



THE ROLE OF URBAN BRANDING TO ATTRACT FOREIGN TOURISTS

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ABSTRACT

In today's world, Abstract City-marketing and urban-branding strategies play an essential role in the tourism industry. Tourism activists compete with each other to attract more tourists to their attractions. In promoting a touristic attraction, branding, both physical and spiritual aspects are crucial. Developing tourism infrastructures, built heritage, iconic architecture is essential as well as reinforcement of historical references, an attractive way of life, or cultural values. Since Certain cities are attracting all of the assets and the attention, while others are becoming more or less invisible, one of the critical prerequisites for the success of cities is their overall image, or so-called „city branding.“ In this research, we tried to investigate the urban branding of Kerman-a touristic and historical city located in the south of Iran- and its role in attracting foreign tourists toward this destination. After gathering data through library and field studies and analyzing data, we come to this result that urban branding has a crucial role in attracting foreign tourists to this town.



The out coming from the subsidiary hypothesis tests showed that the six aspects of branding effects on attracting tourists. Our results could be useful for promoting Kerman tourism attractions.

Keywords: Urban branding; Tourism attraction; tourists

1. INTRODUCTION

Focusing on branding area had been at first just in physical products, and then more attention had paid for services. Concerning countries, cities, places, and touristic destination branding, there are some studies and investigations, but these studies are somehow banal and new. The researches in this field are more concentrating on place selling, place marketing, and touristic attraction branding, and it seems there are few studies about macro- branding of leisure, accommodation, tours, or sports projects. These kinds of projects develop around metropolises to create an attraction for recreation, entertainment, and a relaxing place for their citizens.

Iran is one of the ten first countries around the world in the tourism attractions category, one of the five first countries in the ecotourism and the diversity of plant and animal species category and also it is one of the three primary countries after China and India in the Variety of handy- crafts category. With these natural and cultural potentials in the tourism field, we can call Iran: A WORLD IN ONE BOUNDARY. Its attractions are so varied that it has wholly conformed to every taste. As a result, Iran's attractions are sufficient motivation for travel to the country and can be used as one of the major tourist destinations in the world. Economically speaking, tourism is one of the vital forces in the world, which is so crucial for developing countries. As the biggest profitable export, it is the most critical source of foreign exchange and employment.

For three reasons, tourism has counted as an industry:

- It helps to boost other activities in the community
- The multiplier in this type of business is one to seven, that is, with a single investment, we can harvest seven units
- With the arrival of one tourist, we can create eight jobs

Regarding the importance of the tourism industry for the economy of a country, now we want to focus on branding and its role in attracting more tourists and developing the tourism industry. Some values and reasons for urban branding are: attracting the domestic investment, attracting foreign tourists, credibility, and confidence among investors, Increasing internal political influence (national) and external political power (transnational), Better and more productive partnerships with other global cities, universities, and private research institutions, public and private sector organizations, the impact of "city builder" on products and services, national pride, the ability to focus on internal coordination and confidence. It is essential that urban branding in Iran is of low importance. Lack of a place branding leads to uncoordinated behaviors at national and international levels and creates an ambiguous and confusing picture from Iran in tourist minds.

About the importance of this study, it is enough that tourism is a dynamic, huge, variable, and clean industry, it is also one of the developing parts of the national economic system. This industry with 200 million employers (8% of all occupations around the world), and by annual turnover, around 5/4 trillion dollars turned into the most significant and most varied industries in the world. As a result, all nations around the world are trying to benefit from this enormous opportunity and approach to Relative prosperity for the present and future of their societies.

The most critical issue in maintaining tourism policies is the accurate identification market. Urban areas count as a significant tourist attraction because of their historical and cultural aspects. Usually, cities have lots of museums, memorable monuments, theater salons, sports stadiums, parks, great malls, historical monuments or places referred to as essential events or famous people. Besides, if there are some attractions around a city place, people prefer to travel to that area and just because of the city services like excellent accommodation or great restaurants stay in the city. As mentioned above, a massive amount of tourism facilities is located in cities, so a city or urban branding is so essential for tourism activists.

According to the evaluations of the Global Business Organization, the earnings of the tourism industry have been equal to more than 700 billiards dollars' trades. In contrast, despite its high potentials of cultural heritage and Eco touristic attractions, Iran has the 68 ranks among 150 members of the Global Tourism Organization. It has been 75th in the best situation, and of this 700 billiard dollars just assigned one billiard dollar in the most optimistic case. Urban branding is a process that helps cities in the globalization system to attract the skilled population and increase the sense of belonging and satisfaction of the present citizens, attract

tourists and investors relying on sustainable competitive advantage and its identity. All of them are essential for the economic development of a city. However, assessing the image of the existing town is key and initiative steps to create a brand for every town.

In this step, the useful and essential factors and dimensions of the public image should be recognized and evaluated. In the urban branding process and recognizing urban image dimensions, the competitive advantage should be noted. Therefore, indicating the potential competitive benefits of Isfahan and the emphasis of the programmers of this city on developing tourism and making this city as one of the premier tourist destinations in Iran and all around the world, this research has been investigated to consider the factors affecting on the urban image dimensions of Isfahan in designing a brand for this city.

