

# CONCEPTUALISATION OF NATION BRAND IMAGE

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## Abstract

*This paper examines the nation brand image notion. Literature review is employed as the method to develop the conceptual model. This paper suggests that the multifaceted nature of a nation can be covered in the nation brand image. In addition, the theoretical relationship between national brand identity, national identity, tourism brand and nation brand image and is also explored. This paper eventually proposes a conceptual model of nation brand image and suggests that future research include the multi elements of national brand identity and national identity as the components of nation brand image.*

**Keywords:** *Conceptual model, nation brand image.*

## Introduction

Giving nation a brand is considered not enough to be a market leader and have a strong positioning. Referring to the theory of branding, one of the ways to be a market leader and have strong positioning is not only by having a brand (Keller, 2003). Beyond that, to be a market leader and have strong positioning requires brand image. This paper provides an insight on the nation brand image notion. In doing so, the first section discusses the paradox of nation brand. It moves on to the second section that critically reviews the brand image and nation brand image notion; followed by a discussion on nation brand image and tourism brand. The discussion reviews the perspective of giving nation a brand image through national identity as nation brand differentiation. In conclusion, a definition and a conceptual model are offered as an extension of previous studies (Olins, 1999; O'Shaughnessy & O'Shaughnessy, 2000; Kotler & Gertner, 2002; Gilmore, 2002; Anholt, 2002, 2007; Dinie, 2008; Fan, 2010; Kaneva, 2011).

## **Nation Brand Studies**

The idea of giving nation a brand is intriguing. Nation brand is acknowledged as the growing sub-field of place marketing (e.g. Anholt, 2002, 2007; Gilmore, 2002; Kotler & Gertner, 2002; Olins, 1999; and Papadopoulos & Heslop, 2002). According to literature, between 1950 and 2002, 766 books and articles by 789 authors have been published on the subject of place marketing (a special issue of the *Journal of Brand Management*, 2002). The number implies that nation brand is a growing subject of interest among scholars in brand management.

In general, most of the studies highlight nation brand as part of the national strategy to build positive image and reputation (Anholt, 2002; 2007; Fan, 2006). Subsequently, nation brand expands its scope by not only aiming to build positive a image, reputation and gain more international market shares but also strengthening a country is position at the international stage. However, the nation brand notion seems to be considered vague due to unsettled debates on the nation brand existence. For instance, Fan (2006) argues that a nation has brand image with or without a branding technique, while several authors keep on suggesting that there is a need for a nation to be branded (e.g. Anholt, 2002; 2007; Gilmore, 2002; Kotler & Gertner, 2002; Olins, 1999; Keneva, 2011).

Nevertheless, the nation brand concept can be regarded as being in the infancy stage. This is partly because the place branding and its sub-field (nation branding) is considered a minority in every involved discipline and field of studies that interact within its notion (Kaneva, 2011). As an infant notion and a minority in related fields and disciplines, it is deemed appropriate to conduct theoretical research to enrich this notion (Kaneva, 2011; Fan, 2010).

The fundamental idea is to expand the recommendations of previous studies which suggest that the nation brand issue should be discussed from various angles and perspectives. In this sense, it is argued that nation brand is not only about developing attractive places for tourists, foreign students, foreign direct investment (FDI), talented/skilful people and business transactions but also positioning a nation as a market leader in a certain category (Olins, 1999; O'Shaughnessy & O'Shaughnessy, 2000; Kotler & Gertner, 2002; Gilmore, 2002; Anholt, 2002; 2007; Dinie, 2008).

One of the issues that past studies highlighted is the multifaceted nature that a nation is attached with (Kaneva, 2011; Dinnie, 2008; Fan, 2006). It implies the difficulties in giving a single brand to a nation brand which denotes a single image (or single message for different audiences in different countries). It is noted countries have put lots of energy; capital and time to create a nation brand by only adding an adjective before or after the country's name. By highlighting what they have and how fantastic the country is (and/or its resources are). The tendency of most governments that only focus in creating bombastic campaigns (which are claimed as nation brands) implies confusion between developing a nation brand and developing a tourism brand. This phenomenon generates questions such as what is the distinction between these constructs. This subsequently leads to the issues on how to manage national dimensions (which are considered as a country's products) that are multifaceted (Dinnie, 2008; Fan, 2006) and how can literature support the idea of giving a nation a brand. Unfortunately, there seems to be only limited study on differentiating the constructs of nation brand and tourism brand.

