

Bangkok Branding Through The Bangkokian's Perspective

Received: April 26, 2022 / Received in revised form: July 21, 2022 / Accepted: July 25, 2022

Nisachol Ratanasachol

Silpakorn University

Yubol Benjarongkij

National Institute of Development Administration

Abstract

This research aims to 1) study Bangkok's identity of the Conventional Districts through the Bangkokian's perspective, 2) explore the development of the Conventional Districts towards the New and Emerging Districts, and 3) apply the findings of Bangkok's identity study to Bangkok branding. The subject of this study was a 3- Helix group of policy makers, district researchers and developers, and Bangkokians. Focus-grouped interviews were conducted with the two groups: policy makers, and district researchers and developers, and a survey questionnaire was used with a group of 400 Bangkokians. The findings show that Bangkok is a multicultural society, having the Chao Phraya River and Thainess as the city's identity. Based on the Structural Equation Model (SEM), the findings confirmed that Bangkok identity also consists of a variety of dimensions, including history and culture; natural infrastructure; and tourism and recreation, which can lead to Bangkok branding which is based on its being the capital city of history and valuable cultural heritage, its being a multicultural community with the river and canals as natural infrastructure, and its being a city with a vision towards becoming a smart city. The results, therefore, suggest the definition of Bangkok for Bangkok branding is 'a living city of Thai heritage with natural infrastructure connecting people of multicultural and sophisticated city that keeps up with the world'.

Keywords: Bangkok, Bangkokian, Bangkok Branding, City Branding, Bangkok Identity

Nisachol Ratanasachol (Ph.D. in Communication Arts and Innovation, National Institute of Development Administration, Thailand, 2021, email: Nisachol23@gmail.com) is a lecturer at the Faculty of Information and Communication Technology, Silpakorn University. Yubol Benjarongkij (Ph.D. in Mass Communication, The Ohio State University, 1984 email: yubol.b@nida.ac.th) Professor Emeritus Yubol Benjarongkij Ph.D., National Institute of Development Administration.

This article is based on the research conducted for the dissertation "Bangkok Branding Through the Bangkokian's Perspective" by Nisachol Ratanasachol for which Professor Emeritus Yubol Benjarongkij Ph.D. was the advisor. It was support by the government budget of National Institute of Development Administration.

Introduction

Bangkok, officially established as Thailand's capital city on April 25, 1782 (B.E. 2325) or over 240 years (at the present year of 2022), has been the center of political and governmental dominance, education, transportation, finance and banking, communication, and commerce. The outstanding feature of Bangkok is its being a cosmopolitan city with people of multicultural differences who have a way of living their lives with their unique identity. It was ranked the World Best City for three consecutive years in 2010, 2011, and 2012 and is considered one of the World's best tourist destinations. From background studies of the development of Bangkok, different developmental aspects are found including the development of old-town or conventional districts that parallels with the changing of the city to a smart city. An ultimate goal of Bangkok city development is to turn it into a lively and living city which potentially attracts people to come to live, travel, and invest in. Accordingly, the study of Bangkok's identity is essential for Bangkok branding, especially when it comes from the perspective of the people who reside, work, and live there.

Transportation routes created the *Yan* or district and the community. The Siamese (Thai) way of life has been tied closely to rivers and canals. The Chao Phraya River is like arteries that nourish communities and bring about their unique identity. In the past, it was used as the main means of transportation; however, as there has been a transportation evolution, this has been shifted from waterways to roadways and railways. These changes led to the emergence of *Yan* or districts which comprise old-town or conventional districts with their

own unique identity and new or emerging districts with innovation and smart functions.

Yan or districts are areas which have been developed from the past to present with different patterns, depending on geographic, economics, social and political factors. There are two main categories of *Yan* or districts: *Conventional Districts*, which include Historical and Cultural Districts, Central Business Districts, and Residential Districts, and *Emerging Districts* which are Creative Districts, Innovation Districts and Matrix/Smart Districts. It is essential to start with the study of the Conventional Districts' identity and then to understand the Emerging Districts' concepts in order to identify the general tendency of district development.

The research gap was identified by gathering of previous study related to branding or identity of Bangkok in the past, which it was often conducted from the top-down direction or from the policy level to be adapted by general people. In addition, previous studies also focused on the tourism purposes such as tourists' needs and expectations, which were gathered from the outsiders or outside-in approach.

To understand the identity of Bangkok and how to maintain the identity of a long-history city, while searching for the contemporary identities of Bangkok, these two parts was studied via Bangkok communities, from the "emic approach" or from the eyes of the Bangkokians. Moreover, the study aimed to increase the feeling of participation and ownership of the city towards the sustainability of Bangkok.

