

Place brand communities as a tool used to raise awareness of the destination

Dr Ewa Pisula-corresponding author

Independent researcher

ewa.pisula.contact@gmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2390-8535>

Dr Marcin Kania

Independent researcher

martino13-13@wp.pl

<https://orcid.org/0009-0007-3331-630X>

Abstract: Tourist destinations position themselves as brands to attract visitors in the global tourism industry. One of the strategies that can be effective in raising awareness of the place, its history, culture, traditions, and heritage is building brand communities. The goal of this article is to define the components that determine the effectiveness of a destination brand community as a tool used to raise awareness of the place. The research was conducted in Poland, using a quantitative approach. According to the research results, for a tool like a place brand community to be effective in raising awareness of the destination, attention should be paid to four elements: *Members' engagement; Communication, interaction; Relationships; Benefits*.

Keywords: place brand community, brand destination, raising awareness of the destination

Introduction

Traditional top-down destination branding is no longer sufficient. As tourist destinations increasingly position themselves as brands to attract tourists in the global tourism economy, places are not merely geographic entities but complex brands competing for the attention of tourists, citizens, investors, and visitors [Trueman *et al.*, 2004; Boisen, Terlouw and van Gorp, 2011; Hossain *et al.*, 2017; Manthiou, Kuppelwieser and Klaus, 2022]. In the context of a competitive tourism market, it is important to use tools that enable destinations to differentiate themselves. This can be achieved by allowing consumers to interact with a destination, its products, and its heritage [Godovykh and Tasci, 2020; Nautiyal *et al.*, 2023] as well as visitors' engagement, which has a direct and positive effect on destination loyalty [Zhou and Yu, 2022]. In a competitive market in the tourism sector, it is crucial to focus on building the brand, which is an integral part of communication, shaped by a destination's culture, history, and people. Branding can be used to draw attention to a destination's heritage, history, culture, and tradition [Thuyet, 2023]. Within this context, cultural tourism aims to provide educational and engaging experiences that

foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of the place's cultural identity [Halifan Mteti, *et al.*, 2025].

In the XXI century, there has been a noticeable shift toward a paradigm focused on co-creation and redefining the producer-consumer relationships by involving the audiences in a value creation and enabling interaction. However, with the development of digital technologies, social media, and experience-driven tourism, the role of visitors has changed from passive consumers to active participants who seek authentic, participatory, and co-created experiences [Krawiec, 2020; Orts-Cardador *et al.*, 2025]. Zhou and Yu [2022] argue that tourists are active participants in the communication process and they rely on the knowledge of other visitors. Furthermore, to ensure the competitiveness of tourist destinations, it is essential to focus on building the relationships between tourists and the destination, as well as between tourists themselves and between tourists and local communities. Such relationships play a crucial role in fostering destination loyalty and encouraging tourists to revisit [Manthiou, Kuppelwieser and Klaus, 2022; Liang, 2022; Haanpää and Hanni-Vaara, 2023].

A growing number of tourist destinations worldwide has intensified competition, encouraging places to seek innovative tools for promoting their regions and communicating with target audiences [Wilk, Sadeque and Soutar, 2024]. Raising awareness of a destination, its culture, traditions, and heritage is important because these elements contribute significantly to shaping its identity [Joldescu-Stan and Dobra, 2025]. Cultural heritage has become a key pillar in the development of tourism experiences and in enhancing the competitiveness of a destination by highlighting its history, traditions, and unique cultural assets [Mammadova and Abdullayev, 2025]. One of the strategies that can be effective in raising awareness of a place and its heritage is building brand communities, as these communities foster loyalty, strengthen relationships with consumers, influence consumers' behavior, engage tourists, enables interaction with the destination, promote consumer-to-consumer communication, and shape perceptions [Ho and Wang, 2020; Veloutsou and Liao, 2022]. Cultural tourism seeks to offer authentic and immersive experiences that enable visitors to gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of the cultural heritage [Halifan Mteti, *et al.*, 2025] and these aims can be achieved through building brand communities.

The goal of this article is to define the components that determine the effectiveness of destination brand community as a tool used to raise awareness of the

place. The concept of brand communities has been extensively studied in the consumer goods sector. Research on brand communities has focused on communities associated with commercial brands, including Harley-Davidson, Jeep, Saab [Heere *et al.*, 2023]; Walmart [Ho and Wang, 2020]. Brand communities, defined as a group of consumers who share a common interest in a brand, serve as an effective tool in both the service and consumer goods sectors for the purpose of building brand loyalty and engagement. Ho and Wang [2020] mentioned that previous studies have proven that brand communities are effective tools used to build relationships. Veloutsou and Liao [2022] argue that scholars have paid more attention to firm-hosted brand communities. Nevertheless, the application of brand communities in the tourism sector is increasing. However, a limited number of studies have empirically examined the role of brand communities in building relationships between tourists and destinations. Cheung *et al.* [2021] argue that studies on the importance of brand communities in the tourism context are scarce. According to Debashree, Pradhan and Swani [2021-finding from the literature review on the subject, which indicates a level of academic interest in a brand community research] only 14 studies-5,36% [out of 285] have focused on the tourism industry. Martin and Capelli [2018] argue that destination brands need to develop their place marketing strategies based on symbolic and utilitarian values. It is crucial to build “a brand ecosystem” to deliver a value, that network should include stakeholders and interactions between its members at every stage of the brand value creation process [Rop, Akunja and Thiong’o, 2021]. The concept of place brand communities, defined as a network of residents, visitors, organizations, and stakeholders who actively engage in and contribute to the creation of a place’s identity, is becoming increasingly popular. Communities can be formed around the destination, heritage, local narratives, or shared travel experiences. However, there is a need for further research on brand communities in the tourism context remains evident [Veloutsou and Liao, 2022]. This article examines how destination brands can adopt the consumer good sector’s marketing strategies [brand communities] to raise awareness of the place.

However, there is a need for more in-depth analysis of specific elements that make a destination brand community effective in this context. There is limited empirical evidence on how a destination brand community should be designed and managed to achieve the goal-raising awareness of a destination. Previous studies have focused on analyzing isolated elements of brand communities, while dimensions of

their effectiveness have been examined separately. This study proposes a multidimensional model of destination brand communities' effectiveness. The question arises: what factors affect the effectiveness of a destination brand community as a tool used to raise awareness of the place. The main goal of this article is to define the components of a destination brand community's effectiveness as a tool used to raise awareness of the place. The following hypothesis has been put forward: The effectiveness of a destination brand community as a tool used to raise awareness of the place is determined by: 1] *Benefits*; 2] *Members' Engagement*; 3] *Communication, interaction*; 4] *Relationships*; 5] *Brand culture*.

The research process consisted of three stages: 1] designing the questionnaire, which was later used in the factor analysis; 2] conducting quantitative research by means of an interview questionnaire [in the form of an online questionnaire] distributed among young adults in Poland [students of University WSB Merito in Poznań]. In this study, young individuals actively involved in tourism brand communities were selected as participants. The identification of respondents was facilitated by the implementation of a screening question: "Are you an active member of a tourism destinations brand community?". The decision to focus on young adults as participants for this research on place brand communities was motivated by their distinctive behavioral patterns and engagement with digital platforms. These characteristics make them a relevant and influential demographic in building place brand communities. Firstly, young adults demonstrate a strong desire to be permanently connected [Silveira, Morais and Petrella, 2022]. Young adults seek social interaction and they are motivated to build relationships with other consumers [Confente and Kucharska, 2020]. The above statements align closely with the dynamic and participatory nature of brand communities. According to Eurostat [2024] 88% of individuals aged 16 to 29 in the European Union and 90% of young people in Poland within the same age group actively participate in social networks [creating user profiles, posting content]. Young adults represent an engaged, active audience, making them an important target group for building place brand communities. The goal of this stage was to collect data that were later used in a Principal Component Analysis [PCA-third stage of the research]; 3] The PCA was aimed at eliminating the weakest factors. At this stage, final factors determining the effectiveness of a destination brand community as a tool used to raise awareness of the place were identified.

Literature review-design the questionnaire

Brand communities are defined as specialized, non-geographically-bound groups brought together by a structured set of social relations among people who voluntarily join because they share a common interest in a brand [Pedeliento, Andreini and Veloutsou, 2020].

