Unpacking nation branding: Identification of key influential, processual, and outputs

Zohreh Dehdashti Shahrokh
Marketing Management Department, Faculty of Management & Accounting, Professor at Alameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran
E-mail: Dehdashtishahrokh@atu.ac.ir

Akbar Sepahvand
Marketing Management Department, Faculty of Accounting and Management, Phd candidate at Allameh Tabataba'i University Tehran, Iran
E-mail: a.sepahvand1991@gmail.com

ABSTRACT:

This study aims to identify key influential, processual, and output factors of nation branding based on qualitative case studies on primary nation branding by systematically reviewing the nation branding literature. We conducted our study using the meta-synthesis method and reviewed qualitative case studies in the nation branding literature. The results showed that case studies on nation branding examined the influential, processual, and output factors of nation branding. The originality of this study was approved based on indicating key nation branding factors based on systematic review and synthesis of the literature on nation branding.

1. Introduction

Experts and scholars in various fields have focused on nation branding due to its economic, political, and strategic values (Papadopoulos et al., 2016). The nation branding concept with the adoption of different marketing and promotion strategies intends to increase public awareness about the nation's image of a country and attract diverse customers of other countries including tourists, citizens, and companies (He et al., 2019). To achieve these purposes, a substantial body of research and case studies have investigated a wide range of different factors influencing the nation branding process and its key results (e.g., Echeverri et al., 2019; Hassan & Mahrous, 2019; Miazhevich, 2018; Frig & Sorsa, 2018; Roozen & Raedts, 2017 ; Yousaf, 2017; Schühly & Tenzer,

2017). On the managerial side, many countries have started branding for their nation as a means of acquiring advantage in the competitive world (Che-Ha, 2015). Without knowing factors affecting nation branding, countries will not be able to understand the output of this program. Thus, with an incoherent and blind approach to nation branding, countries do not obtain appropriate outcomes despite spending a large amount of money. Understanding nation branding factors can greatly help manage nation branding and adopt appropriate nation branding strategies.

Despite the growing interest by researchers, business activists, and public policymakers (Oda, 2020; Steenkamp, 2019; Knott et al., 2017; Anholt, 2011*)*, research on nation branding is a complicated and even confusing construct (Fan, 2006). In fact, there are still fragmented and various conceptualizations of nation branding as a developing field. Thus, a systematic review of publications is needed to map the field of nation branding (Hao et al., 2019). Little research has attempted to aggregate and accumulate the findings of these scattered and contextualized studies into integrated models. This inattention may be because most researchers focus on collecting primary data and overestimate the value of primary data (Hoon, 2013). In this study, we used meta-synthesis to build a theory in the form of a systematic approach based on qualitative case studies on primary nation branding that have not been planned as part of an integrated multisite effect.

The present meta-synthesis sought to address this issue by reviewing 987 articles. Of the articles, we synthesized 37 case studies published in different countries through September 2003 to December 2019. We reported three categories of variables affecting the nation branding process, and nation branding processual and output variables. In this study, we addressed two issues in particular. First, the previous literature showed that social-political goals of a nation brand were often broad and ambiguous. One of the most critically posed questions is the extent to which a country is involved in nation branding. Thus, according to the current study, nation branding requires a systematic approach that encompasses different levels of a country, including people, organizations, and the government. Based on our systematic literature review of case studies, we

identified key factors of nation branding. Clarifying these factors helps nation branding managers identify and coordinate nation branding stakeholders.

Second, the inconsistencies in the nation branding literature are due to contextual differences across each study, such as differences in the social, cultural, political, and economic environment of countries. Many studies have examined nation branding in big economies such as Japan (Murti, 2019) and the United States (Zavattaro & Fay, 2019) or in small countries such as Malta (Xuereb, 2017). Although some of the factors influencing the nation branding process and its key results may be similar in different countries, some differences in countries may have caused inconsistencies in prior case studies. In this study, we identified key nation branding factors. The results of this study can be used as a guideline on the effectiveness of nation branding plans and can help managers and policymakers allocate their resources more successfully.

2. Nation Branding

From the marketing point of view, nation branding is a particular twenty-first-century economic strategy that nation-states develop to enhance their international competitive position (Kim & Lee, 2018). Anholt (2011) believes that creating an image of a country is not much different from branding a product or organization, as nation branding requires deep engagement, identity, as well as emotion. As Aker (1996, p. 68) points out, "the brand is a multidimensional set of functional, emotional, relational, and strategic elements that create unique associations in the public mind". Wu et al. (2017: 2) defined a nation brand as "all perceptions about a nation in the minds of its international stakeholders" (Add pag num). However, nations are not like a tangible product or service and consist of many factors and associations such as geographical location (e.g., provinces, cities, regions, etc.), natural resources and beauty, local products, people, history (e.g., myths, legends, monuments, etc.), culture, language, political and economic systems, social institutions, infrastructures, celebrities, designs (e.g., architecture, style, etc.), and images (Fan, 2006). Nation branding is "the strategic introduction of a country to create a reputation and

economy, politics, as well as promote social interests at home and abroad" (Szondi, 2008). It is an agentic process that involves deployment of resources and negotiation of agreed definitions and terms of a nation's identity (Ozbilgin & Yalkin, 2019) to persuade others (internal and external audiences) by talking and reasoning to have specific thoughts and behaviors toward one country (Carstensen & Schmidt, 2015).

The nation brand literature shows that different stakeholders and country levels play a role in the nation branding process (such as Anholt, 2007; Kotler et al., 1993; Dinnie, 2015; Papadopoulos, 2014). This can extend from tourism development to different functions such as foreign investment, export development, and public policy, which aim to engage with different communities to inform and influence them (Foroudi et al., 2016). In the nation branding context, a reconciliation is required between interests and preferences of different stakeholders in a country. There is also a need for public-private partnerships to build a national brand for each country (Anholt, 2007). Moreover, to achieve nation brand goals in each country, it is required to have a commitment and cooperation between different sectors of that country, including the government, the private sector, people, and the media (Dinnie, 2015).

3. Method

Today, meta-analysis has become one of the most popular research methods in management fields (Lazazzara, 2020; Jami Pour et al., 2019). The reason for this popularity is that meta-analysis allows us to study the findings of different studies that examined similar theoretical predictions or a set of relationships around a definite phenomenon and create "super-samples" to assess the direction, size, and distortion of theoretical relationship estimates that can be highly reliable (Combs, 2019). Various models have been developed to carry out meta-synthesis (Sandelowsky & Barroso, 2003; 2007; Walsh & Downe, 2005; Hoon, 2013). Table 1 shows an adaptation of meta-synthesis protocol steps by Hoon (2013). This model is extensively used for its comprehensive, novel approach in the management research literature (e. g., Lazazzara, 2019;

Garavan, 2019; Habersang & Reihlen, 2018; Morais, 2016). Hoon described the purpose of the

model, documenting a specific logical path to meta-synthesis with the aim of enhancing its validity

and reliability.

