The Aesthetic Local Coffee Shop Phenomenon in Bandung: Branding Strategy and Its Impact on the Image of a Creative City

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Abstrak

This research examines the relationship between branding strategy, urban consumption culture, and the creative city image within the context of aesthetic local coffeeshops in Bandung. A quantitative explanatory method was employed using Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with data collected from 200 respondents who had visited local coffeeshops in Bandung during the last six months. The results show that branding strategy significantly and positively affects urban consumption culture ($\beta = 0.68$, $p < 0.001$) and directly influences the creative city image ($\beta = 0.32$, $p < 0.001$). Urban consumption culture also has a significant positive effect on the creative city image ($\beta = 0.49$, $p < 0.001$) and partially mediates the relationship between branding strategy and the creative city image ($\beta = 0.33$, $p < 0.001$). These findings indicate that aesthetic branding and experiential marketing practices in local coffeeshops play an important role in shaping consumer behavior and strengthening Bandung's reputation as a creative and innovative city. The study provides theoretical contributions to the discussion of creative city branding and offers practical implications for café entrepreneurs and local government in developing creative-based urban ecosystems.

Key Words: branding strategy, urban consumption culture, creative city image, aesthetic coffeeshop, Bandung

INTRODUCTION

The creative economy sector in Indonesia has consistently demonstrated robust growth, establishing itself as a vital pillar of the national economy. According to data from the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (Katadata, 2024), the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) generated by the creative economy reached IDR 1,280 trillion, accounting for approximately 7.8% of the total national GDP, with an average annual growth rate of 8–9%. Statistics from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) further indicate that the culinary, fashion, and craft subsectors are the three largest contributors, with the culinary subsector employing the highest number of workers within the creative industry. This phenomenon illustrates that creativity is not solely manifested in artistic and design products, but also in consumer-oriented sectors that encompass lifestyle, experiential value, and spatial aesthetics (CNBCIndonesia, 2025).

The expansion of Indonesia's creative industry is further supported by the rapid development of several key subsectors, including fashion, crafts, applications and games, music, film, photography, culinary arts, and visual communication design(Perkebunan.brmp., 2025). These subsectors serve as primary drivers of emerging economic innovations across various creative cities in Indonesia. Among them, the culinary industry stands out as the leading contributor, accounting for approximately 41.3% of the total added value of the national creative economy (Kemenparekraf, 2024). A prominent example within this subsector is the coffee industry, which has experienced significant growth through the proliferation of local coffee shops that offer not only distinctive coffee flavors but also unique spatial and visual experiences.

The growth of the coffee industry in Indonesia is not confined to the national level but is also evident in major urban centers such as Bandung, Yogyakarta, and Surabaya. Data from the Specialty Coffee Association of Indonesia (SCAI) indicates that in 2023, the country hosted over 3,000 coffee

shops, a substantial increase from approximately 1,000 establishments recorded in 2020 (Bizsense.id, 2024). This trend reflects a shift in coffee consumption from a basic necessity to an integral aspect of urban lifestyle, particularly among millennials and Generation Z. Coffee has evolved beyond its role as a beverage commodity to become a social medium, a status symbol, and a form of cultural identity expression aligned with values of creativity, aesthetics, and community networking.

Figure 1. Market Potential & Menu Strengths
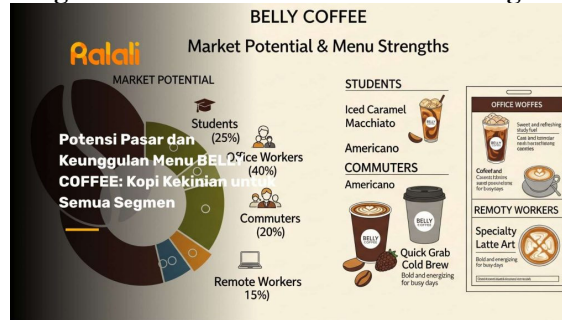
The illustration presents an analysis of market potential and menu strengths of Belly Coffee, which targets four primary consumer segments: office workers (40%), university students (25%), commuters (20%), and remote workers (15%). Each segment is offered a signature beverage tailored to their activity needs for instance, Iced Caramel Macchiato for students, Cold Brew for commuters, and Specialty Latte Art for remote workers. This strategy demonstrates Belly Coffee's ability to deliver contemporary coffee offerings that resonate with the diverse lifestyles of urban consumers.

