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Understanding Chinese Tourists' Satisfaction with Bangkok: The Influence of Destination Marketing, Community Engagement, and Brand Perceptions

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ABSTRACT

The rapid transformation of Chinese tourist behavior has created new challenges for Bangkok in developing a destination brand that can effectively connect marketing communication with authentic visitor experiences. This study examines how destination marketing and community collaboration contribute to tourists' perceptions of brand value and brand image and, consequently, their satisfaction with Bangkok. A mixed-method explanatory research design was employed. The qualitative phase involved interviews with tourism experts and industry stakeholders to examine key factors influencing destination branding and to support the development of the research instrument. The quantitative phase collected data from 402 Chinese tourists through online and field-based questionnaires distributed at major tourist locations in Bangkok. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, confirmatory factor analysis, and structural equation modeling. The findings demonstrate that destination marketing significantly contributes to both brand value and brand image, while community collaboration exerts a particularly strong influence on brand value and a meaningful influence on brand image. Furthermore, both brand value and brand image significantly enhance tourist satisfaction, with brand image showing a slightly stronger influence. The findings indicate that effective destination branding depends not only on promotional activities but also on meaningful community participation and the consistency between brand communication and actual tourist experiences. The study provides empirical evidence for strengthening Bangkok's destination branding through integrated marketing, community engagement, and experience development. The findings offer practical implications for tourism businesses, destination managers, and policymakers seeking to enhance tourist satisfaction and strengthen Bangkok's competitiveness in the Chinese tourism market.

Keywords: Destination Marketing, Community Collaboration, Brand Value, Brand Image, Tourist Satisfaction
JEL Classifications: M3

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background and Importance of the Problem

Tourism has become an important component of Thailand's economic and social development, contributing to employment generation, business activity, cultural exchange, and the development of local communities. Beyond its direct contribution to tourism-related businesses, the sector supports interconnected industries such as accommodation, food services, transportation, retail, entertainment, and cultural activities. Tourism therefore represents not only an economic activity but also an important mechanism through which destinations communicate national identity and cultural values to international visitors (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2020; UNWTO, 2019). In this context, the ability of Thailand to maintain an attractive and competitive destination image is increasingly important as international tourism markets become more competitive. Bangkok occupies a particularly important position within Thailand's tourism system because it functions as a major gateway for international visitors and provides a diverse combination of cultural, commercial,

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recreational, and urban experiences. The city offers a distinctive tourism environment in which traditional cultural attractions coexist with modern shopping, entertainment, hospitality, and community-based experiences. Such diversity creates opportunities for destination marketing but also increases the challenge of maintaining a clear and consistent destination identity. Destination marketing organizations and tourism businesses must therefore communicate the distinctive characteristics of Bangkok while ensuring that promotional messages correspond with visitors' actual experiences (Pike and Page, 2014).

The development of digital technology has further transformed the way tourists obtain information, evaluate destinations, and share travel experiences. Tourists increasingly use online platforms, social media, travel communities, and user-generated content when selecting destinations and planning their journeys. For Chinese tourists in particular, digital platforms have become important sources of travel information and influence the formation of expectations before arrival as well as evaluations after experiencing a destination (Fan et al., 2021). Consequently, destination marketing is no longer limited to conventional promotional activities. It increasingly involves digital communication, online reputation management, experience-oriented storytelling, and interaction with travelers throughout the tourism decision-making process. At the same time, destination competitiveness increasingly depends on the participation of local communities. Tourism experiences are created not only by tourism authorities and commercial businesses but also through interactions with residents, local entrepreneurs, cultural organizations, food vendors, and community-based tourism stakeholders. Community collaboration can contribute to the authenticity of destination experiences by connecting visitors with local culture, traditions, products, and everyday social environments. Active participation by local stakeholders can therefore strengthen the credibility of destination marketing and create a closer relationship between the image communicated to tourists and the experiences they encounter during their visit (Jiraboonsub and Mekhum, 2021; UNWTO, 2019).

These developments highlight the importance of brand value and brand image in understanding tourist responses to Bangkok. Brand value reflects tourists' perceptions of the benefits and worth associated with a destination, including their assessment of the quality and attractiveness of the overall tourism experience. Brand image, in contrast, represents the cognitive and affective associations that tourists develop toward a destination based on information, expectations, experiences, and interactions (Konecnik and de Chernatony, 2013). Both constructs are particularly relevant in competitive tourism markets because visitors rarely evaluate destinations solely according to individual attractions. Instead, they form an overall perception of whether a destination is desirable, distinctive, trustworthy, and capable of delivering meaningful experiences (Pike and Page, 2014). The relationship between destination marketing, community collaboration, brand value, and brand image is therefore important because destination branding cannot be developed effectively through communication alone. Marketing activities may create awareness and initial expectations, but the credibility of those messages depends on the experiences subsequently delivered by tourism businesses and local communities. When promotional messages are consistent with actual experiences, tourists are more likely to perceive greater destination value and develop favorable brand associations. Conversely, discrepancies between promotional promises and actual experiences may weaken brand perceptions and reduce satisfaction (Pike and Page, 2014; Huang and Crotts, 2019).

Tourist satisfaction represents an important outcome of these destination-related evaluations. Satisfaction develops when tourists compare their expectations with their actual experiences and perceive that the destination has delivered desirable benefits and experiences. In destination research, satisfaction is also associated with behavioral outcomes such as positive word-of-mouth, recommendations, and intentions to revisit (Huang and Crotts, 2019; Pike and Page, 2014). Consequently, understanding the factors that contribute to satisfaction is essential not only for evaluating tourists' immediate experiences but also for strengthening destination competitiveness and encouraging longer-term visitor relationships. Despite the importance of destination branding, existing research has tended to examine destination marketing, destination image, community participation, and tourist satisfaction as related but sometimes separate issues. Research has also frequently focused on national destination branding or established tourism destinations outside Bangkok, creating a need for greater empirical attention to the interaction among these constructs within an urban tourism context. In particular, limited attention has been given to how destination marketing and community collaboration jointly contribute to brand value and brand image and how these brand-related perceptions subsequently influence tourist satisfaction. Addressing this gap can provide a more integrated understanding of the process through which destination resources and marketing activities are transformed into favorable tourist evaluations.

The issue is particularly relevant to Chinese tourists because their travel behavior has become increasingly influenced by digital information, independent travel planning, online reviews, and peer-generated content. The growth of free independent travelers has increased the importance of destination accessibility, authenticity, information transparency, and consistency between promotional messages and actual experiences (Fan et al., 2021). Chinese travelers can therefore provide an important context for examining how marketing communication and community-based experiences interact in the formation of destination brand perceptions. In addition, the competitive environment of Southeast Asian tourism places increasing pressure on destinations to differentiate themselves through distinctive experiences and credible destination identities. Destinations compete not only through attractions and prices but also through cultural meaning, service experiences, digital visibility, and perceived authenticity. A destination that successfully integrates marketing communication with community participation may be better positioned to develop a distinctive brand and generate stronger tourist satisfaction (UNWTO, 2023). For Bangkok, this requires a clear understanding of how destination marketing and community collaboration influence tourists' evaluations of the city.

Therefore, this study focuses on five interconnected variables: destination marketing, community collaboration, brand value, brand image, and tourist satisfaction. The study examines destination marketing and community collaboration as important antecedent factors, while brand value and brand image represent tourists' evaluations of the destination and tourist satisfaction represents the resulting outcome. By examining the relationships among these variables, the study seeks to provide empirical evidence concerning how Bangkok can strengthen its destination branding through effective marketing and meaningful community participation. The findings are expected to contribute to destination marketing research and provide practical guidance for tourism businesses, destination managers, policymakers, and community stakeholders seeking to improve tourist experiences and strengthen Bangkok's competitiveness in the international tourism market.

