9

Key Elements of Nation Branding: The Importance of the Development of Local Human Capital in the UAE

Myriam Saad

Since the beginning of the 21st century, globalization has led nations to brand themselves and get competitive advantage in order to develop a positive country image. Since the world is now one single market where countries compete against each other, nation branding has become a matter for discussion. In fact, today's single international market has led countries to manage their strategies in view of a larger audience, to benefit from foreign investment, skilled labour and businesses between nations. Like product and corporate branding, nation branding corresponds to the strategies set up in order to enhance reputation and image and help build and sustain competitiveness. This chapter sheds some light on nation branding, especially for the case of the UAE, and highlights general practices that can be used by the country to enhance its nation's value.

One of the most significant factors in competitive advantage is not reality but perception. In fact, countries have brand images that are their most valuable asset as these images are the only thing that people really

M. Saad (✉)
University of Wollongong, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

know about these countries. Hence, nation branding has come under the international spotlight as a way of better understanding the strategies that need to be implemented to enhance country image. The purpose of this chapter is to determine the main elements influencing nation branding and explore potential opportunities for the UAE to strengthen its nation branding. Although there is considerable amount of literature regarding nation branding, no studies have been carried out on the case of the UAE as a brand. Hence, this chapter aims to investigate the global practices the UAE needs to follow in order to be ranked in the top ten most valuable nation branding (Brand Finance, 2017).

Nation branding has factual and positive outcomes. Despite the debate around the existence of nation branding, many researchers agree on the fact that 'nation branding' is not a myth and that each nation has a brand and an image (Andrei, 2017; Anholt, 2007; Dinnie, 2008; Fan, 2010; Zeineddine, 2017). A well-planned progressive strategy for nation branding can enhance the country's ability to attract tourists, investors and talented workforce alike (Zeineddine & Nicolescu, 2018).

Most researchers agree on the actual existence of nation branding and the various aspects influencing it; however, conducting research about nation branding remains a challenge for marketers due to the international dimension. This study, carried out using an exploratory qualitative approach applied to the UAE, aims to provide an insight of nation branding and eventual recommendations regarding the global practices to be followed. Findings from this research will help develop the elements of the concept of nation branding in order to understand the basics of the topic and the main factors to focus on to enhance nations' ranking. Products, tourism, political and cultural brandings have been identified as the main elements of nation branding after analysing the rankings of the main determinants from Anholt-Gfk Roper Index.

This chapter may guide scholars, practitioners, researchers and government regarding the specific elements that should be considered when deciding to enhance nation branding and country image. Therefore, this study contributes to existing research by providing with a thematic study based on real indexes.

Research Background

The term 'nation branding' has initiated several debates on its existence and its real meaning (Fan, 2010). Over the past years, the level of interest in a country's reputation and image has been growing, mainly in Asia. Indeed, nations are trying to ensure that their global image and reputation keep pace with the quick growth of their economy and politics (Anholt, 2008). Being part of the Asian continent and experiencing rapid growth, the UAE turns out to be an interesting country to focus on in terms of nation branding. The UAE is now a famous destination for work, business and holidays due to the high income offered, the tax-free structure and the luxurious lifestyle.

However, to be able to compete against other nations, the UAE needs to base its strategy on different determinants and elaborate an attractive nation brand. Currently, the country is well known as a strong driver of reforms and has been taking initiatives to enhance growth. Although it has successfully won the bid of the Expo 2020 and has emerged as a leader in the Middle East and North Africa region, the UAE has not reached the top ten most valuable nation branding yet. Through diverse projects, the country has drawn the world's attention and improved its economy. Hence, a study of the UAE's nation branding was chosen here because of the high potential of the country.

Over the past years, the UAE has been showing a strong effort and motivation to grow its economy at a fast pace. Ranked 35th in most valuable nation branding in 2012 (BrandFinance, 2013), it reached the 21st position in 2017. Its high involvement in FDI attraction within the country has allowed the country to become the third strongest nation brand in the world, considering the fact that nation brand power is based on FDI power (Brand Finance, 2017). According to the 2019 report, UAE brands are at the top of the list in the GCC region (https://brandfinance.com/news/uae-home-to-the-middle-easts-most-valuable-brands/).

Through Vision 2020, the UAE has shown a willingness to stand out from other countries and be an active participant in the global competition. This research is particularly important as today's global market is very competitive and countries need to establish strategies to build their brand and attract the world's attention. The high potential and capability

of the UAE makes it an ideal destination and country to study for improving nation branding. Despite the large numbers of published articles related to this topic, few, if any, are related to the UAE as a brand. By investigating global practices of strong nation brands around the world, this study can provide scholars, practitioners and researchers with an overall understanding of nation branding elements, as well as an eventual approach for the UAE to enhance its brand.

This research aims to identify the key determinants of nation branding and the way the UAE needs to proceed to increase its nation ranking. The specific research questions are:

- What are the key elements of country branding in emerging countries?
- Which approach does the UAE need to follow from global best practices for sustainable human capital?