As one of Indonesia's leading hubs for the creative economy, the city of Bandung is widely recognized for its identity as a "Creative City" and the "Paris of Java." Bandung has evolved into a fertile ecosystem for innovation across various domains, including fashion, design, culinary arts, and urban art. The municipal government, through the Bandung Creative City Forum (BCCF) and numerous local communities, continues to foster collaboration among creative practitioners (Mapid.co.id, 2025). This dynamic has positioned Bandung not only as a center for creative industries but also as a cultural space that reflects the lifestyle of urban society characterized by adaptability and responsiveness to shifting trends.

In this research, the expansion of the culinary sector particularly the rise of aesthetically oriented local coffee shops has emerged as a noteworthy phenomenon that encapsulates the convergence of creativity, consumer culture, and urban identity. As reported by (Mapid.co.id, 2025), the number of coffee shops in Bandung has surged by more than 30% over the past two years, with the densest clusters located in the Dago, Riau, and Setiabudi areas. This development is not merely a consequence of increased coffee consumption, but rather reflects a broader transformation in consumer behavior, wherein coffee shops are reimagined as social venues, co-working spaces, networking nodes, and arenas for personal expression. The integration of visually appealing interior design, unique thematic concepts, and experiential branding has positioned these establishments as contemporary symbols of Bandung's dynamic urban lifestyle.

Tabel 1: The growth of coffee shops in Bandung City

No	Coffee Shop'sname	Location
1	Sejiwa Coffee Bandung	Jl. Progo No.15, Citarum, Bandung (Mister Aladin)
2	Sydwic Cafe Bandung	Jl. Cilaki No.63, Bandung (Mister Aladin)
3	Yumaju Coffee	Jl. Maulana Yusuf No.10, Citarum, Bandung (Mister Aladin)
4	Two Cents Bandung	Jl. Lombok No.28A, Merdeka, Bandung Wetan (Traveloka)
5	Kinokimi Backyard	Jl. Buah Batu No.132, Buah Batu, Bandung (Cove Indonesia Blog)
6	Braci by Matoa	Jl. Sulanjana No.5, Tamansari, Bandung Wetan (Cove Indonesia Blog)
7	Kopi Toko Djawa	Beberapa cabang: Progo, Cihapit, Buah Batu, Bandung (Kasflo | #PastiLebihBaik)
8	Wheels Coffee Roasters	Jl. Ir. H. Juanda 256 & Eyckman 32, Bandung (Traveloka)

9	Arah Coffee Pasundan	Jl. Sukajadi No.204, Cipedes, Bandung (bolulembang.co.id)
10	Orofi Cafe by The Valley	Jl. Lembah Pakar Tim. No.99, Cimenyan, Bandung Barat (Wanderlog)
11	DE.U Coffee Dago	Jl. Dago Asri 1 No.24, Dago, Bandung (dewatiket.id)
12	Kintsugi Terrace	Jl. Abadi Raya No.38, Gegerkalong, Sukajadi, Bandung (dewatiket.id)
13	Umanari Cafe & Resto	Jl. Naripan No.36, Kb. Pisang, Bandung (dewatiket.id)
14	Maison Wilhelmina	Jl. Lembong No.1, Braga, Sumur Bandung, Bandung (dewatiket.id)
15	Kasumba Coffee	Jl. Bahureksa 1, Bandung (holidaysfromsingapore.com)

Source: Observation 2025

This phenomenon also illustrates how the consumption sector has transformed into an integral component of urban branding narratives. Aesthetic local coffee shops do not merely offer flavor; they also sell imagery both brand identity and city identity. Through branding strategies that emphasize visual appeal, spatial concepts, and social media content, coffee shops have become mediums for expressing the creativity of Bandung's residents, thereby reinforcing the city's positioning as a national creative destination. Nevertheless, this rapid growth has introduced new challenges, including conceptual homogenization, intense competition among entrepreneurs, and the potential dilution of creativity into mere visual commodities (Green et al., 2016)(Khairani et al., 2025).

