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“This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published in Academia Revista Latinoamericana de Administración on 2022, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1108/ARLA-07-2021-0132>.”



Analysis of the influence of reputation, identity and image on the country brand.

Journal:	<i>Academia Revista Latinoamericana de Administracion</i>
Manuscript ID	ARLA-07-2021-0132.R3
Manuscript Type:	Research Paper
Keywords:	country brand, identity, reputation, country image, Anholt-Gfk Nation Brands Index

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The article

**“Analysis of the influence of reputation, identity and image on
the country brand”**

has been proofread by the abovementioned professional, UK
native translator.

4th. March 2022



Administracion

Analysis of the influence of reputation, identity and image on the country brand

Análisis de la influencia de la reputación, la identidad y la imagen en la marca país

Abstract

Purpose - The main objective of this study is to identify some of the variables that affect the perception of the Brazil country brand, as well as the knowledge of the relationships among them. **Design/methodology/approach** - The proposed model aims to find out the influence of the affective image, the cognitive image, the identity and the reputation on the country brand. Partial Least Squares (PLS) is the method used to test this model.

Findings - According to the results obtained, it seems that both identity and reputation have a positive and significant effect on the country brand. On the other hand, the cognitive image is positively related to identity and the affective image, while it is surprising that the affective image itself shows no significant influence on identity.

Originality/value - The study is of particular interest to the policy makers of territories, explaining the factors which they must influence in order to successfully enhance the country brand. It also contributes to theoretical development by proposing a conceptual model that highlights the importance of the cognitive image in the country brand due to its effect on the affective image and identity.

Keywords country brand, identity, reputation, country image, Anholt-Gfk Nation Brands Index

Paper type Research paper

Resumen

Objetivo - El principal objetivo de este estudio es identificar algunas de las variables que inciden en la percepción de la marca país Brasil, así como el conocimiento de las relaciones entre ellos.

Diseño/metodología/enfoque - El modelo propuesto tiene como objetivo conocer la influencia de la imagen afectiva, la imagen cognitiva, la identidad y reputación en la marca país. El PLS (Partial Least Squares) es el método utilizado para probar el modelo propuesto.

Resultados - Según los resultados obtenidos, parece que tanto la identidad como la reputación tienen un efecto positivo y significativo en la marca país. Por otro lado, la imagen cognitiva se relaciona positivamente con la identidad y la imagen afectiva, mientras que sorprende que la imagen afectiva en sí misma no muestra una influencia significativa sobre la identidad.

Originalidad/valor - El estudio es de especial interés para los responsables políticos, ya que explica los factores que debe influir para potenciar con éxito la marca país. También contribuye al desarrollo teórico proponiendo un modelo conceptual que resalte la importancia de la imagen cognitiva en la marca país, por su efecto sobre la imagen e identidad afectiva.

Palabras clave Marca País, Identidad, reputación, Imagen del país, Índice marca país Anholt-Gfk.

Tipo de papel Trabajo de investigación

1. Introduction

The country brand has been gaining in importance in recent years. Cities, regions and nations invest significant amounts of money to improve or change their brand image (Anholt, 2014) and there are numerous studies in the field of management that focus on country brand awareness (Anholt, 1998; Anholt, 2014; Buhmann, 2016; Cho and Hwang, 2020; Fan, 2006; Lascu *et al.*, 2020; Papadopoulos and Heslop, 2003). These studies have centered on the creation, valuation and management of brands associated with specific countries. Additionally, most of them have been analyzed from the perspective of tourists and using eminently qualitative methodologies, with relatively few studies developing conceptual models supported by quantitative methodologies (Buhmann, 2016). They have also focused on measuring the brand image of territories (Mariutti, 2017; Wetzel, 2006). Therefore, this paper aims to add quantitative research based on primary data on country brand to the existing literature and also guide managers on how to strategically improve a country brand in order to differentiate its offering and help them to make decisions.

However, understanding the factors that contribute to the formation of country branding is considered to be of the utmost interest to policymakers in territories, as country branding can be an antecedent to the intention to engage with the country and a source of competitive advantage and market success (Anholt, 2005; Montanari *et al.*, 2019; Ulutaş, 2020). This is especially relevant for small and developing countries due to the possibility that it offers them to "establish and communicate to the world their true cultural, social and historical identity and achieve a "niche" within the global community" (Pablo de Roca, 2016: 82). It should be noted that when talking about a country brand it is necessary to consider its real meaning: the place of origin, represented by a name and an identity, is used to support the sales of products of that country. A country brand influences people's decisions about what to buy, where to visit or work or study, where to invest, whom to believe, and whom to trust (Anholt, 2020). It is not the brand itself, but the benefit it can bring, measured in monetary terms, for the country it represents. And this benefit goes far beyond improving tourism indicators, also being reflected in the attraction of foreign investment, the financing possibilities of the country and its organizations, the sale of products and services and the attraction of talent (Kilduff and Núñez Tabales, 2017; Pablo de Roca, 2016). Therefore, a country brand becomes of interest not only for governments but also for businesses that need to enhance their competitiveness abroad (Kilduff and Núñez Tabales, 2017; Roth and Diamantopoulos, 2009).

According to the above considerations, the main objective of this research is to identify the country brand background and establish its influence on it. Consequently, the study strives to answer how country image, identity and reputation affect a country brand, as well as the knowledge of the relations among them. Nowadays, the literature about the relationship between a country identity and a country image has still had no conclusive results, and international reputation has been largely absent from the studies about country brands. Additionally, most of the research has focused on the cognitive dimension of the country image rather than including both the affective and cognitive dimensions. Furthermore, we also contribute to the existing literature by delving into the effect that each dimension of the country brand has on this construct, which has been little researched. To this end, a conceptual model is proposed that is contrasted empirically for the case of the Brazil country brand.