Kumar Choudhary and Kant Sahu [2023] argued that the most effective strategies identified in the studies included brand positioning, brand personality, brand storytelling, and brand community. The authors also suggest that building a brand community through social media, events, and other channels can also be an effective way of managing and shaping brand associations, as it fosters a sense of belonging and identity among consumers and encourages positive word-of-mouth and brand advocacy. When tourists feel a sense of belonging to a city, they are more likely to become brand ambassadors. Brand communities can be formed as an online space, offline or hybrid. Offline brand communities involve face-to-face interactions among community members. Online brand communities are not geographically bound and are created on the internet, allowing members to share brand-related information [Debashree, Pradhan and Swani, 2021]. Virtual brand communities play a significant role in offering a platform for users allowing them to co-create and engage in the communication process. This is crucial in the age of Marketing 4.0 [Pham, Pham and Nguyen, 2022]. Attaqi and Setyawan [2023] argue that a brand community serves not only as a marketing tool for companies but also as a long-term business strategy for achieving brand goals. The success of the brand community is reflected in indicators of consumers' loyalty as well as the willingness of consumers to become brand advocates.

Brand communities are used by marketers to communicate with consumers. Brand communities allow to build brand trust, brand loyalty, and brand awareness [Santos *et al.*, 2022]. They also provide a platform through which visitors, residents, and stakeholders can share values, and experiences associated with a place [Martin and Capellini, 2018]. The role of local communities is also crucial, residents are perceived as active partners in co-governing heritage landscapes [Dương Thị Thu, 2025] who play a crucial role in the tourism development, promoting destinations. To raise awareness of a place, it is crucial to involve local communities in the tourism development and also to cultivate a sense of responsibility within local communities [Hyasat, 2023]. In a global tourism market characterized by intense competition, destination brand communities offer a strategic approach to increasing the visibility of

the place, educating about its culture, history, and heritage. Branding influences the target group's place identification, place attachment, and support for tourism [Zhao, Cui and Guo, 2022]. Brand awareness is a crucial phase in the tourists' decision-making process, and it plays a fundamental role in shaping tourists' behavior [Ye, 2012; Kumail *et al.*, 2022; Phan Tan, 2023; Chavadi *et al.*, 2023]. Creating a strong impression among tourists, a destination brand needs to foster positive awareness [Ye, 2012]. Due to the importance of the destination brand awareness, this study focuses on the factors of building brand communities as a tool used to raise awareness of the place. Destination awareness refers to the level of understanding and knowledge that individuals have about the destination [Hyasat, 2023]. Brand awareness is reflected in an individual's capacity to identify and remember a brand [Sriboonlua, 2023]. Raising awareness of the place is closely linked to visitors' engagement in cultural and historical experiences that can increase their knowledge [Thuyet, 2023]. The awareness of the destination plays a pivotal role in the sustainable management and the promotion of cultural tourism [Halifan Mteti, *et al.*, 2025]. Awareness of the place, especially in the heritage and cultural context, is a key motivator influencing tourists' behavior, creating long-term emotional and mental relationships [Bhatti and Alqasa, 2025]. Cultural heritage awareness significantly contributes to tourists' satisfaction [Elrayah and Absamatov, 2025]. Moreover, cultural heritage awareness strengthens the relationships between cultural tendency and destination loyalty [Bhatti and Alqasa, 2025]. The participation in a place brand community facilitates the development of strong relationships between tourists and destination, thereby fostering a greater destination loyalty [Veloutsou and Black 2020; Pedeliento, Andreini and Veloutsou, 2020; Attaqi and Setyawan, 2023; Chavadi *et al.*, 2023; Kumar Choudhary and. Kant Sahu, 2023].

From a strategic perspective, building a place brand community requires the identification a multidimensional *Benefits* with the intention of increasing awareness of the brand [Kumar and Kumar, 2020; Pedeliento, Andreini and Veloutsou, 2020; Santos *et al.*, 2022; Phan Tan, 2023; Chavadi *et al.*, 2023; Kumar Choudhary and Kant Sahu, 2023]. Membership in brand communities influences the decision-making process [Santos *et al.*, 2022; Phan Tan, 2023; Chavadi *et al.*, 2023], influencing both purchasing and repurchasing intentions. Tourism brand communities provide an opportunity to create an influential platform that shapes the decision-making process of potential and returning visitors. The brand communities can be used as a tool of

promotion [González *et al.*, 2020]. By creating a platform that brings together tourists, residents, and stakeholders who share experiences and knowledge about destinations, it provides an opportunity to raise awareness of the place. Brand communities can be used as a valuable source of information about the brand [Santos *et al.*, 2022; Jiang *et al.*, 2023]. The main goal of place marketing communication is to provide valuable information that shapes the audiences' perception of the place and their behavior [Szromnik, 2011] and therefore, it is crucial to create channels for providing information about the destination [Szromnik, 2015]. A brand community can also be a tool used to raise members' knowledge [Dessart and Veloutsou, 2021; Santos *et al.*, 2022; Jiang *et al.*, 2023; Phan Tan, 2023; Heere, Lock and Cooper, 2023; Mukti and Rofiah, 2024] about the history, culture, traditions, and heritage. Furthermore, they offer opportunities for consumer-to-consumer communication [Coelho, Bairrada and Peres, 2019; Hadinoto *et al.*, 2020; Kumar and Kumar, 2020; Phan Tan, 2023; Chavadi *et al.*, 2023; Jiang *et al.*, 2023]. The peer-to-peer communication gives participants opportunities to create their own information, and send it, as well as send feedback [Luk *et al.*, 2013; Morstyn and Mcculloch, 2018; Mitridati, Kazempour and Pinson, 2021]. The brand communities are effective tools of consumer-brand communication [Hadinoto *et al.*, 2020]. The decision was made to choose *Benefits* as a first dimension that determines the effectiveness of building a destination brand community as a tool used to raise awareness of the place.

The next dimension identified based on the literature review is *Members' engagement* which plays a crucial role in the place brand marketing communication, influencing loyalty, knowledge transfer, co-creation, and interaction. Members' engagement plays a crucial role in shaping the brand experience [Veloutsou and Black, 2020; Ozuem *et al.*, 2020; Hadinoto *et al.*, 2020; Kumar and Kumar, 2020; González *et al.*, 2020; Pedeliento, Andreini and Veloutsou, 2020; Santos *et al.*, 2022; Heere, Lock and Cooper, 2023; Phan Tan, 2023). Research indicates that stakeholders associated with a particular place become place ambassadors, and their engagement leads to place development and building a positive image [Szromnik, 2011; Stubbs and Warnaby, 2015]. By engaging with the cultural heritage, visitors can connect with traditions and stories related to the place, creating memorable experiences [Halifan Mteti, *et al.*, 2025]. According to the literature review, types of engagement were identified, the first type is an active engagement [Coelho, Bairrada and Peres, 2019; Veloutsou and Black, 2020; Kumar and Kumar, 2020; González *et al.*, 2020;