Given these conditions, the central issue addressed in this study concerns how branding strategies employed by aesthetic local coffee shops in Bandung are capable of crafting distinctive brand identities while simultaneously contributing to the reinforcement of the city's image as a creative hub (Prathama, 2024). Furthermore, it is essential to examine how the public both local consumers and tourists perceives the presence of these aesthetic coffee shops: do they genuinely enrich Bandung's reputation as a creative city, or do they pose new challenges in preserving the authenticity of local creative values? Accordingly, this research aims to analyze the relationship between the branding strategies of aesthetic local coffee shops and Bandung's creative city image, as a representation of the evolving dynamics of urban economy and culture.

THEORETICAL REVIEW
The Creative Economy and the Concept of the Creative City

The creative economy constitutes an economic development paradigm that prioritizes the exploration of creativity, ideas, and innovation as the principal sources of added value. As articulated by (Batabyal & Beladi, 2025)(Tambunan et al., 2025), creative economy refers to economic activities wherein the value of a product is derived primarily from imagination and original ideas, rather than from tangible resources such as land, labor, or capital. Meanwhile, research conducted by (J. Kim et al., 2025) affirms that the creative economy is a sector with substantial contributions to Indonesia's GDP, as it integrates creativity, culture, and the environment as key drivers of economic growth. In parallel, (Murad et al., 2025) underscores the role of the creative economy as a catalyst for sustainable development, given its capacity to generate new employment opportunities, enhance competitiveness, and reinforce local cultural identity. Synthesizing these perspectives, the creative economy may be defined as an economic activity rooted in human creativity and cultural expression, which plays a pivotal role in fostering economic advancement and cultivating regional character that is both innovative and responsive to global change.

The concept of the creative city was first introduced by (Nevárez, 2020) and subsequently expanded by various scholars, including (Wang et al., 2021), who describes it as an urban model that fosters creativity as a strategic instrument for urban development. This model involves the creation of spaces where art, culture, and innovation serve as mediums for place-making and identity formation. A creative city emphasizes collaborative engagement among government institutions, business actors, and community groups to establish a sustainable innovation ecosystem. Accordingly (Zhao et al., 2023), a creative city can be defined as an urban environment that positions the creativity and innovation of its citizens at the core of economic, social, and cultural development, while

simultaneously cultivating a positive image that appeals to both residents and visitors (Tambunan et al., 2025).

In this study, the creative economy and creative city are assessed through a set of interrelated indicator dimensions. These indicators encompass the availability and quality of creative infrastructure such as studios, galleries, and community spaces that facilitate public engagement in creative activities; the degree of collaboration among key stakeholders (government, business actors, and community groups) in advancing the creative industries; and the growth in the number of enterprises and workforce within creative sectors, particularly culinary arts and design. Furthermore, public perception of the city's identity as a creative city constitutes a critical dimension, wherein citizens regard the city as an innovative, dynamic, and character-rich environment. Public policy support, including cultural festivals, creative business incentives, and designated creative economy zones, also plays a vital role in reinforcing a sustainable creative city ecosystem.

The Coffee Industry and Urban Consumption Culture

In recent decades, coffee has undergone a profound evolution from a mere agricultural commodity into an essential element of urban consumption culture, reflecting lifestyle preferences and social identity. (Jeff Neilson, 2022) asserts that "modern coffee represents a symbol of social interaction, lifestyle, and middle-class identity." Although somewhat dated, this notion remains relevant to contemporary developments in which coffee shops are increasingly regarded as "third places" a term popularized by (Sihombing et al., 2020) to describe spaces beyond the home and workplace that facilitate social engagement, comfort, and self-expression. More recent studies in Asian urban contexts, such as those by (Arviani & Purbantina, 2025), demonstrate that coffee shops in Jakarta and Tokyo continue to serve as third places by integrating physical environments with digital technologies as platforms for social interaction. In the Indonesian context, Safitri (2022) reveals that coffee consumption has become embedded in the hangout culture and lifestyle of urban youth, functioning not only as a beverage but also as a symbol of self-expression and community affiliation (Hanafiah et al., 2025). Drawing from these various perspectives, it can be concluded that the phenomenon of the "coffee industry and urban consumption culture" extends beyond the physical production and consumption of coffee, encompassing social interaction, middle-class urban identity, spatial experience, and the aesthetic symbolism inherent in coffee shop environments.