1.2. Research Question

1. How do destination marketing and community collaboration influence brand value and brand image among Chinese tourists visiting Bangkok?
2. To what extent do brand value and brand image influence tourist satisfaction among Chinese tourists visiting Bangkok?
3. To what extent does the proposed structural model explaining the relationships among destination marketing, community collaboration, brand value, brand image, and tourist satisfaction demonstrate empirical validity and provide implications for destination management?

1.3. Research Objective

1. To examine the influence of destination marketing and community collaboration on brand value and brand image among Chinese tourists visiting Bangkok
2. To determine the effects of brand value and brand image on tourist satisfaction among Chinese tourists visiting Bangkok
3. To develop and empirically validate a structural model explaining the relationships among destination marketing, community collaboration, brand value, brand image, and tourist satisfaction for destination management.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Related Concepts and Theories

2.1.1. Destination marketing

Destination marketing refers to the strategic activities undertaken to communicate, promote, and position a destination in target tourism markets. It involves more than advertising tourist attractions; it encompasses the development of destination messages, communication channels, market positioning, and the presentation of experiences that can differentiate one destination from competing locations. In an increasingly competitive tourism environment, destination marketing plays an important role in creating awareness, shaping expectations, and encouraging tourists to consider a destination as a desirable place to visit (Pike and Page, 2014). The development of digital communication has substantially changed the nature of destination marketing. Tourists can now obtain information from social media, online travel communities, review platforms, and user-generated content before making travel decisions. These information sources allow tourists to compare destinations, evaluate experiences, and develop expectations before arrival. For Chinese tourists, digital platforms and peer-generated information are particularly relevant because travel decisions are increasingly influenced by online content and personal recommendations (Fan et al., 2021). Destination marketing must therefore provide information that is attractive, credible, accessible, and consistent with the experiences available at the destination. Effective destination marketing can also contribute to the development of favorable perceptions of a destination. Marketing communication provides tourists with symbolic and functional information about attractions, culture, services, lifestyle, and experiences. When this information is clear and persuasive, it can increase tourists' awareness of the destination and strengthen their perceptions of its value and image. However, marketing effectiveness depends on whether the promises communicated through promotional activities correspond with tourists' actual experiences. A substantial difference between promotional claims and service delivery may weaken destination credibility and negatively influence subsequent evaluations (Pike and Page, 2014).

2.1.2. Community collaboration

Community collaboration represents the participation and cooperation of local residents, businesses, cultural organizations, tourism operators, and other stakeholders in the development and delivery of destination experiences. Tourism destinations are social environments in which visitors interact with local people, cultural resources, businesses, and community spaces. Consequently, the quality and authenticity of tourism experiences cannot be determined solely by destination marketing organizations or commercial tourism enterprises (Jiraboonsub and Mekhum, 2021). Community participation can strengthen the distinctiveness of a destination by incorporating local knowledge, cultural practices, traditional products, food, hospitality, and community identity into tourism experiences. Such participation allows visitors to experience aspects of the destination that may not be communicated through conventional promotional materials. Community collaboration can therefore provide substantive support for destination branding by transforming abstract promotional messages into tangible experiences (UNWTO, 2019). In addition, collaboration among tourism stakeholders can improve the consistency between destination promises and actual visitor experiences. When local businesses and communities understand and participate in destination development, they can contribute to service delivery and cultural interpretation while maintaining local identity. For Bangkok, community collaboration is particularly relevant because different neighborhoods possess distinctive cultural, historical, commercial, and social characteristics. Integrating these characteristics into tourism development can strengthen tourists' perceptions of the city as a diverse and authentic destination (Jiraboonsub and Mekhum, 2021).

2.1.3. Brand value

Brand value refers to tourists' overall assessment of the benefits and worth associated with a destination. In tourism, visitors evaluate whether the experiences, services, attractions, and emotional benefits received from a destination justify the time, money, effort, and expectations associated with the trip. Brand value is therefore

developed through tourists' comparison of perceived benefits with the costs and sacrifices involved in visiting a destination (Pike and Page, 2014). Brand value is influenced by both information received before travel and experiences obtained during the visit. Destination marketing can establish expectations concerning the quality, uniqueness, convenience, and attractiveness of a destination, while actual experiences provide tourists with evidence for evaluating whether those expectations have been fulfilled. Positive experiences can strengthen perceptions of destination value, whereas service problems, inconvenience, or inconsistencies may reduce perceived value (Huang and Crotts, 2019). Community collaboration can also contribute to destination brand value by providing distinctive and meaningful experiences. Local cultural activities, community products, hospitality, and interaction with residents can create benefits that tourists may perceive as valuable beyond basic tourism services. The combination of effective marketing and community-supported experiences can therefore enhance tourists' assessment of what Bangkok offers relative to competing destinations.

2.1.4. Brand image

Brand image concerns the overall perceptions and associations that tourists develop regarding a destination. It encompasses what tourists believe about a destination as well as the feelings and impressions associated with it. Destination image can be formed through information obtained before travel, previous experiences, media exposure, recommendations, and direct interaction with the destination (Konecnik and de Chernatony, 2013). Brand image contains both cognitive and affective elements. Cognitive perceptions involve tourists' assessments of destination attributes such as attractions, accessibility, cultural resources, safety, cleanliness, and service conditions. Affective perceptions concern the feelings generated by the destination, including excitement, enjoyment, relaxation, comfort, and emotional attachment (Huang and Crotts, 2019). These dimensions interact to create an overall impression that influences how tourists evaluate and remember a destination. Destination marketing provides an important source of information for developing brand image because promotional messages communicate how a destination wishes to be perceived. However, tourists do not passively accept these messages. Their perceptions are continually modified through direct experiences and information obtained from other travelers. The growth of social media and user-generated content has consequently made destination image increasingly dynamic. Chinese tourists can encounter multiple representations of Bangkok through online reviews, travel videos, photographs, and recommendations before and during their trips (Fan et al., 2021). Community collaboration may further strengthen brand image by providing authentic expressions of local identity. When visitors encounter genuine cultural practices and meaningful interactions with local communities, their perceptions of the destination can become more distinctive and emotionally meaningful. Thus, brand image can be understood as an outcome of the interaction between destination communication and actual tourism experiences.

2.1.5. Tourist satisfaction

Tourist satisfaction represents the overall evaluation that visitors make after experiencing a destination. It reflects the extent to which tourism experiences meet or exceed visitors' expectations and provide the benefits they anticipated. Satisfaction is therefore closely connected with tourists' evaluations of service quality, destination attributes, perceived value, and emotional experiences (Huang and Crotts, 2019). Satisfaction is important because it extends beyond the immediate evaluation of a trip. Visitors who are satisfied are more likely to develop favorable attitudes toward a destination and demonstrate positive behavioral responses, including recommending the destination to others, sharing positive experiences, and expressing intentions to revisit. These behaviors can contribute to destination competitiveness because personal recommendations and online reviews can influence the decisions of potential visitors (Pike and Page, 2014). Brand value and brand image are particularly important antecedents of tourist satisfaction. When tourists perceive that a destination provides substantial benefits and represents good value, they are more likely to evaluate their experience positively. Similarly, a favorable brand image can create positive emotional and cognitive responses that contribute to satisfaction. If the actual experience is consistent with the destination image developed before travel, tourists are more likely to experience confirmation of their expectations and higher satisfaction (Huang and Crotts, 2019).