Table 1. Meta-Synthesis Protocol (Adaptation of Hoon, 2013)

Steps in Meta-Synthesis	Analytical Goal	Strategy/Analytical Procedure Used	Outcome to Generate a Theoretical Contribution
Framing research Questions	Determining accurate and specific criteria to determine what studies will be considered in terms of methodology, theoretical foundations, research focus, initial research question, and quality	A priori specification	Identifying a well-specified research question will facilitate the accurate operationalization of variables and the extraction of data from primary studies.
Determining relevant research	Identifying the body of relevant studies associated with the research questions. Following a comprehensive literature search helps avoid the lack of essential information that strengthens the findings due to being generated from a broader base	Identify keywords, searching strings, and formulating an exhaustive search strategy including the key steps and complementary of the Study	Locating research samples (primary related research)
Setting inclusion-exclusion criteria	Determining accurate and specific criteria to determine which studies are included or excluded from the meta-synthesis process	Developing a list of inclusion/exclusion criteria and carefully expressing inclusion criteria	Determining the scope (range) of cases under investigation and ensuring validity and reliability
Extracting and coding data	Reading the full-text of each article carefully and coding the characteristics and proceeded insights of each primary study based on the research questions	Initial coding by multiple coders and rating each code by them	Ordering, coding, and classifying evidence from each study; sensitivity to the context of data, a valid coding form, intercoder ratings
Analyzing the case-specific level	Sequencing variables found in each study to determine their impact on the research questions	Case-specific causal networking	Identifying themes, key concepts, patterns, and relationships in each case study
Synthesizing on a cross-study level	Merging case-specific causal networks into meta-causal networks and accumulating the variables at the cross-study level with the aim to achieve a general pattern among the variables	Meta-causal networking and variable rating	Identifying patterns and central variables and rating the variables to ensure validity
Building a theory	Determining the basic concepts of the study and showing its specific contribution	Linking the literature with the research results	Determining the basic concepts of research and arguments about research contribution to answer the research questions
Discussion	Discussing the results of the meta-synthesis study and potential limitations	Discussing rigor, validity, and reliability	Legitimizing the validity and reliability of the methodology and activities used in the study

Step 1: Framing research questions - The first step in the meta-synthesis process is to design a clear and accurate research question. This question will guide the whole research path and determine the scope of the research. To design a research question, we studied the existing literature on nation branding for the clear identification of a problem or a phenomenon. This study included the review of reliable electronic business and marketing journals. In this study, we aimed to identify managerial and social factors involved in the nation branding process and the main factors of nation branding at each level. To this end, we posed the following questions: (Q1) What are the main factors influencing of nation branding? and (Q2) what is the nation branding outputs?

Step 2: Determining relevant research - According to the research questions, this step aims to find the maximum number of studies that focused on the keywords "Nation Branding", "Nation Brand", and "Branding the Nation" in valid scientific databases such as Google Scholar. We only focused on reviewing published English-language articles from September 2003 to August 2019. We also searched other databases including Wiley Online Library, Emerald, Springer, Science Direct, Sage, Jstor, and Scopus and found 987 relevant articles. We removed 258 articles from the list as they were duplicate. After a first review and screening of the titles and abstracts of the articles, we identified 549 of the articles as irrelevant and false positives and excluded them due to improper citations (n=180). Next, we obtained the full-text versions of the remaining 180 articles and compared them in terms of title, abstract, keywords, procedure, and outcomes. We reviewed all the 180 articles manually and one by one. Due to the inconsistency between the titles and abstracts with the bodies, we excluded 100 articles and eventually selected 80 articles for the next step of the meta-synthesis process. Of the selected articles, 42 were case studies, eight were multi-case studies, three were comparative studies, eight were quantitative studies, nine were literature reviews and theoretical frameworks, six were other qualitative studies, and four were mixed method studies.

Step 3: Determining inclusion-exclusion criteria - This step aims to determine and apply inclusion-exclusion criteria. This leads to the selection of appropriate studies relevant to our research questions (Table 3). In this step, we also examined the validity and reliability of our study (Dalton & Dalton, 2008).

Table 2. The inclusion and exclusion criteria

Number	Criteria	Rationales	Resources
1	Studies must be qualitative or mixed method case studies on nation branding.	This criterion was developed to narrow the meta-synthesis to qualitative or mixed case studies on nation branding. Articles using cases for illustrative case examples to give an instance of how to apply nation branding frameworks were excluded.	Hoon (2013); Ferasso (2018); Garavan (2019)
2	The dominant view of the study must be in the field of marketing.	Since nation branding has been studied in several different disciplines (e.g., political science, geography, etc.) and variables of these disciplines are intertwined with marketing, the political science, geography, and so on, they were excluded from the meta-synthesis process.	Adaptation of Hoon (2013); Garavan (2019)
3	Case studies should only focus on nation branding.	This criterion defines and identifies the fundamental focus of the study; that is, only studies on nation branding and not on branding of country, place, origin, industry, etc., were selected.	Adaptation of Hoon (2013); Lazazzara et al. (2018); Garavan (2019)
4	Studies should show nation branding influential, processual, and outcome factors involved in nation branding.	This criterion specifies the scope of the meta-synthesis and ensures that the boundaries of the meta-synthesis are precisely defined.	Adaptation of Hoon (2013); Garavan (2019)
5	Studies should meet criteria for quality control.	• The research question should be clear. • The data collection procedure should be described. • Findings should be explicitly stated. • A strong link should be established between theory and empirical evidence. • The contextualization of the case should be explained clearly.	Adaptation of Hoon (2013); Lazazzara et al. (2018); Garavan (2019)

We reviewed the selected articles in this step (n = 80) carefully and comprehensively based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria. According to the first criterion, "the research method must be a qualitative or mixed case study". Thus, we excluded quantitative articles (n = 8), theoretical literature review articles and theoretical frameworks (n = 9), and articles that did not use the case study method or merely used a case to explain the problem more precisely (n = 9) from the study. Based on the second criterion, "the dominant view of research must be in the field of marketing". Thus, we excluded political case studies from the process (n = 7). According to the third criterion, "case studies should only focus on nation branding". Thus, we excluded a study devoted solely to place branding from the meta-synthesis process (n = 1). We also excluded two more studies (n = 2) from the study based on the fourth criterion, referring to "studies that show nation branding influential, processual, and outcome factors involved in nation branding". Based on the last criterion, "studies should meet criteria for quality control". Thus, we excluded seven studies that did not meet one of the criteria from the meta-synthesis process (n = 7). Finally, we selected articles that met all the inclusion criteria (n = 37) for the next step of the meta-synthesis process.