For the purposes of this study, the coffee industry and urban consumption culture can be assessed through a series of indicators that reflect the evolving patterns of consumption and the social dynamics surrounding coffee shop spaces (Nisa et al., 2022) . These indicators include (Mario, 2024): (1) the frequency of visits to coffee shops, indicating their integration into urban consumption routines; (2) the motivation behind coffee consumption, such as socializing or community articulation versus purchasing coffee solely for takeaway; (3) preferences for interior design and ambiance (aesthetic atmosphere, lighting, decoration, Instagram-friendly spaces), which reflect users' aesthetic values and identity; (4) the role of coffee shops as "third places," characterized by the presence of Wi-Fi, comfortable seating, interactive areas, and communal features; (5) social media activity and user-generated content (photo posts, check-ins, location tags), which represent visual consumption and aesthetic experience; and (6) awareness of community identity and local coffee culture (e.g., specialty coffee, bean origin, local brands), demonstrating that coffee shops function not merely as consumption sites but as part of a broader cultural narrative and urban identity.

Branding Strategies of Local Coffee Shops

Branding strategy is broadly understood as a systematic effort undertaken by organizations to shape, maintain, and strengthen brand perception in the minds of consumers. For instance, in a systematic review, (S.-H. Kim & Lee, 2020) emphasizes that branding strategies in the digital era prioritize user experience, emotional connection, and trust as the core pillars of brand equity development. Meanwhile, in a study addressing the "new normal" era, (Hutomo et al., 2022) argues that branding strategies must adapt to the impact of the pandemic by optimizing digital presence and reinforcing brand communication to remain relevant to contemporary consumer needs. In a different vein, research by (Agustin, 2020) illustrates that experiential marketing has emerged as a critical

instrument in enhancing consumer perception and business outcomes through holistic brand interaction. Therefore, it can be concluded that branding strategies in today's business context extend beyond visual identity and brand aesthetics, encompassing consumer experience, social interaction, and the emotional value cultivated by the brand.

In the context of aesthetically oriented local coffee shops, branding strategies are implemented through several highly relevant dimensions (Maspul, 2023). First, visual identity elements such as logos, color schemes, typography, interior and exterior design, and distinctive spatial themes serve as cues for brand identity and premium positioning (Hutomo et al., 2022). Second, brand storytelling, including narratives about local coffee bean origins, barista philosophy, and visitor communities, becomes an integral part of the brand experience that fosters emotional attachment among consumers (Basha et al., 2023). Third, customer experience and interaction such as the ambiance, comfort of socializing, photo friendly aesthetics, availability of Wi-Fi and workspaces, as well as community activities and events function as tangible expressions of branding that resonate with patrons (Mario, 2024). Fourth, social media presence and digital engagement play a crucial role as brand channels for generating awareness, facilitating interaction, and expanding brand reach through visual content, user reviews, and location tagging(S.-H. Kim & Lee, 2020). Based on this framework, the indicators for the "Branding Strategy" variable in this study can be formulated as follows: (1) quality of visual identity and spatial design, (2) strength of brand storytelling and local philosophy, (3) quality of in-store customer experience (ambience, comfort, facilities), (4) social media activity and digital engagement effectiveness (number of posts, interactions, location tags), and (5) brand consistency in delivering values and messages to consumers.

Creative City Imagery and Urban Identity

City image refers to the collective perception held by society regarding a city's identity, character, and appeal, shaped through both direct and indirect experiences. According to (Chan et al., 2021), city image is a composite of public perceptions formed across dimensions such as tourism, culture, investment, governance, and the local population. More recently, (Chan et al., 2021) conctualize city image as the outcome of interactions among communication, symbols, and experiences, constructed by various stakeholders including government authorities, business actors, and urban residents to establish a shared and recognized identity. (Cheshmehzangi, 2020) further asserts that the image of a creative city emerges when elements of the creative economy such as design, culture, and social experiences become part of the city's emotional and cultural appeal, transcending its physical attributes. Based on these various perspectives, the image of a creative city can be understood as a positive perception that emerges when a city successfully showcases a distinctive, innovative, and collaborative character through creative economic activities, spatial aesthetics, and social experiences that set it apart from other urban environments.