It's possible to say that urban branding also has a concept of national branding, but at a lower level (Dinnie et al., 2010). Something significant here is that we care about urban sustainable development indicators in micro-politics. Still, unfortunately, urban branding is ignored, especially for the cities with a high capacity to attract tourists, while urban branding indicators correlate in many cases, the urban sustainable development indicators.

The tourist destination brand is the leading brand, along with tourism purposes (Ashworth, 2009). This kind of brand considers place as a product for the tourists and makes the visitor attraction of that place for the people. Many cities prefer to be branded as the touristic branding because tourists are usually the most crucial source who can make a city famous, and also communicating to the properties of this kind of branding is more organized and defined.

The tourism industry has the most amounts of marketing budgets and must increase city attractions. Note that the tourist brand of a city must be branded based on the competitive advantages and the unique properties of that city. Since a city brand is comprised of a set of products and services in the city, it is complicated, and the city operation in all cases should be suitable and according to the defined properties for the city brand (Kavaratzis, 2009).

We should also be sensitive about the city brand because if the intangible liabilities of the brand are not conceived practically, the city brand will be damaged. We hope that by focusing on branding cities and tourist destinations, Iran could be among ten premier countries on tourist's arrival. This is not an idealistic wish, but a realistic hope. So, researching about tourism industry which is a developing industry in Iran is very important and this research is going to consider t.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Brand Concept

American Marketing Association(AMA) defines the brand as: “a name, word, symbol or a pattern or a combination of them to introduce products and services of a salesperson or a group of salespeople to the customers and also to differentiate their products with the products of competitors. A brand adds dimensions to a product or a service to differentiate that product from others. These differentiations can have a logical, tangible, or even intangible function.”

Philip Kotler has provided a similar definition to the American Marketing Association: a name, expression or phrase, sign, mark, symbol or a combination of them to introduce a commodity or a service which a salesperson or a group of salespeople offer and at this moment differentiates them from other competitor companies.

The product brand forms based on its operation in the customer's mind and are an unwritten promise to the customer that transfers through communicators such as advertisements, media communications, etc. And the factor which maintains the brand in the customer's mind is the proper operation of that product and the equivalent service of the promise given to the customer.

2.2. Urban Branding Concept

The brand is something that makes you different and unique (Vanolo, 2008). Brand category from the consumer's point of view is a matter that attracted the attention of many investigators in the last 15 years, and many of these researches related mostly to the brand value category. While the initial focus of the brand value can be found in the financial domain, this category has assigned an attractive issue to the marketing domain (Aaker, 2012).

The branding concept was used in late 1990 about tourist destinations. Urban Branding: branding is one of the marketing instruments and place branding is an almost new term which includes the branding of cities, regions, nations, etc. The name “Place Branding” has sometimes been synonymous with the “Place Marketing.” As was mentioned later, it is related to the competition to attract tourists, visitors, investors, citizens, and the other sources inside these cities, regions, and so forth.

According to Pike (2005), the widest and the most useful procedure in branding spaces is likely to investigate the role of branding in marketing the tourist destinations. This procedure was considered at the time when decision-makers of the tourism industry understood that

destinations are visited due to the primary images made in people's minds. This procedure presents many theories in space branding. Hankinson has tried the best in this part. He started his work when he expressed his belief in this way: "No theoretical framework has been made to affect the space branding, apart from the branding theory based on the product." For this purpose, he presented a framework declaring that cities can be branded as tourist destinations.

Based on this issue, another researcher called Brent Ritchie distinguished that destination brand has the potential to play a coordinator role for many social activities while branding the tourist destination has developed in recent years and has been one of the new domains of researches (Ritchie & Ritchie, 1998). When talking about tourism, the first question is that why do people travel. Identifying tourist's motivations is possible in various ways. Table 2.1 expresses a summary of travel motivations according to the related researchers' theories.

Table 1: Travel Motivation Based on Psychological Analysis

| Theorist | Theoretical Basis | Motivation or Needs Highlighted |
|---|------------------------------------|---|
| Jung (2014) | Psychoanalytic approach | Need for arousal (excitement) need for creativity and self-actualization |
| Adler (2013) | Psychoanalytic attitude adjustment | The need for competence |
| Sullivan (2013) | Psychoanalytic attitude adjustment | Requires the adoption of Love |
| Horney (2013) | Psychoanalytic attitude adjustment | The need to control anxiety and the need for security and love |
| Freud et al. (1895) | Psychoanalytic theory | Sexual desire and aggression |
| Hull et al. (1940) | Learning Theory | The need to reduce stress |
| Allport (1937) | Trait theory | Satisfying the need to repeat behaviors |
| Bandura (1989) | Social learning theory | Need to master and requires personal promotion |
| McClelland, Atkinson, Clark, and Lowell (1976) | Social attitudes | Need for success |
| Rogers (2012) | Humanitarian Psychology | Need to flourish |
| Maslow, Frager, Fadiman, McReynolds, and Cox (1970) | Humanitarian Psychology | Hierarchy physiologic safety requirements, need to love and respect the need for self-seeking |
| Berlyne (1950) | Cognitive attitude | The need to satisfy curiosity, the search for intellectual stimulation |
| Harré (1991) | Social and philosophical trends | The need to respect and to avoid humiliation by Diagram |
| Cohen and Taylor (1992) | Social Theory | Need to escape from the monotony of life, the need for excitement |
| Kelly (1955) | Personal construct theory | Need to anticipate and cosmology |
| Csikszentmihalyi (2014) | Humanitarian attitude | Search peak experience |

