

LAB University of Applied Sciences
Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality
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The impacts of social media on destination branding. Case study based on Hanoi city – the capital of Vietnam.

Thesis 2020

Abstract

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The impacts of social media in the tourism image of a destination. Case study based on Hanoi city – the capital of Vietnam

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Thesis 2020

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The purpose of the thesis was to discover the current situation of social media in destination branding with a use case of a developing city in Vietnam while weighing the impacts of social media marketing brings to advertise the destination.

In the theoretical chapters of the thesis, the author aimed to understand the general state of social media at the moment. Moreover, the author wanted to understand the impacts that social media has on the image of Hanoi. So that he could utilize the advantages and minimize the disadvantages affecting directly to the image of Hanoi. There were a few studies that only focus on the general picture of the relationship between social media marketing and destination branding. However, they did not concentrate on the specific purpose of the effectiveness of social media marketing in a destination. According to the data which was collected after six interviews, the author had an overview of the current impacts of social media marketing and the ways of improving them from the experts in this field.

Combined with previous studies, the influences of social media on the destination have been seen. Besides, there are more suitable proposals to improve and promote the image of Hanoi in the future. At the end chapter of the thesis, the author also gave a few pieces of advice as a guideline to build an effective social media marketing plan.

Keywords: Social media, Marketing, Tourism, Destination, Branding, impact

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1 Introduction

1.1 General description

In the 21st century, the tourism industry has become one of the most developed in each country because traveling demands have been increasing every year. People want to explore the world and experience the uniqueness of each country that they visit. Thus, the future potential of this industry is limitless.

On the other hand, as a result of internet development, people have more chances to reach the information of each destination that they are willing to visit in the future. Normally, people usually search engines on the internet such as Google, Bing, Ask, AOL, Yahoo to find information about the destination on the internet. Therefore, social media was born in addition to seeking information, people can share and interact with others easily. This results in the information being able to spread rapidly. However, the information spread through social media may contain both positive and negative information. New web technologies combined with a broadband Internet connection that allows people to reach diverse and interactive Social Media's content, such as videos, images, and audio. This is a two-way communication for information exchange that helps people have a multi-dimensional perspective on an event or a phenomenon.

Therefore, the main reason for choosing the topic is to understand a deeper level of social media impacts on the tourism image of a city. In detail, research will be done to measure positive and negative effects which affect the number of tourists visiting the destination from traveling companies' point of views. Moreover, the author decided Hanoi to be the destination to evaluate the impacts of social media on a city's tourism image. After a thousand years, Hanoi becomes a modern city but it still preserves and exists ancient relics. Thus, this city has its mark making it different from other cities in Viet Nam.

The work of this thesis consists of both theoretical and practical sections because the theoretical part will support the practical part while collecting interviews from companies and agencies. The theoretical part will focus on social media marketing, branding, destination branding as well as the information about Hanoi city, the chosen destination, and the tourism companies and agencies which are

doing marketing for the city. The practical part will cover the analysis results related to the impacts of social media on the city's image and the most remarkable contents in Hanoi. So, the author can evaluate which could be the impacts on tourists' attention through social media and the affections to tourism.

1.2 Thesis justification

In this thesis topic, the author wants to gain more knowledge about social media development and influence which impact directly on the tourism industry of Vietnam. After working for some traveling agencies in marketing, the author hopes to change the general picture of Vietnam tourism in general and Hanoi tourism in particular becoming better in the eyes of international friends.

At first, the author wanted to understand the importance of social media development in the tourism industry. In the 4.0 era, there is no reason to deny the role of digital marketing especially social media marketing to business. The advent of digital marketing has brought solutions and benefits to business growth such as higher revenue, cost-effectiveness, build BRAND image, real-time results, and competition with large corporations. Especially in the tourism industry, digital marketing, and social media marketing bring solutions to small and medium-sized travel companies in order to compete with bigger ones. Because of its cost efficiency, small and medium-size travel companies can introduce products easily to potential tourists.

Secondly, although social media marketing brings impressive business efficiencies, it also has negative impacts on the image of the destination. For example, the authenticity of the information is a key issue. If some negative news about Hanoi would be released, potential tourists would be affected even if they were incorrect information. Moreover, that news could be spread widely by the power of e-WOM (Electronic Word of Mouth) within a few hours. It will take a lot of time to correct the information and gain back people's trust.

Last but not least, it is very necessary to find solutions in order to utilize social media marketing. By creating a complete social media marketing

plan, it will be easier to develop the quality of posts' content so that the authenticity of posts will be guaranteed. Moreover, the content of posts will be more obvious when the format content is changed into pictures and videos. Posts with pictures and videos gain more attention and interactions from people than the normal ones. Besides that, there are many channels delivering information to tourists so the consistency of post content is needed to be ensured. Finally, the most important thing in this part is to focus on one or two main social media channels in order to achieve the highest efficiency.

After the thesis work, the author hopes to achieve more experience and knowledge about digital marketing, especially social media marketing which will affect future career and higher education.

1.3 Aims and delimitation of research

The main objectives are needed to be achieved while handling the thesis are listed below:

- To understand the importance of social media marketing in the tourism industry, especially in the tourism image (brand image).
- To evaluate the impacts of social media on the image of a destination by positive and negative factors.
- To utilize the advantage factors and most attractive content brought from social media to improve the brand image of Hanoi.

2 Social media overview

Social media is a popular word that has been mentioned for 10 years. On the other hand, social media is also known as one of the most necessary tools of any brand and business. By using this tool, companies can get more chances to contribute to building a stable relationship, communicating with customers, and reaching potential customers in the future.

According to Simon Kemp, social media has become an essential element of the daily life of people all around the world.

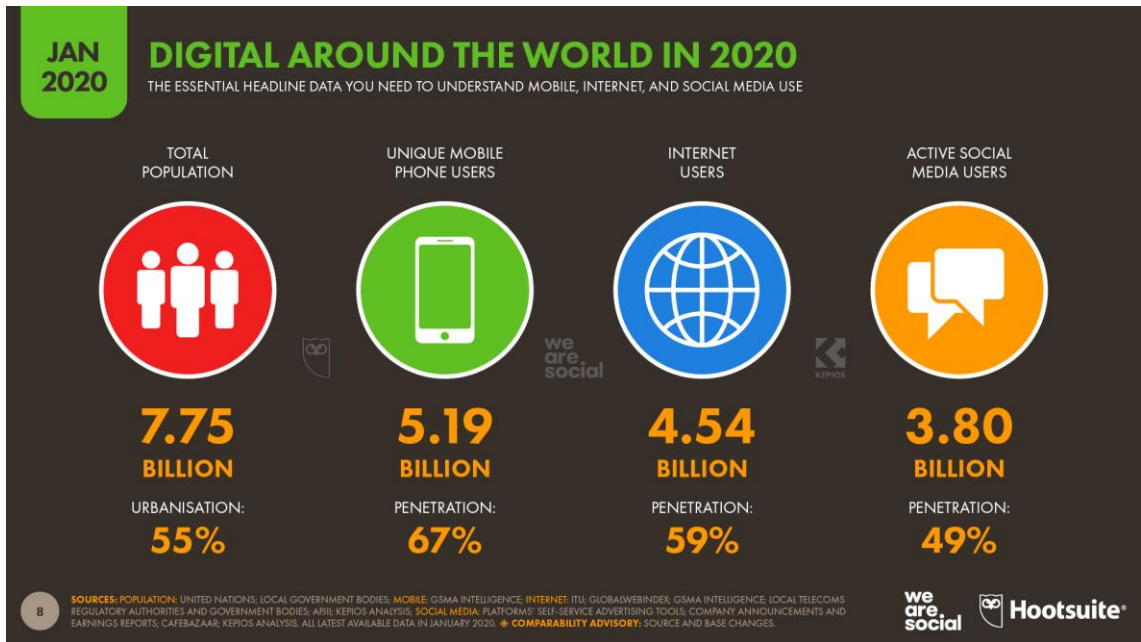


Figure 1. Digital around the world in 2020 (Simon Kemp 2020)

There are 4.54 billion people using the internet and more than 85% of them have been using Social Media. This means, nearly half of the population in the world have used at least one of their social media platforms.

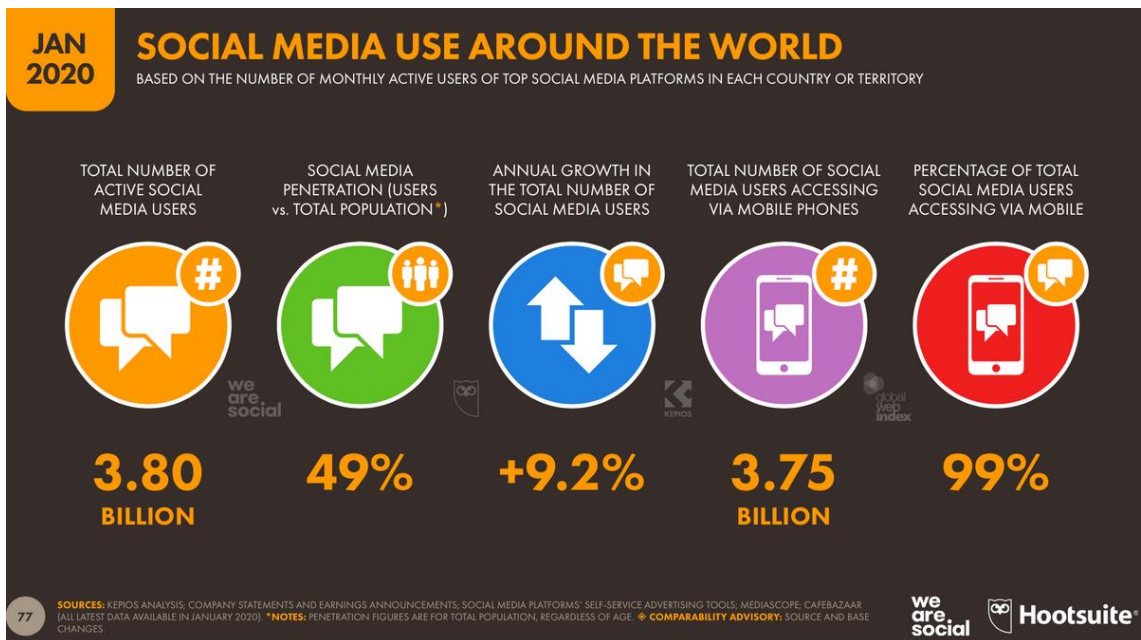


Figure 2. Social media users around the world (Simon Kemp 2020)

In this image, the total number of people using social media was 3.80 billion people presenting 49% of the world's population. To compare, the percentage of total social media users this year have been increasing by 9.2% more than in

2019. These numbers show the powerful influence of social media by constantly connecting people. Besides the traditional connection via mobile phones, social media becomes more and more popular when approximately 3.75 billion users access them via mobile phones, it takes 99% of total social media users who have social media applications on their own phones.

Moreover, Simon also mentioned the average time spent by individuals on the internet in 2020. So, each individual normally spends more than 100 days online this year, it takes on average six and a half hours online every day. In detail, each individual spends 2 hours and 24 minutes on social media every day which means more than 2 minutes compared to last year.

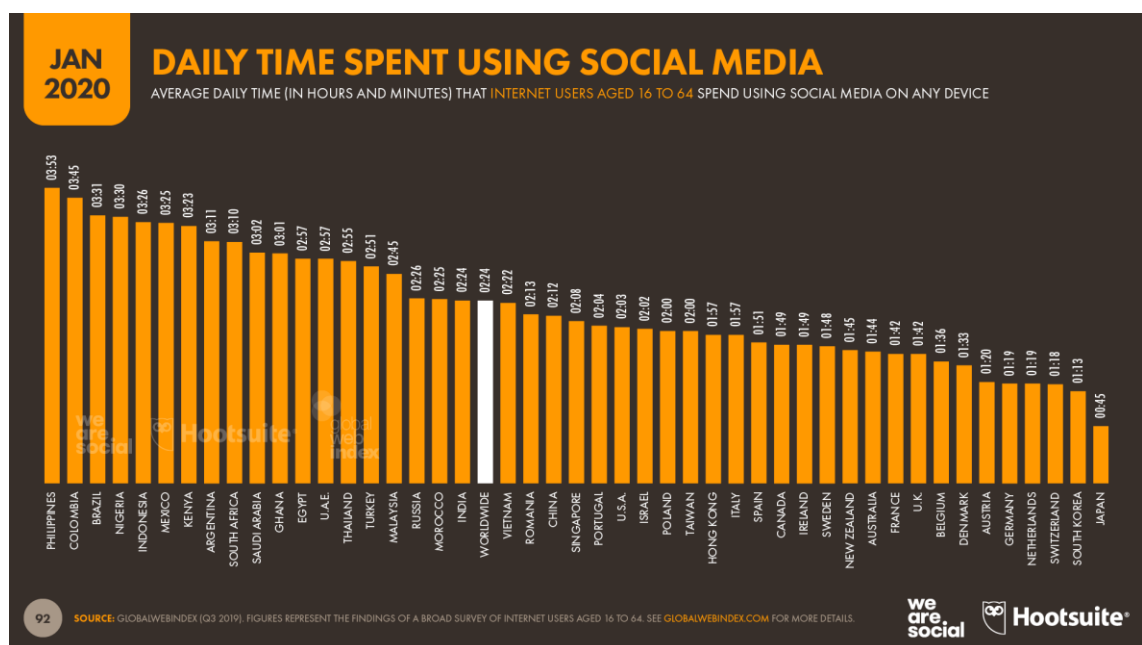


Figure 3. Daily time spent using social media (Simon Kemp 2020)

Therefore, there are three reasons that social media plays an important role in our daily life and no one can negate the influence strength in the 4.0 era. If people could not apply the advantages of Social Media, they would not have had any chance to improve their positions online. Firstly, the interactions between each other are significantly strong which helps many businesses communicate to customers through social media networks. social media networks provide perfect chances in order to connect with regular and potential customers. In this way, businesses can investigate their customers, what customers really want from them, how to improve relationships between them and customers, and to bring

their products to customers efficiently. Secondly, access to social media is larger than other methods, of course, people spend more than one-third of their online time on Social Media. Thus, businesses can gain more interaction with customers on social media if they could create attractive content related to their products and services. Lastly, advertising becomes easier than ever on Social Media. There are many social media platforms, for example, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, where people can share and exchange information with each other. If businesses only continue doing traditional advertisements, there will be fewer chances for them to reach out to more customers' attractions. At the moment, almost all of the profit is earned from these most convenient platforms. In addition, advertising on social media develops into more comfortable with a rich "resource" and powerful support from the 4.0 technology platforms.

In conclusion, using social media for digital marketing is as necessary as learning to use email for business 10 years ago.

2.1 What is Social Media?

The author decided to divide social media into "Social" and "Media" in order to have a clear point. Firstly, "Media" can be understood as several platforms that people use for communicating with others on the internet nowadays. Before the internet's appearance, there were many kinds of media such as TV, radio, and newspaper. Secondly, "Social" is the community that people receive and share information from many points of view. Thus, social media can be defined as interactive platforms on the internet, which can be websites or mobile-based applications (Hudson. M 2020). This may be any digital space or social networks such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Tumblr, LinkedIn, Snapchat, YouTube where people can create, share, and comment about any content with others. For example, they can write posts about their opinions; share photos, videos, or a website link; or create events to remind others, celebrate any anniversaries in real-time. Moreover, people can easily sign up for any social media account within a few clicks through the internet.

According to the famous model of Tracy L. Tuten, there are four main groups of social community zones.

