Abstract

A culturally thriving nation needs comprehensive tourism. Holistic tourism considers economic growth, cultural preservation, and inheritance, as well as cultural improvement and innovation. The tourism development will assist transportation, hotel, dining, commerce, cultural, and sports sectors. Also, the statistics show that travellers often choose positive-message locations. Many developing countries perceive tourism as a way to achieve long-term growth and are keen to expand worldwide. This study examines how tourists perceive China, particularly Zhanjiang. This place has beautiful scenery, a rich cultural legacy, and cultural heritages. China's tourist services are well-known. This study examines ways to better understand a tourist town's image to help develop national tourism (Zhanjiang). This study will identify contemporary issues in Zhanjiang's tourism by evaluating the current condition and researching the audience’s impression. To understand secondary data, examine various media, Zhanjiang's website, news, and blogs. Marketing communication is vital for building a tourism brand. Conversations from relatives and friends, user-generated social media posts, internet celebrity affectionate referrals, corporate media on-site reports, famous film, and television viewfinders, Zhanjiang's official media attention platform, tourist industry projects of travel agencies and blogs created impactful tourists’ perceptions of comprehensive tourism. This article addresses establishing a tourism brand in Zhanjiang and developing a marketing plan.

Keywords: comprehensive tourism; city tourism identity system; integrated marketing communication; marketing channel, Zhanjiang
exports progressively increased, especially the Greater Bay Area travel and tourism in Hong Kong, China (Yuan & Liu, 2020). In August 2015, Jinzao Li, former director of the National Tourism Administration, outlined a comprehensive strategy for the growth of holistic tourism. The concise concept of comprehensive tourism was first outlined in the pertinent documentation of the 2016 national tourism working conference, which requires urban areas to treat tourism as a favourable industry in a particular region by optimising and boosting regional economic development systematically and comprehensively.

This article reviewed the literature on tourism image and holistic tourism, considering the impact of tourism image on the market. The present study will investigate the city tourism identity system (CTIS) and integrated marketing communication (IMC), demonstrating how the consumer perceives the urban tourism image and how to strategically and tactically control or influence relevant enterprise information. Therefore, enhancing brand value and managing customer relationships. This study attempts to use the opportunity of national comprehensive tourism building by studying how to understand the picture of a tourist city truly.

Furthermore, this research also aims to investigate Zhanjiang City’s tourism image using the CTIS and the other characteristics of comprehensive tourism. The urban tourism image of Zhanjiang will be concluded by exploring tourists’ perceptions of mind identity, behaviour identity, and visual identity in the CTIS, as well as all components of comprehensive tourism. Integrated tourism development and other businesses are crucial in the era of comprehensive tourism. Simultaneously, this study evaluated the relationship between audience perception and tourist publicity channels to see if publicity channels influence the audience's impression of Zhanjiang’s comprehensive tourism brand. The research’s evaluation and conclusion described some practical considerations for Zhanjiang city tourism managers in adapting integrated marketing communication strategies to develop a distinctive tourism brand in comprehensive tourism.

1.1 Research questions

- What is Zhanjiang’s most unique and impressive attribute?
- How to develop a complete tourism brand in Zhanjiang?
- How to build a viable integrated communication strategy to advertise it effectively?
- What effect do communication channels have on the audience aware of the comprehensive tourist industry?

1.2 Research objectives

- To identify Zhanjiang’s features and uniqueness to establish a unique city tourist brand for the city.
- To acquire more about the communication channels via which the wider populace acquires tourism recommendations.
- To analyse the influence of communication channels on audience awareness of integrated tourism.
- To give available integrated strategies in shaping the tourism brand image of Zhanjiang.

1.3 Significance of the study

Tourism benefits cities economically and socially. Tourism development will help the transportation, accommodation, retail, entertainment, sports, and auxiliary industries—consequently, tourism’s function is to foster economic expansion. Urban tourism is the primary driving factor of the tertiary sector, promoting industrial consolidation, streamlining, and modernisation. According to the ideology of comprehensive tourism, the sector’s development is not meant to compete alone but
rather to flourish in tandem with industrial integration.

In summation, it is beneficial to support the mutual expansion of indigenous industries and tourism through economic integration, stimulating regional economic growth, and promoting the expansion of all types of tourism, which benefits the disadvantaged and the community. Hence, rural communities can actively grow the tourism business through communication channels. A thriving tourism brand may draw the attention of major corporations and sectors, resulting in a slew of new business and investment possibilities. It will facilitate practical industrial cooperation, streamlining, and modernisation and contribute directly or indirectly to workforce recruitment.