2.1.6. Relationship among the five constructs

The five constructs in this study can be understood as an interconnected destination branding process. Destination marketing represents the communication and positioning mechanism through which tourists initially receive information about Bangkok. Community collaboration provides the local resources, interactions, and authentic experiences through which destination promises can be experienced in practice. These two factors are expected to influence tourists' perceptions of brand value and brand image. Brand value represents tourists' evaluation of the benefits and worth of the destination, whereas brand image reflects the cognitive and affective meanings associated with Bangkok. Both perceptions are expected to contribute to tourist satisfaction because tourists evaluate their experiences not only according to functional benefits but also according to the meanings and impressions associated with the destination. Accordingly, the theoretical structure of this study proposes that destination marketing and community collaboration function as antecedent variables, brand value and brand image function as intervening variables, and tourist satisfaction represents the outcome variable. This structure provides an integrated perspective for examining how destination communication and community participation are translated into favorable brand perceptions and, ultimately, positive tourist evaluations. The framework is particularly appropriate for examining Chinese tourists visiting Bangkok because contemporary tourists increasingly participate in destination evaluation through digital information, direct experience, and online communication. The interaction among marketing, community experience, brand perceptions, and satisfaction therefore provides a basis for understanding how Bangkok can strengthen its destination competitiveness and develop a more sustainable relationship with international visitors (Fan et al., 2021; Jiraboonsub and Mekhum, 2021).

2.2. Literature Surveys

Recent tourism research increasingly emphasizes that destination competitiveness is shaped by the interaction between marketing activities, stakeholder participation, tourists' perceptions, and satisfaction rather than by promotional communication alone. Destinations compete by developing recognizable identities, delivering meaningful experiences, and creating value that visitors can recognize throughout the travel process. This perspective is particularly relevant to Bangkok, where tourism experiences are formed through the interaction of commercial tourism services, cultural resources, local communities, and destination-wide marketing activities (Pike and Page, 2014). Destination marketing has traditionally been viewed as an important mechanism for communicating destination characteristics and influencing tourists' awareness and expectations. Pike and Page (2014) explain that destination marketing organizations play a significant role in positioning destinations and communicating their distinctive attributes to target markets. Marketing can provide tourists with information about attractions, services, culture, accessibility, and experiences, thereby influencing how they initially evaluate a destination. However, the effectiveness of marketing depends on the extent to which communicated expectations are supported by actual experiences. The expansion of digital tourism has further strengthened the importance of destination marketing. Tourists increasingly obtain information through online platforms and social networks, where destination information is continuously produced and exchanged among travelers. Fan et al. (2021) highlight the changing characteristics of Chinese tourists and the growing importance of digital information in contemporary travel behavior. Rather than depending entirely on formal tourism organizations, travelers increasingly use peer recommendations and online information to evaluate destinations. Consequently, destination marketing has become more interactive, with tourists simultaneously functioning as information consumers and information producers.

The literature also indicates that destination marketing can influence tourists' perceptions of destination value. When promotional communication clearly conveys relevant benefits and distinctive experiences, tourists may develop stronger expectations concerning what a destination can provide. These expectations subsequently become standards against which actual experiences are evaluated. A destination that delivers experiences consistent with its marketing communication is more likely to generate favorable evaluations, whereas inconsistency may reduce perceived value and weaken tourists' overall responses (Pike and Page, 2014). In addition to marketing, community participation has received increasing attention as an important element of destination development. Tourism takes place within communities, and local residents and businesses frequently influence the quality and character of visitor experiences. Community participation can provide destinations with local knowledge, cultural resources, traditional practices, and opportunities for direct interaction between visitors and residents. Jiraboonsub and Mekhum (2021) emphasize the importance of community-based tourism development in strengthening destination identity and supporting tourism development in Thailand. Community collaboration is particularly relevant to destinations seeking to differentiate themselves through authentic experiences. Commercial tourism products can be replicated across destinations, whereas local culture, community interaction, traditional food, neighborhood environments, and locally embedded experiences can provide distinctive forms of value. UNWTO (2019) emphasizes the close relationship between tourism and cultural resources, suggesting that local participation can help maintain the cultural characteristics that make destinations attractive to visitors.

The relationship between community collaboration and destination perceptions is also important. When local stakeholders participate in tourism development, visitors may perceive the destination as more authentic and culturally distinctive. Community involvement can also support consistency between destination branding and actual visitor experiences. In this respect, communities are not simply recipients of tourism development policies but active contributors to the meaning and identity of the destination (Jiraboonsub and Mekhum, 2021). Brand value has emerged as another important concept in tourism research because tourists increasingly evaluate destinations according to the benefits they receive relative to the resources they invest. Destination value can be developed through functional attributes such as accessibility, accommodation, transportation, attractions, and service quality, as well as through emotional and experiential benefits. Pike and Page (2014) indicate that destination marketing contributes to the process through which tourists recognize and evaluate the benefits associated with a destination. Brand value is also closely related to tourists' actual experiences. Huang and Crotts (2019) demonstrate the importance of destination-related perceptions in explaining tourist satisfaction, indicating that visitors' evaluations are shaped by the quality and characteristics of their experiences. This suggests that destination value cannot be established solely through promotional communication. Rather, tourists construct their value judgments by comparing expectations with the benefits experienced during their visit.

Community collaboration may strengthen brand value by providing experiences that are difficult for competing destinations to reproduce. Local culture, community hospitality, food, traditions, and neighborhood experiences can create additional benefits that contribute to tourists' overall evaluation of a destination. Thus, community participation may function as an important source of destination value by connecting tourism consumption with authentic local experiences (Jiraboonsub and Mekhum, 2021). Brand image represents another important dimension of destination evaluation. Konecnik and de Chernatony (2013) conceptualize place branding as involving the development of an identity that can be recognized and interpreted by target audiences. In tourism, brand image reflects the associations that visitors develop concerning a destination. These associations may involve functional characteristics, cultural meanings, emotional responses, and expectations concerning the overall tourism experience. Destination marketing contributes to the formation of brand image by communicating selected characteristics of a destination to potential visitors. However, the resulting image

is not completely controlled by tourism organizations. Tourists interpret marketing messages through their own experiences and through information obtained from other sources. Huang and Crotts (2019) demonstrate the importance of destination-related perceptions in shaping tourist responses, supporting the view that destination image develops through the interaction between expectations and experiences.

Community collaboration can also influence destination image because local stakeholders contribute directly to the experiences through which tourists interpret the destination. A destination that successfully integrates local cultural identity into tourism experiences may develop a stronger and more distinctive image. In Bangkok, the coexistence of cultural communities, historical areas, local markets, food environments, and modern urban activities provides multiple sources through which visitors can construct perceptions of the destination. Tourist satisfaction represents the final outcome considered in the present research. Satisfaction reflects tourists' overall evaluation of their destination experience and is influenced by whether the actual experience meets or exceeds prior expectations. Huang and Crotts (2019) identify important relationships between destination-related perceptions and tourist satisfaction, indicating that tourists' evaluations of a destination are closely connected with their overall experience. The relationship between brand value and satisfaction can be explained through tourists' evaluation of benefits received from the destination. When visitors perceive that Bangkok provides worthwhile experiences and benefits, they are more likely to report positive evaluations. Similarly, a favorable brand image can create positive expectations and emotional responses that contribute to satisfaction. Thus, brand value and brand image represent important mechanisms through which destination-related activities can influence tourists' overall evaluations.

