NATION BRANDING: EDUCATION AND EDIFICATION

Dr. C. Shanmugapriya
Veltech Multitech Dr.Rangarajan & Dr.Sakuntahala Engineering College, Chennai
Kcspriya30@gmail.com

Dr. V. Rajeswari
Mother Teresa Women’s University Kodaikanal
rajevv@rediffmail.com

ABSTRACT

Nations are becoming very conscious of their positions and international perception as they affect their images in the world. They are generating new approaches and strategies to establish and propagate positive national brand images. According to Dinnie [2008], a comprehensive nation branding strategy would encompass initiatives and programmes to stimulate Diaspora mobilization, enhance the coordination of the nation’s key institutions and organizations and ensure a reasonable consistency in the country’s official communication and behaviors. It is felt that there is pressing need for the study of the process underpinning the support for Nation Branding. Pedagogy for branding a nation for the stakeholders is the need of the hour because it is the informal education and values which can be inculcated in the minds of the viewers. These are all discussed in the full paper.

1. Introduction

In a globalized world, with the development of fast and efficient information technology, it has become crucial to identify and manage a country’s image and reputation. While a country’s image has been indirectly developed throughout history by international politics, this practice has helped capitalize on international economic, social, and political prospects. The active development of a country’s image and reputation is based on the theory of Nation Branding, which uses marketing tactics to build a country as a brand (Fan, 2006). This study also explores the theories of nation branding, national image, national reputation, and competitive identity. However, this term has most recently been referred to as Competitive Image, using more relationship based approaches (Anholt, 2008).

Keywords: Nation Branding, Branding, International Public Relations, News Media, Reputation Management, Competitive Identity, National Brands, Nation Image.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this professional paper is to develop a case study of nations and its branding techniques. It will provide a snapshot of the historical review of the branding in randomly selected nations. The specific objectives of this paper are to first review the conceptual and theoretical foundation of nation branding by leading authors in the marketing field; second, to examine and define nation branding and discuss its challenges. Third, this paper discusses
some selected nations branding techniques. It also highlights that the need of the hour is to educate and edify the community for better understanding of the nation through formal, non-formal and informal education that too, starting from students to the public by all means.

3. Research Methodology

This study will use the case study approach to gain insight into nation branding concept. Methodologically, it uses scholarly literature, media sources, and publications from non-governmental organizations to examine the translation of nation branding into real world situations. This thesis is a study of the phenomenon of nation branding, its relation to public diplomacy in international relations, and how the practice has been implemented. Data collected for this thesis primarily consisted of an analysis of academic publications, which was then compared to real-life applications of nation branding as seen in the media, qualitative nation branding reports, and nation branding campaigns. Media sources include online archived news stories, most of which are from the newspaper and article extracts that were used in some of the scholarly publications found in the research. The reports on nation brand rankings were found through two international organizations that specialize in nation branding: FutureBrand, Inc. and GfK Group (Gesellschaft für Konsumforschung). Annual reports are published on each respective website.

4. Research Questions

The key to carrying out this study effectively is to clearly map out the scope of nation branding. The main interest of my research is directed towards the following questions:

- How is nation branding practiced in SINGAPORE, SOUTH KOREA, DUBAI, THAILAND AND CHINA and who are the main actors in this practice?
- To what extent has branding been an effective practice in improving the image in the global arena?

5. The Application Of Branding Strategies To Nations

The application of branding techniques to nations and places is growing in frequency given the increasingly global competition which nations and places now face in both their domestic and external markets. Today there are more reasons why nations must manage and control their branding, including the need to attract tourists, factories, companies and talented people and to find markets for their exports. This requires countries to adopt conscious branding if they are to compete effectively on the global stage (Kotler and Gertner, 2002), a view shared by Olins (1999), who asserts that within a few years, identity management will be seen as a perfectly normal manifestation of what is now called joined-up government in that a successful brand will be seen as a key national asset. Van Ham (2001) claims that the unbranded state has a difficult time attracting economic and political attention, and that image and reputation are becoming essential parts of the state’s strategic equity.
6. What necessitates a nation brand?