This research aims to explore the Bangkokian's perspective on Bangkok's identity of conventional districts in order to apply the gained insight to the branding of Bangkok. A mixed method

was used in a pilot study to collect the data from three groups of people including policy makers, district scholars and researchers, and developers so that a research framework could be established for the study of the identity of conventional districts. The subjects from eight communities were interviewed and 400 Bangkokians answered the survey questionnaires. The findings show that *Yan* can reflect Bangkok's identity and this identity from conventional districts which are historical and cultural districts, residential districts and business districts could be used to develop emerging districts which are creative districts, innovation districts and smart districts. The analysis of the Structural Equation Model with the implementation of factor analysis brought about identity variables such as historical and cultural identity, natural resource infrastructure such as the Chao Phraya River and canals which could facilitate tourism and recreation.

The research questions served to answer the purpose of the study are stated as follows;

1. How to explore the Bangkok's Identity from the Bangkokian's perspective?
2. How to find the district's identity from the Bangkokians who are living in the conventional districts?
3. To what extent can the conventional district's identity describe Bangkok identity?
4. How to utilize the data from the past, the present and the future of Bangkok to generate Bangkok branding?

Literature review and related studies

The history of Bangkok establishment

The history of Bangkok establishment has been reflected through the different reigns of The

Kings of Thailand. In the reign of King Rama I-III (1782-1836), there was a move of the capital city from one side of the Chao Phraya River, the Thonburi side, to the other side, the Phra Nakhon side. During these periods, the city expansion and development was greatly implemented with the main purpose of making the new capital city on the Phra Nakhon side as splendid and graceful as the Ayutthaya capital city. Several improvements, therefore, involved the excavation of ditches and canals, the construction of city defense walls, and the settlement of people from different regions and races along the riverside. In the reign of King Rama IV-VI (1836-1925), Thailand opened the country in order to cope with the invasion from different western countries, and Bangkok was faced with a lot of changes. Different types of reforms including political, economic, and financial and education reforms were made in great measure. European architecture and construction were widely seen throughout the city. In addition, more roads such as Charoen Krung, and Silom were constructed for the convenience of people and good transportations. The mode of transport was changed from commuting by river to by road. The settlement of people and the lines of buildings were expanded along the roads, accordingly. In the reign of King Rama VII-VIII (1925-1946), when World War I ended, the influence of western cultures was exerted throughout Bangkok. A lot of changes were made to reform the city structure and patterns. Most importantly, Thailand changed from an absolute monarchy to democracy which led to changes in people's ideas about governing roles, politics, economics, and society of Siam, of which the name was changed to 'Thailand'. In the reign of King Rama IX (1946-2016), Thailand moved towards universality

and globalization. Bangkok's development was made so greatly that it was ranked as a world-class city. A lot of projects were initiated in this period. They included natural resource conservation and rehabilitation, international relations, and medical and public health care. There was an attempt to make Bangkok a heaven city or a clean, attractive, historic and beautiful city with suitable infrastructure such as ring roads which can help solve traffic problems and connect the road network. (225 Years of Rattanakosin, 2007)

Bangkok was once named the 'Venice of Asia' because of the Chao Phraya River and a number of canals which were used as the main routes of people and goods transportation. The central business areas seemed to be expanded along the river. However, after the construction of more roads in the city, there was a shift of the central commercial areas from the rivers to the roads. Bangkok has now entered the age of rail construction. Electric trains and subways have helped in urban development and the 'boat, car, rail' system has assisted well in the study of the city and community development.

Vision of Bangkok 2020

The vision of Bangkok 2020 was transmitted into three developmental approaches: 1) a gateway metropolitan of which the planning provides a connection and an exchange of personnel, products, information, knowledge, technology and education, 2) a green and sustainable city of which the planning focuses on the maintenance of a good natural environment in parallel to production, commerce and service with high competitiveness capacity, and 3) a pleasant community with good quality of life in

which people's good life can correspond with the creation of economic competitiveness capacity.

Definition of *Yan* (district), Old-Town or Conventional Districts and approaches of District Restoration

Yan or districts refer to the areas which have been developed since the old days up to the present with different patterns based on geographic, economic, social and political factors. These communities are divided into floating markets, commercial-street districts, markets, and village communities.

According to the district planning and restoration project implemented by the City Planning Office, Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (2009), there are two types of *yan* or districts. One is the old-town or conventional districts which include 1) historical and cultural districts, 2) central business districts, and 3) residential districts. The other is the new or emerging districts which are not specified by traditional characteristics, but newly designated by emerging issues e.g. elderly society and online economy, etc. These districts are 1) creative districts, 2) innovation districts, and 3) smart districts. From the definitions of all kinds of districts and the preparation of guidelines for restoring the conventional districts of Bangkok, the data can be used as guidelines for studying the identity of these districts. (The Urban Design and Development Center, Chulalongkorn University 2015)

Innovation Districts

The National Innovation Agency (NIA), 2014 stipulated "Innovation Districts" as a new concept of spatial and urban planning and design. They are the areas with a density of innovation or innovation usage

which share resources and co-creation of innovation which respond to the goals of individuals and organizations in the districts.

