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SBMA7123D MBA Dissertation

Nation branding: From crisis to recovery

(How can countries recovering from crisis improve their national brand image?)

A research submitted for MBA

Dissertation

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Course: **Master of Business Administration (MBA), General Management**

"Everything is a brand: Coca-Cola, FedEx, Porsche, New York City, the United States, Madonna, and you — yes, you! A brand is any label that carries meaning and associations. A great brand does more: It lends coloration and resonance to a product or service."

Kottler (2003)

Acknowledgement

Thank you for all your mentorship and example.

I very grateful to my supervisor, Dr. Alex Bell, for his support and guidance throughout this process. I would also like to thank the MBA team for their support and patience with the many modules I took prior to my dissertation. I am thankful to the university for giving me the opportunity to try to achieve something I had long wanted to achieve.

Declaration/Statements page

DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed .....Mursal Siyid..... (candidate)

Date .....13/04/2020.....

STATEMENT 1

This work is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated.

Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

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Title

Nation branding: From crisis to recovery. An investigation into how countries emerging from crisis can improve their national brand image.

Introduction

In this thesis, I aim to research how nations recovering from crisis can improve their national brand image. The focus of my research is to investigate how current theories and theoretical models on nation branding can be used by fragile nations emerging from crisis to rebrand themselves quickly, disassociating themselves from the crisis and forging a new competitive identity. The research aims to do this by synthesising and adapting current research and theories avalaible on nation branding to the context and the situation of countries emerging from crisis.

I will mainly be using secondary data; data published by global institutions such as the world bank, historic data, research carried out by academics and national bodies to find if there are ways of shortening the national international image development lifecycle (Jaffe and Nebenzahl, 2006). I will then conduct a survey of business leaders, branding practitioners and experts to find out if they see the current models and theories as valuable or applicable to fragile nations emerging from crisis. I will then analyze my findings against the existing literature to see if a model can be developed that nations emerging from crises can follow in order to improve their national brand image.

This research also aims to explore the successful applicability of current theories and models of nation branding to countries that have experienced a recent crisis and if adaptations to these theories and models can be made to make more applicable to countries emerging from a recent crisis.

I am interested in how the 'made in' label impacts the perceived value of products and services and if and how this can be changed. What strategies are available for changing the brand value of a nation? How can a nation, especially those recovering from crisis change how they are perceived and thus how their products and services are perceived and valued?

Background

Having lived in several developing countries, I am often reminded of the image of those countries internationally, and those images are always much worse than the reality I had experienced.

The ability for countries to influence how they are perceived internally and internationally is of paramount importance economically as Anholt argues (Anholt, 2007). People living in countries emerging from crisis live with the unspoken economic impact of the brand image of their nation

daily, and its impact on the ability of their country to attract inward investment and tourism in order to develop.

Nation branding is an important and current topic. For several decades now, writers in the UK (Leonard, 1997) and elsewhere in the developed world have been writing about how their country should rebrand itself. It is arguable that nation branding is even more important to countries in the developing world and those emerging from crisis, as it is, they, who most need the investment.

Many people in the world live in countries with a poor brand image because of events long ago which they have found difficult to dissociate their current country from. As an example, anyone looking up Rwanda on a search engine, still ends up with the auto complete suggestions of "hotel" and "genocide" but that is not what the country wants to be associated with or what today's Rwanda is about. Today, Rwanda has a national brand image management strategy including a 'Made in Rwanda' brand (Minicom.gov.rw, 2017) but many nations are still to appreciate the economic importance of a positive national brand image and develop a strategy to manage their country's image.

This research is important because if successfully carried out, it has the potential to further the understanding of nation branding and in particular how nations emerging from crisis can improve their brand image quickly so that they can move on from the crisis. They can then build a positive competitive identity.

Nation branding is an increasing important issue in a world where each nation is struggling to gain and maintain competitive advantage.

In a globalized world in the information age, where a country can exist virtually as well as the in the physical world, it is important that countries manage the information and the perception audiences have about a country. Today's countries also must cope with increased competition, higher expectations and are affected by globalization and an increasing pace of change in technology, demographic, values and customer expectations. A negative image costs countries money according to Reibstein, and Bedi (2018).

Objectives

This research has the following objectives:

- Use existing research to explore if current theories and models of nation branding can be applied to countries that are emerging from crisis.
- Survey branding practitioners to determine their perspectives on the applicability of the current nation branding theories to counties such as Somalia.
- Develop recommendations for a model that the countries emerging from crisis to can follow the improve their brand image quickly.

Concepts Theories

My research will be informed by theories in the areas of Branding, Strategic management and International Business, such as:

- Marketing and Strategic management
- place branding
- Nation branding
- Creating competitive advantage
- Change management
- Brand strategy

Branding

Branding has been around since humans began trading. People have been branding their animals and pottery for thousands of years and distinguishing their work from others on buildings and their products. This had been done for a variety of reasons, as discussed by Rajaram and Shelly (2012). The attempt to brand a nation is how ever a relatively new discipline, at least the study of it, and there isn't much literature available on nation branding for countries emerging from crisis.

Branding is part of marketing and public relations and Richard Hall points out that "marketing has never been more important because business has never been so competitive" (Hall, 2013). While one might think that business has always been competitive and doubt the accuracy of the statement, many academics argue that this is axiomatically true. "From strong brand equity flow customer loyalty and profits" (Keller, 2000). With the help of developments in communications and transport technologies, competitors are closer to each other than they used to be, and nations are closer than they used to be. A consumer can buy a widget anywhere in the world via the internet and have it delivered to their door. To attract business, inward investment, tourism, talent and trade a nation needs to develop a strategy to differentiate itself from other nations and provide an attractive environment and hence the need for nation branding.

Figure 1: Nation branding

Nation branding has been given several definitions, one of which is the application of corporate branding techniques to promote a country for the purpose of tourism, inward investment and other desired outcomes of the country (Culturaldiplomacy.org, 2011). A more abstract definition is offered by Dannie (2015) who defines nation branding as "the unique, multi-dimensional blend of elements that provide the nation with culturally grounded differentiation and relevance

for all of its target audiences." There are many variations on the definitions but the fundamental element that they all have in common is that every entity has a reputation, a subjective perception that other entities have of it. Brand management is an attempt to manage that subjective perception to the entity's advantage. I will be using this later definition and apply it to nation branding. The nation is an entity and its reputation needs to be managed.

The purpose of nation branding – what is being branded?

Even though Kottler (2003) said that everything is a brand, not every brand needs to have energy invested in managing its brand image or is worth investing energy and resources in for anyone, leaving it appear as it is. In a company, for example, the company itself can be branded as can its products and services and so can its leader and CEO. Branding the leader is there to provide congruency or alignment between the leader and the company they lead (Harrysson, 2019). It is often clear with companies, what is being branded and why it is being branded. According to Fan (2005) this is not the case with nation branding, many other academics such as Reibstein (2006) disagree.

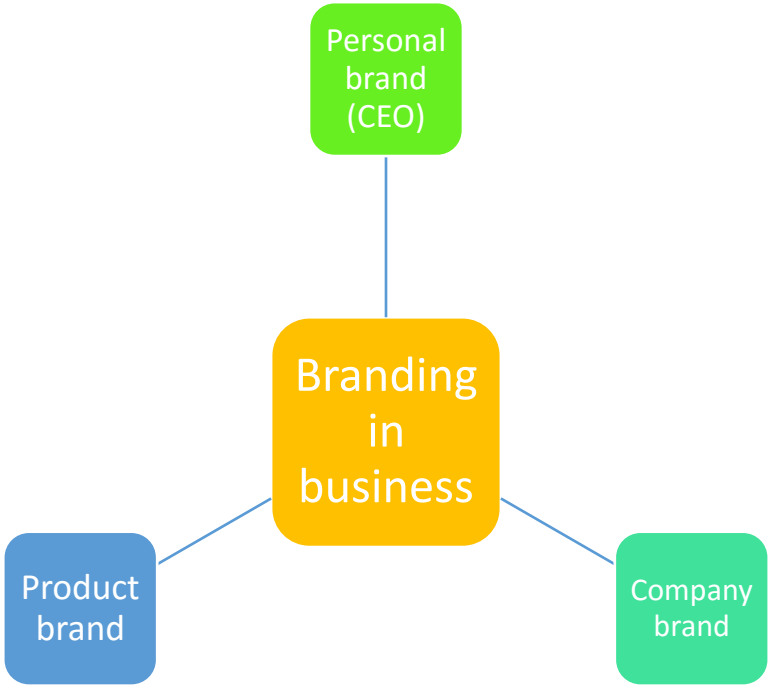


Figure 2: What can be branded in business (source: multiple sources)

In the case of nation branding, what countries want is a central idea, a mother brand, and offshoots of the mother brand. The mother brand is there to say what the country is about in general. There are four material areas that countries want to brand themselves against the global competition. Countries want to brand themselves as a good place to invest in, a good place to

work in, a good place to trade with and a good place to visit.

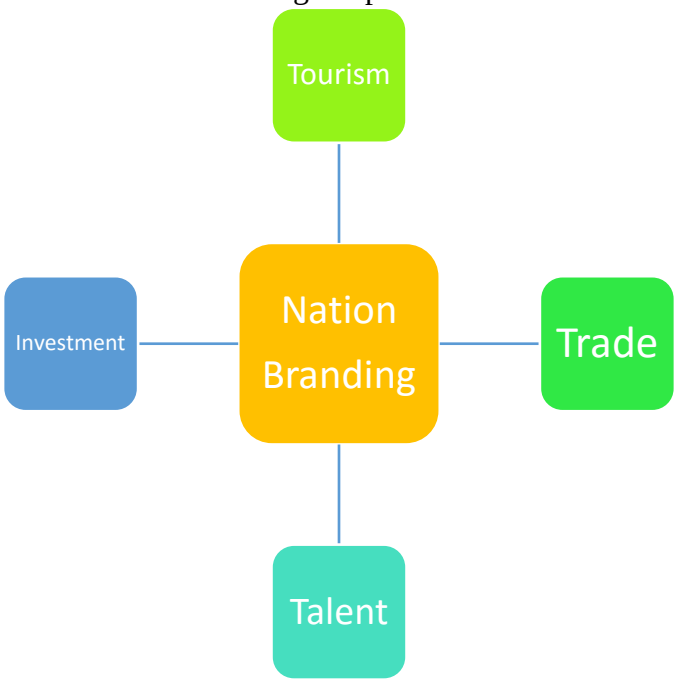


Figure 3: The four material benefits that counties want from nation branding (source: multiple sources.)

Inward international investment will lead to jobs for its people. A positive view of its citizens is an in trade and tourism which in turn can lead to the country having political soft power, diplomates are less likely to dismiss the views of countries of which people have a positive view.

Beyond these material gains, countries also want to be good citizens of the world. A nation's good brand image also serves an emotional purpose for its citizens and is part of the mythological archetypes of their nation. These are often the stories and the taglines of the nation, this is often seen on smaller entities such as states and cities and an example of this is the tagline of Tel Avivi "The non-stop city" as explained by (Azaryahu, M., 2006.). This is an attempt to define who the city is, an attempt benefit a link to New York by trying to trigger the link to the nick name of New York as the: "city that never sleeps" which was popularized by various American films and songs. For tourists this makes sense as a majority of tourists in Tel Aviv come from New York.

The challenges of nation branding are analogues to those of branding a company. Some nations manage to brand their country and control the narrative about their country much better than others. This corresponds to the same success rate as those trying to brand a company.

Even if countries don't always succeed, it is important that nations manage their brand just like any good company (Reibstein, 2016). Reibstein argues that the subjective perception of a country comes from a variety of sources, which include the product that the country produces, word of mouth information and what people see in the media. If a country does not actively

manage its brand image, with its own central idea of itself, then others will control the nation's brand image.

If a nation's brand image is not well received internally and internationally, even local companies will try to distance themselves and their products from the country and try to link themselves to other countries whose brand image is preferred by consumers. Examples of these are; Lenovo, a Chinese company so names as to not sound Chinese and Dixons' naming its own brand MATSUI, to sound more Japanese (Leonard, 1997). This is to appeal to the British consumer who associates Japan with electronics.

Brand Management applied to Nations with historical crisis

Some of what nations want to from nation is branding are the following:

- Being on the map. This will let the global community know where the country is. This is often relevant to fragile and less developed nations and those recovering from crisis. These countries may also be known only for a crisis and they want to project the image that there is more there than the given crises. More developed and bigger countries are already known by most of the world so don't need to spend resources to inform the world of their existence.
- To convey a central idea about themselves.
- To convey focused ideas for given target groups.

There are four main tasks in nation branding:

- Measuring (Finding out how the brand is doing. This can also be classed as auditing)
- Improving (improving a brand that is already good enough – brand building)
- Starting from scratch (salience, it is a new country and people don't know about it)
- Brand repositioning (a known brand but known for the wrong reasons).