Step 4: Extracting and coding data - The fourth step aims to extract the codes and classify the evidence from the approved case studies. According to Hoon (2013), it is vital that meta-synthesis operates at a level where instead of focusing on the raw data of original studies, researchers construct their insights based on their understanding and interpretation of the data. We collected and organized the obtained codes based on the research questions. To obtain relevant evidence, findings and contributions of each research must be studied carefully. The major decision in this step is features that should be converted into codes, which requires a valid and consistent coding form that leads the data coding process. Carefully studying and controlling the quality of the definite sections from the approved articles, we designed the original codes based on the research questions, and then, inserted them into coding forms. It is essential to work with two synthesizers,

both as coders and readers, to eliminate any mistakes in data recording and avoid the omission of relevant data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Two researchers familiar with the process and the domain performed the coding process. The defining unit of the codes in the present study was textual expressions referring to a particular subject. In addition, we also focused on the levels of nation branding.

Step 5: Analyzing the case-specific level - This step aims to classify the codes into variables within each case study and understand how they relate to each other. In this step, we obtained codes from the reviewed studies based on the research questions (Miles & Huberman, 1994) and two researchers categorized the data into axial codes and variables. Then, we compiled the obtained codes into comprehensive coding tables. We also searched for variables influencing the other variables, variables appearing simultaneously, and variables occurring before the other variables. We aimed to develop distinct causal networks and determine the level of each study. Based on the causal networks, we detected the influence of different variables and how they affected each other at different levels of each case study.

Step 6: Synthesizing on a cross-study level - Moving from a case-specific level analysis to a cross-study level analysis, we combined sequences of variables identified in case-specific causal networks into a meta-causal network. The case-specific meta causal networks provided further insights into how the studies under synthesis were related or dissonant through cross-case comparison and contrast. Therefore, a meta-causal network goes beyond any individual study to show causal mechanisms, causes, or conditions and results from the analysis across a set of studies. The outcome of this step is the research variables and the patterns between them (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Hoon, 2013). In this step, we obtained causal networks based on the interpretation and comparison of variables in each case. Furthermore, we categorized the variables

into three categories of variables affecting the nation branding process (Table 3), nation branding

process variables (Table 4), and nation branding output variables (Table 5).

Table 3. Influential variables of nation branding

Variable	Axial codes	Initial codes	Source code
People empowerment	Knowledge	Educated citizens	A3
		Education	A3
		Fear of not knowing	A3
		Closed mind People	A3
		Education	A20
		People's knowledge	A10
		Education	A28
	Human Resources	Human Resources Market	A15
		Labor market	A32
		Human Capital	A36
	Skills	People's capacity and skills	A10
		Capacity of the people	A10
		Capacity	A20
Socio-personal characteristics	Personal characteristics	Physical features	A15
		Personality characteristics	A15
	Social characteristics	New lifestyle	A13
		Youth	A27
		Multi-faceted diversity	A27
		Life style	A15
		Modernity	A15
		Advanced society	A28
		Crime and social corruption	A15
		Crime	A21
		Social values	A15
cultural factors	Languages	Language and dialect	A15
		Languages	A28
	Traditions	Colors	A15
		Customs	A15
		National holidays	A24
		Traditional festivals	A24
		Customs	A26
	Religious Approaches	Religion	A15
		Religious conflicts	A3
		Growing religious fundamentalism	A3
		Religious Attractions	A19
		Religious conflicts	A3
		Religion	A28
	Country History	Heroes	A15
		History	A16
		Contemporary history	A24
		Ancient history	A24
		History	A36
	Food culture	Food & Drink Attractions	A26
		Food tastes	A15
		Drinks	A36
	Nation identity	Country national identity	A2
		Social cohesion	A20

Variable	Axial codes	Initial codes	Source code
Economic factors		National Brand Identity	A36
		Citizens' national pride	A10
		Pride	A20
	People's culture	Cultural distance	A28
		Hospitality	A12
		Cultural spectrum	A27
		Cultural values	A26
	Art	Music culture	A16
		National Music	A36
		Cinema and Art	A24
	Economics Empowerment	The size of the country's wealth	A2
		Economic role in the region	A2
		Dependence on other countries	A3
		Economic power	A3
		Existence of large companies	
		Poverty and wealth	A15
	International Business	Formation of trade zones (such as free trade zones, etc.)	A6
		Take advantage of export markets	A9
		Imports and exports	A15
		Export of creative cultural goods	A21
		Participation in World Trade	A28
	Economic Development Indicators	Economic infrastructure	A3
		producing section	A15
		Public infrastructure	A28
		Economic Development	A28
		Economic Growth	A28
		National economy	A36
		Industry	A36
		Gini coefficient	A21
		GDP	A21
		Industrialization	A32
		Financial and Monetary Policies	A28
	Investment Attraction Policies	Long-term approach to investment	A10
		Attract foreign investment	A15
		Government investment support	A32
		Attracting Direct Investment	A28
Cultural policies	Religious Policies	Religious practices	A2
		The growth of religious beliefs	A3
		Secularism	A3
		Religious freedom	A3
	Culture Management	develop attractive culture	A21
		Promote global citizenship and cultural acceptance	A21
		Ministry of Culture	A21
		Cultural activities assigned to the country	A2
		Ministry of Innovative Culture	A21
Governance Qulity	Government effectiveness	Government stability	A3
		Government competence	A16
		Government flexibility	A24
	Government structure	Imperialism Government	A3
		The power of democracy	A3
	Corruption	Crime and political corruption	A15
		Government corruption	A3
W	Healthcare System	Advanced medicine	A3