Literature Review

Concept of Nation Branding

The term 'nation branding' is based on images from strong and persuasive stereotypes that significantly influence nations' growth (Anholt, 2007). Globalization has led many countries to invest in branding efforts for the sake of conveying a positive image. Branding has an important role in today's global market as it acts on enhancing the way nations perceive each other and influence stakeholders' purchasing decision. From developed to developing countries, nation branding has become a matter of interest due to its complexity and its importance when it comes to attracting foreign direct investments, talents and businesses. It aims to attract the world's attention with the purpose of economic growth, by conveying a unique image and message to other nations (Fan, 2010). According to Dinnie (2015), nation branding is similar to corporate branding, as nations aim to attract worldwide consumers to their country and products. Many studies highlight the importance of competitive advantage of nations due to the high international competition between them (Andrei, 2017; Anholt, 2003). Anholt (2007) particularly emphasizes the notion

of competitive identity when alluding to national reputation and image. He describes the concept of competitive identity as "the synthesis of brand management with public diplomacy and with trade, investment, tourism and export promotion" (Anholt, 2007, p. 5). Knowing that people passively collect information and form their own perception of a country's image, it is important to convey a positive image (Lee, Toth, & Shin, 2008).

As mentioned earlier, despite the debate around the existence of nation branding, many researchers agree on the fact that 'nation branding' is not a myth and that each nation has a brand and an image (Andrei, 2017; Anholt, 2007; Dinnie, 2015; Fan, 2010; Zeineddine, 2017) that are shaped through diverse sources such as previous experience in the country, product purchases, mass media and word of mouth (Loo & Davies, 2006). Amongst emerging countries, BRICS countries have been particularly involved in nation branding, which enhances their corporates' competitiveness (Anholt, 2007; Loo & Davies, 2006). The more an emerging country becomes 'global', the more it needs to focus on its nation branding, its reputation and the way the international arena perceives it. Failing to establish an appealing nation brand can give its competitors the opportunity of creating harmful stereotypes about it. According to Anholt (2000, 2007), Andrei (2017), White (2012) and Zeineddine (2017), it is essential for a nation to focus on its branding in order to attract investors, skilled workforce, tourists, and governments of other nations through:

- Export opportunities
- Attractive foreign direct investment opportunities
- Enhanced tourism experience
- Favourable government environment

Export Opportunities Via National Identity and Country of Origin

Branding is as essential for a nation as it is for a good or service. A country may be famous for exporting a specific product (Papadopoulos & Heslop, 2002), and in some cases, companies from particular countries

promote their features adopting the Country of Origin (COO) as an asset (Kotler & Gertner, 2002). German cars, Japanese electronic gadgets and Swiss chocolates are some examples in which companies in specific industries promote their products and services with their country's name. Hence, the COO can be considered as a competitive advantage.

The first form of branding starts with determining a nation's advantages compared with its neighbours as well as utilizing those advantages. Many small countries with low natural resources, such as Switzerland, have been establishing their nation branding successfully through different national specialities, where they are now considered the main exporter country and COO (chocolate and luxury products for Switzerland). National identity constitutes the 'essence' of nation branding, as the brand comes not only from the products and company but also from the culture of the country in its widest sense (Dinnie, 2008).

Here, export refers to the way people perceive products and services coming from each country (Anholt, 2007) and the degree of seeking or avoiding products based on COO. Research reveals that consumers relate places to products and have preferences for products from specific countries. Hence, products' COO labelling directly influences consumers' attitudes, perception and purchasing decisions. This is the Country of Origin effect, also called 'the label effect'. Many studies are already available about the COO effect, and it might be one of the most investigated nation-branding tools.

According to White (2012), COO can play a role on nation image and contributes in nation reputation. The COO effect impacts behaviour towards products, services and nations' brands, which can directly impact exports. The way people perceive a product from a specific country can vary over time; hence, nation-branding stakeholders aim to ensure that people's perception varies in a favourable manner. According to Dinnie (2008), COO and national identity are two concepts that are integral part of nation branding and form pillars to the nation brand development. Existing COO research looks mainly at impacts of 'Made-In' labels on consumers' purchasing decision without considering the cultural aspects of national identity that play a part in country image.

The intersection of national identity and COO is related to the general field of culture. Considering the large meaning of 'culture', it is necessary

to determine the way the term has been defined for the sake of having a better understanding of the way expressions of 'culture', as a determinant of country image perception and an important component of nation branding, can be examined (Dinnie, 2008). Danesi and Perron (1999) describe culture as being a lifestyle that relies on signifying order handed down generation to generation. Some other definitions relate culture to national identity and COO, mentioning that culture is a set of norms transmitted by a group of people that guide individuals to decide on their acts and their feelings (Goodenough, 1971). In addition to the importance of COO in nation branding, the above definitions also indicate the importance of culture in nation branding campaigns, as country image is mostly shaped by its culture and not uniquely by the way consumers perceive products and services of the country.

FDI and Immigration

The world is facing a significant macro-economic challenge with respect to trade, investments and immigration, which means that people and capital are increasingly mobile (Kavaratzis, 2007). Nation branding aims at boosting investments, skilled as well as unskilled labour, and exports. Many researchers agree on the fact that place brand assets is an essential terminology in terms of FDI attractiveness. In fact, investors perceive place brand, where the perception of brand quality highlights the dependability of a brand. Jacobsen (2009) developed a framework to enable an effective way to establish regional place branding in order to attract FDI in innovative industries through place brand assets. The latter can be accomplished by strengthening awareness, reputation and impression as well as promoting quality and heritage. The attraction of local as well as foreign investments and immigration is determined based on people's perception of the country's political, economic and social conditions (Alam, Almotairi, & Gaadar, 2013). Consumers' perception is macro (about the country) and micro (about its product) and requires special attention since strong macro-micro relationship leads to reliable and powerful brand awareness (Hakala, Lemmetyinen, & Kantola, 2013).