The difference between the approach to brand management of countries emerging from crisis is that they need to get rid of a negative image to begin with. So, this is brand repositioning. Historically, there are many countries that have out of crises and changed their brand image quickly. What can one learn from how these countries approached the nation branding exercise? This is what I will aim to research in this paper.

Who does nation branding?

The impetus for nation branding comes from the desire of nations to improve their reputation in many dimensions of life. This leads government communication departments, foreign offices and international trade department of governments to want to communicate their message and this has led to consultancies appearing in the market offering the services designed to help

governments and nations communicate their nation's message to the world. An example of this is the UK government's efforts to brand and rebrand UK as a business destination. (GOV.UK. (2016)). The government has recruited external consultancies to help with this effort.

Many of the more developed nations have long standing public diplomacy organisations and a multitude of agencies all working together to advance a coordinated image of their nation but many less developed nations operate an ad hoc system and some have no systems or strategy at all or a named official.

If one accepts that nations need to manage their brand image, then countries need to have structures in place to manage their brands. Government alone can't manage a nation's brand. In order to successfully implement a nation branding strategy, a number of stakeholders have to work together.

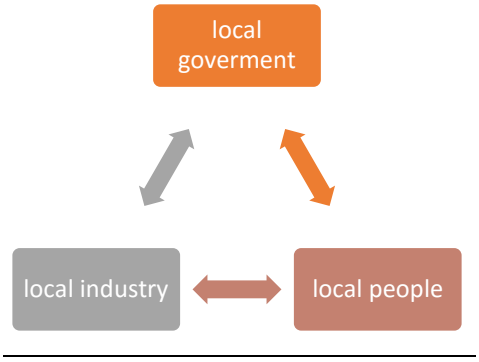


Figure 4: Who does nation branding? (Authors construction from multiple sources)

Who is Nation branding for? – target audience

No brand can be everything to everyone at the same time. Nation branding has an internal and external target audiences. As discussed in later section of this paper each of these target audiences need to be managed and interfaced with in a different way and given tailored messages. Investors, tourists, citizens or various types and others all need their own tailored messages and contact points (Bonomo, 2019).

Nation branding being analogues to corporate branding, there needs to be a unique and authentic offering, in experience or other forms. This offering needs to be differentiated and within the its type of offering and reference point and a fair value attached to it

Nation brand dimensions

In a way similar way to Hoffstede's cultural dimensions, Anholt (2015) has put forward the nation brand dimensions, namely:

- Culture and heritage
- Governance
- People
- Exports
- Tourism
- Investment
- immigration

Figure 5: Nation branding dimensions (Anholt, 2000)

These dimensions serve as way of measuring and comparing nation brand images. There yearly publication showing the ranking of world's nations in terms of the brand value (FutureBrand, 2018) of the nation, just as there are publications that rank the brand value of different companies.

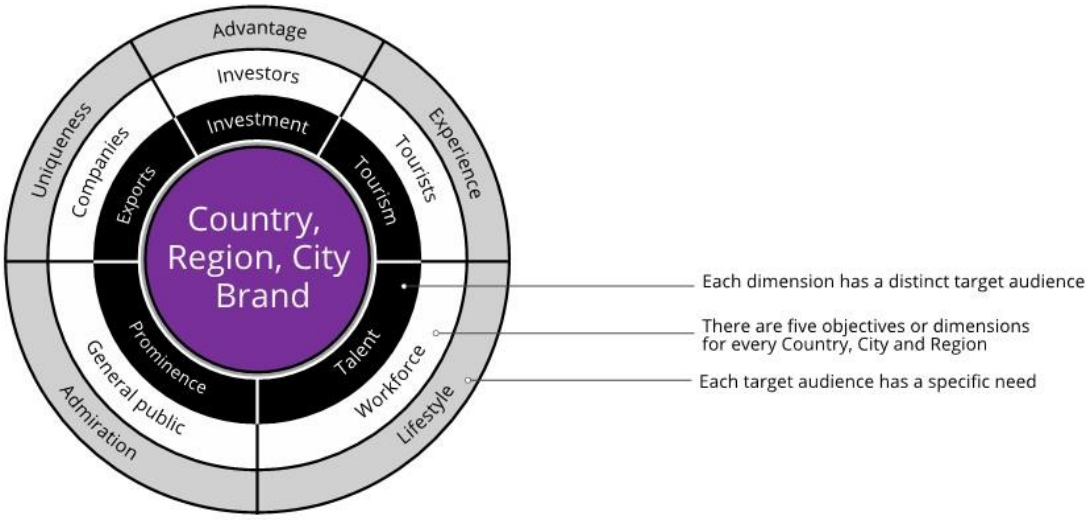


Figure 6: Bloom Consulting Country Brand Wheel (Source: Torres, J. (2016).)

Other academics have put forward more dimensions such as the one put forward by Reibstein (2015), which are: Adventure, Business Ready, Cultural Clout, Global Citizenship, Innovation & Entrepreneurship, Quality of Life, Power & Influence, Values & Heritage, and Differentiation. Still others can be discussed but these two sufficiently get at the same elements, presenting them in different ways.

The ethical, political and cultural dimensions of nation branding

Branding does not have to be limited to products and services, nations can also be branded for political1, cultural and business reasons. Every nation has an international image even if it is not managed. Brand management could also be regarded as cultural diplomacy in action.

Ethics need to be at the forefront of any effort in nation branding to ensure that leaders do not use marketing techniques to obfuscate poor practice or to mispresent the country and do not make indefensible claims for their country.

As explained by Hudson, (2017), there is a rise in interest from countries in nation branding who see public diplomacy and branding as a solution to problems. Hudson regards this as a problem. The most effective way for a country to enhance its image is just to be good. Ensure that the brand value offering meets and exceeds expectations.

[1] According to (Jaffe and Nebenzahl, 2006), George Bush's repeated use 'axis of evil' to refer to 3 countries was a form of political branding.

Nation branding and competitive advantage

Many academics argue that in a globalised world, everyone has access to the same hardware and goods to sell. The competitive advantage therefore must come from other sources (World Economic Forum, 2014). One of the sources of competitive advantage is branding. It is differentiated within a particular category of product or service. Some consumers make purchase decisions on packaging, other on price and

Porter's five forces[2] and generic strategies[3] suggest that a company should either aim to be a low-cost leader or aim to lead on brand differentiation. It suggested that it would be undesirable for an organization to pursue both strategies as the unique value of the organization's offering would be demined in the eyes of the customers.

When it comes to holiday destinations for example, a majority of travelers prefer to go back to the same place (Doughty, 2015). The suggestion is that the particular travelers who go back to the same place are satisfied with what the place offers. These are the target customers of the destination.

In order to capitalise on the country's strengths, the branding needs to reflect the countries strengths and the branding needs to be based on the country's strengths. Thus, branding is in part about communicating a country's strengths and concentrating on areas of competitive advantage. According to Porter's diamond model one of the determinants of competitive advantage is ''advanced factor condition' this includes branding because basic factor conditions can be obtained by anyone with money. It is therefore important to invest in this aspect of a nation's competitive advantage.

The criticism levelled at the Porter's diamond model is that it was developed by studying developed countries and therefore cannot be relied upon to have any predictive qualities when it comes to developing countries but in the aspect of nation branding, even for developing countries, what the model would predict is what can be observed in the economic standing of nations. Some very material resource rich countries are among the poorest and some of the richest countries among the richest. The answer to why some countries are poor and some are rich must therefore not be in the natural material wealth of the nation but in factors such as human resources, branding and other added value.

[2] Threat of New Entry, Buyer Power, Threat of Substitution, Supplier Power, Competitive Rivalry
3 cost focus, overall cost, differentiation focus, overall differentiation

The role of laws and public policy in nation branding

The laws and policies implemented in a country play an important role in a country's image. The legal system and institutions of the nation and the general cultural and political environment play a critical part in the nations brand image, as a place to visit, trade with and invest in. This is one aspect of nation branding that countries emerging from crisis can easily implement without much cost. Bad policies and administration costs more than good administrator.

Some countries have begun to understand this. In Somalia for example, there are efforts to strengthen institutions such as the recent opening of the Somalia Trademarks Office after 30 years. According the Airpo (2020), Somalia has become a signatory once again to The Harare Protocol on Patents and Industrial Designs. Copy right, patents, trademarks and design rights are now protected by the law and one can appeal to the office in the first instance. This move brings the country in line with the global norms, after 30 years of absence from the organization (Cabral, 2020). A country with weak intellectual property laws is likely to end up with weak brands as no one will be able to protect their designs and brands effectively (Gurry, 2015).

Figure 7: Somalia Trademarks Office resumes operations after almost 30 years (Cabral, 2020).

International Property Rights Index produced by the WIPO shows that almost all developing countries score lowest in this index. This is also the same in the world innovation index. While the list is topped by developed counties such as Finland, Switzerland, Singapore and Japan. This may not demonstrate cause of any kind but there is a correlation

In the last two-decade Rwanda has risen from being at the bottom of the list on the innovation and intellectual property rights index to scoring better in this index than China, Russia, Italy and 89 other countries. The country has done the same in another index published by the WIPO, the global innovation index (GII) (Wipo.int, 2019). In the GII Rwanda again tops the list of countries in the developing world, above many larger countries such as Indonesia and many much more developed countries.

Rwanda has achieved this by reforming policies in all areas of the economy and intellectual property rights. Countries emerging from crisis might be able to copy this strategy as it is a low-cost plan. Although there are some academics who criticize the applicability of the Rwandan strategy on other countries, an example of these voices is Professor Cheeseman, who although acknowledging the impressive progress made using the strategy says that there are reasons to doubt the applicability of the Rwandan model to other countries. Cheeseman identifies the following Characteristics of the Rwandan model:

- Direct intervention by the government in the markets with the support of the population.
- Less reliance on markets and outside aid as many developing countries do.
- Promotion of self-reliance.
- Partly government owned companies in most sectors of the economy
- Ruling party hegemony

He argues that these characteristics are not true of most fragilis states. Others question the reliably of the figures and statists produced by Rwanda (The Economist, 2019). But similar characteristics have produces successes in lifting populations out of poverty and improving the economy of nations, examples include Singapore and there is precedence for partially government owned companies driving success in the markets especially in post conflict areas as demonstrated by the success of the rebuilding of central Beirut (Bădescu, G.,(2017).

Steps in nation brand development

The first in developing a nation's brand image is getting all the key stakeholders to realize that they need to manage their nation's brand image or that the nation's image needs management at all. This stage also needs to establish the resources available to manage the nation's image.

Once salience has been established, then representatives of all stakeholders need to be consulted on the nations brand image and an audit of the current perception needs to be conducted. For even if the country is not aware of how it is currently perceived the country does have a reputation internationally and internally. This should answer the question of what message is being put out and is there alignment of stakeholders on what the country's image is?

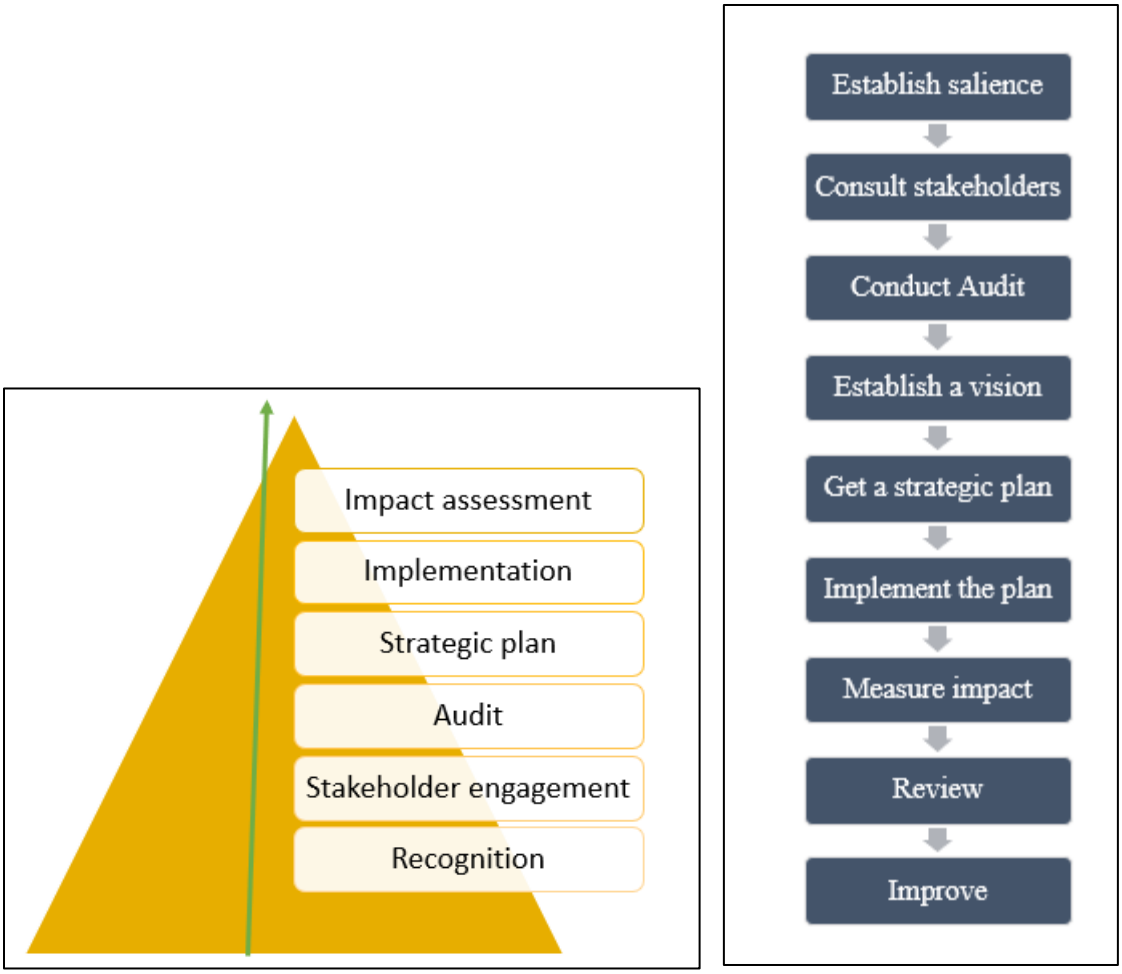


Figure 8: Steps in nation branding (authors construction from multiple sources)

The consultation of the stakeholders will enable the development of a vision as to what the national brand is and what it could be; it answers the questions of where are we now, and where do we want to be? The strategic plan puts this together with resources, manpower, monitoring, milestones and timescales, with the aim of achieving the vision. As discussed earlier the citizens of any country are an important element of the branding of any nation and are key stakeholders who need to be engaged. One should be able to establish common threads and stories in order to establish alignment of stakeholders.