Consequently, this study will assist tourists in determining the characteristics of Zhanjiang tourism brands to promote their business. Besides, building the Zhanjiang tourism brand and communication insights will provide some theoretical basis for cities to boost the tourism industry's expansion. Analysing data can help tourism agencies create effective promotional tactics and differentiate their products from competitors.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Zhanjiang's features and uniqueness

Zhanjiang, a city in Guangdong province, is also known as "Port City", located at the southern tip of the Chinese territory and on the western coast of Guangdong Province, China (Lianrong&Rul, 2019). The maritime climate balances the temperature throughout the year, implying no excessive cold in the winter and excessive heat and humidity. The natural resources of Zhanjiang, such as the sea view, Huguangyan scenic location, military port, and environmental quality with blue sky and white clouds, leisure, and pleasant landscape, are unique features of the tourism business in Zhanjiang and have been widely recognised. As evidence of the city's historical growth, Chikan Old Street contains winding alleys, Lingnan-style arcaded buildings, and western-style constructions that have persisted since colonial times.

Further, there are numerous picture sites in Zhanjiang, such as the olden Beach coastal leisure tourism area, World Geopark Huguangyan scenic spot, WuchuanDinglong Bay National Marine, The resort, Xiaoshan Guangzhou Bay French-style street, and other cultural sites. Zhanjiang also has a strong sports history and a culturally diverse legacy. Traditional dances include the Zhanjiang Dragon Dance, Leizhou song folk literature, Leizhou traditional theatre, and Suixi Lion Dance (Liu, Lai& Yuan, 2020). In addition, the cuisine in Zhanjiang is fantastic. Zhanjiang's seafood is also a vital cultural tourism resource. Fresh ingredients are used in cuisine, typically prepared with coarse components to maintain flavour. Zhanjiang cuisine has its way of preparation and flavour, characterised by a distinct spiciness.

Despite its gorgeous landscape, abundant resources, and governmental and provincial assistance, Zhanjiang's tourism image has yet to gain national popularity (Li, He &Qiao, 2021). The image position is not entirely appropriate. There are several tourism features in Zhanjiang, but no especially significant image perception factors might form a dominance. The infrastructure for entertainment in Zhanjiang is not very good, so it cannot meet the needs of tourists for "food, lodging, transportation, and entertainment." Some beautiful places have tourist facilities that are getting old and not being updated. The roads are in bad shape, and there are few high-end hotels (Lv & Wang, 2022). Internet publicity about Zhanjiang fails to properly investigate Zhanjiang's natural tourist resources, cultural tourism resources, and social tourist activities, resulting in a dearth of tourist attractions and a lack of popular appeal. The traditional picturesque site tourism concept tied to the ticket economy in Zhanjiang is also observed. A competent tourist department is crucial for building and operating a particularly scenic spot. The tourism industry's growth primarily relies on scenic location ticket revenue, lacks integration with other industries, and fails to combine the creation of tourism services and infrastructure. The relevant government departments disregard the target audience, lack direction and appeal to the target audience, and implement preferential policies.
to entice all social subjects to engage in the brand-founding plan, which results in poor enthusiasm among the target audience to participate in the Zhanjiang seaside tourism city brand founding (Zhang, 2021).

However, marketers recommend that Zhanjiang tourism encourage cultural and smart tourism by improving communication channels (Lai & Deng, 2020). It will enhance guide interpretation services and tour assistance, integrate cutting-edge technology, and offer interactive, in-depth experiences, allowing tourists to comprehend Zhanjiang City in depth. In a nutshell, Zhanjiang requires integrating tourism facilities, expanding communication channels, and exploiting attractive sites to build a widespread tourism image presence.

2.2 Overview of the communication channels and their influence on audience awareness

Xiao-long (2006) determined that the overall reflection of a city’s established visual image that most tourists recognise is the urban tourism image. It has been there for extended periods and is a critical consideration of a city’s tourism development. Tourists’ image perception of tourism destinations is influenced by a variety of factors, including their preferences, education level, economic standing, way of life, tourism experience, motivation, expectation, similarity with the desired location, traffic ease of access, location resource conditions, infrastructure status, and customer satisfaction, among others (Kushwaha et al., 2020). Zhanjiang Tourism Bureau should invest more funds to cooperate with many TV stations, not only to buy advertisements in local TV stations but also to promote Zhanjiang’s coastal tourism city brand to audiences in Guangdong Satellite TV and tourism channels, to attract more domestic or foreign tourists (Lv & Wang, 2022). Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the marketing communication channels in shaping the urban tourism image.