Lee (2009) mentions nation branding as an eventual tool to attract and retain FDI, which can be considered as FDI competitiveness. An

effective nation brand combined with country image management can lead to sustainable competitiveness of the country. Researchers on nation branding focused on its various aspects, such as its existence. They have also pointed out the connection between FDI, place branding and exports, which enhance nations' global competitiveness (Dinnie, 2008; Kotler & Gertner, 2002). Hence, from an international perspective, FDI, place branding and exports are essential nation branding actors (Lee, 2009). Meanwhile, Mihailovich (2006) explains the relationship between destination branding, FDI and labour mobility. Accoridng to the author, that nations focus on their slogans and brand images during holidays times to build nation brand stronger, which results into generation of generating FDI and employment.

Tourism Industry

Nowadays, tourism is internationally acknowledged as a fast growing and important sector, where catchy slogans are used to represent nations, for instance, Malaysia ('Truly Asia') or South Africa ('Alive with Possibilities'). Tourism measures the level of interest displayed by people in visiting another country (Fetscherin, 2010). Similar to companies, countries need to manage and enhance their brand image uniqueness in order to attract local as well as foreign investors and tourists (Kotler & Gertner, 2002). It has a positive influence on the country brand (Caldwell & Freire, 2004).

Many authors mention the notion of 'place branding' as a marketing strategy to convey its identity, in order to enhance its competitiveness and relevant target audience's image of the place. The sense of 'place' is broad as it can mean a country, a city, a neighbourhood or even a museum. Place branding encompasses nation and destination branding, which makes it confusing (Akotia 2005; Foroudi et al. 2014). Hence, it is important to understand that place branding differs slightly from the following notions, though they are often used interchangeably: 'destination branding' and 'nation branding'. Destination branding refers to the reinforcement of a unique destination image and the differentiation of the

destination from other countries, for tourism purposes (Blain, Levy, & Ritchie, 2005). On the other hand, nation branding relates to conveying a nation's identity in order to enhance its national branding's positioning, national competitiveness (Anholt, 2007; Fan, 2010; Mihailovich, 2006) and nation image (Fan, 2006, 2010) as well as to boost its political and economic interests (Kotler & Gertner, 2002; Szondi, 2007). The confusion between these terms have been highlighted in the famous Malaysian campaign ('Malaysia Truly Asia'), which was considered for a long time as a successful nation branding strategy whereas it was purely targeting tourists, which means that it aimed at increasing visitors in the country and enhancing the destination branding of Malaysia (Anholt, 2008; Fan, 2010).

The UAE is recognized as a strong destination brand due to the high advertising and marketing around Dubai as an investment and holiday destination (Stephens Balakrishnan, 2008). Despite the little amount of review available about the UAE branding, it is represented as a fast-growing destination, famous for its attractiveness for investments through incentives. Meanwhile, India has been particularly active in its efforts to increase tourism and play on its high scores in 'Heritage and Culture' and 'History' aspects. Through its 'Incredible India' campaign launched in 2002, India has worked on unifying and creating the uniqueness of its brand to remain competitive in the global market place as well as boost its tourism industry (Kerrigan et al., 2012). Raj, Griffin and Morpeth (2013) relate culture to tourism by stating that culture is not only the heritage of a destination, heritage here meaning the remains of the past, but also the living essence of the past.

Culture influences the choice of destination, since it often acts as the image foreign tourists will get from the destination. Hence, tourism and cultural heritage are interdependent since tourism can dole out funding for the preservation and protection of cultural heritage while the latter can offer a unique experience to tourists coming to the destination (Raj et al., 2013). Most nation branding strategies aim at incorporating both past heritage and actual culture so that outdated perceptions do not confuse the way potential tourists perceive modern societies.

Government Environment

Nation branding originates from COO studies and multiple literatures about national identity, which is a combination of political, economic and social views of national identity. From a political perspective, the main components of nation branding are international relations and public diplomacy, which is also described as a competitive state (Cerny, 1997). It refers to government communication with foreigners with the intention of accomplishing changes in the minds of people and other governments (Szondi, 2007). From a local standpoint, it can also mean domestic public being involved in the explanation of the goals of foreign policies to the domestic audience. In both cases, it is based on fostering the nation's values to the rest of the world (Özkan, 2013). In the case of a well-reputed country, except if the policy is wrong-headed, the public may receive it well and it would just need to be plainly communicated to the audience. Conversely, if the country suffers from a bad reputation, especially in terms of policies, it would be challenging to get the policy enthusiastically received and it can lead the public to ignore the policy or take it as additional proof against the nation. This is the reason Anholt (2010) clearly mentions in his article the definition of nation image as being the "context in which messages are received, not the messages themselves".

Public diplomacy is conceptualized through three dimensions: the first one is condition, which is the context of the communication. The second is the objectives of communication, from persuading to building relationship. The third dimension is power, which is the capability to effect the results one wants. The concepts of soft power and hard power refer to resources used by the nations for the sake of accomplishing their goals by affecting people's behaviour (Nye, 2004). In fact, if a country is aiming to bring about regime change in another country, it is important to be able to persuade the other country's population through soft power, instead of launching a direct military intervention. Thus, soft power is an essential concept of public diplomacy, even if the relationship between soft power and public diplomacy is still ambiguous (Szondi, 2007). Hence, most researchers agree on the fact that public diplomacy is an important

component of nation branding (Anholt, 2006; Fan, 2010). However, there is still a debate on the direct impact of public diplomacy on nation image, which needs to be clarified. In fact, Anholt (2008) clearly explained that people cannot change the views they have held for years based on a simple campaign.