Hardware and software of nation branding

The easiest way to measure the impact of branding exercise is to use digital tools. This is easier for countries emerging from crisis. Although the more developed countries can commission impact studies to be carried out by experts, countries emerging from crisis may not have these experts or the capacity to pay them.

There are number of ways one can think about the elements of a nation brand development. One could think of it as consisting of two main elements, the hardware and the software. The hardware being the infrastructure of the country such as roads, physical communication links and

so on. The software being what the world economic forum calls the software connectivity, these are the institution, the regulatory and cultural frame world of the nation. The software of a brand are the subjective experience of the brand, how it feels. But without the hardware connectivity, the software connectivity cannot in the long run stand alone.

One of the defining characteristics of how a nation is branded depend on its hardware (the nation's geographical location, geography, landscape, buildings. Etc.). In order to create an authentic brand, one has to go with a national brand that is defensible. It Hardware of the location as an example Malaysia's tagline of "Malaysia, truly Asia"(Nanthakumar, et al, 2012.) was defensible and it carried an explanation on its website as to why this was true to reinforce the idea that Malaysia was truly Asia (Tourism Malaysia, 2020). Malaysia is multicultural society with peoples of Chinese, Indian, Malay and other Asian backgrounds living there. So, this is a defensible statement. May economist argue that the natural endowment of the country in terms of resources is not important to the country's competitive advantage (Porter, 1990)

Nation branding tasks

Whoever it is undertaking the task of nation branding need to take a variation on a number of steps to achieve it. This process is shown here as a waterfall, but it is and iterative process, hence the last

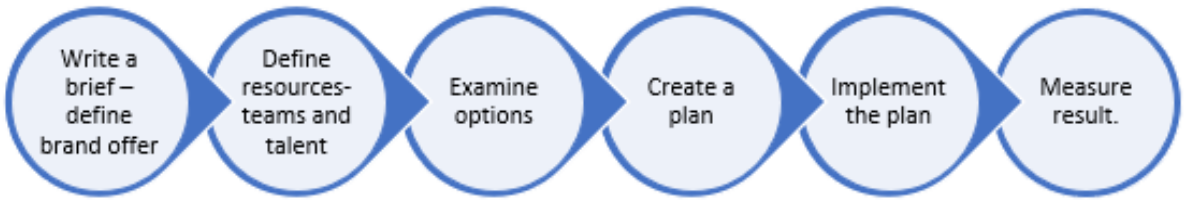


Figure 9: Nation branding tasks (authors construction from multiple sources)

- Communication the salience of nation branding, within government, people and industry
- Carry out national brand image audit. audit of values.
- Hold discussion with stake holders to ascertain what the image of the country is, what the story of the country is.
- Develop a nation brand image strategy and story, in collaboration with stake holders.
- Implement
- Monitor results
- Refine

Any proposed brand message that that comes out of this process needs to have the following characteristics:

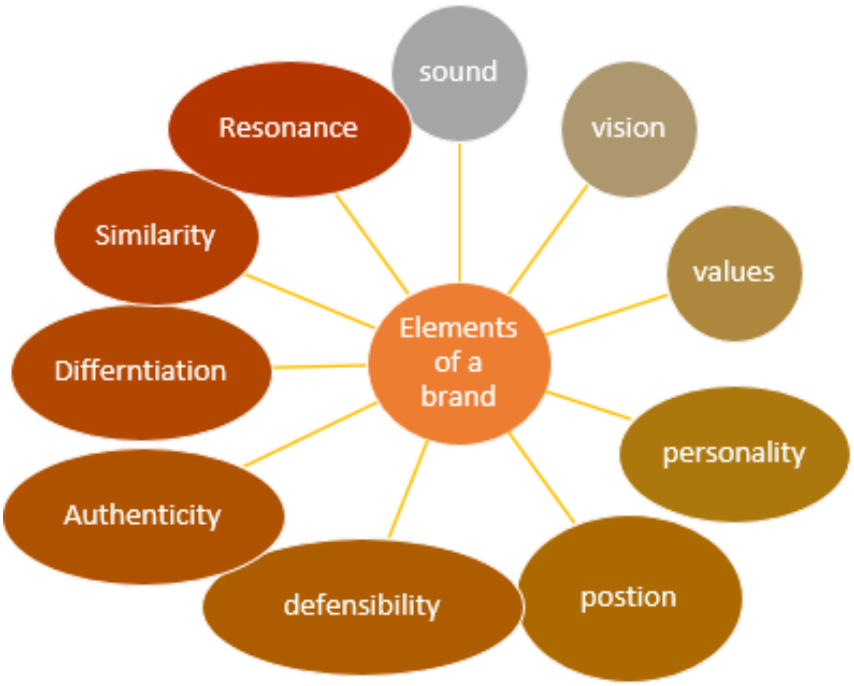


Figure 10: Nation brand message characteristics (authors construction from multiple sources)

The challenges and risks

The biggest challenge of brand building is finance or cash according to Tybout, (2011.). This challenge can also be observed empirically in that the countries with best brand image are some of the wealthiest. Few less developed nations have a good brand image internationally with any of their target groups[4]. The incentivization of executives to deliver short term financial returns also impacts political leadership of countries. Leaders of countries want to see their investments make a return while they are in office. This makes it a difficult for countries to pursue a long-term branding strategy over decades.

As professor Cheeseman argues, there needs to be a long-term driver of nation branding, this could either be deep-rooted civil service, a long standing leader with hegemonic population support such as Kagame of Rwanda, The King of Morocco, both have built their nation's brand, as has the leader of Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew who transformed Singapore during his tenure (1959-1990) (Hussain, Z.,2015). This is also why Professor Cheeseman doesn't belief that their success is replicable in other countries, because the same conditions don't exist in most countries.

[4] Tourists, investors, talent, citizens and non-citizens.

The challenges for many countries emerging from crisis is not that they don't realise the importance of branding, but they lack the resources and know how to implement a comprehensive nation branding exercise. It is also difficult to hire and attract talent because the most able do not want to work in countries that are struggling or emerging from crisis. But the motivation for change for these countries is often greater than the risk as many cannot continue as they are.

There are also the risks that leaders of fragile nations may think that branding techniques and strategies can be used to mask issues caused by bad policies, and practices.

Simon Anholt who advices governments on how to do nations branding says that he does not tell governments on how to do marketing instead he advices them on the policies that will lead then to have a good reputation in the world. (Anholt, 2006)

Branding and public diplomacy also come with their own risks in a globalized, world with diverse cultures where one can lose control of one's message quickly through mediums such as social media as many brands have found to their cost (Morse, B.,(2019). One's message could easily be misunderstood and misrepresented, these are the same for nations and anyone who puts a message forward in the globe that is why nation branding efforts need to be approached as a multidisciplinary task.

Branding approaches

Branding is about telling a story, that story could be told through a number of mediums. The figure below shows that that story can be told though mediums such as art, flagship brand[5], sport, architecture[6] , lifestyle[7], and even unique laws[8], differentiation the destination from other places in the world.

[5] Samsung is an example of a flagship brand that puts a nation on the map.
[6] Dubai has been one of the most successful places in telling a story through architecture with the Burj Khalifa Coombe, W. and Melki, J. (2012).)
7 Bhutan and the national cross happiness, Iceland and green energy for example.
8 There are many differences in laws and policies in terms of tax, food and drink and personal freedoms that differentiate countries.

Figure 11: Branding statements can be made using many mediums (constructed by the author, adapted from multiple sources)

One explanation of the difference between marketing and branding is that branding is about telling a story about who the entity is, and each entity needs to tell a story. As discussed earlier, there needs to be an overarching story and a strategy and a strategy for each of the sub goals.

The story of nation brand can be told through images, sculptures logos and events to give presence to the idea.

Figure 12: This the new logo for South Korea - South Korea has recently used the letter K as a symbol, used to reference Korean such a K-Pop to denote Korean music (K- brand, 2016)

As shown in the figure above that story can even be told through political leadership. Echeverri (2015), argues that this influence and factor in the nations branding is overlooked and that it is an important factor in the way countries are perceived. She, using south America as an example lists 3 types of presidents which she describes as the public relations president, social leader and

follower president. She thinks the best way to improve the brand image of the country is to have a national leader who is public relations president. But this maybe down chance as there is no one particular person who has control of the who becomes a national leader. This is also made difficult in the context of countries emerging from crisis as they tend to have even less control of who becomes their leader. empirical evidence also suggest that this may not be major factor. Most people in the world would struggle to name the leader of South Korea, Switzerland or Taiwan is at any given time and these are countries appear high on the brand index.
Branding can also be achieved through holding events such as the Olympics. This gives the country an opportunity to showcase and tell their story to the world. A nation can tell its through global organizations. The fact that Addis Ababa host the African Union Headquarters is to the benefit of Addis Ababa.

Branding through buildings and architecture is perhaps the most costly and would not be easily achieved by fragile nations. It Is difficult for nations coming out of a crisis to build iconic building that would be noticed by the rest of the world, although entire town have succeeded in becoming a tourist destination through mass adjustment in architecture. Examples of this are the blue city of Chefchaouen in Morocco where there isn't one iconic building but because of small adjustments by almost all homeowners has resulted in the town becoming a tourist destination.

Figure 13: Visit Malaysia logo (Tourism Malaysia 2020)

Malaysia is also a country that had rebranded itself. It launched the first visit Malaysia year in 1990 (Tourism Malaysia, 2020).), and although it took a while, Malaysia is one of the most visited nations in the world. Malaysia has also created an anthem to go with this campaign, this is an example of sonic branding.

Creating different points of contact and messaging for different audiences.

While Tourism Malaysia is about attracting visitors and tourisms to Malaysia. Malaysia also runs programs for other target audiences such as investors. The Malaysia Investment Authority manages this program designed to promote Malaysia as an investment destination. These are

different target groups with tailored messages and management authority. It is not a difficult task for nations emerging from crisis copy to this model which appears to be effective.

The creation of different platforms and organization to interface with the different stakeholders appear to be common practice, as Kenya also has a visit Kenya and an invest in Kenya platforms and authorities as do many other countries.

Creation of vision year

The creation of a development plan with an end year focuses stakeholders' efforts and sets time scales. This basic goal setting approach is used by many counties in their development goals. Almost every country now a vision for a particular year, an example of this is shown below. This could easily be copied by countries emerging from crisis and this could create momentum behind their development plan.

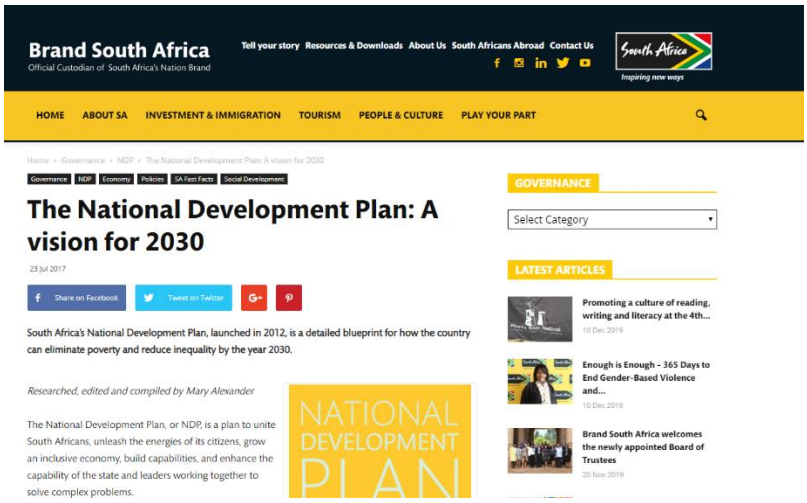


Figure 14: Vision 2030 South Africa (Brand South Africa,2019)

Nation branding and public diplomacy

Some more developed countries, such as Chile have set up global organizations such, Image of Chile Foundation, whose entire goal is to "manage the nation's brand" (Fundación Imagen de Chile, 2019). Other countries engage in nation branding efforts though a multitude of older organizations such and the Institut Français and many others. Many of these more established organizations have multiple purposes including cultural diplomacy which is part of nation branding. Many counties in Asia, Europe and the Americas have these organizations. It is only in Africa that these types of organizations are not found.
Although it is difficult to calculate the impact of these organizations, the fact that they continue to be funded by governments is an indication that their valued contribution.