National branding has direct and indirect implications on the economy and its businesses. The former includes hotels, airlines and travel agencies, and the latter, adjacent sectors like food, entertainment, fashion and services. "More tourism creates more jobs, more infrastructures, more industries, and it can also bring about improvements in education – so that the country has more qualified people to manage these sectors – and elevate the country's quality of life," Valentini noted.

Nation branding comes in many forms, but most commonly, as a logo with a slogan that gets splashed across television screens, websites, magazines, brochures, at events, and so on. "A successful nation branding initiative depends on how well your audience absorbs, understands, adopts and redistributes the message based on their requirements for value," said Valentini. The idea for nation branding is a relatively recent one – a trend that had only picked up, globally, over the past few decades as people got acquainted with experiential marketing and saw how stalwarts like "I Love New York" could bring prominence and distinction to a state; and with that, visitors, investments and jobs.

7. Target Audiences

If a nation’s goal is to change or develop a better national image and reputation, it is critical to understand the different target audiences that need to be reached to develop the nation’s brand awareness. Therefore, different tactics from different fields are necessary to persuade target audiences to develop a favorable image of a nation. As explained by Kotler (2002) and O'Shaughnessy (2000), national image is reliant upon the human ability to recall ideas and memories about the nation and stereotypes can be a large part in making consumer decisions. The emphasis then for nation image and reputation is on the development of relationships with the international community through time.

8. The limitations of Nation Branding.

The concept ‘nation branding’ is said to have been coined in 1996 by Simon Anholt, today considered one of the fathers, and gurus, of nation branding, partly as a result of increased ‘homogenisation of
markets on the one hand and in the increasing sense of national identity on the other’ (Szondi 2008: 4). There are limitations to the practical use of nation branding. An image of a nation is far more simplistic than reality and cannot capture the complexities and diversity of people and opinions within its boundaries – trying to do so may well undermine these characteristics as well as a country’s credibility (Riordan 2004: 9). This is not to suggest that one’s perception of a country is irrelevant. It’s always a doubt that there is anyone who has never been affected by ads, slogans, or simply a recommendation from a friend.

9. Review of related literatures
GfK is one of the world’s leading research companies, with around 13,000 experts working to discover new insights into the way people live, think and shop, in over 100 markets, every day. GfK is constantly innovating and using the latest technologies and the smartest methodologies to give its clients the clearest understanding of the most important people in the world: their customers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Nation</th>
<th>2012 NBI Score</th>
<th>2012/2011 Score Difference</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>69.09</td>
<td>+0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>67.72</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>67.14</td>
<td>-0.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>66.58</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>65.90</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>65.87</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>65.08</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>64.61</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>64.36</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>63.49</td>
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Source: 2012 and 2011 Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands IndexSM 2011 rankings are shown in parentheses.
### Immigration & Investment ranking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2013 rank</th>
<th>Nation</th>
<th>Score change from 2012</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>-0.58</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Canada</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Australia</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>0.33</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Japan</td>
<td>-0.40</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
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</tbody>
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... ... ...

| 21        | Brazil         | -0.26                  |
| 25        | Russia         | 1.04                   |
| 31        | China          | -0.14                  |
| 42        | India          | -0.78                  |

*Source: Anholt-GfK Nation Brands Index 2013*

### Top 10 Ranked Nations 2008-2011: Overall NBI<sup>SM</sup>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2008</th>
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<td>1 United States</td>
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<td>7 Italy</td>
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<td>Canada</td>
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<td>8 Australia</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
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<td>9 Switzerland</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 Sweden</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Spain, Sweden (tie)</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
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</tbody>
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10. Future Brand Ratings

10.1 Dubai - Instant City Or Instantly Recognizable City

Dubai’s formula for development included several components—visionary leadership, high quality infrastructure, an expatriate-friendly environment, zero tax on personal and corporate income and low import duties. The result was that Dubai quickly became a business and tourism hub for a region that stretches from Egypt to the Indian sub-continent and from South Africa to the ex-Soviet republics. Dubai, Doha (Qatar), Bahrain are the examples of what we can call ‘instant’ cities or ‘cities within cities’ that are focal points of their government’s efforts to promote real estate development. They are ‘instant’ in that they are the product of a super-fast urbanism. Combining the involvement of local businesses and innovative strategies of urban marketing with headline catching projects, Dubai has set out to transform its urban landscape, and its image.