The relevance of a country brand has prompted that, following the classic brand rankings, country brand rankings are now available and are published every year. The first attempt to set up a countries ranking was the Anholt Nation Brands Index that was developed by Simon Anholt in 2005 and has now become one of the largest social science projects in the world. This index uses a representative sample of 20,000 people from 20 countries to assess 50 countries and is based on six dimensions (tourism, export, governance, investment and

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4 immigration, culture and patrimony, and people) that will be our benchmark to measure the
5 Brazil country brand. Other indexes have been created in the last sixteen years, such as the
6 Nation Brand Impact Framework, the FutureBrand Country Brand Index, the Bloom Consulting
7 Country Brand Ranking and the Global Soft Power Index, among others. Most of them are
8 measured by surveys concerning some countries and are answered by people from different
9 countries. Nevertheless, they have been criticized about the number of countries evaluated, the
10 sample size or the number of countries where the survey has been carried out. However, Papp-
11 Vary (2021) explains that “if a research makes exactly the same mistake from time to time, the
12 changes can be interpreted in the very same way, and that is the point” (p. 113).

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15 This last sentence is important to us because, as our study focuses on the Brazil country
16 brand only from the Spanish point of view, this could be seen as a limitation of the paper. On
17 the other hand, the literature also offers other studies that have only surveyed one country (e.g.,
18 Papadopoulos and Heslop, 2004; Pappu *et al.*, 2007, Mariutti and de Moura, 2019). The choice
19 of this territory is based, first of all, on the consideration of Brazil as the second investment
20 market for Spain, behind the United Kingdom (Communication Fundación Consejo España
21 Brasil, 2017), Spanish companies having created more than 400,000 jobs in Brazil in recent
22 years. Furthermore, according to the conclusions of the First Spain-Brazil Forum (Sao Paulo,
23 2017), companies from this American country must increase their international presence, the
24 country must provide greater legal security to investors, and, affected by the economic crisis
25 and corruption, Brazil’s image in Spain must be improved (Fundación Consejo España-Brasil).
26 In this regard, and despite being the tenth world economy in terms of GDP data, the indicators
27 of unemployment, GDP per capita and ease of doing business as well as the difficulty of
28 emerging from the economic crisis (the latest GDP growth data is far below the country’s
29 productive capacity), place Brazil as an emerging economy (Plan Nacional de Turismo, 2018).
30 Finally, Brazil has been making important efforts to build and communicate its country brand
31 to different stakeholders in recent years, through the so-called Aquarela plans (Schiavon, 2018).
32 These plans were launched to change the image that the country had previously displayed
33 abroad, represented by the figure of women enjoying the beaches, and has placed Brazil in
34 second place in the ranking of Latin American countries (Country Brand Report, 2018).

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37 This research provides new findings and offers support to existing conclusions. Its main
38 contribution is that it extends a country brand into the international context, by providing
39 empirical evidence of a positive and significant effect of both identity and reputation on the
40 country brand. Moreover, the cognitive image is positively related to identity and the affective
41 image, while it is surprising that the affective image itself shows no significant influence on the
42 identity. The study is particularly interesting to the policymakers of territories, explaining the
43 factors that they must influence in order to successfully enhance the country brand. It also
44 contributes to theoretical development by proposing a conceptual model that highlights the
45 importance of the cognitive image in the country brand due to its effect on the affective image
46 and identity.

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49 The theoretical foundations and the proposed conceptual model are presented next.
50 These are followed by the main issues related to the empirical study, detailing the design of the
51 research, the measurement instruments, and the data analysis. Finally, the principal results
52 obtained are discussed, as well as their theoretical and management implications.

53 54 55 **2. Theoretical Background and Research Hypotheses**

56 The limited theory and complexity of considering the country as a brand makes this construct
57 of interest to both academics and professionals (Montanari *et al.*, 2019). Consumers value
58 differently products that are identical in everything except their country of origin (Pappu, *et al.*,
59 2007; Roth and Diamantopoulos, 2009). Consequently, the academic literature has devoted

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4 increasing attention to the study of country branding, although most studies have focused on
5 measuring the brand image of different territories (Florek, 2005; Florek and Conejo, 2006;
6 Gilmore, 2002; Gudjonsson, 2005; Mariutti, 2017; Montanari and Giraldi, 2020; Wetzel, 2006).
7 There are theoretical approaches to this issue (Anholt, 1998; Fan, 2006; Van Ham, 2008),
8 although there is not really a generally accepted conceptual model that includes the
9 relationships among the different variables that affect the construction of the country brand.
10 However, as Anholt (2014: 168) states "it is really possible and necessary to explore, discuss
11 and measure whether it is feasible to deliberately influence the international image and
12 reputation of territories, and by what means...". This same author postulates that the country
13 brand should be considered in relation to the identity, brand image and reputation of the
14 territories, rather than as a marketing strategy (Anholt, 1998). Dinnie (2015) also recommends
15 that both image and identity should be used to develop a country brand while Urde and Greyser
16 (2016) posit that the identity should be reflected in the country brand. The relationship between
17 country identity and the country image still has no conclusive results. This situation leads us to
18 propose the conceptual model represented in Figure 1. The constructs of the model and research
19 hypotheses are explained below.
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23 Figure 1 presents the research model proposed in this paper and summarizes the
24 hypotheses which are to be explored.
25

26 **Figure 1**

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30 Though we support the six-dimension model proposed by Anholt (2005) (tourism, export,
31 governance, investment and immigration, culture and patrimony, and people) that combined
32 form the multidimensional construct of a country brand, in this paper we do not examine the
33 linkages between individual dimensions and the country identity or the reputation. However,
34 we delve into the effect that each dimension of the country brand has on this construct by
35 assessing weights and loads to each of them. This has been a deficiency in the existing
36 literature (Ulutaş, 2020).
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39 *2.1 Country Brand*

