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RESEARCH ARTICLE

FACTORS FOR DESTINATION BRANDING BASED ON TOURIST'S PERSPECTIVE.

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Abstract

The problem consists in the lack of knowledge of the factors that visitors take to account for distinguish the city branding of Tijuana, Mexico. The information was obtained by applying an exit pool survey to a selected sample of 601 tourists in the city. Sixteen items were included in the Exploratory Factor Analysis. The results show six key factors influencing the perception of city branding: Wide Offer and Connectivity; Urban Environment; Historical and Cultural Heritage; Monuments; Traffic Safety and Friendliness and Security. By incorporating the opinion of tourists into the design of the city's brand, it makes it easier to stand out the unique personality of the destination, which allows the development of a long-term vision for the marketing activities of the sector.

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Introduction:-

With the expansion of the global tourism industry, cities are in a constant battle to attract tourists through the differentiation of their localities, incorporating unique local values that allow them to differentiate themselves from others, with the purpose of obtaining a greater competitive position to be chosen as a tourist destination. As part of the strategy they use City Marketing (CM), which can be understood as the interaction that exists between the managers of the city's policy area and its three target groups: tourists, citizens and businessmen.

Tourist destinations must have their own identity, acquire advantage of their natural and cultural attractions, promote them and give added value to their visitors. In the nineties the cities adapted the strategic planning model to get the venues of cultural or sporting events, improve the quality of life of the inhabitants of the city and satisfy the demands of the visitors; therefore new theoretical tools are required (Precedo, Orosa & Míguez, 2010).

However, the CM is broader than designing the place brand: after devising strategic concepts that turn the city into a brand with a unique personality (place brand), the city can attract its target groups and finally sell itself (Goovaerts, et al., 2014). If cities practice impulsive city marketing, based on assumptions, there is a risk that their scope will be short-term without developing a long-term strategic vision.

For its part Zenker & Braun (2016) argue that by definition the place brand is very complex due to its different target groups, various offers of places and various associations that customers might have of it. Therefore, brand managers need to include specific sub-brands for target groups such as residents, entrepreneurs and visitors.

The in situ perception of destination is a key moment in the tourists' experience, since it contrasts with they have been imagining previously. During the visit, tourists can confirm or not the earlier images of the place they have seen before their travel (Martins, 2015).

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Castillo-Villar (2016) states that future studies with quantitative methodologies would also be needed to contribute to a more general and important issue: the use of city branding strategies to benefit society. In the same sense, Kasapi & Cela (2017) argue that the branding concept has been only recently embraced by the tourism destination studies. Concluded that studies in destination branding field are still in its infancy, suggesting that more studies shall be conducted.

Literature review:-

Public administrators seek to market their cities to promote their development and also to increase the cities competitiveness level, for this purpose they need a comprehensive knowledge to influence marketing decisions. What it means to know the current image of the city, then design the image as they wish and define actions to improve it (Zali, Ebrahimzadeh, Zamani-Poor & Arghash, 2015). To transfer the brand concepts of local commercial products to the city brand concept, both the distinctive characteristics of commercial products and those of the city must be included (Zali et al. (2015).

Usually those who design the brands of the cities, are institutions that carry out the project and that can involve local stakeholders such as business, political, cultural and consultant. But there is another way to approach the same task, and assumes that the city brand can be designed from the perspective of consumers who make decisions based on the place, whether local residents, investors or tourists (Kavaratzis, Warnaby & Ashworth, 2015).

The city image concept (City brand) is an important characteristic that affects the choice, visit and revisit intention to a destination by tourists. Therefore, tourist destinations administrators should pay more attention to the natural environment, the infrastructure, the general atmosphere of the city and to the social environment elements that make up the cognitive image perceived by tourists (Artuger & Cetinsoz, 2017).

The lack of understanding about brand's power could be one of the reasons for the failure of tourist destinations, since in this sector; consumers often buy images associated with products. Therefore, understanding the way in which a destination is able to identify its unique sales proposals and achieving positioning for its commercialization to tourists is a key task (Meža & Šerić, 2014).

The place sellers either tourist promotion offices, convention centers and others, require a deep understanding of how place buyers (tourists or excursionists) take their decisions to choose a destination (Kotler et al., 2002). In this sense, according to the WTO (2012) the cities have six elements to differentiate themselves and compete with other destinations: amenity, access, attraction, human resources and price.

In general, tourists create their own destination image, thanks to their knowledge of the place, whether by an external influence, such as friends and family, advertisements, intermediaries or also, through their own past experiences. In this way, a subject of crucial interest for the local public administrators is to know the image projected by the destinations towards their potential tourists (Martins, 2015).

