

The Impact of Place Branding Complexity on Word of Mouth Advertising with Respect to the Moderating Role of Residents and Domestic Tourists of Kerman City

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Received: 21 May 2018

Accepted: 12 November 2018

Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

Essentially, when destination/place marketers employ a similar, yet simple strategy, they may underestimate the issues related to the establishment and formation of place branding; meanwhile, places and locations are faced with a broad range of target groups whose understanding of the place are completely different, mostly shaped by stereotypical imaginations and clichés. Nevertheless, residents are of a deeper awareness on the place, which is contrary to the simple messages, they use to introduce the place. Simplified messages lead to weaker identification and improper behavior (negative word-of-mouth advertising) of residents against tourists. The present study seeks to identify the positive results of place identification and how this very concept along with word-of-mouth advertising could be improved through brand complexity.

2. Methodology

In terms of purpose, the present inquiry is an applied study; and since it is attempted to describe the status of the society through field survey, it is descriptive-survey research. As for data collection and evaluation of various aspects of the model, the questionnaire instrument was used. The population of the study includes the entire residents of Kerman city in all four districts as well as the entire domestic tourists entering the city for a 1-month period since

21/3/2017 until 20/4/2017 (Nowruz celebration). Given the purpose of the study, which involves a comparative approach, the sample population in both groups should be considered as equal. Subsequently, the sample population was calculated as 384 people using Cochran's formula, and the number of data analyzed was 460. Since a standardized questionnaire by Zenker, Braun & Petersen (2017) was used, there is no need to confirm its content validity. The outlook and behavior of residents and domestic tourists are examined in the following with a focus on these hypotheses:

- The complexity of place branding influences word-of-mouth advertising through place satisfaction and the moderating role of residents.
- The complexity of place branding influences word-of-mouth advertising through place satisfaction and the moderating role of domestic tourists.
- The complexity of place branding influences word-of-mouth advertising through place identification and the moderating role of residents.
- The complexity of place branding influences word-of-mouth advertising through place identification and the moderating role of domestic tourists.
- The complexity of place branding influences word-of-mouth advertising through place commitment and the moderating role of residents.

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- The complexity of place branding influences word-of-mouth advertising through place commitment and the moderating role of domestic tourists.

Overall, the present study seeks to achieve the following purposes:

1. The impact of place branding on word-of-mouth advertisement with respect to the moderating roles of residents and domestic tourists

3. Results

In the first stage, the relation between the complexity of the city brand through satisfaction and identification were confirmed and its impact through commitment is rejected using the multiple mediator model. Consequently, the fourth and fifth hypotheses are rejected at the initial stage. In the next step, given the standardized regression coefficients of residents and domestic tourists as 0.170 and 0.380, respectively, it can be stated that the complexity of place branding through the satisfaction of word-of-mouth advertising mostly has a positive impact on domestic tourists with no significant effect on residents. Furthermore, considering the standardized regression coefficients of residents and domestic tourists as 0.352 and 0.490, respectively, it can be stated that the complexity of place branding through identification on word-of-mouth advertising is of positive impact on both the residents and domestic tourists.

4. Conclusion

The main purpose of the study was to examine the impact of place branding complexity on identification and recommending the location to others through

a comparative outlook of residents and domestic tourists of Kerman city. The results obtained from the hypotheses of the study showed that the complexity of place branding influences the identification by residents and domestic tourists. Place brand complexity through satisfaction on word-of-mouth advertising mostly impacts domestic tourists in a positive manner with no significant effect on residents. As a result, it is recommended that the motives, expectations, and requirements of the present and potential (tourists) residents of the city are taken into account. To this end, meeting their needs such as a proper quality and price of living expenses, regional security, economic diversity, quality of life, parks, green spaces, and other factors should be ensured. Place branding complexity through identification on word-of-mouth advertising involves a positive impact on both the residents and domestic tourists. Nevertheless, in order to increase the identification by residents and domestic tourists, correct and comprehensive information on the identity of locations should necessarily be provided, particularly in places, which are of historical values. Place branding complexity through commitment on word-of-mouth advertising has no positive impact on both the residents and domestic tourists. Subsequently, in order to raise commitment, involvement in other urban projects through shareholding is recommended.

Key Terms: Place branding, Destination branding, Brand complexity, Word of mouth advertising, Domestic tourists, Kerman city.

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How to cite this article:

Poursaeed, M. M., & Barzgarpour, M. (2018). The impact of place branding complexity on word of mouth advertising with respect to the moderating role of residents and domestic tourists of Kerman City. *Journal of Geography and Urban Space Development*, 5(1), 243-259.

URL <http://jgusd.um.ac.ir/index.php/gud/article/view/69703>

ISSN: 2538-3531