Nation Branding, National Identity and Nation Image

Competition is getting global, and for the purpose of attracting the world's attention, nations must distinguish and improve their image. In other words, nations must brand themselves (Hakala et al., 2013). Similar to product branding, the first step in nation branding is to create brand awareness to develop a positive image of the nation in people's mind even before visiting it (Percy, 2008). In terms of marketing, a 'brand' is identified as a symbol, name, design or a combination of these, which results in differentiation from the competitors (Kotler & Gertner, 2002). Similarly, a country's place brand represents how the state promotes and represents its identity and values to the world as well as the reputation of the state among other state and non-state actors (Dinnie, 2015).

Nation image refers to the country's projection to the world (Fan, 2010). All nations, with or without brands, do have an image, and they aim at valuing the image they enjoy—*real image*—as well as making it attractive to others—*ideal image*. It is a main factor in consumers' and travellers' investment as well as decision-making. Nation image is not only evaluated on the basis of real or imagined characteristics but likely in terms of 'brand' as well. The image is defined by the perception of people outside the country, which comes from stereotypes, previous experience and media. Most researchers agree on the relationship between nation branding, nation image and national identity, and Fan (2010) summarized it and has discussed the relation in depth. National identity is the 'self-perception' of a nation and directly affects nation branding, which is the 'nation brand identity'. Nation branding helps in the development of the nation's image, which is the 'perception by the others'.

The purpose of nation branding is to enhance nation image; however, it is important to bear in mind the fact that image might be influenced by many other factors from political, economic and social aspects. The biggest challenge for nations is to be able to share a unique image or message to various individuals in various countries. Hence, in theory, nation branding aims at consistently conveying a coordinated message to different stakeholders. However, in real terms, it is more complicated than expected to create such a single core message, considering the fact that a nations is represented in multiple industries across the world. Hence, Fan (2010) clearly affirms that a single slogan or campaign can hardly convince everybody to perceive the country in the same way.

Methodology

An exploratory qualitative approach has been selected using external secondary data. Taking into consideration the lack of adequate amount of research related to nation branding in the UAE, this chapter aims to give an insight into the topic, understand the way the UAE could currently improve its national ranking and open the floor to further research. It uses the UAE's brand as a unit of analysis for in-depth investigation of nation branding in its global context and the potential elements on which nations need to focus on.

Data Collection

Data have been collected online through publicly available secondary sources, including official data archives (Hox & Boeije, 2005). The type of data collected has been chosen based on existing rankings. Seven index tables have been collected from different index websites, namely BrandFinance, Bloom Consulting, Statista, Business Insider, USnews and Nation Branding Index. Later the six indexes were collectively compared to the Most Valuable, Nation Branding Index. Also, the UAE's government website and diverse newspapers have been used for the sake of having a better idea of the UAE's current situation in term of vision,

missions and actual processing. In order to aid the flow of the report, different existing models and theories related to nation branding have been used. In fact, determinants of nation branding developed by Anholt (2000) have been mainly used to lead the research of ranking.

Data Analysis

This research has been done through a thematic analysis, using different sources to identify and analyse themes and patterns in the current topic (Aronson, 1995). The top ten countries in different domains have been compared to top ten countries with most valuable nation branding to evaluate the importance of each one of the domain in nation branding. Based on the most commonly used variable in Anholt-Gfk Roper ranking, the main elements of nation branding have been determined. Finally, the indexes with the most matches (five or more) were chosen as the main elements of nation branding, considering the fact that a country's success in the specific ranking had an impact on the nation brand.

This thematic analysis allows evaluating the importance of some components in nation branding. The following indexes have been selected according to Anholt-Gfk Roper ranking and split into four themes.

Theme 1: Nation Branding and COO

The first theme compares the top ten countries with most valuable nation branding and the top ten from made-in-country index. The purpose of this comparison is to determine the common countries between these two rankings and assume the importance of one on the other. The well-known 'Made in China' and 'Made in India' rank, respectively, 49th and 43rd (Statista, 2017) due to their reputation often being associated with poor quality. Indian products' reputation remains higher than Chinese goods, despite the actual improvement of the 'Made in China' image (Shepard, 2018).

Theme 2: Nation Branding and Destination Branding

The second theme focuses on the relationship between most valuable nation branding and the index for tourism. The purpose of this comparison is to understand if attracting tourists in the country can affect nation branding. The fact that six countries are common to both indexes demonstrates the importance of branding the place to positively impact nation branding. In addition, the remaining countries are all in the global top 25 performers (Bloom Consulting, 2017), with Japan, Canada, South Korea and India, respectively, ranking 14th, 15th, 21st and 22nd in the tourism index. Hence, all countries with most valuable nation branding are part of the most touristic countries. In a nutshell, branding the destination is a factor that considerably influences nation value.

Theme 3: Nation Branding and Public Diplomacy

The third theme relates the nation's power and nation branding. It is noticeable that the top six most valuable nation branding countries are part of the most powerful countries. South Korea, Canada, India and Italy are positioned, respectively, 11th, 12th, 16th and 18th (Business Insider, 2017). Hence, the most valuable nation brands are part of the top 20 powerful countries and it is possible to assume that the power of the nation is an important component of nation branding.

Theme 4: Nation Branding and Nation Identity

The fourth and last theme focuses on nation branding and cultural influence of nations. Although it does not have the highest match, it is an important point of nation branding. According to Usnews.com (2017), countries like—Canada (11th), Germany (14th), China (21st), India (29th) and South Korea (30th) still rank in the top 30 countries with cultural influence. It shows a high implication of national identity in nation branding. In a nutshell, the above similarities have allowed assuming that the COO, tourism, political power and cultural power influence nation branding.

