

Event Marketing Management and City Competitiveness: Mediation of Bandung City Branding

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to analyze the effect of Event Marketing Management on City Competitiveness with City Branding as a mediating variable in Bandung City. This research addresses the strategic role of event-based activities in strengthening city identity and enhancing competitiveness in an increasingly competitive urban environment.

Research Methodology: This study used a quantitative approach with PLS-SEM. Data were collected through questionnaires from respondents experienced with Bandung City events and analyzed using SmartPLS 4.0 with bootstrapping to evaluate the measurement and structural models.

Results: Event Marketing Management positively and significantly affects City Branding but has no significant direct effect on City Competitiveness. City Branding positively affects City Competitiveness and fully mediates the relationship between Event Marketing Management and City Competitiveness, indicating that events alone cannot enhance competitiveness without a coherent city branding strategy.

Conclusions: The study concludes that City Branding plays a crucial role in transforming event marketing initiatives into sustainable city competitiveness.

Limitations: This study was limited to Bandung City and used cross-sectional data, which may limit the generalizability of the results.

Contributions: This study contributes to the urban marketing literature by empirically confirming the full mediating role of City Branding in the relationship between Event Marketing Management and City Competitiveness.

Keywords: *City Branding, City Competitiveness, City Marketing, Event Marketing Management, PLS-SEM*

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1. Introduction

In the era of globalization and increasing regional competition, cities no longer function only as centers of administration and economic activity but also as strategic entities that must maintain their competitiveness. Cities worldwide compete to attract tourists, investors, and creative talent through innovative marketing strategies. One increasingly used strategy is event marketing, which can enhance city visibility, strengthen its image, and create memorable experiences for visitors and local communities. According to [Getz and Page \(2019\)](#), the role and impact of planned events in tourism have been widely documented and are increasingly important for destination competitiveness. However, event-based tourism has only been widely recognized in recent decades by both the tourism industry and researchers, and its growth has been described as remarkable ([Getz & Page, 2019](#)).

In an urban context, event marketing is not limited to organizing events but also requires structured and integrated management through Event Marketing Management. Effective event management involves strategic planning, consistent themes, stakeholder involvement, and sustainable programs that align

with the city's vision and identity. However, many cities still organize events without comprehensive management, resulting in impacts that are often short-term and less effective in improving long-term city competitiveness ([Indriani & Lutfi, 2026](#)).

City competitiveness is a multidimensional concept that reflects a city's ability to attract economic resources, strengthen its reputation, and provide superior experiences compared to other cities. Although the number of events held in many cities continues to increase, this growth does not always lead to greater competition. This indicates the presence of other factors linking event management and city competitiveness, one of which is city branding ([Ozden, 2026](#)).

Table 1. City branding

No	Region Name	Number of Locations
1	West Java	16,803
2	Greater Jakarta	6,303
3	Yogyakarta	3,336
4	Bandung City	1,955
5	South Jakarta	2,258
6	Surabaya	1,587
7	Bekasi City	1,568

Table 1 show city branding represents a city's identity, values, and image as perceived by the public. When event marketing is strategically managed, it can strengthen city branding through consistent communication, engaging experiences, and the development of positive associations with the city. However, insufficient integration between events and city branding often limits the ability of events to shape the city's image effectively. Consequently, their impact on city competitiveness is less significant. Therefore, city branding serves as a crucial mediating variable linking Event Marketing Management to city competitiveness ([Norvadewi & Zaroni, 2021](#)).

Bandung is an Indonesian city known for its creative industries, urban tourism, and cultural activities. The city actively organizes various arts, culture, tourism, and creativity events that can increase its competitiveness. However, challenges remain, particularly in integrating event management with a consistent and sustainable brand strategy. In addition, competition with cities such as Yogyakarta, Surabaya, and Jakarta requires Bandung to implement more effective and targeted city marketing strategies ([Utami, Perdana, & Nisa, 2022](#)).

Although research on city branding and urban competitiveness has grown in recent years, gaps remain in understanding the role of event marketing as a strategic tool in city marketing. [Zahrah \(2023\)](#) highlights that city branding serves as a key approach to attracting tourists and investors while supporting urban development in an increasingly competitive global environment. Furthermore, the literature indicates that city branding extends beyond visual identity and promotional activities, encompassing broader elements such as the quality of public services, security, and collaboration between the government and communities in shaping a strong city identity.

The relevance of this study extends beyond the city of Bandung. Many cities in Indonesia and other developing countries increasingly use events to attract tourists, investors, and the creative industries. However, these events are often not integrated into a consistent city branding strategy. Therefore, examining the relationship between Event Marketing Management, City Branding, and City Competitiveness can provide insights for other cities in developing more integrated urban marketing strategies. The findings of this study are expected to guide local governments and stakeholders in using events more effectively to strengthen city branding and improve long-term competitiveness ([Mabillard, Pasquier, & Vuignier, 2023](#)).