It's evident that in every other research, travel motivations can be different in different situations for various people. In another attitude towards the subject, a current relationship can be found between the given destination's properties and travel motivation. Actually, at this

point of view, it is the destination's properties that attract the tourist. A list of these properties is shown in table 2.

Table 2: Destination Characteristics and Travel Motivation

| | |
|----|---|
| 1 | Visiting a place I have never seen before |
| 2 | Spectacular sceneries |
| 3 | Visiting new and different people |
| 4 | The chance of enhancing individual knowledge |
| 5 | The attractiveness of rural and suburban environments |
| 6 | The destination which worth the money spending on it |
| 7 | Personal safety |
| 8 | Cultural attractions |
| 9 | Transport facilities like aircraft |
| 10 | Experience the new lifestyle |
| 11 | Having a good time and fun |
| 12 | Hygiene and cleanliness standards. |
| 13 | Visit friends and relatives |
| 14 | historical, ancient, military Positions |
| 15 | Just rest |
| 16 | Escape from the monotony of routine life |
| 17 | Accompanying family |
| 18 | Cheap travel destination |
| 19 | The best-proposed travel |
| 20 | The availability of information before traveling |
| 21 | The ability to communicate in foreign languages |
| 22 | Low-cost domestic trips |
| 23 | Great weather |
| 24 | Taste new foods |
| 25 | The chance of shopping |
| 26 | Ease of getting the visa |
| 27 | Natural beauty destination |
| 28 | The definition of travel attractions thence |
| 29 | Meet like-minded people |
| 30 | Escape from busy |
| 31 | Unique culture and ethnicity as Eskimos |
| 32 | Ease of money exchanging |
| 33 | Freedom from occupation settlements |
| 34 | Find excitement and fear |
| 35 | Mysterious and strange environments |
| 36 | Different and unique cultures of immigrants |
| 37 | Ease of driving a personal car |
| 38 | Flights introduced as a low-cost destination |
| 39 | Air and water quality |
| 40 | Aristocratic life experience |
| 41 | Visit the ancestral land |
| 42 | Create activities for the whole family |
| 43 | Go to where your friends have visited |
| 44 | Outdoor activities |
| 45 | Experiencing a simple life |
| 46 | The chance of relaxation |
| 47 | Exercise opportunities |
| 48 | The tolerance of Hardships |

Source: Goeldner and Ritchie (2012)

Table3: City Marketing Development Stages

| Writer | Phase | Goals | Characteristics |
|--------|-------|-------|-----------------|
|--------|-------|-------|-----------------|

| <i>First Stage: Scattered Improvement Activities</i> | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|---|--|
| Bailey (1991) | Looking for Chimneys | Manufacturing employment | One goal is to help attract companies, Reducing operating costs |
| Ward (1998) | Agricultural Colonies | Settlements on vacant land | Preparations vast areas of little time to settle |
| Ward (1998) | The Diversity of Urban Functions | Selling a tangible product | Differentiation of certain municipal functions (such as tourism-suburban) |
| Ward (1998) | Selling the Industrial Cities | Making the industry attractive | Focus on improving the quality, motivate artisans (limited to marginal sectors of urban/regional) |
| Bark and Kent (1999) | Selling Cities | Sales of existing cities | Simple promoting the city and its charm |
| <i>Second Phase: Urban Marketing Mix</i> | | | |
| Bailey (1991) | Target Marketing | Attract manufacturing and service jobs in profitable industries Special | Multiple targets, moving from mass marketing to unique marketing, physical infrastructure, public-private partnerships, improve quality of life |
| Bark and Kent (1999) | Cities Advertisement | Change the negative image or image promotion neutral or favorable | Advertisers spent an essential subject in the picture, which makes the picture? |
| Bark and Kent (1999) | Cities Marketing | Attracting inward investment and tourists at the same time respond to the priorities of residents | Beyond advertising, including significant events, outstanding development in the environment, According to local companies trying to identify potential customers' demands |
| Bailey (1991) | Product Development | As well as targeted marketing and attract future jobs | Clustering, strong public-private partnerships, more emphasis on quality of life |
| Ward (1998) | Sales in the Post-industrial | Open urban renewal, replacement of lost resources | A vital part of the response to intensified competition |
| <i>Third Phase: the City Branding</i> | | | |
| (Bark & Kent, 1999) | Current Phase | work with residents and provide exposure to existing external image | Pictures content is valuable, who will benefit, and how the photos? |
| M Kavaratzis (2008) | City Branding | Create and manage emotional and psychological associations City | Marketing a wide range of interventions such as the prospect of public space, infrastructure, organization, focusing on all aspects of marketing communications |