Aside from that, nation brand is also associated with national identity. It is used as a national brand identity in the initial stage of treating a nation as a brand. It functions as core essence to differentiate a nation over others (Fan, 2010; Kaneva, 2011, Fan, 2010; Kotler & Gertner, 2002; O'Shaughnessy & O'Shaughnessy, 2000; Anholt, 2002; 2007; Gilmore, 2002; Olins, 1999). However, these issues of unsettled debate, the vague notion of nation brand and the role of national identity in giving nation a brand are considered to have less well-founded studies.

Borrowing Keller's theory brand image (2003), this study offers an alternative for giving a nation a brand. In this sense, instead of developing a nation brand (which is against the multifaceted nature of a nation as a big entity), it is wise to develop a nation brand image.

Dinnie's (2008) conceptualization of a nation-brand identity and image has initially indicated the nation brand image notion, unfortunately, there seems to be limited study clarifying the definition of a nation brand image. Moreover, past studies merely provide conceptions about the variables which only emphasise how nation branding gives a nation a brand (not giving a nation a brand image). Due to that matter, this paper moves to discuss nation brand image and its conceptualization.

### **Paradox of Brand Image**

One of the arguments that needed to revisit the nation brand notion is when Fan (2006) specifically argues that nation has a brand image with or without a nation branding technique. Secondly, most of the studies focus on how to brand a nation without specifically defining the clear idea of the notion. If the idea of giving a nation a brand is argued for developing a nation's image and reputation, thus the philosophy of giving a nation a brand by merely creating a bombastic campaign that simply involves advertising the perspective and Public Relations (PR) technique. In this sense, it is contrary to the nation brand image which Kaneva (2011) and Fan (2006) argue that a nation brand image is not only aimed to improve a nation's image and reputation but it also involves nationhood (national identity).

The phenomenon of creating a bombastic campaign can be seen from what most governments have done to promote their countries to the world. Regardless of that effort, some governments are unsatisfied with the result of exposure through the bombastic campaign. This is due to the fact that there is no significant improvement on positioning and the number of tourists' arrival to a country (Anholt, 2006). Implicitly, there is a gap of interpreting the idea of giving a nation a brand.

While several authors argue that a nation brand exists without a branding technique, some authors assert that giving a nation a brand is important due to globalization (Kotler & Gertner, 2002; O'Shaughnessy & O'Shaughnessy, 2000). However, Fan's (2006) argument that the existence of a nation brand is naturally constructed can be considered in line with the proposition that nations historically have branded themselves through icons and symbols such as flags, military uniforms, currencies, anthems and ideology due to regime changes or ideology changes and stereotypes (Dinnie, 2008; Fan, 2006; Kotler & Gertner, 2002; O'Shaughnessy & O'Shaughnessy, 2000).

Thirdly, even though recent studies mention national identity in the nation brand notion (Fan, 2010; Kaneva, 2011) which indicate that other variables involved in strengthening the nation brand notion, still it seems debatable due to the difficulty in giving a nation a brand (Zenker, 2011). Those who disagree have suggested a new term such as place brand (Zenker & Braun, 2010). In this sense, the nation brand notion is being questioned due to insufficient explanation of its notion and a lack of literature support.

On the contrary, the idea of a nation brand image is rather plausible and possible to be implemented (refer to the following discussion of brand image and nation brand images). Although, Dinnie (2008) implicitly has conceptualized the idea of a nation brand image, the idea may require further clarification. According to Dinnie (2008) a nation brand image is derived from a nation brand identity which must be executed by proper key communicators. In addition, a nation brand must address the diverse range of audiences and denote the need to seek for a certain identity in order to develop a nation brand image. However, the conceptual model did not define (or differentiate) the concepts of the notion clearly which generates confusion about a nation brand and a nation brand image notion. Unfortunately, studies that try to clarify the concept of a nation brand and a nation brand image notion seems to be very limited. Hence, the following section strives to clarify concepts and the notion of nation brand and nation brand image.

### **Brand Image and Nation Brand Image**

Kotler and Gertner (2002) argue that the nation brand notion is derived from strategic image management (SIM) which is important to attract international audiences. Nation brand is defined as a total perception of international audiences which emerged as the overall image of a nation (Fan, 2010).