Based on these considerations, this study aims to empirically examine the influence of Event Marketing Management on the competitiveness of Bandung, with city branding serving as a mediating variable. The results are expected to contribute theoretically to the development of urban marketing studies and provide practical insights for governments and stakeholders in designing event and city branding strategies that promote sustainable urban competitiveness ([Grix, Brannagan, Wood, & Wynne, 2017](#)).

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

2.1 Event Marketing Management

Recent studies indicate that events are no longer viewed merely as forms of entertainment but have evolved into strategic tools in city marketing. Research in the field of cultural event management demonstrates that both planning and execution of events influence regional branding by creating participatory experiences for visitors and local communities. For instance, a study conducted in Sawahlunto City revealed that well-managed events can enhance the city's branding by delivering direct experiences to the public, although challenges such as insufficient market research remain barriers to achieving optimal branding outcomes ([Zahrah, 2023](#)).

Recent international studies have also emphasized that event marketing has shifted into a strategic urban development instrument that shapes city image, stimulates tourism flows, and strengthens emotional connections between visitors and destinations ([Kim, Jun, Walker, & Drane, 2015](#)). Well-managed events can create memorable experiences and strengthen destination attachment, which later contributes to place promotion and branding effectiveness ([Van den Berg & Braun, 2020](#)).

However, most studies on events in the existing literature tend to emphasize the impact of events on tourists' images and experiences rather than examining how strategic event management contributes to overall city marketing. This creates an opportunity for further research to explore Event Marketing Management as a more comprehensive and integrated variable within the broader context of city marketing ([Oliveira & Panyik, 2015](#)).

2.2 City Branding

City branding has become an important focus in place marketing literature because it enables cities to differentiate themselves from their competitors through identity narratives, images, and public perceptions. It involves a range of efforts to develop a strong city image, including the implementation of public policies, collaboration across sectors, and the promotion of the city's distinctive characteristics. The literature review indicates that the key dimensions of city branding consist of tourist attractions, the quality of public services, and the active participation of the community in fostering a positive city image ([Zahrah, 2023](#)).

Historical reviews of city branding explain that hypercompetition between cities forces governments to develop more adaptive and creative communication and representation strategies, including the effective use of digital media and visual narratives. However, this literature also notes the major challenges faced in reconstructing theory into practice, especially in ensuring brand consistency at all stakeholder levels ([Suardi et al., 2023](#)).

Empirical studies in various Indonesian cities show that city branding affects tourists' decisions to visit a destination. For instance, an analysis of branding in tourist attractions in Karawang indicates that the city's persona strategy affects tourists' visitation decisions, which represent one of the key components of destination competitiveness ([Maulani & Prasetyo, 2018](#)). Likewise, the implementation of city branding in Bandung through the "Bandung Juara" program demonstrates that a well-planned communication strategy is an integral part of efforts to enhance the city's image at the local level. However, its execution still encounters challenges, particularly the limited involvement of various city stakeholders ([Romli & Romli, 2020](#)).

2.3 Urban Competitiveness

Although the literature on urban competitiveness is more developed within the fields of economics and infrastructure, recent studies have begun to incorporate city branding dimensions to better understand

how public image and perception relate to competitiveness indicators. Analyses using indices that combine branding and competitiveness attributes reveal that while city branding emphasizes symbolic and perceptual elements, urban competitiveness is more focused on aspects such as infrastructure readiness, economic stability, and the quality of human resources. This suggests that although city branding and urban competitiveness are interconnected, they differ in their primary areas of emphasis ([Abdelraouf, Abdel-Latif, & ElSerafi, 2025](#)).

Recent studies have also shown that competitiveness is influenced not only by physical infrastructure but also by intangible assets such as image, reputation, and experiential value offered by cities ([AlShaalan & Durugbo, 2025](#)). Cities with strong and positive images are generally more competitive in attracting tourists, investments, and talent. International research also indicates that events, particularly sporting events, can generate both top-down and bottom-up impacts on a city's image and on residents' perceptions. These effects ultimately shape tourists' decisions and encourage them to share favorable impressions through word-of-mouth. These findings reflect the indirect relationship between events, city image, and behavioral dimensions that impact competitiveness more broadly ([Vuignier, 2017](#); [Yu, Lee, Ahn, Lee, & Foreman, 2023](#)).