Variable	Axial codes	Initial codes	Source code
		Healthy	A3
		Caring	A3
		Over-populated	A3
		Health	A15
		Health infrastructure	A28
		Appropriate social services	A3
	Education Status	Pay attention to the Education section	A7
		The education system	A15
		Education system	A24
		Empowering Women	A35
		Education system	A36
		Educating methods	A36
	Freedom	Human rights	A3
		Gender policies	A3
		Respect for the individual	A3
		Gender equality	A11
		Government-Women Relations	A11
		Gender	A11
		Giving women governmental roles	A35
		Gender equality	A35
	Environmental policies	Government environmental concerns	A3
Tourism	Tourism Marketing	Increasing tourism demand	A10
		Introducing tourist attractions	A12
		Build attractive tourism	A19
	Infrastructure Development	Transport infrastructure	A28
		Improve tourism infrastructure	A10
Technolog	Technology Development	Technological structure Development	A13
		Upgrading technology services	A18
	Innovation	Technologic innovation	A27
		Technologic innovation	A15
Sports	Sports teams	Foundation Sports teams	A14
		Specialized sports in the country	A29
	Sport Planning	Targeting the sports audience	A14
		Attention to sport	A27
political situation	Internal policy	Internal political affairs	A15
		Security	A15
	Foreign policy	contribution to international society	A18
		Being military	A3
		Being friendly	A3
		Patience	A3
		Foreign Policy	A15
		Soft power	A33
Media policy	Media management	Exposure to the media,	A21
		Media campaigns	A30
		Reaction to events	A36
		Creating and recreating targeted news	A36
		Building long-term relationships	A36
	Media Tools	Presence in powerful international media	A22
		Social media	A21
		Communication tools	A30
Tangibl	Nation Brand Recognition	Recognition the target audience of the country	A2
		Recognition of audience of the country's immigrants	A2
		Recognition the target audience of country's religion	A2

Variable	Axial codes	Initial codes	Source code
Intangible assets	Stereotypes	Attributed stereotypes	A2
		Religious threat stereotypes	A29
		Terrorism stereotypes	A29
		Extremism stereotypes	A29
		Internal crises stereotypes	A29
		Poverty stereotypes	A29
		Threat to regional peace stereotypes	A29
		War stereotypes	A29
		Nuclear power stereotypes	A29
		Leadership stereotypes	A29
		Stereotypes from international friends' stereotypes	A29
		Popular stereotypes	A29
		Physical appeal of country	A29
		Sports stereotypes	A29
		The flag attributed color stereotypes	A29
		Traditional stereotypes	A27
		The stereotypes attributed to the country	A6
		Gender stereotypes	A35
		The mental image of individuals, communities, governments	A37
	Media image	Monetary and non-monetary information provided in the media	A2
		Proper media coverage	A10
		Negative effects of media	A21
		Media impact	A21
		Mass media	A24
		International media	A33
		Country Student Messages on Social Media	A36
	Foreigners experience	nation brand Improvement through visitor experiences	A10
		Positive experiences of tourists	A26
		Visitors' associations, influences, perceptions, and experiences	A37
		Knowledge of the country	A27
		WOM and media advertising to visitors of their experiences	A37
	Economic Attractions	Real Investment Attractions	A24
		Innovative Attractions	A30
		Investors' associations, influences, perceptions and experiences	A37
		Commercial Products	A2
		Brands	A36
		Market size	A28
		Market boom	A28
		Real Investment Attractions	A24
		Powerful sub brands	A34
	Audience Emotions	Anger emotion of foreign audiences over the nation brand	A23
		admiration emotion of foreign audiences for the nation brand	A23
		Guilty emotion of domestic audiences for the nation brand	A23
		Pride emotion of domestic audiences for the nation brand	A23
		The emotional qualities attributed to the country	A37
	Human Resources	Human Resources Market	A15
		Labor market	A32
		Human Capital	A36
	Unnatural Attractions	Artificial Attractions	A15
		Entertainment	A15
		Cities and landscapes	A15
		World Historic Places	A21
		Structures	A30

Variable	Axial codes	Initial codes	Source code
		Landmarks	A30
		Museums	A30
		Country of myths	A27
		Big cities	A27
		Spectacular spots	A36
		Ideological Attractions	A19
	Natural Attractions	Weather	A15
		Geomorphology	A15
		Geographical location	A15
		Natural and artificial disasters	A15
		Plants and Animals	A15
		River and Sea	A15
		Natural beauties	A15
		Geographical features	A16
		Natural beauties	A24
		Tourism attraction	A30
		Land	A36
		Scenery	A36
		Natural resources	A3
		Beauty	A3
		Pollution	A3
	Cultural-Sporting Events	Holding sporting events	A14
		Hosting world events	A10
		Hosting World Sporting Events	A10
		Holding festivals	A17
		Hosting World Cultural Events	A10
		Capability of hosting conferences	A27
		Entertainment related events	A12

Table 4. nation branding processual variable

Variable	Axial codes	Initial codes	Source code
Nation l Branding Program Requirements	Long-term approach to nation branding	Long term planning	A1
		Commitment to nation branding	A24
	Developing a National Branding Strategic Plan	Creating a nation-brand vision	A4
		Setting a nation-brand goal	A4
		Developing a nation-brand strategy	A4
		Operating a nation-brand strategy	A4
		Sustenance of competitiveness of a nation	A4
		Set a national brand identity	A4
		Development of nation brand systems	A4
		Create a brand vision based on people's spirit,	A9
		Targeting a new country in people's minds	A9
		Reflect this vision and purpose	A9
		Focus on development of export, industry and technology,	A9
		Design targeted strategies to achieve these goals	A9
		Developing National Branding Policy Framework for Foreigners	A18
		Specific planning	A31
		National Branding Strategies	A37
		Accurate definition of target markets	A34
		Careful evaluation and monitoring	A34
		Accurate position analysis	A34
	Defining a Position for the nation brand	Accurate positioning	A2
		Positioning the country's competitive advantages	A9
		Planning flexibility	A1
		Change audience as needed	A6
		Nation brand positioning based on differentiation	A37
	Improvement the Nation Brand Status	Constantly finding progress area	A7
		Recognition the barriers of national brand development	A13
		Re-branding	A13
	Comprehensive Nation Branding Plan	Balance between commercial and cultural elements in the plan	A7
		Making a national brand not just centered on an organization, an industry, or a cultural area,	A7
		Not focusing on tourism	A9
		Persuasive features in the national brand	A34
	Building Formal national branding guidance team led by the government	Government as responsible for nation branding strategies	A9
		Having a nation brand guidance team	A1
		Forming and organizing the nation branding and implementation team by the government	A8
		Formation of the official nation branding council	A18
		President's support for nation branding	A18
		Giving legal authority to the National Branding Council	A18
		Government financial support	A19
		Managing Nation Brand Performers	A30
		Support the government and independent army of the national brand	A34
		Consider government and national leaders as nation brand actors	A9
	developing nation branding based on the realities of the country	Design a slogan in accordance with the national brand	A9
		Focus on real resources and capacities of the country	A9
		Adapting the facts of the country and national slogan	A13
		Giving a fundamental spirit to the nation brand that embodies the true values of the country	A13
		Native and real message transmission	A26
		Nation brand should not be based on rhetoric	A34