However it is done, as Anholt put it: "The only sort of government that can afford to ignore the impact of its national reputation is one which has no interest in participating in the global community, and no desire for its economy, its culture or its citizens to benefit from the rich influences and opportunities that the rest of the world offers them." (Anholt, 2016)
In this case, as (Szondi, G., 2008) discusses, nation branding can either be seen as being part of public diplomacy or the other way around.

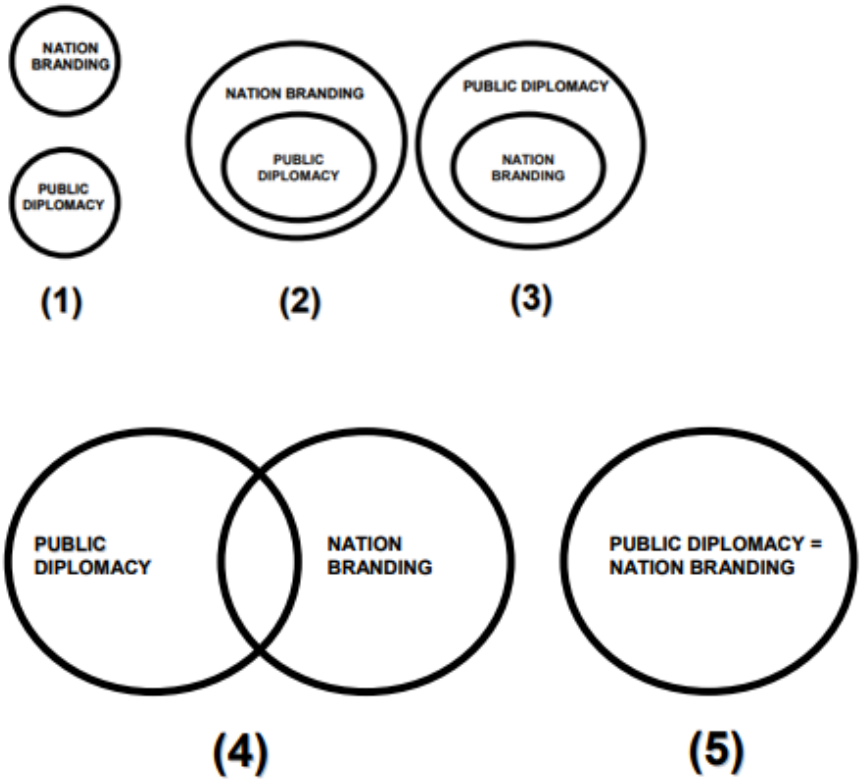


Figure 15: What Szondi, sees at the possible relationships between nation branding and public diplomacy (source: Szondi, G., 2008)

Branding statements and stories can be told through many mediums, the important element is to define the message and available resources before picking and appropriate medium.

Criticism

Some academics question the validity or the usefulness of the concept of nation branding. In his paper, (Fan, 2006) questions what exactly is being branded and aims to show in the table below the difference between branding a product or service and branding a nation.

	Nation brand	Product brand
Offer	Nothing on offer	A product or service on offer
Attributes	Difficult to define	Well defined
Benefits	Purely emotional	Functional and emotional
Image	Complicated, various, vague	Simple, clear
Association	Secondary, numerous and diverse	Primary and secondary, relatively fewer and more specific
Purpose	To promote national image?	To help sales and develop relationships
Ownership	Unclear, multiple stakeholders	Sole owner
Audience	Diverse, hard to define	Targeted segment

Figure 16: Comparison of nation branding and product branding (Fan (2006)

Other academics disagree, (Jaffe and Nebenzahl, 2006) show how the country of origin influences purchase decisions and the price customers are willing to pay for functionally identical products and services. This is in line with the observations of every customer that the costs of products are influenced by the manufacturer's brand.

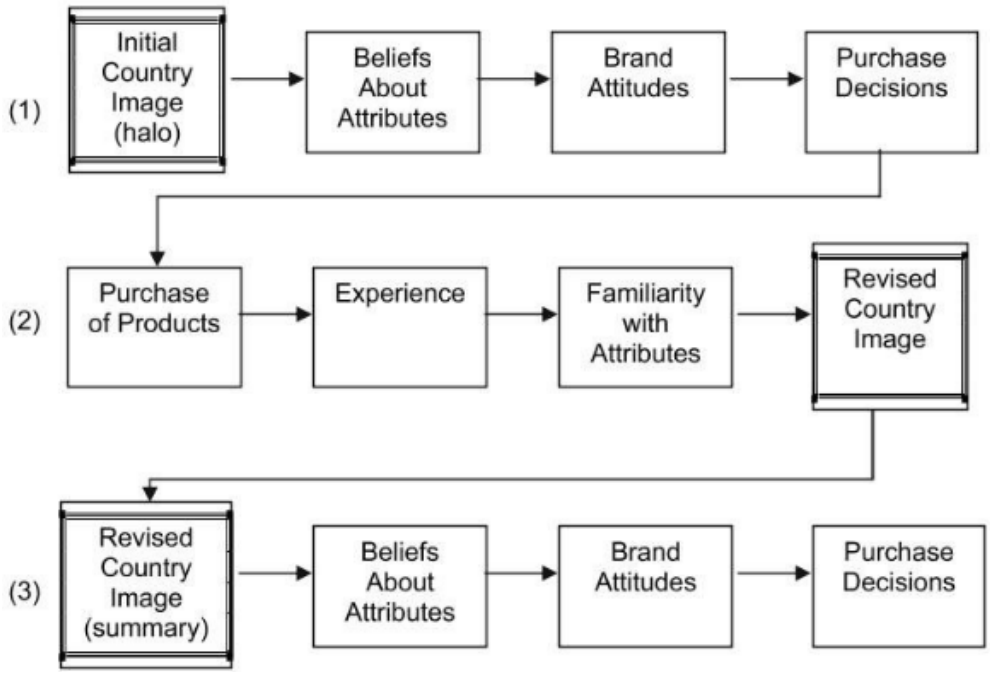


Figure 17: The influence of country of origin on purchase decisions (Jaffe and Nebenzahl, 2006)

Jaffe and Nebenzahl (2006) also argue that how much the country of origin influences the price customers are willing to pay for a certain product or service can be calculated and therefore the return on investment in brand management by countries can also be calculated.

Anholt (2006) in his book also show how less developed nations suffer economically by not having a strong local and international brand.

Methodology

My own personal ontological and epistemological assumption lean towards positivism and that reality is one which can be uncovered. However, there are many inherent difficulties with answering this research question with provable, conclusive facts. Although there is empirical evidence of countries that have historically improved their brand image quickly, this could due to factors other than active nation branding exercise. This makes impact assessment of nation branding strategies and models difficult and brand resonance with an individual is subject and may differ from person to person.

For this reason, I will be taking an interpretivist approach top this research question. I will collect primary data using a survey to make my research manageable. The survey will collect quantities data in order to assess stakeholder perspectives discussed in previous sections.

I will be using quantitative research methodology. I will mainly be using published research, reports and academic theory to compare how different countries manage their nation's brand. I will also be looking at historic data in order to analyze the strategies used by countries such as post-war Japan, Singapore, Morocco and Rwanda to see how they have changed their national brand image. I will then see if their approaches match the current nation branding theories and if countries currently emerging from crisis (Somalia ...etc.) can apply the same approaches to change their brand image. I will also aim to extract a tool kit that maybe applicable to other countries. I will then survey key stakeholders to ascertain perspectives on the applicability of the toolkit to Somalia. I will analyze that data in order to critically asses the validity and applicability of nation branding theories and models to fragile nations.

Disadvantages, advantages and limitations of quantitative methods

Quantitative methods involve collecting quantitative data and analyzing this data to answer a research question. There many examples where quantitative research methods have successfully been applied to answer qualitative research question. Examples of this are global indexes such as the corruption perception index. This method allows the quantification and creation of specific answers to questions. One of the key strengths is that data can be collected and analyzed quickly, large numbers of random samples can be surveyed quickly. It is more repeatable and generalizable than the results of qualitative research methods and interviews (Little, 2013)

Among other limitations of this methodology are that the researcher is not able follow up answers to get clarification and that the participants could end up being self-selecting, making generalizing the result difficult.

Despite these limitations, I have concluded that this would be the most suitable methodology for this research question as this methodology in order to provide a meaningful answer this complex research question.

Presentation and analysis of evidence

In this section, I will present the findings of my survey. I have discussed each question in the finding in relation to the existing literature and expectations. I have then written a section below of the key finding, and the limitations of these findings.

Participants

Online survey sent to brand practitioners, experts and Somali stakeholders interested in the subject area.

Number of Participants (sample size)

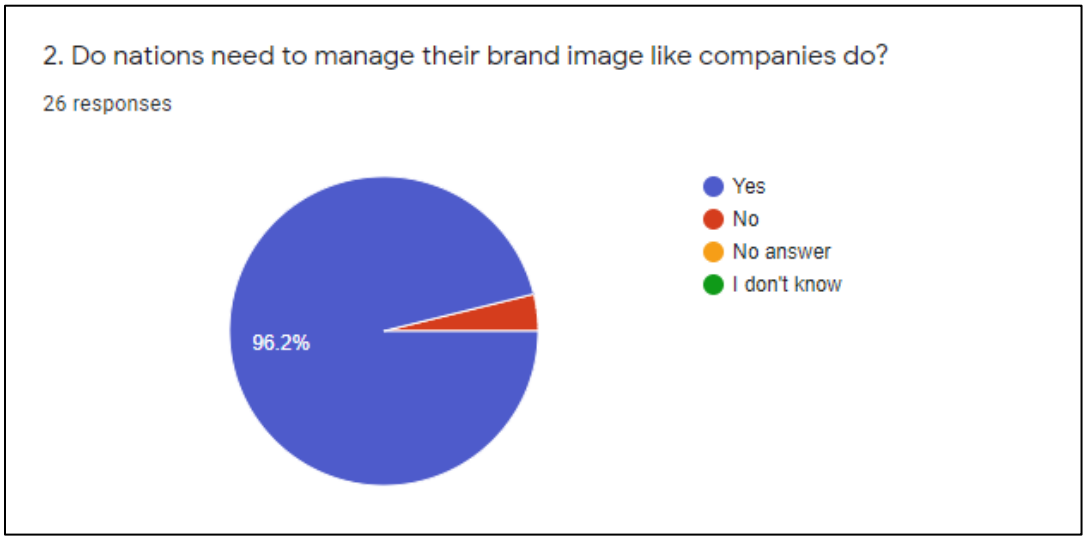
I had aimed to get back more survey having send 115. I have had close my data collection after 26 participants completed it due to implementation. I needing to submit my dissertation this year. There is also difficulty in determining the sample size needed for given confidence level because there is no way of determining the overall population size of people involved in nation branding.

Mechanism

Online Survey created on Google forms.

Questions

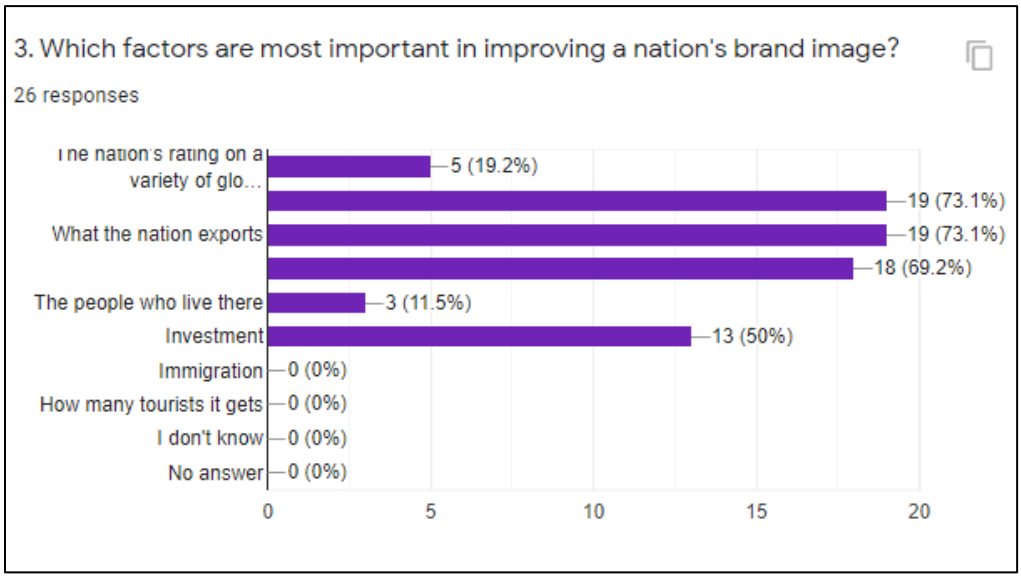
Online Survey created on Google forms. The questions can be found in appendix A.