Table 4: Comparing the Frameworks of the City Branding

| Theorist | the Emphasis of the Model | Main Characteristics | The Strengths of the Model | the weakness of the model |
|------------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| (Kotler, 1986) | Introducing elements of branding | Target market, marketing components, Department of Planning | Having a holistic view of the whole city branding | Failure to provide the modeling process |
| Moilanen and Rainisto (2009) | The introduction of brand success factors | Landscape analysis, image, and identity, public-private partnerships | According to the Public-Private Partnership in branding | Failure to provide the modeling process |
| Anholt (2016) | A framework to assess the city's brand | Presence, location, potential, vitality, people, Prerequisites | A useful tool to guide the branding efforts | Failure to provide a systematic way to city branding |

| | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|---|---|
| Mihalis Kavaratzis (2009) | Branding the management of the city | It's intentional and unintentional | According to the brand as communication and different components influence the relationship intentional and unintentional | Failure to provide a systematic way to city branding |
| Hankinson (2004) | Brand as the relationship | Relations essential services, infrastructure, brand relations, media relations, consumer relations | Due to the impact of the various stakeholders on city branding | Failure to provide a systematic way to city branding |
| Prideaux and Cooper (2003) | the need for an independent organization to branding the city | Two scenarios: as a unifying governing body and the balance between the governing body and the private sector | Based on the structure of branding | Lack of attention to the branding exercise |
| (De Chernatony, 2010) | City branding entangled in the complex network of | Network groups a set of organizational, network capacity, network organization, coordination network | Given the complexity of the relationships between the various stakeholders of city branding | Failure to provide clear solutions for dealing with the complexity of urban networks in making brands |
| Brown, Kozinets, and Sherry Jr (2003) | The need to distinguish between target groups in branding the city | Sub-brand perception of the brand-specific target groups | According to the defined target groups and Sub-brand for each | Lack of attention to other aspects of branding |
| Locioum | Attention to the points of contact with the target group of | Macro Events in the destination, shipping destination, their full sales, recreational facilities, food and beverages | Video of all components that interact with the customer offers | The lack of a solution to plan for dealing with contact points target |
| Gagvity | Foresight approach to city | Places, people, processes, partners | Having a holistic view and stop branding | failure to provide implementation guidance |
| Azvado | David Acer's brand identity planning model implemented in branding the city | Sustainable competitive advantages, opportunities, and threats feature functional and emotional brand | Having a holistic view and stop branding | simplicity and failure to provide implementation guidance |

In research called “satisfaction and discontent towards the properties of the tourist destinations,” its effect on the overall satisfaction and tending to return, with a survey on 2423 coastal tourists, Marin and Taberner (2007) reached the result that the discontent experience causes a decrease in the overall satisfaction.

Negative feelings due to commercializing, becoming crowded, and environmental degradation significantly decreases tourists' tendency to return to the destination. In the research “Foreign Tourist Motivation for Staying in Thailand and Their Satisfaction in connection with the Cultural and Historical Properties of Destination” Sabsmaren, Canoknon (2009) concluded that there is a significant relationship between demographic, cultural and historical properties, tourist's motivation and the overall satisfaction of tourists.

It is a crucial index of tourist's delight in Thailand. The research titled "tourists' satisfaction towards the tourist destination" showed that tourists' satisfaction is a result of their motivation, aims, and perception of the tourism services, and organizing travel services explains only a 50% variance of the overall comfort of the tourist.

Recent researches on urban branding indicate the following information:

In a Ph.D. Thesis titled "Urban Marketing to Urban Branding" in 2009 at Groningen University of Netherlands, a transition from urban marketing to urban branding was investigated, and a theoretical framework is presented through the combination of place branding and corporate branding literature. Product brand and its function in place branding have also been investigated in this thesis.

This thesis investigates marketing endeavors in Amsterdam, Budapest, and Athena through in-depth interviews. In an article titled "Urban Branding Management," published in 2009 in the Journal of Place Branding and General Diplomacies, in addition to providing a framework of the urban branding based on the local properties, the authors present a framework review to make a city brand.

The authors declared that their reason for writing this article was a demand from the "Institute of Strategic Management, Economy and Research" of Kazakhstan to make a branding for Kazakhstan cities and determining their position among the cities of the regional countries and the future world. "Antecedents of resident' city brand attitudes" Journal of business research. In an article called "Antecedents of resident' city brand attitude" in 2009 in the Journal of Business Research, the properties of the city affecting the city brand were investigated through a gauging of 272 inhabitants of Gold Coast of Australia. In this research, the relation of the higher level of understanding natural environment, culture, shopping facilities, social solidarity, business creativity, transportation facilities, a clean environment, safety, administrative and public services, and urban branding were quantitatively investigated.

