The Impact Of Social Media Platforms On The Brand Image Of Cat Ba Tourism In Hai Phong City

Do Minh Thuy[1], Pham Minh Dat[2*]

[1]Haiphong University, Haiphong city, Vietnam.Email: thuydm@dhhp.edu.vn Orcid: https://orcid.org/0009-0000-6548-4817
[2*]Thuongmai University, Hanoi city, Vietnam Email: minhdat@tmu.edu.vn Orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7262-4299

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	This study reveals that several factors have a substantial and positive impact on the brand image of Cat Ba tourism. Stunning Visual Content effectively captures the attention of potential tourists, while Engagement and Interaction on social media platforms foster trust and encourage the sharing of authentic narratives. User-generated content contributes to Cat Ba's credibility and diversifies its appeal, acting as a form of digital word-of-mouth. Influencer Collaborations accentuate Cat Ba's unique selling points, making it distinct and appealing. Promotions and Exclusive Offers stimulate travel decisions, generate word of mouth, and contribute to economic growth. These findings have important implications for destination marketing strategies, emphasizing the significance of high-quality visuals, social media engagement, UGC, influencer collaborations, and promotional initiatives. Nevertheless, the study's limitations, including its location-specific focus and the evolving nature of social media trends, highlight the need for continuous adaptation in practice and exploration of these factors in diverse contexts to assess their long-term impacts on destination branding. **Keywords**: Tourism branding; Social media impact; Brand image; Cat Ba tourism; Visual content; User-generated content.

INTRODUCTION

In an age characterized by a digital renaissance, social media platforms have irrevocably transformed the communication landscape, influencing and reshaping diverse facets of human interaction, commerce, and tourism (Reisinger, 2009). The paradigm shift ushered in by this digital revolution has yet to spare the realm of destination marketing, where promoting and shaping the image of tourist destinations now navigates the intricate currents of virtual discourse (Pencarelli, 2020). The islet of Cat Ba, nestled in the majestic archipelago of Halong Bay, emerges as a vivid and emblematic case study in this transformative narrative as it endeavors to define, refine, and propagate its unique identity and allure in the digital realm (Richings, 2022; Mai & Smith, 2015).

Cat Ba, part of the Hai Phong City administrative region in Vietnam, is celebrated for its unspoiled natural beauty, comprising verdant limestone karsts, pristine beaches, lush forests, and a cultural tapestry that is as diverse as it is vibrant (Chon & Berger, 2012). The island's geographical and cultural endowments hold significant tourism potential and aspire to magnetize an expanding global audience (Croes, 2022). Within this context, the influence of social media platforms emerges as a dynamic and multifaceted conduit, capable of magnifying the destination's enchantment and, at times, posing formidable challenges in its branding efforts (Bruns & Highfield, 2015; Nguyen et al., 1999).

This article explores the intricate relationship between Cat Ba tourism and the pervasive presence of social media platforms (OJH et al., 2011). As travelers increasingly turn to platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, TripAdvisor, and YouTube to plan, document, and share their journeys, these virtual landscapes not only serve as a source of inspiration but also a realm where the brand image of destinations is molded by user-generated content, engagement, and peer-to-peer communication (Matikiti-Manyevere & Kruger, 2019). With its raw and

exquisite allure, Cat Ba stands poised at the precipice of opportunity and risk as it navigates the digital currents of contemporary tourism marketing (Kahn, 2013).

Within this exploratory journey, we delve into the dynamics and dimensions of social media's impact on the brand image of Cat Ba tourism (Ruiz-Meza et al., 2022). The analysis herein encompasses an array of thematic dimensions, containing the influence of stunning visual content, the interactive potential of engagement, the persuasive authenticity of user-generated narratives (Thanh & Smith, 2018), the amplifying resonance of influencer collaborations, and the enticement of exclusive promotions disseminated through these digital conduits (Davis & León, 2018). Through a meticulous dissection of these factors, we aim to elucidate how Cat Ba's brand image is being influenced, sculpted, and projected in the virtual landscape and the repercussions of this influence on its tourism endeavors (Ruiz-Meza et al., 2022). In the forthcoming sections, we embark on an academic exploration that delves deep into these thematic elements, offering a holistic understanding of the role and impact of social media platforms on the brand image of Cat Ba tourism in Hai Phong City (Ruiz-Meza et al., 2022).

LITERATURE REVIEWS

The brand image of Cat Ba tourism

The brand image of Cat Ba tourism is characterized as a diverse and captivating destination (Ruiz-Meza et al., 2022; Nguyen et al., 2013), the largest island within the World Natural Heritage Site of Halong Bay, and a UNESCO-recognized World Biosphere Reserve (Goodwin, 2008). Cat Ba boasts pristine landscapes of forests, sea, mountains, hills, beaches, caves, and villages, and it is home to the endangered Cat Ba Langur (Bloom, 2022). Many factors, including natural beauty, cultural heritage, accessibility, marketing, visitor experiences, safety, cuisine, events, sustainability, word of mouth, and historical significance, collectively shape this brand image (Arasli et al., 2021). In the digital age, social media platforms are pivotal in disseminating compelling visual content, fostering interaction, promoting user-generated content, facilitating influencer collaborations, and announcing exclusive offers (Lieb, 2012). A positive brand image is crucial for attracting tourists, supporting local economies, and preserving the community, actively managed by tourism authorities and stakeholders (Duarte et al., 2017).