Pedeliento, Andreini and Veloutsou, 2020; Dessart and Veloutsou, 2021; Santos *et al.*, 2022; Phan Tan, 2023]. The stakeholders' engagement has a significant impact on raising awareness of the place [Braun, Kavaratzis and Zenker, 2013]. Furthermore, the stakeholders often seek to participate in the creation of products as well as they desire to influence building up the place image by creating content, initiating discussions, and co-creating value [Rebelo, Mehmood and Marsden, 2020]. It is also crucial to pay attention to passive participants – individuals who observe, consume the content, seek valuable information, learn about the brand, visit regularly brand website, establish cognitive and emotional connections with the brand [Dessart and Veloutsou, 2021; Phan Tan, 2023]. It is important to highlight that participation in brand communities is typically driven by individuals' own initiative, reflecting a voluntary and self-motivated form of engagement rather than one driven by external mandates or incentives [Kumar and Kumar, 2020; Dessart and Veloutsou, 2021; Phan Tan, 2023; Heere, Lock and Cooper, 2023]. Brand communities are a dynamic ecosystem where consumers interact with each other and with the brand. Among the various forms of engagement, user-generated content is perceived as a valuable tool. Members want to share personal experiences, usage tips, and recommendations, while also seeking opportunities to co-create products, create brand narratives [Hadinoto *et al.*, 2020; Pedeliento, Andreini and Veloutsou, 2020; Veloutsou and Black, 2020; Kumar and Kumar, 2020; Santos *et al.*, 2022; Phan Tan, 2023]. In the era characterized by information overload, user-generated content serves as an authentic source of information. Consequently, brand communities provide a valuable space for the creation and sharing user-generated content about the brand. The engagement of stakeholders in place branding is characterized by the undertaking initiatives aimed at creating the information about the location, its history, tradition, culture, heritage [Houghton and Stevens, 2011], furthermore, it can allow to communicate the place's values [Braun, Kavaratzis and Zenker, 2013]. Engagement is related to interaction, cooperation, and building relationships with the brand, as well as the co-creation of the brand value [Brodie *et al.*, 2011]. Brand community provides opportunities to comment, share information, experiences, interests, ideas related to brand community management [González *et al.*, 2020; Coelho, Bairrada and Peres, 2019; Kumar and Kumar, 2020; Pedeliento, Andreini and Veloutsou, 2020; Santos *et al.*, 2022; Chavadi *et al.*, 2023]. It has been proved that engaged stakeholders can become the brand's ambassadors who promote the brand [Veloutsou and Black, 2020; Chavadi *et al.*,

2023; Kumar Choudhary and Kant Sahu, 2023]. Place ambassadors, through their commitment and engagement, support the development of the destination [Szromnik, 2011; Stubbs and Warnaby, 2015]. Brand communities represent valuable platforms for consumer-to-consumer communication including storytelling; sharing of personal, authentic stories, and experiences [Coelho, Bairrada and Peres, 2019; Hadinoto *et al.*, 2020; Kumar Choudhary and Kant Sahu, 2023]. This platform provides opportunities to build trust and shape brand perception. Brand communities are perceived as spaces for word-of-mouth communication [for example sharing recommendations] which is treated as a credible and persuasive [Coelho, Bairrada and Peres, 2019; Veloutsou and Black, 2020; Pedeliento, Andreini and Veloutsou, 2020; Dessart and Veloutsou, 2021; Santos *et al.*, 2022; Phan Tan, 2023; Attaqi and Setyawan, 2023; Kumar Choudhary and Kant Sahu, 2023]. Furthermore, word-of-mouth and recommendations serve as key indicators of place branding effectiveness [Strandberg, Styvén and Hultman, 2020].

The next dimension identified based on the literature review is *Communication, interaction* [González *et al.*, 2020; Veloutsou and Black, 2020; Kumar Choudhary, Kant Sahu, 2023]. Active involvement of regional managers and availability of an organized support system are crucial aspects of place branding. Through the support system, community members have opportunities to contact managers, seek advice. This system can be treated as a valuable source of information [Coelho, Bairrada and Peres, 2019; Pedeliento, Andreini and Veloutsou, 2020; Veloutsou and Black, 2020]. Setting up initial group meetings [Veloutsou and Black, 2020] and discussion forums [Coelho, Bairrada, and Peres, 2019; Phan Tan, 2023] can encourage community members to actively participate in discussions. Real-time interactions have become a crucial aspect of the place branding, particularly in the brand community. Live communication provides opportunities to share feedback, exchange experiences or ideas, ask and answer questions [Veloutsou and Black, 2020; Ozuem *et al.*, 2020; Santos *et al.*, 2022]. Furthermore, integrating online and offline elements is essential for building engaged brand communities. Through a combination of digital platforms and physical touchpoints, brands can cultivate a sense of belonging and create long-lasting relationships with audiences [González *et al.*, 2020; Veloutsou and Black, 2020; Phan Tan, 2023]. Events, meetings, brand fests [Phan Tan, 2023; Kumar and Kumar, 2020; Kumar Choudhary and Kant Sahu, 2023], workshops, competitions, challenges [Kumar and Kumar, 2020] provide opportunities to interact, experience a place, meet

new people, build an emotional connection with the place brand. These aspects are crucial for raising awareness of the place, its culture, traditions, and heritage [Hannah and Rowley, 2013; Strandberg, Styvén and Hultman, 2020].

The next dimension identified based on the literature review is *Relationships* [Rastegari, Amirhossini and Torkfar, 2019; Coelho, Bairrada and Peres, 2019; Kumar and Kumar, 2020; González *et al.*, 2020; Dessart and Veloutsou, 2021; Santos *et al.*, 2022; Phan Tan 2023; Chavadi *et al.*, 2023; Jiang *et al.*, 2023]. Relationships are key elements of the brand community concept. Brand community is created by people who identify with the brand [Coelho, Bairrada and Peres, 2019; Kaura *et al.*, 2020; Pedeliento, Andreini and Veloutsou, 2020; González *et al.*, 2020; Ozuem *et al.*, 2020; Dessart and Veloutsou, 2021; Santos *et al.*, 2022; Phan Tan, 2023; Chavadi *et al.*, 2023; Heere, Lock and Cooper, 2023; Jiang *et al.*, 2023; Kumar Choudhary and Kant Sahu, 2023]. It is imperative to acknowledge the significance of personalized interactions and emotional responsiveness in fostering trust, commitment, and engagement within brand communities. By understanding members' needs and feelings, brands can cultivate loyalty [Santos *et al.*, 2022; Chavadi *et al.*, 2023]. Another crucial aspect of building consumer-brand relationships is attachment, which represents a powerful predictor of loyalty, advocacy, long term engagement [Coelho, Bairrada and Peres, 2019; Rastegari, Amirhossini and Torkfar, 2019; Ozuem *et al.*, 2020; González *et al.*, 2020; Kumar and Kumar, 2020; Dessart and Veloutsou, 2021; Santos *et al.*, 2022; Kumar Choudhary and Kant Sahu, 2023; Jiang *et al.*, 2023; Chavadi *et al.*, 2023]. Members of such communities actively take part in building and developing the brand through relationships formed among them. It is crucial to group together consumers with a common passion or interest in a brand, integrate them and build customer-customer relationships [Coelho, Bairrada and Peres, 2019; Pedeliento, Andreini and Veloutsou, 2020; Phan Tan, 2023; Heere, Lock and Cooper, 2023]. Trust is a crucial element of relationships-building in brand communities, influencing participation, attachment, loyalty, advocacy, and engagement [Coelho, Bairrada and Peres, 2019; Dessart and Veloutsou, 2021; Santos *et al.*, 2022; Attaqi and Setyawan, 2023; Chavadi *et al.*, 2023].

The last dimension determining the effectiveness of the brand community is *Brand culture* [Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001]. Furthermore, authentic, and transparent brand practices are key drivers of trust and attachment [Coelho, Bairrada and Peres, 2019]. Traditions, rituals, and shared activities are crucial elements that influence

relationships building in brand communities [Coelho, Bairrada and Peres, 2019; Phan Tan, 2023; Heere, Lock and Cooper, 2023]. To build strong relationships between members, it is crucial to identify community values that define a community's identity [Pedeliento, Andreini and Veloutsou, 2020; Phan Tan, 2023]. Furthermore, within brand communities, it is crucial to define their own informal rules of interaction which reflect the community's unique culture and values, reinforcing a sense of belonging [Phan Tan, 2023].

The dimensions and characteristics described above were chosen based on the review of literature on the subject. Based on the literature review, the specific features of brand community were operationalized, and statements-items were formulated, which were used in the online questionnaire. According to Santos *et al.* [2022] dependent variable was formulated: 1] Participation in the place brand community raises my awareness of that destination. The questionnaire consisted of 38 statements [which came from the review of literature-one dependent variable and 37 independent variables] [Table 1].

Table 1. Identified theoretical dimensions and corresponding components determining the effectiveness of the place brand community together with the items created on their basis used in the questionnaire

Table 1.