2.4 The Influence of Event Marketing Management on City Branding

Event marketing management is a strategic component of city marketing that focuses on the planning, organization, and sustainability of events in accordance with the city's identity and vision. When managed professionally, events serve not only as entertainment but also as forms of symbolic communication that convey a city's values, culture, and character. Previous research has shown that events can strengthen positive perceptions and images of a city through direct experiences felt by visitors and local communities ([Getz & Page, 2016](#)). This is in line with the view that city events are often reproduced and institutionalized over time, creating recurring cultural patterns that contribute to shaping the urban identity ([Gelders & Van Zuilen, 2013](#)).

Recent studies have revealed that integrating events into city marketing strategies improves the consistency of city branding messages and strengthens city identity amid intercity competition. Event experiences, visitor engagement, and storytelling elements significantly influence place image formation and brand recall ([Washinta & Hadi, 2021](#)). Therefore, strategically planned and professionally executed events are expected to contribute significantly to strengthening and sustaining city branding.

Based on this reasoning, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H₁: Event Marketing Management positively affects the City Branding of Bandung

2.5 The Influence of Event Marketing Management on City Competitiveness

The competitiveness of a city reflects its ability to attract economic resources, tourists, investments, and creative talent compared to other cities. Event marketing management has the potential to become a strategic instrument for improving competitiveness by increasing city visibility, reputation, and local economic activities. Research indicates that cities hosting large-scale events with effective management often achieve higher levels of attractiveness and stronger reputations at national and international levels ([Grix et al., 2017](#)).

Other studies have also indicated that event-based tourism can stimulate economic activity, enhance destination exposure, and improve long-term urban positioning in competitive markets ([Saygin, 2023](#)). However, some studies note that the effect of events on competitiveness is not always direct and depends on how events are managed and integrated into broader urban strategies ([Kato, Ikeda, & Koizumi, 2024](#)). From a practical perspective, effective event marketing management may help city governments strengthen urban attractiveness and stimulate economic and tourism development.

Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H₂: Event Marketing Management positively affects the Competitiveness of the City of Bandung

2.6 The Influence of City Branding on City Competitiveness

City branding plays a crucial role in shaping public perception and has become a key factor in determining competitiveness among cities. Cities with strong brands tend to attract tourists, investors, and skilled human resources more easily. Empirical studies show that city branding significantly influences city competitiveness by enhancing reputation, trust, and differentiation from competitors ([Mabillard et al., 2023](#)).

Recent studies have also confirmed that city branding affects not only tourism performance but also the broader economic and social competitiveness of cities. A strong place identity and reputation contribute to investment attractiveness and long-term urban development ([Saygin, 2023](#)). For urban policymakers, strengthening city branding can be a strategic tool to improve competitiveness by shaping positive perceptions and increasing the city's attractiveness in global competition ([Getz & Page, 2016](#)).

Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H₃: City Branding has a positive effect on the City's Competitiveness

2.7 The Role of City Branding Mediation in the Relationship between Event Marketing Management and City Competitiveness

Although event marketing management has the potential to improve city competitiveness, several studies indicate that its impact may be temporary if it is not supported by the development of a strong city image and identity. In this context, city branding plays an important role in converting event experiences into lasting perceptions of the city ([Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2018](#)). Recent research suggests that city branding can function as a mediating mechanism that explains how city marketing strategies, including events, indirectly influence city competitiveness. Event experiences first strengthen emotional attachment and city image, which later contribute to competitiveness and destination loyalty ([Washinta & Hadi, 2021](#)). For city managers, this implies that events should not only focus on short-term visitor attraction but also be integrated into long-term branding strategies to create sustainable competitiveness ([AlShaan & Durugbo, 2025](#)).

Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H₄: City Branding mediates the influence of Event Marketing Management on the Competitiveness of the City of Bandung

3. Methodology

3.1 Types and Approaches to Research

This study adopts a quantitative approach using an explanatory research method to examine the causal relationships among Event Marketing Management, City Branding, and City Competitiveness. This approach was selected because the study focused on testing hypotheses and analyzing the influence between variables that were developed based on existing theories and prior research. The research design is cross-sectional, where data are collected at a certain time to describe respondents' perceptions of event management, city branding, and the competitiveness of the city of Bandung ([Sugiyono, 2025](#)).

3.2 Research Object and Location

The research location was the city of Bandung, which was chosen because of the high intensity of the event and its position as a creative city and urban tourism destination that competes with other major cities in Indonesia.

3.3 Population and Research Sample

3.3.1 Population

This study employed purposive sampling, a type of non-probability sampling, where respondents were selected based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. This method was chosen because the study required participants with direct experience attending events in the city of Bandung.