40 A country's brand is the total sum of the perceptions that international stakeholders have
41 about that country, it is conceived as "the national identity made tangible, robust, communicable
42 and useful. It impacts virtually every aspect of their international development and therefore
43 plays a critical role in their economic, social, political and cultural progress" (Pablo de Roca,
44 2016:82). Under this meaning, it represents the intangible assets of the territory, which include
45 political, cultural, historical, economic, social and technological aspects (Dinnie, 2015).
46

47 Due to its origin, the country brand is considered a concept related to other very similar
48 concepts, such as the country of origin, tourism destination brand management, public
49 diplomacy and national identity (Fan, 2010). These concepts have been the main source of
50 reference for much country brand research. The development of the country brand is closely
51 connected with the strategies of the territories' policymakers, who have promoted it by
52 searching for sources of competitive advantage to differentiate their countries from the rest,
53 based on the premise that a strong country brand contributes to progress (Filieri et al, 2019;
54 Jaffe and Nebenzahl 2001; Kleppe and Mossberg, 2006).
55

56 Given the strategic importance of its management, it is key to know the dimensions on
57 which a country brand is based. To this end, we will rely on the Anholt-Gfk Nation Brands
58 Index, developed in 2005 by Simon Anholt to measure the global perceptions of countries in
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4 six dimensions: tourism, exports, government, investment and immigration, culture and
5 heritage, and people.

6 Figure 2 presents the six-dimensional model that Anholt (2005) proposed to measure
7 the global perceptions of countries. This paper will be based on this to measure the country
8 brand.
9

10 11 Figure 2

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14 **Tourism:** Tourism is the most visible aspect of the country brand, creating an image
15 that may impact the nation's performance. It is usually the most competent marketing force as
16 it creates a visual image of the country that can affect other areas, such as foreign investment
17 (Anholt, 2005). From this point of view, countries with good tourism indicators will be in a
18 better position to develop a strong country brand.

19
20 **Export:** Exporting determines the image of products and services and the extent to
21 which consumers proactively seek or avoid products from a country (Corbacho *et al.*, 2014).
22 Large exporting countries of value-added products already have a strong country brand related
23 to product image. These are the countries that, through their "made in" labels, achieve consumer
24 confidence. In this regard, the promotion of innovation and the commitment to the development
25 of patents and brands will contribute to the generation of a strong export sector which, in turn,
26 will add value to the country brand (Anholt, 2005).

27
28 **Governance:** The governance dimension is based on the public opinion about the
29 competence and fairness of the national government, as well as its perceived commitment to
30 global problems. It addresses issues related to respect for human rights, justice, poverty
31 reduction, respect for the environment and accountability in matters of international peace and
32 security (Zhao and Latshaw, 2009). Internationally respected governments will contribute to
33 the development of a strong country brand. Therefore, it is necessary to manage the effect that
34 government actions have on individual beliefs about the country's commitment to democracy,
35 justice, poverty reduction and respect for the environment.

36
37 **Investment and immigration:** the investment and immigration dimension refers to the
38 ability to attract investment and talent. This dimension is determined by aspects such as the
39 country's economic prosperity, equal opportunities and perception of the quality of life (Zhao
40 and Latshaw, 2009). One point to also consider is that, when choosing the country of
41 destination, potential residents, tourists or organizations carry out a risk assessment that they
42 will assume, choosing the country that is most valuable for them (Felipa, 2014).

43
44 **Culture and patrimony:** this dimension reveals global perceptions of the country's
45 cultural heritage and includes aspects related to sport, cultural heritage, music, cinema, art and
46 literature. Culture, heritage and sport give countries richness, dignity and loyalty and provide
47 them with respect abroad and quality of life within their borders. The intellectual capital of the
48 heritage, history, culture and geography of the nation is often well known to others, but
49 inadequately or inefficiently applied in order to add value (Anholt, 2005).

50
51 **People:** This dimension measures the reputation of the population in relation to skills,
52 training, friendliness, openness and the perceived level of discrimination and hostility
53 (Corbacho *et al.*, 2014). It is the nation's human capital and represents the main intangible asset
54 for the country, including skills, behavior and the values of people (Anholt, 2005). It measures
55 the attractiveness of human resources at the professional level, and how business managers are
56 willing to hire qualified personnel depending on their nationality (Zhao and Latshaw, 2009).

57 58 59 2.2 Country image

As we have already pointed out, many researchers have focused on country image when studying country brands. In this line, Pappu, *et al.* (2007) highlight the relation between the country image and the brand image, as the brand image is associated with the positive or negative image of a country. Consumers could become loyal to those brands that have been made in a country with a positive image. Authors also point out that the country image could be transferred throughout product categories, acting like an umbrella brand.

On the other hand, each country has an image, fixed in the minds of consumers through their own experiences or information acquired via training or transmitted by the media (Papadopoulos and Heslop, 1993). This image has been mostly considered as a multidimensional construct, made up of a knowledge-based cognitive dimension and an affective dimension which is a product of an emotional judgment (Andersen *et al.*, 2018; Echtner and Ritchie, 1993; Han and Terpstra, 1988; Hosany *et al.*, 2006; Magnusson *et al.*, 2019; Wang *et al.*, 2012; Woo, 2019). While the cognitive component consists of specific assessments with respect to attributes of the image object, the affective component is a necessarily general judgment with respect to its emotional appeal. Therefore, the country image refers to what people know (or think that they know) about a country's different attributes and their general feelings toward the country.

In accordance with previous research, this study considers the country image as the mental representation of a country and its inhabitants, based on a cognitive and affective assessment. The cognitive image incorporates beliefs based on aspects related to product quality, company reliability and worker qualifications. The affective image indicates mere feelings of acceptance or rejection of the country. The two can be opposed, so it is necessary to consider both dimensions in the study of the country image (Wang *et al.*, 2012).