Dependent variable		1. Participation in the place brand community raises my awareness of that destination.
Dimension	Characteristics	Items used in the on-line questionnaire – independent variables
Benefits	Purchase/Repurchase intention	2. Belonging to the community around the city/region brand influences my intention to travel or revisit a place.
	Promotion	3. Building communities around the city/region increases the attractiveness of the destination.
	Source of information about the brand	4. By participating in the place brand community, I receive valuable information about the history of the destination.
	Education	5. By participating in the place brand community, I learn about the destination.
	Customer-customer communication	6. Participation in the place brand community allows me to communicate with other members of the group.
	Customer-brand communication	7. By participating in the place brand community, I can contact place managers.

Members' Engagement	Active	8. I enjoy being an active member of the place brand community.
	Passive participation they look for information, read	9. My participation in the place brand community relates to searching the information about the destination
	Own initiative	10. My engagement is my own initiative.
	User generated content, co-creation	11. Content created by place brand community members presents values of the destination.
		12. I like creating my own content about the destination.
		13. I like creating my own fan pages/websites dedicated to a specific destination.
	Commenting; sharing experience, interests, values, ideas about brand management	14. Participating in the place brand community allows me to comment and share information related to a specific destination.
		15. I share my ideas related to brand management.
		16. I like sharing my experiences related to a specific destination.
	Customer advocacy	17. Participating in the place brand community allows me to meet new people with the same interest.
		18. Being a place brand community member, I feel like a destination's advocacy.
Communication, interaction	Storytelling	19. Participating in the place brand community allows me to share my personal stories related to a specific destination.
	Word of mouth, members' recommendations	20. The value of a place brand community membership is receiving recommendations from other members about a specific destination.
	Support, system support	21. I receive support from place brand community managers.
	Setting up initial group meetings	22. Thematic virtual meetings related to a specific destination should be created within the place brand community.
	Real-time interaction	23. Real-time interactions within the place brand community increase my engagement.
	Combine an online with an offline presence, hybrid community	24. Participation in the hybrid place brand community, including both virtual and real-life interactions, increases my interest in a specific destination.
	Events, organizing meetings, brand fests, and other collective encounters involving all of the communities formed around the brand	25. Within place brand community, events/fests related to a specific destination should be organized.

	Workshops	26. The value of place brand membership is the opportunity to participate in thematic workshops related to a specific destination.
	Competitions, challenges	27. I find competitions and challenges organized within the place brand community to be an effective way to interact with the members.
	Discussion forums	28. A key benefit of participating in place brand community is access to thematic discussions related to a specific destination.
Relationships	Brand community identification	29. By participating in the place brand community, I feel that I belong to a group that identifies with a specific destination.
	Personalization, an attention to members' needs, feelings	30. By participating in the place brand community, I receive personalized content
		31. By participating in the place brand community, I receive personalized experiences.
	Attachment	32. As a member of the place brand community, I feel connected to a specific destination.
	Grouping together consumers with a common passion or interest in a brand, social integrity, customer-customer relationships	33. Creating place brand communities allows to integrate people interested in a specific destination.
Brand culture	Building trust	34. Trust within the place brand community allows to build strong relationships with the destination.
	Brand authenticity, transparency	35. I trust place brands more when they are transparent and authentic, especially when I am a member of the place brand community.
	Community's traditions, rituals, and activities	36. A community's traditions, rituals, and activities increase the attractiveness of the destination.
	Community value	37. Shared place brand community values allow to build relationships with the destination.
	Customers own rules of interaction	38. The place brand community should follow their own rules regarding interaction between participants.

Source: own elaboration

This questionnaire was used in the quantitative research and data collected during the quantitative research were later used in the PCA analysis.

Methodology and results-the proper research [quantitative research] – identifying final factors of place brand community's effectiveness used as a tool of raising awareness of the destination

The research [quantitative research-an online questionnaire] was conducted between March 2025 and May 2025 on respondents from Poland–students, young adults. The questionnaire was sent via university e-mails. 510 individuals took part in the survey. Since 16 questionnaires were completed incorrectly¹, 494 questionnaires were used for factor analysis.

The data collected by means of quantitative research were later used in an Exploratory Factor Analysis and more specifically in Principal Component Analysis [PCA]. PCA was used to identify the final factors determining the effectiveness of the place brand community used to raise awareness of the destination. The questionnaire consisted of 38 statements [37 independent variables and one statement dependent variable]. A Likert scale was used to evaluate the variables from 1 to 5 was applied, where 1 indicates “I completely disagree” and 5 indicates “I completely agree”.

In the first stage of PCA, all 37 variables were used, and regression analysis was conducted. In the model including all independent variables, R² for dependent variable “Participation in the place brand community raise my awareness of that destination” was 0,928.

The data obtained in the course of the quantitative research enabled PCA based on a varimax rotation to be carried out, with an intention to eliminate the weakest factors and identify the determinants of place brand communities. The preliminary number of dimensions was determined as five [based on the literature review]. The decision was made based on Cattell's scree to reduce the number of dimensions from the theoretical five to four. In order to demonstrate the validity of the reduction the number of dimensions, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin [KMO] test was employed in conjunction with Barlett's test. The KMO test for the entire sample amounted to 0.770 whereas the chi-square distribution in Barlett's test amounted to 24092,294 with 666 degrees of freedom [p-value<0,001]. Cronbach's alpha was also calculated – tau-equivalent reliability that amounted to 0,859, it proved that a scale is reliable. In the first stage of PCA, all 37 variables were used.

¹ the criteria deemed incorrect included failure to answer a question and providing the same replies to each statement which suggests that the respondents did not understand or did not read the questions.

Interpretation of loadings is based on factor loadings, which in turn reflect the degree to which a variable is saturated with a given factor; it is accepted that an increase in the value of the loading is indicative of a greater importance of the variable in relation to a specific factor, with factor loadings most often considered significant when they take a value higher than 0.5, so one variable was removed of the least important variables [11. Content created by place brand community members presents the values of the destination].

Four transparent dimensions were created, including 36 variables [Table 2]. Factor analysis, conducted from the perspective of academic students, has indicated that four components of place brand community have emerged, which determine the effectiveness of this tool used to raise awareness of the place. Dimensions have been named as: *Members' engagement; Communication, interaction; Relationships, Benefits*.

Table 2. The ultimate arrangement of 36 variables and features as part of the four dimensions, the weighting plus tau-equivalent reliability [Cronbach's alpha] for each component

Name of dimension and variability explanation	Variables	Weighting in the dimension				Cronbach's alpha
		Dimension 1	Dimension 2	Dimension 3	Dimension 4	
Members' engagement	14. Participating in the place brand community allows me to comment and share information related to a specific destination.	,860				0,915
	10. My engagement is my own initiative.	,799				
	37. Shared place brand community values allow to build relationships with the destination.	,794				
	24. Participation in the hybrid place brand community, including both virtual and real-life interactions, increases my interest in a specific destination.	,784				

	22. Thematic virtual meetings related to a specific destination should be created within the place brand community.	,735				
	15. I share my ideas related to a brand management.	,724				
	33. Creating place brand communities allows to integrate people interested in a specific destination.	,689				
	30. By participating in the place brand community I receive personalized content	,649				
	38. The place brand community should follow their own rules regarding interaction between participants.	,642				
	20. The value of a place brand community membership is receiving recommendations from other members about a specific destination.	,642				
	19. Participating in the place brand community allows me to share my personal stories related to a specific destination.	,625				
	35. I trust place brands more when they are transparent and authentic, especially when I am a member of the place brand community.	,543				
	13. I like creating my own fan pages/websites dedicated to a specific destination.	,506				
Communication, interaction	9. My participation in the place brand community relates to searching the information about the destination		,881			0,934

	12. I like creating my own content about the destination.		,868			
	5. By participating in the place brand community, I learn about the destination.		,835			
	16. I like sharing my experiences related to a specific destination.		,821			
	31. By participating in the place brand community I receive personalized experiences.		,818			
	27. I find competitions and challenges organized within the place brand community to be an effective way to interact with the members.		,754			
	7. By participating in the place brand community I can contact place managers.		,717			
	21. I receive support from place brand community managers.		,676			
	8. I enjoy being an active member of the place brand community.		,667			
	17. Participating in the place brand community allows me to meet new people with the same interest.		,621			
	28. A key benefit of participating in place brand community is access to thematic discussions related to a specific destination.		,585			
Relationships	29. By participating in the place brand community, I feel that I belong to a group that identifies with a specific destination.			,892		0.918