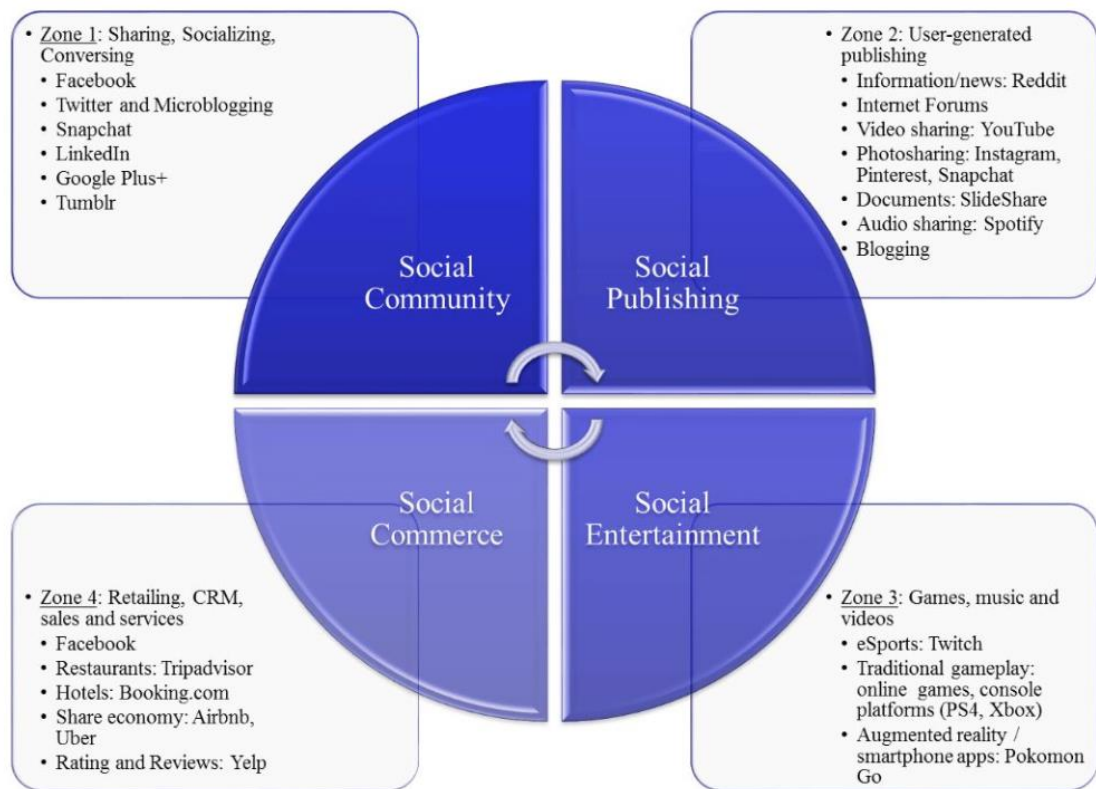


Figure 4. The social community zones. (Tracy. L Tuten 2017)

Firstly, **the social community** is described as a group focusing on multi-dimensional interactive features which allow people to comfortably talk, connect, and share the same concerns, point of views. The communication can be two-way or multi-way conversations, sharing experiences or resources and users can show their opinions about the issues. In this zone, we built relationships through similar activities, characters in order to classify each segment. It is easy to find out many channels which are used, for example, these popular channels are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Linked In, Google+, Snapchat.

Secondly, it is **social publishing**, which is called user-generated publishing. This is the zone where people can produce their contents which would be published on social media channels. Almost of social media channels may be blogs (Tumblr, WordPress), micro sharing sites (Twitter, Posterous, FriendFeed, Daily booth, 12 seconds), news sites, media sharing sites (Flickr, Pinterest, Instagram, YouTube), document sites (Scribd, SlideShare, Wikipedia), music sharing sites (SoundCloud, Spotify).

Thirdly, it would not be complete if **social entertainment** was not mentioned in the social community zones. Besides all information shared, people are also concerned about entertaining where they can relax after stressful times. This zone includes social games, eSports games, social streaming platforms (Twitch, Socialize, OneStream, Switchboard Live, Facebook Live), traditional gameplay (online games, console platform: PS4, Xbox, Nintendo Switch) and alternate reality games (Pokémon Go). On the other hand, not only games but also music and videos belong to this zone.

Lastly, this zone includes many buying-selling platforms where people can be assisted to provide and sell products, services. **Social commerce** is also a part of e-Commerce, moreover, this is a place for online shoppers to interact or communicate or give feedback to sellers. It consists of reviews and rating sites where customers can give their rates and feedback about the products or services; social shopping markets where people find recommended products or services and communicate with friends to discuss it; online stores which belong to retailers to show their products and services (retailers' websites). For instance, these platforms can be the Facebook marketplace, TripAdvisor, eBay, Amazon, Booking.com, Airbnb.

In conclusion, the author wants to show the diversity of social media brings to business to the moment. Based on each purpose, one of these zones can define the most suitable target segments or improve business efficiency with the combinations for all of them.

2.2 The necessity of social media – Why is Social Media?

Many years ago, a small number of people were concerned about what social media is and why should social media be used for business. People were familiar with traditional media such as radio, broadcast television, prints, and billboards. However, social media has been becoming one of the most efficient marketing tools which are used for business from small businesses to corporations around the world.

There are many examples of successful digital marketing campaigns, nevertheless, the author decides to choose three examples. Each of them will represent one typical campaign such as business, tourism, and personal.

First of all, people working in digital marketing are familiar with the "Share a Coke" campaign of Coca-Cola. In 2011, Coca-Cola decided to cooperate with Ogilvy and Mather Australia, an advertising agency, in order to launch this campaign. The main idea of this campaign was to write "Share a Coke..." with popular names on the Coca-Cola bottles. The purpose of this campaign was to build an intimate relationship with customers and encourage them to share their caring with others. Coca-Cola hoped to achieve 2 goals, which were to increase its sales during summertime in Australia and attract more people to love the brand. This campaign was published through many channels such as newspapers and TV, however, the most efficient channel was Social Media, especially Facebook with #shareacoke. Apparently, a lot of people had responded to this activity by sharing and re-upping photos and posts on Facebook, Twitter. On the other hand, this campaign went viral instantaneously because Coca-Cola knew "Sharing is caring" and people loved doing that. As a result, the "Share a Coke" campaign helped Coca-Cola in several ways. The consumption of Coca-Cola's sales during that time increased by 7% in Australia. Approximately 18.3 million appearances were earned on Media Impression. The Facebook page of Coca-Cola grew by 39% of getting new fans, the saw traffic also reached 870%. At least 76000 virtual Coca-Cola cans were shared online with many names around the world. The most important thing was to successfully build a positive brand image of Coca-Cola to consumers. (Heble 2019)



Figure 5. “Share a Coke” campaign.

Secondly, one of the most typical examples of destination branding, which took advantage of the movie series, was Ireland. Almost all of the Game of Thrones’ scenes were filmed in Northern Ireland, in detail, at the famous Dark Hedges trail. This place became a key destination for Game of Thrones tourists. In late 2015 and early 2016, several trees in the trail were knocked down after the Gertrude storm coming through, Ireland’s tourism department decided to do something with lumbers. Thus, 10 doors were built from the fallen trees from the Dark Hedges trail by highly skilled artists and woodworkers. 10 doors represent 10 episodes in season six of the Game of Thrones series and people could find them across Ireland. Moreover, tourists coming to visit the doors would collect stamps in the Game of Thrones tour of Northern Ireland passports. When each door was published through social media videos, they earned 17.5 million times viewed, more than 250000 interactive times, and more than 126 million reaches on social media in 2016. This campaign created a new record when earning £17 million from social media (around \$22 million) and the tourism attraction of Ireland increased by 8% than in 2015. By knowing to take the opportunity, Ireland's tourism department created tourism productions to attract more tourists not only to visit the Game of Thrones’ filming locations but also to encourage them to explore the country by looking for Doors of Thrones. Through this campaign, if you want to succeed with destination branding, it will be about not understanding the location, but also hearing about what people are talking about and finding out

the common voice. So, more and more tourists will be attracted to what you will say about the destination through Social Media. (CrowdRiff Blog 2017)



Figure 6. “Doors of Thrones” campaign. (Tourism Ireland 2016)

Lastly, besides businesses and destinations, social media also can be used to build individual brands. Barack Obama, the 44th president of the United States, is “the first social media president” with 14.7 million followers. By following the golden rules of social media marketing, it was obviously difficult to find a person who did not retweet his Twitter account. In May 2015, Obama joined Twitter with a humorous tweet *“Hello, Twitter! It's Barack. Really! Six years in, they're finally giving me my account.”* This Tweet made him become the first online-friendly president. In this case, Barack Obama became the content creator on social media and he could share his opinions or trending topics in order to create interactions with his community. Moreover, the author assumed that Barack Obama’s Twitter account was an influencer account. Thus, the spread of information and the influence of this account was much greater than other normal accounts. For example, his account only needs to share a picture of him with any products or destinations to his followers, all of them would be famous after a night.



Figure 7. The table and chairs that Barack Obama used in a local restaurant in Hanoi, Viet Nam. (Kenh14 2018)

In this picture, the restaurant owner decided to keep the table and chair that the president sat on while he was having dinner as an icon. Therefore, many people knew about this local restaurant and came to see and try the food there. On the other hand, the president also developed his social personality to be a trusted person by showing behind the scenes of a president. Because he was also a husband, a father, and a fan of baseball, it made him more friendly and closer to normal people. This would help him a lot to attract more people supporting him in election campaigns and his country's governance process. (Murray 2016)

As a result of three cases, social media has played an important role in every particular digital marketing campaign which directly affected business activities. To summarize, the author identified four main roles that made social media more and more necessary. First, social media has the **largest community** and grows steadily in recent years. People are using social media as an integral part of their daily lives, in detail, they usually use social media to communicate with friends, look for information or news, and buy or sell products online. This could be a

potential environment for business and to reach out to the audience speedily. Besides improving position to audiences, **brand awareness** is also a primary target in many marketing campaigns. And, social media is the key to increasing brand awareness because it can build the relationship between business and customers becoming closer and more familiar. For instance, Coca-Cola succeeded with the “Share a Coke” campaign by creative approaches and suitable content, therefore, many people still love the brand and use its products. Furthermore, social media helps to **increase the website’s traffic**. While people are searching for needed information and suitable content appears, they will click the link below to the website. It allows a business to start a conversation about the information that people look for. Lastly, people can update real-time news and knowledge without accessing online newspaper websites through social media networks. In comparison, social media networks also help businesses to **collect information** about people in order to understand and define suitable customer segments and catch up with new interesting trends in the community. By Social Listening tools, businesses can follow up on anything appearing on social media networks in order that a lot of interesting and suitable content will be generated according to the new trends.

2.3 Popular social media platforms in Vietnam

According to Google and Temasek's research in 2016, the e-economy of Southeast Asia will reach USD 200 billion by 2025. The research estimated approximately 3.8 million people accessing the internet every month. Because people in this area spend on average 3.6 hours on mobile phones and social media networks more than other areas in the world. Especially people in Viet Nam, they spend 4.5 hours on social media networks every day. Thus, Viet Nam has become a potential market for business on social media platforms. In this part, the author wants to analyze three of the most used social media networks in Viet Nam.

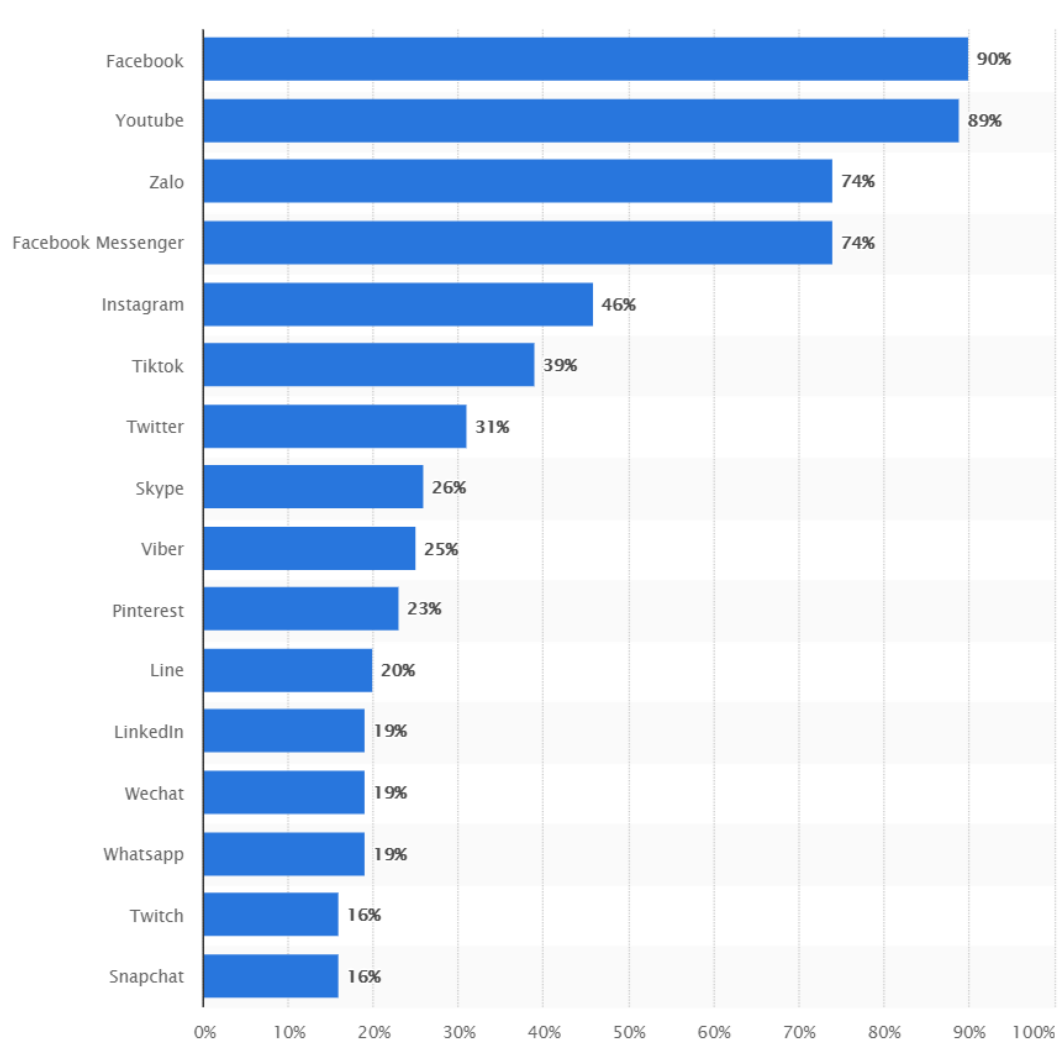


Figure 8. Leading active social media platforms of the 3rd quarter in 2019 in Viet Nam. (Statista 2019)

In general, the three most used social media platforms in Viet Nam are Facebook, YouTube, and Zalo, however, the author decides to replace Zalo with Instagram. Because of the fact, Instagram is most used by younger people than Zalo, therefore, there would be more chances to reach potential customers.

Facebook is the unchangeable leader of the world market with more than 2.7 billion active users every month as well as Vietnam with 65 million users through computers and mobile devices. It is the platform where users can do everything so that almost all target audiences are on Facebook (Statista 2019). For example, Facebook is used for communicating with friends, family; searching for news, information; relaxing with games, videos; or directly buying or selling products. In the opinion of Robert Karjalainen, more than 80% of Facebook users are connecting via mobile devices and he also showed Vietnamese users' behaviors.

Vietnamese would be attracted by long posts with a careful description of features and benefits. Writing posts with many emojis will make posts look more interesting, moreover, it seems those posts are meticulously and carefully crafted. In Vietnam, people have been told a lot of stories during their childhood so that storytelling would be useful. It will be more effective and attractive if stories are shared emotionally. Before making any final decisions to buy anything on Facebook, Vietnamese tend to have conversations with sellers in order to understand more about products or services. Thus, the reaction from sellers will be essential to increase the ability to buy decisions. In addition, Vietnamese like to join groups on Facebook where they can share and find people having the same hobbies.

The second popular social media platform in Viet Nam is YouTube which has had around 89% of interactive online (Statista 2019). Since Vietnamese like to connect with somebody who they know and trust. The problem of connecting over the Internet is that people cannot make eye contact or have real conversations. The author believes that videos are the best method to share any message. Viewers can easily understand and trust someone because they can see what happens in videos. Therefore, YouTube is one of these platforms which has 2 billion logged-in users every month, this amount of traffic was second only to Facebook. Whoever they are, people always look up for a fixed content on YouTube such as advice for taking care of a dog or a cat, how to fix a car, a motorbike, or even how to fry an egg. Moreover, people spend at least an hour watching videos on YouTube every day so that the popularity of YouTube is undeniable.

The last social media platform which the author wants to mention is Instagram (Statista 2019). This is a young platform that was launched in October 2010; however, Instagram has gradually asserted its position compared to other older platforms. This is a mobile application allowing users to take photos, videos, and share them directly to its news feed in frames. Besides that, Instagram provides filters that help photos, videos look more attractive so people can apply them. Especially, the relationship between users is quite unique rather than other social media platforms. If businesses on this social network want to affirm their position

with users, they will need to have their own brand identity. Since there are only two factors needed to be concerned, which are content of posts and quality of photos uploaded. It would be difficult to find any account which had posts, photos without quality concepts or blurred images from top Instagram users.