The affective image transmitted by a country has important repercussions on key aspects of international competitiveness, such as foreign capital investment (Gertner 2010; Kunczik 2002), export success (Papadopoulos and Heslop 1993), buying process and product evaluations (Dedeoglu, 2019), attraction of talent for the labor and educational market (Papadopoulos, 2004), international relations or a country's ability to influence international policies (Van Ham, 2008). Image studies of tourism destinations, also focused on a territory's management, have postulated the effect that the cognitive image has as an antecedent of the affective image (Ryan and Cave, 2005; Song and Hsu, 2013).

Meanwhile, the literature also presents the micro and macro dimensions of a country image (Pappu *et al.*, 2007; García *et al.*, 2021). According to previous studies, the macro country image refers to economic, political and technological dimensions and the micro country image concerns the person's beliefs about the products made in a given country. The former conceptualization of the country image is at the country level, while the latter is at a product level. Additionally, most of the research has focused on the cognitive dimension of the country image (Garcia *et al.*, 2021). Consequently, meaning to study both the cognitive and affective images and both the macro and micro dimensions, our research operationalizes the micro dimension considering the cognitive attributes and the macro dimension considering the affects. Moreover, in line with Papadopoulos and Heslop (1993) and Pappu *et al.* (2007), we again consider that both dimensions are related.

Based on the above considerations, the following research hypothesis is proposed:

H1: The cognitive country image positively affects the affective country image

2.3 Country identity

In the brand management literature, the country is considered an organization. From this point of view, each country should have its own identity that allows it to differentiate itself from others. Identity consists of the physical traits (visual signs) and cultural traits (values and

beliefs) with which the country itself identifies and with which the target market, in turn, identifies the nation (Bastard, 2011). The identity dimension, applied to the country, refers to what the country actually is and does and arises from within the country itself, which must decide what it is, what it represents and what it wants to become (Heding *et al.*, 2009). However, it is possible for these same questions to be answered from outside the country, in which case the identity would be related to the perceptions that different stakeholders have about what the country is and represents. In this sense, countries should know their strengths and weaknesses, their opportunities and threats, compared to other nations, in order to determine their sources of competitive advantage and base their identity on them (Kotler and Gertner, 2002). Under this perspective, identity is not something static; it can vary over time due to factors outside the country (Urde and Greyser, 2016).

The relationship between the country identity and the country image has been studied in the previous literature, without conclusive results. Some authors postulate that identity affects image formation (Mindutri *et al.*, 2015), but that there is a gap between territories' decisions about how they wish to be perceived and how they are actually seen (Dinnie, 2015). Others claim that both constructs are interrelated, as the country identity is based on the country image that external agents have (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004; Rusciano 2003). From the cognitive perspective, it is emphasized that the knowledge that individuals have of the characteristics of a place (Alhemound and Armstrong, 1996) affects its identity. From the management point of view, it is recommended that both image and identity should be used to develop a country brand (Dinnie, 2015), and that the identity, with the appropriate communication and positioning strategies, will be reflected in the country brand (Urde and Greyser, 2016). All of the above leads to the following hypotheses:

H2. The affective country image is positively related to the country identity.

H3. The cognitive country image is positively related to the country identity.

H4. The country identity is positively related to the country brand.

2.4 International reputation

A country's international reputation is considered an emotional variable that determines admiration, trust, and international opinion. It is the result of a judgment made by agents outside the country (Basdeo *et al.*, 2006) and is dynamic in nature, so it can be modified over time. Reputation is an intangible benefit that results in price advantages and quantifiable rewards in the context of international trade (Anholt, 2014). Since 2016, the Reputation Institute (RepTrak) has conducted an annual study of the reputation of large companies and offers an indicator, called Pulse, which measures the emotional appeal that a company awakens among its stakeholders. In 2004, this institution launched the Country RepTrak model to discover the perceptions that the interviewees had of different countries based on 3 dimensions (advanced economy, appealing environment and effective government). The institution does not only offer the Country Pulse, it also correlates the country reputation with favorable behaviors, such as recommending you visiting, living, working, investing and studying in the country, buying its products and organizing and attending events that are held in the country. Doing so, the RepTrak transfers the concept of "Reputation Economy" from the company to the nation to reflect how good perceptions of the country generate favorable behaviors that, in turn, have a direct impact on the economic results of the country (export, foreign direct investment and arrivals of tourists, immigrants and students). To do so, this institution correlates the favorable behaviors with real data on the economic results. According to the Reputation Institute (2018), there is a direct relationship between reputation and the creation of a tangible economic value, in such a way that a 10% increase in reputation implies an average 11% increase in tourist arrivals and a 2% increase in foreign direct investment.

The study of the reputation of nations has focused on aspects related to communication and public relations (Buhmann and Ingenhoff, 2015), those connected with the economic and diplomatic environment (Mariutti, 2017; Van Ham, 2008) and those linked to territory management (Mariutti, 2016; Kotler and Gertner, 2002). Under this last approach, the debate has been raised concerning the possible similarity between image and reputation (Mariutti, 2016), but this has been solved as reputation goes beyond the joint influence of different dimensions of image. Reputation is considered the synthetic measure of attitudes toward a country, which must be managed via institutional communication (Rusciano, 2003) to obtain a favorable global reputation. In order to manage reputation, it will be necessary to modify the judgments, attitudes and opinions of interest groups, driving favorable behaviors that create value and generate respect and interest from other countries and the international media (Anholt, 2007; Yang *et al.*, 2008).

In this line, Fernández *et al.* (2019) defend that “the status of a country’s reputation has convinced policymakers, governments, and society to take significant steps to market their brands and images” (p. 2). However, Mariutti and Giraldi (2020) point out that international reputation has been quite absent from the studies about the country brand. In accordance with these authors (Mariutti and de Moura, 2019), we highlight its potential impact on international business strategies worldwide and suggest developing communication plans by engaging the public and private sectors. The brand reflects the perceptions of stakeholders and is consequently affected by reputation (Vallaster and von Wallpach, 2013). This leads to the next research hypothesis:

H5. Reputation is positively related to the country brand.