Within social media's influence on Cat Ba tourism in Hai Phong City, captivating visual content, interactive engagement, user-generated content, influencer collaborations, and promotional strategies are instrumental in shaping the destination's brand image (Meikle, 2016; Weng et al., 2021). These factors collectively showcase Cat Ba's natural beauty, engage the audience, build credibility through authentic user-generated content, extend reach through influencer partnerships, and create a sense of excitement through promotions, thus enhancing the overall appeal and recognition of Cat Ba (Templeton et al., 2020).

Stunning Visual Content

In destination marketing, the propagation of stunning visual content has evolved into a pivotal tool for engaging, attracting, and captivating potential tourists (Morgan & Pritchard, 2001; Song et al., 2021). The act of disseminating high-quality photographs and videos that depict Cat Ba's picturesque landscapes, pristine beaches, and vibrant cultural tapestry across popular social media platforms, such as Instagram and YouTube, has emerged as an influential mechanism for shaping the perceptions and decisions of prospective visitors (Avraham, 2015). This strategic employment of visual media serves a dual purpose: It serves as a visual testament to the intrinsic allure of Cat Ba's geographical and cultural assets and operates as a conduit for emotional and sensory immersion (Tien Bui et al., 2016). The immersive power of these visual narratives lies in their ability to transcend the confines of physical distance, permitting viewers to experience a virtual vacation through the lens of the destination's splendor (Ryan, 2015). In this manner, the dissemination of visual content stands as a profound and persuasive instrument that resonates with the profound impact of aesthetic appreciation and wanderlust, consequently propelling the allure and recognition of Cat Ba as a compelling and captivating tourist destination (Ruiz-Meza et al., 2022).

Engagement and Interaction

Engagement and interaction on social media platforms have gained eminence in contemporary destination branding strategies, offering a dynamic means of cultivating community, rapport, and trust among the virtual audience (Huertas & Marine-Roig, 2016; Pino et al., 2019). This two-way communication channel is exemplified by tourism stakeholders' active and responsive participation in addressing the inquiries, comments, and messages proffered by online residents in a friendly and informative manner (Waligo et al., 2013). By transcending the conventional barriers of impersonal promotional campaigns, such an approach transcendspromotional endeavors to establish a more profound, humanized connection between the destination and its potential visitors (Huang & Liu, 2021). This personalized, responsive interaction fosters a sense of belonging and inclusivity, akin to an evolving online community where travelers' queries, experiences, and feedback are acknowledged, valued, and reciprocated (Huang & Liu, 2021). Encouraging tourists to share their experiences and insights actively serves a dual function, amplifying the wealth of user-generated content and imbuing the brand with authenticity and credibility (Amaral et al., 2014). The impact of such engagement reverberates beyond the immediate exchange, transmuting social media platforms into spheres of trust, where potential travelers are not only consumers of information but active contributors to the destination's narrative,

thereby galvanizing the brand image and cultivating a shared sense of identity and belonging within the broader community of Cat Ba enthusiasts (Pike & Page, 2014).

User-Generated Content

The utilization of user-generated content as a potent instrument in destination marketing epitomizes a strategic departure from conventional promotional paradigms, emphasizing authenticity and the power of peer-to-peer influence (Hermanus, 2022). Encouraging tourists to embark on a narrative journey of their own, subsequently sharing their experiences and cherished memories of Cat Ba, engenders a profound sense of authenticity and credibility (Basu, 2007). These testimonies, embedded in the narratives of fellow travelers, possess a unique and compelling persuasive force that extends beyond the conventional bounds of orchestrated advertising (Nichols, 1994). By adopting an inclusive approach that welcomes the voices and perspectives of tourists, destination stakeholders transform their promotional efforts into a collaborative and dynamic endeavor (Nyanjom et al., 2018). This shift from destination promotion to community-based storytelling enables the creation of a mosaic of lived experiences that conveys the essence of Cat Ba's charm.

To further amplify the impact of user-generated content, it is imperative to solicit and actively curate and showcase this valuable content on official brand profiles (Smith et al., 2017). By featuring user-generated content on official platforms, destination managers can harness the inherent power of peer endorsement and the trust associated with authentic traveler narratives (Connolly, 2020). This strategy capitalizes on the perception that these testimonials are free from the biases of overt marketing agendas, thereby reinforcing the brand's credibility and resonance (Allen et al., 2008). Additionally, when a destination brand exhibits a genuine appreciation for the contributions of its visitors, it not only enhances its authenticity but also forges a sense of reciprocity that may incentivize others to participate in this collective narrative, thus contributing to a dynamic and captivating representation of Cat Ba tourism (Kidd, 2014).

Influencer Collaborations

The strategic alliance with travel influencers and prominent bloggers represents a contemporary paradigm shift in destination branding and marketing (Javits, 2019), whereby the inherent potential of online charisma and digital engagement is harnessed to impart wider exposure and a diversified outreach for Cat Ba (Ryan, 2016). These digital luminaries, wielding substantial and dedicated followings, are uniquely positioned as intermediaries who bridge the chasm between the destination and an expansive virtual audience (Miller, 2012). Through their lenses and narratives, these influencers proffer an invaluable gateway for prospective travelers to peer into the multifaceted allure of Cat Ba (Rafiki et al., 2023). This approach bestows upon the destination a dual benefit: firstly, the influencers serve as conduits for relaying their firsthand experiences, complete with personal anecdotes and recommendations, thereby creating a visceral connection between the destination and its virtual spectators (Gunawardene & Noronha, 2007). Such recommendations and endorsements are laden with credibility, for they emanate from figures perceived as authentic and trustworthy sources of information (Braddock & Morrison, 2020).