Implementation Requirements of the Nation Branding	Emphasis on distinctions	Emphasizing the uniqueness of the country	A13
		Focus on transmit distinctions	A41
	Integrity of external communication channels	Use communication channels based on audience characteristics	A1
		Using different media	A5
		Internet	A5
		Celebrity	A5
		Publishing books and articles	A5
		Cultural diplomacy	A5
		Pay attention to business transactions	A5
		Focus on print media	A22
		Focus on television media	A22
		Focus on online video media	A22
		Social media use (Facebook)	A36
		The nation brand should be publicized globally	A34
	Targeted campaigns	Implement coherent and targeted campaigns	A1
		Holding campaigns	A26
		Using trust in all relationships,	A9
		Create a collective image of the brand	A13
		Coordination of government and businesses	A31
	Involvement of different levels of society	Collaboration across all levels of society	A1
		Politicians' participation in nation branding	A18
		participation of Private Sector in nation branding	A18
		participation of Public Sector in nation branding	A18
		Forming councils from different departments and ministries	A18
		General mobilization	A20
		Synchronize messages published by different parts of the country	A22
		establish collaboration between government and key stakeholders in nation branding	A34
		Nation brand should be understood and embraced by all stakeholders	A34
		Forming a national brand based on stakeholder engagement	A34
		the whole country should support the nation branding effort	A34
		The need for cooperation between the public and private sectors,	A9
	Satisfy the interests of all stakeholders	Understand the need to nation branding at all levels of the country	A6
		current and prospective visitor (and investor) perceptions should be considered	A34
		meaningful stakeholder engagement should anchor the nation branding strategy.	A34
		nation brand communication to be done also to the citizens and local communities.	A34
	Domestic and foreign cooperation	Cooperation between all levels of society	A1
		The need for cooperation between the public and private sectors	A9
		Cooperation between the government and key stakeholders	A34
		Cooperation between organizations and other parts of the country	A25
		Collaborate with target country organizations	A25
		Pay attention to the state of cooperation in each country	A25
		Repeat cooperation	A25
		Flexibility of cooperation	A25
		The nature of cooperation	A25
	Stereotypes' Management	Managing the source of stereotypes	A6
		Promoting shared values	A6
		Emphasis on geographical cultural symbols	A6
		Manage sent messages	A6
		Design a slogan in based on the desired nation image	A9

Table 5. Output variables of nation branding

Variable	Axial codes	Initial codes	Source code
Nation Brand Equity	National brand associations	Pleasing country associations	A2
		Create positive and negative associations in the audience's mind	A37
	National brand awareness	Brand awareness and salience	A20
		Increased awareness of the nation brand	A5
		Nation brand exposure	A20
		Brand advertising	A20
	National Brand Image	Develop a purposeful image of the country	A13
		Improved nation brand image	A14
		Image and perception of the nation brand	A20
		External image of national brand	A20
		Credibility	A20
		Iconic images	A20
		National image	A31
		Foreign clients' mental image,	A36
		Nation brand image in domestic and foreign companies,	A36
		Image of nation brand to investors	A36
		Nation brand image before other governments	A36
		Nation brand image in the media	A36
		Country Image	A33
Socio-cultural exchanges	Cultural Influence	Culture Transfer	A7
		Acceptance of national claims	A30
		Transfer the cultural, historical, food, modern characteristic	A14
	Attracting foreign talent	Attracting people from other countries	A30
		Attracting Talents	A30
Nation building	Values Change	Changing national values and priorities	A11
		Mass reduction	A20
		Building economic values	A37
		Nation building	A12
	Nation Brand Identity	The authenticity of brand identity	A20
		Culture	A20
		Place	A20
		Story	A20
	People's knowledge and skills	Education	A30
		human resources	A30
		People	A20
International presence	International Relations Improvement	Foreign policy	A8
		Public diplomacy	A8
		Creating positive emotional relationships between countries	A14
		Globalization	A30
	Soft Power	Increase soft power	A30
		National Security	A8
		Inspire residents, investors, employees	A37
Positioning	Nation Brand Position	Proper positioning of the nation brand	A19
		Brand Position	A20
		Positive and negative branding in the audience's mind	A23
		Positive and negative aspects of national brand personality	A16
The quality of the institutional	Government effectiveness	Better Management of Your Country by the Government	A30
		Corruption	A30
	business environment Improvement	The Convenience of Doing Business	A30
		Creating Sustainable Competence in the Business Environment	A31
		Creating a legitimate Sustainable Business Framework	A31
		Become an Attractive Market	A34

The Drivers of Economic Development	Social capital	Changing Government-Citizen Relations	A11
		Citizen loyalty	A30
		Talent retention	A30
	Infrastructure Development	Transportation	A30
		Infrastructure	A20
	Rule of Law	Rules Quality	A30
		Terms and Conditions	A30
	Foreign Investment	Attracting Direct Investment	A28
		Attracting investment	A30
		Attracting Direct Investment	A34
		Attract investors	A37
	Tourism Development	Tourism and travel	A30
		Attract tourists	A37
	Export Development	Export	A30
		Competitiveness rating	A30
		Competitiveness of the country's goods and services in the international arena	A37
		Development of export of products and services	A37
	Competitive Advantages	Sustainable competitive advantage	A9
		Gaining competitive advantage	A12
		Competitive Advantage	A20
		Uniqueness	A14
		Distinction	A37
		Creating competitive advantage globally	A37
	Create Opportunity	Creating Opportunities	A30
		Co-branding	A20
		Economic Growth	A30
	International Reputation	Creating, Rehanging and Protecting International Reputation	A37
		Nation reputation	A8

Step 7: Building a theory - In this step and following Hoon's study (2013), we identified the basic concepts of research, exploration theory, and new concepts.. The results of the meta-synthesis analysis showed that three categories of factors were involved in the nation branding of each country Countries' assets and nation branding processual factors can be regarded as the most significant contribution of this study that were affected by popular and governmental factors and influenced the nation branding process. Finally, these research shows outputs of a nation branding program and the purpose of planning and implementing a nation branding. All levels of a country are benefited or harmed from nation branding and these outcomes are not limited to a particular level Overall, to our knowledge, this is the first study that shows all variables involved in nation branding in one integrated conceptual framework (Fig. 1).

Step 8: Discussion - Hoon (2013) states that it is necessary to discuss the way in which articles are conducted under meta-synthesis and also to discuss their limitations. Finally, we were constrained by the literature on nation branding. However, to ensure that this study captured the most high-quality and widely-cited publications on nation branding, we conducted a comprehensive search in the literature. We are confident that the findings of this study can contribute to research on nation branding.