10.2 SINGAPORE – FROM THIRD WORLD TO FIRST WORLD COUNTRIES – “A CREATIVE CITY”

Without nation branding, there would be no Singapore. Without a concerted, closely-coordinated programme of nation branding over the last few decades, Singapore might not have made it from Third World to First World. Nation Branding Strategies Framed by Singapore (Tourism Positioning - Destination Branding )Singapore has changed its tourism positioning four times since 1964.
the 1960s and 1970s, Singapore was “Instant Asia. In the 1980s, “Surprising Singapore” In the 1990s, Singapore has promoted itself as "New Asia – Singapore". In March 2004, the STB launched the “Uniquely Singapore” destination brand. Unique is the word that best captures Singapore, a dynamic city rich in contrast and colour where you’ll find a harmonious blend of culture, cuisine, arts and architecture.

Communicating the image of Singapore as vibrant and exciting are done by several ways.
1. Various government authorities are actively searching for, and bidding to attract, major events to the country. As a result, spectacular activities are being frequently staged in the city. Besides hosting pop concerts by international mega stars, popular musicals and block bust exhibitions, Singapore hosts big events, for example, the 2006 World Bank and IMF meetings, the 2009 APEC summit and the first-ever Youth Olympics in 2010.
2. To “accredit” the promoted lively images of Singapore, the Singaporean authorities seek investments and endorsements from international firms.
3. To become a respected arts and cultural city, Singapore has also established a number of cultural institutions.

The e-Transformation Journey of Singapore Planning to house the needs of its nation state, develop sustainable and strategic industry clusters, and a robust infrastructure of transportation systems to support the growing economy. The leaders abide by the belief that Singapore’s continued survival depends on its ability to play a useful and valuable role in the world. Two strategic imperatives remain to undergird the nation state: economic development and domestic stability. This has formed the backdrop of Singapore’s development.

10.3 Brand China
A survey organized by the Communication University of China (CUC) in Beijing shows that foreigners like china better after the Beijing Olympics but still hold negative opinions about some of Chinese behavior. A total of 2400 foreigners took part in survey through face to face interview or online questionnaire before and after Olympics According to the findings China’s economic image rose from 3.1 to 3.2, Cultural image rose to slightly higher from 3.0, Political image remain the same, Image of Beijing city rose from 3.0 to 3.1.Loo & Davies (2006) in their paper Branding china : The ultimate challenge in reputation management? , has identified ten challenges facing the branding of china from a review of related literature. It ends with a discussion of ten possible values and images that Brand china can embrace which is as follows.

(a) How can china counter its developing nation and low price images to command a premium price for its products?
(b) A nation’s image can vary from stake holder to stake holder and from market to market. Which stakeholders markets need the most attention from china?
(c) The country of origin effect is prevalent across consumers, industrial buyers and foreign investors. How can china create a single coherent brand to tackle these multiple stakeholders?
(d) How can brand china be built up so that its halo effect can benefit its corporate product brands when they make forays into the international arena?
(e) What does modern day Brand china mean to both the Chinese and worldwide audience and what are the common denominators that can be applied across outputs?
(f) Should china decide to manage its brand centrally and across all outputs.
(g) Should it be done in a formalized way or to just create a momentum then let it happen spontaneously?

(h) Which outputs and companies should lead the imagery?

(i) How will the nation brand be promoted both internally and externally?

10. How to maximize the nation branding opportunities that the Olympic games and world expo offer?

According to (Mari 2008) China’s government is commonly criticized for its lack of transparency. According to researchers, China has a long way to go in improving its nation brand equity.

10.4 Brand Qatar

Qatar is seeking to become a regional power and is trying to compete with its neighbors Saudi Arabia and Iran. As a sovereign state Qatar is looking for regional independence, it does not want to be perceived as a state that has the same characteristics of its neighboring countries. Promoting Qatari Cultural awareness and values will eventually lead the small Gulf state to expose its identity and differentiate itself from its neighboring countries. However, having the US security guarantee which backs Qatar, has allowed the small Gulf island to pursue its foreign policy objectives of building an international image as an ‘honest broker’ within the region.