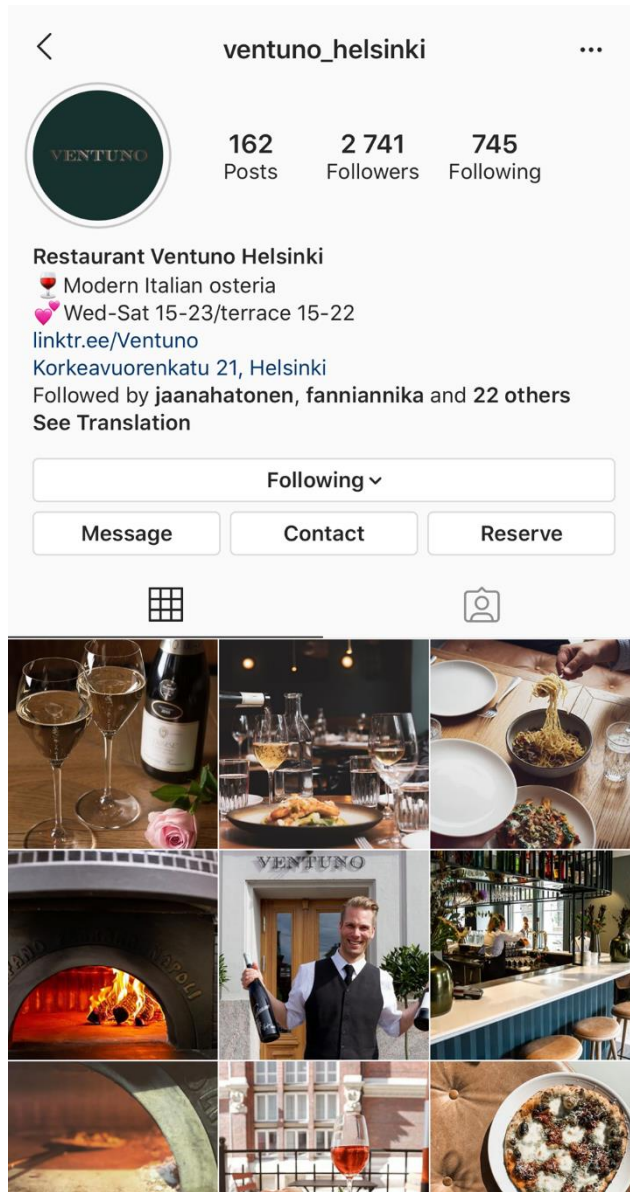


Figure 9. An Instagram account of Ventuno restaurant in Helsinki. (Instagram 2020)

In this figure, a grid of many pictures represents the concept of this restaurant which is an Italian fine-dining restaurant located in Helsinki. As a result, there is a quote to confirm the uniqueness of Instagram -" find beauty everywhere", this was the affirmation of its distinct culture compared to other social media networks. Marketers have to spend more time and are careful while building the content of

posts, photos, and videos on Instagram. To conclude, Instagram can be assumed an image social network, therefore, all the posts need to be more creative, diverse, and special. Furthermore, image is the core value of Instagram which can be utilized radically by storytelling with photography, turning ordinary into artistic moments so that the meaningful message could be delivered.

3 Destination branding in general

3.1 Brand definition

People will recognize a brand through a unique symbol, name, term, word which businesses or companies use to differentiate their product or service from other competitors. The connection between companies and their brand is obviously tight, in another way, companies stick with their brand (Kenton 2020). When someone mentions a product name, people will recognize immediately the company having that product. Moreover, the most valuable asset of a company is its brand which is the face of the company. However, the brand of a company must come from the core values of the company and the brand strategy outlined at the beginning.

It is impossible to deny the importance of the brand because of the impact of bringing to companies or businesses. A brand can affect the position of a company in customers' minds so that it will help the new business strategy come and change brand awareness. The logo will become the first important element of a brand since it is the image of the company which will appear in people's mind. Therefore, the design of the logo should be memorable and have a deep impression at the first sight. On the other hand, the brand of a company is the key to increase its values to give more chances in the future business. It also generates more investment opportunities because of its certain position in the market. (Smithson 2015)

3.2 Destination branding

According to the definition of a brand, in 1998, Ritchie and Ritchie defined that a destination brand was a unique symbol, name, logo, or other graphics defining

and making a destination differ from others. Moreover, the brand of a destination will be all travel experiences and memories which can be found only in that destination. Destination-marketing organizations (DMOs) are in charge of creating positive images and make differences in their destination from others which will influence awareness, choice, recommendation, and loyalty of tourists. The destination branding marketing had been applied for many years; however, it was a one-way communication before the appearance of social media. Thanks to social media, DMOs could implement two-way interaction with tourists. This led to the coexistence of marketer-generated content and customer-generated content. Although social media is becoming very necessary for marketing, it also influences customers' purchase decisions.

In conclusion, destination branding is to select and combine both of the most distinctive and attractive features of a place in order to create its different highlights to get more attention from potential tourists.

3.2.1 The importance of destination branding to a nation and a city

The concept of changing a location into a defining brand has been increasing obviously for the past few years. The reason was to make the destination become more famous and different from other locations. The more the authentic experiment, a natural symbol of destinations' character are identified, the more visitors are attracted.

Firstly, destination branding brings long-term tourism development to a destination which is based on the country's aspects, how it can reach its achievements. This will help the destination to promote its own features and core values, which visitors can only find in this place. This is very important for destination-marketing organizations to figure out the features and core values of the location before generating it to be a potential place.

Secondly, a well-planned branding strategy would help any location to be more understood by destination-marketing organizations. Thus, they can find out the types of investment and the kind of markets' segments being suitable for the place. Overall, these things help not only to define the existing image but also to orientate the future image of the destination (Fair 2020). It brings a lot of

economic benefits to the city, country, in details, destination branding is also very important for developing countries to have more highlights globally. During a sustainable developing process, it is necessary to have a destination brand before expanding the development to another factor. Destination branding as well as tourism branding frequently brings many chances for locations with valuable investments and a wonderful tourism image. France can be mentioned as a successful country in destination branding when people hear about it. Many awesome characters would be referred to such as wine, Paris, Eiffel tower, Cannes film festival, the country of art, high-quality cuisine, etc.

In a long journey, these above aspects will create more investment chances from the outside and attract more talents who are willing to develop the destination so that the identification image of the destination will be improved better in the future.

Thirdly, destination branding has an important role in determining the displayable image of a location such as a country, a city. Compared to other developed countries, Vietnam is one of the developing countries starting to improve the destination branding in each small city, especially Hanoi the capital of it. With more than 2000 years of history, Hanoi is a potential location to make advertisements; promote through media, events. By using a similar method, many destination-marketing organizations can apply to other locations in Viet Nam. Therefore, more and more locations in Viet Nam will be known and attract new tourists to visit. This will lead to the strong growth of the Vietnamese economy as well as the tourism industry of Vietnam. (Bliss 2014)

Last but not least, destination branding is to build a potential environment that can be used to attract and hold tourists, investors, and potential individuals. By understanding deeply, destination-marketing organizations can promote unique features of the place in order to create a fantastic image and value to attract clients.

According to Bliss in 2014, this infographic below can describe the sense of a destination, in other words, this information is what kind of information people think about the mentioned place. The sense of destination consists of sensorial

experience, characteristics, and features, clarity and legibility, imageability and identity, symbols, and icons.

SENSE OF PLACE

An approach to environmental perception/cognition and place-making

SYMBOLS & ICONS

PLANNING & DESIGN

Many cities have symbolism from historic events, religious sites, and other cultural associations. This symbolism can be developed over time (i.e. Rome) or artificially created (i.e. Las Vegas). Iconic architectural features (i.e. the Eiffel Tower) or natural features (i.e. Mt. Fuji) should be used to reinforce local identity. Smaller communities must cultivate and/or create local symbolism and intangible cultural heritage. Event programming is a vital technique for developing local sense of place and community.

SENSORIAL EXPERIENCE

PLANNING & DESIGN

The visual aspects of the environment should include esthetic design, color psychology and spatial animation. Acoustics should consider both controlling and augmenting artificial (i.e. music) and natural (i.e. water) ambient sound. Paving textures and street furniture should provide a variety of tactile experiences. Natural scents (i.e. flowering plants) and artificial scents (i.e. bakery) should be considered. Outdoor dining and street food-vending provide for the sense of taste.

MOST FAMOUS LANDMARKS

1. Eiffel Tower, Paris, France
2. Clock Tower (Big Ben), Westminster Palace, London, UK
3. Empire State Building, New York, US
4. Forbidden City, Beijing, China
5. Sydney Opera House, Australia
6. Leaning Tower of Pisa, Italy
7. Swedegon Pagoda, Yangon, Myanmar
8. Cologne Cathedral, Köln, Germany
9. Brandenburg Gate, Berlin, Germany (Nations Online)

WORLD EVENTS

- (Alphabetical selection)
- 2012 EXPO, Yeosu, South Korea
 - 2012 Summer Olympics, London, UK
 - 2014 World Cup, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
 - Burning Man, Black Rock Desert, Nevada, US
 - Carnegie Film Festival, France
 - Carnival, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
 - Mardi Gras, New Orleans, US
 - Oktberfest, Munich, Germany
 - San Fermin (bull), Pamplona, Spain
 - Venice Carnival, Italy

COGNITIVE

MOST VISITED CITIES

1. Paris, France
2. London, UK
3. New York, US
4. Antalya, Turkey
5. Singapore, Singapore
6. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
7. Hong Kong, HK
8. Dubai, United Arab Emirates
9. Bangkok, Thailand
10. Istanbul, Turkey (Wikipedia)

IMAGEABILITY & IDENTITY

PLANNING & DESIGN

The five components of imageability are districts, boundaries, paths, landmarks and nodes. In concert they form the "image of the city". The community and districts should have clearly recognized geographical "boundaries" and meaningful placenames. Paths should be identifiable by hierarchy or function. Landmarks should relate to local heritage and culture. Nodes, or activity centers, should contribute to sense of community. Local identity must be given preference to corporate (globalized) identity, and branding should be viewed as a necessary endeavor for community competitiveness and resiliency.

CLARITY & LEGIBILITY

PLANNING & DESIGN

A clear understanding of the environment is a key element in place-making. Orientation is an individual's awareness of their location within the urban environment, and gateways provide sense of arrival and the distinction of internal and external space. Wayfinding guides individuals through the environment, and navigability is the ease or friction associated with access and mobility. Patterns (i.e. block grids) and information (i.e. kiosks) assist in environmental legibility. Symbols and colors are preferable to text as they are more easily remembered and can reach a wider public. Places should have a foundational idea or story that is easily recognized, understood and shared. Characteristics and features should be designed to provide the setting for the story. Great stories become charismatic urban identities.

CHARACTERISTICS & FEATURES

PLANNING & DESIGN

Typical design elements include architecture, graphics, landscape, public art (i.e. Cows on Parade), signage, streetscape and urban design. These elements are perceived as urban characteristics and features, and they collectively create an urban "character" or "personality". Design elements should include "city comforts" (i.e. drinking fountains) and "delicate details" (i.e. informational plaques) that enable a sense of discovery. Design should encourage social interaction and the visible passage of time (daily, seasonal, generational). Public open spaces should be designed as "stages" for transforming experiences.

Prepared for
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 September 18, 2011

References: *Aesthetics, Community Character, and the Law* by American Planning Association; *City Controls* by David Scharke; *The Experience Economy* by Joseph Pine; *The Geography of Names* by James Kennerly; *The Image of the City* by Kevin Lynch; *Intangible Cultural Heritage* by UNESCO; *A Pattern Language* by Christopher Alexander; *Psychogeography* by Henri Lefebvre; *Response Measurements* by Bentley Brink; *Sense of Place and Identity* by Yan Xu; *Topophilia* by Yi-Fu Tuan; *Wikipedia*; *You Are Here* by Leslie Gelsbach.

Prepared by
Stephens Planning & Design
 www.stephensplanning.com

Figure 10. Sense of Place: An approach to environmental perception/cognition and place-making. (Bliss 2014)

3.2.2 Strategies of destination branding

Based on the distinctive features of each location, destination-managing and destination-marketing organizations can find out suitable strategies in order to build a branding image for the destination. This is a long-term mission to bring out the core value of a city, a region, or a nation such as nature, culture, and people as well as to demonstrate the strategic vision of these organizations. Therefore, it is necessary to determine the branding of a destination. In general, the brand will provide the most authentic information about the specific place. In this part, the choices of building destination branding will be presented based on the types of destination.

First of all, destination branding is more than a destination advertisement because it also includes trust in potential customers. It requires destination-marketing organizations to bring the core value of the destination to the local people and tourists. By raising the knowledge of the destination, people will know firstly about it and pay attention to it as a touristic destination with its beauties. Tourists will be curious about the destination and start figuring out. Moreover, the attraction of the destination needs to be pointed out in order that tourists can consider making a decision to visit the destination. Tourists will believe that this destination can be the most suitable place for their future visiting. As a result of the development of digital channels, especially social media networks, destination-marketing organizations have more chances to promote their destinations on the Internet through videos, photos, and posts. Therefore, the image of a destination will be positioned easier in tourists' minds. People have to believe that this destination will be the best among their choices. (Tsvetkov 2019)

Secondly, it is particularly necessary to fill up the space between the existence characteristic of the destination and the awareness of potential tourists. Thus, information of the destination, which is being provided, needs to be unique and distinctive as well as durable and reliable. Destination-marketing and destination-management organizations must build relationships with all stakeholders in order

to ensure the integrity and authenticity of the destination's information advertised. Moreover, they have to pay attention to both doing marketing and developing these factors in order to keep the reliable information about the destination (Tsvetkov 2019). For example, the touristic products and services of a destination are obviously important while creating and doing advertising. Destination-marketing and destination-management organizations need to ensure that offered products and services have to be truly advertised to potential tourists. To summarize, doing research on the market plays an important role in the very first stage of destination branding.

Thirdly, branding in destination branding relates to the system development as well as the creation process of standard products and services of the place. The importance of investments into the destination's infrastructure, public services, and safety for tourists should be given attention by these local organizations. Education in tourism is definitely necessary for local people, especially people who work in hospitality and economic fields(Tsvetkov 2019). The process of building products and services should be done concurrently with making the image of the destination. On the other hand, the difference between the product and the image of a destination is an emotional value which is also difficult to describe. It is a value that could be only made by the impression of tourists.

In conclusion, it is essential to combine destination promotion with tourism into the strategy of building the general image of a nation. In the view of the author, tourism is the representative image of a country, which is responsible for economic, cultural, political, industrial images. This will affect the image of the country in the eyes of foreign countries because people can assess whether this is a country with developed industry, a country with an impressive culture, or a suitable country to invest in (Tsvetkov 2019). Thus, the most difficult and important issue is to ensure the identity of the destination's actual and promotional images.

3.2.3 The advantages of destination branding

Nowadays, the successful development of many destinations is a shred of typical evidence for the advantages that destination branding brings. All successful

destinations have common things that are delivered from a brand image of its own. Moreover, the products and services of the destination also strongly relate to the image. For instance, Italian tourism is well-known with many famous architectures, wonderful arts, good food, amazing wine, or one of the fashion capitals. On the other hand, China, a typical traditional country in Asia, is also famous for many things that many people want to discover. China is the third biggest country with a great diversity in geography. With the rich cultural and philosophical traditions, China is one of "the Four Ancient Civilizations" with a diversity of ethnic groups living in (Zhou 2020). This has become an ideal destination for tourism development. As a result, destination branding is similar to an economic brand because it evokes the core values, images, and feelings of people about the inherent values and products of the destination. Thus, it also provides the trust and the guarantee of the destination's image on the market.

First of all, the idea of destination branding has been quite familiar with marketers for the past few years. This leads many countries to easily locate and find their position in the global market in order to encourage imports, exports, economic development, investments, and especially tourism. Obviously, destination branding helps to build and manage their own image of each destination. By the development of destination promotion, a destination can be differentiated from others which will bring benefits to local companies, people, products, and services. The main purpose of destination branding besides creating its own image is to attract not only tourists but also business travelers who mainly offer more opportunities for trade exchange and investment of a nation. Therefore, the position of a nation also depends on its own image which is mostly influenced by destination branding. Destination branding is absolutely important to attract more global capital. This further confirms the importance of destination branding in creating a positive position of a nation in the view of fastidious investors. Furthermore, a powerful image of a destination not only aims to encourage economic development, but also helps to reshape its cultural, economic, social, and political situations. (Baker 2011)

Secondly, a destination with a positive image is also a great attraction for talented individuals. Nobody is willing to waste talent in an underdeveloped and backward

place. Developing talent requires a destination that ensures a normal living standard, a diverse working environment. In order to gain attractions from people, these advantages need to be widely advertised by building a potential image for the destination. Moreover, countries with their own positive public image seem to be more powerful, more attractive than others. There are many countries having their own certain trademark or brand. For example, people will come to France because of its cozy and elegant quality of living. Others will like American since they can find more opportunities to develop themselves and because of its cultural diversity. These countries are the symbol of success and the leaders in the global marketplace. Thanks to these countries, more and more nations start following up their development which leads to global development on the cultural and economic map of the world. (Baker 2011)

Thirdly, one thing cannot deny is the extreme advantage of destination branding. It is a limitless and sustainable resource which means its own value can be continued by suitable marketing. The core value of destination branding is mainly on everyone's mind; therefore, it is obviously difficult to destroy. This is the appropriate method for developing countries to confirm the position on the tourism map of the world. The value from destination branding does not come from the meaningless and dishonest advertisements. It comes from actual advertisements and what people see, experience. (Baker 2011)

On the other hand, destination branding brings not only external values but also inner values for local people. It increases the pride of local people in the development of the destination. When people are proud of their city, they start sharing more information related to it. This can be considered as an inexpensive but extremely effective way of advertising. After all, the destination's reputation will be confirmed even more on the intentional map.