Results Discussion

The Concept of Nation Branding Elements

This study of nation branding has involved many elements that play a considerable role in the overall nation management. Amongst the rankings analysed, four elements have been showing many similarities with nation branding index, as well as between each other. The first element identified is export branding, which is the equivalent of product branding. By having a label, a country will attract the world's attention as well as create and develop its credibility in the world's mind. The next element is destination branding, as it is crucial to develop the tourism industry in order to influence the way people perceive the country and strengthen its reputation. Also, political branding is a significant element of nation branding as it involves communication between nations, which aims to enhance the country's reputation. Finally, cultural branding corresponds to national identity, which is the core of nation branding, as it encompasses the country's history and culture. According to Gertner (2007), as well as Anholt 2018, brand images have played an active role in the emergence of many economies, leading to increased exports, attracted investments, businesses, factories, visitors/tourists and talented workforce (Fig. 9.1).

All these elements are important components of nation branding, with the purpose of enhancing the country image, that is, the way the country is perceived by others. This perception cannot be directly controlled by nations, and this is why it is not part of the elements of nation branding. Nevertheless, it is the goal for nations, and branding products, place, politics, and culture is done with the purpose of enhancing the nation's image similar to corporate branding. From another perspective, the country image improves when the country conveys a simple and clear message to the world. Once implemented, it will attract the world's attention and its nation branding value would increase further.

The above concept also highlights the interdependence between these elements. While destination and products are related due to the image that one can give to the other, public diplomacy is linked to product,
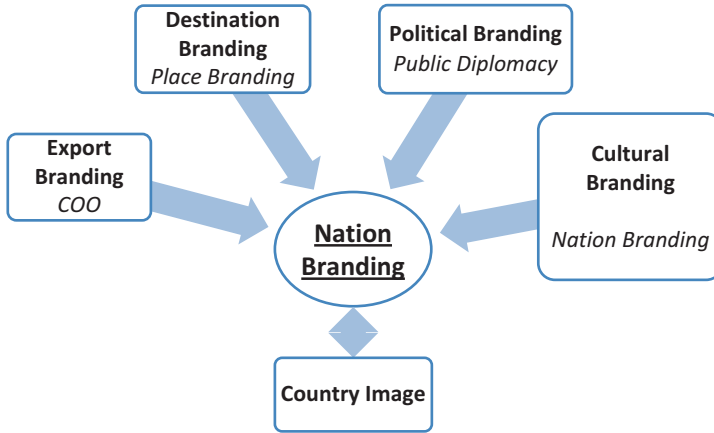
Fig. 9.1 Elements of nation branding (Source: Author)

destination and culture because of the government's duty to promote the nation's features, place and identity. Cultural branding, also called national identity, is the essence of nation branding as well as the other three elements. From a product point of view, culture can influence consumers' purchasing decision and hence links to the COO label. From a tourist perspective, culture and heritage attract people to the place, which will encourage the preservation of the culture to keep appealing to the tourists. Finally, from a political view, national identity is the core of the message that governments attempt to convey to the world.

UAE Nation Branding

Established in 1971, the UAE has been promoting itself since the 1980s as a 'world financial gateway' through the Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (Zeineddine, 2017). Moreover, since the 1990s it has been actively building its nation branding and has successfully emerged not only as a regional leader but also as a global player in the domains of emerging technologies, finance, media, retail, tourism, aviation and innovation (Allagui & Al-Najjar, 2018). Dinnie (2012) noted that UAE leaders fully embraced the strategic

importance of national identity and culture for the development of a national brand. Saberi, Paris and Marochi (2018) have discussed in detail that during the last decade how UAE was able to project a positive image through investments in the tourism and film industry, which resulted in nation branding, cultural diplomacy and soft power development. The 49-year-old nation is certainly a nation branding leader in the region (Zeineddine, 2017).

The UAE is a multicultural work destination, reflecting many races, cultures, ethnicities and origins. It has been estimated that more than 80% of the UAE labour workforce is made up of expatriate workers, a compound of more than 100 nationalities (Ababneh & Hackett, 2019). According to a 2018 report, the share of employed UAE nationals out of the total workforce, both expatriates and nationals, across all sectors was 7.19% only (UAEVision2021, 2018). Thus, the UAE depends heavily on expatriate skilled labour. In coming years, the country is expected to face a shortage of highly skilled workers. This labor gap is expected to widen by 2030 and might cost a loss to the nation, worth $50 billion (Khaleej Times, 2018). Due to mobility of the talent and unfavourable immigration policies, attracting talented workforce remains an arduous challenge for the UAE. Contemporary nation branding strategy can play an effective and dexterous role in captivating the capable and expert labour pool (Silvanto, Ryan, & McNulty, 2015).

Nation Branding and Sustainable Human Capital

According to the World Economic Forum (WEF) report in 2011, it is the responsibility of the national governments to adopt and practise nation branding to attract international skilled human capital as a means to augment their human capital stock and to boost economic competitiveness (WEF, 2011). This call of WEF resulted in wider acceptance of nation branding as a tool to attract and retain skilled human capital and in active research. Five years later, in 2016, the WEF published its annual Human Capital Report and stated that a "nation's human capital endowment—the skills and capacities that reside in its people—can be a more important determinant of its long term economic success than virtually any other resource" (WEF, 2011; p. 1).