The perception of tourism image extends through the entire tourist process and significantly affects tourists’ preferences from a timing viewpoint. Tourists’ impulsive visits to tourism destinations develop distinct emotional reasoning, split into three stages: before, during, and after tourism. Direct perception refers to the individual impression of people who visit the tourist destination and personally visit scenic spots and tourism infrastructure. In contrast, indirect perception refers to the personal impression of tourism destination publicity films, particularly on marketing channels, relevant travel companies, relatives, and friends.

Consumers constantly change in today’s rapid technology growth and the digital economy (Elliott, 2020). Tourists are the earliest visitors. The transformation of communication technology must be influenced by people’s behaviours, media consumption, involvement level, and expectations. In order to achieve the goal of individualised communication, digital media can integrate the desires of varied audiences, pictures, images, and other combined data.

Koc & Ayyildiz (2021) state that external information is crucial in building a tourism image. Social communication, such as word of mouth, various promotional materials, marketing news, and field trips, are external information sources. It has been found that Facebook has greatly aided in restoring and rebuilding tourism image perception as a formal and informal means of communication and an additional distribution route circumventing the news media. In addition, as indicated by the most frequent style of tourism image, the short videos given by TikTok were constant viewing habits. Most locals involved in tourism are local inhabitants with low cultural literacy and service levels, inadequate professional training and abilities, and inadequate tourist reception skills. It is challenging to deliver high-quality business services, which negatively impacts the experience of tourists visiting the local area and hinders the long-term growth of tourism (Liang & Han, 2020). Consequently, the public is more likely to have a favourable opinion of the image of tourism developed and broadcast on these channels.

Hence, it is required to emphasise the significance of online media in tourism brand shaping, improve tourist image-shaping interactions, and reduce traditional media expenditures. People cited Park et al. (2019) to identify the channels to learn about a city and develop an interest in it: user-generated content, family and friend referrals, on-site mainstream media, social media, internet
celebrity influence, reports, popular film and television, the official public platform, and more. Moreover, regarding word-of-mouth marketing, public conversations on social media may generate more effective publicity and attract more clients in the contemporary media environment. In light of the rapid expansion of Internet-based new media, it can be concluded that each tourism destination can significantly increase the rate of marketing communication.

2.3 City Tourism Identity System (CTIS)

City Tourism Identity System denotes the imprint shaped by people's accumulation and precipitation of a city through time, a unique identification system recognised by most people in society (Liu & Liu, 2006). This recognition technique takes a city's historical impression into account. CTIS is divided into three classes: behaviour identity, mental identity, and visual identity. The purpose of the visual identity concept is to develop a particular image of urban tourism. It is a critical tool for defining and integrating a brand's image. Forming a brand image can be an integral part of the marketing system since it reflects the power and spirit of the brand. As a result, it may also be thought of as consumers' pictured cognition of tangible products in a highly competitive marketplace. Besides, the mind identity concept states the uniqueness and coherence of a city's tourism management notion, which is at the heart of the urban tourism identification system. People build an image of the city in their brains as a result of the city's qualities. Kotler & Keller (2016) assert that a city's or brand's image reflects the consumer's perception and trust as represented by the associations stored in their memory. According to the situation, Kotler separates the picture of a place (place image) into positive, weak, negative, mixed, contradictory, and images with extreme attraction.

Moreover, the behaviour identity concept successfully integrates all governmental and citizen behaviours associated with the city to form a coherent tourism image. The identification of urban management systems and standards, as well as an in-depth assessment of urban management behaviour from different approaches, such as government departments, social businesses, and urban residents, are all part of the CTIS. To be more precise, City Tourism Identity System combines unity and integrity to create a visually complete and reliable individual enterprise brand image, improve brand popularity and recognition, form the memory of consumer audiences externally, and internally enhance cohesion.

In general, the design of a City Tourism Identity System pertains to the city's intentional, planned, and active action in communicating the city's development model, spiritual culture, and diverse tourism information to every group and individual associated with the city. As a result, the features of tourists will serve as a foundation for using the City Tourism Identity System in formulating urban tourism image design.

2.4 Comprehensive tourism

In comprehensive tourism, promoting and diffusion of tourism brands are critical in developing tourism destinations. Different tourist behaviours vary from society to society concerning marketing strategies and content selections. China's domestic tourism development has primarily been centred on exploring the natural or cultural riches of different regions, with tourists preferring to visit only those places with stunning natural scenery or historical significance. With the rapid growth of China's economy and residents' income, as well as the rapid development of urbanisation, each city's infrastructure has inclined to improve, and the urban environmental quality has gradually improved.