2.3. Territorial Contextualization about the Destination Kerman:

Iran is certainly assumed as the best destination for tourists in the old Testament, Especially due to its monuments, art, and cultural heritage and Kerman is also considered as the best destination for tourists by the purpose of cultural tourism, especially due to its architectural value and its old industry (Farahbakhsh & Pourkiyani, n.d.). Investment for the development of tourism can have a significant influence on various aspects of tourism. More

than 1000 prone areas of the country has been identified and the province of Kerman is one of them.

The Kerman province has 41 regional tourism is the ninth in the number of areas. The region has a diverse climate, beautiful mountains, rivers full of water, beautiful mirage, a variety of vegetation, rare ecosystems, ranging from ancient monuments to different periods and different traditions, always eager tourists from home and abroad to attract (Anvari, 2016). For example, one of the most popular places are visited by foreign tourists is Lut desert where has been recorded in Unesco: The Lut Desert, or Dasht-e-Lut, which is located in the south-east of the country. Between June and October, this arid subtropical area is swept by strong winds, which transport sediment and cause aeolian erosion on a colossal scale.

Consequently, the site presents some of the most spectacular examples of aeolian yardang landforms (massive corrugated ridges). It also contains extensive stony deserts and dune fields. The property represents an exceptional example of ongoing geological processes (Lut Desert - UNESCO World Heritage Centre, n.d.). Other places could be considered to attract numerous tourists in Kerman, including Shahzadeh Garden, Jabalieh Dome, Fath-Abad Garden, Tomb of Shah Nimatullah Vali, Kerman Bazaar Aggregate (Grand Bazaar), Ganj-Ali Khan Bath, Meymand village. Another industry, also, could be mentioned is handicrafts that annually have a lot of visitors around the world. Kerman carpet, which has world fame and also Pateh, Shal, Copperworks (15 Reasons to Visit Kerman in Iran | Visit Kerman, n.d.).

3. METHODOLOGY

One of the presented models in urban branding used in this research is Simon-Enholt Model (2007), which divides urban branding factors to 6 groups as the following:

- a) City Attraction (e.g., traditional architecture attraction)
- b) Place (e.g., the city nature)
- c) People (e.g., people's behavior with tourists)
- d) The physical location of the city (the international situation of the town)
- e) The city infrastructures (e.g., transportation and communications)
- f) The city potentials (e.g., universities and economic status) Simon (Enholt, 2007).

One of the methods of descriptive research is a correlation. In this type of research, the relationship between variables is analyzed based on the research objective. While there is a

correlation between the variable's urban branding and tourist attraction, the research method is descriptive-correlative and is a field study based on gathering data. The sample size is determined by the Cochran method. So, the sample size in this research equals 377 people of the 2000 statistical society that was resulted by the Cochran formula. According to the above formula, if we consider the sample size with the 0.5 demographic gaps, (namely the mixed population has a specific attribute, and the other half lacks it), p and q are usually considered as 0.5. The value of z is often 1.96, and d can be 0.01 or 0.05.

$$n = \frac{\frac{z^2 pq}{d^2}}{1 + \frac{1}{N} \left(\frac{z^2 pq}{d^2} - 1 \right)}$$

For example, if the population size is 400 and the allowed error to be considered as 0.05
 1.96=z
 .5=p=q

Then according to the above formula, the sample size will be 196.

Table 5: How the questions are numbered (variable urban brand)

| Row | Dimensions of the City Branding | The number of questions |
|-----|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | City attraction | 6-1 |
| 2 | place of the city | 12-7 |
| 3 | City residents | 18-13 |
| 4 | Position of the city | 27-19 |
| 5 | City infrastructures | 53-43 |
| 6 | City potential | 59-54 |
| 7 | Tourist attractions | 42-28 |

Table 6: Likert scale for the questions

| Variable | Completely agree | agree | Have no idea | disagree | Completely disagree |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|-------|--------------|----------|---------------------|
| Urban branding and tourist attraction | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

To estimate the questionnaire validity, the point of view of experts and the professors who know the research and the questionnaire have been used. Reviewing and considering the experts' ideas ensures the researcher toward the questionnaire's validity and the correspondence of the subject to questions and the questions being to the point, and it also determines that how much problems can explain the model and hypotheses testing.

To make sure of the validity of the questionnaire, a primary survey was designed and showed to some experts. According to the professor's answers to the initial study and making some adjustments and the confirmation of the supervisors, the final questionnaire was prepared and distributed in the mathematical society.

Table 7: The results of reliability

| variable | Number of the items | Cronbach's alpha |
|--------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Tourist attraction | 15 | 0.746 |
| Urban branding | 44 | 0.795 |
| Position | 8 | 0.719 |
| Place | 6 | 0.759 |
| Potential | 7 | 0.702 |
| People | 6 | 0.769 |
| Infrastructures | 11 | 0.774 |
| City attraction | 6 | 0.774 |

The analysis was done in two descriptive and inferential levels using SPSS, which analyzing in descriptive statistics was done through statistical features such as frequency, percent, mean, and standard deviation. Inferential statistics is used here for a significant relation. The simple regression is done for the hypotheses and Kolmogorov–Smirnov testis used to assess the normal state of the data.