I will start with question 2 because question 1 was getting the participant to agree to the survey. This question was asked to establish if the participant thought that countries need to manage their brand image internally and externally.

The finding here is that out of 26 participants, only one participant thought that it was not important for counties to manage their brand image. The reason why this participant thought that branding is not important cannot be followed up which is one of the disadvantages of this research method. It could be the phrasing of the question that prompted this response. The participant could have thought that they nations needed a different approach to branding than companies as Aholt argues (Anholt, 2016).

In academic literature and among practitioners there is a widespread agreement that nations need to manage their brand image and that they need a coherent approach to achieve this (Browning, et al, 2017). The responses to this question concur with that agreement.



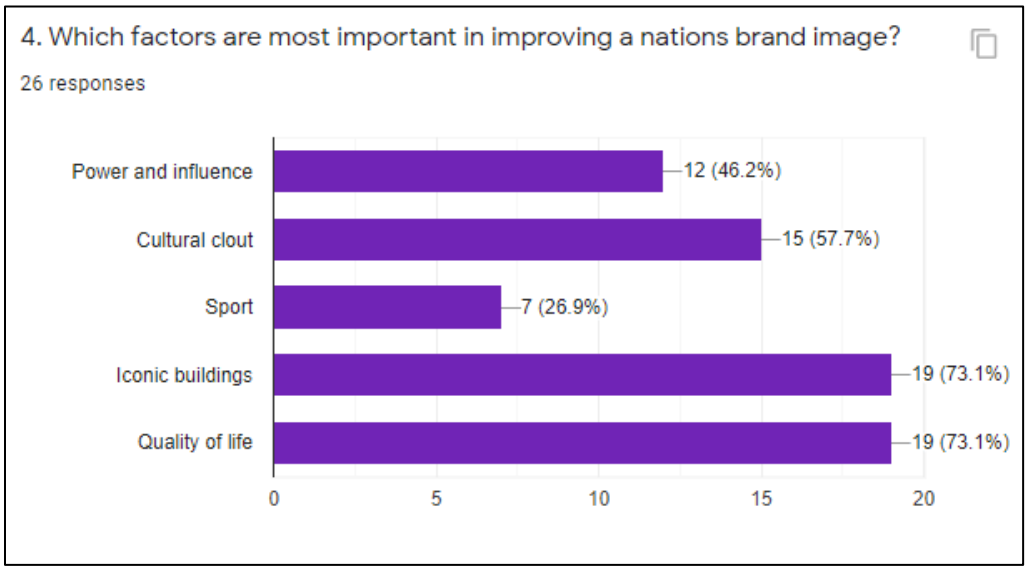
Having established the widespread agreement that nation branding is important, finding out the factors that impact how nations are perceived, would be the next step in understanding what nations need to do to improve their national brand image. The reason for the options listed is that most of the literature such as (Reibstein, 2015) and (Anholt, 2000) consider these factors to be important in improving the national image of a country. The responses of participants are shown above, the most common options chosen are:

- The nation's culture and heritage
- What the nation exports
- The Nation's political system
- Inward investment

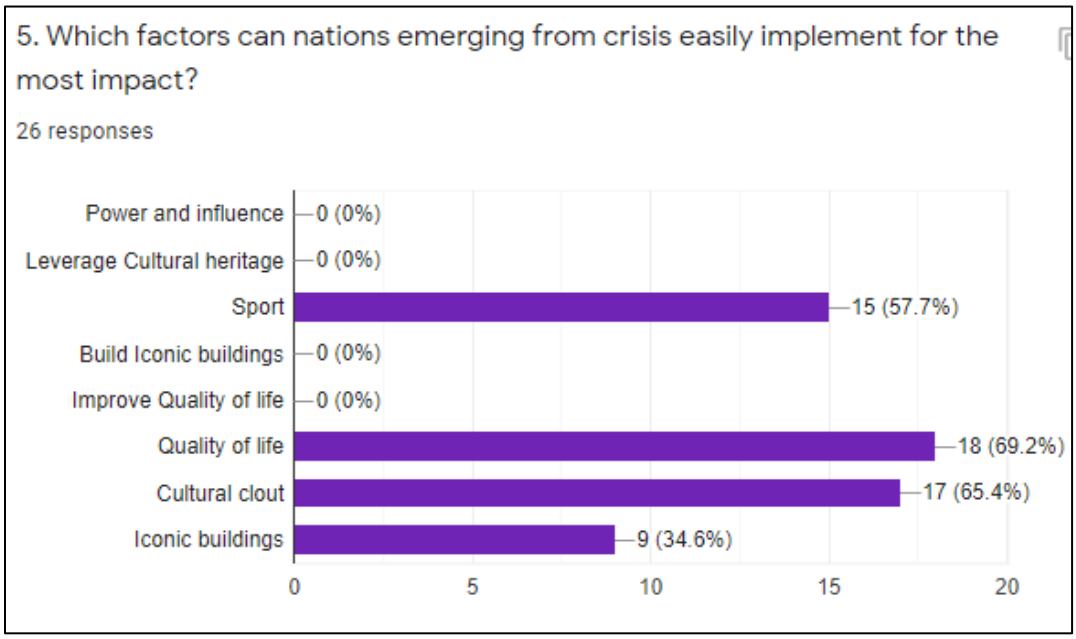
None of the participants chose:

- Immigration
- How many tourists the country gets.

Reasons for this will are discussed in later questions. The question allowed multiple selections so as to present participates with what the current research says are the important factors and what their experience tells them.

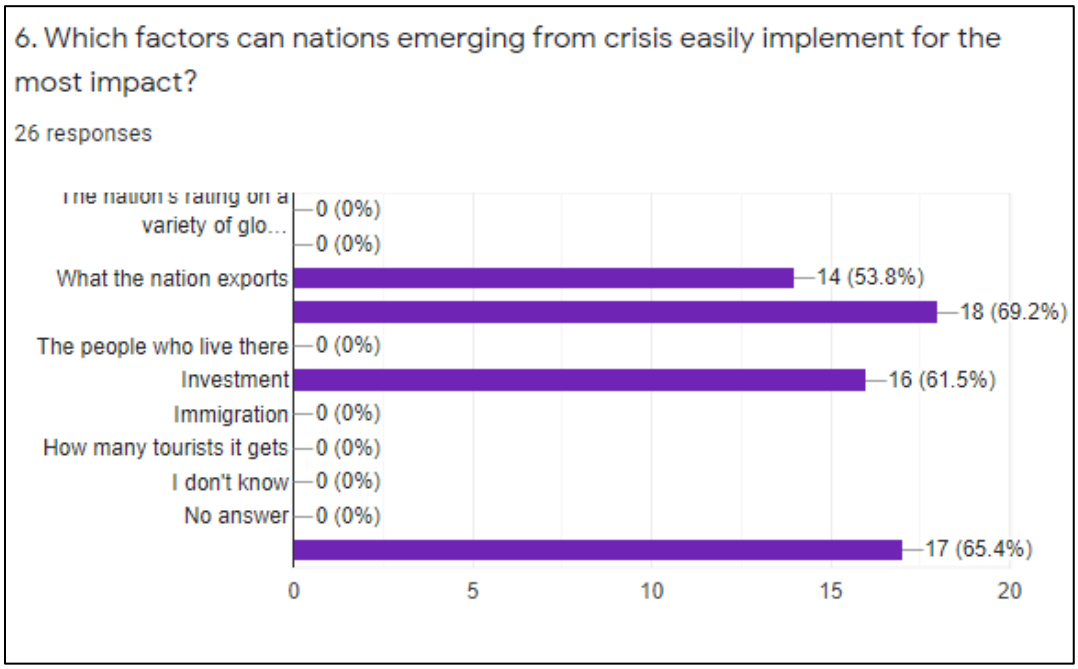


Question 4 is a continuation of question 3 and the options available are based on what the literature says are possible approaches to improving a nations image.



The reason for this question is that poor countries need easily implementable solutions. Although many academic and practitioners caution against seeing this nation branding a short-term project. (Anholt, S., 2006), nevertheless, countries emerging from crisis have limited

resources to deploy and image has been further damaged from where it was prior to the crisis. The responses of the respondents are shown above. Although more options could have been added, these limited responses are again based on what the literature says are possible approaches to improving a nations image.



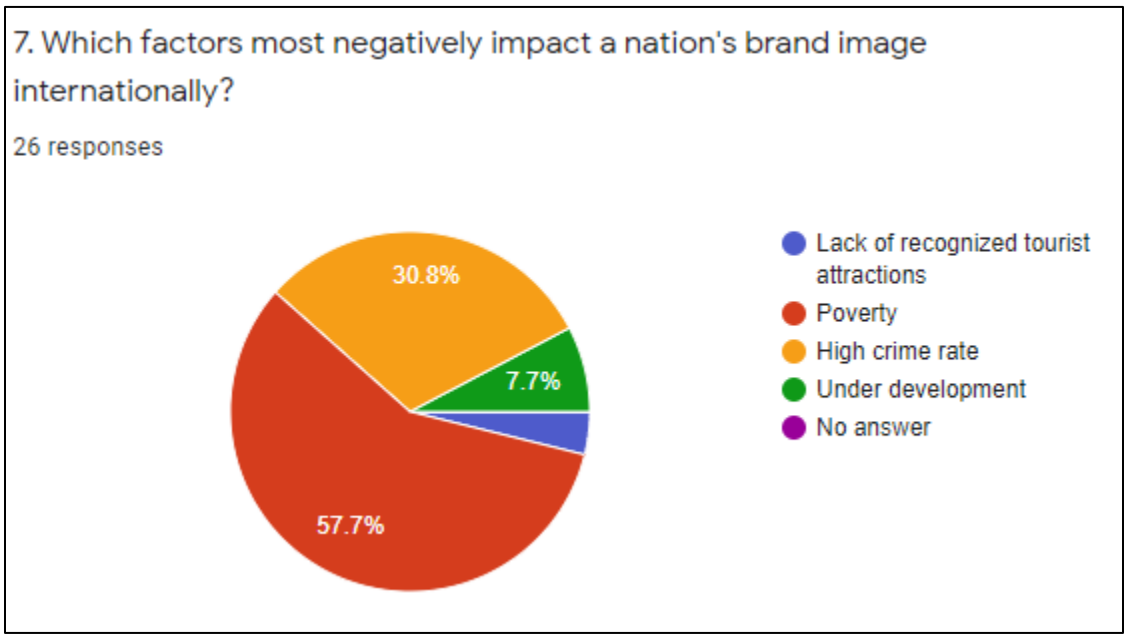
The option available in this question come from the what the available literature says are the determining factors of a country's national image. Some of these factors can't be tweaked with the aim of the improving a nation's image. One such factor is the people who live there- it is unlikely that this is going to be changed. It is also true that countries have different histories and heritage available to them, some richer than others. The most common responses were:

- What the nation exports
- The Nation's political system
- Investment Immigration

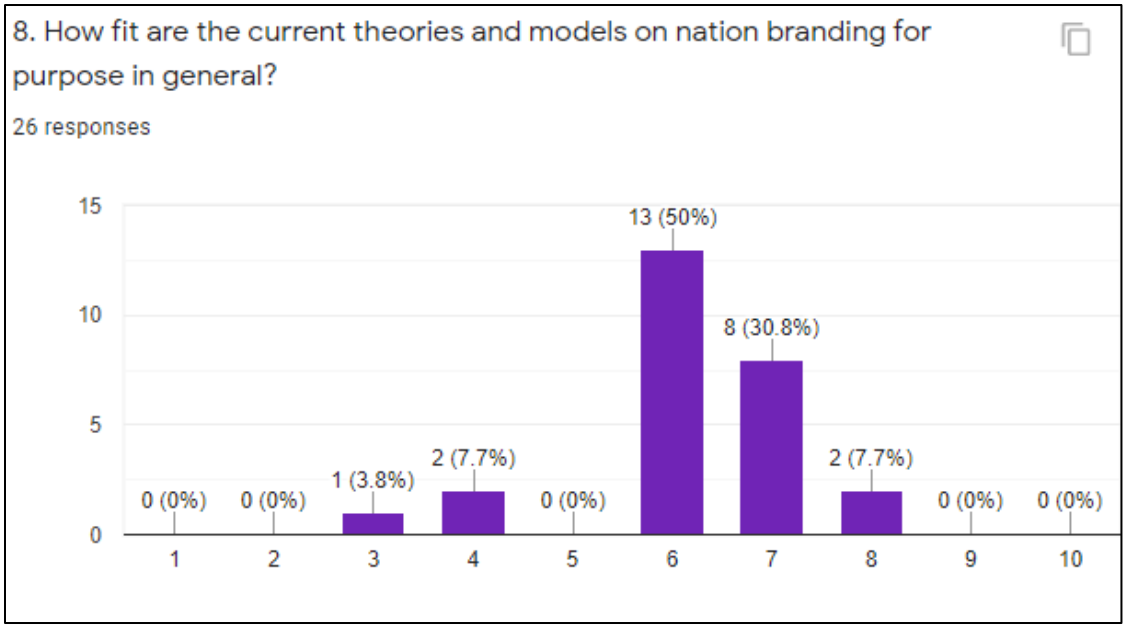
Any country can try to improve exports, political system and attempt to gain more investment. The literature, however does show that investors and other stakeholders pay attend to how country appears on the certain index in order to help them make decisions, so it in the end it might be worthwhile investing time to aim to improve the nation's ratings on a variety of global indexes such as the global corruption index.