Smart districts

The Office of Digital Economy Promotion Agency (DEPA) defines a smart city as a city that can make use of modern and smart technology and innovation to increase the effectiveness of service provision and urban management, and also reduce costs and uses of resources by emphasizing the participation of business and civil sectors in city development.

Concepts of Bangkok as a Cosmopolitan Primate City

Bangkok is considered one of the cosmopolitan cities comprising people of racial and cultural diversity and was ranked the 32nd among the megacities in 2017. The importance of being a metropolitan city is to be a center of economic and political dominance at an international level and possess its own roles. This concept is emphasized by what Gottman, 1995 states: *'Every large city wants to develop a world role'* (p.62).

Concepts of the Virtuous Circle of Creative Destination Reputation

Making a city a creative destination can help enhance the well-being of the people in the community. Morgan et al., 2011 suggest the use of the virtuous circle of creative destination reputation to do this job. The circle consists of six aspects: tone, tradition, tolerance, talent/strength, transformability, and testimonial. In addition, the hexagon of competitive identity was also recommended by Anholt, 2002 as a tool for a city to communicate with

the outside world and create its image in the target public's minds. This model comprises six channels of activities that a city should take into account: 1) tourism promotion, 2) branding, 3) government's policy, 4) business investment, 5) culture, and 6) people.

Concepts of Destination Branding

Ritchie and Ritchie, 1998 define 'a destination brand as a name, logo, artwork, or graphics that can identify the identity of a product or service and can differentiate destinations. Destinations brands can deliver promises of memorable tourism experiences which can help in consolidating and reinforcing the collection of satisfactory memories towards the destinations.'

Ritchie and Crouch, 2001 identify 8 characteristics of destination brands: 1) identification, 2) the degree of the memory of destination brand over others, 3) differentiation, 4) no confusion with other places, 5) anticipation, 6) the generation of desire to visit, 7) expectation and reassurance, and 8) reinforcement, cement, consolidation, and coherence.

Concepts of Brand and Brand Identity

Aaker, 1996 defines 'brand' as the creation of differentiation of the name and uniqueness of certain products or services, i.e., logo, trademark, or packaging as well as identification of the product and service of a seller (p. 28). In addition, Aaker specifies three levels of brand value: 1) functional benefit, 2) emotional benefit, and 3) social benefit. Insch, 2011 describes that for city branding, groups like residents are often neglected and devalued though they play an important role in shaping and developing a brand. In fact, they are the people who live and breathe

there and therefore are a major component of a city brand. Their attitudes, engagement, and lifestyles related to the places where they live can affect tourists' perceptions about places. All aspects of these places concerning economic, social, cultural and environmental dimensions can influence residents' satisfactions and these have become the ultimate outcome of a city branding. Another view of city's branding is described by Urry, 1990 as 'tourist gaze'. He explains it as a visual experience that cannot be gained from their usual life at home or at work. Their aim for travelling is to 'gaze at a sign' to find specific features or attributes of certain places such as well-known chapels or beautiful landscapes or other attractions.

Concepts of Thainess

Jackson, 1991 describes Thai fundamental institutions: Buddhism, Nation, and Monarchy as the foundation and identity of Thai culture. Buddhism teaches monks and Buddhist laymen ethics, beliefs, and practices. Though the Thai identity can be communicated through traditional village crafts, fairs, architectural monuments, archaeological sites, the most distinguished Thai identity is being Buddhist and this is confirmed by what was written in *Trai Phum Phra Ruang*, a Sukhothai-era text.

Sanyawivat, 2017 defines 'Thainess' by separating it into two parts. The first part is physical Thainess which involves gesture, body movement, speaking behavior, etc. in traditional and inherited manners. A well-known nonverbal action of Thai people is smiling and this leads to the slogan 'Siam, the land of smiles'. The second part is explained as spiritual Thainess which concerns Thai ways of thinking, i.e., an ability to rule the country peacefully,

proper management towards orderliness and harmony, and community unity.

Cultural Heritage Fairs of Fine Arts Department and the Office of the National Cultural Commission classify Thainess into 9 groups: 1) ancient objects/ archaeological sites/ art objects, 2) Thai history, 3) art objects, 4) traditions, 5) language and culture, 6) performing arts and folk plays, 7) Thai dressing, 8) values/morality/ethics, and 9) ways of living and Thai wisdom.