3.3.2 Sample

The sampling technique used in this study was purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling method in which respondents are selected based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. This

technique was chosen because the study required respondents who had direct experience participating in events held in the city of Bandung.

The criteria for the respondents in this study were as follows:

1. Respondents must have attended at least one event in Bandung within the last year.
 2. Respondents must be at least 17 years old to ensure that they could provide informed perceptions and evaluations.
 3. Respondents must have an understanding or perception of the image and attractiveness of Bandung.
- The population of this study consisted of individuals who participated in events organized in Bandung. Data were collected using a questionnaire distributed to respondents who met the above criteria.

The determination of the sample size in this study refers to the requirements of Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) analysis. [Hair et al. \(2021\)](#) suggested that the minimum sample size should be 5–10 times the total number of indicators used in the research model. Since this study utilizes approximately 25–30 indicators, the minimum sample size falls within the range of 125–300 respondents. Therefore, the number of samples used in this study is considered sufficient and meets the recommended criteria for SEM-PLS analysis.

3.3.3 Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed through online and offline methods. The research instrument employed a 1–5 Likert scale with the following scale descriptions:

Table 2. Likert scale

No	Answer Scale	Code	Value
1	Strongly agree	SS	5
2	Agree	S	4
3	Neutral	N	3
4	Disagree	TS	2
5	Strongly Disagree	STS	1

Table 2 show the questionnaire was designed to measure respondents' perceptions of each indicator of the research variables.

3.4 Operational Definitions and Variable Measurements

3.4.1 Event Marketing Management (X)

Event Marketing Management refers to the process of planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating events designed to support a city's marketing strategy.

The indicators used refer to the event management literature ([Getz & Page, 2019](#)):

- 1) Structured event planning
- 2) Consistency of the theme and concept of the event
- 3) Quality of event implementation
- 4) Stakeholder engagement
- 5) Sustainability and event evaluation

3.4.2 City Branding (Z)

City Branding is the perception and image of a city that is formed in the public mind as a result of the identity, values, and experiences that the city offers.

The city branding indicator refers to ([Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2018](#)).

- 1) Identity and character of the city
- 2) The charm and uniqueness of the city
- 3) Reputation of the city
- 4) Consistency of the city's message
- 5) Pride in the city

3.4.3 City Competitiveness (Y)

City competitiveness is defined as a city's ability to attract tourists, investment, and economic activity compared to other cities.

The city's competitiveness indicator is based on ([Saygı, 2023](#)) as follows:

- 1) Tourist attractions and events
- 2) Reputation and position of the city
- 3) Quality of visitor experience
- 4) Economic and investment potential
- 5) Competitive advantage of the city

3.5 Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted using the Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) approach with the assistance of the SmartPLS software. This method was selected for the following reasons.

- 1) It can analyze causal relationships between latent variables simultaneously.
- 2) It does not require strict assumptions of data normality.
- 3) It is suitable for exploratory research and theory development.

The stages of the analysis included:

1. Test Outer Model
 - a. Convergent validity (loading factor > 0.7; EFA > 0.5)
 - b. Discriminatory validity
 - c. Construct reliability (Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability > 0.7)
2. Test Inner Model
 - a. R-square value
 - b. Path coefficient
 - c. Test hypothesis significance using bootstrapping (t-statistic and p-value)
3. Mediation Test
 - a. Testing the indirect effect of Event Marketing Management on City Competitiveness through City Branding.

3.6 Research Hypothesis

The hypotheses tested in this study are as follows:

H_1 : Event Marketing Management positively affects City Branding

H_2 : Event Marketing Management positively affects City Competitiveness

H_3 : City Branding has a positive effect on City Competitiveness

H_4 : City Branding mediates the influence of Event Marketing Management on City Competitiveness

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Results

In this study, data analysis was performed using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach, which is a component- or variance-based method within Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The analysis was conducted using SmartPLS version 4.0, a software specifically developed for estimating structural models based on variance. The diagram depicting the outer and inner model path designs applied in this study is presented in Figure 1.