Inputs	Hoped for outcomes
• Aiming to improve nation's rating on a variety of global indexes such as the global corruption index • The nation's culture and heritage • What the nation exports • The Nation's political system • Investment • Power and influence • Cultural clout • Sport • Iconic buildings	• What the nation exports • The Nation's political system • The people who live there • Investment • Immigration • More tourists • More power and influence • Cultural clout • Quality of life

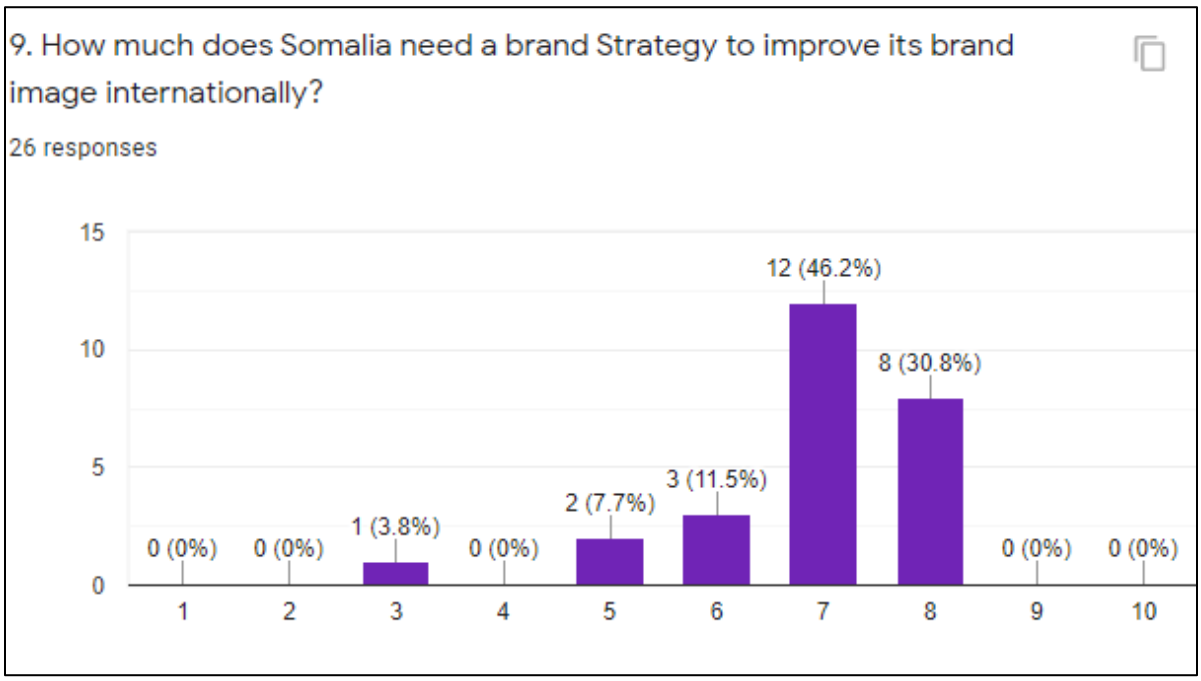
The reason why there no respondents chose how much tourism the country get as why of improving is so few respondents chose how much tourism it gets as a lever for improving a countries national brand image is that how much a tourism a county gets is an effect for which there needs to be cause. There is much confusion about this in the literate as the literature mainly focuses on measuring national brand equity rather than nation brand building.



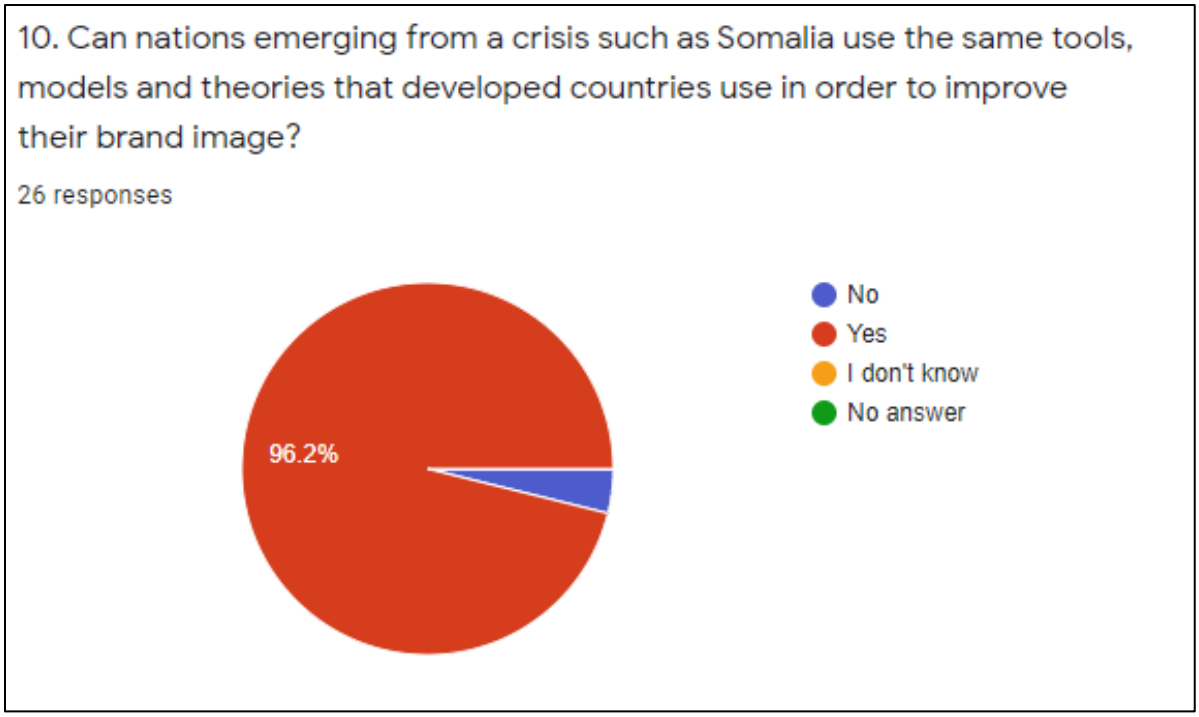
In the literature, bad governance should have included in the options, there were too limited option in the available answers. Most respondents concluded that poverty is damaging to a counties image. But underdevelopment is seen as less of a problem.



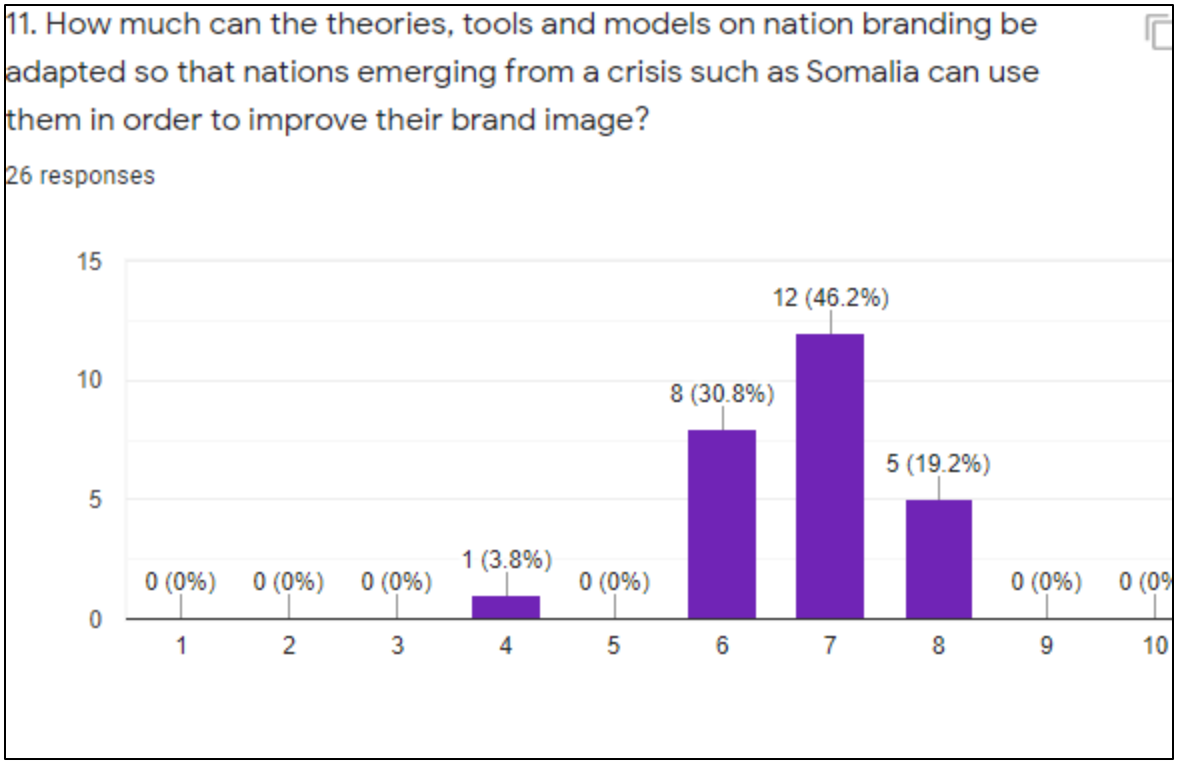
Here, I wanted to find out if the participants thought that the current models were fit for purpose.



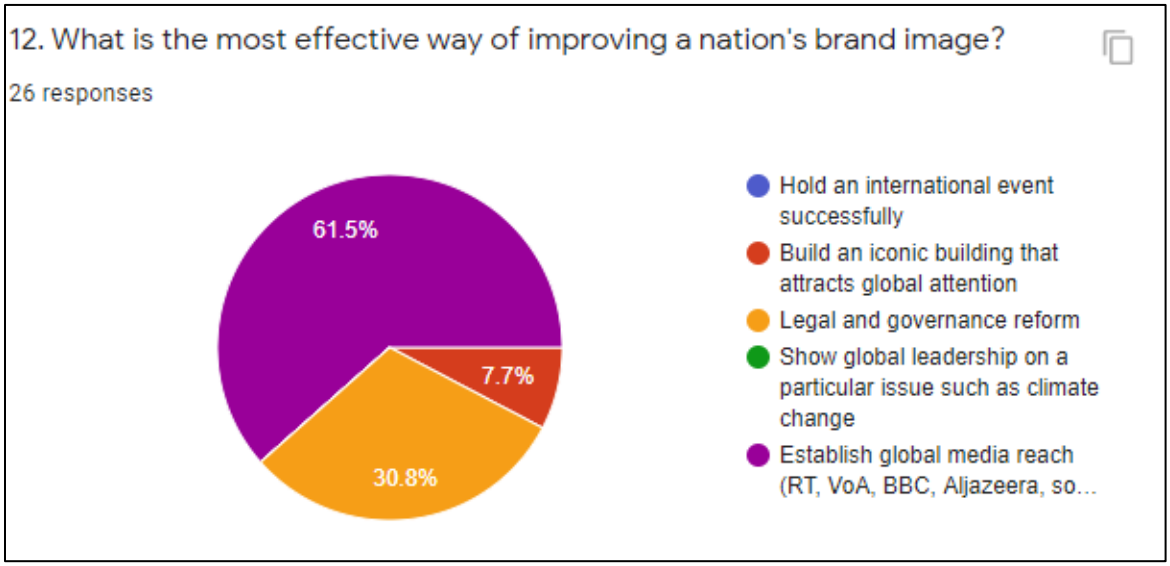
The responses to this question tally with what the literature already shows that every country needs to manage its brand image. The responses are also generally in line with the responses to question 2.