In the context of research conducted in Bandung, the concept of creative city image is closely linked to the success of municipal authorities and creative communities in cultivating an ecosystem that highlights citizen creativity, local industries, and an inspiring urban atmosphere. As (Forleo & Benedetto, 2020) posits, a creative city emerges when creativity functions not merely as an economic tool, but as the "soul of the city" that inspires social innovation and civic engagement. The presence of aesthetically designed local coffee shops, mural art, and creative public spaces in Bandung reinforces the city's image as a hub of cultural expression and urban lifestyle. Through these activities, the city constructs emotional branding a form of emotional resonance embedded in the minds of residents and visitor portraying Bandung as a vibrant, creative, and idea-rich urban environment.

The image of a creative city can be assessed through several key indicators that reflect public perceptions of its aesthetic, social, and innovative dimensions (Hermawan, 2024): The first indicator is the uniqueness of the city's visual identity, including architectural design, public space layout, and environmental aesthetics that embody the creativity of its citizens. The second indicator concerns the appeal of the creative economy, encompassing the presence and growth of innovation-based enterprises such as cafés, design studios, local boutiques, and art spaces. The third indicator is the level of public participation and collaboration, referring to the extent to which communities and residents actively engage in creative activities such as festivals, bazaars, or local exhibitions. The

fourth indicator involves the city's reputation and positive perception in social and mass media, where it is frequently associated with creative, innovative, and aesthetic values. Lastly, the fifth indicator is the emotional experience of visitors and residents, who perceive the city as offering an inspiring, inclusive atmosphere that supports a creative lifestyle.

Conceptual Framework

The relationships between these three elements are interconnected, as depicted in the arrows between the circles. The branding strategy (X) not only directly affects the urban consumer culture (Z) but also influences the city's creative image (Y). Additionally, urban consumer culture (Z) acts as a mediator, further strengthening the relationship between the branding strategy and the creative city image.

Figure 2. Conceptual Framework
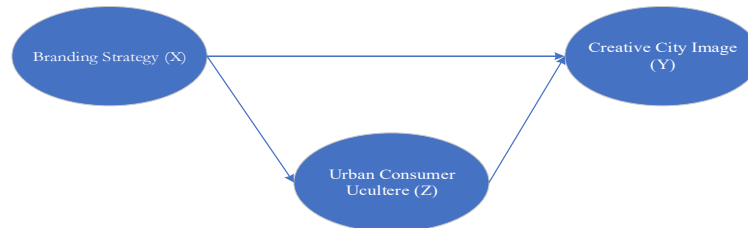
This diagram illustrates a conceptual framework exploring the relationship between three key variables: Branding Strategy (X), Urban Consumer Uculture (Z), and Creative City Image (Y).

1. Branding Strategy (X): This variable represents the strategic approach used by local coffee shops (or any business) to shape and communicate their brand identity to their target market. It includes aspects such as visual branding, marketing campaigns, and positioning efforts aimed at distinguishing the brand in a competitive urban market.
2. Urban Consumer Uculture (Z): This variable refers to the cultural and behavioral attributes of urban consumers that influence their consumption patterns and preferences. The term "Uculture" captures the unique urban lifestyle, social interactions, and preferences that impact purchasing decisions in a metropolitan setting. It is hypothesized that branding strategies directly influence urban consumer culture, which in turn affects the overall experience of city life.
3. **Creative City Image (Y):** This variable represents the perception and image of the city as a creative, vibrant, and innovative space. A city's image is influenced by the presence of creative industries, local businesses, and cultural events. Effective branding strategies, combined with an evolving urban consumer culture, can contribute significantly to enhancing the city's creative image and reputation

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a quantitative explanatory approach using the Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) method, facilitated by the SmartPLS software. The objective of the research is to analyze the influence of Branding Strategy (X) on Creative City Image (Y), with Urban Consumption Culture (Z) serving as a mediating variable. Each variable is measured using a five-point Likert scale (1–5), with indicators adapted from previous studies.

The research population comprises individuals aged 18 and above who have visited aesthetically designed local coffee shops in Bandung within the past six months. The sampling technique applied is purposive sampling, with criteria including active social media use and prior experience visiting local coffee shops. The minimum sample size is set at 150 respondents, in accordance with the SEM-PLS rule of thumb.