10.5 Brand Australia

Heidi Therese Hansen (2010) Australia’s image in Denmark – How to measure a nation-brand image? Has explained the The new Brand Australia Programme in detail. Until this year, Australia had not had what can be defined as a real nation-brand. However, it was already recognised by O. Donovan in 1995 that the image of Australia abroad was mostly associated with beaches, open spaces and beer (as reported in Richardson 1996: 60). The purpose of the Brand Australia concept is to make the world see that Australia is more than a great place to take a vacation but also a good place to do business, and a country that have invented such things as WiFi technology and a type of cancer vaccine (Australian Government n.d.).

10.6 Brand Thailand

Nuttavuthisit (2007) in his study on “Brand Thailand: Correcting the negative image of sex tourism, illustrated the current situation of Thailand and analyzed the root causes of sex exploitation and perceptual problems. He observed that the place branding strategies are proposed to correct the present negative image by placing emphasis on positive characteristics in order to suppress negative perceptions.

As a small emerging country, Thailand has recognised the need to enhance the nation's branding in order to compete in the competitive global marketplace. The Branding Thailand project was initiated by the Thai Government to find out how people worldwide view the nation's strengths and weaknesses. These strategies include the development of brand positioning through promotional campaigns that use positive features, such as natural beauty and local hospitality, and communication tools such as slogans, themes, visual symbols and events.

In response to the question about word association with Thailand, the majority of respondents mentioned positive notions, such as ‘exotic' and ‘friendly people'. Examples of such reactions, particularly about the problem of prostitution include:
'Sex, local cuisine, dances, forests' (Argentina, Male)  
'Steamy, colourful, crowded, poverty, prostitution, beaches' (USA, Female)  
'Beaches, beggars, sex' (USA, Male)  
'Temples in the forest, prostitution of children' (France, Female)  
'Country side; well marketed; friendly; prostitution problems' (USA, Male).

10.7 Brand South Korea
The Nation Branding Committee’s points of south korea are as follows:

(a) Shaping the Future with Korea: As a recently developed nation itself, South Korea will systematically provide external aid to developing nations to help build its industries by teaching and informing best practices for development and providing supplies when necessary. As a result of this effort, South Korea will stand out as a “model” for developing nations and develop interest in the Korean culture.

(b) Campus World/Global Korea Scholarship/CAMPUS Asia: Through exchange programs, South Korea will welcome students and scholars to experience, learn and understand South Korean culture. Thus, South Korea will build a friendly relationship with foreigners. Focus will be put on actively providing this opportunity to experience South Korea to future and current students leaders and scholars from neighboring countries.

(c) Korean Supporters: Systemize volunteer efforts at a more national level in order to connect the image of the volunteer organization as a South Korean effort. Furthermore, build national eagerness to participate in volunteer programs within the Korean residents. As a result boosting South Korean image as the second largest volunteer nation.

(d) Global Korean Network: To connect Koreans all over the world by providing a comprehensive and accessible cyber network for the ease of information exchange at the international level.

(e) Global Citizenship: By educating South Koreans to be well-rounded global citizens by spreading country-specific etiquette information, South Korea hopes to become a more welcoming and understanding country for foreigners. It will accordingly build a friendly and sophisticated image of South Korea.

(f) Advanced Technology & Design: Put forward the best South Korean products to better represent national brands, for the heightening of South Korean product image, especially in technology and design. As a result increasing Korean brand awareness and increasing exports.

11 Conclusion
To summarize, nation branding may be characterized as a domain that is currently very much practitioner-led and where academic research has been slow to follow, although high levels of academic interest in the topic are now beginning to materialize. Governments must lead the branding process. Clearly, News organizations are interested in ‘bad news’ such as wars, disasters and the like. Who is there to make that attractive image for you? The logical conclusion is that each country must take control of its own brand. This means that it must invest in its brand, as well as the management and promotion of that brand. This is a task that must be led by governments. With this participation in the branding process, these stakeholders will then become natural promoters of the brand. Furthermore, if the government takes an initiative that is intelligent and clearly of benefit to the whole country, it is likely to get the willing support of other stakeholders. This study may be of interest to the governments to identify the area of improvements on the existing campaign; to discover and accentuate the campaign strengths, and diminish the campaign weaknesses so as to create a strong brand identity; and expectantly sustain competitive advantages over the neighboring countries.
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