant to the strong keywords, as mentioned in the previous section. The keywords/hashtags should be more specific, such as #diff, #chammuseum, #ladybuddha, #streetfood, #nonnuocvillage. Noticing that more than one hashtag can be used for the same marketing content. As discussed earlier, Danang can brand itself as a cultural destination for tourists. The creative class people hence will be attracted, and they can contribute to the sustainable development of the city as well.

Regarding academia, this research implies that online city branding towards cultural tourists as a specific stakeholder can be demonstrated by using a practical method of web developers. It means that the relevant techniques in other fields also can be used in this disciplinary genre. Further studies can use similar tools to repeat exploration with various data sources or extension to photo analysis to define the identity-image match. The research framework has the ability to apply widely in the digital environment.

CONCLUSION

The study has achieved the goal of exploring search patterns of cultural tourists in different regions of Vietnam and understands the strength of each city. A keywords research tool that is the heart of Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is firstly applied in an academic study in city branding. Besides, understanding the pre-visit behaviors of cultural tourists is meaningful for localities offers a different view of culture-based brand image.

Among 1933 keywords, 1723 keywords are about cultural characteristics for tourism. This searching trend is beneficial for these tourist cities to reconsider their branding strategies, especially on city image positioning. However, the study has not categorised where the online users come from and which online channels the searching results display. Further research can solve this limitation.

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