Related Studies

Potjiranukul, 2016 conducted a study titled 'The elements of identity, brand image of Sukhothai cultural branding, and the role to support nation branding' and aimed to study the elements of identity and culture used for Sukhothai-culture branding. The findings showed that ancient temples and a 'world heritage' sign could be used as Sukhothai's identity for city branding. The concepts of Echtner and Ritchie, 2003 are also adopted to measure the Sukhothai brand. The measurement covers these aspects: functional benefits, emotional benefits, perceived value, perceived personality, psychological image, perceived attributes, and overall perception. Furthermore, the national brand theory of Anholt, 2000 was applied to measure the perception of nation brand image through four dimensions: tourism, culture and heritage, people, and branding.

Traiphiriya, 2017 analyzed the patterns and a process of the signification of Thainess in tourism advertising and the construction of Thai identity in tourism advertising in her study called 'The analysis of symbolic meaning and Thai identities construction in the tourism-oriented advertising'. The advertising

was produced by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) and it displayed Thai identity in diverse meanings, with the portrayal of hybridity caused by cultural diversity and dynamism by social contexts. She found that the Thai identity or Thainess in tourism advertising is the construction of a set of signs from the tourists' gaze lists of both Thai and foreigners.

Hongjanya, 2018 did a study 'Nation branding based on semiotic analysis: a case study of Thailand brand'. The research aimed to develop a conceptual framework of Thailand brand based on semiotics analysis through six competitive identities and images. The study showed that the Thailand brand was constructed with six national identities; people, tourism, investment, product, governance, and culture.

The literature has been reviewed in different dimensions including the history of Bangkok, the identity of conventional districts which comprise architectures, cultures, traditions, and rituals. The city has been developed through the changes of transportation routes from the river to the roads and rails. The study of Bangkok development for the present and the future is to study through the restoration of conventional districts and the development of new or emerging districts. Most importantly, it is to study one important dimension and that is 'Bangkokians' which consists of the residents of the districts who live in a place and the people who work or stay in a place. These groups of people have a sense of belonging and they are believed to be valuable assets and important parts of the development of Bangkok both in the policy-making and at operational levels.

Research Methodology

The research was conducted by using mixed methods comprising qualitative and quantitative approaches. The population included a 3 Helix group, namely, 1) the government sector (policy makers), 2) the academic institutions (researchers, district developers, and scholars), and 3) Bangkokians and people in the communities. The study was conducted in the following four phases:

The first phase was to review documented research concerning the history of Bangkok, Bangkok Vision in 2032, the development of conventional and emerging districts, and the city's branding.

The second phase used in-depth interviews to collect data from stakeholders and experts related to policy making and city branding, and experts in developing innovation districts, creative districts and smart districts, and scholars related to the restoration and development of conventional districts.

According to Patton (1990), city development requires participation from all sectors by determining key informants from the involved agencies or people and the place in an information-rich case whose in-depth information can be acquired. There are three main parts comprising of political groups who play significant roles of policy-making, groups of high experience of researchers and community leaders and groups of diverse population. Thus, for this study, the population was

Policy Maker from Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA), Tourism Authority of Thailand, Digital Economy Promotion Agency (DEPA), and National Innovation Agency (NIA). From this group, the study aimed to shed light on the policies of Bangkok Development, comprising the 20-year Bangkok Development Plan, policies of public

relation of tourism in Bangkok, and policies for developing smart district and innovation district in Bangkok

Researchers, city developers, and scholars from universities, such as Urban Design and Development Center (UddC), Chulalongkorn University, an expert in Creative District from an instructor of the Faculty of Architecture and Planning, Thammasat University.

And the expert in Branding from Chulalongkorn University. The third phase used focus-group interviews with community leaders and people in the conventional districts to gain insights on the community identity from the eight communities, as follows: 1) Kham Phaeng Thong Phattana Community, Klong Bang Luang 2) Haroon Mosque Community, Charoen Krung 3) Nang Loeng Community 4) Suan Luang Community, Charoen Krung 5) Sampheng – Yaowarat Community 6) Kudi Chin Community 7) Bangrak – Silom Community and 8) Bang Sue Community

The sampling was purposive sampling by contacting community leaders or experts in each community or district. The topics or outlines of the interview are 1) Definition of the district and its eminent feature of identity. 2) Changes affecting the district 3) Desirable district in the future 4) Trends or directions for future Bangkok development and 5) Problems and obstacles for developing the district. The data helped to explain community identity and to foresee the tendency for district and city development.

The fourth phase was called ‘Voice of Bangkokians’ which used a survey questionnaire to explore 400 Bangkokians’ perspective to discover Bangkok’s identity. The quantitative method was

applied to research for recheck the unique identity of each studied district in Bangkok gained from qualitative research. The survey questionnaire comprises the following topics: 1) General information of the Bangkokians 2) The district identity and image 3) The components and characteristics of district identity 4) Approaches for developing the Conventional, Creative, Innovation and Smart District. 5) Component of Bangkok Branding and 6) The foresight of Bangkok.