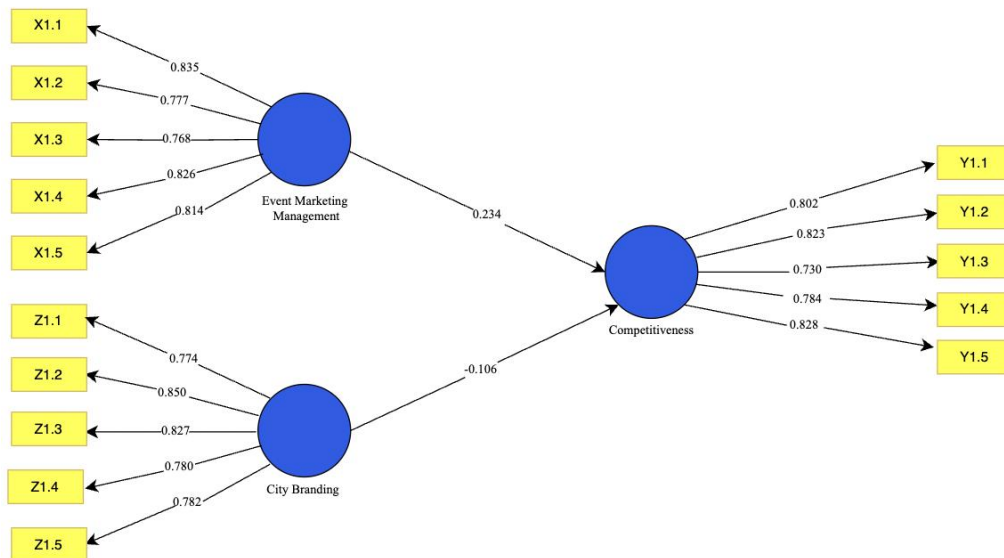


Figure 1. Outer model and inner model

4.2 Measurement Model Analysis (Outer Model)

The measurement model analysis or outer model uses two stages of testing, including:

1. Validity and reliability of constrictors
2. Validity of Discrimination

4.2.1 Construct reliability and validity

Convergent validity is the value of the loading factor on the latent variable and its indicator.

Table 3. Outer Loading

Variables	Indicator	Event Marketing Management	Competitiveness	City Branding
Event Marketing Management	<i>X_{1.1}</i>	0,835		
	<i>X_{1.2}</i>	0,777		
	<i>X_{1.3}</i>	0,768		
	<i>X_{1.4}</i>	0,826		
	<i>X_{1.5}</i>	0,814		
Competitiveness	<i>Y_{2.1}</i>		0,802	
	<i>Y_{2.2}</i>		0,823	
	<i>Y_{2.3}</i>		0,730	
	<i>Y_{2.4}</i>		0,784	
	<i>Y_{2.5}</i>		0,828	
City Branding	<i>Z_{3.1}</i>			0,774
	<i>Z_{3.2}</i>			0,850
	<i>Z_{3.3}</i>			0,827

Based on the PLS data processing results presented in Table 3, all indicators in this study had outer loading values above 0.70. Indicators exceeding this threshold are considered to meet the criteria for convergent validity at a satisfactory and robust level, allowing the analysis to proceed to the next stage of the validity assessment. The table shows that the outer loading values range from 0.730 to 0.873, indicating that all indicators fulfill the requirements for convergent validity and are suitable for measuring the three variables.

4.2.2 Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was applied to ensure that each construct within the latent variables was distinct from the others. This can be evaluated by analyzing cross-loading values. A model is said to have good discriminant validity when each indicator loads higher on its respective construct than on the other constructs. The following section presents the results of discriminant validity analysis.

Table 4. Discriminant Validity (Cross Loading)

	Event Marketing Management	Power Competition	City Branding
EM1.1	0.5799	0.2361	0.2250
EM1.2	0.5396	0.3799	0.3278
EM1.3	0.5333	0.2389	0.3014
EM1.4	0.5736	0.2681	0.2701
EM1.5	0.5653	0.2951	0.2715
C2.1	0.2750	0.5569	0.1813
C2.2	0.2938	0.5715	0.1326
C2.3	0.2326	0.5069	0.1792
C2.4	0.2299	0.5444	0.1660
C2.5	0.3194	0.5750	0.1701
CB3.1	0.2417	0.1076	0.5375
CB3.2	0.3229	0.1694	0.5903
CB3.3	0.2993	0.2514	0.5743
CB3.4	0.2611	0.0951	0.5417
CB3.5	0.2264	0.1181	0.5431

Based on the data presented in Table 4, the discriminant validity test using the cross-loading method shows that the indicators for Event Marketing Management (EM), Competitiveness (C), and City Branding (CB) have higher loading values on their respective constructs than other variables. Additionally, all indicator cross-loading values exceeded 0.700, indicating that each indicator was valid and met the criteria for discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2021). According to the Fornell-Larcker criterion, a model is considered to have good discriminant validity if the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct is greater than the correlations between that construct and other variables in the model.

Table 5. Fornel-Lacker Criterion Value

Indicator	Event Marketing Management	Competitiveness	City Branding
Event Marketing Management	0,558		
Competitiveness	0,348	0,551	
City Branding	0,342	0,190	0,558

In the discriminant validity test using the Fornell-Larcker criterion, as shown in Table 5, the square root of the AVE for each variable Event Marketing Management, Competitiveness, and City Branding was found to be higher than its correlations with other variables. These results indicate that the model meets the requirements of discriminant validity. The Fornell-Larcker values ranged from the lowest score for City Branding (0.190) to the highest score for Event Marketing Management (0.558).

