A survey on factors influencing city branding

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, the issue of “globalization” is entering to all areas in the world. In addition to products and companies, cities and countries also have the opportunity to see themselves as important actors in international arena. Places define their positions in different fields like business, leisure and recreation, educational opportunities, living, etc. This paper presents an empirical study to introduce city branding as one of the solutions to join globalization process. The method of this research is based on the “descriptive-analytic” and utilize the available literature and experts’ opinions to prioritize the influencing factors of city branding. We use Delphi consensus methods and technique of analytical hierarchy process to evaluate the factors. Finally, the results of the study indicate that security, transportation and mental creativity are the weakest fields and business and shopping facilities are strong fields of city branding in metropolitan of Tehran.

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1. Introduction

Nowadays, cities all over globe include more and more marketing techniques in their administration practice and governing philosophy. The transfer of marketing knowledge, however, to the operational environment of cities creates some challenges, mostly due to the specific nature of places in general and cities in specific as marketable assets (Kavaratzis, 2004; Anholt, 2006; Braun, 2008). Nowadays, the issue of “globalization” is entering to all areas in the world. In addition to products and companies, cities and countries also have the opportunity to see themselves as important actors in international arena (Ashworth & Voogd, 1990; Hankinson & Cowking, 1993). Embacher and Buttle (1989) investigated the suitability of repertory grid technique to destination image research. The study tried to find out how tourists construed destination countries and reported how they perceived Austria in terms of the constructs generated. Gallarza et al. (2002) presented a review and investigation of the concept and measurement of destination image, within an intra-disciplinary marketing perspective. They presented a conceptual model featuring its complex, relativistic multiple and dynamic nature as a more comprehensive framework of destination image. Ashworth and
Kavaratzis (2009) explained the rise of city branding and the reasons of its popularity and identified necessary similarities between these two forms of branding.

2. The proposed study

In this paper, we present an empirical investigation to prioritize different factors influencing on city branding using analytical hierarchy process (AHP) (Saaty, 1988, 1990). The study considers seven factors influencing on city branding development (Knox & Bickerton, 2003; Ward, 1998; Raubo, 2010), which are briefly discussed as follows (See Fig. 1),

Nature: Access to recreational open spaces clean, plenty of parks and facilities, mass flow, the Green Belt, Natural Attractions (Embahcer & Buttle, 1989),

Creativity and innovation in business: Good place to do business, innovative business process improvements to local industries, abundant employment opportunities (Embahcer & Buttle, 1989),

Purchase opportunity: Choices for shopping, good shopping centers, variety of restaurants (Hankinson, 2001; Hankinson & Cowking, 1993),

Transportation: Lack of adequate communication networks, traffic flowing, lack of any problem for citizens during road construction, road maintenance and quick repairs (Kozak, 2003),

Cultural activities: Cultural events and festivals, cultural centers (Hankinson, 2001),

Governmental services: Adequate access to health care, educational facilities, availability of plenty of public transportations according to the therapeutic needs of the elderly, reliable energy sources (Santos et al., 2007; Merrilees et al., 2009; Smyth, 2005),


As stated before, the proposed study of this paper uses analytical hierarchy process (AHP) to rank the effects of seven different factors. Table 1 demonstrates the results of pair-wise comparison and Fig. 2 summarizes the results of our ranking.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
<th>The summary of pairwise comparison</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factor</td>
<td>Nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity and innovation in business</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase opportunity</td>
<td>1.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural activities</td>
<td>1.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governmental services</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As we can observe from the results of Fig. 2, creativity and innovation in business development is number one priority followed by purchase opportunity, cultural activities and governmental services. The consistency ratio has been considered as 0.056, which is well below 0.1 and this confirms the overall survey.

4. Discussion and conclusion

In this paper, we have presented an empirical investigation to rank different factors influencing on city branding. The proposed study has considered seven factors including nature, creativity and innovation in business, purchase opportunity, transportation, cultural activities, governmental services and security influencing on development of city branding. The study has accomplished a pairwise comparison by performing a survey among 15 people and the results of the survey has confirmed that creativity and innovation in business development is number one priority followed by purchase opportunity, cultural activities and governmental services. The results of our study are consistent with Rainisto (2003), Kavaratzis (2004) and Kozak (2003). Based on the survey accomplished, we propose some methods for developing city branding in city of Tehran, Iran and Table 2 shows the summary of our findings.

Table 2
The summary of possible actions for city development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Suggestion</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good transportation</td>
<td>Infrastructure development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature</td>
<td>Further development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governmental development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity and innovation in business</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase opportunities</td>
<td>Sustainable development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As we can observe from the results of Table 2, for three factors of security, good transportation and nature related issues; we recommend further development in infrastructures. There is no doubt that governmental development could significantly contribute to city branding and finally, sustainable development could contribute on having more creative ideas, purchasing opportunities as well as development in cultural activities.
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References