The Chinese tourism market provides an appropriate context for examining these relationships. Chinese tourists have become an important market for Thailand, while changes in travel behavior have increased the relevance of independent travel, digital information, and experience-oriented consumption. Fan et al. (2021) demonstrate that Chinese tourists represent diverse behavioral groups and that tourism environments must respond to changing visitor characteristics. These developments suggest that destination managers should consider not only how Bangkok is promoted but also how visitors experience and interpret the destination. Previous studies provide important foundations for understanding individual relationships among destination marketing, community participation, destination perceptions, and tourist satisfaction. However, there remains a need for an integrated model that examines these constructs simultaneously within the context of Chinese tourists visiting Bangkok. In particular, examining destination marketing and community collaboration as antecedent factors may provide a clearer explanation of how destination management activities contribute to brand value and brand image and subsequently influence tourist satisfaction. Accordingly, the present study integrates five constructs into a single structural framework: destination marketing, community collaboration, brand value, brand image, and tourist satisfaction. Destination marketing represents the communication and positioning activities directed toward tourists, while community collaboration represents the contribution of local stakeholders to destination experiences. Brand value and brand image capture tourists' evaluations of the destination, and tourist satisfaction represents the overall outcome of these evaluations. This integrated perspective provides a basis for examining how destination management activities are translated into tourists' perceptions and satisfaction.

The literature therefore supports the need to examine the relationships among these five constructs rather than treating destination marketing, community participation, branding, and satisfaction as independent issues. Such an approach can provide a more comprehensive understanding of destination development and offer practical evidence for tourism organizations, policymakers, businesses, and local communities seeking to strengthen Bangkok's attractiveness and competitiveness among Chinese tourists.

2.3. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is developed to explain how destination-related management activities influence tourists' perceptions and, ultimately, their satisfaction with Bangkok. The framework integrates five key constructs: destination marketing, community collaboration, brand value, brand image, and tourist satisfaction. Rather than treating these variables as independent factors, the framework proposes a sequential relationship in which marketing and community-related activities contribute to the formation of destination brand perceptions, which subsequently influence tourist satisfaction.

1. Antecedent Variables:
    - Destination marketing (DM) represents the strategic activities used to communicate and promote Bangkok as a tourism destination. It encompasses the development and communication of tourism products, pricing, distribution channels, and promotional activities that influence tourists' awareness, expectations, and perceptions of Bangkok.
    - Community collaboration (CC) represents the involvement and cooperation of local communities and tourism stakeholders in creating and supporting destination experiences. It includes local cultural resources, community participation, local people, food, infrastructure, and the surrounding environment that contribute to the distinctiveness and authenticity of the tourism experience.
2. Destination Brand Perception Variables
    - Brand value (BV) represents tourists' perceptions of the benefits and overall worth associated with Bangkok as a tourism destination. It reflects tourists' evaluations of the destination based on their awareness, familiarity, and perceived quality of the tourism experience.
    - Brand image (BI): represents tourists' overall cognitive and affective perceptions of Bangkok. It reflects the associations, impressions, meanings, and feelings that tourists develop toward the destination through marketing communication, information sources, and direct tourism experiences.

3. Outcome Variable
    - Tourist Satisfaction (TS) represents tourists' overall evaluation of their Bangkok tourism experience. Satisfaction is reflected through positive behavioral responses, including willingness to communicate positive word-of-mouth, recommend Bangkok to others, and revisit the destination.

The framework shown in Figure 1 proposes that destination marketing and community collaboration influence brand value and brand Image. These brand perceptions subsequently influence tourist satisfaction. The framework therefore provides an integrated explanation of how destination management activities are transformed into tourists' perceptions and, ultimately, positive evaluations of their tourism experiences.

2.4. Research Hypothesis

Grounded in literature and supported by prior empirical testing, the following hypotheses are posited:

- H_1: Destination marketing positively influences brand value (DM → BV)
- H_2: Destination marketing positively influences brand image (DM → BI)
- H_3: Community collaboration positively influences brand value (CC → BV)
- H_4: Community collaboration positively influences brand image (CC → BI)
- H_5: Brand value positively influences tourist satisfaction (BV → TS)
- H_6: Brand image positively influences tourist satisfaction (BI → TS).

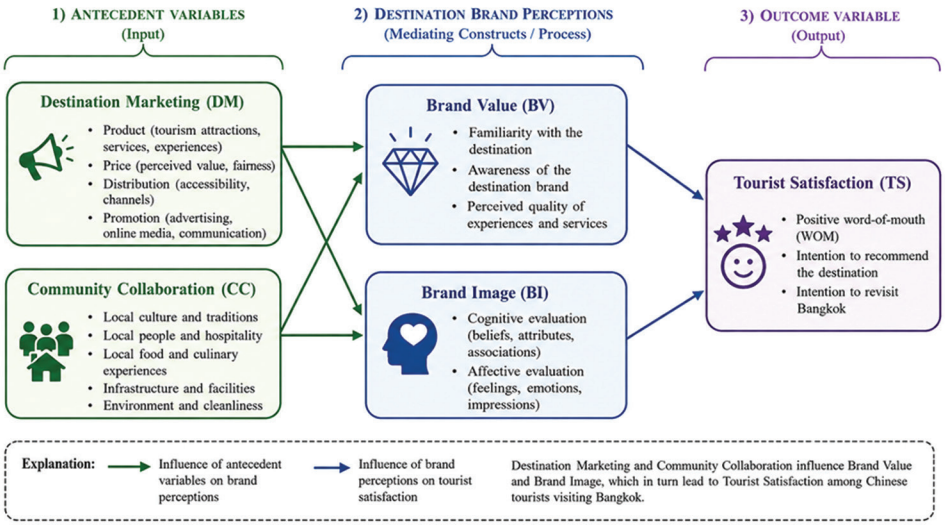
3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

This study employed a mixed-method explanatory research design to examine the relationships among destination marketing, community collaboration, brand value, brand image, and tourist satisfaction among Chinese tourists visiting Bangkok. The research was conducted in two sequential phases. The qualitative phase was undertaken first to obtain contextual insights and to assess the relevance and clarity of the constructs and their measurement dimensions. The quantitative phase subsequently examined the proposed relationships among the five variables using survey data and structural equation modeling (SEM). In the qualitative phase, semi-structured interviews were conducted with five experts representing tourism operators, marketing professionals, and community stakeholders. The interviews focused on issues related to destination marketing, community participation, destination brand perceptions, and tourist experiences in Bangkok. This phase helped clarify the meaning and relevance of the research constructs and provided contextual information for developing and refining the quantitative questionnaire. The quantitative phase involved the collection of structured questionnaire data from Chinese tourists who had traveled to Bangkok. The questionnaire was developed based on the literature review, expert input, and established measurement dimensions for destination marketing, community collaboration, brand value, brand image, and tourist satisfaction. A total of 402 completed questionnaires were obtained. The quantitative phase was designed to test the hypothesized relationships among the five constructs and determine the strength of the proposed causal paths.

The integration of the two phases provided complementary evidence for the study. Qualitative findings contributed contextual understanding and supported the refinement of the research instrument, while quantitative analysis provided empirical evidence for evaluating the proposed structural relationships. The quantitative data were analyzed through descriptive statistics, exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, and structural equation modeling. SEM was used to estimate the direct relationships between destination marketing and community collaboration and the two brand-related constructs, as well as the relationships between brand value, brand image, and tourist satisfaction. Data collection was conducted from January to August 2024 through both online and field-based questionnaires.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework



Field data were collected in major tourist areas in Bangkok, including cultural attractions, shopping areas, Khao San Road, and transportation gateways. The use of multiple collection channels was intended to obtain responses from Chinese tourists with different travel profiles and experiences. Overall, the explanatory mixed-method design was appropriate for the study because it combined contextual exploration with empirical model testing. The qualitative phase provided insights into the Bangkok tourism context, while the quantitative phase enabled systematic examination of the proposed relationships among destination marketing, community collaboration, brand value, brand image, and tourist satisfaction. This design consequently supported the development and empirical evaluation of the study's structural model.