On the other hand, based on the traditional branding theory, the nation brand image notion can be derived from strategic brand management (SBM) which Keller (2003) points out as part of brand knowledge of the segmented target audiences. Keller (2003) argues that brand image is closely related to the level of familiarisation of target audiences in associating the products offerings and influences the purchase decision. Brand image is defined as everything that people associate with the product offering (Newman, 1957; Keller, 2003). It generates types of brand associations, favourability of brand associations, and strength of brand associations and uniqueness of brand associations (Keller, 2003).

The brand associations refer to its symbolic attributes, level of quality, the profile of the company and functions which can be seen from product related and non-product related that characterize the identity. Positive brand associations indicate conditions where people tend to

recall and recognize the brand as if it is the product itself and tend to become a first choice in the market. It signifies a positive brand image (Keller, 2003).

A positive brand image stimulates consumers' intention or willingness to purchase (Hsieh et al., 2004). It influences the buying decision and potentially becomes a market leader in a certain category, while negative brand image is not. It is due to the belief that people not only purchase the physical functions of products or services, but also the symbolic meanings associated with the brand name which are eventually linked to prestige. This implies the affective phase of the attitude theory. It highlights the proposition of the accumulative level of cognitive and affective on consumers' future action (conative). Consequently, the brand image of the product offerings not only becomes assets of the company but also shapes the prestige of the consumers.

Prestige of consumers is developed from types, favourability, strength and uniqueness of the brand associations. These brand associations imply not only the consumers' cognitive but also grabs the consumers' affective. In this sense, the objective of giving a product a brand image is not only to build brand awareness (through symbolic-oriented process) but also to generate a positive brand image (through types, favourability, strength and uniqueness of the brand associations) in the consumers' mind.

Similarly, this is applicable to a nation. The idea of a nation-brand image is not only to build nation-brand awareness (refers to the nation's image) but also to foster a positive nation-brand image (refers to reputation, positioning which leads to position as a market leader). Johansson (1993) Agrawal and Kamakura (1999) argue that a favourable image that is attached to the place (which refers to nation) can be a competitive advantage to win international markets. It is also argued that besides becoming a brand name, a country's name can also be the product itself. This is due to competition to attract tourists, factories, businesses, the faces (very important people), foreign students and talented skilful people (Kotler & Gertner, 2002). These international target audiences are also similar to the target audiences of any other product offerings which will purchase goods or services not only based on the physical function but also the prestige of the brand image.

In general, a country product offering can be grouped as the national dimensions which are managed under a country's name as a brand. National dimensions are classified into tourism, export, government, culture, people, investment and immigration (Anholt, 2002; 2007). It signifies social-cultural, economics, and politics (Kotler & Gertner, 2002; O'Shaughnessy & O'Shaughnessy, 2000; Dinnie, 2008). Due to this multifaceted entity of a nation, nation brand is attached with multiple images which could be positive or negative, thus, making it difficult to give a nation a brand. On the contrary, the brand-image theory states that to have a brand image requires brand associations. Brand associations denote multifaceted images which can be perceived by different audiences. In this sense, conceptualizing nation brand image is possible.

According to the brand knowledge theory, brand image is closely related to the level of familiarisation of the target audiences (Keller, 2003). Thus giving nation a brand image is related to national activities that are performed through national dimensions. It aims to make international audiences familiar and be able to recognize a country's national dimensions and influence the buying decision so that it can be a market leader in a certain category. In this sense, the idea of developing the nation brand associations is to design the nation's images that possess multifaceted nature. It is done based on the self-perception (which is considered as national identity) and desired images (visionary perception) that a nation wants to be perceived by international audiences.

Particularly, self-perception and desired images are part of the nation image perspectives which denote the process of the nation branding formation. In other words, nation brand image is developed through key perspectives of nation image (Brown et al., 2006; Fan, 2010), while nation brand merely involves the actual image (Fan, 2006). In other words, it is not being controlled by the producer-based on the stereotype.

In general, the key perspective in nation image consists of constructs such as identity, image and reputation that refer to mental associations that generate a frame of experiences and a frame of references of the international audiences. Identity is defined as self-belief of the characteristics that the entity has. While image is collection of identity that is projected to others, reputation is the feedback received from others about the images that is projected (Whetten & Mackey, 2002; Fan, 2010).