4.2.3 Construct Reliability

The internal consistency of the measuring instrument on PLS was measured using a reliability test. Reliability testing shows the accuracy and consistency of a measuring instrument in making

measurements, where reliability refers to an instrument that is considered reliable to be used as a data collection tool because the instrument is good. The following presents the composite reliability value for each variable Table 6.

Table 6. Composite Reliability

Indicator	Composite Reliability
Event Marketing Management (<i>X</i>)	0,902
Competitiveness (<i>Y</i>)	0,895
City Brand (<i>W</i>)	0,901

A variable is declared tested or reliable if it has a Cronbach's alpha value greater than 0.7. Based on the data presented in Table 6, it is concluded that all constructs have met the reliability criteria, as evidenced by a composite reliability value greater than 0.8 – 0.9. All indicators were consistent in measuring the three variables. The following presents the Cronbach's alpha value for each variable Table 7.

Table 7. Cronbach' Alpha

Indicator	Cronbach's Alpha
Event Marketing Management (<i>X</i>)	0,866
Competitiveness (<i>Y</i>)	0,873
City Brand (<i>W</i>)	0,864

A variable is recognized as tested or reliable if it has a composite reliability value of above 0.7. Based on the data presented in Table 7, it is concluded that all constructs have met the reliability criteria, as evidenced by a Cronbach's alpha value greater than 0.7. The indicator was consistent in measuring the three research variables.

Table 8. Mean Variance Extracted (AVE)

Indicator	(AVE)
Event Marketing Management (<i>X</i>)	0,647
Competitiveness (<i>Y</i>)	0,631
City Brand Image (<i>W</i>)	0,645

Table 8 shows a variable is considered valid and reliable if it has an Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value of at least 0.5. Based on the results presented in Table 8, all variables show AVE values greater than 0.5, indicating that they meet the required criteria and are reliable. This implies that all indicators can adequately represent the variables being measured. Furthermore, when all indicators are standardized, the AVE corresponds to the average value of the block communalities.

4.2.4 Structural Model Analysis (Inner Model)

4.1.1.1 R-Square (R²)

The value in the R-squared is listed to see how much the impact of the free latent variable on the dependent variable.

Table 9. R-Square Test Results

	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square
K	0,308	0,286

Based on Table 9, it is concluded that the R-Square value for the latent variable of competitiveness is 0.308, which shows that the variability of Event Marketing Management, Competitiveness, and City Branding has an impact of 0.286, or equivalent to 28.6% on consumer competitiveness, while 71.4%.

4.1.1.2 Effect Size (F-Square)

The F-squared (F^2) value is used to determine the influence of the predictor variable (X) on the dependent variable (Y). The value of F-square ranges between $0.02 \leq F^2 < 0.15$ indicates that the variable has a weak influence, $0.15 \leq F^2 < 0.35$ indicates that the variable is moderately influential, and $F^2 \geq 0.35$ indicates that the variable is highly influential.

Table 10. F-Square test results

Event Marketing Management - > Competitiveness	0,049
Event Marketing Management - > City Branding	0,012
City Branding - > Competitiveness	0,209

Based on the Table 10, F^2 the Event Marketing Management variable (0.049) had a moderate effect, and Competitiveness (0.012) had a weak effect on city branding in the structural model. Competitiveness (0.209) had a high impact.

4.2.5 Hypothesis Testing

In model evaluation, significance testing was conducted to determine the relationships between variables using the bootstrapping procedure. Hypothesis testing is based on the t-statistic and p-value. A hypothesis is considered supported when it meets the rule of thumb, namely a P-value below 0.05 and a t-statistic greater than 1.96 (at a 5% significance level, one-tailed). The statistical evaluation of the model using the bootstrapping method in SmartPLS 4.0 is presented in Table 11. The table of inner weight results provides information on the estimated coefficients used to assess the proposed hypotheses.

Table 11. Results For Inner Wights Hypothesis Research

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Average (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Event Marketing Management → City Branding	0.234	0,227	0.105	2.227	0.026
Event Marketing Management → Competitiveness	-0.106	-0.099	0.179	0.591	0.555
City Branding → Competitiveness	0.437	0.446	0.113	3.858	0.000
City Branding → Event Marketing Management → Competitiveness	0.234	-0.099	0.113	0.591	0.026

Based on the data processed using Smart PLS 4.0, each hypothesized relationship was tested using simulations. In this case, a bootstrap method was used for the sample. Bootstrap testing is intended to minimize the problem of data abnormalities in research. The test results using the Smart PLS bootstrapping method are as follows.