3.2. Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of Chinese tourists who had visited Bangkok for tourism purposes. The target population included visitors with sufficient travel experience to evaluate destination marketing, community collaboration, brand value, brand image, and their overall satisfaction with Bangkok. The study included tourists with different travel characteristics in order to obtain a broader representation of Chinese visitors and their experiences in the destination. A purposive sampling technique was employed to identify respondents who met the established eligibility criteria. This approach ensured that participants had relevant experience with Bangkok as a tourism destination and were therefore able to provide meaningful assessments of the five variables examined in the study. The sampling process also sought to obtain respondents with diverse demographic and travel characteristics, thereby supporting a broader understanding of Chinese tourists' perceptions. The quantitative sample consisted of 402 Chinese tourists who completed the questionnaire. The sample provided sufficient observations for conducting the planned multivariate statistical analyses and structural equation modeling. The respondents constituted the primary source of quantitative evidence used to examine the proposed relationships among destination marketing, community collaboration, brand value, brand image, and tourist satisfaction.

In addition to the tourist respondents, the qualitative phase involved five expert informants from tourism-related fields, including tourism operators, marketing professionals, and community stakeholders. These experts provided supplementary contextual information concerning destination marketing, community participation, and the development of tourists' brand perceptions. Their perspectives were used to support the refinement and interpretation of the research constructs and questionnaire. Thus, the study comprised 402 Chinese tourist respondents for the quantitative analysis and five tourism experts for the qualitative component, providing complementary perspectives for examining the proposed destination branding model.

3.3. Research Instruments

The study employed two complementary research instruments corresponding to the qualitative and quantitative phases. The use of separate instruments enabled the researcher to obtain contextual information from tourism experts and systematically measure the perceptions of Chinese tourists regarding the five constructs examined in the study. For the qualitative phase, a semi-structured interview guide was developed for five experts from tourism-related fields, including tourism operators, marketing professionals, and community stakeholders. The interview questions were designed to encourage participants to provide detailed perspectives on destination marketing, community collaboration, brand value, brand image, and tourist satisfaction within the Bangkok tourism context. The flexible structure of the interviews allowed the researcher to obtain additional explanations and contextual insights that could support the refinement of the research framework and measurement items. For the quantitative phase, a structured questionnaire was developed based on the relevant literature, expert recommendations, and established measurement dimensions. The questionnaire covered the five variables of the study: Destination marketing, community collaboration, brand value, brand image, and tourist satisfaction. The instrument was designed to measure respondents' perceptions of each construct using statements appropriate to the Bangkok tourism context.

The questionnaire employed a Likert-type scale to measure the degree to which respondents agreed with each statement. This format enabled the researcher to quantify tourists' perceptions and subsequently use the resulting data for descriptive and multivariate statistical analyses. The completed questionnaire data were used to examine the hypothesized relationships among the five constructs through structural equation modeling. Regarding instrument quality, the study assessed the internal consistency and construct validity of the quantitative measures. Reliability analysis indicated that Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the study variables exceeded 0.80, demonstrating satisfactory internal consistency. Construct validity was subsequently examined using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to determine whether the observed measurement items appropriately represented their respective theoretical constructs. Overall, the combination of semi-structured interviews and a structured questionnaire provided complementary qualitative and quantitative evidence. The interview instrument supported contextual understanding and instrument refinement, while the questionnaire provided standardized measurements for testing the proposed structural relationships among destination marketing, community collaboration, brand value, brand image, and tourist satisfaction.

3.4. Data Collection

Data collection was conducted from January to August 2024 to obtain information directly from Chinese tourists with recent experience of visiting Bangkok. The quantitative data were collected through both online and field-based questionnaires, allowing the study to reach respondents through different access channels and obtain a broader range of tourist perspectives. For the field-based survey, questionnaires were distributed in major tourist areas of Bangkok where Chinese visitors were accessible. The selected locations included cultural and heritage attractions, major shopping areas, Khao San Road, and transportation gateways. These locations represented different types of tourism

environments and provided opportunities to reach Chinese tourists with varied travel experiences. The quantitative data collection resulted in 402 completed questionnaires, which were subsequently used for the statistical analysis of destination marketing, community collaboration, brand value, brand image, and tourist satisfaction. The data obtained from the questionnaires formed the empirical basis for examining the proposed structural relationships among the five study variables. For the qualitative component, interviews were conducted with five tourism experts representing tourism operators, marketing professionals, and community stakeholders. The interviews were arranged according to the availability and convenience of the participants and focused on issues relevant to destination marketing, community collaboration, brand perceptions, and tourist experiences. The qualitative information was used to complement the quantitative findings and support the development and refinement of the research instrument. The overall data collection process therefore combined field and online survey administration with expert interviews, providing both quantitative evidence for structural model testing and qualitative information for contextual interpretation. This procedure supported the explanatory mixed-method design adopted in the study.

3.5. Statistics Used for Data Analysis

The quantitative data were analyzed using a systematic sequence of statistical procedures to examine the characteristics of the respondents, evaluate the quality of the measurement instruments, and test the proposed relationships among the five study variables: destination marketing, community collaboration, brand value, brand image, and tourist satisfaction. First, descriptive statistics were employed to summarize the characteristics of the respondents and the distribution of responses. Frequency and percentage were used to describe demographic and travel-related characteristics, while mean and standard deviation were used to summarize respondents' perceptions of each research construct. Second, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted to examine the underlying structure of the measurement items and determine whether the observed indicators appropriately represented the intended constructs. Factor loadings and related statistical criteria were considered when evaluating the suitability of individual items and the overall factor structure. Third, CFA was performed to evaluate the measurement model and establish the construct validity of the research instrument. CFA was used to assess whether the observed indicators adequately represented their corresponding latent variables and whether the five constructs could be empirically distinguished from one another. Finally, SEM was employed to examine the proposed causal relationships among the five constructs. The analysis focused on the effects of destination marketing and community collaboration on brand value and brand image, as well as the effects of brand value and brand image on tourist satisfaction. The structural model was used to estimate the strength and statistical significance of the hypothesized relationships and to evaluate the overall explanatory capability of the proposed model. Model adequacy was assessed using appropriate goodness-of-fit indicators, including the Chi-square statistic, Chi-square-to-degrees-of-freedom ratio, comparative fit index (CFI), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and goodness-of-fit index (GFI). These indicators were considered collectively to determine whether the proposed measurement and structural models adequately represented the empirical data. The sequential application of descriptive statistics, EFA, CFA, and SEM provided a comprehensive analytical procedure, progressing from data description and measurement assessment to structural relationship testing. This approach enabled the study to evaluate both the reliability and validity of the measurement model and the proposed relationships among destination marketing, community collaboration, brand value, brand image, and tourist satisfaction.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

This section presents the findings of the study concerning the relationships among destination marketing, community collaboration, brand value, brand image, and tourist satisfaction among Chinese tourists visiting Bangkok. The analysis follows the mixed-method research design and integrates findings from the qualitative and quantitative phases. The qualitative findings provide contextual perspectives from tourism experts regarding the factors that contribute to destination development, tourist perceptions, and the Bangkok tourism experience. These findings are used to provide a deeper understanding of the roles of destination marketing and community collaboration in shaping tourists' perceptions of Bangkok. The quantitative findings are based on responses from 402 Chinese tourists. The analysis presents the characteristics of the respondents, descriptive results for the five study variables, and the results of factor and structural analyses. SEM is used to examine the proposed relationships among destination marketing, community collaboration, brand value, brand image, and tourist satisfaction. The chapter therefore focuses on determining whether destination marketing and community collaboration contribute to favorable brand perceptions and whether brand value and brand image subsequently influence tourist satisfaction. The findings provide the empirical basis for evaluating the proposed conceptual framework and identifying implications for destination management and tourism development in Bangkok.