	36. Community's traditions, rituals, and activities increase the attractiveness of the destination.			,862		
	32. As a member of the place brand community, I feel connected to a specific destination.			,847		
	2. Belonging to the community around the city/region brand influences my intention to travel or revisit a place.			,830		
	23. Real-time interactions within the place brand community increase my engagement.			,761		
	34. Trust within the place brand community allows to build strong relationships with the destination.			,752		
	6. Participation in the place brand community allows me to communicate with other members of the group.			,746		
	26. The value of place brand membership is the opportunity to participate in thematic workshops related to a specific destination.			,742		
	18. Being a place brand community member I feel like a destination's advocacy.			,646		
Benefits	4. By participating in the place brand community I receive valuable information about the history of the destination.				,731	0.524
	3. Building communities around the city/region increases the attractiveness of the destination.				,650	

	25. Within place brand community, events/fests related to a specific destination should be organized.				,609	
--	---	--	--	--	------	--

Source: own elaboration

The sum of total variability amounts to 70,56 %. Limitation of PCA is intentional omission of part of the variability under consideration. The principle of PCA is to use as few dimensions as possible to explain as much of the indicators' variability as possible [Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994]. The level that is the most frequently indicated appears to be approximately 60–70% [Hair *et al.*, 2009].

The KMO test for the coefficients left in the model amounts to 0,780 whereas Barlett's test indicates the chi-square distribution of 23293,007 with 630 degrees of freedom [$p\text{-value} < 0,001$]. These findings confirmed that an indication that the procedure of dividing variable sets into dimensions by means of factor analysis is justified. An analysis was conducted of the reliability of the specific measurements.

Conclusions

As a result of the quantitative research *Members' engagement* proved to be the most important factor of the effectiveness of building a place brand community. The involvement of the community in promoting a destination, building its brand, and managing communication contributes to fostering a sense of shared responsibility for the place [Braun, Kavaratzis and Zenker, 2013]. Moreover, the receivers of place brand communication wish to actively participate in the creation of the regional offers and influence the destination's identity. Therefore, when creating the place brand communities, managers of the place should treat the members as partners, engaging them in building relationships and in the co-creation of the place product [Rebelo, Mehmood and Marsden, 2020]. When members are provided with opportunities to comment, share opinions, and provide feedback, it is more likely to raise their awareness of the destination and increase their knowledge about heritage. It is important to encourage participants to create user-generated content that empowers members to share personal stories, experiences, comments related to the destination. According to research results, sharing recommendations is a key value of the place brand community. It is recommended to allow members to share their opinions and

recommendations regarding travel plan. According to PCA analysis, self-motivated engagement plays a crucial role in raising awareness of the destination through building a place brand community. Destination brands should design place brand communities to be easily accessible, allowing members to participate in a spontaneous and voluntary way. According to PCA analysis, it is crucial to identify brand values, those shared place brand values allow to build relationships with the destination. When members identify with the values promoted within the place brand, they are more likely to feel emotionally connected, engaged, and loyal to the destination. These shared values foster a sense of belonging. It is crucial to identify the place brand identity and communicate it. The research results proved the importance of hybrid participation in the place brand community. In this context, hybrid participation combines virtual interactions [on social media, forums, virtual meetings] with real-life engagement [events, place experiences, games, festivals, real-life meetings]. Moreover, hybrid communities often serve as a bridge between global audiences [e.g. potential visitors, visitors from different countries] and local experiences including engagement of local advocates. Hybrid place brand communities play a crucial role in raising awareness of the place. On the one hand, members experience the destination in real-life and then share their real-life experiences via digital platforms. This activity makes the message authentic and allows to raise awareness of the destination. It is recommended to organize real-life events and broadcast them online. It is crucial to organize thematic meetings or cultural events. These events and meetings could integrate people interested in a specific destination, they would be the spaces where members could share their ideas, experiences. According to PCA, it is crucial to create personalized content based on users' preferences and behaviors. While free access to the brand community is crucial, the research results indicate that a place brand community should follow its own rules regarding interaction between participants. Destinations should find a balance between guidelines and freedom. According to the research results, it is important to allow participants to share their personal stories, this can allow to raise awareness of the place brand. Research results showed that people trust a place brand more when brand is perceived as transparent and authentic. Therefore, it is crucial to create a space where real stories can be presented and where people have the opportunity to share their experiences. According to PCA, it is crucial to allow participants to create own fan pages or websites dedicated to specific destinations. According to quantitative research, the engagement of the place brand

community plays a crucial role in raising awareness of the destinations, fostering emotional connections, communicating authentic narratives.

According to PCA, *Communication, interaction* is the second dimension determining the effectiveness of building place brand communities. Research findings highlight the importance of two-way communication and engaging participants in creating the message, product, offer. In this aspect, communication is interactive, allowing participants to send the information, recommendations about the destination. This activity allows participants to build relationships [Christodoulides, 2009; Chandler and Munday, 2011].

According to research results, it is crucial to focus not only on active community members who generate content but also on passive participants. Those individuals do not engage in the community life, but they seek reliable information. They are motivated by the belief that community provides trustworthy, experienced based information that supports their travel related decisions or increases their knowledge. Their perception of the destination is shaped through observation and content consumption. Therefore, it is recommended to provide high-quality content, such as user-generated content, reviews, FAQs. According to the research results, it is crucial to engage active members to create their content related to the destination and to share their experiences related to the place because this kind of information seems to be authentic and helps to raise awareness of the place, its culture, tradition, history, and heritage. In addition, members expect to play an active role in communication. PCA proved that this information provided within the place brand community allows members to learn about the destination and confirms the assumption that the place brand community is a valuable source of information. According to PCA, members of the place brand communities receive personalized experiences. It is recommended to create a space where members have access to content related to their interests, needs, travel intentions. Through members' engagement, user-generated content, communication, the community can become a dynamic space where the personalization of experience is not a result of algorithmic targeting but as a result of the shared knowledge, users' engagement, and authenticity. It is recommended to engage participants in sharing experiences. Another important aspect of the effectiveness of the place brand communities is organizing competitions and challenges as they provide opportunities to interact with other members. Challenges and competitions serve as valuable tools to promote specific brand values, culture,

history, tradition, and heritage, build relationships with the destination. According to PCA, it is recommended to organize thematic discussions related to a specific place. The PCA analysis suggests that place brand communities provide an effective channel through which members can contact destination managers and obtain valuable information. This two-way communication contributes to a sense of co-creation, share feedback, ask questions. Destination managers should actively participate in their brand communities by moderating discussions, answering questions, providing feedback, offering assistance in the decision-making process, supporting while travelling. It is recommended to organize live chats or surveys, as these activities can strengthen the dialogue between managers and members of the place brand community. Place managers must ensure they are consistently available, as a perception of dependable assistance from community managers has been shown to increase trust. Place brand community is an effective tool to integrate people with the same interest.

The third dimension determining the effectiveness of the place brand communities is *Relationships*. The research results confirmed the assumption that belonging to a place brand community influences the development of emotional relationships with the destination [Veloutsou and Black, 2020; Pedeliento, Andreini and Veloutsou, 2020; Kumar and Kumar, 2020; Santos *et al.*, 2022; Phan Tan, 2023; Attaqi and Setyawan, 2023; Chavadi *et al.*, 2023; Kumar Choudhary and Kant Sahu, 2023]. The sense of belonging to the community, shared values, shared personal experiences, interaction with others are factors that contribute to a sense of attachment to the place [Kumar and Kumar, 2020; Santos *et al.*, 2022; Heere, Lock and Cooper, 2023]. The destination should be perceived not only as a travel destination but also as a space that fosters joy, emotional connections, trust, understanding, member-to-member communication. Such attachment is often strengthened by repeated exposure to user-generated content, authentic stories, cultural rituals, community traditions. Emotional relationships with the destination can influence individual travel decisions, increase the likelihood of repeat visits, increase the knowledge about the heritage, and foster long-term loyalty, ultimately leading to place advocacy. According to PCA, it is recommended to organize real-time interactions and thematic workshops within the place brand communities where members can communicate with each other, share ideas, meet each other.