Many researchers are of the opinion that nation branding strategies must be practical, instrumental, symbolic and reachable to the internationally mobile skilled professionals and must not be limited to high wages and steady work only (Silvanto & Ryan, 2014; World Economic Forum, 2011). According to the findings of the study conducted by Silvanto et al. (2015), a successful nation branding campaign should focus on the 'pull' factors like quality of life, employment opportunities, economic dynamism, good governance and tolerance. A strong nation brand has been identified to emphatically attract the talent (Herrero, San Martín, & del Río Peña, 2015; Roozen, Chia, & Raedts, 2017). The study by Nadeau and Olafsen (2015) concluded that efforts like attracting investments and tourism should be exercised by the national governments for nation branding to attract skilled workforce.

According to Baruch, Altman and Tung (2016) globalization and the corresponding 'war for talent' has resulted in a world in which 232 million people are termed 'foreign' because they live and work outside their countries of origin. Usage of flags, anthems, mythologies and other symbolic forms has been prevalent in the histories of the nation to mark their sovereignty, but the robustness of the current tech- and media-savvy world urges to develop and establish a global image (Pittz, Benson, Intindola, & Kalargiros, 2017). As stated by Jansen (2008) "Branding not only explains nations to the world but also reinterprets national identity in market terms and provides new narratives for domestic consumption."

Fougner (2006) states that "statesmanship is transformed into salesmanship", the aim being to sell "the state as a location to globally footloose capital and firms". Simon Anholt, who is the branding consultant and promoter of 'nation branding', suggests that to have a nation brand is to possess a 'license to trade' (Aronczyk, 2008). In addition to presumed material benefits, nation branding has become pivotal in fostering a sense of ontological security and national esteem (Browning, 2015). Zeineddine (2017) has emphasized that nation branding is essential to attract investments, boost exports and attract tourists and not the least the talented workforce.

The main aim of the nation branding campaigns is to attract and retain the talented human capital from abroad by presenting a competent image

of the country (Silvanto & Ryan, 2018). As noted by Al Ariss, Koall, Ozbilgin, Suutari and Özbilgin (2012) the relocation of highly skilled people is considered a multilayered and multifaceted phenomenon, not one-dimensional. It is evident from the literature that highly skilled individuals immigrate due to a combination of personal, political, professional and financial purposes (Silvanto & Ryan, 2014; Solimano, 2010). Silvanto and Ryan (2014) offer five drivers of 1. employment, 2. economic dynamism and opportunity; 3. cultural diversity and inclusiveness; 4. clear immigration policies and effective governance; geographic concentration of talent; and 5. quality of life, lifestyle, and services. strategic vision for relocation branding, which often overlap and are not mutually exclusive. It is recommended that these drivers can be effective in making a nation branding campaign successful.

Recommendations

The UAE has shown a high potential for improvement, as it ranks 21st in the most valuable nation branding, worth $594 billion in 2017 (Brand Finance, 2017). After investigating the UAE ranks in different indexes, it is noticeable that some areas could be improved and this improvement can lead the UAE to the top ten. The first one is the Made-In ranking, where the UAE is not even registered. Although the industry sector represents about 46% of the UAE's GDP, 'Made in UAE' remains poorly recognized at the international level and can be an area to focus on. The local productions such as construction material and porcelain are mainly used for domestic purposes, and the production of goods to be exported would strengthen the UAE's position in the global arena. Hence, the creation of an Emirati label of origin can give some credibility to the UAE's manufacturing sector. It would involve standardization and governmental funds. Another way to boost the industrial sector is to go through university-industry collaboration as India has done. It involves an agreement between the Ministry of Education in the UAE and universities to get more specialties in industrial fields through research partnerships, shared infrastructures, and grants and donations. Finally, the UAE needs to focus on the tourism industry combined with the country's

heritage. In fact, the UAE is currently positioned as the top touristic place in Arab countries, whereas globally it ranks 44th. It is important for the UAE to focus on its unique cultural heritage and aim to strengthen its cultural tourism. It will influence the image of the country and increase tourism. Though the UAE is already well known as a business and holiday destination, it now becomes an event destination with the Expo 2020 being held in Dubai; it should take this opportunity to target the ranking of the world's leading family destination, through its culture.

Theoretical/Academic Contributions

Since this is an exploratory research of a recent and complex concept, the contribution of this study is to shed some light over the nation branding in the UAE and the elements and factors surrounding it.

Managerial/Practical/Policy Contributions

The UAE may use this research as a guideline to have a better understanding of the notion of nation branding and create a strategy to construct an effective approach and enhance nation ranking. However, since this research has taken into consideration global practices, it can also be used by other countries. Therefore, scholars, practitioners and researchers can use this concept of nation branding when countries aim to develop strategies to enhance their brand, by understanding where to focus and the outside factors influencing their nation brand.

Research Limitation and Areas for Future Research

Since this study is based on exploratory research, further conclusive research needs to be done. One of the major limitations of this study lies in the choice of indexes. The study focuses on seven indexes for comparison with the Most Valuable Nation Branding Index. Hence, the non-randomization of the selected indexes may bias the findings of the final concept. There is a need to expand the indexes selected to include

additional elements in the model, especially other variables used in different nation branding indexes. For instance, Anholt has started to focus on and developed a Good Country Index, which can be used to determine the elements of good countries that influence nation branding. Moreover, this study focuses only on the case of the UAE: other countries need to be explored. Finally, further research may take into consideration the different meanings of 'nation' and 'country', as well as 'brand' and 'branding', since cthey have been used interchangeably in this research.

