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Determining effective urban design factors within the branding strategy due to brand city spaces and evaluating city spaces by comparing them to the presented factors. A case study of ChaharBagh Avn, Isfahan, Iran.

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Abstract

Thanks to city branding strategy, number of countries and cities which marketing themselves is increasing. In this regard, branding urban spaces is one of the crucial subdivisions in reach to boosting the publicity of one place. Therefore, it is fundamental to investigate the factors and indicators which have crucial effect on turning a regular urban spaces into branded one with respect to urban designing. This research is going to discover the most important factors that influence urban spaces from the point of city branding by studying some relevant resources and then by presenting a table contains the effective factors and indicators in branding city spaces. The outcome of the study is a basic chart that could be used in comparing urban spaces with major standards. The conclusion of the research reveals the fact that how many factors a selected urban space contains in comparing to the other branded urban spaces.

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1. Introduction

Globalization has increased competition among cities in both national and international level. Such competition is for attention, influence, markets, investment, business visitors, talents, and significant event. In order to be a winner in this competitive environment, cities need to use a wide variety of strategies to propose themselves. City branding strategy is one of the known strategies in the field of economic to introduce a place for the people all over the world. City branding regarded as a strategic tool to publicize the city's competitive advantage. In this regard, identifying and defining the characteristics of the city is a critical task.

Traditionally, city branding has begun with establishing the very first town by human, where people needed to utilize some structure to exhibit their power to their enemies. However, contemplating it as a strategic plan is significantly younger. At the late 1960s, a new concept, city boosterism has been introduced. Actually it was the marketing of a product which was as an identification of the city. Place branding which invented after city boosterism in 1980s, is the marketing of a place that make the city specified. The reasons for the creation of city branding can be found in city boosterism. Boosterism is the behavior of "enhancing," or marketing, one's community, town, or company, with the target of increasing community understanding of it (Merriam Webster dictionary). Therefore, for elevating their images in people's mind cities used their products advertising and marketing; in this way they were declared themselves to the observers.

The concept of place branding was proposed in theories in later 1980, including: nation branding, region branding, and city branding (Moilanen and Rainisto, 2009). Employing branding strategy for small scales within cities is new urban designers/planners issue that has been neglected. In this regard, the paper is seeking to investigate how to use branding strategy in small scales such as urban space places. The question emerges here is that how one unknown place could be a brand of its city and what could be done by means of city designers and planners in order to improve the one place's image on visitors mind in order to change one unknown place to known one in the national and international level. The paper first gives an overview of city branding literature. Then according to the literature review it presents a table contains important factors that have impact on branding a city place. After that, it examines the given factors on case study of Chahar Bagh Avenue in Isfahan city based on observers' opinions by means of questionnaires and specifies priority of each factor with allocating weight to the answers.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Brand

A Brand, defined by the American Marketing Association, is a "name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competition" (AMA, 2011). A brand is an impression perceived in a client's mind of a product or a service and It is the sum of all tangible and intangible elements, psychological and sociological features related to the product, which makes the selection unique (Kapferer, 1997). Brands are created, stimulated and applied by people working in organizations seeking to create worthwhile experiences for their customers that will induce behavior beneficial to the organization (Van Gelder, 2003). Shaping brand occurs in the viewer's mind; Kavartzis and Ashworth identify that one brand has three essential concepts that are related to it: identity; image; and communication as in figure 1. The identity of the brand is defined by the creator of it and include the features that the owner of brand wants to be perceived, the features like: functional, emotional and self-expressive benefits. On the other hand, brand image is the real image remains in the observer's mind. In order to make connection between chosen factors of the identity and observer's mind communication like advertising is needed. In fact, communication is the way that introduces the brand identity to the customers. What we name Brand, is totally positive and negative part of an element perception.

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