In different attempts to define the characteristics susceptible to distinguish a city, various factors that reflect the place identity and the physical aspects of the city have been used. However, in a tourist destination experience is an element of main attraction, is a product of scenarios for events, activities and services (Prilenska, 2012). In this sense, image of place incorporate concepts that includes brand, visual image, reputation, the feeling toward the place and place identity (Bayraktar & Uslay, 2017).

In the recent past, the results for creating a brand for cities point toward the efforts oriented to create symbolic programs to promote them. Most of these activities are carried out by the local tourism councils with no or minimal research preparation, and are focused in every way on the creation of a visual image and key logo to promote competitive advantages of the destination to the external public, i.e. potential guests (Jelinčić, Vukić & Kostešić, 2017).

Among the variables that have been investigated with respect to the image perceived by visitors of a tourist destination Naidoo, Ramseook-Munhurrin & Durbarray (2010) and Ramseook-Munhurrin, Seebalucka & Naidoo, (2015), found three categories 1) Travel Environment: safe and secure, cleanliness, friendly and helpful host community. 2) Events: distinctive history and heritage, variety of entertainment, festivals and cultural events and colorful nightlife. 3) Infrastructure: wide selection of restaurants/cuisine, wide choice of accommodations and signs

and indicators are properly displayed, classifying the first category as psychological dimension, and the rest of them into functional dimension. Because their results are not generalizable, it is recommended that quantitative exploratory studies be carried out in this area.

In the same vein, the main destination distinctiveness factors for a city brand image identified by Risitano (2006) were, in order of importance, historical and cultural resources, friendly inhabitants, local food/cuisine, hotels and accommodations, security and transportations services.

Regarding the same subject Martins (2015) realized that interesting cultural attractions, local gastronomy, transportation infrastructure, nightlife, friendly people and cultural heritage contribute to the destination's image construction.

Although cultural resources and museums appear in the aforementioned studies, Castillo-Villar (2016) affirms that the proliferation of museums and monuments as icons in different cities around the world, it does not contribute to the development of a distinctive image of them. However, he recommends comparing his findings with research carried out in other cities to obtain a broader vision and explore whether these contribute significantly to the development and positioning of the city brand.

Research Methodology:-

From the lack of knowledge of the factors that tourists identify as representative of Tijuana, and that shall be used in the design of the city brand, it was decided to carry out a descriptive study using the quantitative method, applying the survey technique to achieve the following objectives.

Research Objectives:-

1. - To identify the socioeconomic and sociodemographic profile of tourist that visits the city.
2. - To hierarchize the factors that shall represent the Tijuana Brand as a tourist destination based on visitor's perception.

Sampling Unit:-

It was determined to survey national or international visitors to the city who agreed to respond to the survey. The questionnaires were applied in four areas of the city, characterized by the concentration of tourist offer and the presence of a greater volume of visitors.

Definition of Sample Size and Procedure for Data Collection:-

To define the sample size, a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of $\pm 4\%$ were established, resulting in 601 visitors being surveyed at the four predetermined areas. In order to validate the final instrument, two pilot samplings of the instrument were carried out in the months of September and October of 2015, each pilot test was conducted with a sample of 40 visitors.

This allowed the design of the final survey, which in addition to the socioeconomic and sociodemographic data, includes sixteen factors that shall represent the Tijuana Brand as a tourist destination; a five-point Likert scale was used with the following response options: 5= Extremely Important, 4 =Very Important, 3 = Important, 2 = Less important and 1 = Not important.

Statistical Tools:-

1. Descriptive measures.
2. Exploratory Factor Analysis.

Analysis and Discussion:-

The sociodemographic profile of the respondents (Table 1) shows that, overall, 62.00% are between 18 and 38 years old, which means that is a young demand; 48.30% of the respondents were male and the other 51.70% were female.

Besides, the 74.20% correspond to tourists (visitors who spend at least one night in the city) and only 25.80% are excursionist or day visitors. The visitor's ethnic profile is represented mainly by Mexicans with 52.60%, Hispanics with 25.60%, either Hispanics who immigrated to the United States, or children of Hispanics who emigrated but who were born in the United States and Anglo-Saxons with 20.30%.

The most used source to obtain information about the city is the recommendation of a relative or friend (mouth to ear) by 77%, while the least used are the internet and social networks. The majority was employees, the 41.77% residents of Southern California and 37.2% in other Mexican states. Finally, the 50.6% reported monthly income for up to \$1600 dollars.