4. Discussion and Future Research Directions

This study mainly aimed to identify the most significant influential, processual, and output factors in nation branding using the case study meta-synthesis method. The process used in the study was the meta-synthesis model of Hoon (2013) (based on Miles & Huberman's approach (1994)), which applies a step-by-step approach to conduct meta-synthesis research. Substantial qualitative case studies in the field of nation branding allow researchers to integrate factors and outputs obtained in each research into an integrated view of nation branding and identify the most significant influential, processual, and outcome factors in the branding process. Qualitative studies allow to identify contextual factors that link influential, processual, and output factors in nation branding together. We hope to contribute to the nation branding literature with the systematic review of case studies on nation branding and identify factors involved in revealing the unique and rich contextual knowledge captured in separate qualitative case studies. Moreover, identifying patterns across these studies at different levels in an integrated conceptual framework using the meta-synthesis method helps better understand how nation branding factors at each level affect nation branding outcomes.

5. Theoretical perspectives

In this study, we developed the concept of country assets and defined it as specific tangible or intangible assets of a country that do not belong to any particular level of the county and from which the whole country is benefited. These assets are divided into two categories, intangible and tangible assets. Intangible assets are the right or wrong mental values of a nation that result from the interaction of people, organizations, and governments in a country with those of other countries. According to Menedz (2013, 468), "nations are also associated with tangible elements of their own geography and nature". Thus, tangible assets can be defined as unique natural (e.g., weather, geographical location, rivers, seas, etc.) and unnatural (e.g., entertainment places, historic places, museums, etc.) attractions and assets of a country that are rooted in the culture and geography of that country (e.g., cultural events, festivals, etc.).

Processual factors are variables that nation branding planners and executives should consider while planning and implementing a nation branding program. Many scholars have emphasized processual variables and the systematic approach to the nation branding process (e.g., Frasher et al., 2003; Lee, 2009; Van den Akker, 2011). This research shows that nation branding planners must take a strategic, transformational, and realistic approach to nation branding. Using a systematic, holistic approach to the nation branding process, nation branding planers should develop nation branding strategies to promote their countries (Lee, 2011). Achieving proper nation branding results depends on the appropriate implementation of the nation branding program. Accordingly, the government should be able to engage various agents at each society level and satisfy their interests by establishing comprehensive and appropriate communication between them.

Like other processes, the nation branding process has its own specific outputs. These outputs show why countries should have nation branding plans and determine the purpose of nation branding projects. Understanding these outputs has a great significance for many researchers (e.g., Knott & Jones, 2015; Roozen & Raedts, 2017; Jeong, 2018). According to the

results, a country by nation branding can increase its nation brand equity, gain a better international position, obtain better social cultural exchanges, improve people's characteristics, and correct the quality of its sovereignty and economy. We developed the nation brand equity based on Keller's (1993) model. This conceptualization focuses on two components, brand knowledge and brand image (including brand associations). Based on his model, brand equity is the "added value" endowed to a product or service in the thoughts, words, and actions of a customer. Based on the current research, this value can add to the overall value of a country or nation.

Another significant output of this research is the nation building concept that refers to the development of all aspects of social, economic and political systems of all societies (Barr, 2011). The nation-building concept in the literature has two essential components including building nations and socially constructing national identities (Fukuyama, 2007; Talentino, 2004; Barr, 2011). Based on the literature, we considered nation building as socio-cultural changes in people of a country. These changes can be in peoples' values, skills, and identities. Finally, one of the major categories of nation branding outputs is the quality of a country's institutional environment. However, numerous studies on nation branding sporadically demonstrated different aspects of the institutional environment as a result of nation branding. This study for the first time identified institutional quality as one of the most valuable outputs of nation branding by gathering different dimensions of this institutional environment in one category. North (1990, 2005) defined institutions as follows: "The rules of the game" that guide human interactions to do tasks in harmony, gain better societies, and generate an appropriate environment, conducive to progress in the societal context of a country (Urbano et al., 2019). According to the findings of the current study, nation branding can help improve the performance of the government and business climates, the quality of social capital, law, and the development of countries' infrastructure.

6. Future research directions

Due to the multiplicity of terms in the field of nation branding, such as place, city, destination, etc., many researchers have attempted to provide integrated models and explain their differences and similarities (e.g. Korac & Segota, 2017; Fan, 2010; Hankinson, 2005). Korac and Segota (2017) in their study showed that place brand was the broadest and longest term that included nation brand country, city, and destination brands. They considered these concepts as hierarchical levels. Future research must identify factors at each level (place, nation, city, destination, etc.) in the form of multilevel models that can reflect the influential, processual, and output factors of the levels. There are also other labels such as the country's reputation, image, brand, and identity (Buhmann & Ingenhoff, 2015), and future research can identify relationships between these labels.

Many articles in various fields have examined nation assets and considered various factors as nation assets. For example, Marshall (2018), Kingdon et al. (2016), Keskinen et al. (2016), and Akyol (2017) considered health, legacy data, experience, and sow as nation assets, respectively. Moreover, Dinnie (2008) presented two categories of nation assets and conceptualized internal assets of each country as innate (landscape, iconography, and culture) and nurtured (internal buy-in and support of arts). He also considered external assets of each country as vicarious (perceptions of country image and external portrayal in popular culture) or disseminated (ambassadors of brand, the diaspora, and branded exports). The current study, by reviewing of the existing literature, proposed a new category of countries' assets in forms of tangible and intangible assets. Future researchers can provide a comprehensive model of countries' assets by examining and comparing the literature on nation assets in different fields.

One of the most significant findings of this study is nation brand equity presented based on Keller's (1993) model that encompasses two aspects of brand knowledge and brand image. While Dinnie (2008) developed the nation brand equity concept based on countries' assets that embeds

two aspects of internal and external assets, future research can examine nation brand equity based on customers and assets in an integrated model.

Another significant finding of this study is the institutional environment quality as one of the most significant outputs of nation branding. Understanding the institutional environment is essential to understand corporate governance (Daniel, 2011). The institutional mechanisms develop and disseminate shared value rules and norms among organizations in an industrial field. Consequently, based on the institutional environment, organizations behave in similar ways to gain social legitimacy and financial benefits (Ouyang, 2018). Future researchers can specifically address the relationship between nation branding and the quality of a country's institutional environment.

7. Practical Implications

A country can have a good nation brand when the role of each of its stakeholders is clear and all of these factors are well engaged in the nation branding process. According to Stubbs and Warnaby (2015), stakeholder engagement is fundamental in any nation and place branding to secure a coherent and reliable nation brand. Two examples of stakeholder engagement plan are 'stakeholder workshops' and 'internal brand engagement programs', which ultimately enhance the collaboration between governmental organizations, politicians, local businesses, the media, promotion agencies (to inform and persuade people), and academic organizations (Goulart & Giovanardi, 2017).