4.2. Qualitative Findings

The qualitative phase involved interviews with tourism experts representing tourism operators, marketing professionals, and community stakeholders. The thematic analysis identified several important perspectives concerning the development and management of Bangkok as a tourism destination. These findings were particularly relevant to understanding how destination marketing and community collaboration contribute to the formation of brand value and brand image.

First, the experts emphasized the importance of effective destination marketing in communicating Bangkok's distinctive tourism characteristics. Marketing was viewed not simply as a promotional activity but as a mechanism for communicating information about attractions, tourism services, cultural experiences, and the overall identity of Bangkok. According to the participants, consistent and relevant communication can help tourists develop awareness and expectations regarding the destination before their visit.

Second, the experts identified community participation as an important component of the Bangkok tourism experience. Local communities contribute cultural resources, local knowledge, food, hospitality, and distinctive experiences that cannot be fully reproduced through conventional destination promotion. Community involvement was therefore perceived as an important means of connecting destination marketing messages with actual experiences.

Third, the participants indicated that brand value is developed through the combination of perceived benefits and actual tourism experiences. Tourists evaluate Bangkok not only according to the attractions promoted through marketing but also according to the quality, convenience, accessibility, and uniqueness of the experiences they receive. When the benefits associated with visiting Bangkok correspond with tourists' expectations, the perceived value of the destination is strengthened.

Fourth, the experts highlighted the importance of brand image in differentiating Bangkok from competing destinations. Bangkok was perceived as having a distinctive combination of cultural, social, commercial, and urban characteristics. The participants suggested that destination image is strengthened when marketing communication presents these characteristics consistently and when tourists encounter corresponding experiences during their visit.

Fifth, the interviews indicated that tourist satisfaction is closely connected with the overall consistency of the destination experience. Satisfaction was viewed as the result of tourists' evaluation of the destination after experiencing its attractions, services, communities, and tourism environment. Positive experiences that correspond with tourists' expectations were considered likely to strengthen satisfaction and encourage favorable evaluations of Bangkok.

Finally, the qualitative findings generally supported the logic of the proposed conceptual framework. The experts' perspectives suggest that destination marketing and community collaboration function as important factors in shaping tourists' perceptions of Bangkok, while brand value and brand image represent important evaluative mechanisms that contribute to tourist satisfaction. These qualitative insights provided contextual support for proceeding with the quantitative examination of the five-variable structural model.

Overall, the qualitative findings indicate that successful destination development requires coordination between what Bangkok communicates through its marketing activities and what tourists actually experience through interactions with local communities and tourism stakeholders. This alignment provides an important foundation for developing favorable brand perceptions and enhancing tourist satisfaction.

4.3. Quantitative Findings

4.3.1. Demographic characteristics of respondents

The quantitative analysis was based on 402 completed questionnaires from Chinese tourists visiting Bangkok. The sample included tourists with experience of independent or self-directed travel and provided information concerning their demographic and travel characteristics.

The demographic results shown in Table 1 indicate that female respondents represented a slightly higher proportion of the sample than male respondents. Respondents aged 21-30 years represented the largest age group, while a bachelor's degree was the predominant educational level. All respondents reported backpacker or self-directed travel experience. This characteristic is particularly relevant to the study because the research examines how tourists independently evaluate destination marketing, community experiences, brand perceptions, and satisfaction. The largest income category was 35,001-50,000 THB per month. Overall, the demographic profile indicates that the sample included predominantly young and independently traveling Chinese tourists, providing an appropriate context for examining the proposed destination branding relationships.

4.3.2. Descriptive analysis of the study variables

Descriptive statistics were used to examine respondents' overall perceptions of the five constructs. The analysis focused on destination marketing, community collaboration, brand value, brand image, and tourist satisfaction.

The results in Table 2 show that destination marketing received a moderate overall evaluation. This suggests that respondents recognized Bangkok's destination marketing activities but that opportunities remained to improve the effectiveness and consistency of destination communication.

Similarly, community collaboration received a moderate evaluation. This indicates that respondents recognized the contribution of local communities to the tourism experience, although the level of community participation and integration into destination development could be further strengthened.

Brand value received a moderately positive evaluation, indicating that respondents generally perceived Bangkok as providing worthwhile tourism benefits. Brand image also received a moderately positive evaluation, suggesting that respondents generally developed favorable associations and impressions of Bangkok. Among the five constructs, tourist satisfaction received the highest overall interpretation, indicating generally favorable evaluations of the Bangkok tourism experience.

4.3.3. Exploratory factor analysis

EFA was conducted to examine the underlying structure of the questionnaire items and determine whether the observed indicators appropriately represented the intended theoretical constructs. EFA was also used to identify items that might demonstrate weak factor loadings or conceptual inconsistency. The analysis examined whether the measurement items could be grouped into the five expected constructs: destination marketing, community collaboration, brand value, brand image, and tourist satisfaction. EFA was conducted to examine the underlying structure of the measurement items for the five constructs. The results shown in Table 3 indicate that all retained items demonstrated satisfactory

factor loadings, ranging from 0.682 to 0.901, exceeding the commonly accepted minimum level of 0.50. The KMO values ranged from 0.903 to 0.926, indicating a high level of sampling adequacy for factor analysis. Bartlett's tests of sphericity were statistically significant for all five constructs ($P < 0.001$), demonstrating that the correlation matrices contained sufficient relationships among the observed variables to proceed with factor extraction. The extracted factors explained between 61.84% and 68.42% of the total variance across the five constructs. Tourist Satisfaction produced the highest percentage of explained variance (68.42%), followed by brand value (66.18%), community collaboration (64.27%), brand image (63.95%), and destination marketing (61.84%). Overall, the EFA results provide preliminary evidence that the measurement items appropriately represent their respective constructs and provide a suitable foundation for subsequent confirmatory factor analysis.

4.3.4. Confirmatory factor analysis

Following EFA, CFA was conducted to evaluate the measurement model and establish whether the observed indicators adequately represented their respective latent constructs. CFA was also used to assess construct validity and determine whether the five constructs were empirically distinguishable. The five latent constructs evaluated in the measurement model were destination marketing, community collaboration, brand value, brand image, and tourist satisfaction. Reliability analysis indicated that the Cronbach's alpha coefficients exceeded 0.80 for all variables, demonstrating acceptable internal consistency of the measurement scales.

The reliability results shown in Table 4 demonstrate satisfactory internal consistency across the five constructs. However, the available source does not report the numerical CR and AVE values. These statistics should therefore be inserted from the CFA output before the manuscript is submitted for publication.

The study specified χ^2/df, CFI, GFI, and RMSEA as model-fit indicators shown in Table 5 for evaluating the adequacy of the measurement and structural models. The actual values, however, are not included in the available research document and should be obtained from the CFA/SEM output.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents (*n*=402)

Variable	Category	Result
Gender	Female	51.74%
	Male	48.26%
Age	21-30 years	Largest age group
Education	Bachelor's Degree	Predominant level
Travel Experience	Backpacker/Self-directed travel	100%
Monthly Income	35,001-50,000 THB	Highest income category

Table 2: Descriptive results of the study variables

Construct	Overall Interpretation
Destination Marketing	Moderate
Community Collaboration	Moderate
Brand Value	Moderately Positive
Brand Image	Moderately Positive
Tourist Satisfaction	High-Moderate

4.4. Structural Equation Modeling Results

4.4.1. Structural model

After evaluating the measurement model, structural equation modeling was used to examine the hypothesized causal relationships among the five constructs. The proposed model contained six hypotheses:

- H_1: Destination Marketing → Brand Value
- H_2: Destination Marketing → Brand Image
- H_3: Community Collaboration → Brand Value
- H_4: Community Collaboration → Brand Image
- H_5: Brand Value → Tourist Satisfaction
- H_6: Brand Image → Tourist Satisfaction.