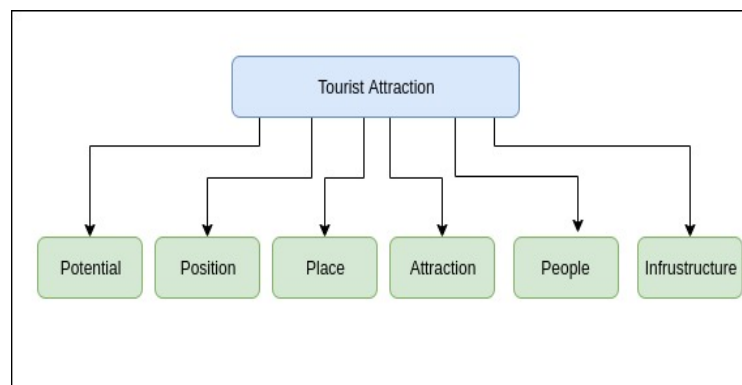


Figure 1: Research model

This part considers the descriptive information related to personal information such as gender, age, education, and also the vivid information of the questionnaire's variables such as urban branding dimensions including presence, place, potential, people, prerequisites, pulse, and tourist attraction. Responders' gender: The descriptive statistics of the responders' gender are showed in the following table and chart. It is shown that the investigated sample included 45.6% women and 54.4% men.

Table 8: Sex of the respondents

| Sex | Abundance | Present |
|--------|-----------|---------|
| Female | 172 | 45.6 |
| Male | 205 | 54.4 |
| Sum | 377 | 100 |

Responders' age: according to the following table and chart, most responders are between 45 to 65 (56.2%) years old.

Table 9: Number and percentage of respondents

| age | abundance | percentage |
|------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Less than 25 years old | 11 | 2.9 |

| | | |
|------------------------|-----|------|
| 25 – 45 | 96 | 25.5 |
| 45 – 65 | 212 | 56.2 |
| More than 65 years old | 58 | 15.4 |
| Sum | 377 | 100 |

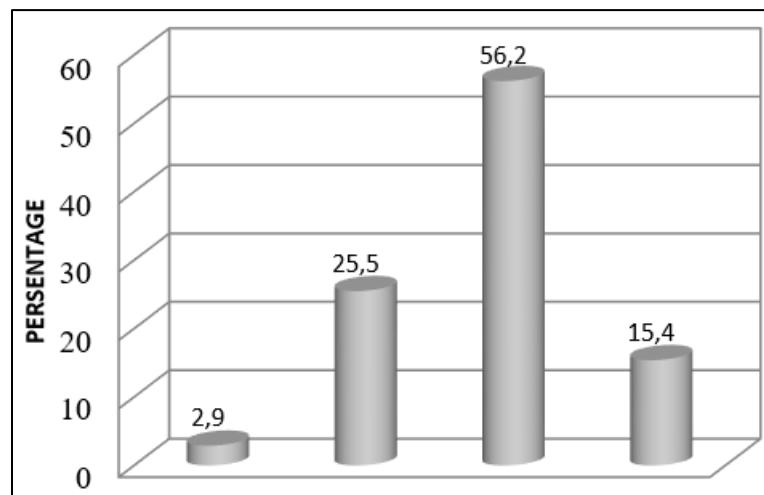


Figure 2: age distribution of respondents

Responders' education: according to the following table and chart, most responders (54.1%) have B.A.

Table 10: Number and percentage of respondent's education

| education | Abundance | Percentage |
|------------------|-----------|------------|
| Diploma | 30 | 8 |
| Associate Degree | 2 | 0.5 |
| Bachelor Degree | 204 | 54.1 |
| Master Degree | 109 | 28.9 |
| PhD | 32 | 8.5 |
| Sum | 377 | 100 |

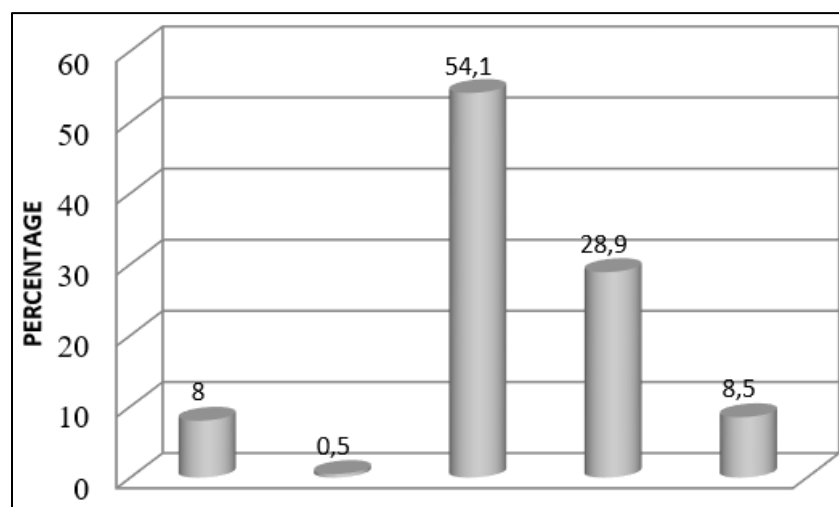


Figure 3: Number and percentage of respondent's education

Descriptive statistics of the research variable: In this part, the following graphic indicators are considered: mean, standard deviation, minimum, maximum related to the research variables, namely urban branding dimensions such as presence, place, potential,