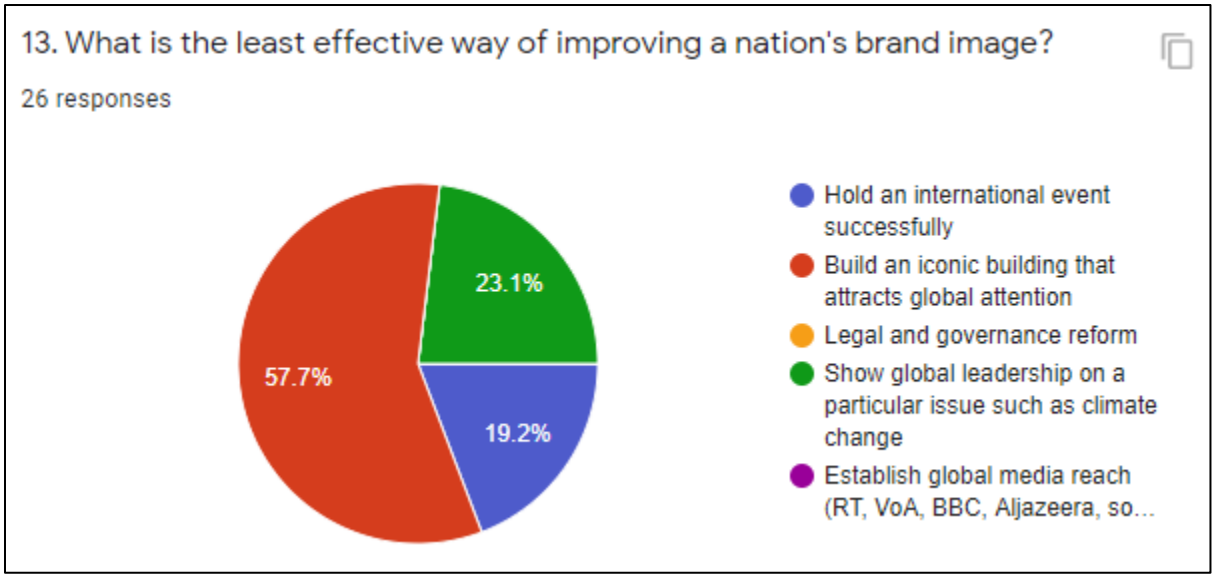
There are many practitioners who developed their own version of how do to measure the value of national brands and some have developed models for improving brand images and the reasoning behind this question is to ask some of the practitioners if they think the models would be suitable for nations coming out of a crisis.



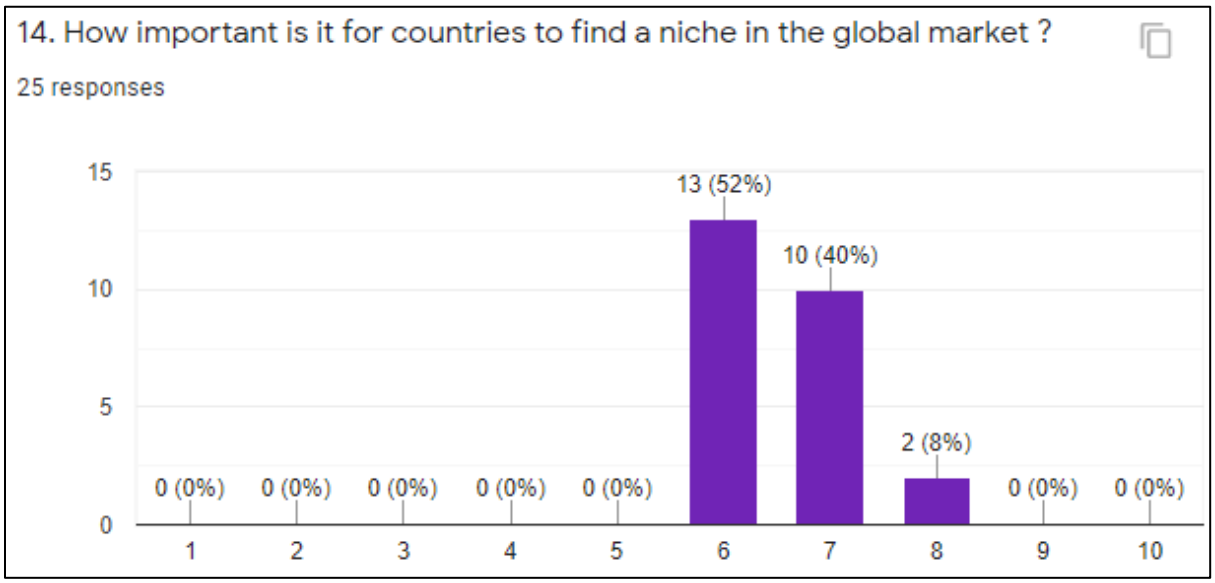
This question is a continuation of question 10. Most respondents agree that that those tools need to be adapted to the country's situation.



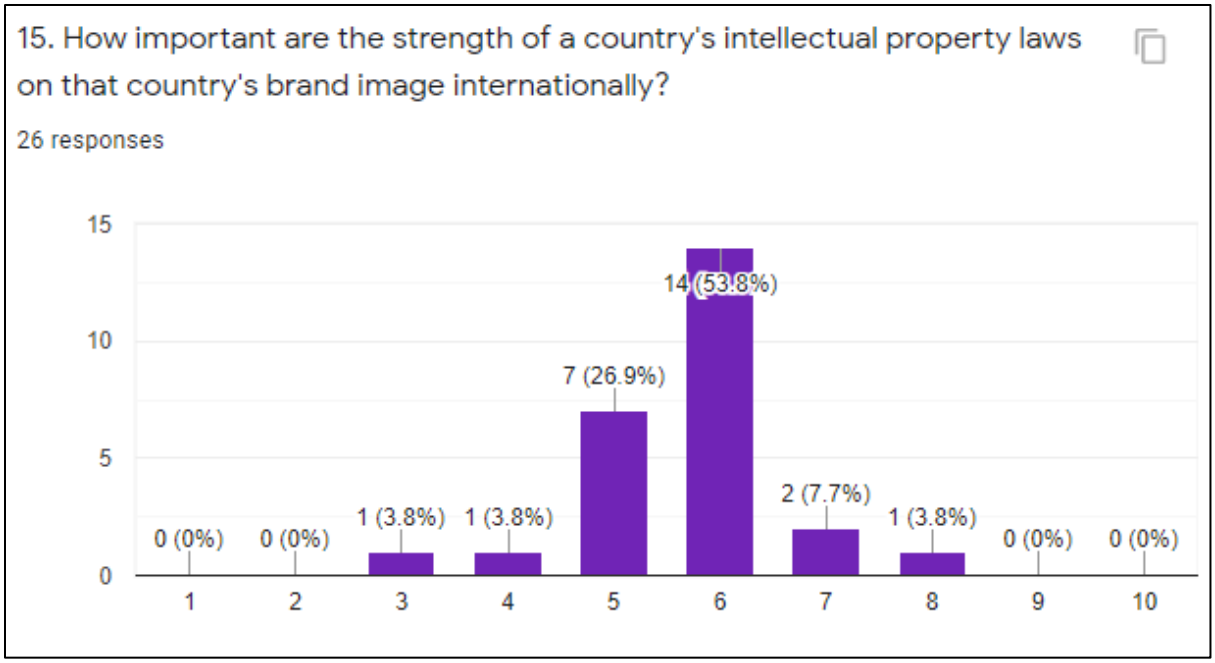
The available responses come from what the literature says are possible approaches to improving a nation brand image. The responses show that the most effective way is for a country to have access to its own media which is in line with what the literature would suggest.



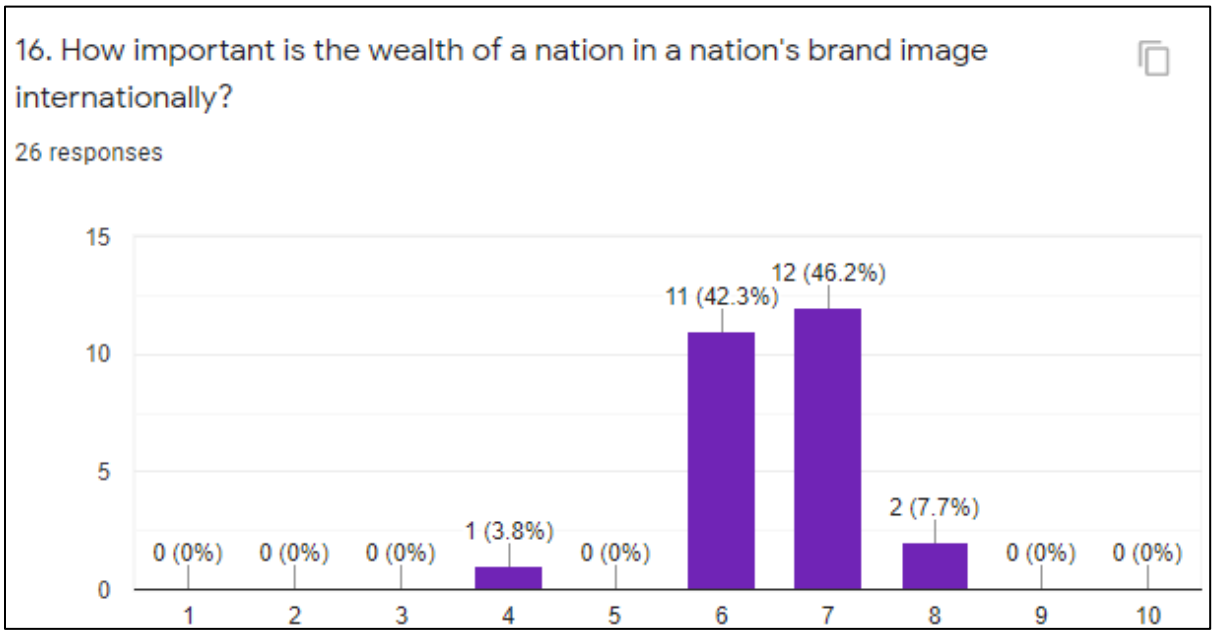
The available responses come from what the literature says are possible approaches to improving a nation brand image. The responses show that the least effective way is for a country to build iconic buildings.



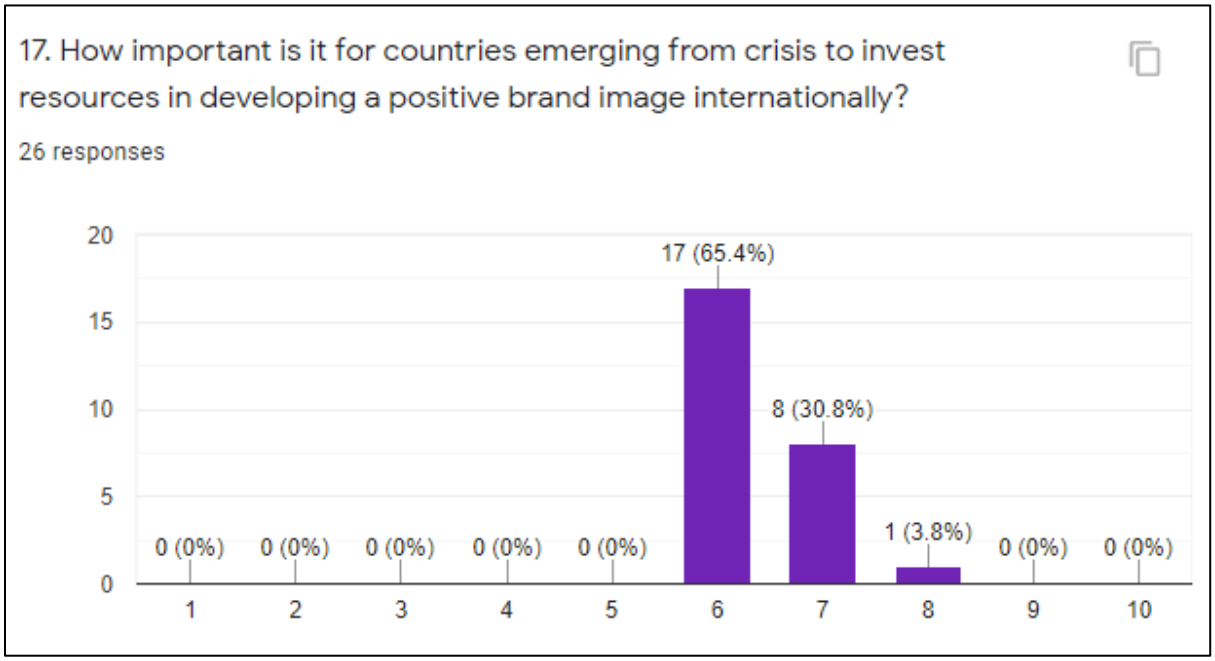
I asked this question because literature suggests that most counties either need to build clusters or find a niche. The responses are in line with expectation.