Secondly, partnering with travel influencers augments Cat Ba's visibility and presence within the social media landscape, consequently securing a foothold in the consciousness of a broader and more diversified demographic (Everett, 2007). These influencers, owing to their diverse fan base, facilitate the dissemination of Cat Ba's narrative to segments of the population that may otherwise remain beyond the purview of conventional marketing endeavors (Jowett& O'Donnell,2018). Thus, influencer collaborations function as a strategic mechanism for heightening the brand image of Cat Ba, not only infusing credibility and authenticity into the destination's portrayal but also orchestrating a symphony of resonant endorsements that reverberate within the virtual sphere, illuminating the destination and kindling the wanderlust of a diverse multitude of potential tourists (Park et al., 2014).

Promotions and Exclusive Offers

The strategic deployment of promotions and exclusive offers on social media platforms represents a pivotal facet of contemporary destination marketing endeavors, wherein the digital realm serves as an expansive canvas for orchestrating persuasive incentives and augmenting the desirability of Cat Ba as a travel destination (Shanmugasundaram, 2008). By employing social media as a conduit for disseminating promotions, discounts, and exclusive offers, destination stakeholders endeavor to resonate with the evolving consumer psyche, one characterized by an inherent penchant for value, immediacy, and experiential enrichment (Khatri et al., 2015). Such promotional campaigns are rooted in the psychology of consumer decision-making, harnessing the behavioral tendencies of travelers inclined to respond favorably to time-sensitive, cost-effective, and experientially rewarding offers (Matthias, 2023).

In the digital milieu, the announcement of promotions, often coupled with limited-time deals or special packages, serves a dual function (Le & Wang, 2020). Firstly, it fosters a compelling sense of urgency, accentuated by the temporal constraints imposed by the limited duration of these promotions (Harikrishnan et al., 2022). This urgency is known to galvanize traveler decision-making processes, inciting a proactive response that is both swift and decisive (McBay, 2019). The digital audience, enticed by the prospect of value maximization, finds itself spurred to engage with the promotional content (Murray, 2018). This engagement in itself contributes to enhanced brand visibility and resonance.

Secondly, introducing exclusive offers augments the excitement and anticipation surrounding a visit to Cat Ba (Pine & Gilmore, 2011; Moon, 2010). These offers amplify the destination's appeal and evoke a sense of privilege and exclusivity, which can be particularly enticing to potential tourists (Echtner, 2010). The exclusivity of the offers imparts a distinctive character to the travel experience, bestowing it a uniqueness that harmonizes with the contemporary traveler's quest for exceptional and personalized experiences (O'Dell & Billing, 2005). In this vein, strategically integrating promotions and exclusive offers on social media platforms is a catalyst for positively influencing traveler decision-making (Law et al., 2014). These campaigns serve as a compelling bridge between aspiration and actualization, rendering Cat Ba an alluring (Mai & Smith, 2018), value-rich, and time-sensitive prospect poised to satiate the wanderlust of the discerning contemporary traveler (Rose, 2010).

Based on literature reviews, we formulated the following research hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Stunning Visual Content has a substantial and beneficial effect on The brand image of Cat Ba tourism

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Engagement and Interaction has a substantial and beneficial effect on The brand image of Cat Ba tourism

Hypothesis 3 (H3): User-Generated Content has a substantial and beneficial effect on The brand image of Cat Ba tourism

Hypothesis 4 (H4): Influencer Collaborations has a substantial and beneficial effect on The brand image of Cat Ba tourism

Hypothesis 5 (H5): Promotions and Exclusive Offers has a substantial and beneficial effect on The brand image of Cat Ba tourism

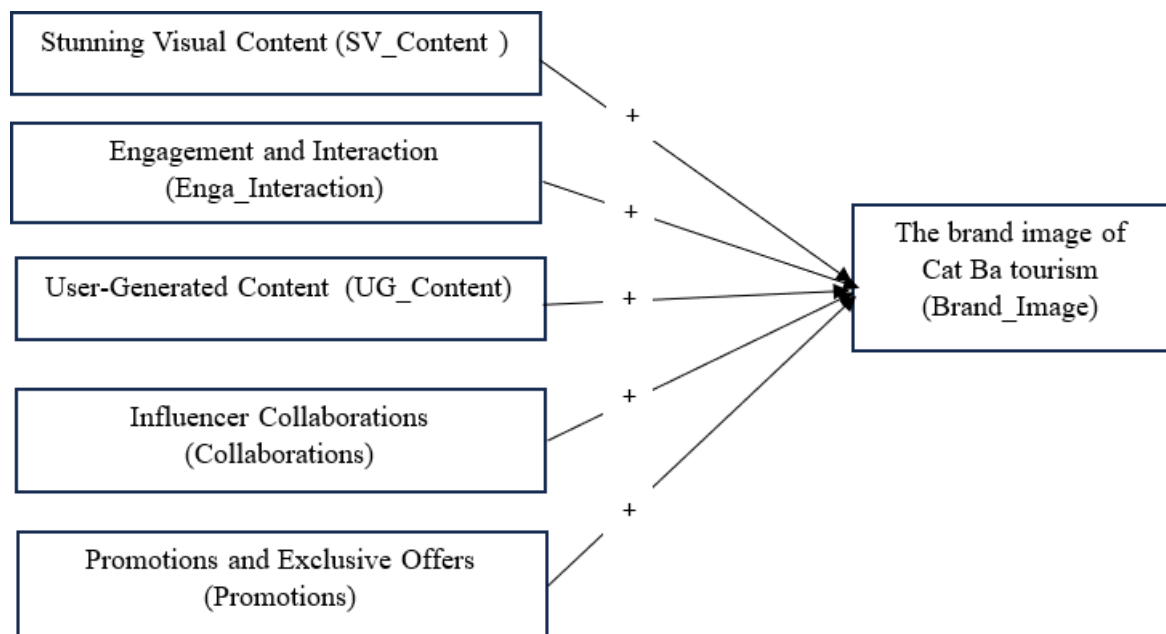Based on the above research hypotheses, the following research model is proposed (Figure 1).