Table 1:- Sociodemographic characteristics of participants

Variable	Characteristics	Frequency	%
Age	18 to 27	187	31.1
	28 to 38	186	30.9
	39 to 48	121	20.1
	49 to 58	73	12.1
	59 and above	34	5.7
Gender	Male	290	48.30
	Female	311	51.70
Type of visitor	Tourist	446	74.20
	Excursionist (Day visitor)	155	25.80
	Mexican	316	52.60
	Anglo-Saxon	122	20.30
	Hispanic born in the US	97	16.10
Ethnic profile	Hispanic emigrated to the US	57	9.50
	Asian	7	1.20
	African-American	2	0.30
Source of information	Recommendation	463	77.00
	Lived in the city	88	14.70
	Ads on television	25	4.20
	Social Networks	19	3.20
	Web Page	6	1.00
Occupation	Employee	381	63.40
	Student	91	14.90
	Home	60	10.00
	Self-employed	57	9.32
	Retired	13	2.20
Place of residence	California, US	251	41.77
	Other US states	22	3.66
	Baja California, Mexico	97	16.13
	Other Mexico States	224	37.28
	Other countries	7	1.16
Monthly income (US dollars)	\$ 800 dollars and below	162	27.00
	\$ 801 to \$ 1600	142	23.60
	\$ 1601 to \$ 2400	79	13.10
	\$ 2401 to \$ 3200	43	7.20
	\$ 3201 and above	69	11.50
	Did not declare income	106	17.60

Reliability of instrument:-

Table 2 shows the results of the reliability analysis – Cronbach's Alpha Value. The test demonstrates the consistency between the measurements scales used in the sixteen variables used in the research. A score of 1.0 on the Cronbach Alpha indicates 100 percent reliability. The score obtained from .705 is above the generally accepted score of Nunnally (1978) of 0.7; this result shows the reliability of the questionnaire.

Table 2:- Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of elements
.705	16

Exploratory Factor Analysis:-

In order to examine the appropriateness of the data to carry out the exploratory factor analysis, the KMO and Bartlett's sphericity tests were performed. If the total result exceeds 0.50 means that factor analysis is useful with the given data (Hair, Black, Babin & Tatham, 2006). In this case results suggest that the data are adequate for factor analysis due to the value of 0.682 and confirms that a factor analysis is appropriate. Additionally, the level of significance has a very small value (Sig. = 0.000) indicating that the variables are highly correlated (Table3).

Table 3:- KMO and Bartlett's test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sample Adequacy		.682
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Squared	1753.149
	df	120
	Sig.	.000

As shown in Table 4, after reducing the 16 variables indicating the characteristics that shall represent the Tijuana Brand as a tourist destination, and considering only Initial eigenvalues greater than one (1) it was found that five (5) representative uncorrelated components together explain 62.52% of the total variance over the perception. The rest of the components with initial eigenvalues smaller than one (1) were discarded because together they explain only 37.48% of the cumulative variance.

Table 4:- Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %
1	3.059	19.119	19.119	3.059	19.119	19.119	1.920	12.003	12.003
2	1.866	11.662	30.781	1.866	11.662	30.781	1.836	11.473	23.476
3	1.666	10.412	41.193	1.666	10.412	41.193	1.723	10.769	34.245
4	1.269	7.928	49.121	1.269	7.928	49.121	1.635	10.216	44.461
5	1.122	7.014	56.135	1.122	7.014	56.135	1.514	9.464	53.925
6	1.022	6.390	62.525	1.022	6.390	62.525	1.376	8.601	62.525
7	.838	5.236	67.761						
8	.804	5.022	72.783						
9	.756	4.727	77.510						
10	.651	4.068	81.578						
11	.639	3.993	85.571						
12	.602	3.763	89.334						
13	.511	3.191	92.525						
14	.490	3.064	95.589						
15	.432	2.700	98.289						
16	.274	1.711	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

The idea of rotation is to reduce the number factors on which the variables under investigation have high loadings. The result of the Factor Analysis shows six components that highlight the variables that distinguish Tijuana brand as a tourist destination (table 5). The rotated component matrix allows identifying the variables that present significant loads in the same factor, enabling the definition of common factors.

Table 5:- Rotated Component Matrix ^a

Variables	Components					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Diversity of the gastronomic offer	.740					
Variety of lodging offer	.713					
Varied offer of bars and nightclubs	.652					
City with international air connectivity	.500					
Cleanliness in the tourist areas of the city		.777				

Signage to reach tourist sites		.646				
Outdoor spaces where visitors can walk		.596				
Museums			.903			
Cultural events			.901			
Monument to Independence, Freedom or Cultural Miscegenation				.768		
The Monumental Clock is representative in the city				.734		
The Minaret is an icon of the city of Tijuana				.653		
In the city traffic signs are respected					.836	
The conditions of the streets in the city are excellent					.617	
Kindness of the local people						.773
Sense of safety in the city						.773
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. ^a Rotation converged in 6 iterations.						