References

Ababneh, K. I., & Hackett, R. D. (2019). The direct and indirect impacts of job characteristics on faculty organizational citizenship behavior in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). *Higher Education, 77*(1), 19–36.

Akotia, M. (2005). Country branding: an imperative for developing countries. *IFE Psychologia: An International Journal, 13*(2), 150–163.

Al Ariss, A., Koall, I., Ozbilgin, M., Suutari, V., & Özbilgin, M. (2012). Careers of skilled migrants: Towards a theoretical and methodological expansion. *Journal of Management Development, 31*(2), 92–101.

Alam, A., Almotairi, M., & Gaadar, K. (2013). Nation branding: An effective tool to enhance fore going direct investment (FDI) in Pakistan. *Research Journal of International Studies, 25*, 134–141.

Allagui, I., & Al-Najjar, A. (2018). From women empowerment to nation branding: A case study from the United Arab Emirates. *International Journal of Communication, 12*, 18.

Andrei, A. G. (2017). The impact of nation branding campaigns on country image. Case Study: Romania. *Management & Marketing, 12*(2), 222–236.

Anholt, S. (2000). Another one bites the grass: Making sense of international advertising. Wiley.

Anholt, S. (2003). Brand new justice: The upside of global branding. Elsevier.

Anholt, S. (2006). Public diplomacy and place branding: Where's the link?

Anholt, S. (2007). What is competitive identity? In *Competitive identity* (pp. 1–23). London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Anholt, S. (2008). Editorial - Nation branding in Asia. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy, 4*, 265–269.

Anholt, S. (2010). Definitions of place branding–Working towards a resolution.

Anholt, S. (2018). *Nation brands index*. Nation-brands.gfk.com. Retrieved from https://nation-brands.gfk.com

Aronczyk, M. (2008). 'Living the brand': Nationality, globality, and the identity strategies of nation branding consultants. *International Journal of Communication, 2*, 25.

Aronson, J. (1995). A pragmatic view of thematic analysis. *The Qualitative Report, 2*(1), 1–3.

Baruch, Y., Altman, Y., & Tung, R. L. (2016). Career mobility in a global era: Advances in managing expatriation and repatriation. *The Academy of Management Annals, 10*(1), 841–889.

Blain, C., Levy, S. E., & Ritchie, J. B. (2005). Destination branding: Insights and practices from destination management organizations. *Journal of Travel Research, 43*(4), 328–338.

Bloom Consulting. (2017). *Consulting Country Brand*, Tourism Edition. Retrieved from https://www.bloom-consulting.com/en/pdf/rankings/Bloom_Consulting_Country_Brand_Ranking_Tourism.pdf

Business Insider. (2017). https://www.businessinsider.com/iceland-has-fastest-growing-national-brand-2017-10

Brand Finance. (2013). *Nation Brands 2013*. Retrieved from http://brandfinance.com/images/upload/brand_finance_nation_brands_2013.pdf

Brand Finance. (2017). *Nation Brands 2017*. Retrieved from http://brandfinance.com/images/upload/bf_nation_brands_2017.pdf

Brand Finance. (2019). Retrieved from https://brandfinance.com/news/uae-home-to-the-middle-easts-most-valuable-brands/

Browning, C. S. (2015). Nation branding, national self-esteem, and the constitution of subjectivity in late modernity. *Foreign Policy Analysis, 11*(2), 195–214.

Caldwell, D., & Freire, J. (2004). The differences between branding a country, a region and a city: Applying the brand box model. *Journal of Brand Management, 12*, 50–61.

Cerny, P. (1997). Paradoxes of the competition state: The dynamics of political globalization. *Government and Opposition, 32*(2), 251–274.

Danesi, M., & Perron, P. (1999). *Analyzing cultures: An introduction & handbook*. Indiana: Indiana University Press.

Dinnie, K. (2008). *Nation branding*. Amsterdam: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Dinnie, K. (2012). More than tourism: The challenges of nation branding in Asia. *Global Asia, 7*(3), 13–17.

Dinnie, K. (2015). *Nation branding: Concepts, issues, practice*. New York: Routledge.

Fan, Y. (2006). Branding the nation: What is being branded? *Journal of Vacation Marketing, 12*(1), 5–14.

Fan, Y. (2010). Branding the nation: Towards a better understanding. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy, 6*(2), 97–103.

Fetscherin, M. (2010). The determinants and measurement of a country brand: The country brand strength index. *International Marketing Review, 27*, 466–479.

Foroudi, P., Melewar, T. C., & Gupta, S. (2014). Linking corporate logo, corporate image, and reputation: An examination of consumer perceptions in the financial setting. *Journal of Business Research, 67*(11), 2269–2281.

Fougner, T. (2006). The state, international competitiveness and neoliberal globalisation: Is there a future beyond 'the competition state'? *Review of International Studies, 32*(1), 165–185.

Gertner, D. (2007). Place branding: Dilemma or reconciliation between political ideology and economic pragmatism? *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy, 3*(1), 3–7.

Goodenough, W. H. (1971). *Culture, language and society, modular publications* (Vol. 7). Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Hakala, U., Lemmetyinen, A., & Kantola, S. P. (2013). Country image as a nation-branding tool. *Marketing Intelligence and Planning, 31*(5), 538–556.

Herrero, Á., San Martín, H., & del Río Peña, A. (2015). Influence of country and city images on students' perception of host universities and their satisfaction with the assigned destination for their exchange programmes. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy, 11*(3), 190–203.