Figure 1 Proposed Research Model

Methodology

Instrument and participant

The survey instrument utilized in this study was meticulously developed through a comprehensive process involving an extensive review of relevant literature consultation with two experts in travel and tourism management and one expert in sociology. This questionnaire exhibits a two-part structure to ensure comprehensive data collection. Part 1 is dedicated to gathering essential demographic information from participants, encompassing details such as gender, age, and nationality, as well as their familiarity with Cat Ba tourism and their engagement with social media platforms for travel-related purposes. Meanwhile, Part 2 is designed to elicit responses about key variables crucial to the investigation of the brand image of Cat Ba tourism, stunning visual content, engagement and interaction, user-generated content, influencer collaborations, and promotions and exclusive offers, drawing upon established research within the field (Ruiz-Meza et al., 2022; Nguyen et al., 2013; Tien Bui et al., 2016; Huertas & Marine-Roig, 2016; Pino et al., 2019; Rafiki et al., 2023; McBay, 2019). Notably, the questionnaire was thoughtfully crafted in both Vietnamese and English versions to cater to the diverse linguistic backgrounds of the research participants. Rigorous testing was conducted on a pilot group of 40 individuals, and minor refinements were made to the questionnaire based on the feedback and data acquired during this preliminary phase, ensuring its validity and reliability (Santos

et al., 2016; DeVellis, 2017; see Appendix for details). The study encompassed a sample of 200 tourists selected randomly from diverse nationalities, including Vietnam, Australia, Japan, Korea, and the USA, during the bustling Christmas season of 2022 in Cat Ba. This period was chosen due to its peak influx of tourists from abroad compared to other regions in Northern Vietnam. Notably, before participating, all research subjects provided verbal consent as an essential ethical prerequisite.

Table 1 Demographic characteristics of survey participants

		Use social media platforms for travel-related purposes					
		Occasionally		Regularly		Very Frequently	
		Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
Age	25-30 years	7	18.9%	7	18.9%	23	62.2%
	31-35 years	7	21.2%	2	6.1%	24	72.7%
	36-40 years	3	8.3%	5	13.9%	28	77.8%
	41-45 years	2	10.0%	3	15.0%	15	75.0%
	46-50 years	12	28.6%	3	7.1%	27	64.3%
	above 50 years	4	12.5%	3	9.4%	25	78.1%
Gender	female	19	17.3%	7	6.4%	84	76.4%
	male	16	17.8%	16	17.8%	58	64.4%
Nationality	Australia	4	20.0%	0	0.0%	16	80.0%
	Japan	5	19.2%	5	19.2%	16	61.5%
	Korea	11	17.7%	7	11.3%	44	71.0%
	USA	1	5.3%	6	31.6%	12	63.2%
	Vietnam	14	19.2%	5	6.8%	54	74.0%
Familiar with Cat Ba tourism	Somewhat familiar	11	22.9%	5	10.4%	32	66.7%
	Very familiar	24	15.8%	18	11.8%	110	72.4%

Reliability analysis

Reliability analysis is an essential step in assessing the quality and precision of survey data. Reliability analysis determines the consistency and stability of a measuring instrument or survey questionnaire across time and situations. This study used Cronbach's alpha to determine the degree of internal consistency dependability. The criteria for evaluating Cronbach's alpha analysis findings are subjective and dependent on the particular study environment and questionnaire or test variables being evaluated (Kline, 2015; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). In general, several 0.7 or above indicates high internal consistency and dependability and is regarded as an acceptable criterion for most surveys (Cortina, 1993; Kline, 2015; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). A number between 0.6 and 0.7 may be acceptable for specific surveys but may suggest that some questionnaire questions do not contribute to assessing the underlying concept and may need to be altered or eliminated (Cortina, 1993; Kline, 2015). A number below 0.6 is often considered poor, suggesting that the questionnaire questions may not assess the same concept and need revision (Kline, 2015; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Table 2 Summary of Reliability

Scales	Number of variables observed	Reliability coefficients (Cronbach Alpha)	The correlation coefficient of the smallest total variable
Brand_Image	4	0.733	0.501
SV_Content	4	0.765	0.522
Enga_Interaction	4	0.799	0.585
UG_Content	4	0.775	0.557
Collaborations	4	0.802	0.598
Promotions	4	0.802	0.593

Table 2 presents the results of testing the reliability and validity of the research questionnaire. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all items were more significant than 0.7, indicating the internally consistent reliability of the questionnaire (Hair et al., 2019; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The validity of the questionnaire was also confirmed through construct validity testing, including exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis (Bollen, 1989; Hair et al., 2019). All items in the questionnaire were found to have good convergent validity, indicating that they are measuring the same construct (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Discriminant validity was also established, as each item was more strongly correlated with its respective construct than other constructs in the questionnaire (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2019).