The first Component of relevance, which was called "Wide Offer and Connectivity Factor", includes, in order of importance and its respective load factor, four variables: diversity of the gastronomic offer (.740), varied offer in lodging offer (.713), in bars and nightclubs (.652) and international air connectivity (.500). By itself this factor account for a variance of 19.11%.

The second Component determined as "Urban Environment Factor" contain aspects such as cleanliness in the tourist areas of the city (.777), signage to reach tourist sites (.646), outdoor spaces where visitors can walk (.596) and it represents 11.66 % of the variance.

Thirdly, appears the Component named "Historical and Cultural Heritage Factor", which cover aspects directly related to museums (.903) and cultural events (.901), explaining the 10.41 % of the variance.

The fourth Component called "Monuments Factor" refers to the representative monuments of the city. To the Liberty, Freedom or Cultural Miscegenation (.768), Monumental Clock (.734) and The Minaret (.653), explicating the 7.92% of the variance.

The fifth Component labeled "Traffic Safety Factor", includes the variables: in the city traffic signs are respected (.836) and the conditions of the streets in the city are excellent (.617), accounting for 7.01% of the variance.

The sixth and final component named as "Friendliness and Security Factor", refers to the Friendliness of the local people (.733) and to the sense of safety in the city (.773), and it represents 6.39% of the total variance.

Discussion and Conclusion:-

As mentioned above, in the design of a city brand that aims to attract tourists to the destination, besides the active participation of the public sector, stakeholders such as political and cultural organizations and consultants, should incorporate the opinion and perception of current and potential tourists to attract them.

The first component "Wide Offer and Connectivity Factor" includes factors as varied offer in lodging, bars and nightclubs; these results are in agreement with the findings of Naidoo et al. (2010), Ramseook-Munhurrin et al. (2015), Risitano (2006) and Martins (2015), who found that nightlife, wide selection of restaurants and accommodations are factors perceived by visitors. Continuing with the factors included in the first Component, the results indicate that the connectivity of the destination is also relevant, as pointed out by Martins (2015).

With respect to the second Component designated as "Urban Environment Factor" contain aspects such as cleanliness in the tourist areas, signage to reach tourist sites and outdoor spaces where visitors can walk. They coincide with the findings reported by Naidoo et al. (2010) and Ramseook-Munhurrin et al. (2015), in the travel environment and infrastructure categories.

Regarding the third Component named "Historical and Cultural Heritage Factor "; it refers to museums and cultural events. And they are in agreement with the results found by Naidoo et al. (2010), Ramseook-Munhurrin et al.

(2015), Risitano (2006) and Martins (2015), whom emphasize their contribution to the city brand through its different manifestations such as historical and cultural heritage, as well as festivals and cultural events.

The fourth Component called "Monuments Factor" refers to the representative monuments of the city: to the Liberty, Freedom or Cultural Miscegenation, Monumental Clock and The Minaret. However, these findings contradict the conclusions of Castillo-Villar (2016), who argues that the use of museums and monuments as icons in different cities around the world, does not contribute to the development of a distinctive image.

The fifth Component labeled as "Traffic Safety Factor", incorporates variables such as respect for traffic signals and excellent street conditions are similar to the conclusions of Naidoo et al. (2010) and Ramseook-Munhurrin et al. (2015), Risitano (2006). It is necessary to mention that from visitor's perspective these variables contribute significantly to the sense of security in the destination.

The sixth and last Component named "Friendliness and Security Factor", which refers to friendliness of the local people and to the sense of safety in the city, were stand out by Naidoo et al. (2010), Ramseook-Munhurrin et al. (2015), Risitano (2006) and Martins (2015). So the courtesy of the local population is an essential element in the design of the city image that, in addition, contributes to the visitor's sense of security.

If the city administrators, as well as those responsible for touristic promotion offices or the convention center executives try to attract a certain segment of tourism, they need to incorporate the tourists perception, with the purpose of designing a unique sale proposal that allows them to achieve a better position and diverse commercialization levels, as indicated by Meža and Šerić (2014). In this way, they would be following the recommendation of Kavaratzis and others (2015) whom suggest that city brand, shall be designed from the tourist perspective that take decisions based on the place.

Additionally, considering that the in situ perception of destination is a key moment in the tourists' experience (Martins, 2015) it is suggested to obtain the tourist opinion and perception through a survey applied in the destination, which would allow to evaluate the most relevant factors to city branding, based on recent experience.

In summary, to design a city image it is essential to take into account the tourist opinion, incorporating the public and private sectors as well as the local community, with the purpose of standing out the city image and highlighting the unique personality of the place, which will allow developing a long-term vision for the tourism sector.

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