Hair et al (2010) propose a set of criteria for selecting samples. These included that the sample should be randomly no less than 100 samples and that the sample size should be greater than 10 times of any latent variables in the model. According to the rule of thumb, the minimum sample size should be 150-250 samples (Hair et al, 1998). Besides, if considered by the proper sample size of Yamane (1973) formula, the sample should not be less than 400 samples. Thus Bangkokians collected in this study were 400 samples.

The 400 of Bangkokians represented by the residents who live in conventional districts of Bangkok from birth up to present and the people who live, use space or travel around Bangkok. The questionnaire was also distributed to the respondents at the age of 20-70 years described as Baby Boomer, Generation X, Generation Y and Generation Z.

The content validity of the questionnaire was tested by the thesis advisor, committees, scholars and experts. The reliability of each part of the questionnaire was found to be proper or between 0.60 -1.00 (Krit Raengsungnoen,2011) as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1 The alpha-coefficient of the reliability test of the questionnaire

Part	Alpha Coefficient
Part 2: Components of the District identity	0.886
Part 4: Approaches for the District restoration	0.908
Part 5: Components of Bangkok branding	0.915
Part 6: The foresight of Bangkok	0.943
Total reliability value	0.959

The descriptive analysis: frequencies and percentages were used for describe demographic variables and mean was used to explain the level of 34 variables. Since, the researcher aimed to study the identity of Bangkok in order to applying it to Bangkok branding, the analysis of the congruence of Structural Equation Model (SEM), an approach of Schumacker and Lomax (2010), was implemented for statistical analysis to test and estimate the causal relationships. Structural Equation Model is a set of statically techniques used to measure and analyze the relationships of observed and latent variables. It examines linear causal relationships among variables while simultaneously accounting for measurement error.

Besides, Multivariate Regression Analysis and Factor Analysis were also used to find the identity of Bangkok related to the conventional district and to examine the relationship among the components or factors for proposing brand communication for Bangkok.

The researcher analyzed all four sets of data which were gained from the three groups of key informants: policymakers, researchers and district developers, and Bangkokians, and from the analysis of statistic data in order to ascertain the similarities and differences among those sets of data the

guidelines for Bangkok's district development and Bangkok branding can be set up.

Findings

The research aimed to find out whether *yan* can reflect Bangkok identity, what the tendency of district development is like, what the future of Bangkok will be, and what the factors used for identifying Bangkok identity are.

Findings from documentary study

The origin of city developments started from the study of Bangkokian settlement along the river. Then it shifted to the settlements along the roadways and the railways. Nowadays especially the role of railways can be clearly observed as the city development plan has included the district development along the sky train routes.

Findings from in- depth interviews with policy makers, scholars and experts

The findings from the in-depth interviews have provided data concerning the following topics.

1. Bangkok Vision 2020

The results show that the Bangkok Vision 2020 project was implemented and in this 20-year Bangkok development plan (2013-2032), Bangkok is positioned as 'Vibrant of Asia'. By the year 2032, Bangkok will have been transformed through

different phases in order to become a metropolitan city of different aspects, namely, of safety, of environmental friendliness, of people, of compact structure, of democracy, and of economics and learning. It is expected to finally become a center of the economy, education, investment, commerce and culture of the ASEAN region and in Asia.

2. Expansion of the city through transportation routes

Bangkok city planning # 4 (year 2017) has had a plan to expand the city along the new transportation routes such as the sky train system. This finding is corresponded with the reviewed literature that illustrated the necessity of the transportation oriented development as to build up a compact city in which it can be connected to its adjacent cities through sky train and with self-administered systems.

3. Campaigns used for Bangkok branding

The findings gained from the interviews with the Tourism Authority of Thailand described a variety of campaigns employed to help boost Thailand tourism and to support Bangkok branding. First, the ‘*Bangkok Smile*’ campaign was implemented with a focus of five dimensions, namely, 1) culture, 2) rivers and canals, 3) shopping, 4) sightseeing and food, and 5) value for money. Second, the ‘*Amazing Thailand*’ campaign, a collaboration between the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration and the Tourism Authority of Thailand, to promote tourism and to integrate the cooperation among private organizations in Thailand and in neighboring countries. Third, the ‘*Amazing Thai Te*’ or Thai Charming Campaign was also used to encourage Thai people to travel in the country. Bangkok is considered as a preferred destination and a hub of everything; people come to Bangkok for shopping, watching sports, appreciating arts and most

importantly experiencing Thai hospitality. All in all, the Tourism Authority of Thailand has designated Thai identity as ‘Thainess’ and the Bangkok brand involves culture, history, food, sports, local tourist attractions and city modernity.