The notion of urban tourism has lately evolved in China's large, moderate, and small tourist cities, and attractions have become increasingly broad, including entertainment, business exhibitions, shopping and dining, vacation and health care, and landscape sightseeing. The growth of urban tourism has progressed to the stage of integrated development. According to Panasiuk (2017), the integrated development of tourism and other industries is crucial in the era of comprehensive tourism. Specifically, the fundamental business, commerce, real estate, handicrafts, and other sectors
of the travel destination can develop links with tourism and use tourism to modify and expand the added value of these sectors, promoting the integrated growth of local industries.

The State Council of China’s General Office published guidelines for fostering the growth of comprehensive tourism, urging cities to undertake systematic marketing and create a tourism brand reputation. Liu et al. (2020) suggest that the city should devise a strategy that is demand-driven, clear in terms of global promotion and advertising strategy; enrich promotional material, further trying to improve the level of promoting tourism, in-depth extraction and display of geographical features, and implementing a series of tourism promotion measures.

2.5 Integrated marketing communication (IMC)

According to Camilleri (2018), integrated marketing communication theory refers to managing all information sources associated with products or services provided to customers or potential customers. It is intended to motivate them to acquire enterprise products or services and maintain their loyalty. Professor Schultz’s integrated marketing communication theory is the foundation for tourism integrated marketing communication, which describes a process that uses the tourism destination as the marketing object and significantly increases the tourism destination’s brand influence by combining and optimising various marketing strategies.

With the evolution of society and the increasing diversity of people's perspectives, online channels efficiently reach new audiences in today’s fast-expanding social mass communication. Traditional brand promotion concentrates on users, goods, markets, media, and planning. In contrast, in the era of comprehensive tourism, it is essential to combine all types of channel resources offered to people and establish an accurate and efficient interaction system that includes all media, all data, and all planning. As a result, specific marketing content is essential. Promoting a tourism destination’s brand is no longer solely based on sales or revenue. In summary, the Integrated Marketing Communication theory is merely a guiding and broad theory that explains how to conduct marketing communication with specific populations (Daghman, 2018). When it comes to regional tourist promotion, it is also essential to do a detailed analysis based on the current state of the tourism industry.

Tourism marketing is an intangible service; thus, it must focus on improving consumers’ trip experiences and their impressions of brand image. With the rapid development of Internet-based new media, each tourist attraction can significantly increase the pace of advertising communication, improve the quality of the location’s new media integrated marketing, and better serve tourism development by creating excellent advertising channels. Tourism cities can use Tiktok, WeChat, Instagram, Facebook, and other social media to publicise their image using graphics and audio-visual content. Simultaneously, continuing to employ newspapers, television, radio, and other conventional media to strengthen the role of media communication is recommended.

2.6 A viable integrated communication strategy

As aforementioned, Zhanjiang has a modest presence in the tourism sector, but it does have the potential to improve its brand image. Particularly, internet publicity about Zhanjiang does not thoroughly explore Zhanjiang’s natural tourist sources, cultural tourism resources, and social tourism resources, leading to a lack of visitor attractions and a weak appeal to the folk (Zhang et al., 2007). Zhanjiang must combine tourist resources, increase communication channels, and promote tourism through well-known locations. The central body of city marketing should be pluralistic, with the government playing the dominant role in promoting Zhanjiang (Yufei&Hongmei, 2019).

In this context, it is critical to analyse all components of tourism perception when developing an effective integrated communication plan. According to Rong-hua (2013), service quality is crucial in determining how people perceive tourism. The subjective evaluation of services received by travellers during a trip, such as shopping, catering, leisure and recreation, hospitality, and other
attributes, includes service quality. Similarly, price perception is vital to travellers’ perceptions, influenced mainly by subjective personal factors.

Individuals anticipate being able to purchase their favourite items at reasonable prices at a tourist destination; however, if the city increases the costs of the relevant items, the pricing perception will be drastically altered. Scholars have examined significant pricing perception discrepancies between domestic and international tourists. Ruhanen (2004) states that tourists expect to receive relevant services at the lowest possible cost. As an outcome, for relevant strategy is essential to consider the vectors; service quality and pricing.

Moreover, given the shifting growth environment, media marketing must perform marketing publicity with greater precision. Simultaneously, Zahra (2018) pointed out that it is necessary to focus on creativity and compress the distinctive features of tourist attractions to utilise better media’s role in developing the tourism brand. Municipal managers can modify and refine the city image, turning it into a business card for the city’s external publicity.