Moreover, the study's results showed that one of the most significant factors influencing nation branding was intangible assets such as stereotypes and visitors' experiences. Stereotypes can be related to all kinds of groups in one or more communities and include religion, race, ethnicity, gender, age, and profession stereotypes, among others (Bennet, 1998). When stereotypes are attached to a nation or country, a coordinated and continuous branding planning approach is required to improve the country's image and reinvent the country's brand (Yousaf, 2017). By

recognizing stereotypes and labels attributed to a country, managers and government strategists become aware of barriers to enter other markets and overcome these barriers by adopting appropriate promotional strategies. On the other hand, managers and politicians can transfer best experiences to visitors by focusing on the tourism industry and striving for the hospitality culture of people.

Nation branding should be based on the reality of each society and national identity. Nation brand activators should avoid ideal and unrealistic slogans. The government as responsive to nation branding has low control over nation branding outputs. For example, the slogan of the tourism industry may be "sincere people", but the government cannot force people to be sincere (Papadopoulos & Hamzaoui, 2014). Understanding tangible and intangible assets of a country, nation priorities, people' culture, stereotypes attributed to a country, and real conditions of each society can help develop appropriate nation brand slogans.

This study indicates that the proper planning and implementation of nation branding can lead to outputs that benefit all nation brand stakeholders. For example, nation building is the movement of a nation toward positive changes. These changes can be in the values or skills of people of a country. Business managers should know that a good nation brand contributes to the selection of more professional workforce in a country. Entrepreneurs and business owners with nation branding can have a better competitive environment by changing the institutional environment, and it will be easier to start and grow businesses. Moreover, by having a clear position in the international market, business and commercial activators can choose more appropriate target markets and increase the effectiveness of their activities.

8. Conclusion

A nation brand is a simple and transparent measure that acts as a "license to trade" in the global market and is an indicator for the acceptance of people, hospitality, culture, policies, and services in other countries (Anholt, 2005). However, nations are not like a tangible product and consists of many factors and associations such as geographical location (e.g., provinces, cities, regions, etc.), natural resources, aesthetics, local products, people, history (e.g., myths, legends, monuments, culture, language, etc.), political and economic systems, social institutions, infrastructures, celebrities, designs (e.g., architecture, style, etc.) and images (Fan, 2006). Therefore, in this study, we realized the need for an integrated approach of nation branding to provide a complete and integrated view of factors involved in the nation branding process. To this end, we used the meta-synthesis approach to review qualitative case studies in the extensive literature of nation branding and attempted to integrate fragmented pieces of nation branding puzzles in the form of case studies in different countries. In this study, we attempted to minimize coding and modeling errors and increase research validity using meta-synthesis models and tools by Hoon (2013). We also attempted to increase the reliability of the study by the coding and careful study of the literature with the help of two researchers. One limitation of this study was the limited number of the selected studies (n=37) compared to 987 studies initially identified in the field of nation branding. Another limitation of this study was limiting the search for articles to those containing the "nation branding" keyword. Other studies with keywords such as "place branding", "country branding", and "country reputation" may provide an appropriate insight into the nation branding process.

References

Aaker, D. A. (1996). Building Strong Brands. New York: Free Press

Akyol, M., & Yildiz, B. (2017). Impact of size of the National Asset Funds on Economic Development: Panel Data Analysis on Select Nations. *Journal of Economics Library*, 4 (2), 194-205.

Anholt,S. (2010). Definitions of place branding – Working towards a resolution. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy,* 6 (1), 1–10.

Anholt, S. (2007). *Competitive Identity. Hampshire*, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 138.

Barr, M. (2011). Nation Branding as Nation Building: China's Image Campaign. *East Asia*, 29 (1), 81–94.

Buhmann, A., & Ingenhoff, D. (2015). Advancing the country image construct from a public relations perspective. *Journal of Communication Management*, 19 (1), 62-80.

Carstensen, M., & Schmidt, V. (2015). Power through, over and in ideas: Conceptualizing ideational power in discursive institutionalism. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 23(3), 318-337.

Che-Ha, N., Nguyen, B., Yahya, W. K., Melewar, TC. (2015). Country branding emerging from citizens' emotions and the perceptions of competitive advantage: The case of Malaysia, *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 22 (1), 1–16.

Combs, J. G., Crook, T. R., & Rauch, A. (2019). Meta- Analytic Research in Management: Contemporary Approaches, Unresolved Controversies, and Rising Standards. *Journal of Management Studies*, 56 (1), 1-18.

Dinnie, K. (2015). *Nation Branding: Concepts, Issues, Practice*. London: Routledge.

Echeverri, L., ter Horst, E., Molina, G., & Mohamad, Z. (2019). Nation Branding: Unveiling Factors that Affect the Image of Colombia from a Foreign Perspective. *Tourism Planning & Development*, 16 (1), 1-21.

Fan, Y. (2010). Branding the Nation: Towards a Better Understanding. *An Online Article, Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 6 (2), 97–103.

Fan, Y. (2006). Branding the Nation: What Is Being Branded? *Journal of Vacation Marketing* 12 (1), 5–14.

Flyvbjerg, B. (2011). Case study. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research*, 301-316.

Frasher, S., Hall, M., Hildreth, J., & Sorgi, M. (2003). A Brand for the Nation of Latvia. Report, Said Business School, *Oxford University*. Unpublished.

Frig, M., & Sorsa, V. P. (2018). Nation branding as sustainability governance: a comparative case analysis. *Business & Society*, 59 (6), 1-30.

Fukuyama, F. (2007). Liberal Versus State-Building, *Journal of Democracy* 18: 10–13.

Garavan, T. N., McCarthy, A., & Carbery, R. (2019). An Ecosystems Perspective on International Human Resource Development: A Meta-Synthesis of the Literature. *Human Resource Development Review*, 18 (2), 248-288.

Goulart Sztejnberg, R., & Giovanardi, M. (2017). The ambiguity of place branding consultancy: working with stakeholders in Rio de Janeiro. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 33 (5-6), 421-445.

Habersang, S., & Reihlen, M. (2018). Advancing qualitative meta-analyses: A realist and a constructivist approach. In *Academy of Management Proceedings*. 2018(1), 14206-14230.

Hammersley, M., & Gomm, R. (2002). *Introduction. In M. Hammersley, R. Gomm, & P. Foster* (Eds.), Case study method: Key issues, key texts , *Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage*, 1-16.

Hankinson, G. (2005). Destination brand images: a business tourism perspective. *Journal of Services Marketing.* 19(1), 24-32.

Hao, A. W., Paul, J., Trott, S., Guo, C., & Wu, H. H. (2019). Two decades of research on nation branding: a review and future research agenda. *International Marketing Review*.

He, L., Wang, R., & Jiang, M. (2020). Evaluating the effectiveness of China's nation branding with data from social media. *Global Media and China*, 5 (1), 3-21.