4.2.4 Characteristics of different types of Yan or districts

The findings from the Urban Design and Development Center (UDDC), Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok 250 classified the districts into conventional districts which comprised historical and cultural, central business, government, and residential districts, and emerging districts which included new industrial, creative, diaspora and, smart districts. The following are features of some types of districts obtained from the interviews.

A smart district: the data about smart district planning was obtained from the Digital Economy Promotion Agency (DEPA) which described the policies, guidelines, concepts and operations of a smart city plan. Bangkok is expected to be a city of livability, efficiency, and sustainable development.

An innovation district: The National Innovation Agency (NIA) described the policy for building up an innovation district as the application of knowledge and creativity towards changes and the official participation should involve four main sectors (Quadruple-Helix) including the government sector, private sector, education institutions, and people in a district. The six districts designated as the target innovation districts.

A creative economic district: some scholars viewed that the creative district can help support the community’s identity when the concept of ‘adaptive reuse’ was promoted for Bangkok’s development plan.

5. Brand and Bangkok branding

The data obtained from scholars and experts in brand and destination brand illustrated the importance of Bangkok branding in that it can make people in the districts proud of their community. In addition, Bangkok branding should involve both present and future dimensions and must enhance the increasing of revenue and the reduction of cost.

From the obtained data, it can be concluded that district features can reflect Bangkok identity and the factors that influence Bangkok branding are attributes, benefits, value, personality, and psychological aspects as suggested in Aaker's, 1998 conceptual framework as shown in Figure 1.

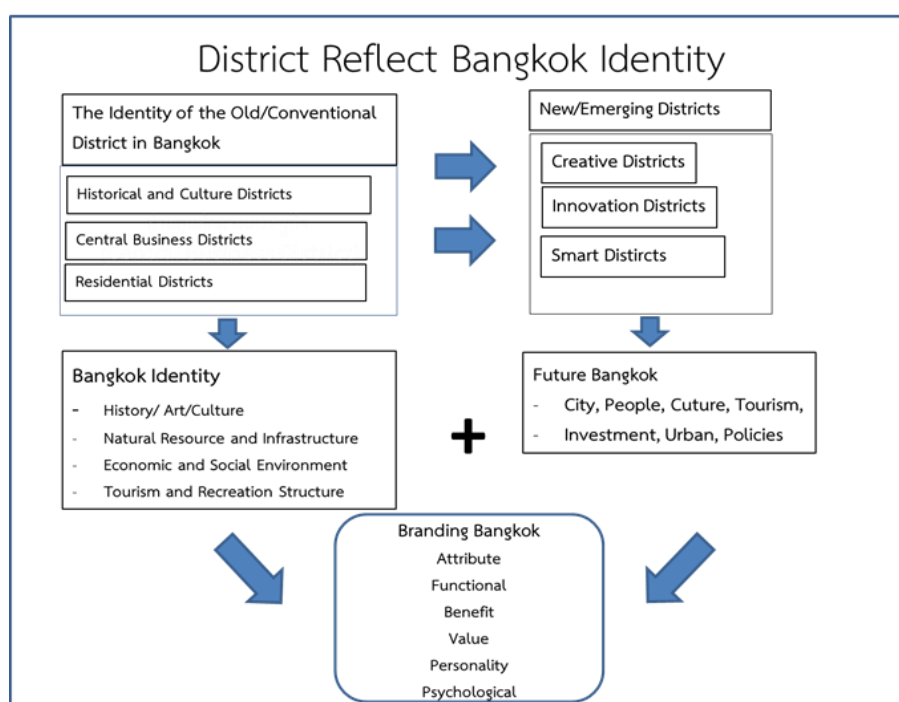


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Findings from focus- group interviews with communities

The findings show that each community should have ten common features concerning district identity, namely, 1) having a historical and cultural identity, 2) having a unique way of life, 3) being a strong community, 4) being tourism- oriented, 5) being a multicultural community, 6) having unique and fine food, 7) possessing their own architecture, 8) having transportation- oriented development, 9) being a

business or commercial community, and 10) having other identities, i.e., OTOP products, etc.

In addition, district development in the future should be community-based or community-oriented and should maintain old and traditional values. The districts are expected to have become livable districts with complete transportation development and finally they can be developed and turned into tourist attractions for both Thai and foreign tourists.

Findings from the quantitative research

The subjects who answered the questionnaire included 400 Bangkokians who are in the following age ranges: 40-54 or Generation X (51.9%), followed by 22-39 or generation Y (31.4%). Both groups are well-educated considering their educational background and most of them earned approximately 30,000- 60,000 baht monthly. In overall, most samples were middle-class people with potentials in education and occupation, so they could be considered potential Bangkok residents who could provide valuable information and perspective on Bangkok identity. They lived in 23 areas and 72 districts. They identified their places of living as residential districts, central business districts, and historical and cultural districts. This

finding corresponded with the designation of district types produced by the Urban Design and Development Center, Chulalongkorn University which identified these districts as conventional districts.