3. Empirical Study

Next, we present the main characteristics of the empirical study, focusing on the methods of information collection, the design of the measurement instruments and the statistical techniques used in the data analysis.

3.1 Methodology

An empirical study has been carried out to test the hypotheses, based on a questionnaire administered online via e-mail and social networks to adults living in the different provinces of the region of Andalusia in southern Spain. The total population size was 6,605,779 in January 2018. The sample elements were selected on the basis of snowball convenience sampling, stratified by province according to the weight of each province in the total population. Data collection took place in May 2018, and 329 duly completed questionnaires were obtained, after eliminating incomplete questionnaires and those containing systematic or inconsistent responses, as well as the observations that did not meet the criteria suggested by Hair *et al.* (2016) to handle missing data. The error level assumed for a confidence level of 95% is 5.4%. The composition of the sample is detailed in Table I.

Table I

3.2 Measurement instruments

With respect to the measurement instruments used, the affective image, the cognitive image and the reputation were measured with 5-point Likert scales made up of indicators extracted from the theoretical review carried out. The cognitive image, measured with five indicators, incorporates the beliefs based on aspects related to product quality, business reliability and worker qualification. The affective image, composed of three items, indicates mere feelings of acceptance of the country. Finally, reputation has been measured with three indicators related to the country's weight on the international stage.

To measure identity, a single indicator was used, constructed for that purpose from an open-ended question asking the respondent to define Brazil in two words. These words were catalogued according to their positive (+1), negative (-1) or neutral (0) identification, assigning a single final value obtained additively. This value informs of the existence of a negative or positive perception about the country identity.

The country brand construct, meanwhile, was measured using a multidimensional scale based on the Anholt-GfK Nation Brands Index. In order not to condition the answer, this construct was measured with a semi-open multiple-choice question, which included the six elements suggested by Anholt (2005), proposing an additive operation to generate the values obtained by the country brand.

3.3 Data analysis techniques

The technique used to test the proposed model is Partial Least Squares (PLS), a variance-based approach to modeling structural equations, specifically the SmartPLS software version 3.2.7 (Ringle *et al.*, 2015). This decision is based on different reasons. On the one hand, the constructs that form the model of our research are composite and therefore suitable for the application of PLS (Roldán and Sánchez-Franco, 2012). On the other hand, this research is oriented to identifying the reputation and image constructs that allow predicting the country brand construct (Hair *et al.*, 2011). All the constructs have been modeled in Mode A, except for the country brand, estimated in Mode B as the original instrument based on Anholt's hexagon (2005) has been used.

3.4 Measurement model

To evaluate the measurement model, it is necessary to distinguish between the estimated mode A and mode B compounds. For compounds that have been estimated with mode A, the traditional measures of internal consistency, reliability and validity must be applied (Henseler *et al.*, 2016). As a general rule to consider the reliability satisfactory, the loads of both indicators and dimensions must exceed the value of 0.7. In our case, all the indicators of the constructions estimated in mode A exceed this critical value (Table II). In addition, as they show a composite reliability greater than 0.7 (Table II) they meet that requirement.

Table II

To prove the convergent validity of Mode A constructs, the average variance extracted (AVE) is applied. In our model, all the constructs and dimensions meet this criterion as their AVE exceeds the level of 0.5 (Table II).

To accept the discriminant validity, which indicates that each construct differs from the other constructs, a two-way approach is used: the square correlation of the construct must not exceed the value of the AVE (Fornell-Larcker, 1981); and the HTMT (Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio) (Henseler *et al.*, 2015). All values in the matrix are below 0.85 (Kline,

2010), and the confidence intervals for HTMT do not contain the value 1 (Henseler *et al.*, 2015), so we accept discriminant validity (Table III).

Table III

To control the possible bias attributable to the measurement variable, during the research design process we applied the procedure recommended by Podsakoff *et al.* (2003). In addition, a complete collinearity test based on variance inflation factors (VIF) was applied to detect possible biases in the common Kock (2015) method. This analysis followed the guidelines that were described by Kock and Lynn (2012), who proposed such a test to assess both the vertical and the lateral collinearity. Kock (2015) indicates that when a VIF reaches a value greater than 3.3, there will be an indication of pathological collinearity. This would warn that a model may be affected by biases in the common method. The Government and Tourism variables show evidence of collinearity by reaching VIF values of 10.82 and 10.84, respectively, which exceed the critical value. The Tourism variable was eliminated as it shows a higher VIF and a lower weight. Having removed the Tourism indicator, the current model, with a maximum VIF of 1.89 (Table IV), can be considered CMB-free.

Table IV

For the country brand construct estimated in mode B, the weights of the indicators and their significance are assessed (Table V). Culture, Investment and Government indicators reach a level of significance higher than 0.05, suggesting that they are relevant for the construction of the country brand variable. As the loads of the Export and People indicators obtain values below the critical level of 0.5, the significance of their loads is measured. The export indicator is significant. The people indicator did not present a high multicollinearity, therefore it contributes to measuring the variance of the country brand construction. Consequently, it should be included in the measurement model (Roberts and Thatcher, 2009).

Table V

3.5 Structural model

A bootstrapping (5000 samples) has been carried out to provide both t-values and confidence intervals that allow the evaluation of the statistical significance of the relationships (Roldan and Sanchez Franco, 2012). Empirical evidence reveals that there is a significant relationship between the cognitive image and the affective image and also between the cognitive image and identity, so that hypotheses H1 and H3 are accepted, while hypothesis H2 is not admitted since there is no significant relationship between the affective image and identity. It is also ascertained that identity is positively related to the country brand, which leads us to accept hypothesis H4, and that reputation is positively related to country brand, which confirms hypothesis H5. Table VI shows the direct effects included in our research model.