Factor analysis

Factor analysis is a widely used statistical tool in the social sciences that can help researchers identify underlying factors or dimensions in a set of variables. The process involves reducing the number of variables in a dataset by identifying patterns of inter-correlation among them and grouping them into a smaller set of underlying factors (Gorsuch, 1983). The number of factors to be extracted is often determined by examining scree plots and eigenvalues (Fabrigar et al., 1999). The results of a factor analysis can inform the development of more refined research questions, hypotheses, and models (Hair et al., 2010) and provide insights into the key factors that explain the relationships among variables in a dataset (Chen, 2008).

Table 3 Result of factor analysis

Rotated Component Matrix^a

	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Promotions4	.716					
Promotions3	.707					
Promotions1	.681					
Promotions2	.657					
UG_Content4		.753				
UG_Content2		.752				
UG_Content1		.622				
UG_Content3		.619				
Brand_Image1			.710			
Brand_Image4			.708			
Brand_Image3			.654			
Brand_Image2			.619			
Collaborations2				.799		
Collaborations1				.702		
Collaborations3				.682		
Collaborations4				.592		
Enga_Interaction1					.752	
Enga_Interaction2					.703	
Enga_Interaction4					.678	
Enga_Interaction3					.639	
SV_Content2						.746
SV_Content3						.717
SV_Content1						.652
SV_Content4						.637

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.
b. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO)= 0.927
c. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Approx. Chi-Square=1901.662; df=267; Sig.=0.000)
d. Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings = 62.470; Initial Eigenvalues =   1.095

Table 3 presents the factor analysis results conducted to validate the research questionnaire. Bartlett's test of sphericity was statistically significant (Sig. = 0.000), and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin coefficient (KMO) = 0.927 (>0.5), indicating that the observed variables are correlated in the population and are, therefore, suitable for factor analysis. The factor loading coefficients for all variables >= 0.5 indicate the validity of the factor analysis. The criterion for the practical significance of factor loading is a minimum level = 0.3, an essential level = 0.4, and a practical level = 0.5. Table 3 shows that all variables have factor loading coefficients >= 0.5, demonstrating the validity of the factor analysis. The total load squared extraction for the six factors = 62.470% (>50%), indicating that the extracted factors can explain significant variance in the data. The initial eigenvalue of the six factors = 1.095 (> 1.00), indicating that the extracted factors have eigenvalues more significant than one and are, therefore, valid. These results demonstrate the suitability and validity of exploratory factor analysis for the proposed research model (Hair et al., 2019; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019).

Correlation analysis

Correlation analysis is a statistical method used to measure the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two variables (Bryman & Bell, 2015). According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2013), it is a way to quantify the association between two variables and determine if changes in one variable are associated with changes in another. The correlation coefficient, also known as Pearson's, measures the strength of the linear relationship

between two variables and ranges from -1 to 1 (Field, 2013). According to Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham (2017), -1 indicates a perfect negative correlation, 1 indicates a perfect positive correlation, and 0 indicates no correlation. Correlation analysis can provide valuable insights into the relationships between variables and can be used to make predictions about one variable based on the values of another variable (Gronlund & Linn, 2014). However, it is essential to note that correlation does not imply causality and that other factors may contribute to the relationship between the variables (Agresti & Finlay, 2009).

The results of the correlation analysis (Figure 2) show that, with a 95% significance level, the correlation coefficient indicates that the relationship between the dependent and independent variables is statistically significant (Sig. = 0.05). The magnitude of the correlation coefficients ensures that the variables are used to analyze the multiple linear regression model and the variable control regression in the next step (Seraphin et al., 2019; Larose, 2014). The correlation analysis allows quantitative examination of the relationships between variables (Field, 2018). Additionally, the significance level of the correlation coefficient is an essential element of the correlation analysis, as it determines whether or not the relationship between the variables is statistically significant (Larose, 2014). Furthermore, using multiple linear and variable control regression in the next step allows for identifying the factors significantly impacting sustainable tourism development (Seraphin et al., 2019). Multiple linear regression identifies the independent variables most significantly related to the dependent variable, while variable control regression allows for controlling extraneous variables that may influence the relationship between the dependent and independent variables (Field, 2018; Larose, 2014).
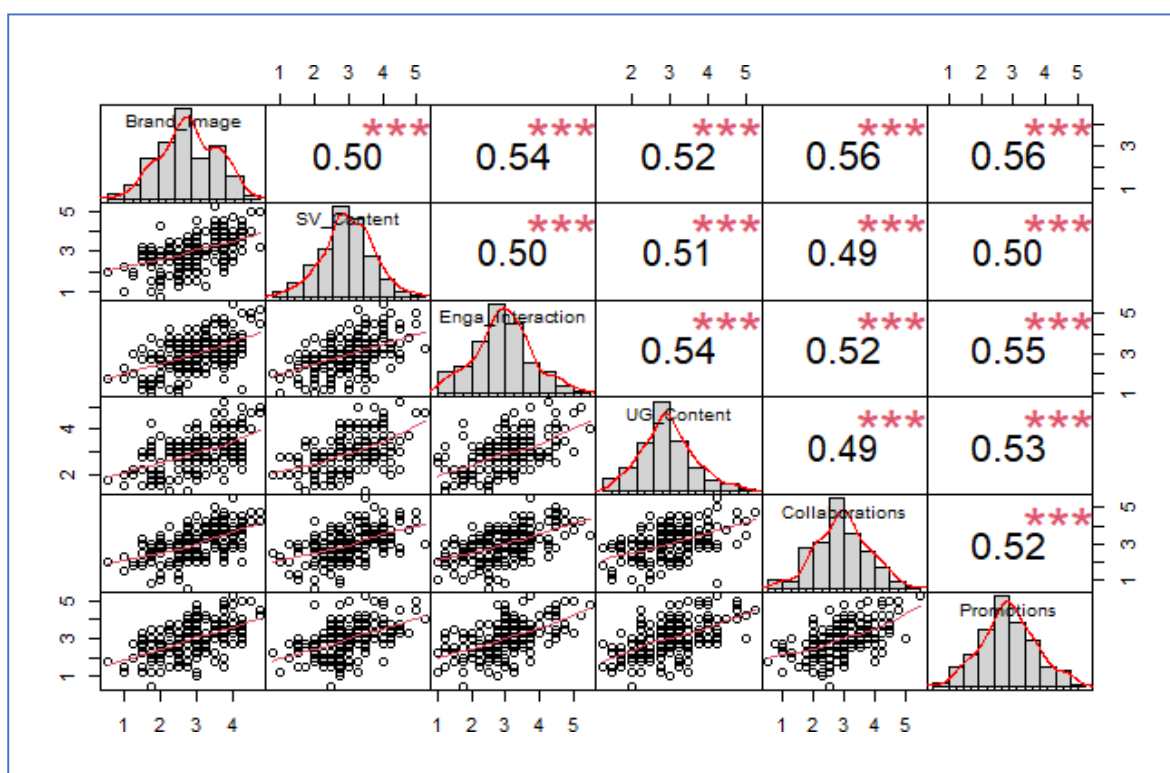