Last but not least, destination branding seems to be an effective remedy to improve commercial and political ills (Morgan 2004). It is very difficult to change the world's impressions of a destination because the destination's image has been built for many years or even many centuries. Destination-marketing organizations can only specify and maintain the positive existing impressions of the destination. Moreover, they need to plan on building up other advantages that

influence directly the future positive image or impression of the destination. The fact is all destination-marketing organizations need to set up the general image through tiny hints. Furthermore, it is necessary to give hints in order so that people can draw a complete image by themselves. This will help the perception of the destination to be retained in their impression.

However, the perception of the destination is also easy to change. Japan is a typical example of changing the nation's image in a century. 70 years ago, Japan failed in World War II and became a poor country because the Japanese Government must pay compensation to the occupied countries. At that time, it was thought that Japan would go through a difficult time to rebuild the country after the war. However, the world can see the transformation of Japan at the moment. After 70 years, Japan's GDP is in the top 3 of the highest countries in the world (Worldometer 2020). "Made in Japan " products become a shred of evidence for the excellent quality and advanced technology. Moreover, people have changed their perception of Japan, from a heavily damaged country to one of the world's leading powers.

In conclusion, destination branding brings inner and external values to places. It is the key to decide on the destination's image in order to gain more benefits from economy to tourism and promote the nation's image. When a country has a strong and positive impression, more tourists, skilled workers, and investors will be attracted to come and evolve.

4 Social media marketing and impacts on destination branding

4.1 The overview of social media marketing

At the moment, social media marketing is assumed as the most effective tool that can be used to attract customers by both small companies and large corporations. The tempting of social media marketing is clearly confirmed in many cases. At least, 88% of many companies sell their products through one social media channel. Moreover, social media channels are also the place where companies can directly communicate with their clients that they can improve

sales and receive feedback. Thus, the main purpose of social media marketing is to improve the relationship between companies and consumers and the image of the brand. In this case, the author believes that social media marketing can be the most suitable and effective for destination branding.

Nowadays, the number of active social media users dramatically increases day by day. Thanks to the introduction of smartphones in 2007s, social media became more popular and mobile. People do not need to spend many times using computers to find information about the destination. Moreover, companies can control the information's contents that they watch, share, mention, and comment on. Therefore, social media marketing is inexpensive and easy to measure, target compared to traditional media marketing.

On the other hand, advertising on traditional media marketing is not outdated in many cases. So, the combination of both social media marketing and traditional media marketing is extremely reasonable because they can support each other in marketing campaigns. Both of these kinds of marketing will create brand awareness for the destination to the community.

There are some similarities especially the content between social media marketing and content marketing, however, they are totally different from each other. According to Will Kenton's definition in 2018, companies use social media websites and social networks to introduce their products and services to the market. Social media marketing helps companies to gain more chances to interact with customers and new potential clients. Moreover, marketers are allowed to control and track the data in order to analyze the effectiveness of social media marketing activities.






Content Marketers	Social Marketers
 Produce content: blog posts, videos, webpages, etc.	 Distribute content: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.
 Are experts on your market, product & aesthetic	 Nurture your various social media communities
 Own & manage content calendar	 Own & manage content calendar
 Own a marketing tactic	 Own a marketing channel

Figure 11. Social Media Marketing and Content Marketing. (Hausman 2017)

In social media marketing, the main purpose of marketing activity is to focus on several social media networks. When content marketers produce content, social media marketers have to arrange contents which are suitable for each network such as posts on Facebook, videos on YouTube, or photos on Instagram (Hausman 2017). Moreover, social media marketers will deliver the correct content based on the behavior of social media users. In many social media platforms, they will create more activities and discussions around the destination brand in order to engage people to interact. After these activities, brand awareness of the destination will be enhanced. In contrast, content marketers mainly produce content for blogs, podcasts, videos, posts, and photos. These people are the ones who can understand the destination and what belongs to. Content marketers will study the destination's case and classify potential customer segments with contents related to the destination. Therefore, content marketers are to focus on generating demands. They bring the curious to people in order to attract and create relationships with them. (Murdock 2012)

Consequently, the author assumes that this thesis should include content marketing for destination branding. Destination branding can be successful depending on the combination of both social media marketing and content marketing.

4.2 The impacts of social media marketing on destination branding

4.2.1 Advantages

On one hand, it is obvious that people use anything because of its usefulness and social media marketing is not an exception. Firstly, brand awareness of the destination can be increased easily by social media marketing. By constantly sharing news, content, and information about the destination, marketers can change people's awareness and bring conducive images. In other words, it can increase the reputation of the destination's brand for people who have adored it. On several social media platforms, it is easy to share and connect the same content or information by creating hashtags and tagging related people. Followers can share or repost the content or the information on their own social media platforms and attract more and more people. Hashtags can help the content to reach more people who have not known about the destination yet. (Blue Fountain Media n.d.)

Secondly, social media marketing is a two-way communication tool that helps people to interact with others anywhere. Normally, it is just many activities that people communicate with each other through likes, comments, shares on social media networks. On a deeper level, it is a conducive environment for marketers to create a connection between people and the destination. For example, when a video with content related to the destination is launched. People, who visited it before, start sharing it and discussing the content of the video. They can tell friends or followers about their experience such as what to do, to try while visiting the destination. This will create the destination exploring the desires of others and attract them to find information. As a result, the traffic of the video will be increased dramatically beside the discussion about the destination. Moreover, marketers can put the link related to the destination below the video's information. (Blue Fountain Media n.d.)

The result of this communication is to create competitive advantages for the destination. Keywords, which are relevant to the destination, will frequently appear on search engine platforms such as Google, Bings, and the search bar of social media platforms. Hence, it is possible to increase the sales of journeys to

the destination. Social media can actually make people feel excited to discover the destination by shared videos, photos, and posts on it. (Blue Fountain Media n.d.)

Lastly, social media marketing also improves the image of the destination in order to change people's awareness. For instance, people do not want to travel to Vietnam because they heard that Vietnam was still poor and backward rather than other countries in South-East Asia, people in Vietnam were not friendly and hospitable. However, it was the time when social media platforms were underdeveloped so that foreign people could not know the transformation of Viet Nam. Nowadays, thanks to social media marketing, it is not difficult to find videos or photos about the change of Viet Nam. (Blue Fountain Media n.d.)

4.2.2 Disadvantages

On the other hand, social media marketing also brings several drawbacks. In this part, the author assumes that destination-marketing and destination-management organizations have to control the source of the destination's information going to social media networks in order not to leak any bad information and be involved in any scandal. This can seriously affect the image of the destination.

Moreover, social media platforms always update per hour so that the information of destination should be usually renewed or edited. For example, people always refresh their newsfeed to keep up with others. So, they do not want to see an old video or an old post about the same destination which cannot make them stay curious. It is very important to have suitable strategies to update the interesting information about the destination. (Jens 2015)

In addition, electronic word-of-mouth communication in social media marketing can also spread more rapidly than the traditional one. It only takes less than an hour for people to share and know about the bad news involving the destination. This can be fast enough for the destination to be immediately boycotted by existing clients and potential individuals.

Furthermore, it is obviously difficult to specify a common image of the destination. There are many websites and social media pages, groups providing the similarity information, however, they are in many points of advantage and drawback views. Information of the destination can be delivered to consumers in various ways with a lot of meanings. Therefore, destination-management and destination-marketing organizations have to be consistent while advertising the image of the destination.

Last but not least, things should be listed in this part which are time-consuming and slow returns on investments with this kind of marketing. People can immediately ignore the advertisement of a destination because they may be interested in other locations. To attract them and make them share the destination can take a long time until they are really concerned about it. For this reason, posts related to the destination always have to be updated and renewed in order to keep the authenticity. Additionally, because of the time-consuming characteristic, social media marketing will be slow on returning investments. For example, destination-marketing organizations must always take care of the content related to the destination until they can reach potential customers being attracted. (Jens 2015)

In conclusion, social media marketing brings both positive and negative influences on destination branding. For example, social media marketing helps the destination to gain more chances of communicating with social media users. However, it is also a time-consuming tool to get attractions from them. Over a period, social media marketing will not only take part in the branding strategy of a destination as a supporting implement but also becomes one of the main marketing approaches along with other marketing techniques. Therefore, the author believes in utilizing advantages and supplementing drawbacks in order to preserve the image of the destination.

4.3 Creating opportunities and constraints of social media marketing

4.3.1 Creating opportunities with social media marketing

In the previous part, the author proved that social media marketing had brought a lot of opportunities in both tourism and other developments. According to Tardrew in 2015, social media provides a huge amount of personal backgrounds

of potential individuals, moreover, this information can be collected and sorted for marketers to find out targets. Based on their desires, aspirations, and preferences, marketers can make up ideal contents of the destination which can exactly attract each of them. Thus, the first objective of social media marketing should get to know audiences and influencers before approaching them.

In addition, social media marketing becomes the most necessary tool to promote and improve the online presence of a destination. In other words, social media marketing is a useful tool to raise the destination's brand awareness. The destination's brand becomes more popular when more people start discussing and sharing content related to the destination. So, articles need to be kept up to date as well as the content should be accurate. (Tardrew 2015)

By sharing posts, videos, or content on social media, the range of reaching customers will be expanded and the destination's brand awareness will be also strengthened. This drives the generation of potential customers. They will discover the destination's content on social media platforms which can raise customer interest in the destination. Without social media marketing, it will be difficult to bring the content to prospects. (Tardrew 2015)

Last but not least, social media marketing is two-way communication between marketers and customers. This means marketers not only upload content to social media platforms but also receive comments, feedback, and discussions from customers. Responsive marketers will earn good reputations rather than others. Being active on social media will help increase interactions in order to keep existing and to attract more potential customers. The trust between marketers and customers will increase tremendously. Therefore, they will pay more attention to the destination and consider visiting it.

4.3.2 Constraints of social media marketing

Besides many opportunities, social media marketing also requires many constraints to ensure the image of the destination. Many destinations are having the similarity to your destination which are giving the distraction. They prevent marketers from expressing the destination's marketing content to a bigger group of audiences. In reality, it is a difficult challenge to maintain the image brand of

the destination. Not only marketers of destination on-marketing organizations but also every person, who relates to the destination, should be responsible in order to keep the reputation of the destination. One of the most difficult constraints is to ensure the destination's reputation that any company needs to face. The good preparation of writing content on social media can change this constraint to be an opportunity or a strength. (Owen 2019)

In this part, the next issue, which should be mentioned, is the consistency in storytelling. According to the earlier part, the author has brought up the problem of many resources about the destination. Most marketers focus on advertising the destination and forget about the feeling of customers about the destination. Thus, the better solution for this issue is to concentrate on the content of posts, videos, or stories which are prepared suitable for the tourist's demands. Moreover, providing unique information about the destination can become the key to keep attractions from them. Using hashtags is necessary for posts, videos to build a small community that relates to the destination so people can easily find the information in that community. (BusinessBlogs n.d.)

Building the strategy of social media marketing requires careful and heedful planning. Problems usually occur between choosing a global and domestic strategy for promoting the image of the destination. Marketers always have to keep their minds away from the 'One-Size-Fits-All' approaching method. For example, they have to use English while writing content used for worldwide advertisements and they could not use English in domestic content if their mother tongue is not English. The consistency of the content can bring huge benefits to the destination because it ensures the same information going to all social media channels. Besides that, the local advertising method is to serve the audience of the local location which can make the destination outweigh rather than others such as a city in a country.

In conclusion, according to Jackie Owen in 2019, social media marketing also brings several problems while promoting the destination. However, if marketers can handle them, it will be a good chance to change from constraints to many opportunities and strengths to the destination.

5 The situation of social media marketing in Hanoi

5.1 Reason to choose the destination

In 2019, Hanoi received approximately 29 million tourists, including 7 million foreign visitors. Which had increased by 10.1% more than in 2018. The total revenue from tourism was around 4.1 million euro in 2019, increased by 34% compared to 2018. During the last 20 years, the number of tourists arriving in Hanoi has been increasing dramatically. This led to the development of the smokeless industry at the beginning of the 21st century in Vietnam. Nowadays, the main strategy of developing tourism in Hanoi is focusing on increasing the number of foreign visitors while keeping the sustainable average of domestic visitors also. (CPV 2019)

Hanoi has its own beauty and uniqueness that makes the city different from others in Vietnam and Asia regions. These differences make a typical Hanoi that becomes a desirable destination for many domestic and foreign tourists. While exploring the Hanoi capital, visitors will immediately feel the bustle of life, the diversity of cuisine, and the rich culture, history, and friendliness of local people. Many memorable things in Hanoi make a deep impression on visitors, for example, nooks and crannies of the city which have old architectures from the French colonial era, the sidewalk shops with plenty of local food, or the unique way of Hanoians using transports. Moreover, while walking on crowded streets, visitors will easily come across friendly smiles from local people. Visitors will feel the warm, hospitable of Hanoians and make their trip more comfortable.

Hanoi is a capital city with a rich history and culture from the past and strong development in all aspects in recent years. There are many sightseeings and attractive places in Hanoi to explore both traditional and modern places. Besides that, Hanoi also has many products that will attract many tourists. Not only Vietnam but also Hanoi is recognized as a destination having a diverse kind of food. Without any Michelin star, however, the food and beverages in Hanoi are still known by many visitors and tourists because of its tasty and good smell. Pho is a symbol of Hanoi that has its own characteristics not to be found elsewhere. Moreover, Hanoi also has a trade village called Van Phuc where many silk

products are made. The silk from this village is lightweight, smooth, and its own typical appearance. The main products of Van Phuc silk village are "Ao-dai ", ties, crafts, dresses, shirts. It is easy to reach the village by motorbike, car or bus because it is only 10 km away from the city center. Additionally, Lotus is known as Vietnam's national flower, moreover, the best varieties of lotus flowers are believed to be found in West Lake. One of the most famous tea maker villages found a way to combine the lotus fragrance into green tea and lotus tea became an expensive souvenir in Hanoi which can cost €350 for a kilo. Lastly, if you are usually to have a cup of coffee in the morning, Vietnamese coffee will be a good choice for you to try in Hanoi. Introduced by the French, however, coffee became a more local favorite from the 20th century. There are many combinations with eggs, condensed milk, or yogurt but the best way could be to drink dark coffee with ice. (Nguyen Luyen 2020)

Viet Nam is a tropical country; however, Hanoi is a city located in the North that has four seasons. So that the low and high seasons can be divided into high and low seasons. Two high seasons can be the most suitable to visit Hanoi. The spring starts from the middle of January until the end of April when the summer is ahead. If clients are pretending to go to Hanoi during the summer, it will not be a good choice because of the weather. The summer is hot and humid as well as the highest rainfall occurs during that time. The transition from autumn to winter is also the other high season which begins from the end of September till the middle of December. During this time, tourists can avoid the rainfall, the heat from summer, and the high humidity between December and January. This can be said to be the best time in Hanoi, especially during all high seasons. Because tourists can still feel the warning from the sun and a little cold wind from the North. On the other hand, the low season starts from May until September. This is the holiday season for most people living in Hanoi in order to avoid the high heat and rainfalls. So, it will be better if tourists go to the South to enjoy the summer over there. (Tripadvisor n.d.)

Tourists, of course, people who come from outside Viet Nam such as Asian, Western countries would be the most stakeholders of Hanoi tourism. In 2019, around 7 million tourists are coming to Hanoi and the number of foreign people

has been increasing year by year. Hanoi received 4.1 million euro in 2019, more than 34% of total revenue in 2018. Hanoi Authority and Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam are constructing the development plan for Tourism in Hanoi 10 years later to attract more tourists to come and visit not only Hanoi but also in Viet Nam.