The key perspectives in nation image illustrates the need of identifying self-perception of identity which is defined as a question: 'who are we as a nation?'. This initial phase leads to what reference points think about us as a nation. The third one is related to the idea of constructing the nation image which implies the beginning of a nation-brand image development. This constructed image is related to a question of what we believe our image is in front of the world. Subsequently, the constructed image builds the actual image that shapes reputation and stereotype. In this stage, the government of a country analyses how the nation image is actually perceived by others. The fifth key perspective in nation image is the projected image which is defined as the constructed image that does not reflect the reality of the nation which leads to the need to form the desired image (point number six of the key perspectives). The desired image needs to be developed in order to distribute the visionary self-perception that a nation would like other nations to hold about it in the future.

Unlike the nation-brand notion which is related only to the actual image that external (outsiders) perceive, nation-brand image is related to both actual images that external (outsiders) and internal (insiders) perceive about nation images. In this case, the conceptualization model that is offered by past studies which argued the need of a nation-brand identity is confirmed due to the philosophy of the nation-brand image notion (Dinnie, 2008; Fan, 2010; Kaneva, 2011). It denotes nation brand image as a construction process of multifaceted images of the nation based on the key perspectives in nation image that Fan (2010) offered.

Therefore, nation-brand image is defined as the total collection of a nation's multifaceted images that are associated with a country's national dimensions and activities which are managed by a country's government based on actual image, national identity and desired future image to be perceived by international audiences.

### **Nation Brand Image and Tourism Brand**

To date, studies about nation-brand image are associated with the country of origin (export dimension), public diplomacy (Roth & Romeo, 1992; Heslop & Papadopoulos, 1993; Pappu et al., 2007; Szondi, 2008) and cultural focus (Morgan & Pritchard, 2002). The philosophical aim is giving national products a brand. For instance, textile or Moslem clothes which are labelled as made in Indonesia



and being exported implies the country of origin notion which also implies that Indonesia is the biggest Moslem country in the world. That analogy signifies not only the product related to a country being offered to international audiences but also denotes the belief structure (part of national identity elements) of Indonesia as a nation.

On the other hand, a public diplomacy study focuses building hard and soft power (a country's power in influencing or forcing political, financial, and social activities) at the regional or international stage (Szondi, 2008; Fan, 2008). In this case, the public diplomacy study denotes the national system and ideology that countries chose also implies the way they projected themselves regarding international issues.

The cultural study focuses on national heritage and cultural homogeneity which generates national identity as well. Most of this study is used to build the tourism dimension as one of the national products that influence international audiences' perception; e.g. the Malay, Indian and Chinese races represent countries in South East Asia which mostly tourism attractions as national products in that region.

Many studies that dominated the nation-brand image notion have brought confusion. The most notable one is the confusion of between identifying nation-brand image and tourism-brand notions. Past studies acknowledged that the tendency of most governments in creating bombastic campaigns by adding adjectives to the name of the country is not considered as nation brand (Dinnie, 2012; Fan, 2006) but more to tourism brand which most governments have a part in taking tourism as a national industry.

As it has been defined nation brand is the total perception of international audiences about a country. Nation brand exists with or without nation-branding notion due to stereotypes. Stereotype produces prejudice, and unreasonable judgments based on one's own group (Lippman, 1922 cited in Fan, 2008). On the other hand, nation-brand image notion focuses on developing (designing) national brand associations in order to increase international audiences' familiarisation towards national dimensions that represent the socio-cultural, economic, and political activities of a country. Nation brand denotes symbolic oriented which refers to national identity. For instance, Indonesia is nation brand is Bhineka Tunggal Ika. Bhineka Tunggal Ika represents the pluralistic characteristic of Indonesia and its cultural attachment as a nation. For nation-brand image, the focus

is managing brand associations which can be derived from endorsed brands such as the national tourism brand or the country of origin (export dimension).

The distinction between these constructs refers to the classification of national brand identity which nation brand denotes the umbrella brand that covers overall national identities. National tourism brand signifies the tourism national brand identity (endorsed brand) which is well-known as a subject of destination-branding notion (Morgan & Pritchard, 2002). Tourism national brand identity (endorsed brand) is managed as one of the national dimensions (similar to the country of origin notion which generally links with export dimension). However, tourism national brand identity is considered relatively close to nation-brand image notion. It is due to proposition that the nation-brand image notion is designing nation brand associations which are derived from national identity (self-perception which denotes national profile based on socio-cultural, political and economic) which most countries interpret nation as people and nation as culture (Fan, 2006). For instance, British imply nation as people and as culture. Therefore, it is sufficient to say that national-tourism brand is part of the nation-brand image notion.