people, prerequisites and pulse and tourist attraction. According to the following table, the values of tourist attraction mean, appearance, location, potential, people, requirements, and vibration are 2.93, 2.25, 2.32, 2.29, 2.17, 2.36, and 1.83, respectively.

Table 11: Descriptive statistics of variables

| Variable | Minimum | Maximum | Average | Standard deviation |
|--------------------|---------|---------|---------|--------------------|
| Tourist attraction | 2.93 | 4.27 | 3.70 | 0.2 |
| Position | 2.25 | 4.25 | 3.13 | 0.38 |
| Place | 2.33 | 4.17 | 3.26 | 0.37 |
| Potential | 2.29 | 4.14 | 3.23 | 0.33 |
| People | 2.17 | 4.5 | 3.39 | 0.42 |
| infrastructure | 2.36 | 4.36 | 3.23 | 0.31 |
| City attraction | 1.83 | 4.67 | 3.61 | 0.52 |

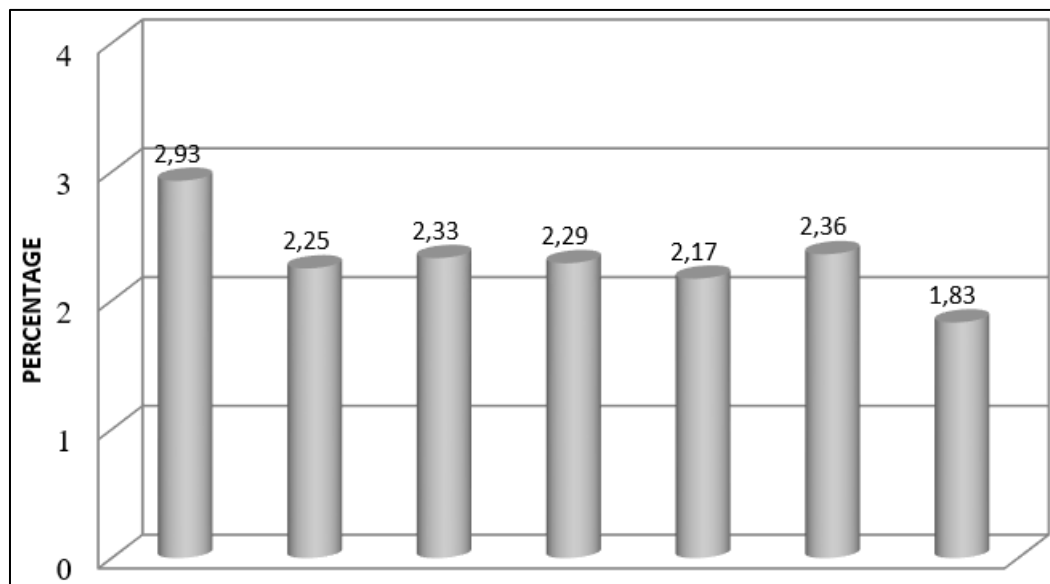


Figure 4: Descriptive statistics of variables

Table 12: Kolmogorov-Smirnov test results

| variable | Kolmogorov–Smirnov (Z statistics) | Significance level (sig) | Test result |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| Tourist attraction | 0.556 | 0.321 | Normal |
| Urban branding | 0.488 | 0.389 | Normal |
| Position | 0.191 | 0.203 | Normal |
| Place | 0.988 | 0.114 | Normal |
| Potential | 0.499 | 0.106 | Normal |
| People | 0.363 | 0.097 | Normal |
| infrastructure | 0.229 | 0.064 | Normal |
| City attractions | 1.075 | 0.102 | Normal |

Table 13: The results of multiple regression analysis (dependent variable: tourists)

| variable | Beta coefficient (β) | | T statistics | Significance level (Sig) | Collinearity Statistics | |
|-----------------|------------------------------|----------|--------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------|
| | Non-standard | standard | | | Tolerance | VIF |
| Constant factor | 0.633 | ----- | 12.242 | 0.000* | ----- | ----- |
| Position | 0.223 | 0.228 | 4.544 | 0.000* | 0.968 | 1.033 |
| Place | 0.121 | 0.110 | 2.529 | 0.023* | 0.958 | 1.044 |
| Potential | 0.210 | 0.207 | 3.675 | 0.000* | 0.958 | 1.015 |
| People | 0.117 | 0.103 | 2.213 | 0.031* | 0.99 | 1.01 |
| infrastructure | 0.189 | 0.173 | 3.453 | 0.001* | 0.968 | 1.033 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|-------|-------|-------|--|-------|--------|
| City attractions | 0.143 | 0.129 | 2.695 | 0.002* | 0.984 | 1.016 |
| F statistics | | | 6.831 | The significance level model (Sig) | | 0.000* |
| The coefficient of determination R ² | | | 0.413 | The adjusted coefficient of determination (adj) R ² | | 0.409 |
| significant level Kolmogorov- Smirnov (K-S) | | | 0.941 | Durbin-Watson statistic (Durbin- Watson) | | 1.973 |
| Significant level: 0.05* | | | | | | |