In summary, this part is an overall picture of the reasons why Hanoi can be a potential destination in order to do social media marketing. Hanoi can be recognized as a mix of the modern and traditional city ranging from skyscraper buildings to historical attractions around the city. These things usually attract a lot of visitors in order to discover the mystery of a thousand years-old city.

5.2 The approach of social media

The author believes that building and engaging a strong community can be the best way to keep information about the destination up-to-date and truthful. Moreover, the community will be a suitable solution for problem-solving of communicating with a large number of customers. Existence customers and social media users knowing the destination are also the supporters, they can easily answer a lot of questions of others instead of only destination-marketing organizations.

The Tourism Board of Vietnam is definite evidence for building and engaging a strong community. This leads to the huge transformation for Vietnamese tourism with the vast development of social media. The relationship on social media is one of the important keys in the digital world. People always tend to believe in the person they know, for example, it can be their close friends, family members who also use social media networks and have connections with. Without a social media connection, most people will not believe in what others are going to say. The photo below shows the official page of the Vietnam Tourism Board which always updates information about many destinations in Viet Nam.

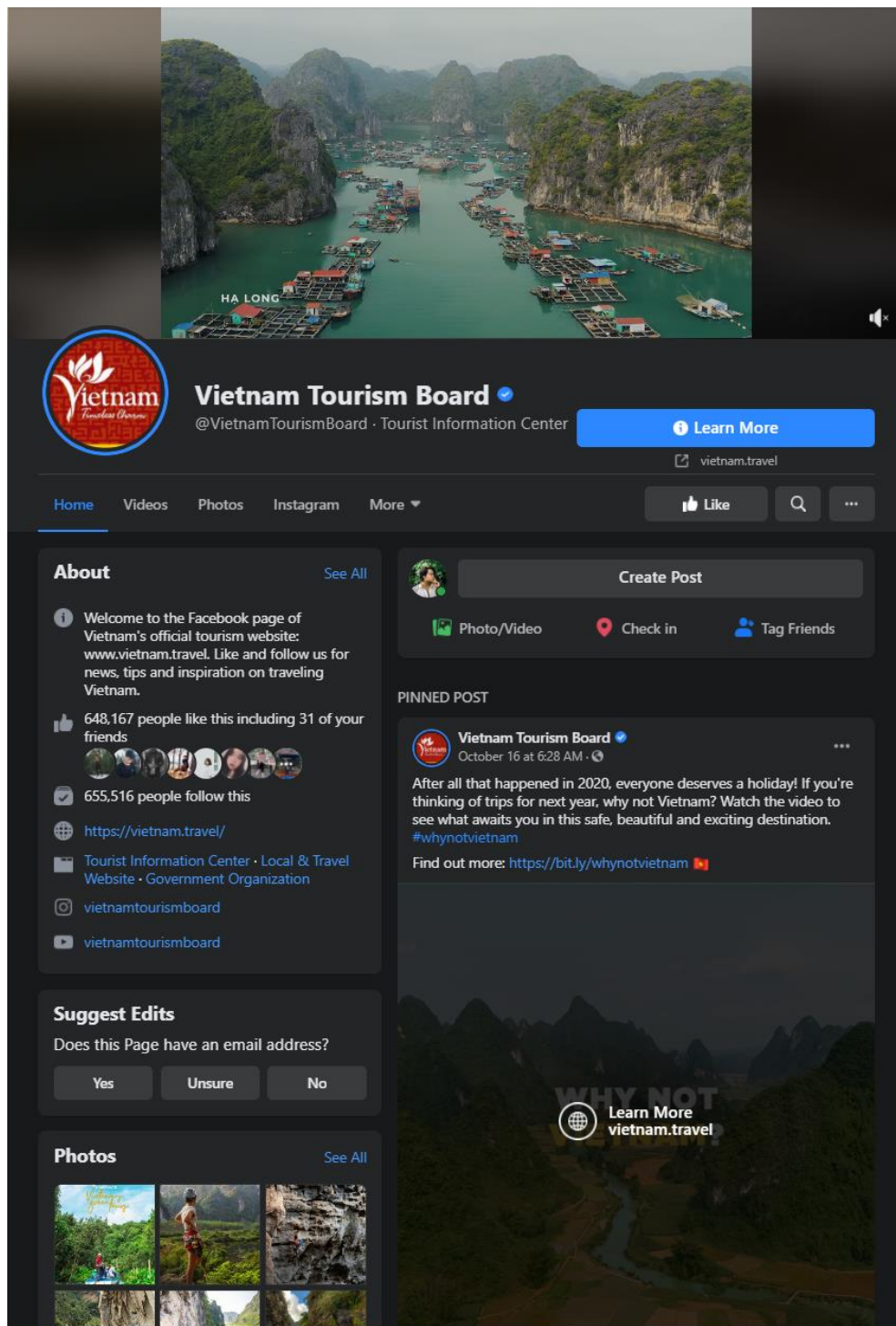


Figure 12. Vietnam Tourism Board official Facebook page. (Facebook 2020)

On the other hand, Hanoi has its own social media channels called Hanoi department of tourism, which are also available on Facebook and YouTube. However, these channels are not usually being updated so maybe the government has not concentrated on social media. Most contents are created as general articles and they do not have much creativity and uniqueness.

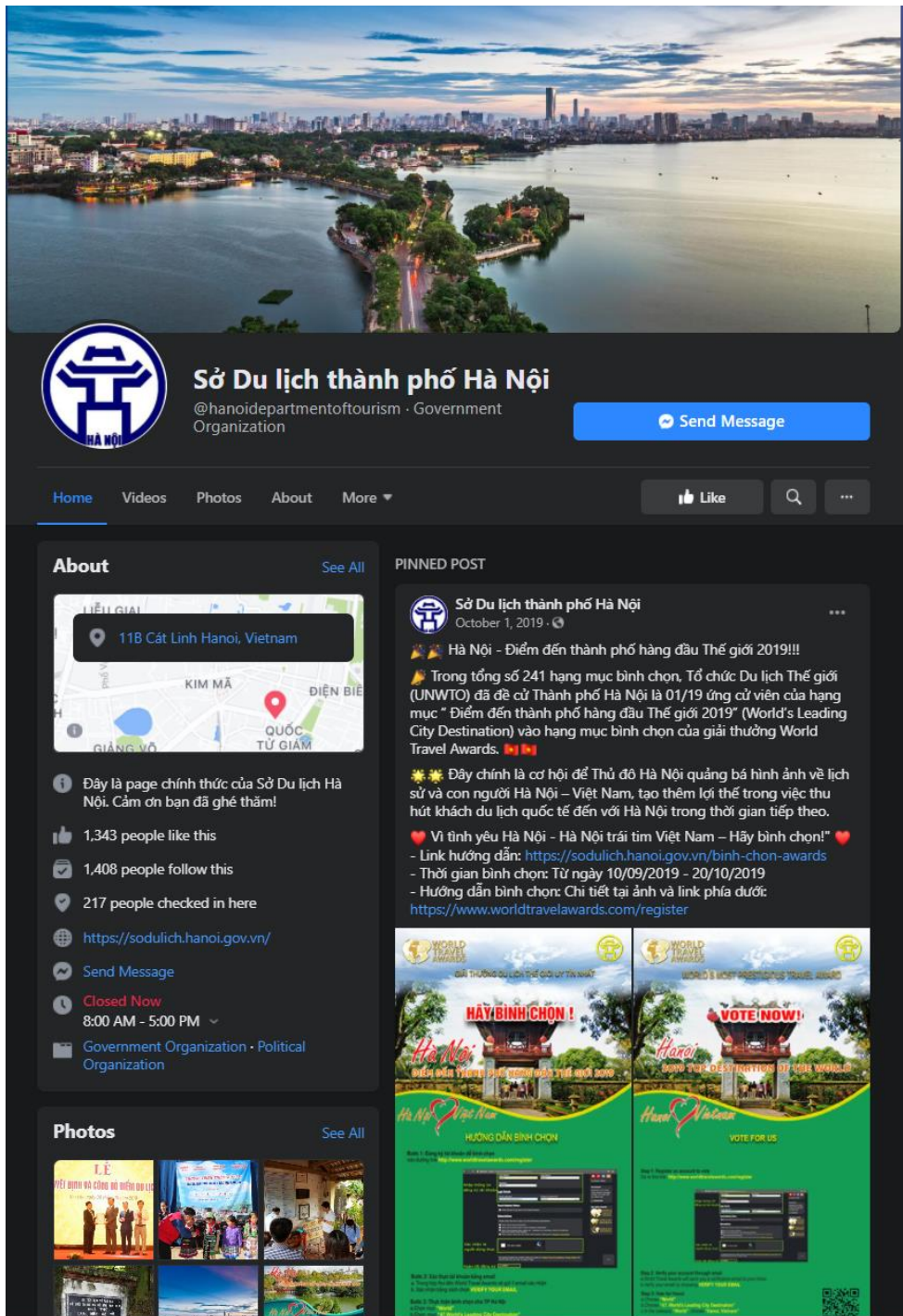


Figure 13. Official Facebook page of Hanoi department of tourism. (Facebook 2020)

5.3 Popular social media channels

According to the previous part, there are two platforms that have been used as main channels to approach potential tourists. In this case, the author decides to approach destination branding through an individual's social media channels with

hashtags #hanoi, #visitinghanoi, and three of the most interesting contents related to Hanoi. Although there would be many challenges instead of following the official organizations' guides.

5.3.1 Facebook

Of course, Facebook will be the first social media channel to be analyzed. Facebook is the biggest social media channel that has billions of people using it every day.

First of all, according to the official Facebook page of the Hanoi Department of tourism in 2020, it has an official Facebook page which was launched a few years ago. By discovering the website of the Hanoi tourism department, the author found three different links leading to the official Facebook page, Twitter account, and YouTube channel called “Sở Du lịch thành phố Hà Nội”. This Facebook page has more than 1400 followers and 1300 likes (Hanoi department of Tourism’s official page 2020). Moreover, this is a local organization that belongs to the Vietnamese government. All of the post’s content or video’s contents are one-way broadcasting from the administrator of the page. Thus, followers can only react and leave comments on the page’s posts. Followers cannot post their own content related to the destination on this page. However, the audience of this page may be Vietnamese people or people who can understand Vietnamese. The contents of the posts are written in Vietnamese without any translation. At the moment, the administrators have not updated posts usually so that the interaction between followers and the page is too rare.

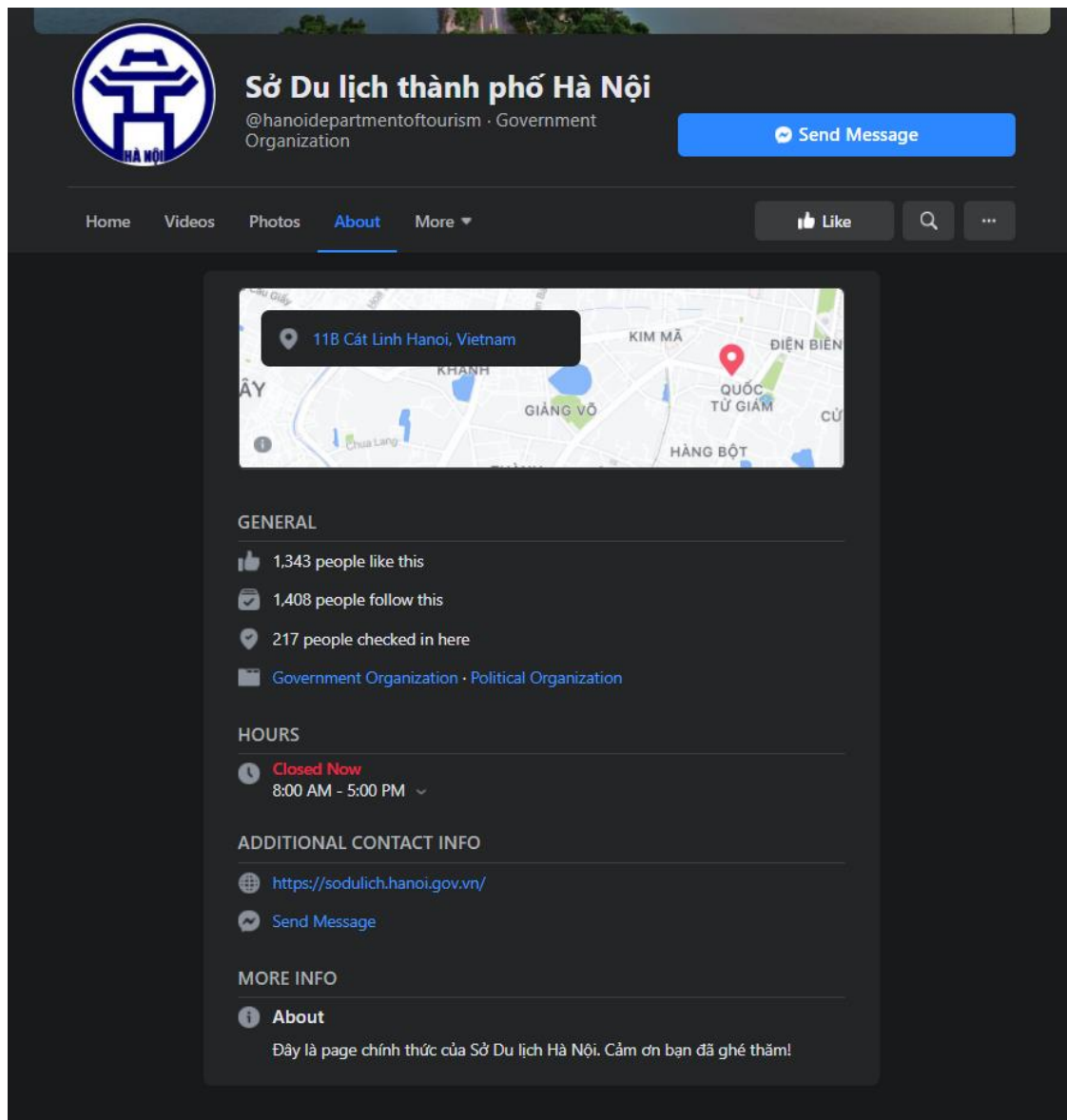


Figure 14. Information about Hanoi Tourism Department. (Facebook 2020)

Secondly, there is also another website called Vietnam travel which belongs to the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism. This is a website with a lot of information consisting of many tourism information about Vietnam especially destinations in Vietnam. In this research, the author will only focus on the contents related to Hanoi on this platform. In the beginning, this Facebook page allows people to upload posts, videos, and photos, instead, only the administrators can post them. This may be the advantage of this Facebook page because it gives more chances for people to interact with each other. The more people can communicate, the more followers will be earned to this page. Despite this Facebook page also belonging to a government organization, the

management method of this page is totally different than the first one. Therefore, approximately seven hundred thousand people like and follow this page on Facebook.