Findings from the Structural Equation Model Analysis

In the Structural Equation Model Analysis, the confirmatory factor analysis was used to identify the latent variables of the identity of the district which supported the identity, the latent variables of Bangkok branding, and the latent variables of the future of Bangkok. According to statistic data, it is confirmed that district identity support Bangkok branding as shown in Figure 2

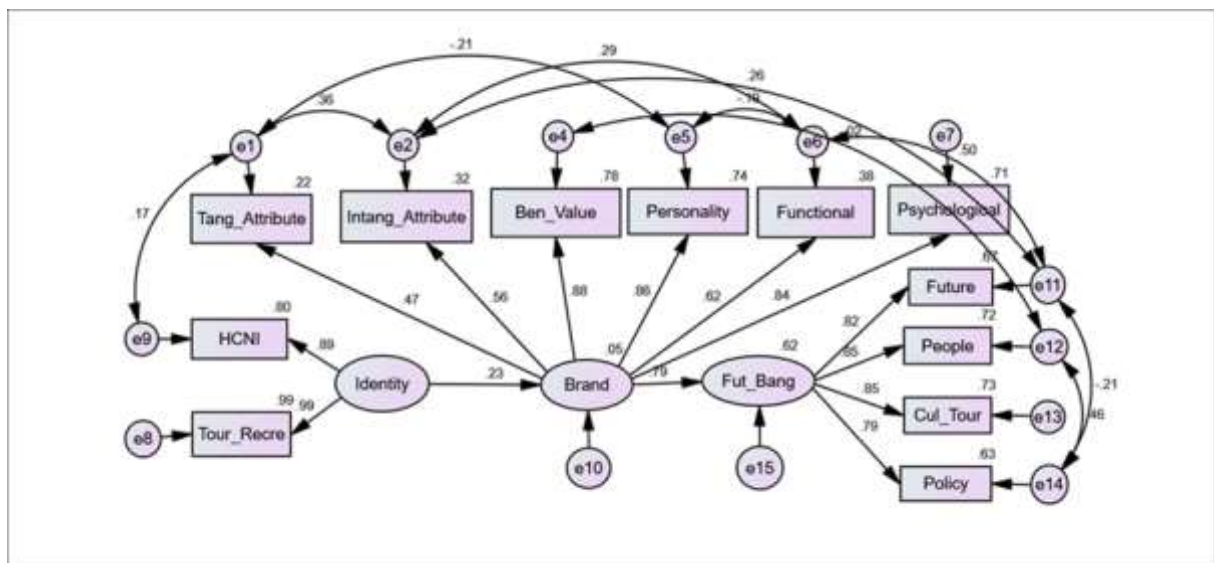


Figure 2 The Relationship among Variables after the Model Modification

Figure 2 shows standardized solution Chi-Square = 91.106, df = 42, p-value = 0.000, CMIN/df = 2.169, RMSEA = 0.054, NCP = 49.106, NFI = 0.974, RFI = 0.959, IFI = 0.986, CFI = 0.986, RMR = 0.030, GFI = 0.965, AGFI = 0.934, PGFI = 0.519, AIC = 163.106, CAIC = 343.246, ECVI = 0.404

From the structural equation model, the conclusion from the use of the structural equation model can explain that Bangkok identity consists of historical culture and natural infrastructure, and tourism and recreation as shown in Figure



Figure 3 Bangkok Identity, Bangkok Brand and Future Bangkok

Discussions

The common identities that were similarly perceived by every part or sector from the top-down perspective to the bottom-up perspective were described in four aspects: history and culture, natural resource and infrastructure, economic and social environment, and tourism and recreation.

- 1) The history and culture aspects: the participants seemed to agree that Bangkok's most distinguished identity was having historical architecture and religious places, and being a multicultural society.
- 2) The natural resource and infrastructure aspects: the participants viewed that Bangkok's eminent images were having the Chao Phraya River and natural canals for their charm and making complete transportation-oriented development.
- 3) The Economic and social environment aspects: they considered Bangkok the

national and ASEAN economic center which could potentially attract foreign investment.

- 4) The tourism and recreation aspects: all groups agreed on the characteristics that make Bangkok the World's best destination. These are beautiful ancient architecture, graceful scenery of the Chao Phraya River and canals, local and original-recipe food, and local products or OTOP.

However, there were few aspects that the participants perceived in different directions. They are the concepts of making Bangkok a smart city for everyone, a compact city, and a modernized city. These ideas seemed to be created only from the policy level and people in the places disagreed with the ideas.