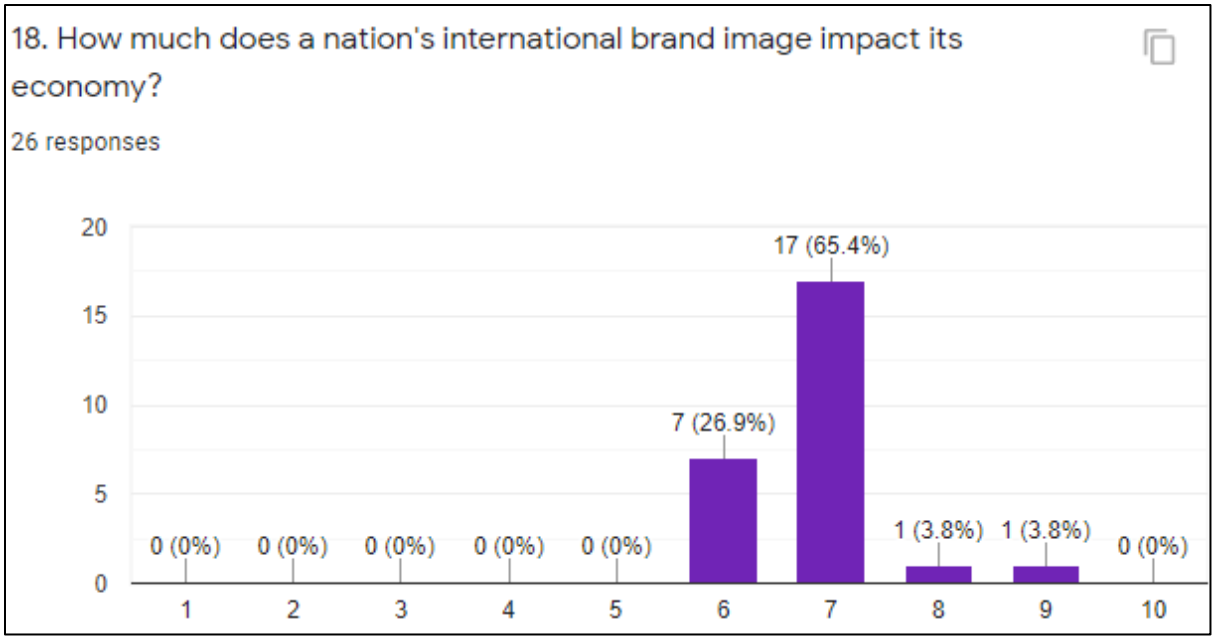
Anholt and other practitioners (Anholt, S., 2005) have discussed the centrality of a strong intellectual property laws and enforcement to the building of any kind of brand. Earlier in thesis I discussed the theories behind this question. Most respondents agree that intellectual property protection is important. Those minority who responded that it is not so important maybe thinking of relatively successful countries with good brand images around the world and weak Intellectual property laws according to the International property rights index (International property rights index, 2019).



Looking at any brand valuation index such as the ones discussed earlier one would realize that there is a divide and all the low income countries are at bottom of the index and all the high income countries and at the top of the list, one then needs to ask is it even possible for a low income county to have a positive brand image? Most respondents think that the wealth of nation is an important determinant of the country's image internationally. This question links to question 7 were a majority of respondents thought that the factor that had the most negative impact on a nation's image was poverty. The index shows that there is a strong correlation between wealth of a country and its brand image. This correlation is something that requires further study and worthy of its own thesis. Can a poor country ever have a positive brand image?



This question links to questions 2 and 9. The responses to this question are in line with literature says about this, that every country needs to manage its national brand image. The responses are also generally in line with the responses to question 2 and question 9. Most responses put the importance at 6 out of 10 which is not the strongest endorsement of the statement but this maybe because of the awareness that these countries often have more urgent priorities such as feeding refugees and law and order.



All respondents to this question agree that a nation's brand image impacts its economy. This is similar the response to question 1. The responses agree with the academics and writers such as Anholt (2006) and Reibstein, D.and Bedi S. (2018).

Recommendations

As counties recovering from crises and other fragile nations do not always the resources, monetary or otherwise to deploy a large-scale nation branding exercise, countries to follow a marginal gains strategy and leverage existing state employees and citizens in the nation branding exercise by raising awareness of the importance of their nations brand to their nation's property and their own property. There should be structures in government who are charged with responsibilities off communication and designing the nation's branding strategy. This need not be cost intensive; it could be one person with an office in a government building. What is important is the recognition that the nation's brand is something that needs managing. As the first task for these counties is to get to widespread salience, to understand that their national image needs managing and is linked to their economic prosperity and life experience. In many countries emerging from crisis salience is already there. For example, in his article Ahmad (2012) has demonstrated that there is already salience in Somalia and many of its citizens are aware of the need to change their countries image. The Somali government has also established offices to develop the nation's brand strategy and it has recruited influencers on social media such as Twitter to try to change the country's entrenched and mainly negative image. On the other hand, the those trying to change the image of the country face an uphill struggle against a narrative that although mostly true is often not balanced, (The Economist 2012) and (The Economist, 2012). These countries need approached not just to present their national brand but also to counter unbalanced reporting. The model I present, below, takes this into account. The figure below also shows easy implemented steps that can be taken by less developed nations to improve their national image.

Figure 1: Easily implementable solution to increasing the counties (authors construction from multiple sources)

Countries emerging from crisis cannot afford to neglect their nation's brand image despite the multitude of other challenges they face. Here, I present a model for thinking nation branding and to help with strategy development.

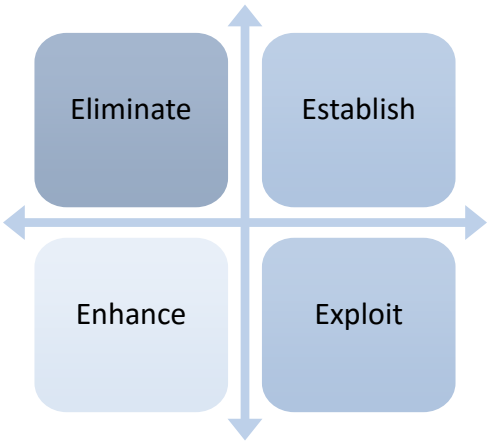


Figure 18: Nation branding matrix (authors construction based on the SWOT model).

For each of the elements in the matrix above, the country should develop a strategic plan, with allocated resources, timeline, milestones, goals and objectives. Perhaps using a template similar to the one below.

Eliminate: – One of the main differences between the way that developed countries approach nation branding and the wan that fragile states might approach nation branding will be that countries emerging from crisis need to eliminate some aspects of their existing reputations.
Establish– These are aspect of the nation's brand where there is no existing perception, but the country wants to move into.
Enhance - These are aspects of the nation's brand where there some awareness but needs developing.
Enhance – These are aspect of the nation's brand that are positive and can be used.

Eliminate-(Threats)		Establish -(Weakness)
Example: 1. China wants people to forget what happened at Tiananmen Sq. 2. Product disasters 3. Rwanda -eliminate association with war 4. Somalia -eliminate association with piracy, war…etc.		Example: 1. No existing national image – not known for anything, looming associations with something undesirable
Enhance (Opportunities)		Exploit (Strengths)
Example: Start associating Somalia with the beaches and the Ocean, fish – not difficult to do. It has the longest coast in Africa.		Example: Opportunities that are just there for the taking. Some of the international community already has this association for example Afghanistan and carpets.

Limitations and further research

Despite the difficulty in determining a relatively accurate sample size, one would need more than 26 participants in a study like this to have reasonable confidence in the finding. What I have done is to create basis for further research.

The research question also needed to be narrower. There are potentially multiple research questions in my dissertation, but I needed to do the dissertation to find this out.

Example research question:

1. Which factors are most important in improving a nation's brand image?
2. Which factors most negatively impact a nation's brand image internationally?
3. How important are the strength of a country's intellectual property laws on that country's brand image internationally?
4. How much does a nation's international brand image impact its economy?

Conclusions

Nation branding is about the finding a convergence of value provided with an authentic image that is differentiated yet has similarities to the class of value provided.
It is a vital part of any organisation's work and of any country's marketing of itself. So that those of the county's target audience who don't know about the offerings of the country get to know about it.

Nation branding is not a panacea as Anholt (2006) argues in his book but it is a factor in the prosperity of nations that does not get sufficient attention from less developed nations.

Although this is a topic that needs more research and analysis of the existing research, it is clear to me that nation branding is even more important for less developed nations and those emerging from crisis because all nations in the world are competing for investment and those more developed countries are engaged in extensive nation branding efforts on top of the advantages that they already have over these less developed countries. Without nation branding, the less developed nations are likely to fall further behind and those emerging from crisis might never get the investment they need to get out of the crisis quickly.

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Appendix A: Survey questions

Nation branding: From crisis to recovery

An investigation into how countries emerging from crisis can improve their nation's brand image quickly, move on from the crisis and build a positive competitive identity.

This survey aims to investigate:

1. If nations need a brand management strategy?
2. Which factors are most important in improving a nation's brand image?
3. Which factors can nations emerging from crisis easily implement for the most impact?
4. The fitness for purpose of theories and models of nation brand development to countries emerging form crisis.
5. The validity and applicability of these theories and models in general.
6. Stakeholder perspectives on the applicability of current nation branding models and theories to countries such as Somalia.

You don't have to answer any of the questions or complete this survey. If you don't want to answer a question, click: "No answer". The data collected is anonymous and personal data is recorded but the information you provide will be used to evaluate the research question.

* Required

1. 1. Do you agree to take part in this survey? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes, I understand that I don't have to take part in this survey and I don't have to answer a particular question if I don't want. answer a question if I don't want.
- No

2. 2. Do nations need to manage their brand image like companies do? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes No
- No answer
- I don't know
- 3. 3. Which factors are most important in improving a nation's brand image? *

Check all that apply

Check all that apply.

- [ ] The nation's rating on a variety of global indexes such as the global corruption index
- [ ] The nation's culture and heritage
- [ ] What the nation exports
- [ ] The Nation's political system
- [ ] The people who live there
- [ ] Investment
- [ ] Immigration
- [ ] How many tourists it gets
- [ ] I don't know
- [ ] No answer

4. 4. Which factors are most important in improving a nations brand image? *

Check all that apply

Check all that apply.

- [ ] Power and influence
- [ ] Cultural clout
- [ ] Sport
- [ ] Iconic buildings
- [ ] Quality of life

5. 5. Which factors can nations emerging from crisis easily implement for the most impact? *

Check all that apply

Check all that apply.

- [ ] Power and influence
- [ ] Leverage Cultural heritage
- [ ] Sport
- [ ] Build Iconic buildings
- [ ] Improve Quality of life

6. 6. Which factors can nations emerging from crisis easily implement for the most impact? *

Check all that apply

Check all that apply.

- [ ] The nation's rating on a variety of global indexes such as the global corruption index
- [ ] Leverage nation's culture and heritage
- [ ] What the nation exports
- [ ] The Nation's political system
- [ ] The people who live there
- [ ] Investment
- [ ] Immigration
- [ ] How many tourists it gets
- [ ] I don't know
- [ ] No answer

7. 7. Which factors most negatively impact a nation's brand image internationally? *

Choose one answer from each column *Mark only one oval.*

- ( ) Lack of recognized tourist attractions
- ( ) Poverty
- ( ) High crime rate
- ( ) Under development
- ( ) No answer

8. 8. How fit are the current theories and models on nation branding for purpose in general? *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Not fit for purpose	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	Completely fit for purpose

9. 9. How much does Somalia need a brand Strategy to improve its brand image internationally?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Not priority	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	Most important

10. 10. Can nations emerging from a crisis such as Somalia use the same tools, models and theories that developed countries use in order to improve their brand image? *

Mark only one oval.

- No
- Yes
- I don't know
- No answer

11. 11. How much can the theories, tools and models on nation branding be adapted so that nations emerging from a crisis such as Somalia can use them in order to improve their brand image? * *Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Not possible											very easily

12. 12. What is the most effective way of improving a nation's brand image? *

Mark only one oval.

- Hold an international event successfully
- Build an iconic building that attracts global attention
- Legal and governance reform
- Show global leadership on a particular issue such as climate change
- Establish global media reach (RT, VoA, BBC, Aljazeera, social media)

13. 13. What is the least effective way of improving a nation's brand image? *

Mark only one oval.

- Hold an international event successfully
- Build an iconic building that attracts global attention
- Legal and governance reform
- Show global leadership on a particular issue such as climate change Establish global media reach (RT, VoA,
- BBC, Aljazeera, social media)

14. 14. How important is it for countries to find a niche in the global market ?

Choose from (1- not very important) - (10 - most important) *Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Not important											most important

15. 15. How important are the strength of a country's intellectual property laws on that country's brand image internationally?

Choose from (1- not very important) - (10 - most important) *Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Not important	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	most important

16. 16. How important is the wealth of a nation in a nation's brand image internationally?

Choose from (1- not very important) - (10 - most important) (does a nation need to be wealthy to have a positive brand image internationals?)

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Not important	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	most important

17. 17. How important is it for countries emerging from crisis to invest resources in developing a positive brand image internationally?

Choose from (1- not very important) - (10 - most important) *Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Not important	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	most important

18. 18. How much does a nation's international brand image impact its economy? *

Choose from (1- not very important) - (10 - most important) *Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Not at all	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	most important factor

END OF PAPER