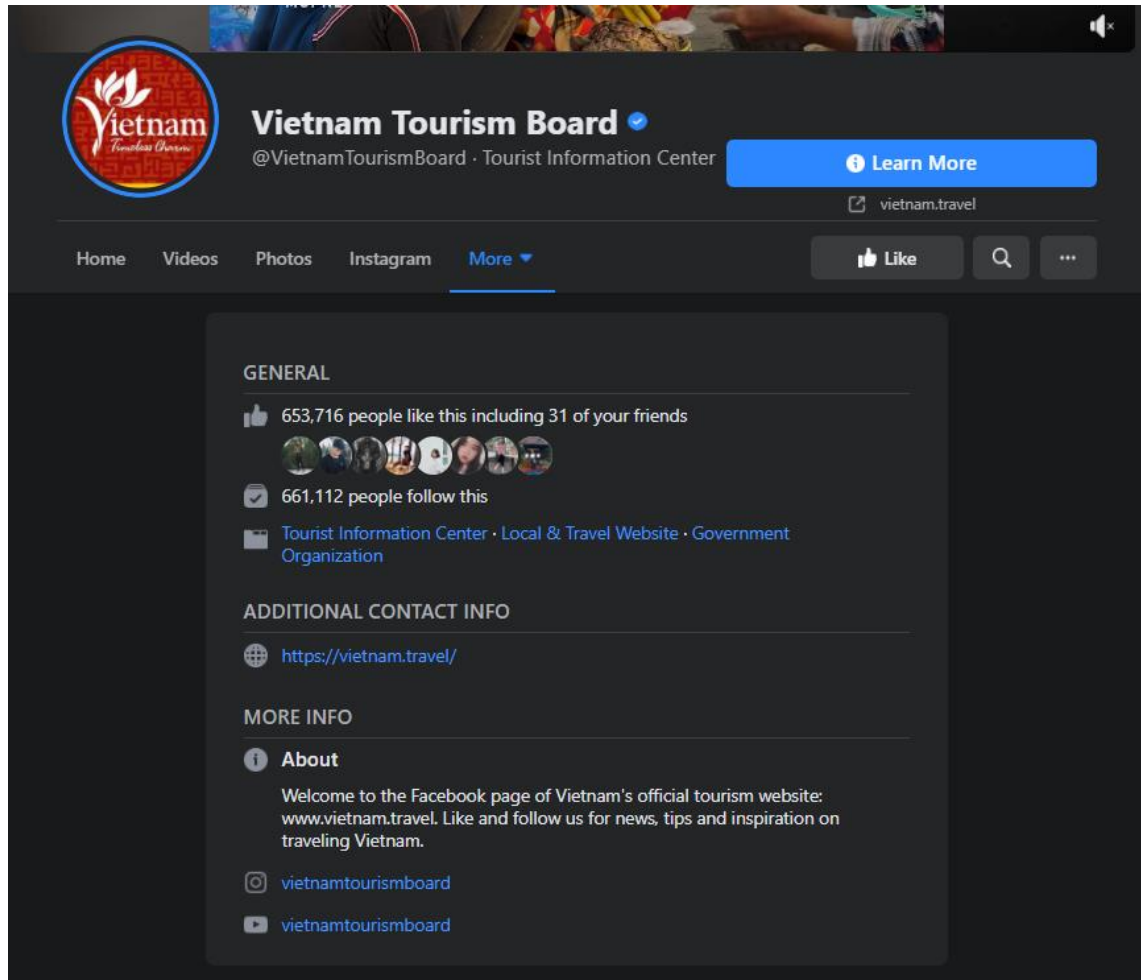


Figure 15. Information about the Vietnam Tourism Board. (Facebook 2020)

5.3.2 YouTube

The second social media channel, which should be mentioned, is YouTube. There is no reason to deny the importance of videos in the era of social media. Videos help information become more realistic because people are not easy to believe in anything with some words or some photos. They can see and feel more about the content through videos in order to understand the destination.

Firstly, the YouTube channel of the Vietnam Tourism Board was created on 27th October 2016. After 4 years, this channel has gained nearly 90 thousand views. This is a small amount of view compared to other channels YouTube. However,

the quality of the contents is really creative and engaging. There are only 3 videos with a duration of under 5 minutes, however, each video describes the beauty of Hanoi from its own perspective. Nevertheless, these videos also want to express the peacefulness of Hanoi more than other destinations.

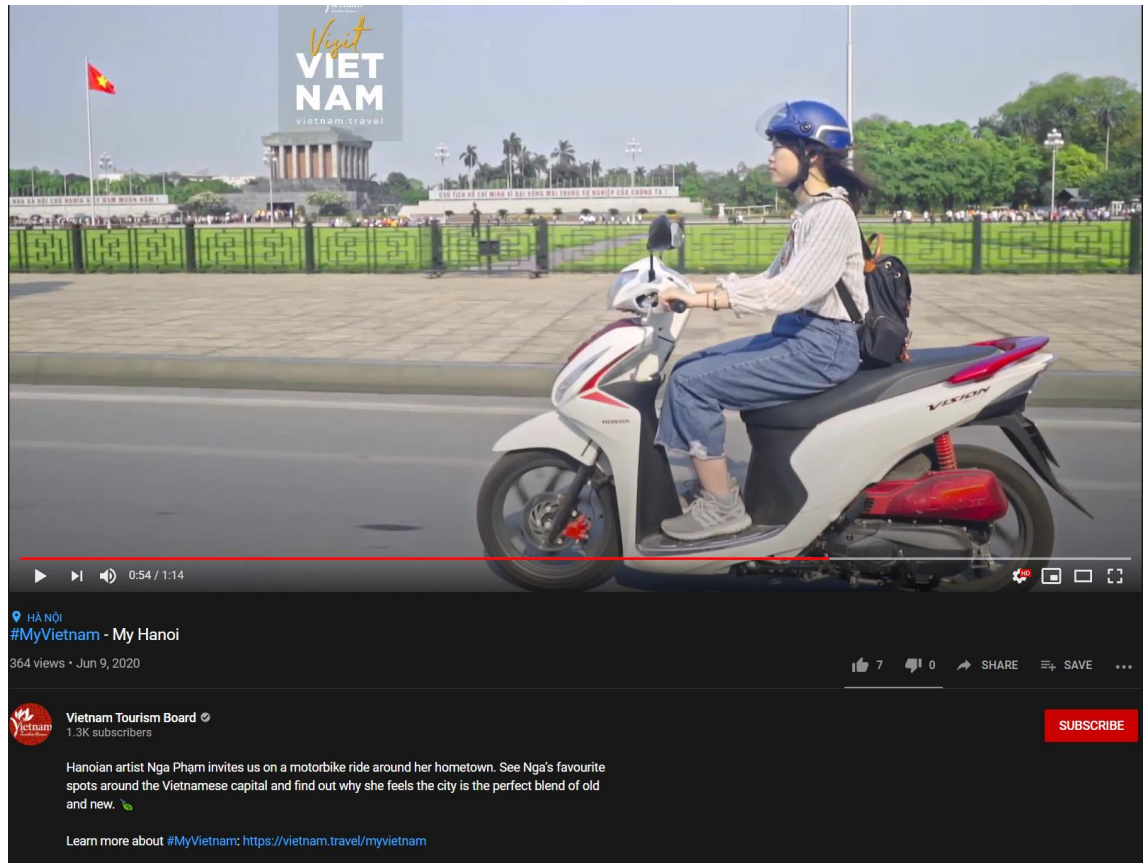


Figure 16. A video about Hanoi was published on 9th June 2020. (YouTube 2020)

Secondly, if people are looking for more videos that have more information about Hanoi, the Hanoi Department of tourism's official YouTube channel will be a suitable one to see more videos about this destination. However, this is still one-way broadcasting of videos because there are not any comments between the channel's manager and the audiences. It is not difficult to see that this channel only has 32 subscribers. However, there are so many videos that are produced professionally about the city. Since all videos of this channel are produced by an official tourism organization. Moreover, the content of these videos is similar to documentary films to other videos that are made by individuals.

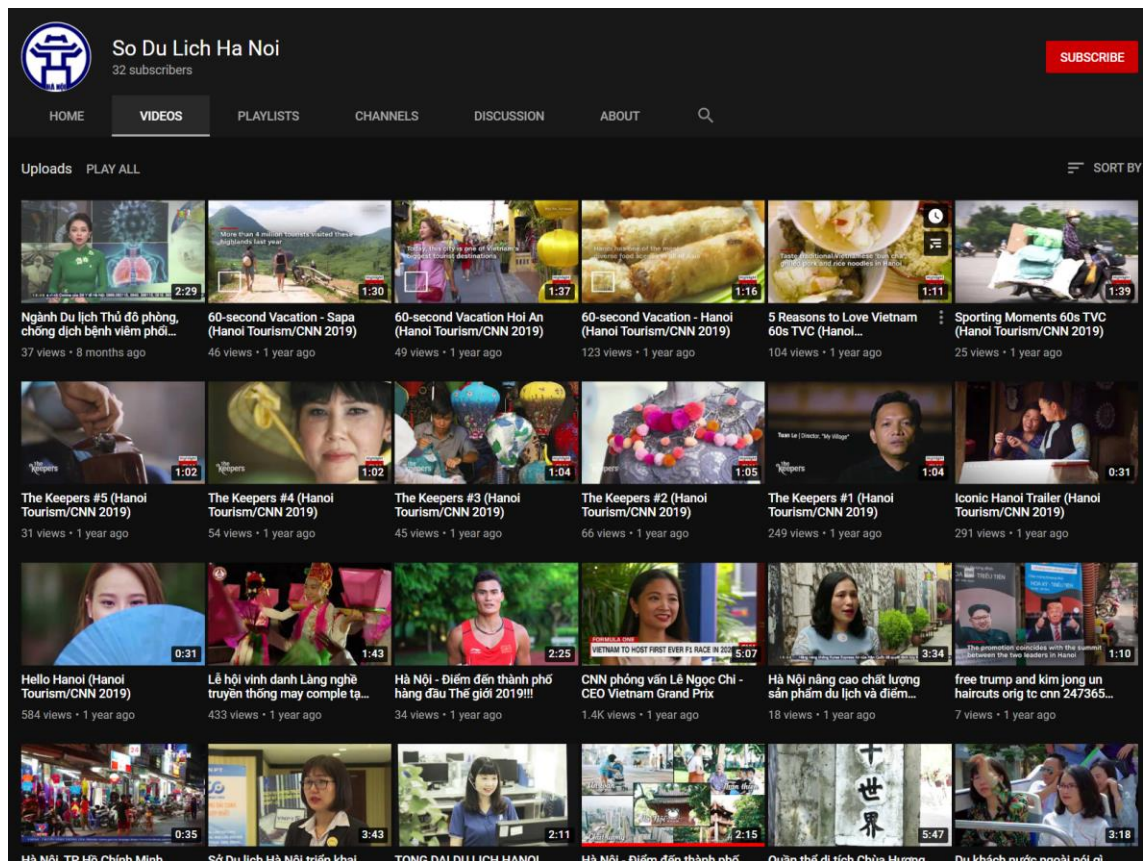


Figure 17. YouTube channel of Hanoi tourism department. (YouTube 2020)

5.4 The most attractive contents on these platforms

According to the previous part, the author discovers that there would be three contents that could make people pay attention to. This formula of these contents can be applied at any destination all around the world.

5.4.1 Must-visit attractions

There is no reason to deny the importance of attractions of a destination, moreover, Hanoi is a city with more than a thousand years of history and civilization. Tourists will be surprised and charmed at the same time by the beauty of Hanoi. This destination is the convergence of the historical and cultural elites of Northern Vietnam. After a thousand years, many tourist attractions and monuments are still kept intact and become the characteristics in order to attract more tourists coming every year. Therefore, this destination is a suitable place for people who want to visit, discover, and experience what has been preserved until today.

For example, One Pillar Pagoda is clear evidence of the historical sites which have been preserved for a thousand year. This pagoda was built in 1049 by the first Emperor of the Ly dynasty. The structure of the pagoda is the shape of a lotus on a stone pillar which represents a symbol of purity in Buddhist philosophy and the religious beliefs of the Emperor at that time. (ArrivalGuides 2020)



Figure 18. One Pillar Pagoda in Hanoi, Vietnam. (ArrivalGuides 2020)

On the other hand, it will be missing without mentioning the modern beauty of this city. Constructed in the early 20th century, the Hanoi Opera House is the biggest theater in Vietnam at that moment. In 1997, the venue was renovated and equipped with full art facilities. This venue is always used to hold concerts as well as plays in the city. Hanoi Opera House becomes a familiar image and pride of the local people, the capital.

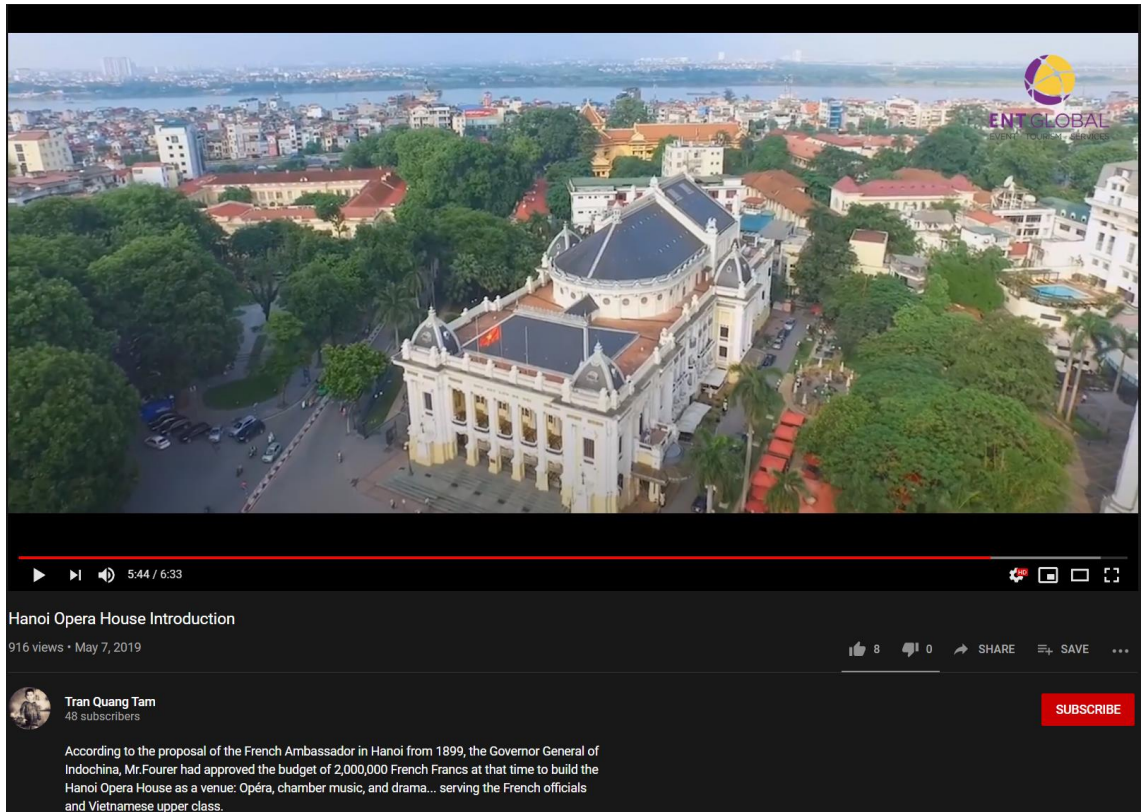


Figure 19. Hanoi Opera House introduction video. (YouTube 2020)

In conclusion, there are many attractions in Hanoi that would bring potential tourists. These examples above are one of the many pieces of evidence about beauty attractions in Hanoi. Moreover, Hanoi converges both ancient beauties from a thousand years and the modernity of a developing city. Therefore, this factor can be one advantage for Hanoi in order to become an ideal place to visit.

5.4.2 The local cuisine

Besides all the attractive places, it will be missing if we ignore many tasty dishes in Hanoi. Hanoi could attract many tourists not only because of its beauty spots with ancient, charming buildings but also because of its unique culinary background. According to Le Figaro, one of the French oldest newspapers, Hanoi is called a food temple where it keeps delicate and fresh dishes. As a huge laboratory, the capital of Vietnam is the place where people can find many delicious street-foods. In Hanoi, tourists can try as many inexpensive dishes as they can instead of going to a luxury or Michelin-star restaurant. To discover all the good dishes, tourists have to explore many small streets and alleys,

moreover, they also need to wait until they get their turn. This is also a cultural beauty of Hanoi's cuisine which is circulated until today. (Nguyen Huong 2020)

Firstly, Pho must be the most famous dish that many people have heard before even if it is not similar to Vietnamese cuisine. The recipe is said to be invented in the early 20th century, then quickly appeared in the south of Vietnam and many parts of the world with Vietnamese people. There are many kinds of Pho but there are only the two most popular which are with chicken and beef. People can eat Pho at any time of the day; however, the most suitable time would be in the morning. It is very easy to see a lot of small restaurants selling Pho all day, in contrast, it is also difficult to find a delicious one.