Figure 2 Correlation analysis results

Multivariate linear regression analysis

Multivariate linear regression analysis is a statistical method used to examine the relationship between multiple independent variables and a dependent variable (Bryk & Raudenbush, 1992). Regression analysis uses a linear equation to model the relationship between the independent and dependent variables (Hair et al., 1998). Multivariate linear regression aims to determine the coefficients for each independent variable, which represent the strength and direction of their relationship with the dependent variable (Greene, 2003). These coefficients can then be used to make predictions about the dependent variable based on the values of the independent variables (Hair et al., 1998). Multivariate linear regression is commonly used in the social sciences, economics, and other fields to understand the relationships between variables and to make predictions based on those relationships (Bryk & Raudenbush, 1992).

Dependent variable:	
Brand_Image	
Model	
SV_Content	0.124* (0.069)
Enga_Interaction	0.156**(0.068)
UG_Content	0.147** (0.073)
Collaborations	0.233***(0.064)
Promotions	0.194*** (0.065)
Constant	0.380* (0.203)
Observations	200
R2	0.471
Adjusted R2	0.457
Residual Std. Error	0.548 (df = 194)
F Statistic	34.539*** (df = 5; 194)
VIF:	SV_Content = 1.64; Enga_Interaction= 1.786; UG_Content = 1.73 ; Collaborations = 1.66; Promotions = 1.800

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

The results of the multivariable linear regression analysis (Table 4) indicate that the regression model is valid to explain the results, as evidenced by the statistical significance of the F-test (p.value = 0.000, df = 5.194) (Hair et al., 2019). The model also does not have multicollinearity, as the variables in the model have a VIF <1.800 (Kutner et al., 2005). This suggests that the variables are not highly correlated, and the regression coefficients can be estimated with high precision.

Results

The research results (Table 4) show that Stunning Visual Content has a substantial and beneficial effect on The brand image of Cat Ba tourism with a regression coefficient β = 0.124 and a significance level 95% p.value =0.050. With this result, H1 is accepted. This result is similar to previous findings in that This outcome aligns with prior research, emphasizing the influential role of visually captivating content in shaping Cat Ba Tourism's brand image (Nguyen et al., 2013). High-quality images and videos portraying Cat Ba's natural beauty, landscapes, cultural richness, and unique attractions hold a strong visual appeal, effectively captivating prospective tourists and evoking emotions that influence their decision-making (Nguyen et al., 2013). Visual storytelling is a potent mechanism for creating a memorable brand image, amplified through social media sharing (Ruiz-Meza et al., 2022). In a competitive tourism industry, strategically presenting unique features and aesthetics through such visuals provides a distinctive advantage, differentiating Cat Ba and enhancing its perceived value (Bloom, 2022). Consequently, these influences profoundly impact potential travelers' inclination to visit.

The research results (Table 4) show that Engagement and Interaction has a substantial and beneficial effect on The brand image of Cat Ba tourism with regression coefficient β = 0.156 and significance level 95% p.value =0.001. With this result, H2 is accepted. This finding is consistent with prior research, underscoring the pivotal role of engagement and interaction on social media in shaping Cat Ba tourism's brand image (Tien Bui et al., 2016). These elements are distinguished by their multifaceted academic dimensions (Song et al., 2021). Proactive and responsive engagement fosters trust and community, conveying reliability and credibility (Avraham, 2015) on the part of Cat Ba's tourism stakeholders, enhancing the destination's perception (Tien Bui et al., 2016). Personalized interaction forges a deeper connection with prospective travelers (Ryan, 2015), amplifying their inclination to consider Cat Ba. Moreover, engagement provides a conduit for real-time feedback, offering valuable insights for refining the tourism experience and enhancing the brand image (Avraham, 2015). This interactive communication encourages travelers to share authentic narratives and endorsements, wielding persuasive influence (Ruiz-Meza et al., 2022). Furthermore, it addresses issues promptly, demonstrating a commitment to customer satisfaction, ultimately positively impacting the brand image (Tien Bui et al., 2016). In summary, engagement and interaction are influential components contributing to the authenticity, loyalty, and overall perception of Cat Ba tourism (Tien Bui et al., 2016).