Hox, J. J., & Boeije, H. R. (2005). Data collection, primary vs. secondary. *Encyclopaedia of Social Measurement, 1*, 593–599.

Jacobsen, B. P. (2009). Investor-based place brand equity: A theoretical framework. *Journal of Place Management and Development, 2*(1), 70–84.

Jansen, S. C. (2008). Designer nations: Neo-liberal nation branding–brand Estonia. *Social identities, 14*(1), 121–142.

Kavaratzis, M. (2007). City marketing: The past, the present and some unresolved issues. *Geography Compass, 1*(3), 695–712.

Kerrigan, F., Shivanandan, J., & Hede, A. M. (2012). Nation branding: A critical appraisal of incredible India. *Journal of Macromarketing, 32*(3), 319–327.

Khaleej Times, (2018). https://www.khaleejtimes.com/nation/abu-dhabi/40-of-jobs-to-disappear-from-uae-in-10-years-

Kotler, P., & Gertner, D. (2002). Country as brand, product, and beyond: A place marketing and brand management perspective. *Journal of Brand Management, 9*(4), 249–261.

Lee, K. M. (2009). *Nation branding and sustainable competitiveness of nations*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Twente, The Netherlands. Retrieved May 25, 2009, from http://doc.utwente.nl/60754/1/thesis_K_M_Lee.pdf

Lee, S., Toth, E. L., & Shin, H. (2008). Cognitive categorisation and routes of national reputation formation: US opinion leaders' views on South Korea. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy, 4*(4), 272–286.

Loo, T., & Davies, G. (2006). Branding China: The ultimate challenge in reputation management? *Corporate reputation review, 9*(3), 198-210.

Mihailovich, P. (2006). Kinship branding: A concept of holism and evolution for the nation brand. *Place Branding, 2*(3), 229–247.

Nadeau, J., & Olafsen, A. H. (2015). Country image evaluations and migration intentions. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy, 11*(4), 293–308.

Nye, J. S. (2004). *Soft power: The means to success in world politics*. New York: PublicAffairs.

Özkan, G. S. (2013). The Relationship between Current Deficit and Economic Growth: The Case of Turkey. *International Journal of Economic Perspectives, 7*(4).

Papadopoulos, N., & Heslop, L. (2002). Country equity and country branding: Problems and prospects. *Journal of Brand Management, 9*(4), 294–314.

Percy, L. (2008). *Strategic integrated marketing communication*. Amsterdam: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Pittz, T. G., Benson, P. G., Intindola, M., & Kalargiros, M. (2017). Opportunity or opportunism?: An examination of international recruitment via employer and nation branding strategies. *Business and Professional Ethics Journal, 36*(2), 157–176.

Raj, R., Griffin, K., & Morpeth, N. D. (Eds.). (2013). *Cultural tourism*. Wallingford: CABI.

Roozen, I., Chia, J., & Raedts, M. (2017). Does institutional nation branding exist in a Singaporean context? *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy, 13*(4), 325–347.

Saberi, D., Paris, C. M., & Marochi, B. (2018). Soft power and place branding in the United Arab Emirates: Examples of the tourism and film industries. *International Journal of Diplomacy and Economy, 4*(1), 44–58.

Shepard, W. (2018). *How 'made in china' became cool*. Forbes.com. Retrieved from https://www.forbes.com/sites/wadeshepard/2016/05/22/how-made-in-china-became-cool/#1683752c77a4

Silvanto, S., & Ryan, J. (2014). Relocation branding: A strategic framework for attracting talent from abroad. *Journal of Global Mobility, 2*(1), 102–120.

Silvanto, S., & Ryan, J. (2018). An investigation into the core appeals for nation branding to attract and retain talent to enhance a country's competitiveness. *Competitiveness Review: An International Business Journal, 28*(5), 584–604.

Silvanto, S., Ryan, J., & McNulty, Y. (2015). An empirical study of nation branding for attracting internationally mobile skilled professionals. *Career Development International, 20*(3), 238–258.

Solimano, A. (2010). *International migration in the age of crisis and globalization: Historical and recent experiences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Statista. (2017). *Made-in country index: Country ranking 2017*. Retrieved March 1, 2018, from https://www.statista.com/statistics/677973/made-in-country-index-country-ranking/

Stephens Balakrishnan, M. (2008). Dubai – A star in the east. *Journal of Place Management and Development, 1*(1), 62–91.

Szondi, G. (2007). The role and challenges of country branding in transition countries: The central and eastern European experience. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy, 3*(1), 8–20.

UAEVision2021. (2018). https://www.vision2021.ae/en/national-agenda-2021

USNews. (2017). *Power subranking*. Retrieved March 1, 2018, from https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/power-rankings

White, C. L. (2012). Brands and national image: An exploration of inverse country-of-origin effect. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy, 8*(2), 110–118.

World Economic Forum (WEF). (2011). *Global talent risk – seven responses, world economic forum, Geneva*. Retrieved from www3.weforum.org/docs/PS_WEF_GlobalTalentRisk_Report_2011.pdf

Zeineddine, C. (2017). Employing nation branding in the Middle East-United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Qatar. *Management & Marketing, 12*(2), 208–221.

Zeineddine, C., & Nicolescu, L. (2018). Nation Branding and its Potential for Differentiation in Regional Politics: The Case of the United Arab Emirates and Qatar. *Management Dynamics in the Knowledge Economy, 6*(1), 167–185.