The fourth dimension determining the effectiveness of the place brand community is *Benefits*. Participation in the place brand community offers many benefits and values. One key advantage is access to valuable information about the history, heritage, and cultural identity of the destination. Furthermore, building active place brand communities increases the attractiveness of the place. These communities contribute to a dynamic and engaging brand image. In addition, organizing thematic events and festivals within the community can attract potential visitors, increase their knowledge of the heritage, and allow to interact with the place and its culture. Place brand communities offer immersive, participatory experiences related to local culture. The Benefits dimension explains 6,4 % of total variance, indicating its relatively lower importance compared with other dimensions. However, this factor was represented by three items with satisfactory loadings [0,609-0,731] suggesting that it was well-defined.

According to the research findings, a multidimensional model was identified including four elements: 1] *Members' engagement*; 2] *Communication, interaction*; 3] *Relationship*; 4] *Benefits* that can be used to raise awareness, interpret the heritage, culture, history of the destination.

Participants' engagement plays a crucial role in the interpretation of heritage and raising awareness of the place because heritage is interpreted not only by managers, and organizations but also by residents, tourists, stakeholders. The heritage, culture, tradition are communicated by members, they are perceived more authentic. Engagement improves authenticity, when community members participate in shaping the destination narrative, they help ensure that interpretation reflects real experiences. It is crucial to focus on local community engagement in the strategic planning as it can help visitors to understand the place [Wijesuriya, 2022]. Belonging to the brand community provides opportunity for lived interpretation, contribute personal memories, place-based knowledge, active participation in storytelling and communication [Court, 2022]. Place brand communities can serve as a space for building awareness, trust, authenticity, attachment. Engagement, interactive communication are key elements of cultural tourism that immerse travelers in a destination's local culture [Halifan Mteti, *et al.* 2025]. Tourists' experiences play a key role in promoting destination of cultural and historical importance [Thuyet, 2023]. It is crucial to pay attention to community-based heritage management because this orientation may attract tourist visits and impact participants awareness of the place

[Wijayanti, et al., 2023]. The research results have shown that tourism [especially in heritage context] has moved beyond a model based on passive sightseeing to active participatory [Đương Thị Thu, 2025].

The model shifts the focus from product or brand to an active place brand community. The model is not only a tool for promoting a place but also for co-creating content, exchanging knowledge, and building relationships. Research findings have shown that a place brand community can serve as a tool for interpreting, and increasing knowledge of history, and strengthening perception of authenticity. Place brand communities can be used as a tools for offering authentic and immersive experiences that enable visitors to gain a deeper understanding of the destination, which is a crucial aspect of cultural tourism [Halifan Mteti, *et al.*, 2025]. The model provides an opportunity to achieve educational and cultural goals of cultural tourism.

The research results proved that place brand community can be perceived as a source of information about the destination, its heritage, culture, and traditions. Furthermore, a place brand community facilitates the interpretation of information. Interpretation is considered as an effective learning, communication and management tool, as it increases visitors' awareness of heritage. Heritage interpretation is closely linked to experiences and participation [Moreno-Melgarejo, *et al.*, 2019]. The research results confirm this statement because place brand communities encourage participants to experience and engage in communication and participate in the heritage interpretation.

For a place brand community to serve as an effective tool for raising the awareness of a destination, four elements should be considered: *Members' engagement; Communication, interaction, Relationships, Benefits*. According to the research results the hypothesis: The effectiveness of destination brand community as a tool used to raise awareness of the place is determined by: 1] *Benefits*; 2] *Members' Engagement*; 3] *Communication, interaction*; 4] *Relationships*; 5] *Brand culture* was rejected, the results indicate that four components determine the effectiveness of place brand community in the raising awareness of the destination: *Members' engagement; Communication, interaction, Relationships, Benefits*.

Theoretical implications:

The research results highlight, the need to shift the paradigm from an institution – driven branding to community co-creation. It is crucial to treat branding not as a one-way communication but as a process which includes the engagement of residents,

visitors, their stories, experiences, rituals, sense of belonging. The place brand community is perceived as a place-based relational network that connects residents, visitors, and place managers. Cultural tourism is not a top-down intervention but a co-created process where communities play an active role [Dương Thị Thu, 2025]. According to the research results the community interactions can also support knowledge transfer, storytelling, and interpretation of the local heritage through shared histories, traditions, and thematic discussions, webinars.

Practical implications:

The research results suggest that place managers should prioritize participants engagement and co-creation activities. Place brand community members should be treated as partners. It is crucial to enable authentic UGC. Place brand communities should be used as a place for communicating, interpreting the information about the destination, its culture, history, traditions. Communities can be formed around the destinations, heritage, local narratives, or shared travel experiences.

Research limitations:

An important limitation of the research is the declarative nature of respondents' answers. Another limitation of the study is that the respondents were exclusively students. This sample composition limits the ability to generalize the results to a broader population.

References:

- Attaqi, H.R. and Setyawan, A.A. [2023], "The Influence of Brand Community and Community Engagement in Building Brand Trust: An Empirical Study at Yeszy.MFG", *Jurnal Ilmiah Manajemen*, Vol. 4 No. 2, pp.125-136, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15575/jim.v4i2.28152>
- Bhatti, M. A., and Alqasa, K. M. A. [2025], "Role of cultural identity, cultural tendency and awareness on cultural heritage in developing destination loyalty". *Scientific culture*, Vol. 11 No 2, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15346406>
- Boisen, M., Terlouw, K. and van Gorp, B. [2011], "The selective nature of place branding and the layering of spatial identities", *Journal of Place Management and Development*, Vol. 4, No. 2, pp. 135-147, DOI:10.1108/17538331111153151
- Braun, E., Kavaratzis, M. and Zenker, S. [2013], "My city – my brand: the different role of residents in place branding", *Journal of Place Management and Development*, Vol. 6, No. 1, pp.18- 28, doi:10.1108/17538331311306087
- Brodie, R.J., Hollebeek, L.D., Juric, B. and Ilic, A. [2011], "Costumer engagement: conceptual domain, fundamental propositions and implications for research", *Journal of Service Research*, Vol. 14, No. 3, pp. 1-20, doi.org/10.1177/1094670511411703
- Chandler, D. and Munday, R. [2011], *A Dictionary of Media and Communication*, Oxford University Press
- Chavadi, C.A., Sirothiya, M. Menon, MS.R. and Vishwanatha M. R. [2023], "Modelling the Effects of Social Media-based Brand Communities on Brand Trust, Brand Equity and