Table VI

The blindfold process allows us to evaluate the predictive importance of the constructions. When performing blindfold procedures, all the Q^2 values are above zero, which supports the predictive relevance for endogenous constructs (Table VII).

Table VII

In addition, the coefficient of determination (R^2) is examined to evaluate the predictive power (sample prediction) for endogenous constructs. This indicates the amount of variance of a construct that is explained by the predictor variables of that endogenous construct in the model (Chin, 2010). In the presented model, the cognitive image explains 29.30% of the affective image, which together with the cognitive image explains 4.4% of identity, which in turn, together with reputation, explains 18.5% of the country brand (Table 7).

When examining the size of the effects (f^2), following Cohen's heuristic rules (1988), we observe that the effect of the cognitive image on the affective image (0.419) is large, the effect of identity on the country brand is medium (0.160) and the effect of reputation on the country brand can be considered as small (0.028). In the same way, the effect of the emotional image on identity can also be considered as small (0.023). However, the effect of the emotional image on identity exists (0.006), although it does not exceed the minimum value.

It is also verified that the SRMR adjustment index is 0.078, lower than the recommended maximum value of 0.08, thus confirming the good fit of the global model.

Figure 3 presents the results of the model, showing both supported (full line) and unsupported (dashed line) hypotheses.

Figure 3

4. Conclusions

This paper deals with the analysis of some of the variables that affect the perception of the country brand, as well as the knowledge of the relationships between them. The aim has been to determine the influence of the cognitive image, the affective image, the identity and reputation on the country brand. According to the results, it seems that both the identity and reputation have a significant positive effect on the country brand. On the other hand, the cognitive image is positively related to identity and to the affective image, while the affective image itself does not show a significant influence on identity.

The effect of the cognitive image has a double nature by affecting both identity (hypothesis H3) and the affective image (hypothesis H1). The cognitive image explains 3.32% of the identity variance. Therefore, it can be affirmed that efforts to improve the cognitive image usually result in an improvement of identity. The positive influence of the cognitive image on the affective image invites us to support hypothesis H1 and we verify that it explains 29.3% of its explained variance. This implies that the affective image, which is forged by an individual, is largely conditioned by the cognitive image that he or she displays.

It is noteworthy that the affective image has no significant effect on identity, which leads us to not support hypothesis H2. As a result, we can state that attempts to develop the affective image without strengthening the cognitive image will not achieve a positive effect on the country's identity.

Identity, on the other hand, has contributed to explaining 15.10% of the country brand (hypothesis H4). This positive and significant influence implies that it is achieving one's own identity which allows a country to differentiate itself from others, being an extremely important element in building a strong country brand.

On the other hand, reputation significantly and positively favors the country brand (hypothesis H5), although it only explains a small part of the variance of the country brand: 3.71%. From this point of view, it does not seem that international reputation can, by itself, make a significant contribution to the development of the country brand.

Finally, according to the analysis of the country brand variable, we can deduce the effect that each of Anholt's dimensions have on this construct. The weight of the investment and

immigration dimension stands out, followed by that of the government, which has a negative effect on the country brand. After these two dimensions, the culture and patrimony construct come next, followed by the export variable and, finally, with a residual weight, by the people dimension. So, we can affirm that the formation of a country brand is strongly affected by the perception of aspects such as the country's economic prosperity, equal opportunities and the quality of life. The perception of the government's actions has a very high weight, and also generates a negative effect on the country brand. In this sense, it is necessary to manage the effect that government actions have on individual beliefs about the country's commitment to democracy, justice, poverty reduction and respect for the environment. The effect of culture and the cultural heritage has also been shown to be relevant, leading to affirming the importance that the internationalization of artists and celebrities can have on the country brand. Another noteworthy aspect of this work, in relation to the dimensions of the country brand concept, is that in practice the tourism dimension does not appear as a constitutive element of the concept. This suggests that the model proposed by Anholt should be analyzed in greater depth in future research, especially from an empirical perspective.

5. Implications of the study

5.1 Theoretical implications

The main theoretical implications of this study focus on the confirmation of the relationship between the cognitive image and the affective image, and the effect of the former on a country's identity. The first of these relationships has already been shown in the literature on tourist destinations (Ryan and Cave, 2005; Song and Hsu, 2013), but in this study we have verified that this relationship is also significant in the case of the country brand, as the cognitive image contributes directly to explaining by itself almost 30% of the affective image.

The positive effect on identity is in line with other research about image, which highlights that the individual's knowledge of the characteristics of a place (Alhemound and Armstrong, 1996) affects its identity. However, this research shows that the feelings that this country arouses, measured via the affective image, will not affect the forming of its identity. It seems that elements related to objective issues, rather than emotions, determine the country identity perceived by different stakeholders.

Moreover, the role of perceived identity and international reputation in the country brand is confirmed, explaining almost 19% of it. These relationships have important repercussions for theoretical development, as they place what the country reflects being, its own uniqueness and perceived identity, as one of the relevant elements in the creation of a strong country brand. This is not only about image, which obviously has to be taken into account because of its effect on identity, but also about something more permanent and difficult to modify with communication campaigns, which can probably change some perceptions, but which will hardly change a nation's identity and reputation.

Finally, we can affirm the need to study the weight and direction of each of the six dimensions of Anholt's hexagon in the country brand. As we have shown in this study, not all of them affect it in the same way, so the knowledge about their relative importance in the forming of the country brand can be an area of theoretical development of relevance for the literature. In this sense, it is interesting to note the relevance of the investment and emigration dimension, which measures the country's capacity as a tourist destination from an economic perspective, despite its image of corruption. One possible explanation for this phenomenon, in our opinion, is that the corruption aspects of the country are closely related to the 'government' brand, which, as can be seen, has a negative sign.