Forming a brand’s image is a vital aspect of the marketing system, as it represents the brand’s strength and essence. Consequently, it can also be viewed as customers’ imagined understanding of tangible items in a market system. China may utilise its advantages as a transit hub more effectively and promote itself via traffic media. It is suggested, for instance, to increase live broadcasts of tourism publicity films, radio, and printed materials to strengthen outdoor advertising along the expressway.

Improving tourists’ perception ability in shaping the urban tourism image is vital. It can be done through marketing on online channels. Undoubtedly, tourists observe the tourism products, cultural context, traffic patterns, lodging conditions, and other components of the tourism destination while on vacation, as well as form their accurate perception of the tourism destination based on the preceding contents, such as the tourists’ perspectives of the tourism destination. Subsequently, providing a positive tourist perception experience increases the distribution of tourists’ urban tourism image and fosters the formation of tourist perceptions.

Moreover, distinct and particular city images are more likely to create a lasting impression on the audience. Therefore, media marketing is essential for more targeted marketing exposure in the contemporary development context. It should emphasise innovation and condense the distinctive characteristics of tourist destinations to successfully exploit the media’s role in establishing the tourism brand. The tourism project’s brand should also describe the most distinctive and well-known picturesque area in the tourist attraction, such as natural landscapes, historical sites, or cultural sites, which can become a well-known label or landmark, enticing many people to visit and consume.

3. Research Methodology

The descriptive method was employed in this study by describing the features of the studied variables. Case studies, naturalistic observation, surveys, archival research, and cross-sectional research are all examples of this type of research. Secondary data was used to investigate the current research. We can completely comprehend the notion of “comprehensive tourism” and form judgments after examining the nature and condition of the research object. The data were collected through social media posts, Internet celebrity affectionate recommendations, corporate media on-site reporting, Zhanjiang’s official media attention platform, and blogs.

4. Results

The urban tourism image reflects a city’s developed sensory image that most tourists recognise. It is the most important indicator for assessing a country’s city-specific tourism development. According to the concept of integrated marketing communication, it has been determined that it is essential to analyse the channels via which the target audience receives brand information, as well as their thoughts regarding the significance and expressiveness of the present marketing channels. Further, it
is proposed that information gathering plays an integral part in developing a tourism brand. There are three sorts of external information sources, including social communication, such as word of mouth, various publicity materials and commercial information, and travel.

It is concluded that tourist perceptions are classified into two categories. Direct perception is when tourists personally visit a destination and personally contact relevant scenic spots and tourism facilities. In contrast, indirect perception is when an individual's impression of a tourist attraction is influenced by relevant materials from travel agencies, relevant tourism destination publicity films, relatives, and friends. As a result, strengthening the progress of tourists' perception to create a positive perception experience for tourists, improving the propagation of tourists' urban tourism image, and boosting the shaping of tourism image are all requisite processes of shaping the urban tourism image.

According to an analysis of the perception model of tourism image, the short clips portrayed in Tiktok and Kuaishou were consistent with the existing methods and habits of the audiences. Consequently, the public is more likely to view pleasantly the image of tourism developed and spread via these media. It is anticipated to focus on the role of new media in tourism image shaping, enhance tourism image shaping interaction, and lower conventional media expenditures in tourism image shaping. Additionally, municipal managers should develop and polish the city's image, transforming it into a business card for external publicity.

5. Conclusion

The Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) theory is primarily a guiding and broad theory. When it comes to regional tourist promotion, it is also necessary to do a detailed analysis based on the current state of the local tourism industry. Furthermore, the IMC approach focuses solely on marketing communication channels at the organisational level, ignoring the role and influence of mass communication. It is determined that the public develops content on social media with widespread communication, robust interaction, and discernible distinction. It benefits brand recognition and should be considered when planning brand marketing communications. In the present media landscape, tourism-integrated marketing communication utilises a variety of marketing communication channels. Businesses and organisations can employ an integrated approach to increase the public relations impact of advertising and significantly enhance their entire image.

With the rapid evolution of Internet-based new media, each tourism destination can significantly increase the speed at which marketing information is transmitted, effectively enhance the location’s new media integrated marketing level, and ultimately contribute to tourism development by establishing ideal marketing channels and a practical marketing creative framework. As a result, when conducting tourism marketing, it is necessary to select the communication channel and polish the substance of tourism information following the media’s positioning and target audience. Moreover, the most critical aspect of urban expansion is the urban brand, which may be viewed as a one-of-a-kind art exhibit of a city that is distinct from others, as well as the public's comprehensive evaluation of the city's complete image. In future research, there is still a need for further in-depth conceptual inquiry and analysis on the planning and implementation of thriving tourist cities and the promotion of comprehensive tourism brands.

References


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