### **Why Giving Nation a Brand Image is Important?**

As mentioned in the introductory section, the critical question of giving the nation a brand is how to brand the multifaceted nature of the nation. In this case, giving the nation a brand is considered difficult but it is possible. The overall nation images which are too nebulous can be solved by applying the strategic brand-image management approach. In this sense, the multifaceted nature of the nation image is managed through strong associations to establish affect-driven, while knowledge of the actual choice processes used can be a guide to the likely influence of the imaginary versus reputational capital (O'Shaughnessy & O'Shaughnessy, 2000; Fan, 2008).

Fan (2006) argues that stated nation brand exists with or without nation branding and that nation brand focuses on the actual image that is held in the consumers' mind with or without branding techniques. It tends to be a symbolic oriented process that is perceived by outsiders. In this case, it becomes the outsiders' perception that is based on symbols such as place, geography, flag, ideology & systems, history of colonization, language, socio-cultural, political and economic activities.

Unlike nation brand, the nation-brand image notion is beyond nation actual images. It is considered as constructed images that are developed by the government based on the desired image (Gioia et al., 2000; Fan, 2008), national identity, references point perception, and projected image. For instance, recently Australia put education as the umbrella brand and added the Indonesia in language (Bahasa Indonesia) as a subject to be studied by students. The United Kingdom on the other hand implemented philosophy to be studied by children in schools. This implied the awareness of the UK and Australia as part of the regional (and/or global) community. These countries show what they are for and how relevant they are for both internal and external publics. Therefore, Asians tend to have the association (perceived images) that the UK and Australia are the destinations for studying.

In this sense, the distinction between nation brand and nation-brand image is in the construction process of applying the branding techniques. In other words, nation brand focusses on symbolic-oriented on a country's name as identity and let the image perceived by the outsiders (which normally according to stereotypes are, frame of experiences and frame of references). It means, there is no further effort by the producer (the government of a country) to control the brand (the nation's image). On the other hand, nation-brand image is beyond that. Nation-brand image highlights the brand associations that are needed to be exposed in order to achieve the nation-brand images based on their identity (self-perception) and desired future image (positioning) that a nation wants outsiders to perceive. Though, both applied the nation-branding notion, the main objective of the nation-brand image is to be the first choice which at the end is expected to be a market leader in a certain category.

In this sense, the theory of brand image says that the problem of a nation as a multifaceted entity can be solved by instead of giving the nation a brand, it is better to develop nation-brand image (Keller, 2003). With this perspective, a multifaceted nature of the nation can be useful due to the idea that brand image is developed by producing brand associations (which aims to get strong positioning in the market). Hence the multifaceted nature of a nation is not dismissed.

Having that perspective, developing nation-brand associations denotes multiple images which can be perceived as positive or negative according to its types, favourability, strength, and uniqueness. In general, these images refer to the place-geography, natural resources, tourist attractions, people-races, ethnic groups,

history, culture, languages, political & economic systems, social institutions, infrastructure, famous people-faces, pictures or images (Fan, 2006). These entities that are attached with a nation can be categorised into product-related and non-product-related. In short, it is sufficient to note that instead of building nation brand (which is considered difficult to be developed), it is better to shift the nation brand effort into nation-brand images notion.

By having nation-brand images, a multifaceted nature of the nation as a large entity can be accommodated. This means, Keller's theory of brand image can be used to settle the problematic notion of nation brand. Keller's theory of brand image basically emphasis the idea of developing brand associations which can be derived from types of product-related and non-product-related. In this case, the national dimensions that are classified into tourism, export, government, culture, people, and investment and immigration can be product-related and non-product-related depending on which dimension is selected to be the umbrella brand. Therefore, it is vital for a country to have nation-brand image than only having a nation brand. As for brand differentiation in nation context, national identity comes to play. National identity which is defined as self-perception of a nation is considered as national-brand identity in nation-branding notion which aims to build nation-brand image (Fan, 2010).

### **National Identity and Nation Brand Identity**

Studies about national identity in conjunction with globalization and the idea of giving a nation a brand are mostly done from the international marketing perspective (Kotler & Gertner, 2002; O' Shaughnessy & O' Shaughnessy, 2000). Although, empirical studies that examine the relationship between national identity and nation-brand image variables seem to be very limited, several studies mentioned national identity as the self- perception of a country which denotes them as nations (Fan, 2006, 2008; 2010: Dinnie, 2008; Kaneva, 2011). These studies indicate that national identity is the essence of nation brand.