Table 14: Simple regression results (dependent variable: tourists)

| variable | Beta coefficient (β) | | T statistics | Significance level (Sig) |
|---|------------------------------|--|--------------|--------------------------|
| | Non-standard | standard | | |
| Constant factor | 0.088 | ----- | 1.423 | 0.000* |
| Urban branding | 0.831 | 0.574 | 3.135 | 0.000* |
| F statistics | 14.213 | The significance level model (Sig) | | 0.000* |
| significant level | 0.814 | Durbin-Watson statistic (Durbin- Watson) | | 1.854 |
| Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) | | | | |
| The coefficient of determination R ² | 0.574 | | | |
| Significant level: 0.05* | | | | |

Table 15: summarizes the results of testing hypotheses

| Variable | Result |
|-----------------------|--|
| The main hypothesis | Urban brand effects on the tourism attraction of the city of Kerman |
| | Confirm |
| | Position effects on the tourism attraction of the city of Kerman |
| | Confirm |
| | place effects on the tourism attraction of the city of Kerman |
| | Confirm |
| Subsidiary hypotheses | potential effects on the tourism attraction of the city of Kerman |
| | Confirm |
| | people effects on the tourism attraction of the city of Kerman |
| | Confirm |
| | infrastructure effects on the tourism attraction of the city of Kerman |
| | Confirm |
| | City attractions effects on the tourism attraction of the city of Kerman |
| | Confirm |

4. CONCLUSION

The research findings showed that urban branding has a role in the tourist attraction in Kerman, and according to the reports of the Cultural Heritage Organization, 15948 tourists traveled to Kerman in 1393, and this number reached 20000 in 1394 with 1.7-night staying average and 70 dollars per every tourist. After considering the results, it was concluded that Kerman has a specific situation to attract tourists, and the tourists were mainly from Germany, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, and England. In investing, they were mostly from China and Russia.

In the recent years, the number of tourists and planning for tourist attraction has been noted more seriously, and we hope that urban planners have more integrated programs for this plan and try to plan the international branding of this city. Meanwhile, it should be attempted to prepare the infrastructures for the tourists in this city. And on the other hand, the

investigation showed that most visitors were between 45 to 65 years old, so it is better to plant to attract younger tourists in plans.

5. FUTURE WORKS

It's better to promote international language education and make more connections with the tourists and attract them, also introduce traditions and local costumes of different cities such as the mentioned city. Some measures should be done to internationally register the protected parks and prepare suitable regional entertainment for the tourists. Also, systematic protection of the natural resources of this city and introducing these resources in international programs, promoting hotel levels to the international norms, and building more hotels for the tourists can be helpful.

While in this research, the city attractions like buildings, architecture and historical places are noted, it is suggested to introduce ancient sites at the international level, in an integrated program. It is also recommended to rebuild historical sites and care more about them to prevent them from being destroyed or eroded, and to build new buildings according to the modern world standards to attract more tourists, especially young tourists.

To create places for biking, suitable transportation in and out of the city, and also proper exercising facilities can be helpful. It's challenging to make an international image of Kerman from the foreign tourists and even creating an online database with pictures showing unique features of the city; branding will be confusing if the city lacks imaginable features. So, local authorities should note that can the picture story they want to make about their city show a symbol of one or various parts of the city or no.

One of the challenges of urban branding is that some involved people are not satisfied with branding horizons, and this dissatisfaction is due to many factors that should be investigated in a separate article. Still, some measures must be done to confront it and make the related authorities to cooperate in this issue. To make suitable traditional fields of study at universities and even develop non-academic teaching such as teaching copper casting and the other arts to attract interested young tourists.

Also, future researchers can investigate attractive regions of Kerman and rank them based on the AHP model. As well, future researchers can study the branding ability of this city and the other cities of Iran. Furthermore, future researchers can investigate people's attitudes toward attracting tourists and their effects on the economic dynamism of the city.

5.1. Programs to be implemented



- a) Enhancing the number of the world record heritage (Lout world record) Foreign marketing
- b) Attending foreign exhibitions in the target market
- c) Holding desert rally and marathon
- d) Using the international TV programming of France, China, Italy, and ...

5.2. Research Limitations

- a) Time and place limitations
- b) The lack of enough internal sources and researches about this subject
- c) Inaccessibility to the tourists
- d) The lack of time to answer any questions

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