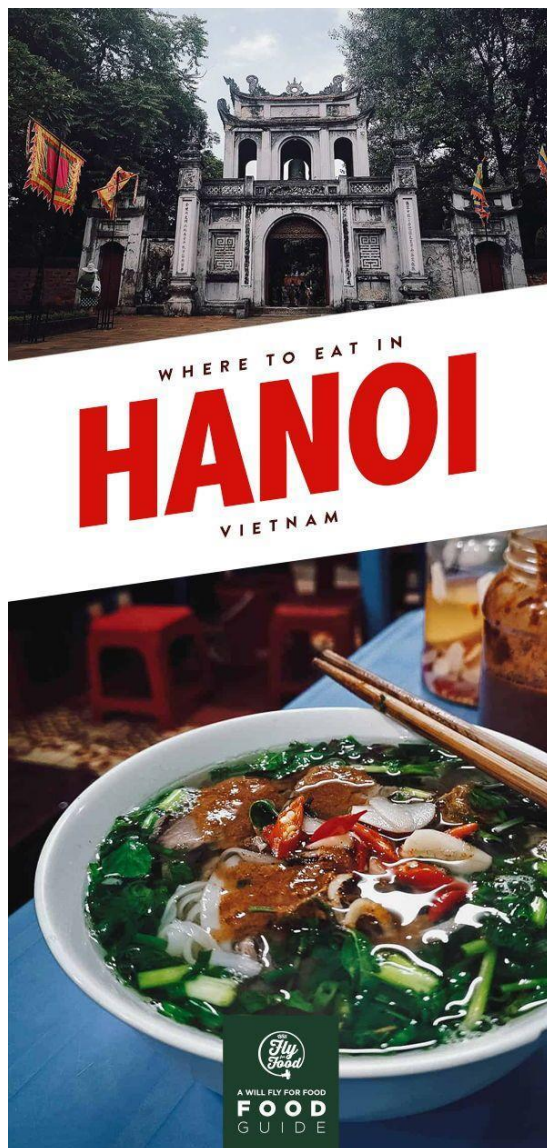


Figure 20. A poster of Pho in Hanoi. (Pinterest 2020)

Besides that, Hanoi also has a dish made from another type of noodle called Bun Cha, which is the Vietnamese dish president Obama fell in love with. The dish is served with a plate of vermicelli, a bowl of fish sauce broth with grilled pork, ground pork, and a small plate of fresh green herbs. However, there are many kinds of vermicelli in many Vietnamese dishes, the vermicelli of Bun Cha has to be thin, soft, and chewy. Bun Cha was usually served for lunch before but most of the Bun Cha restaurants are open from the early lunch until the evening nowadays. Bun Cha is the best present from Hanoi which can never be found in other parts of Vietnam with the original flavor, therefore, this authentic taste can only be found in Hanoi.



Figure 21. An example of a Bun Cha dish. (Pham 2017)

Lastly, one of the things that makes the culinary culture becoming special in Hanoi is egg coffee. No one can think about the combination of egg yolk and coffee. In order to cope with the lack of milk in 1946, Nguyen Van Giang researched and released the first egg coffee recipe at that time, moreover, this recipe has been kept until now by his children. There is one point, which makes egg coffee easily recognized even without tasting, is the texture of the creamy egg foam on top of the coffee. This point makes the egg coffee become different

from other Vietnamese coffee; people need to spend time enjoying it instead of rushing to drink immediately like regular coffee. The egg coffee can be served even in a variety of concoctions, however, the best way to enjoy it is to enjoy it with warm coffee in order to bring the original taste from the Robusta coffee bean. Everyone knows Hanoi is the only place where tourists can try the original version of the egg coffee. Of course, with the irresistibility of egg coffee, its spread is not limited to the capital of Vietnam. This drink has followed the people of the capital and to many parts of the world. Nevertheless, the culture of enjoying coffee has become one of the most popular living experiences in Hanoi that will attract more people to try it shortly. (Thai Trang 2019)



Figure 22. The original egg coffee in Hanoi. (Thai Trang 2019)

6 Research method

According to the content of the thesis's research, the author believes that it is suitable to use qualitative methods as the main research method. The qualitative research method can consist of a different type of logic compared to the quantitative method. Instead of numerical data, a qualitative research method is the collection of interviews, written texts or observation reports, images. Moreover, qualitative research focuses on in-depth information research in order to find out the meaning of the issues. The evidence of qualitative research in the thesis is answered by emails of marketers working in tourism companies in Hanoi and the tourism department of Hanoi. The analysis of qualitative research is to

explain the point of view of individual marketers and to be aggregated so as to reach the general image of the destination. Other marketers can draw experience from this report to apply for tourism development and advertisement of Hanoi. Moreover, the investigation's content of qualitative research is mainly related to human behaviors or the way of thinking that can be explained in another view of thoughts, experiences, and motivations. Therefore, qualitative research is a process that can be achieved through analysis and understanding language and other symbols of humans in order to explain human behavior or thoughts about an issue. So, the result of these interviews will be used to evaluate the thoughts of marketers while doing advertising for Hanoi such as how to attract more new tourists and how to make regular tourists come back. To conclude, the result of qualitative research is to apply the theory to reality and build models for specific cases. (Remler & Ryzin 2011, p. 57)

In other words, qualitative research will bring more advantages than quantitative research in this used-case of the author's thesis. Firstly, the thesis content is not to study the whole market so that the quantity of interviews people would be in a small range. The author wants to explore the thoughts and views of specific companies' and organizations' marketers in Hanoi. After that, the achievement of the thesis is to understand and learn the mindset of doing marketing in the future. Secondly, the interviews will be implemented with a list of open questions instead of multiple-choice questions. With this structure of the questionnaire, interviewees have more chances to express and deliver their emotions and knowledge which can influence the result of this thesis and the future research process of the author. On the other hand, qualitative research helps the author to improve the communication skills of the author while interviewing. The author will have more chances to practice interview skills and learn how to understand their thoughts and emotions. Finally, the purpose of this research method can answer questions about why marketers of each organization decided to do, what achievements they gained and what will be modified to be better in the future.

In this research, the author will use semi-structured interviews in order to collect and explore the data. The online individual interview will be the most suitable at the moment because of the pandemic and time flexibility for interviewer and

interviewee. The interview time will be arranged through emails; however, the data may be collected through answering questions via e-mails if the interviewee feels not comfortable with being interviewed. Of course, the author will still try to reach the interviewees through direct conversations. The author believes that open-ended questions can be used in order to help the interviewees not answer questions but also express and share their opinions and emotions. After having interviews, the author wishes both parties to get more knowledge and unexceptional ideas from each other.

6.1 The design for the list of questions

The list of questions will include all aspects and factors which is related to the interviews' roles and duties of organizations in Hanoi. The structure of the interview is developed by applying three question words following by who, what, how?

In the beginning, the author wants to know more about interviewees in a personal way to be closer to them. This thing will make the atmosphere of conversation relaxing and more comfortable. After that, the author will go deeper inside the role of interviewees in their companies or organizations. For example, interviewees can be a marketing director, supervisor, manager, or junior. Each of them will have their perspectives and views while running a marketing campaign or plan. By knowing interviewees, the first stage of the interview is completed that will connect closely with the interviewer and interviewee. This will lead to a comfortable conversation which interviewees feel pleasant to keep sharing in the whole interview.

Secondly, the author wants to explore information about social media marketing in the company or the organization. The main purpose is to understand how they are doing social media marketing about the destination and the differences in doing marketing between travel companies and organizations. In this part, the author can define and combine the influence of both ways. Moreover, by learning different ways of planning and doing marketing through this interview part, the author can learn how to operate effective marketing plans on social media. These

questions will help to answer issues of this thesis about the impact of social media marketing while working with it for a specific destination.

In the last part, the author hopes to define more trendy contents that make Hanoi more attractive to tourists and which media can easily raise the curiosity of tourists to discover the destination.

In general, these interviews are most likely sharing experience conversations so that the atmosphere of interviews will be comfortable and relaxing. However, the personal information of individuals, companies, and organizations will be kept a secret in order to prevent companies' and organizations' confidentiality. All issues will be discussed and agreed upon before the interview starts.

6.2 Sampling and range of the research

The research of this thesis will focus on companies and organizations which are mostly located in Hanoi so that all interviewees will be individuals who work currently related to Hanoi's tourism. The target of interviews is divided by travel companies and tourism organizations in order to compare the differences between them. Moreover, interviewees have to be suitable for all the factors below:

- Working in the marketing department of travel companies or tourism organizations.
- Taking part in a marketing campaign or plan for Hanoi.
- Working frequently with social media platforms and also as content creators.

These are basic requirements for interviewees in order to be adapted before the interview. In addition, the topic can be reached with a deeper level of doing social media marketing.

6.3 Data collection

The interviews are mostly online meetings through social media networks such as Facebook video calls, Skype video calls, and WhatsApp voice chat. Four of the interviews were done via Facebook video calls which are made with travel

companies located in Hanoi. The two other interviews are from one government organization but interviewees in 2 different positions in Hanoi. At first, the author wanted to go to Hanoi and explore it as a tourist before having interviews with them in order to experience and find out more issues to ask. However, the author could not travel to Hanoi to practice the case because of the pandemic. Therefore, these interviews were scheduled during August 2020, and all of them were recorded by audio and summarized through the written paper by the author. So that the author just wrote the main ideas of each interview's questions instead of the whole conversation. Thus, all answers would be aggregated in the result part in the summary of the main ideas. This allowed him to save more time on referring information while doing these interviews (Barbour 2008, p. 192). All the data of these interviews are gathered in the table below.

Interviewees' position in companies or organizations	Length of each interview
Marketing director (X travel company) – A1 (Grandviet Tour)	20 minutes 45 seconds
Marketing director (Y travel company) – A2 (Vietnam Booking)	23 minutes 23 seconds
Marketing Manager (Z government organization) – B1 (Hanoi Department of Tourism)	19 minutes 55 seconds
Social media marketing supervisor (X travel company) – A3 (Grandviet Tour)	18 minutes 36 seconds
Social media marketing executive (Y travel company) – A4 (Vietnam Booking)	27 minutes 48 seconds

Social media marketing executive (Z government organization) – B2 (Hanoi Department of Tourism)	16 minutes 55 seconds
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Table 1. List of interviewees with the length of them

6.4 Data analysis

The author must ensure to protect the identity of individuals, companies, and organizations in order to prevent their business's secret from others. So that all information related to interviewees had to be encrypted. Firstly, the group was divided into A and B corresponding to companies and organizations in order to compare the differences between them in chapter 7. The group of interviewees was encrypted by using numbers that start from 1 to 6. Moreover, all interviewees were assumed as male gender to keep every information equal. Nevertheless, the data collection has to follow these criteria: connotation, accuracy, generalizability, and legality in order to assure the quality of the thesis's research (Blaxter, Hughes, & Tights 1997, p. 199). All the collected data are definitely important to the thesis report because they represent the point of view and knowledge of experts in marketing. Moreover, their ideas are from the insiders of the marketing department of each company and organization. Although the interview group is diverse, they will provide many different personnel cases working marketing and advertising in Hanoi. Lastly, the research is the best choice between qualitative and quantitative research because the main purpose is to determine the impacts of social media marketing in destination branding that requires as many aspects as possible in chosen companies and organizations. The most efficient method is to collect data from these insiders.

7 Result of the research

After six conversations with interviewees, the group is divided into people working in travel companies and tourism organizations. All of them are in charge of Marketing managerial positions in the chosen ones. This helps the research to be better in a deeper level of organizing marketing inside an individual both companies and organizations that regards both social media marketing and

traditional marketing. Thus, the author will have a general vision of marketing and destination branding.

In this chapter, the result will be presented based on the given questions for these interviews which are in the appendix of the thesis. The main purpose of this chapter is to summarize and form all the answers into a comprehensive picture in order to support the readers to understand easily the current situation of the destination branding on social media in Hanoi.

7.1 Theme 1: Briefly introduction of each interviewee

In this theme, the author was to collect most of the general information related to interviewees' backgrounds and companies, organizations in Hanoi so that the author can better understand the current situation them as well as their daily operating tasks and plans. Additionally, a factor in this part would help the author to draw a general picture of the target group and the segment which companies and organizations are focusing on. Therefore, interviewees can help the author to gain more knowledge of the tourists' behaviors so that the author can analyze this information in certain situations.

7.1.1 Position description

All interviewees provided a description of their daily working tasks and job positions in their travel companies and tourism organizations. In group A, two of these interviewees (A1, A2) are responding as a marketing director of the marketing department in each travel company. They are both sharing the same tasks and responsibilities in their positions. For example, the marketing director's ambitions are to ensure the workflow in the department, plan a marketing strategy, and implement the marketing strategy, moreover, they also need to build good impressions of potential tourists through many marketing channels including social media channels. However, they do not directly implement that on social media channels, they think about the general vision and mission of the company in order to promote destinations and sell journey packages.

On the other hand, the author also had a chance to interview one team supervisor (A3) who was managing the social media marketing of the travel company. He

has been working in this field for more than 7 years. From a marketing intern for a marketing agency, he decided to start his career in a big hotel chain. At the moment, he is the marketing supervisor for a travel company and the marketing manager for a restaurant located in Hanoi.

Furthermore, the marketing executive (A4), who is a friend of the author, is willing to share almost everything about his job with the author. He is currently working in a big travel company which provides not only many domestic tours but also international trips. He started his career with this company 2 years ago and became the group leader last month.

On the other hand, the author also tried to contact two government organizations working in the tourism industry. The author interviewed the marketing manager (B1) of the Hanoi tourism department via Skype video call. Before, he worked as a researcher about destination development and decided to change his job because he wanted to promote the beauty of Hanoi to the world. After 4 years of working in a marketing manager position, he gained some achievements in order to share with new people in this field.

Lastly, the author was introduced as a social media marketing executive (B2) working in a government organization by the marketing manager (B1). This guy was transferred to this position last year.

7.1.2 Responsibilities of the position

Position	Description		
Manager/ Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning & Managing. - Implement to expand the market size. - HR managing. <table border="1" data-bbox="887 1783 1430 1951" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Group A: Business management</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Group B: Destination management</td> </tr> </table>	Group A: Business management	Group B: Destination management
Group A: Business management	Group B: Destination management		

Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building relationships with B2B And B2C. - Maintaining a database for market development. - Analyzing and planning. - Tracking and updating work performance.
Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Producing content for social media channels. - Analyzing campaigns. - Writing reports. - Responding to other users' actions on social media.

Table 2. Responsibilities of the position.

According to these managers, their answers are obviously similar to each other. At the manager level, marketing managers are responsible for planning, managing the company's and organization's marketing strategy in order to reach more tourists and gain more brand awareness. They also need to leverage all methods in order to attract more people to pay attention to the destination. Moreover, all of them also want to implement new approaches for expanding the market size which leads to international tourists. They are also in charge of recruiting, training, orienting employees in order to follow up on work results. However, the differences in marketing directors between travel companies and tourism organizations are based on their developing purposes. The marketing managers from travel companies (A1, A2) mainly aim to achieve more benefits to their companies rather than the development of the destination. In contrast, the marketing managers of tourism organizations (B1) mostly focus on the development of the destination. They bring tourists to the destination in order to support the local economy of each destination. Their main purpose of doing marketing is to promote the brand image of the destination to the world.

In a lower management position, there are many kinds of supervisors as A3 positions. In this research, A3 is responsible for building relationships with B2B and B2C customers and maintaining a database for market development by analyzing data. He has to provide the research report for short- and long-term market forecasts in order to find out the most potential customers that will bring benefits. By assembling marketing information and plans from inferiors, he can provide suitable strategies for each period of the long-term plan. Moreover, he also has to keep the workflow in tracking and promptly updating the situation to the superiors to take out reasonable responses.

Last but not least, this is the lowest position in the marketing department. A4 and B2 are responsible for directly working with customers and marketing content. They always produce content for social media activities, analyze the situation of the current campaign, and update the information to a higher level in the department. Their main tasks are to take care of the social media platforms of the companies and organizations, moreover, they have to respond to all activities on social media channels such as Facebook page, YouTube channel, and Instagram account. On the other hand, they have to be a content creator in order to attract people to their own social media channels.

7.1.3 Companies and organizations overview

	Travel companies (Group A)	Government Organization (Group B)
Type of company	Business companies	Tourism organization
Size of department	10 workers in the department	Less than 5 workers
Location	In Hanoi or in Vietnam	In Hanoi
Purpose	Doing business marketing	Doing destination marketing

Table 3. Companies and organizations overview.

In this research, the author divided into two groups A and B in order to compare 2 types of the marketing operation. Group A represents a type of business company that makes benefits for owners and employees. Group B is a

government organization that main purpose is to promote the image of a destination. The common thing between them is to do marketing operations on social media for Hanoi in order to attract more tourists to come and visit the destination.

Group A has 2 travel companies that both of them have approximately 10 people working in the marketing department and have at least one supervisor for social media marketing. According to these cases, X and Y are medium-size travel companies in Hanoi. Company X has only one office located in Hanoi, however, they organize many tours not only in Hanoi but also in Vietnam. So that the marketing director takes care of the traditional marketing supervisor position. Meanwhile, the marketing supervisor is in charge of digital marketing which includes social media marketing. On the other hand, company Y has the headquarter in Hanoi and 2 offices in Ho Chi Minh city and Danang city. This company mainly organizes many international tours for Vietnamese, however, they also have only a few specific tours for foreign people to big cities such as Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh, and Danang where they have their offices.

Group B is the government organization working to promote the destination's image to gain more tourists visiting Hanoi. There is only one office located in Hanoi and the marketing department of this office is only responsible for marketing Hanoi's image widely.

7.1.4 Target groups

Therefore, the main target group of group A is not only people who are willing to visit Hanoi but also people who enjoy taking their tours. So that the audience of this group can be anyone who is interested in traveling and have concerns for those companies' brands. In contrast, the main target group of group B is only the audience who do care about visiting and exploring Hanoi. So, all of their posts are related to Hanoi and its beauty.