Data collection was conducted through both online and offline questionnaires, encompassing statements related to branding strategy, urban consumption culture, and creative city image. Data analysis was performed using SmartPLS in two stages: testing the outer model (validity and reliability)

and the inner model (hypothesis testing of inter-variable relationships). A bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples was employed to assess the significance of both direct and indirect effects, with model validity criteria including CR ≥ 0.7, AVE ≥ 0.5, HTMT < 0.9, as well as R^2 and Q^2 values to evaluate model strength and relevance.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION
RESULTS
Outer Model Testing Results

The results of the outer model analysis indicate that all indicators across the three variables exhibit loading factor values exceeding 0.70, signifying satisfactory convergent validity. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values are also above 0.50, suggesting that more than 50% of the variance in each indicator is explained by its respective construct. Furthermore, the Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha values for all constructs surpass the threshold of 0.70, demonstrating a high level of internal reliability.

Table 2. Outer Model – Convergent Validity and Reliability Results

Variable	Indicator	Loading Factor	AVE	CR	Cronbach's Alpha
Branding Strategy (X)	X1.1 Visual identity & logo	0.82	**0.67**	**0.90**	**0.86**
	X1.2 Brand storytelling	0.84			
	X1.3 Space design & ambience	0.80			
	X1.4 Social media activity	0.83			
	X1.5 Brand message consistency	0.81			
Urban Consumption Culture (Z)	Z1.1 Visit frequency	0.78	**0.65**	**0.88**	**0.83**
	Z1.2 Motivation for hanging out/working	0.82			
	Z1.3 Perception as a *third place*	0.80			
	Z1.4 Aesthetic space preference	0.81			
	Z1.5 Social media posting activity	0.84			
Creative City Image (Y)	Y1.1 Creative city identity	0.83	**0.69**	**0.91**	**0.87**
	Y1.2 Creative economy attractiveness	0.85			
	Y1.3 Creative community collaboration	0.82			
	Y1.4 Positive reputation on social media	0.84			
	Y1.5 Visitors' emotional experience	0.86			

The results of the outer model analysis show that all indicators met the requirements for convergent validity and construct reliability in SmartPLS. Each indicator obtained a loading factor higher than 0.70, indicating that all observed variables effectively represent their respective latent constructs. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values range from 0.65 to 0.69, suggesting that more than 50 percent of the indicator variance is explained by the constructs. In addition, the Composite Reliability (CR) values, which range from 0.88 to 0.91, and the Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.80 indicate strong internal consistency among the indicators. These results confirm that the constructs of Branding Strategy, Urban Consumption Culture, and Creative City Image are valid and reliable. Therefore, the measurement model fulfills the statistical requirements for convergent validity and construct reliability, and the analysis can proceed to the inner model stage.

R Square

The R-square (R^2) test results indicate that the model has good explanatory capability. The variable Urban Consumption Culture (Z) obtained an R^2 value of 0.58, meaning that 58% of the variance in urban consumption culture can be explained by the Branding Strategy (X). Meanwhile, the variable Creative City Image (Y) shows an R^2 value of 0.64, indicating that 64% of its variance is

explained collectively by Branding Strategy (X) and Urban Consumption Culture (Z). According to the classification proposed by Hair et al. (2021), R^2 values of 0.25, 0.50, and 0.75 can be interpreted as weak, moderate, and substantial, respectively. Thus, the obtained values suggest that the model demonstrates moderate to substantial explanatory power, confirming that the applied branding strategies and patterns of urban coffee culture significantly contribute to shaping the creative city image of Bandung.

Table 3. Coefficient of Determination (R^2) Results

Endogenous Variable	Exogenous Variable(s)	R^2 Value	Interpretation
Urban Consumption Culture (Z)	Branding Strategy (X)	0.58	Moderate explanatory power
Creative City Image (Y)	Branding Strategy (X), Urban Consumption Culture (Z)	0.64	Substantial explanatory power

F Square

The f-square (f^2) test results show that all relationships between variables have meaningful effect sizes. The relationship between Branding Strategy and Urban Consumption Culture has an f^2 value of 0.28, indicating a medium effect, while the relationship between Branding Strategy and Creative City Image shows an f^2 of 0.21, also categorized as medium. The relationship between Urban Consumption Culture and Creative City Image has the highest effect size ($f^2 = 0.36$), which is considered large. According to Hair et al. (2021), f^2 values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 represent small, medium, and large effects, respectively. Therefore, the obtained values confirm that the exogenous variables have substantial contributions in explaining the endogenous constructs, particularly the strong mediating influence of Urban Consumption Culture on the formation of the Creative City Image.