4.1.2.1 Event Marketing Management Towards City Branding

Based on the hypothesis testing results presented in Table 11, the path coefficient is 0.1625, with a p-value of 0.025 and a t-statistic of 2.247 (greater than 1.96). According to the rule of thumb, these values indicate that Event Marketing Management has a positive and significant effect on City Branding. Therefore, H_1 was accepted, and H_0 was rejected.

4.1.2.2 Event Marketing Management Towards Competitiveness

The hypothesis testing results in Table 11, show a path coefficient of -0.106, with a p-value of 0.3625 and a t-statistic of 0.445 which is less than 1.96. Based on these results, Event Marketing Management does not significantly affect City Competitiveness. Thus, H_1 is rejected, and H_0 is accepted.

4.1.2.3 City Branding Against Competitiveness

The hypothesis testing results in Table 11 show that the path coefficient is 0.3034, with a p-value of 0.000 and a t-statistic of 3.753 which is greater than 1.96. These findings indicate that City Branding has a positive and significant influence on City Competitiveness. Accordingly, H_1 was accepted and H_0 was rejected.

4.1.2.4 The Role of City Branding Mediation in the Relationship between Event Marketing Management and City Competitiveness

Based on the results of hypothesis testing using the bootstrapping method in SmartPLS 4.0, the indirect effect of Event Marketing Management on City Competitiveness through City Branding shows a p-value of 0.026 (< 0.05) and a t-statistic of 2.227 (> 1.96), indicating that the indirect effect is statistically significant. However, the direct effect of Event Marketing Management on City Competitiveness yields a path coefficient of -0.106, a t-statistic of 0.591 (< 1.96), and a p-value of 0.555 (> 0.05), indicating a non-significant relationship. However, the effects of Event Marketing Management on City Branding and City Branding on City Competitiveness are both positive and significant. These results confirm that City Branding acts as a full mediating variable in the relationship between Event Marketing Management and City Competitiveness.

4.2 Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that Event Marketing Management has a positive and significant influence on City Branding. This indicates that effectively managed events can enhance a city's image and identity by delivering meaningful experiences and consistent communication messages throughout the event. In this context, events serve not only as forms of entertainment but also as strategic communication instruments that reflect the city's cultural values and uniqueness. This result is in line with prior studies highlighting that event experiences and visitor engagement play a crucial role in shaping the place image and strengthening brand recall ([Richards, 2020](#)). From a practical standpoint, this suggests that city governments must strategically design events to align with the city's identity and long-term branding objectives.

Nevertheless, the study also shows that Event Marketing Management does not exert a significant direct effect on City Competitiveness. This suggests that the organization of events alone is insufficient to enhance a city's competitive position. One possible explanation is that the benefits generated by events tend to be temporary and are often confined to short-term tourism impact. Without integration into broader urban development strategies, such as infrastructure development, investment promotion, and consistent branding initiatives, the contribution of events to overall competitiveness remains limited. This finding aligns with previous research indicating that the effect of events on competitiveness is generally indirect and highly dependent on their integration within wider urban development frameworks ([de San Eugenio Vela, Nogué, & Govers, 2017](#); [Getz & Page, 2016](#)).

The study also found that City Branding has a significant positive effect on City Competitiveness. This result indicates that a strong city brand can improve public perception, trust, and attractiveness, which ultimately contributes to its competitiveness. Cities with strong brands are more likely to attract tourists, investors, and talented human resources. This finding supports the argument that city branding plays a strategic role in strengthening a city's position in an increasingly competitive global urban environment ([de San Eugenio Vela et al., 2017](#)).

Furthermore, the findings indicate that City Branding fully mediates the relationship between Event Marketing Management and City Competitiveness. This implies that the influence of events on competitiveness occurs indirectly through the development of a strong image. In other words, events must first reinforce city branding before they can contribute to enhancing overall competitiveness. This

result underscores the importance of aligning event management with city branding strategies so that events generate long-term value, rather than merely short-term tourism effects.

In terms of research contribution, this study offers a novel perspective by empirically analyzing the mediating role of city branding in linking event marketing management to city competitiveness, particularly in the context of Indonesian cities. Previous studies have largely focused on the impact of events on tourist experiences or destination images, while relatively few have explored how event management strategies affect urban competitiveness through branding mechanisms. Therefore, this study enriches the urban marketing literature by demonstrating that city branding plays a strategic role in converting event activities into sustainable competitive advantage.