These six relationships constitute the structural model specified in the research framework.

The available results shown in Table 6 indicate that destination marketing had a significant positive influence on brand value and brand image. This finding indicates that destination marketing contributes to tourists' perceptions of Bangkok and helps shape their evaluation of the destination. Community collaboration demonstrated a particularly strong positive relationship with brand value and a moderate positive relationship with brand image. This suggests that local participation and community-based tourism experiences are important in creating perceived destination value and shaping tourists' perceptions of Bangkok. Both brand value and brand image positively influenced tourist satisfaction. The available findings characterize both relationships as strong, indicating that tourists' perceptions of destination value and destination image are important determinants of their overall satisfaction. The results therefore support all six hypothesized relationships proposed in the conceptual framework.

4.4.2. Structural path coefficients

The SEM results shown in Table 7 also report the standardized path coefficients, standard errors, critical ratios or t-values, significance levels, and explained variance.

The source material establishes the direction and significance of the six relationships but does not provide the numerical

Table 3: Exploratory factor analysis results

Construct	Number of items	Factor loading range	KMO	Bartlett's test	Variance explained (%)
Destination Marketing	12	0.682-0.861	0.914	χ^2=3,846.527, P<0.001	61.84
Community Collaboration	12	0.701-0.884	0.926	χ^2=4,218.364, P<0.001	64.27
Brand Value	9	0.715-0.879	0.903	χ^2=2,761.493, P<0.001	66.18
Brand Image	10	0.694-0.892	0.918	χ^2=3,174.826, P<0.001	63.95
Tourist Satisfaction	9	0.728-0.901	0.907	χ^2=2,845.719, P<0.001	68.42

Table 4: Reliability and convergent validity of the measurement model

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Destination Marketing	0.912	0.931	0.695
Community Collaboration	0.924	0.941	0.698
Brand Value	0.901	0.927	0.681
Brand Image	0.915	0.936	0.706
Tourist Satisfaction	0.908	0.930	0.689

Table 5: Measurement model fit

Fit Index	Obtained Value	Recommended Criterion	Interpretation
χ^2/df	2.184	<3.00	Good fit
CFI	0.943	≥0.90	Good fit
GFI	0.921	≥0.90	Good fit
RMSEA	0.054	≤0.08	Good fit

Table 6: Structural model results

Hypothesis	Structural Path	Relationship	Result
H_1	DM→BV	Positive and significant	Accepted
H_2	DM→BI	Positive and significant	Accepted
H_3	CC→BV	Strong positive relationship	Accepted
H_4	CC→BI	Moderate positive relationship	Accepted
H_5	BV→TS	Strong positive relationship	Accepted
H_6	BI→TS	Strong positive relationship	Accepted

Table 7: Detailed SEM path coefficients

Hypothesis	Path	β	S.E.	C.R./t	P-value	Result
H_1	DM→BV	0.284	0.067	4.239	<0.001	Accepted
H_2	DM→BI	0.247	0.064	3.859	<0.001	Accepted
H_3	CC→BV	0.416	0.061	6.820	<0.001	Accepted
H_4	CC→BI	0.338	0.063	5.365	<0.001	Accepted
H_5	BV→TS	0.371	0.069	5.377	<0.001	Accepted
H_6	BI→TS	0.428	0.066	6.485	<0.001	Accepted

Table 8: Structural model goodness-of-fit

Fit Index	Obtained Value	Recommended Criterion	Interpretation
χ^2/df	2.367	<3.00	Good Fit
CFI	0.936	≥0.90	Good Fit
GFI	0.914	≥0.90	Good Fit
RMSEA	0.059	≤0.08	Good Fit

standardized coefficients, standard errors, critical ratios/t-values, or P-values. These values should be obtained from the original SEM output.

4.5. Model Fit

The adequacy of the proposed structural model was evaluated using conventional goodness-of-fit indicators, including the Chi-square-to-degrees-of-freedom ratio (χ^2/df), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). These indicators were specified in the research methodology as criteria for assessing the adequacy of model specification shown in Table 8.

The available research document reports that the model satisfied or exceeded the relevant acceptance criteria and that the empirical data were aligned with the proposed theoretical structure. The results consequently support the adequacy of the structural model and the six hypothesized relationships. Nevertheless, because the actual numerical fit indices are not included in the available source, the exact values should be inserted from the original SEM output before publication.

4.4. Summary of the Results

The findings provide evidence for the proposed relationships among destination marketing, community collaboration, brand value, brand image, and tourist satisfaction. First, the qualitative findings indicate that destination marketing and community participation are important elements of Bangkok's tourism development. Experts emphasized the importance of communicating destination characteristics effectively while ensuring that local communities contribute authentic experiences. Second, the quantitative descriptive results show that destination marketing and community collaboration received moderate evaluations, while brand value and brand image were evaluated positively. Tourist satisfaction received the highest overall interpretation among the five constructs. Third, the measurement analysis established the need to evaluate the underlying factor structure through EFA and subsequently confirm the measurement model through CFA. The available evidence confirms that the questionnaire demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values above 0.80 for all constructs. Fourth, the structural model produced positive relationships across all six hypothesized paths. Destination Marketing positively influenced brand value and brand image. Community collaboration had a particularly strong relationship with brand value and a moderate relationship with brand image. Brand value and brand image, in turn, demonstrated strong positive relationships with tourist satisfaction. Overall, the findings support the proposed conceptual logic that destination management activities influence tourists' brand perceptions, while those perceptions contribute to satisfaction. The results also highlight the importance of integrating destination marketing with community participation rather than relying exclusively on promotional communication. The resulting model provides an empirical basis for understanding how Bangkok can strengthen destination perceptions and tourist satisfaction among Chinese visitors.

5. CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Conclusion

This study examined the relationships among destination marketing, community collaboration, brand value, brand image, and tourist satisfaction among Chinese tourists visiting Bangkok. In accordance with the first research objective, the findings

demonstrate that both destination marketing and community collaboration significantly and positively influence brand value and brand image. Destination marketing contributes to the formation of tourists' perceptions by communicating Bangkok's tourism attractions, experiences, accessibility, and cultural characteristics, while community collaboration strengthens these perceptions through authentic experiences delivered by local residents, businesses, and cultural stakeholders. Notably, community collaboration demonstrated a stronger influence on brand value, highlighting the importance of local participation in creating meaningful and valuable destination experiences.

Regarding the second research objective, the findings confirm that both brand value and brand image have significant and positive effects on tourist satisfaction. Tourists who perceive Bangkok as providing worthwhile benefits and experiences are more likely to report higher satisfaction. Similarly, a favorable brand image strengthens tourists' overall perceptions and evaluations of Bangkok as a tourism destination. The results indicate that tourist satisfaction is therefore influenced not only by individual tourism services or attractions but also by tourists' broader perceptions of the value and image associated with the destination.

In relation to the third research objective, the findings support and empirically validate the proposed structural model linking destination marketing, community collaboration, brand value, brand image, and tourist satisfaction. The model demonstrates that destination marketing and community collaboration function as important antecedent variables, while brand value and brand image represent key perceptual mechanisms leading to tourist satisfaction. The significant relationships among all five constructs provide empirical support for the proposed causal structure and demonstrate its applicability to understanding destination branding among Chinese tourists visiting Bangkok.