The distinction between national identity and nation brand identity is correlated but has different meanings. It is argued that national identity is relatively close to culture. It denotes how the 'sense of culture' generates the characteristics of a nation (Keilor & Hult, 1999) which generate the central, enduring, and distinctive (CED). CED signifies the past, present, and future of the people who live in certain

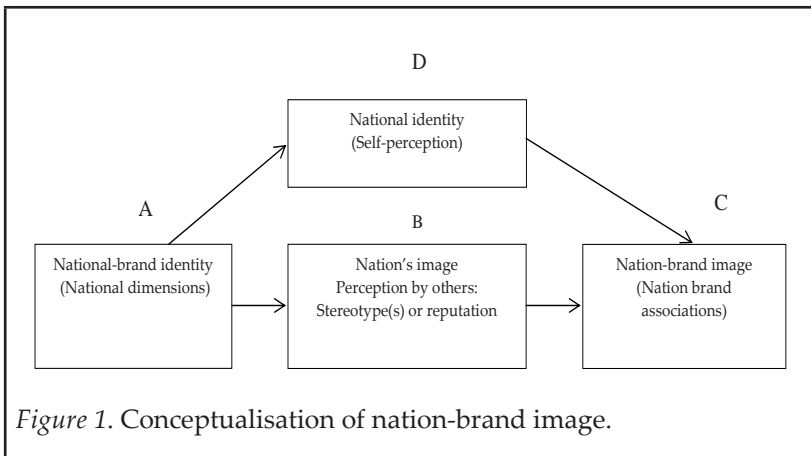
country as a nation (Fan, 2010). In this sense, nation refers to people who are tied up and live together in certain geographical land, ruled by a government and share similar backgrounds, race, languages, history, heritage, beliefs, ideology, and systems, (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 1995; Oxford Dictionary, 2005). National identity connects insiders to have a sense of belonging (emotional tie) as part of a large group called a nation (Fan, 2006).

Several prominent authors from place marketing and nation branding defined national identity as the self-perception of a nation which can be used as the core essence to differentiate a nation over others and it can be used as the predictor of nation-branding notion (Kaveva, 2011, Fan, 2010; Kotler & Gertner, 2002; O’Shaughnessy & O’Shaughnessy, 2000; Anholt, 2002; 2007; Gilmore, 2002; Olins, 1999). Thus, national identity refers to the overall unique characteristics (the people and the culture) of a nation which differentiate a nation over others.

The elements of national identity have been developed by Keilor and Hult (1999). They classified it into cultural homogeneity, belief structure, national heritage and ethnocentrism. Belief structure is identified as a collection of the religions or cults of a country, whereas cultural homogeneity implies the number of subcultures that have counter and become the strengths of national identity. Belief structure that implies that in a dominant religion held by the majority of the population generates a label on a nation because it is attached with people is beliefs that are being practiced daily. For instance, the Middle East countries are known as Islamic countries because they embrace Islam. On the other hand, cultural homogeneity is generated from the number of subcultures and becomes the strengths of national identity. Normally, cultural homogeneity builds a country-image label on a nation from the attributes such as traditional clothes, foods, languages, sub-cultures that merge into character that differentiates over others. Aside from that, the important element that also influences national identity is national heritage. It is related to the history of colonialization which produces different national identities to every nation. For instance, the label of “commonwealth” on countries that are being colonized by the British will adopt and adapt the British system. The British system implies the identity of a nation. The last element is ethnocentrism. It is defined as a cultural evaluation and its attributions are based on their own cultural perspectives as the baseline criteria. Ethnocentrism is included in national identity specifically to examine the consumer behaviour setting which possibly effects product choices (Samice, 1994 cited in Keillor & Hunt, 1999).

On the other hand, national brand identity is defined as a specific set of associations that brand strategists seek and created in order to develop the nation as a brand for a country (Fan, 2010). In this sense, national-brand identity is derived from tangible aspects (such as natural beauty, historical sites, culture, races, ethnic groups, infrastructure, etc.) and less tangible aspects that refer to behaviour of the people, culture, values and mission (Wood, 2006). In other words, national brand identity is a symbolic-oriented branding that highlights the multifaceted nature that is attached with a nation. It is considered something that is important to be perceived by both insiders and outsiders. Explicitly, it can be seen from one of national dimensions that are selected to be exposed as an umbrella brand (Dinnie, 2008; Anholt, 2002; 2007).