From a practical perspective, these findings suggest that local governments should go beyond simply organizing events and ensure that such activities are integrated into comprehensive city-branding strategies. By aligning event themes, narratives, and communication efforts with the city's identity, events can function as effective tools for strengthening the city's brand and enhancing its long-term competitiveness.

5. Conclusions

5.1 Conclusion

This study found that Event Marketing Management positively and significantly affects City Branding in Bandung. This suggests that events that are well organized through careful planning, consistent thematic concepts, active stakeholder participation, and sustainable execution can effectively enhance the city's identity, image, and public perception. However, Event Marketing Management does not have a significant direct impact on City Competitiveness. These results imply that organizing events alone is insufficient to immediately strengthen Bandung's competitiveness, as their impact needs to be integrated within a broader strategic framework to be fully effective.

In contrast, City Branding has a positive and significant influence on City Competitiveness. A strong image, reputation, and city identity play crucial roles in improving Bandung's attractiveness and its competitive standing relative to other cities. Furthermore, the mediation analysis indicates that City Branding fully mediates the relationship between Event Marketing Management and City Competitiveness. This means that Event Marketing Management indirectly enhances city competitiveness by strengthening city branding, indirectly through strengthening City Branding. In other words, events become effective instruments for increasing competitiveness when they can build and reinforce a consistent city brand.

Overall, the findings of this study emphasize that the success of event activities in supporting urban competitiveness depends on their ability to strengthen the city's brand. Therefore, the integration of event management and city branding strategy is a key factor in transforming event activities into long-term competitiveness for the City of Bandung.

5.2 Research Limitations

The findings of this study indicate that Event Marketing Management exerts a positive and significant influence on the City Branding of Bandung. This suggests that events managed in a planned, consistent, and sustainable manner can reinforce the city's image and identity in the perceptions of both residents and visitors. From a conceptual perspective, events function as a medium of symbolic communication that translates a city's values, culture, and character into tangible experiences. When managed professionally, from initial concept development and execution quality to stakeholder engagement events, they go beyond temporary activities and become integral to the city's branding narrative. This supports the view that events can create emotional experiences that contribute to shaping the destination image.

From a theoretical standpoint, city competitiveness is a multidimensional construct that depends not only on the quantity or quality of events but also on how these events are aligned with broader urban development policies, investment attraction efforts, and the strengthening of city identity. Previous

studies have noted that the effects of events are often temporary, particularly when they are treated as one-off activities without a long-term strategic continuity. In this regard, the findings suggest that events in Bandung have not yet been fully leveraged as drivers of structural competitiveness, such as sustaining the city's reputation, attracting long-term investment, or clearly differentiating the city from its competitors. Thus, this study contributes by emphasizing that Event Marketing Management alone is insufficient to generate sustainable City Competitiveness.

Furthermore, the results confirm that City Branding has a positive and significant effect on Bandung's competitiveness. This underscores the importance of city image and reputation as critical factors in inter-city competition, particularly in attracting tourists, investors, and skilled human capital. City Branding functions as a mechanism that simplifies the complexity of a city into an identity that is easily recognized and trusted by the public. Cities with strong brands tend to occupy a clearer position in the minds of stakeholders, making them more competitive. This aligns with the concept of competitive identity, which suggests that branding plays a direct role in enhancing both economic and social competitiveness.

5.3 Suggestions and Directions for Future Research

Based on the results of this study, city governments are advised to prioritize strategic Event Marketing Management that is consistently aligned with city branding rather than merely increasing the number of events. Events should be treated as long-term branding tools that represent a city's identity and contribute to sustainable competitiveness. In addition, strong collaboration among stakeholders and structured post-event evaluations are essential to ensure the effectiveness of branding efforts. For the Bandung city government, several practical recommendations can be considered. First, event planning should be aligned with the long-term city branding strategy so that each event consistently communicates Bandung's identity as a creative and cultural city. Second, the government should prioritize flagship events that represent Bandung's unique cultural and creative industries to strengthen brand recognition at the national and international levels. Third, collaboration with local communities, creative industry actors, tourism stakeholders, and the private sector should be strengthened to ensure that events generate wider economic and social impacts.

In addition, systematic post-event evaluations should be conducted to measure the effectiveness of events in supporting city branding and competitiveness. Indicators such as visitor perception, media exposure, tourist satisfaction, and investment interest can be used to evaluate the event outcomes. By integrating these evaluation results into future event planning, the Bandung city government can improve the strategic role of events as long-term instruments for strengthening the city's branding and competitiveness.

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Author Contributions

AR was responsible for the conceptualization of the research, literature review, data collection, data analysis using the SEM-PLS method and manuscript preparation. The author also interpreted the research findings and revised the manuscript.

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