The research results (Table 4) show that User-Generated Content has a substantial and beneficial effect on The brand image of Cat Ba tourism with regression coefficient β = 0.147 and significance level 95% p.value =0.001. With this result, H3 is accepted. This finding concurs with prior research on the significant impact of User-Generated Content (UGC) on Cat Ba Tourism's brand image (Huertas & Marine-Roig, 2016). UGC, characterized by authentic traveler testimonials, contributes to the destination's credibility and overall image (Huang & Liu, 2021). The diversity of perspectives in UGC broadens Cat Ba's appeal to a wide range of potential visitors. UGC is a form of digital word-of-mouth influencing prospective travelers' decisions (Pino et al., 2019). It evokes emotional connections through personal anecdotes and visuals, strengthening the audience's bond with Cat Ba (Tien Bui et al., 2016). Furthermore, the credibility and authenticity of UGC enhance the destination's image, reinforcing that it meets travelers' expectations (Huang & Liu, 2021). Reposting UGC on official profiles amplifies its reach, further strengthening the brand image (Huertas & Marine-Roig, 2016). In summary, UGC is a compelling tool for conveying authenticity, fostering peer recommendations, and broadening the reach of Cat Ba's brand image (Nguyen et al., 2013).

The research results (Table 4) show that Influencer Collaboration has a substantial and beneficial effect on The brand image of Cat Ba tourism with a regression coefficient β = 0.233 and a significance level 95% p.value =0.000. With this result, H4 is accepted. This result is similar to previous findings with regression coefficient β = and significance level 95% p.value =0.000. This result is similar to previous findings: Collaborations with travel influencers and bloggers significantly enhance Cat Ba Tourism's brand image (Mai & Smith, 2018). This academic perspective is grounded in the diversification and credibility of influencers' audiences and their ability to convey personal and experiential narratives that resonate emotionally with followers (Nyanjom et al., 2018). Influencers' proficiency in visual storytelling accentuates Cat Ba's unique selling points, making it distinct and appealing (Jowett& O'Donnell, 2018). Their endorsements inspire and guide the decision-making process of potential travelers, offering a comprehensive marketing strategy (Braddock & Morrison, 2020). Overall, influencer collaborations are a scholarly-backed approach that amplifies Cat Ba's allure and desirability as a travel destination, leveraging credibility and reach to create an aspirational image (Nguyen et al., 2013).

The research results (Table 4) show that Promotions and Exclusive Offers has a substantial and beneficial effect on The brand image of Cat Ba tourism with a regression coefficient β = 0.194 and a significance level 95% p.value =0.000. This result is similar to previous findings that promotions and exclusive offers play a pivotal role in shaping the brand image of Cat Ba tourism (Nguyen et al., 2013). Their influence is grounded in their capacity to incentivize travel decisions through cost-effective incentives, thereby enhancing the perceived value of Cat Ba as a destination (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). These initiatives create a competitive edge in a crowded tourism industry, and their ability to stimulate positive word of mouth, repeat visits, and economic growth underscores their substantial impact (Law et al., 2014). Their exclusivity fosters a sense of privilege among travelers and contributes to Cat Ba's image as a vibrant and dynamic destination (Khatri et al., 2015). In essence, promotions and exclusive offers are instrumental in enhancing the overall allure and reputation of Cat Ba tourism (Nguyen et al., 2013).

Discussion

The research findings attest to the substantial and positive influence of several pivotal factors on the brand image of Cat Ba tourism (Nguyen et al., 2013). Firstly, the efficacy of Stunning Visual Content in shaping Cat Ba Tourism's brand image has been confirmed. This high-quality visual content, showcasing the natural beauty, cultural richness, and distinctive attractions of Cat Ba, effectively captures the attention of potential tourists (Nguyen et al., 2013). Disseminated through social media platforms, this visual storytelling not only distinguishes Cat Ba but also enhances its perceived value, profoundly influencing the inclination of prospective travelers to visit the destination (Tien Bui et al., 2016).

Secondly, Engagement and Interaction on social media platforms have been unveiled as significant determinants of the brand image (Ruiz-Meza et al., 2022). Proactive and responsive engagement fosters trust and a sense of community, amplifying the inclination of potential travelers to consider Cat Ba (Nguyen et al., 2013). Furthermore, this engagement provides a valuable conduit for real-time feedback, offering insights to enhance the tourism experience (Ryan, 2015). Additionally, it encourages travelers to share authentic narratives and endorsements, exerting a persuasive influence (Thanh & Smith, 2018).

Thirdly, the impact of User-Generated Content (UGC) on the brand image of Cat Ba tourism is notable (Huang & Liu, 2021). UGC, characterized by authentic traveler testimonials, significantly contributes to the credibility and overall image of the destination (Pino et al., 2019). The diversity of perspectives within UGC broadens the appeal of Cat Ba, functioning as a form of digital word-of-mouth that substantially influences the decision-making processes of potential travelers (Nyanjom et al., 2018).

Moreover, the findings confirm that Influencer Collaborations play a pivotal role in enhancing the brand image (Nguyen et al., 2013). This underscores the influential role of diversification and credibility in shaping perceptions. Influencers' proficiency in visual storytelling accentuates the unique selling points of Cat Ba, making it distinct and appealing (Bloom, 2022). Their endorsements inspire and guide the decision-making process of potential travelers, crafting an aspirational image.