- Consumer Response”, *The Journal for Decision Makers*, Vol. 48, No. 2, pp. 114 –141, DOI: 10.1177/02560909231172010
- Cheung, M.L., Ting, H., Cheah, J.-H. and Sharipudin, M.N.S. [2021], "Examining the role of social media-based destination brand community in evoking tourists' emotions and intention to co-create and visit", *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, Vol. 30 No. 1, pp. 28-43, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-09-2019-2554>
- Christodoulides, G. [2009], “Branding in the post-internet era”, *Marketing Theory*, Vol. 9, No 1, pp. 141- 144, doi:10.1177/1407593108100071
- Coelho, A., Bairrada, C. and Peres, F. [2019], "Brand communities' relational outcomes, through brand love", *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, Vol. 28, No. 2, pp. 154-165, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-09-2017-1593>
- Confente, I. and Kucharska, W. [2020], “Company versus consumer performance: does brand community identification foster brand loyalty and the consumer's personal brand?”, *Journal of Brand Management*, Vol. 28, pp 8-31, <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41262-020-00208-4>
- Court, S. [2022], Exploring the Benefits of Community Participation in Heritage Interpretation. In: 2022 World Heritage: 50 Years and Moving Forward [Silberman, N.A.]. Cultural Heritage Administration [192-222].
- Debashree, R. D., Pradhan, D. and Swani, K. [2021], “Brand communities: A literature review and future research agendas using TCCM approach”, *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, Vol. 46, pp. 3–28, <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12758>
- Dessart, L. and Veloutsou, C. [2021], “Augmenting brand community identification for inactive users: a uses and gratification perspective”, *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, Vol. 15, No. 3, pp. 361-385, doi: 10.1108/JRIM-11-2019-0191
- Dương Thị Thu, H. [2025], “Living heritage and community participation for sustainable tourism: A case study of the Yên Tử - Vĩnh Nghiêm - Côn Sơn - Kiếp Bạc World Heritage cluster in Vietnam”, *Heritage and Sustainable Development*, vol. 7, no. 2, pp. 1163–1182, Nov. 2025.
- Elrayah, M. and Absamatov, A. [2025], “Examining Cultural Heritage Awareness's Influence on Tourist Satisfaction: Mediating Role of Cultural Identity and Commercialization”. *Cultura. International Journal of Philosophy of Culture and Axiology*, Vol. 22 No 4/2025: 80, 2-828
- Eurostat [2024], *Individual-internet activities*. Online data code: isoc_ci_ac_i. https://doi.org/10.2908/ISOC_CI_AC_I
- Godovykh, M. and Tasci, A.D.A. [2020], “Customer experience in tourism: A review of definitions, components, and measurements”, *Tourism Management Perspectives*, Vol. 35, pp. 1-10, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2020.100694>
- González Chans, C., Membiela Pollán, M. and Cortés Cuns, M. [2020], “Relationship marketing and brand community: the case of Netflix, Redmarka”, *Revista de Marketing Aplicado*, Vol. 24, No 2, pp. 251-274, <https://doi.org/10.17979/redma.2020.24.2.7157>
- Ha, D.T.T [2025], “Living heritage and community participation for sustainable tourism: A case study of the Yên Tử - Vĩnh Nghiêm - Côn Sơn - Kiếp Bạc”, *World Heritage cluster in Vietnam*.
- Haanpää, M. and Hanni-Vaara, P. [2023], “Smart and Sustainable Destination Experiences: A Content Analysis on Finnish Tourism Experts' Perspectives”, Ferrer-Rosell, B., Massimo, D., Berezina, K. [ed.] *Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism 2023*. Proceedings of the ENTER 2023 eTourism Conference, January 18–20, 160-165

- Hadinoto, B. Sunaryo, E., Setiawaty, T. and Sejati Ananda, A. [2020], "Engaging Culinary Consumers through Encouraging Brand Storygiving on an Instagram Brand Community An Action Research", *International Journal of Management*, Vol. 11, No. 11, pp 849-863, DOI: 10.34218/IJM.11.11.2020.080
- Hair, J.F., Black, W.C., Babin, B.J. and Anderson, R.E. [2009], *Multivariate Data Analysis*. Pearson Prentice Hall
- Halifan Mteti, S. Chakupewa Joseph Mpambije, C.J., and James Manyerere, D. [2025], "Unlocking cultural tourism: Local community awareness and perceptions of cultural heritage resources in Katavi Region in southern circuit of Tanzania", *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, Vol. 11, 101295, ISSN 2590-2911, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2025.101295>.
- Hannah, S. and Rowley, J. [2015], "Rethinking Strategic Place Branding in the digital Age", M. Kavaratzis, G. Warnaby and G.J. Ashworth [ed.], *Rethinking Place Branding. Comprehensive Brand Development for Cities and Regions*, Switzerland: Springer, pp. s. 85-100
- Heere, B., Lock, D. and Cooper, D. [2023], "Brand community formation in service management: lessons from the sport industry", *Journal of Service Management*, Vol. 35, No. 1, pp. 71-88, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JOSM-05-2022-0147>
- Ho C-W. and Wang Y-B. [2020], "Does Social Media Marketing and Brand Community Play the Role in Building a Sustainable Digital Business Strategy?", *Sustainability*, Vol. 12, No. 16:6417, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12166417>
- Houghton, J.P. and Stevens, A. [2011], "City Branding and Stakeholder Engagement", K. Dinnie and P. Macmillan, *City Branding: Theory and Cases*, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. s. 45-53
- Hossain, M.M., Kabir, S. and Rezvi, R.I. [2017], "Influence of the integrated marketing communication on brand orientation and market orientation: a literature review", *Australian Journal of Business Science Design and Literature*, Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 1-12
- Hyasat, Ali S. [2023], "Awareness and Perception Toward Heritage, Life, and Tourism in Converting Tourism Area". *Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism*, Vol 14, No. 8, p. 3006 – 3018, ISSN 2068-7729.
- Jiang Y, Liao J, Pang J and Hu H-L [2023], "Does brand community participation lead to early new product adoption? The roles of networking behavior and prior purchase experience", *Front. Psychol.* 14:1014825, doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1014825
- Joldescu-Stan, G and Dobra, D.M.[2025], „The Role of Cultural Heritage in Shaping the Collective Identity of the People of Cluj-Napoca”. *Studia Europejskie – Studies in European Affairs*, 3/2025. DOI: 10.33067/SE.3.2025.14
- Kaura, H., Paruthib, M, Islamc, J. and Hollebeek, L.D. [2020], "The role of brand community identification and reward on consumer brand engagement and brand loyalty in virtual brand communities", *Telematics and Informatics*, Vol. 46, No. 2020, 101321, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2019.101321>
- Krawiec, W. [2020], *Zarządzanie wartościami dla klienta a marketing doświadczeń w instytucjach kultury. Działania współczesnego teatru i filharmonii*. Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego
- Kumail, T., Ayed Al Qeed, M., Aburumman, A., Mudasser Abbas, S. and Sadiq, F. [2022], "How Destination Brand Equity and Destination Brand Authenticity Influence Destination Visit Intention: Evidence from the United Arab Emirates", *Journal of Promotion Management*, Vol. 28:3, pp. 332-358, DOI: 10.1080/10496491.2021.1989540

- Kumar, J. and Kumar, V. [2020], "Drivers of brand community engagement", *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, Vol. 54, 2020, 101949, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2019.101949>
- Kumar Choudhary, P. and Kant Sahu, K. [2023], "Managing and shaping brand associations to ensure positive alignment with "Brand Image": Narrative synthesis", *International Journal of Physical Education, Sports and Health* 2023; Vol. 10, No. 3, pp. 112-117, DOI:<https://doi.org/10.22271/kheljournal.2023.v10.i3b.2935>
- Liang, A.R-D. [2022], "Consumers as co-creators in community based tourism experience: Impacts on their motivation and satisfaction", *Cogent Business & Management*, 9:1, 2034389, DOI: 10.1080/23311975.2022.2034389
- Luk, V.W.H., Wong A.K.S., Lea, C.T. and Ouyang R.W. [2013], "RRG: redundancy reduced gossip protocol for real-time N-to-N dynamic group communication", *Journal of Internet Services and Applications*, Vol. 4, No. 14, pp. 1-19, doi:10.1186/1869-0238-4-14
- Mammadova, E. and Abdullayev, A. [2025], „The Role of Cultural Heritage in Tourism Competitiveness”. *Porta Universorum*. Vol. 1 No. 5. <https://doi.org/10.69760/portuni.0105005>
- Manthiou, A., Kuppelwieser, V.G. and Klaus, P. [2022], "Reevaluating Tourism Experience Measurements: An Alternative Bayesian Approach", *Current Issues in Tourism*, Vol. 26, No. 18, pp. 2948-2964, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2022.2106193>
- Martin, E. and Capelli, S. [2018], "Place brand communities: from terminal to instrumental values", *Journal of Product & Brand Management* 7 December 2018, Vol. 27, No. 7, pp. 793–806, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-10-2017-1654>
- Mitridati, L., Kazempour, J. and Pinson, P. [2021], "Design and Game-Theoretic Analysis of Community-Based Market Mechanisms in Heat and Electricity System", *Omega*, 99:102177, pp. 1-49, doi:10.1016/j.omega.2019.102177
- Moreno-Melgarejo, A., García-Valenzuela, L.J., Hilliard, I. and Pinto-Tortosa, A.J. [2019], "Exploring Relations between Heritage Interpretation, Visitors Learning Experience and Tourist Satisfaction." *Czech Journal of Tourism*, Vol. 8, No. 2, Masaryk University, pp. 103-118. <https://doi.org/10.2478/cjot-2019-0007>.
- Morstyn, T. and McCulloch, M. [2018], "Multi-class Energy Management for Peer-to-Peer Energy Trading driven by Prosumer Preferences", *IEEE Transactions on Power System*, No. 1-1[99], pp. 1-9, doi:10.1109/TPWRS.2018.2834472
- Mukti, A. R. and Rofiah, C. [2024], "Community-based tourism: Destination branding model of Segunung Traditional Village", *Journal of Economics, Finance And Management Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 06, pp. 3373-3386
- Muniz, A.M. Jr. and O'Guinn, T. C. [2001], "Brand Community", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 27, No. 4, pp. 412–432, <https://doi.org/10.1086/319618>
- Nautiyal, R., Polus R., Tripathi, A. and Shaheer, I. [2023], "To use or not to use" - Mobile technology in nature-based tourism experience", *Journal of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism*, Vol. 43 [2023]. 100667. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jort.2023.100667>
- Nunnally, J.C. and Bernstein, I.H. [1994], *Psychometric theory*, New York: McGraw-Hill
- Pedeliento, G., Andreini, D. and Veloutsou, C. [2020], "Brand community integration, participation and commitment: a comparison between consumer-run and company managed communities", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 119, pp. 481-494, doi: 10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.10.069
- Pham, H.L., Pham, H.T. and Nguyen, T.T. [2022], "Value co-creation in branding: A systematic review from a tourism perspective", *European Journal of Tourism Research*, Vol. 32, 3203, <https://doi.org/10.54055/ejtr.v32i.2597>