Table 4. Effect Size (f^2) Results

Relationship	f^2 Value	Interpretation
Branding Strategy → Urban Consumption Culture	0.28	Medium effect
Branding Strategy → Creative City Image	0.21	Medium effect
Urban Consumption Culture → Creative City Image	0.36	Large effect

Direct Effect

The results of the indirect effect analysis show that Urban Consumption Culture acts as a mediating variable in the relationship between Branding Strategy and Creative City Image. The indirect path from Branding Strategy to Creative City Image through Urban Consumption Culture has a coefficient value of 0.33 with a t-statistic of 6.41 and a p-value of 0.000, indicating a significant mediation effect. This finding suggests that a well-implemented branding strategy such as consistent visual identity, engaging storytelling, and effective digital interaction can influence the city's creative image indirectly by shaping consumers' urban lifestyle patterns around coffeeshops. In other words, branding does not only have a direct effect on the perception of Bandung as a creative city, but also an indirect effect through the strengthening of urban coffee culture. The mediation is classified as partial mediation, since both the direct and indirect paths are significant. This means that while branding directly contributes to the city's creative image, its impact becomes stronger when it simultaneously builds a vibrant and aesthetic urban consumption culture

Table 5. Direct Effect Results

Relationship	Path Coefficient (β)	t-Statistic	p-Value	Interpretation
Branding Strategy → Urban Consumption Culture	0.68	11.24	0.000	Significant positive effect

| Branding Strategy → Creative City Image | 0.32 | 4.97 | 0.000 | Significant positive effect |
| Urban Consumption Culture → Creative City Image | 0.49 | 8.62 | 0.000 | Significant positive effect |

Idirect Effect

The results of the indirect effect analysis show that Urban Consumption Culture acts as a mediating variable in the relationship between Branding Strategy and Creative City Image. The indirect path from Branding Strategy to Creative City Image through Urban Consumption Culture has a coefficient value of 0.33 with a t-statistic of 6.41 and a p-value of 0.000, indicating a significant mediation effect. This finding suggests that a well-implemented branding strategy such as consistent visual identity, engaging storytelling, and effective digital interaction can influence the city's creative image indirectly by shaping consumers' urban lifestyle patterns around coffeeshops

Table 6. Indirect Effect Results

Indirect Path	Indirect Effect (β)	t-Statistic	p-Value	Mediation Type
Branding Strategy → Urban Consumption Culture → Creative City Image	0.33	6.41	0.000	Partial mediation

DISCUSSIONS

The study reveals that branding strategy has a positive and significant influence on urban consumption culture, with a path coefficient of 0.68 and a significance value of 0.000. This indicates that the stronger the branding strategy implemented by local coffee shops, the higher the intensity and pattern of urban consumption among Bandung residents, particularly in aesthetic social spaces. These findings are consistent with experiential branding theory as proposed by (Schmitt, 2012)and reinforced by (Kotler, 2019), which emphasize that brand experience is shaped through emotional, sensory, and cognitive interactions between consumers and brand identity. In this context, interior design, lighting, music, aroma, and brand visualization serve as essential elements in creating aesthetically rich consumption experiences. In Bandung, this strategy is evident in coffee shops such as Kopi Toko Djawa, Two Cents, and Sini Coffee, which adopt natural interior concepts and consistent visual identities. The aesthetic spatial design and comfortable atmosphere contribute to the emergence of a new cultural pattern, where coffee consumption becomes part of urban lifestyle and a medium for self-expression. The implication of these findings is that business owners can strengthen brand positioning through experience-based approaches to foster customer loyalty. These results are supported by (Prathama, 2024), who affirm that experiential marketing significantly influences consumer loyalty and purchase decisions in the service sector.