After using Anholt's the Hexagon of Competitive Identity, the researcher can identify the competitive identity of Bangkok as illustrated in Figure 4

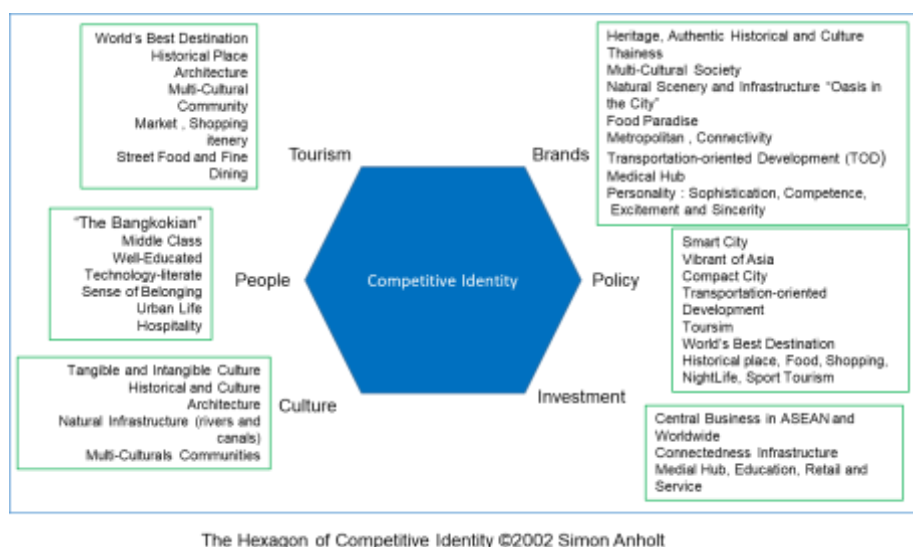


Figure 4 The Hexagon of Competitive Identity of Bangkok

From Figure 4, for the **'people'** dimension, Bangkokians can be described as middle-class, well-educated, and technology-literate groups of people. They have lived an urban life, are hospitable and have a sense of belonging to the place where they live, so they could collaborate well to help develop Bangkok.

Regarding the **'cultural'** dimension in the hexagon, Bangkok comprises both tangible and intangible culture expressed through its long history and culture, architecture, natural infrastructure such as rivers and canals, and being a multi-cultural community.

For the **'policy'** dimension, Bangkok is aimed to become 'Vibrant of Asia' with its being a smart, compact, transportation-oriented city and 'the World's best destination' in terms of tourism policy.

Regarding the **'tourism'** dimension, Bangkok is targeted to be the World's best tourist destination since it is well-known for its historical places, distinguished architecture, local street food and fine cuisine, and markets and good shopping.

In the **'investment'** dimension, Bangkok is the center of commerce and business in ASEAN and worldwide with its connected infrastructure of communications and transportations. In addition, it could be developed to be a medical hub and a center of education and retail services.

For the **'brand'** dimension, Bangkok is positioned as a metropolitan city with a focus on different aspects. These include its historical heritage, authentic historical culture and Thainess, multicultural society, natural scene and infrastructure as Oasis of the city, its paradise culinary culture, and its connectivity among cities in the ASEAN region and around the world, its effective transportation-oriented development, and its being a medical hub. Furthermore, its distinguished personality as part of Bangkok's brand is viewed through its sophistication, efficiency, excitement and sincerity features.

The findings from the study can be used to set the guidelines for Bangkok branding as depicted in Figure 5.



Figure 5 Pyramid of Bangkok Branding from the Perspective of Bangkokians

From the figure 5 The six layer can be explained as follows:

Product features : Bangkok is the capital of historical cultural heritage including natural infrastructure.

Functional benefits: Bangkok is a city of living history, a center of economics, a smart city, a medical hub, and a city of connectedness to other cities of the nation, Asian countries, and the world.

Emotional rewards: Bangkok is the national heritage and authenticity, a smart city, but surrounded by nature, i.e. the river and canals. It is also a multicultural metropolitan city.

Consumer value: Bangkok is good for living, working, and investment. It is a city of cultural heritage that is moving forward continuously while being able to connect to other cities and the world.

Brand personality: Bangkok is a sophisticated city with cultural and historical

heritage reflecting Thainess. It is civilized and has a high potential of being and economic center through its complete communications and transportation infrastructure. It is a smart and exciting city filled with food, shopping, sports, and multicultural communities. Finally, people of Bangkok are sincere and are hospitable and the rivers and canals are Bangkok's valuable natural infrastructure.

All in all, with all the distinguished features of Bangkok identity described, the researcher has come up with the one message which would suggest the best Bangkok brand as

'Bangkok is a living city of Thai heritage with natural infrastructure, river and canals, connecting people of cultural diversity, and is a sophisticated city that can catch up with the world.'

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