7.2 Theme 2: Social media marketing in different categories

In this part, the interview focuses on a deeper level of using social media marketing. In order to find out the effectiveness of social media in marketing for

the destination, the author refers to opinions and suggestions from these experts. These factors below will introduce social media tracking tools, the popular social media channels, and the frequent activities while doing marketing

7.2.1 Social media tracking tools and social media platforms

	Group A	Group B
Facebook Insights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To understand customers' behaviors. - To analyze statistics and competitors' results. - To create and track the quality of the content. - Main purpose: To gain more customers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To create content attracting tourists. - To compare to other destinations. - To research and update the trendy content for the destination. - Main purpose: To develop local tourism.
YouTube Studio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To manage their own channels and the communities. - To ensure the performance. - To track the number of views to create attractive videos. - Purpose: To advertise Hanoi's Image more reliable. 	

Table 4. Social media tracking tools.

According to all of the interviewees, they agreed that **Facebook Insights** would be mentioned as the most useful tool at first. There were many people around the world using Facebook every minute so that the number of potential tourists from this platform would be uncountable. Firstly, this tool helped to schedule the

posts which were published at the most active time of the audiences. So, they could spend time doing other marketing activities instead of waiting until the posts were published. Secondly, Facebook Insights also provided information in detail such as Likes, reach, visits, video views. This thing allowed them to analyze the most active time and interesting contents of the audiences in order to understand customers' behaviors and generate suitable campaigns. Besides that, this tool also provided another function that allowed all marketers to track the performance of their competitors so that they could evaluate the situation and give suitable solutions for each period.

In group A, all functions of Facebook Insights are completely utilized. All of them assumed that it would be necessary to understand both customers and competitors. By understanding customers' behaviors, they could create suitable contents about their tours to Hanoi which will reach the customers' needs. Therefore, their travel companies would earn more potential customers and make them spend money traveling to the destination. On the other hand, this tool gave them a chance to see and analyze the competitors' results on Facebook. So that they could understand the situation of other competitors and find out several solutions in order to improve their results better than others.

In contrast, group B was a government organization so that their main purpose was to attract and make people visit Hanoi instead of bringing their own benefits. However, they also used this tool to compare the attractiveness of Hanoi to other destinations. It helps them to find out more interesting content from other destinations and make it fit with Hanoi's beauty in order to raise potential tourists' attention.

Besides Facebook Insights, both 2 groups also introduced **YouTube Studio** to the author. They believed that people were willing to see videos rather than read long posts on social media platforms. In other words, with the same content, videos were more attractive than normal posts. With YouTube Studio, both groups could manage their channels and grow their own communities. Moreover, YouTube Studio worked as Facebook Insights, they were the analytics tools in order to manage their channel performance. All the data of their audiences would be summarized to evaluate which videos had got many views. Nevertheless,

YouTube Studio gave them more chances to track the number of videos' views in order to find out attractive content.

YouTube Studio's effectiveness was to bring to group A and B the extra source of traffic while people start looking up for information related to Hanoi. Besides the Facebook page of each company and organization, people could find travel companies and tourism departments in Hanoi through YouTube. In another way, YouTube could increase the growth of the awareness level of Hanoi's image brand by videos.

7.2.2 Activities while doing social media marketing

	Group A	Group B
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Keeping social media channels updated. - Creating content and posting announcements related to Hanoi every day. - Responding to customers' actions. - Checking statistics and results from Insights channels. - Scheduling posts with quality content to attract people. - Using hashtags for posts. - Building relationships with influencers. 	

Table 5. Activities while doing social media marketing.

All of the interviewees at the management level agreed that it was obviously important to keep social media channels usually updated. This could be one of the most effective modern methods to communicate with potential tourists to encourage them to visit the destination. Social media marketing requires all marketers to spend time and resources to ensure the freshness of all the posts and keep the content attracting people. Most of them decided to create a daily

workflow so that their social media channels would have more opportunities to keep interacting with people.

In both groups, all interviewees would create a post with content related to a destination such as Hanoi so they can spark encouraging conversations between them and their followers. They believed that new potential customers would be attracted and approached by keeping posting constant announcements on their social media channels. Besides that, posting announcements every day was to keep up with other competitors, if not they would lose their existence and potential customers.

Besides posting announcements daily, they also suggested making a habit in order to reply to comments and messages on each social media channel. It was an activity that showed the respect of their companies to other audiences. They could see that marketers also spent time reading and replying to their comments. Therefore, they could feel more important to be answered and this encouraged other people to leave their comments. If these audiences were interested in the destination, of course, they could become the most potential customers after being responded to on social media channels. On the other side, responding to comments and messages of audiences would increase chances to spot some negative ones. The importance of these negative comments and messages could be denied because they could help companies and organizations to find out and solve their problems. Moreover, solving these problems constantly would help potential customers or tourists not to have misunderstandings with them. People also had more good impressions when they saw that these companies were willing to solve and improve problems. Checking up comments and messages not only helped them to manage negative comments but also prevented the destination from fake news or information. Thus, this was an important task that needed to be done daily.

Four of the interviewees working as a social media manager also believed that the habitation of checking the social media channel's insights was one of the main tasks of them every day. The numbers would show them the results and the effectiveness of their marketing campaigns on social media in detail. They also could compare their results to other competitors in order to have a suitable

strategy for attracting more people in the future. Additionally, this task also helped them to measure the productivity of their advertisements and adjust them on each social media channel. Otherwise, it also told them the time when people could interact with their content about Hanoi mostly, what kind of content related to Hanoi that people usually wanted to share and talk about.

As mentioned before, they also advised that it was necessary to schedule posts every day and create new posts that would be uploaded for the future. By creating content on each social media channel, A4 and B2 suggested using the time to choose the types of posts, for example, they could upload photos, videos, or links to traveling websites with an introduction of posts on Facebook. Moreover, they both mentioned the hashtag on all social media channels. The hashtag is the new way of a connection on social media networks, due to this, they could create content linked with hashtags and make it become popular and trendy related to the destination. The number of hashtags should be corresponding to each social media channel. On Instagram, they could use as many hashtags as possible because hashtags would help posts reach many people following these hashtags. However, Facebook would be a little bit different from Instagram, on Facebook, hashtags could be used as a search engine so that hashtags should be exact to the content of posts instead of as many as possible.

Last but not least, all of the directors in groups A and B agreed that the connection with influencers would be one of the most potent strategies in the near future in order to encourage the number of visitors in Hanoi. Of course, influencers could be the most efficient way to connect customers that could reach out to their followers. In other words, their companies could approach more customer segments than they used to before with the help of influencers because influencers had their own communities. For example, travel companies and tourism organizations only reached tourists who wanted to visit a destination. However, they could gain more people loving cooking who wanted to visit Hanoi by influencers from a cooking channel on YouTube. Therefore, the importance of creating connections with influencers could not be ignored. Looking for influencers and sending them some interesting posts would be listed as a daily task because of its necessity.

7.3 Theme 3: Additional information about destination branding

In the last theme, the author hoped to gain more important information about the content that they would consider to use on their social media channels. In the first part, the author wanted to hear about the most interesting contents in Hanoi which people usually looked at before deciding to visit Hanoi. In the last part, the author wanted to spend time hearing their own opinions about the impacts that social media would bring to the tourism image of Hanoi. This is one of the important parts of the thesis because the author can summarize and give conclusions for the research.

7.3.1 Most interesting things in Hanoi

Both groups assumed that Hanoi was a potential destination for the tourism business because of its interesting things. However, in group A, all interviewees thought that things that could bring more visitors to Hanoi were places to experience local food and entertain. Nowadays, people have been starting to enjoy life rather than before, so that they want to explore a destination in other aspects instead of going to historical attractions of a destination. Interviewees working as marketing executives showed that people started looking for types of tours related to experiencing local food, enjoying local entertainments, and meeting with local people. Thus, both social media marketing executives in two interviews said that they had begun to connect with local restaurants and local theatres in order to create a few tours that would help tourists to explore the local food and local entertained shows in Hanoi. The combination between them would bring a new image to Hanoi tourism in the near future, after the pandemic.

7.3.2 The importance of social media in destination branding

	Group A	Group B
Opinions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Useful marketing tools in destination branding.- The change of communication between organizations and customers.	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Providing many aspects of the destinations. - Directly affecting customers' visiting decisions. - Helping the destinations to increase trustworthiness from people by sharing posts, photos, and videos.
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Table 6. Opinions of interviewees.

According to the collected information, all of them did believe in the importance of social media nowadays. They also talked about the roles of social media channels in using them as a marketing tool, for instance, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. All of the results showed that Facebook and Instagram were not able to work individually without the support of other creative activities. In order to generate interactions between tourists and destination-marketing organizations, they have to ensure the quality of uploaded content which needs to be attractive and interested.

Moreover, as with other marketing channels, social media has changed the way of communication between businesses and their targeted audiences. Especially in the travel and convenience category, the development of the Internet has been raising the chances of audiences in order to reach information about a destination. There were many tools that helped tourists to book and plan their journey to a new destination, however, these activities directly affected the decisions of tourists through the attractive content in the destination on social media channels. People have started finding information and what they should do for their journeys through posts or videos related to activities to do at the destination. All of these resources were located in many social media channels such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube. Almost all travelers started building their plans after looking at several posts and videos about the destination. Travelers who only had one or two vacations every year always hoped to find a suitable place for the plans of them and their families. Therefore, from many travel review channels, they would like to hear feedback, opinions, and experiences of other people who had been there in order to have their final decisions. According to all of the numbers in the thesis, social media channels

would be the most suitable marketing channels providing any information such as pictures, videos of any recent visits or travels. People loved sharing their experiences on social networks, moreover, social network users said that their decisions traveling to any destination were always inspired by their friends' experiences. To summarize this part, if we wanted to reach more potential tourists, we needed to show them positive and consistent images of our destination on social media. Moreover, if these images were shared by their friends or family members, this would be an advantage point for our destination.

8 Conclusion and discussion

In summary, the results collected from the answers of six interviewees reached the author's purposes in understanding the role of social media in destination branding in Hanoi and how social media has been working in order to promote a destination. All of the interviews from travel companies were implemented in the middle of August, however, it took 2 more months to contact the government organization in Hanoi and have the interviews with them. Fortunately, the author could finish all of the interviews and have time to transcribe and analyze all of them. The quality of all the interviews brings many profits for the thesis's research. The interviewees showed not only the different categories about current tools used for doing social media marketing but also the necessary tasks every day in order to achieve their purpose which is to promote Hanoi to become more attractive to tourists. Besides that, they also provided useful information about the attractive content of a destination which could affect the tourists' decisions. All of the results from them could not become useful for advertising other international destinations, however, these results might be suitable to apply on social media marketing in order to develop tourism in VietNam. Based on their working tasks and purposes, all of the suggestions would be helpful for the marketing development of Hanoi in the future through social media. Thanks to all interviewees, the author could gain his knowledge and experience to apply in his future career.

8.1 Conclusion

Nowadays, social media marketing is always mentioned when people are going to do any marketing campaign because of its effectiveness and advantages to other marketing methods.

At the beginning of the thesis, the author showed the current situation of social media which was obviously popular nowadays. Through four factors of social community zone, social media is divided into social communities, social publishing, social commerce, and social entertainment. Each part of the group plays its role in the use of social media and it makes it easier for people to connect with each other. From the analysis, it can be seen that the effectiveness of including social media in marketing has brought many benefits to online businesses. This makes social media even more important when it is used to promote a tourist destination because of its strong pervasiveness. Moreover, thanks to social media destination branding for a destination becomes easier than ever. Besides that, it is necessary to have a reasonable strategy to be able to build destination branding effectively which will lead to immense benefits as well as disadvantages to the destination in the future of its tourism. Therefore, the proper use of social media marketing will create certain opportunities to attract visitors and have beneficial consequences for the destination's economy.

Especially in the tourism industry, using social media marketing in destination branding becomes one of the popular ways that many marketers believe in. Based on a lot of data, the thesis shows that social media marketing will bring many advantages to a destination in building the destination's image. However, it also causes some negative impacts that can directly have a bad effect on the destination's image. Thus, social media marketing has to be used and managed carefully in order to generate opportunities to develop for the tourism destination. On the other hand, according to the current situation of Hanoi, there will be some suggestions and solutions which will help to ensure and improve the quality of the destination's image. By developing an appropriate strategy and plan, it will not only be easier, less costly, and much more efficient to reach visitors. However, it takes a lot of time to perfect and implement it in order to build a perfect plan and strategy. If the plan has not built carefully while promoting your tourist

destination, it will cause the destination to lose a large number of visitors because of misinformation as well as misunderstandings from tourists.

On the other hand, the interviewees said that combining the use of tracking tools to evaluate visitor metrics would help them have a comprehensive view of the most popular content on social media. Through many improvements in terms of content and approach, it would attract more visitors and economic benefits of the destination in the future. Moreover, the construction of everyday tasks would smoothly and effectively execute the strategy and the plan. Lastly, interviewees provided content suggestions which would be able to attract visitors and opinions on how social media influencing the destination. They also emphasized the importance of interacting with people on the Internet so they can attract more visitors.

8.2 Suggestions for doing social media marketing

Based on the article of Lexie Lu in 2017 about the effective ways to promote business on social media, with the variety of social media channels today, choosing the right social media channels is more important than ever. If you choose the wrong social media channel to promote the product, it will be more difficult to reach customers and there will be undue consequences for the destination. Every time we choose a social media channel to implement our marketing plan, we need to consider finding out a suitable customer segment for your business plan. Above all, creating an account on each social media channel to be able to interact with customers is extremely necessary. We can hear more customer opinions to make customizations and changes to the product to increase the reach of customers in each individual channel. This needs to be considered carefully when using the right content with the promotion of travel destinations for each social media channel. For example, it makes sense to use videos to promote your destination on social media channels like Facebook and YouTube.

Moreover, based on all of the suggestions of interviewees, building, and developing a schedule is obviously necessary, a last-minute post can bring low-quality content to the posts. Building scheduled content will minimize post

duplications on social media channels. Moreover, the schedule also helps avoid mistakes and create more efficient posts. Lastly, the general calendar will be generated from small schedules so that it can help track the goals and ensure the right strategies for the whole process of marketing.

On the other hand, thanks to building an effective schedule, it is no longer difficult to reach customers compared to before. The more customers that are approached, the more opportunities will be created to promote the destination. The posting of content belonging to the destinations that people are interested in will create more interactions, so it becomes easier to find out about their interests.

However, marketers must ensure the right of information provided to tourists because over-promote will bring serious problems to destination branding. Audiences and viewers have become more brilliant at receiving and objectively evaluating information, therefore, they will watch interesting content instead of regular advertisements. For example, advertising on social media channels will be more convenient when advertising information about the destination is cleverly integrated into the content of sharing about the truth to increase customers' excitement while learning about the destination.

Besides that, increased customer engagement is also one way to identify negative information or feedback early. Negative information that adversely affects the destination cannot be avoided. Thus, discovering that information as soon as possible will help marketers to have more suitable solutions before things get worse. By giving feedback, other customers may be more sympathetic to the destination-marketing organizations' responsibility. This will make them more eager to explore the destination.

Finally, building a community will support the destination to produce its own value. More followers do not mean the destination will have a chance to convert more people into visitors. When building a complete community interested in the value of the destination, they will become volunteers to share and promote, making the place more popular. More specifically, if there are influencers who have voices in their communities, they can help to promote the destination in an effective way. Moreover, the content produced needs to provide information that is useful to the

visitors so that they will find it attractive to them to explore the destination. This will lead to a strong and successful destination brand in the future.

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THESIS INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Part 1: Introduction

1. Can you introduce yourself briefly?
2. Tell us about your company
 - a. Type of your company (travel company or marketing agency or marketing agency)
 - b. Main focus of your company (customer target, market segments)
3. Can you share about your daily tasks?

Part 2: Information related to social media marketing

1. What are the social media tracking tools used by your company?
2. Which social media channels does your company usually use? Give us reasons.
3. Which Social Media channels are the most useful to your company?
4. How do you check and keep up with the latest updates, new information and trends in your company social media channels?

Part 3: Information related to destination's brand image

1. Which main contents are most interesting on social media channels in Hanoi? (e.g. food, local people, sightseeing, traditional entertainment, expenses.)
2. Which are the two most necessary types in showing contents on social media? (e.g. videos, posts with pictures, etc.)
3. Can you share your opinions about the importance of social media in destination branding?
4. What could be the three most impacts that social media can bring to the image of Ha Noi? (both positive and negative impacts.)