In most cases, tourism has been the most common dimension that is selected by governments to be national-brand identity. It is due to the fact that tourism is attached with people, governmental systems & ideology, socio-culture, economics, and political activities of a country (Leiper, 1990). Hence, tourism reflects the characteristics of a nation. Tourism as one of the national dimensions is beneficial for the public of a country (insiders and outsiders). For the insiders, national identity (self-perception) and national-brand identity (for instance, tourism dimension) used to tie up and generate nationalism, while for outsiders, national identity and national brand identity are used as short cut of international audiences' purchase decision-making. Therefore, the relationship between national identity and nation-brand image can be summarized as shown in the below.



The figure implies direct and indirect relationship between national-brand identity and nation-brand image. In this figure, national identity is used as the core essence to formulate nation-brand associations (Keller, 2003). In general it is treated as a mediator variable. The direct flow of the proposed model (A-B-C) indicates nation-brand image. The relationship between A and B shows the argument that a nation's image is defined by outsiders which are influenced through direct and personal experiences, stereotype, media exposure, while indirect flow (A-D-C) denotes nation-brand image notion which Fan (2006, 2010) and Kaneva (2011) highlighted about culture and people as the focus in nation branding. Based on the above discussion, this paper suggests that the essence to build the national-brand association is to implement the cultural and people-orientated approach.

### Conclusion

Nation brand perspective implies a country's name as a brand which covers national dimensions (for instance tourism, export, and etc.) that are managed by the government at the international stage. It refers to the current and actual image (external perception) held in the international audiences' minds. Considering the philosophy of giving a nation a brand image is rather different with nation brand, hence the issue goes on national dimensions as the product-offering of a country that represents national identity; not only focuses on a symbolic-oriented effort and an effort of developing a single image. This is due to the fact that nation brand is a process of managing the images of a country as a nation which aims to build an image and reputation, while nation-brand image notion is beyond that.

Nation-brand image notion is not only to produce brand awareness but also to produce brand associations based on selected national dimensions as product-offering to reach the strong positioning as first choice (market leader in a certain category). The distinction between nation brand and nation-brand image notion is generally due to the key perspective of images conception. Images in a nation brand are the actual images (outsiders perception) which are derived from stereotypes or reputation that are perceived by international audiences. However, nation-brand image is developed not only based on the actual image (reputation or stereotypes) that are perceived by others (references point/significant others) but also from the desired image of a nation that projects national identity (self-perception of a country).



The biggest challenge on how to communicate a single image (refers to nation brand) to different audience in different countries is countered by applying the nation brand image notion. In this sense, instead of developing a nation brand (which aims to develop a single image), it is wise for a country to have a nation-brand image in order not to dismiss the multifacets of a nation. This could be done through the national endorsed brands which are derived from dimensions such as from tourism, export, inward investment, government, talent attraction and sport (Dinnie, 2008).

The distinctions among nation brand, nation-brand image and tourism brand also have been discussed. The three constructs have different meanings but are correlated to each other. Nation brand exists based on stereotype and reputation, while nation brand image constructs images through managing national brand identity (which could be more than one and refers to national dimensions as the product-offering of a country). In this sense, nation brand and nation-brand image notions are considered as an umbrella brand. On the other hand, tourism brand is considered as an endorsed brand which is relatively close to the nation-brand image due to culture and people as the focus of the notion which is argued as the dimension that most influences a nation 's image (Brooks, 2004; Dinnie, 2012). Therefore, tourism brand is foreseen as the most potentially national dimension to represent the nation-brand image.

In order to achieve brand differentiation and to reach strong positioning, the national identity concept comes to play. National identity provides the overall unique characteristics (the people and the culture) of a nation which differentiate it from others. In this case, national identity implies the central, enduring and distinctive (CED) characteristics of its people, culture, systems, beliefs, and all related characteristics which make them to be called a nation.

### **Limitation and Recommendation for Further Research**

Although this paper provides evidence from literature about the relevancy for a nation to adopt the concepts of nation brand, nation-brand image, national identity and nation-brand identity, it is more on the theoretical nature. Hence it would be more meaningful if future research could take up the proposed framework and explore the possibility to empirically test the framework. This would clarify the robustness of the model and issues of vagueness of these concepts.



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