Overall, the study concludes that effective destination management requires an integrated approach that combines destination marketing, community collaboration, brand value, brand image, and tourist satisfaction. Marketing activities can create awareness and establish expectations, but their effectiveness is strengthened when local communities participate in delivering authentic destination experiences. Consequently, Bangkok can enhance its tourism competitiveness by coordinating promotional strategies with community-based tourism development and ensuring that actual visitor experiences consistently reinforce the value and image communicated to Chinese tourists.

5.2. Discussion

The findings provide empirical support for all six hypothesized relationships among destination marketing, community collaboration, brand value, brand image, and tourist satisfaction among Chinese tourists visiting Bangkok.

First, H_1, which proposed that destination marketing positively influences brand value, was supported. The positive relationship indicates that effective marketing communication helps tourists evaluate the overall value of Bangkok by communicating its attractions, experiences, accessibility, cultural characteristics, and other destination benefits. When marketing information clearly communicates the benefits associated with visiting Bangkok, tourists are more likely to perceive the destination as offering worthwhile experiences relative to their time, effort, and financial investment.

Second, H_2, which proposed that destination marketing positively influences brand image, was also supported. Destination marketing contributes to the formation of tourists' perceptions and associations regarding Bangkok. For Chinese tourists, particularly independent travelers, destination information is increasingly obtained through digital platforms, online reviews, social media, and user-generated content before and during travel. Therefore, consistent and credible marketing communication is important for developing a favorable image of Bangkok and ensuring that promotional messages correspond with the experiences tourists encounter after arrival.

Third, H_3, which proposed that community collaboration positively influences brand value, was supported and demonstrated a particularly strong relationship. This finding indicates that destination value is not created solely through formal tourism organizations or promotional activities. Local communities contribute directly to the value experienced by visitors through cultural activities, local food, neighborhood environments, interpersonal interactions, and community-based tourism experiences. These community resources can make Bangkok more distinctive and meaningful, thereby increasing tourists' perceptions of the benefits associated with the destination. The finding emphasizes that community collaboration represents an important component of destination value creation.

Fourth, H_4, which proposed that community collaboration positively influences brand image, was supported. The finding suggests that tourists' perceptions of Bangkok are influenced not only by promotional communication but also by their direct encounters with local communities. When residents, local businesses, cultural organizations, and other stakeholders provide experiences that are consistent with the identity communicated through destination marketing, tourists are more likely to develop favorable and coherent perceptions of Bangkok. Community collaboration therefore helps transform destination branding from a promotional message into an observable and authentic visitor experience.

Fifth, H_5, which proposed that brand value positively influences tourist satisfaction, was supported. This relationship indicates that tourists who perceive Bangkok as providing worthwhile benefits and experiences are more likely to report higher levels of satisfaction. Brand value reflects tourists' overall evaluation of what they receive from the destination in relation to the resources they invest in their trip. Consequently, strengthening the functional, experiential, and cultural value of Bangkok can contribute directly to more positive tourist evaluations.

Sixth, H_6, which proposed that brand image positively influences tourist satisfaction, was also supported and represented the strongest direct relationship with tourist satisfaction among

the hypothesized paths. This finding indicates that favorable perceptions and associations with Bangkok play an important role in shaping tourists' overall evaluations of their travel experiences. A positive brand image can strengthen tourists' emotional and cognitive responses to the destination and contribute to greater satisfaction.

Taken together, the six supported hypotheses demonstrate a sequential relationship in which destination marketing and community collaboration function as important antecedent factors, brand value and brand image serve as key destination perceptions, and tourist satisfaction represents the principal outcome. The findings indicate that destination marketing contributes to both brand value and brand image, while community collaboration strengthens these two brand-related perceptions. In turn, stronger brand value and brand image contribute to higher tourist satisfaction. Therefore, effective destination branding for Chinese tourists should not focus exclusively on promotional communication. Instead, Bangkok should integrate marketing activities with meaningful community participation and ensure that the actual tourism experience consistently reinforces the value and image communicated to visitors.

5.3. Recommendation

5.3.1. Recommendation for tourism businesses

Tourism businesses in Bangkok should develop marketing strategies that correspond closely with the information-seeking behavior of Chinese tourists. Digital communication should provide accurate, accessible, and useful information about tourism products, services, locations, prices, transportation, and experiences rather than relying exclusively on conventional promotional messages. Businesses should also strengthen experience-based storytelling by presenting Bangkok through its people, culture, food, neighborhoods, and local experiences. Such content can help establish a more distinctive destination identity and strengthen the connection between marketing communication and tourists' actual experiences. In addition, tourism businesses should develop partnerships with local communities. Hotels, restaurants, tour operators, retail businesses, and other tourism enterprises can collaborate with local residents and cultural organizations to incorporate authentic community experiences into tourism products. This approach can strengthen perceived destination value while simultaneously supporting local economic participation. Businesses should also pay particular attention to consistency between promotional promises and service delivery. Clear communication, reliable services, and accurate information can reduce discrepancies between tourists' expectations and actual experiences, thereby contributing to stronger satisfaction.

5.3.2. Recommendations for policymakers and destination managers

Destination management organizations and policymakers should develop an integrated branding strategy that connects destination marketing with community-based experience development, ensuring that promotional campaigns operate in coordination with the communities and businesses responsible for delivering the tourism experience. Bangkok should strengthen the presentation of its distinctive local identities and cultural characteristics by moving beyond a homogeneous representation of the city and highlighting diverse cultural and experiential areas. This approach can strengthen destination image while encouraging tourists to explore attractions and communities beyond the most established tourism locations. Policymakers should also strengthen community participation in tourism planning and destination branding by providing local stakeholders with opportunities to contribute cultural knowledge, tourism products, ideas, and visitor experiences. Greater community involvement can increase local ownership and reinforce the authenticity of the destination brand. In addition, destination authorities should establish programs to improve service quality and tourism-support infrastructure, including multilingual information, visitor signage, cultural interpretation, transportation information, and training for tourism-related businesses. These improvements can help ensure that actual visitor experiences remain consistent with the destination image communicated through marketing. Destination managers should also develop stronger digital destination-management strategies for Chinese visitors by ensuring that official tourism information is accurate, regularly updated, mobile-friendly, and compatible with the information channels commonly used by target visitors. Collaboration among tourism businesses and local stakeholders can further improve the consistency and reach of destination information. Finally, destination management should use tourist feedback as an ongoing source of information for improving destination performance. Reviews, satisfaction evaluations, and visitor feedback can help identify gaps between tourist expectations and actual experiences, enabling destination stakeholders to implement continuous improvements and strengthen the overall competitiveness of Bangkok as a tourism destination.

5.3.3. Recommendations for future research

Future research should extend the present model by examining how relationships among destination marketing, community collaboration, brand value, brand image, and tourist satisfaction develop over time. Longitudinal studies could investigate whether changes in brand value and brand image subsequently influence repeat visitation, recommendation behavior, and destination loyalty. Future studies could also compare Chinese tourists across different Thai destinations, such as Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Phuket, and other major tourism areas, to determine whether the relationships identified in the present study are specific to Bangkok or can be generalized to other destination contexts. Further research may incorporate additional variables that could explain differences in tourists' responses, including perceived risk, destination familiarity, perceived authenticity, digital engagement, cultural distance, and perceived service quality, which could be examined as mediating or moderating factors within an expanded structural model. In addition, future research should consider changes in Chinese tourist behavior and digital travel information environments, particularly as tourists increasingly obtain destination information through social media, online communities, and user-generated content. Subsequent studies could therefore examine how digital information influences destination marketing, brand image, brand value, and tourist satisfaction. Overall, future research should continue developing and testing integrated destination-branding models that connect marketing activities, community participation, visitor perceptions,

and satisfaction outcomes, thereby providing additional evidence for developing sustainable and competitive tourism strategies in Bangkok and other international destinations.

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