5.2 Implications for management

In order to be competitive, nations need foreign investment, must draw talent, internationalize their companies, and attract tourists. All these variables will contribute to the development of a solid country brand which will allow international relations to be approached with greater guarantees. Therefore, the management of the country brand must be a constant concern for the political leaders of the territories. To this end, they must be aware that the creation of a country brand is a long and complex process, based on variables related to what the country itself is, but always in relation to the perceptions that different stakeholders form about it. The image, identity and reputation are three elements that must be dealt with, as we have shown in this research.

With regard to image, efforts should be focused on elements of a cognitive nature rather than merely affective elements. Individuals do not form an affective image of the country without taking into account objective elements related to what they believe that they know about the territory in question. Moreover, this affective image does not seem to affect the perception of the country identity, which is shaped by cognitive aspects. Therefore, as a first implication for management, we highlight the need to improve the knowledge of the country as a previous step to managing a solid country brand.

On the other hand, the identity and reputation of a country perceived by stakeholders affect the perception of the country brand. This is not what the country itself believes it is, but what the rest of the world believes it is. This perceived identity, in the case of Brazil, is greatly affected by two elements: samba and corruption, which are mostly cited by the individuals surveyed. Our second recommendation for the management of the country brand is related to this issue. Due to identity being very difficult to change in the short term, and it significantly affecting the country brand, it is imperative to address a management strategy that influences the development of a strong and positive external identity. Focusing on Brazil's presence in international forums, highlighting the training qualities of its inhabitants, exporting quality products, attracting students and researchers from European countries, and promoting respect for human rights and equitable income distribution are, in our opinion, priority actions to improve the country's perceived identity and international reputation.

Finally, it is necessary to emphasize the effect of the government dimension on the country brand. In Brazil, this variable has a relevant impact on the brand, but the effect is negative. The news about corruption and the political ups and downs of Brazil's recent governments have spread abroad, without any communication efforts aimed at minimizing the impact on the country brand. In this sense, we highlight the need to manage external communication so that internal problems derived from the political situation cannot damage the country brand. Remember that this country brand, if positive, will allow improvements in attracting foreign investment, financing possibilities of the country and its organizations, the sales of its products and services and the attraction of talent (Kilduff and Núñez Tabales, 2017; Pablo de Roca, 2016).

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Figure 1. Proposed model

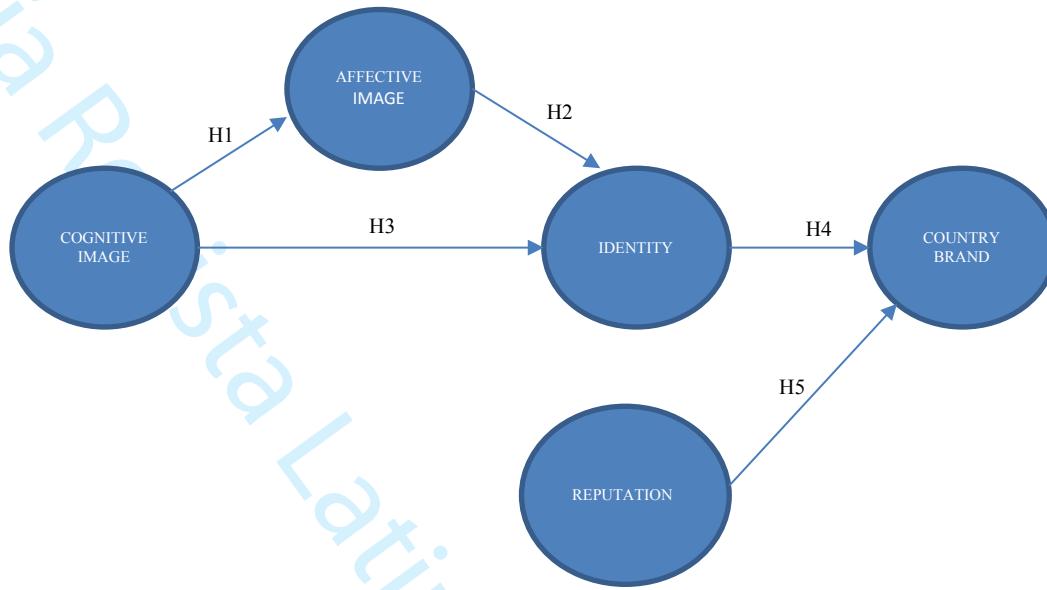
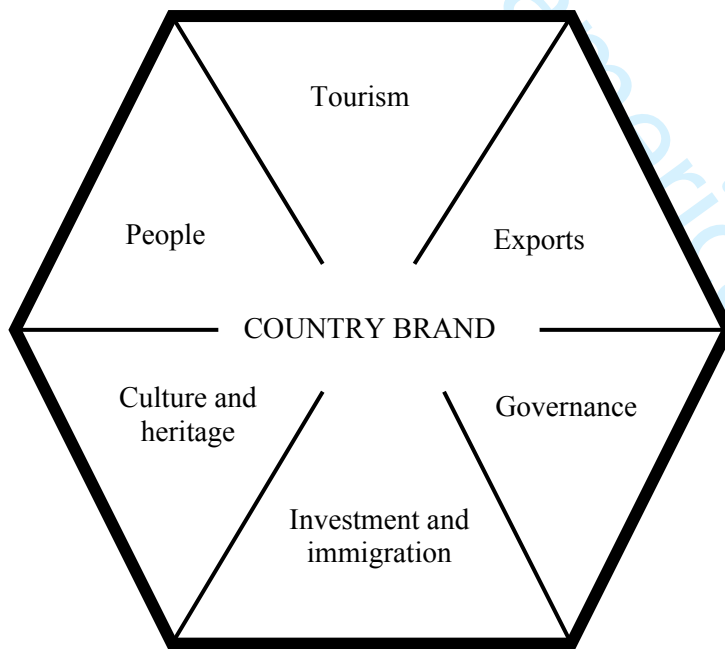