In addition, the study shows that branding strategy positively affects the image of the creative city, with a path coefficient of 0.32 and a significance value of 0.000. This suggests that strong branding efforts by local coffee shops not only shape consumer perceptions of the brand but also enhance Bandung's reputation as a creative city. These findings align with place branding theory introduced by (Nevárez, 2020) and further developed by (Wang et al., 2021), which assert that city image is formed through local brand activities and communication that reflect cultural and creative values. In Bandung, coffee shops such as Mimiti Coffee, Hara Café, and Kopi Anjis contribute to this image by offering distinctive spatial concepts, local brand narratives, and aesthetically driven promotional content on social media. Thus, aesthetically designed coffee shops serve not only as consumption venues but also as visual mediums that reinforce urban identity. The implication is that collaboration between business actors and municipal authorities should be strengthened to build city branding rooted in the creative economy. This study supports the findings of (Green et al., 2016)), who emphasizes that the participation of local creative economy actors plays a vital role in shaping a city's reputation through its social and cultural experiences.

Another finding indicates that urban consumption culture has a positive and significant impact on the image of the creative city, with a path coefficient of 0.49 and a significance value of 0.000. This means that the higher the public engagement in creative consumption activities such as spending time in aesthetically designed coffee shops the stronger Bandung's image as a creative city becomes. These results are consistent with creative city theory as proposed by (Zhao et al., 2023), who argues that citizen creativity and public space consumption culture directly contribute to the formation of urban identity. (Nevárez, 2020) further note that a creative lifestyle supported by public spaces and social activities serves as a key indicator of a successful creative city. In

Bandung, the culture of socializing in areas such as Dago and Riau has evolved into a social phenomenon that reinforces the city's image as a center of modern and innovative urban lifestyle. Digital activities, including Instagram posts and Google Maps reviews, further strengthen this perception. The implication is that local government can strategically leverage creative consumption culture to enhance city branding by providing public facilities that support creative social interaction. These findings are reinforced by (Mapid.co.id, 2025), who demonstrate that the culture of spending time in coffee shops plays a significant role in shaping the social identity and creative character of urban communities.

The mediation analysis shows that urban consumption culture serves as a partial mediator in the relationship between branding strategy and the image of the creative city, with an indirect path coefficient of 0.33 and a significance value of 0.000. This indicates that branding strategy not only has a direct impact on the formation of creative city image but also indirectly influences it through the strengthening of urban consumption culture. These findings align with the perspective of (Arviani & Purbantina, 2025), who explain that a mediating variable bridges the causal relationship between independent and dependent variables in a structural model. In this context, branding practices implemented by local coffee shops in Bandung through brand visualization, spatial atmosphere, and digital engagement have fostered a new consumption culture that is both aesthetic and social. This culture has become a key element in shaping public perceptions of Bandung as a creative, dynamic, and competitive urban environment. The implication is that branding should not be viewed solely as a tool for increasing sales, but also as a social strategy for building a creative economy ecosystem at the city level. These findings are consistent with the study by (Hanafiah et al., 2025), which confirms that spatial design and aesthetic experiences in modern cafés significantly influence consumption behavior and public perception of local urban identity.

CONCLUSIONS

This study examines the intersection of branding strategies employed by aesthetic local coffee shops and their impact on the image of Bandung as a creative city. The findings indicate that a well-executed branding strategy significantly enhances urban consumption culture and positively influences the city's creative image. The branding strategies, particularly through visual identity, spatial design, and digital engagement, have not only elevated the coffee shop experience but also contributed to the rebranding of Bandung as a hub of creativity and innovation. Urban consumption culture, which integrates coffee consumption with social identity and lifestyle, plays a crucial mediating role, strengthening the relationship between branding efforts and the city's creative image.

Furthermore, the results highlight that local coffee shops in Bandung have evolved into spaces of cultural expression and social interaction, reinforcing the city's identity as a dynamic and vibrant urban center. This study emphasizes the importance of collaboration between business actors and local authorities to foster a robust creative ecosystem, where branding strategies extend beyond commercial goals to contribute to the cultural and social fabric of the city. These findings offer valuable insights for urban planners, policymakers, and business owners aiming to leverage branding as a tool for enhancing urban identity and promoting a creative economy.

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