Lastly, the research results establish that Promotions and Exclusive Offers are instrumental in shaping the brand image (Tien Bui et al., 2016). These initiatives, through their capacity to incentivize travel decisions and enhance the perceived value of Cat Ba, create a competitive edge (Nguyen et al., 2013). They stimulate word of mouth, encourage repeat visits, and contribute to economic growth, underscoring their substantial impact (Matthias, 2023).

In conclusion, these findings hold significant implications for destination marketing strategies, emphasizing the significance of high-quality visuals, engagement on social media, user-generated content, influencer collaborations, and promotional initiatives (Matthias, 2023). However, it is essential to acknowledge the limitations of this study, such as its location-specific focus on Cat Ba tourism in Hai Phong City, Vietnam, and the evolving nature of social media trends, necessitating continuous adaptation in practice (Mai & Smith, 2018). Future research endeavors may consider exploring these factors in diverse contexts and assessing their long-term impacts on destination branding.

Conclusion

This research underscores the substantial and positive impact of critical factors on the brand image of Cat Ba tourism (Nguyen et al., 2013). The efficacy of Stunning Visual Content in shaping the destination's image is undeniable, with high-quality visuals portraying Cat Ba's natural beauty, cultural richness, and distinctive attractions captivating prospective tourists and enhancing its perceived value (Tien Bui et al., 2016). Furthermore, Engagement and Interaction on social media platforms are revealed as significant determinants, fostering trust, real-time feedback, and authentic narratives that exert persuasive influence (Ruiz-Meza et al., 2022). UGC contributes significantly to the credibility and overall image of Cat Ba, broadening its appeal through diverse traveler testimonials (Huang & Liu, 2021). The pivotal role of Influencer Collaboration in enhancing the brand image is affirmed, as influencers' visual storytelling and endorsements make Cat Ba distinct and appealing (Bloom, 2022; Thanh & Smith, 2018). Promotions and Exclusive Offers are instrumental in shaping the brand image, creating a competitive edge, stimulating word of mouth, and contributing to economic growth (Tien Bui et al., 2016).

These findings have substantial implications for destination marketing strategies, emphasizing the importance of high-quality visuals, social media engagement, user-generated content, influencer collaborations, and promotional initiatives (Matthias, 2023). However, it is essential to acknowledge the limitations of this study, including its location-specific focus on Cat Ba tourism in Hai Phong City, Vietnam, and the dynamic nature of social media trends, necessitating ongoing adaptation in practice (Mai & Smith, 2018). Future research should consider exploring these factors in diverse contexts to assess their long-term impacts on destination branding.

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Appendix
QUESTIONNAIRE

Please provide the following information about yourself:

Gender: ☐Female ☐Other

Age: _____

Nationality: _____

How often do you use social media platforms for travel-related purposes?

☐Rarely ☐Occasionally ☐Regularly ☐Very Frequently

How familiar are you with Cat Ba tourism in Hai Phong City?

☐Not familiar at all ☐Somewhat familiar ☐Very familiar

Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree:

The Brand Image of Cat Ba Tourism							
Brand_Image 1	Cat Ba is a captivating tourist destination.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Brand_Image 2	I have a positive perception of Cat Ba tourism.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Brand_Image 3	Cat Ba is a desirable place to visit for a vacation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Brand_Image 4	Cat Ba is known for its natural beauty and cultural richness.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Stunning Visual Content							
SV_Content1	The visual content about Cat Ba on social media platforms is visually appealing.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
SV_Content2	Stunning images and videos of Cat Ba's landscapes are frequently shared on social media.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
SV_Content3	The visual content on social media enhances the appeal of Cat Ba as a tourist destination.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
SV_Content4	The visual content accurately represents the beauty of Cat Ba.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Engagement and Interaction							
Enga_Interaction1	Tourism authorities and businesses in Cat Ba actively engage with travelers on social media.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Enga_Interaction2	I feel a sense of community and trust in my social media interactions with Cat Ba tourism.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Enga_Interaction3	Social media interactions with Cat Ba enhance my perception of the destination.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Enga_Interaction4	I am satisfied with the level of engagement I experienced with Cat Ba on social media.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
User-Generated Content							
UG_Content1	Tourists frequently share their experiences and memories of Cat Ba on social media.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

UG_Content2	User-generated content provides authentic and persuasive testimonials about Cat Ba.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
UG_Content3	Reposted user-generated content enhances Cat Ba's brand image on social media.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
UG_Content4	I find user-generated content about Cat Ba to be reliable and informative.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Influencer Collaborations						
Collaborations1	Influencers with a significant following frequently promote Cat Ba on social media.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Collaborations2	I find influencer endorsements of Cat Ba to be credible and trustworthy.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Collaborations3	Influencers contribute to the positive image of Cat Ba as a tourist destination.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Collaborations4	I am more likely to consider visiting Cat Ba based on influencer recommendations.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Promotions and Exclusive Offers						
Promotions1	I have seen social media promotions and exclusive offers for Cat Ba tourism.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Promotions2	Limited-time deals and special packages on social media influence my travel decisions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Promotions3	The announcement of promotions on social media creates excitement about visiting Cat Ba.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Promotions4	I perceive promotions on social media as valuable incentives to visit Cat Ba.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Thank you for your participation. Your responses are invaluable for our research on the impact of social media on Cat Ba's tourism brand image in Hai Phong City.

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