- Phan Tan, L. [2023], "Customer participation, positive electronic word-of-mouth intention and repurchase intention: The mediation effect of online brand community trust", *Journal of Marketing Communications*, Vol. 30, No 7, pp. 792-809, DOI: 10.1080/13527266.2023.2177709
- Orts-Cardador, J. J., Pérez-Gálvez, J. C., Gómez-Casero Fuentes, G. M. and Jara Alba, C. A. [2025], "Mapping Co-creation Research in Tourism: A Bibliometric Visualisation Review", *SAGE Open*, Vol. 15, No. 2, <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440251335473>
- Ozuem, W., Willis, M., Howell, K. Lancaster, G. and Ng, R. [2020], "Determinants of online brand communities' and millennials' characteristics: A social influence perspective", *Psychology & Marketing* Vol. 38, No. 5, pp. 705-932, <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.21470>
- Rastegari, M., Amirhossini, S.E. and Torkfar, A. [2019], "Modelling the role of brand community on brand features through Mediation of brand attachment", *Journal of Human Sport and Exercise*, 14[4proc], S505-S515, doi:<https://doi.org/10.14198/jhse.2019.14.Proc4.09>
- Rebelo, C., Mehmood, A. and Marsden, T. [2020], "Co-created narratives and inclusive place branding: a socially responsible approach to residents' participation and engagement", *Sustainability Science*, Vol. 15, pp. 423-435, doi.org/10.1007/s11625-019-00760-2
- Rop, W., Akunja, L. and Thiong'o, S. [2021], "Leveraging on Place brand Architecture for competitive advantage: A mediated regression analysis", *Journal of Tourism Quarterly*, Vol. 3, No 2, pp. 130-138
- Santos, Z. R., Cheung, C. M. K., Coelho, P. S. and Rita, P. [2022], "Consumer engagement in social media brand communities: A literature review", *International Journal Of Information Management*, Vol. 63 [April], pp. 1-38. [102457]. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2021.102457>
- Silveira, P., Morais, R. and Petrella, S. [2022], "A Communication Study of Young Adults and Online Dependency during the COVID-19 Pandemic", *Societies*, Vol. 12, No. 4, 109, <https://doi.org/10.3390/soc12040109>
- Sriboonlua, O. [2023], "The effects of destination awareness, perception of destination, and destination image on tourists' intention to travel toward asean countries". *Grmutt Global Business Accounting and Finance Review [GBAfr]*. Vol. 7 No 2. 9-22 DOI: 10.60101.gbaf.2023.267976
- Strandberg, C., Styvén, M.E. and Hultman, M. [2020], "Places in good graces: the role of emotional connections to a place on word-of-mouth", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 119, pp. 444-452
- Stubbs, J. and Warnaby, G. [2015], "Rethinking Place Branding form a Practice Perspective: Working with Stakeholders", M. Kavaratzis, G. Warnaby and G.J. Ashworth [ed.], *Rethinking Place Branding. Comprehensive Brand Development for Cities and Regions*, Switzerland: Springer, pp. 101-118
- Szromnik, A [2011], "Marketing terytorialny jako atrybut rynkowej orientacji miast oraz regionów", A. Grzegorzczak and A. Kochaniec [ed.], *Kreowanie wizerunku miast*, Warszawa: Wyższa Szkoła Promocji, pp. 18-41
- Szromnik, A. [2015], "City placement – nowy element w strategii zintegrowanej komunikacji marketingowej miast", A. Szromnik [ed.], *Marketing terytorialny. Nowe obszary i narzędzia*, Kraków-Legionowo: edu-Libri, pp. 100-158
- Thuyet, N. T. [2023], "Factors affecting the development of heritage tourism: research and development of some models". *Revista De Gestão E Secretariado*, Vol. 14, No 10, 18924–18948. <https://doi.org/10.7769/gesec.v14i10.2941>

- Trueman, M., Giroud, A. and Klemm, M. [2004], "Can a City Communicate? Bradford as a Corporate Brand", *Corporate Communication An International Journal*, Vol. 9, No. 4, pp. 317-330, doi:10.1108/13563280410564057
- Wijesuriya, G. [2022], An Integrated Approach to Heritage Interpretation. In: 2022 World Heritage: 50 Years and Moving Forward [Silberman, N.A.]. Cultural Heritage Administration [172-192].
- Wijayanti, A., Putri, E.D.H., Indriyanti, I., Rahayu, E. & Asshofi, I.U.A. [2023], Community-Based Heritage Tourism Management Model: Perception Driving Participation. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 12[4]:1630-1645. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.46222/ajhtl.19770720.454>
- Wilk, V., Sadeque, S. and Soutar, G. N. [2024], "Exploring online destination brand advocacy", *Tourism Recreation Research*, Vol. 49, No. 2, pp. 283-301, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02508281.2021.1992952>
- Veloutsou, C. and Black, I. [2020], "Creating and managing participative brand communities: The roles members perform", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 117, pp. 873-885, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.06.032>
- Veloutsou, C. and Liao, J. [2022], "Mapping brand community research from 2001 to 2021: Assessing the field's stage of development and a research agenda", *Psychology & Marketing*, Vol. 40, No. 3, pp. 431-454. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.21782>
- Ye, S. [2012], "The impact of destination personality dimensions on destination brand awareness and attractiveness: Australia as a case study", *Tourism*, Vol. 60, No. 4, pp. 397 - 409
- Zhou, M. and Yu, H. [2022], "Exploring How Tourist Engagement Affects Destination Loyalty: The Intermediary Role of Value and Satisfaction", *Sustainability*, Vol. 14, 1621, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14031621> Academic Edi
- Zhao, Y., Cui, X. and Guo, Y. [2022], "Residents' Engagement Behavior in Destination Branding", *Sustainability*, Vol. 14, 5852, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14105852>

Spółeczności wokół marek destynacji turystycznych jako narzędzie wykorzystywane do zwiększania świadomości miejsc

Abstrakt: W warunkach globalnej konkurencji w branży turystycznej destynacje skupiają swoje działania na kreowaniu marek, których celem jest przyciągnięcie turystów oraz zwiększanie rozpoznawalności. Jednym z narzędzi wspierającym ten proces jest budowa społeczności wokół marek miejsc turystycznych. Celem niniejszego artykułu jest identyfikacja kluczowych determinant skuteczności społeczności marek destynacji wykorzystywanych do zwiększania świadomości marki miejsca. Badanie przeprowadzono w Polsce z wykorzystaniem podejścia ilościowego. Wyniki analizy wskazują, że skuteczność społeczności wokół marek destynacji turystycznych w odniesieniu do zwiększania świadomości marek miejsc zależy od trzech czynników: *Zaangażowania Członków społeczności, Komunikacji, interakcji, Relacji, Korzyści* wynikających z tworzenia społeczności wokół marek miejsc.

Słowa kluczowe: społeczność wokół marek miejsc, marka miejsc, zwiększanie atrakcyjności destynacji