Hoon, C. (2013). Meta-synthesis of qualitative case studies: An approach to theory building. *Organizational Research Methods*, 16 (4), 522-556.

Huberman, M., & Miles, M. B. (2002). *The qualitative researcher's companion*. Sage.

Jami Pour, M., Jafari, S. M., & Vatanchiyan, V. (2020). What are the determinants of KM 2. 0 adoption? A meta-synthesis of the literature. *Knowledge Management Research & Practice*, 1-12.

Kavoura, A. (2014). A conceptual communication model for nation branding in the Greek Framework. Implications for Strategic Advertising Policy. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 148, 32-39.

Kenny, D. A., & Judd, C. M. (1996). A general procedure for the estimation of interdependence. *Psychological bulletin*, 119 (1), 138-148.

Keskinen, S., Tuori, S., Irni, S., & Mulinari, D. (2016). Experience is a National Asset: A Postcolonial Reading of Ageing in the Labor Market. In Complying With Colonialism. 183-200

Knott, B., Fyall, A., & Jones, I. (2013). The nation-branding legacy of the 2010 FIFA World Cup for South Africa. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 22 (6), 569-595.

Kim, J., & Lee, M. (2018). Nation branding or marketization?: K-Classic and Korean classical musicians in an era of globalization. *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 24 (6), 756-772.

Kingdon, A., Fellgett, M., Bonsor, H., & Campbell, S. (2016). *Development of a national geophysical log data archive: legacy data as a national asset.*

Lazazzara, A., Tims, M., & De Gennaro, D. (2019). The process of reinventing a job: A meta–synthesis of qualitative job crafting research. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*. 116 (2), 1-18.

Lee, K. M. (2009). Nation branding and sustainable competitiveness of nations. *Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Twente*.

Lee, K. M. (2011). Toward nation branding systems: evidence from Brand Korea Development. *Journal of International and Area Studies*, 1-18.

Marshall, L., Finch, D., Cairncross, L., & Bibby, J. (2018). *Briefing: The nation's health as an asset*.

Miazhevich, G. (2018). Nation branding in the post-broadcast era: The case of RT. *European journal of cultural studies*, *21* (5), 575-593.

Morais-Da-Silva, R. L., Takahashi, A. R. W., & Segatto, A. P. (2016). Scaling up social innovation: a meta-synthesis. *RAM. Revista de Administração Mackenzie*, *17* (6), 138-163.

Murti, D. C. W. (2019). Performing rural heritage for nation branding: a comparative study of Japan and Indonesia. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 15 (2), 1-22.

Novčić Korać, B., & Šegota, T. (2017). Branding of a (desti) nation with a deteriorated image: The case of Serbia. *Sociologija i prostor: časopis za istraživanje prostornoga i sociokulturnog razvoja*, 55 (1), 77-99.

Oda, M. (2020). Nation Branding in Modern History. *Diplomatic History*.

Ouyang, Z., Wei, W., & Chi, C. G. (2019). Environment management in the hotel industry: does institutional environment matter?. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 77, 353-364.

Ozbilgin, M. F., & Yalkin, C. (2019). Hegemonic dividend and workforce diversity: The case of 'biat'and meritocracy in nation branding in Turkey. *Journal of Management & Organization*, 25 (4), 543-553.

Papadopoulos, N., & Hamzaoui-Essoussi, L. (2015): Place Images and Nation Branding in the African Context: Challenges, Opportunities, and Questions for Policy and Research, *Africa Journal of Management*, 1 (1), 54–77.

Rasmussen, R. K., & Merkelsen, H. (2012). The new PR of states: How nation branding practices affect the security function of public diplomacy. *Public Relations Review*, 38, 810-818.

Rojas-Méndez, J. I. (2013). The nation brand molecule. *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 22 (7), 462-472.

Roozen, I., Chia, J., & Raedts, M. (2017). Does institutional nation branding exist in a Singaporean context?. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, *13* (4), 325-387.

Sandelowsky M, Barroso J. Writing the proposal for a qualitative research methodology project. *Qual Health Res* 2003;13 (6):781–820.

Sareminia, S., Hasanzadeh, A., Elahi, S., & Montazer, G. (2019). Developing Technology Roadmapping Combinational Framework by Meta Synthesis Technique. *International Journal of Innovation and Technology Management*, 16 (02), 1-33.

Schühly, A., & Tenzer, H. (2017). A multidimensional approach to international market selection and nation branding in sub-Saharan Africa. *Africa Journal of Management*, *3* (3-4), 236-279.

Szondi, G. (2008). Public diplomacy and nation branding: Conceptual similarities and differences. Haag: *Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael*.

Talentino, A. K. (2004). The two faces of nation- building: developing function and identity. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 17 (3), 557-575.

Tranfield, D., Denyer, D., & Smart, P. (2003). Towards a methodology for developing evidence-informed management knowledge by means of systematic review. *British journal of management*, 14 (3), 207-222.

Urbano, D., Audretsch, D., Aparicio, S., & Noguera, M. (2019). Does entrepreneurial activity matter for economic growth in developing countries? The role of the institutional environment. *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*, 1-35.

Van den Akker, D. (2011). *Creation of an umbrella nation branding strategy* (Doctoral dissertation, *MSc Thesis. University of Twente*. Available at http://essay. utwente. nl/61495).

Walsh, D. and Downe, S. (2005), Meta-synthesis method for qualitative research: a literature review*, Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 50 (2), 204-211.

Walsh, G. and Wiedmann, K. P. (2008). *Branding Germany-managing internal and external country reputation.* In: Dinnie, K. (2008). *Nation Branding: concepts, issues, practice.* Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, 154-158.

Wu, L. (2017). Relationship building in nation branding: The central role of nation brand commitment. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 13 (1), 65-80.

Xuereb, K. (2017). Can nation branding be successful tool for the practice of public diplomacy? A Maltese case study. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 13 (3), 255-263.

Yousaf, S. (2017). Quantification of country images as stereotypes and their role in developing a nation brand: The case of Pakistan. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 13 (1), 81-95.

Zavattaro, S. M., & Fay, D. L. (2019). Brand USA: A natural quasi-experiment evaluating the success of a national marketing campaign. *Tourism Management*, *70*, 42-48.

Zhang, Y., Tsang, D., & Fuschi, D. L. (2020). Chinese multinationals on the New Silk Route: Managing political risk by branding the nation. *Thunderbird International Business Review*, 62 (3), 291-303.

Zimmerbauer, K. (2016), "Constructing supranational regions and identities through branding: thick and thin regionbuilding in the Barents and Ireland-Wales ", *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 23 (3), 322-337.