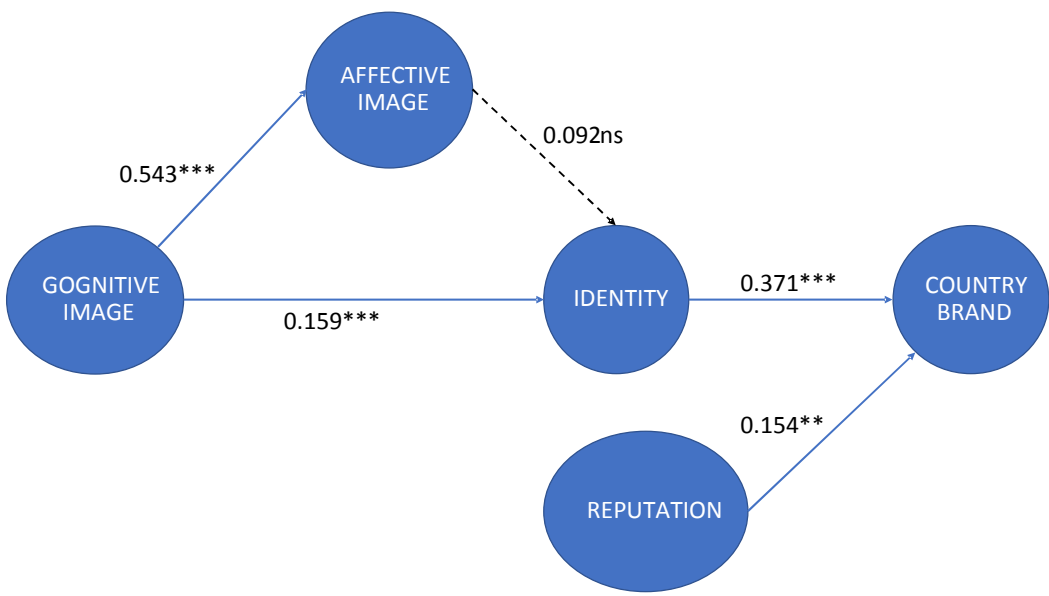
Figure 2: Hexagon Country Brand



Source: Anholt (2002)

Figure 3. Model results

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Table I. Profile of survey respondents

Gender		Age		Location								
Female	Male	18-35	>35	Almería	Cádiz	Córdoba	Granada	Huelva	Jaén	Málaga	Sevilla	
65%	35%	79%	21%	8%	15%	9%	11%	6%	8%	20%	23%	

Source: Own elaboration

Table II. Results of the measurement model

Construct/ Dimension/ Indicator	Loads	Composite Reliability	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Cognitive image		0.891	0.625
Brazilian companies are reliable	0.823		
Brazilian companies are internationally respected	0.715		
Brazil has technically qualified professionals	0.765		
In general, products from Brazil are reliable	0.887		
In general, Brazilian products present good quality for what they cost	0.835		
Reputation		0.846	0.579
Brazil is respected in international politics	0.850		
Brazil is important on the international political stage	0.857		
Brazil is respected in the world economy	0.931		
Identity	1.000		
Affective image		0.918	0.790
I have sympathy for Brazil	0.880		
I admire Brazil	0.886		
I like Brazil	0.900		

Table III. Measurement Model. Discriminant Validity

Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	AFFEI	COGI	IDENT	COUBR	REP
AFFEI	0.889				
COGI	0.543	0.790			
IDENT	0.179	0.209	1.000		
COUBR	0.210	0.226	0.407		
REP	0.308	0.612	0.234	0.241	0.880
Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio HTMT					
	AFFEI	COGI	IDENT	REP	
AFFEI					
COGI	0.190				
IDENT	0.190	0.227			
COUBR					
REP	0.349	0.741	0.250		

Note: AFFEI= Affective image; COGI= Cognitive image; IDENT= Identity; COUBR= country brand; REP= Reputation

Table IV. VIF collinearity of Mode B construct indicators

Variables	CUL	INV	EXP	PEO	GOB
VIFs	1.044	1.034	1.014	1.028	1.051

Note: CUL= Culture and heritage; INV= Investment and immigration; EXP= Exports; PEO= People; GOB= Governance

Table V. Weights and loads for the dimensions of the country brand construct

	Weights			Loads		
	Original Sample (O)	T statistics	P Values	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics	P Values
CUL -> COUBR	0.280	2.600	0.005			
INV -> COUBR	0.704	7.490	0.000			
EXP -> COUBR	0.141	1.427	0.077	0.203	1.940	0.026
PEO -> COUBR	0.070	0.624	0.266	0.059	0.477	0.317
GOB-> COUBR	-0.488	4.829	0.000			

Note: CUL= Culture and heritage; INV= Investment and immigration; EXP= Exports; PEO= People; GOB= Governance; COUBR= country brand.

Table VI. Structural model results

	Path	P Values	T statistics	Confidence Interval	f2	Supported
AFFEI-> IDENT	0.092	0.083 ^{ns}	1.386	[-0.020; 0.199]	0.006	No
COGI -> AFFEI	0.543	0.000***	13.803	[0.479; 0.609]	0.419	Yes
COGI -> IDENT	0.159	0.005***	2.586	[0.057;0.261]	0.019	Yes
IDENT -> COUBR	0.371	0.000***	7.423	[0.297;0.456]	0.160	Yes
REP ->COUBR S	0.154	0.015**	2.169	[0.054; 0.253]	0.028	Yes

Note: AFFEI= Affective image; COGI= Cognitive image; IDENT= Identity; COUBR= country brand; REP= Reputation

***p<0.001, **p<0.01, *p<0.05, ns: not significant

t (0.05; 4999) = 1.64791345; t (0.01; 4999) = 2.333843952; t (0.001; 4999) = 3.106644601

Sig. at 0.05

Table VII. Effects on endogenous variables

	R ²	Q ²	Direct effect	Correlations	Variance explained
Affective image	0.293	0.217			
H1: Cognitive image			0.543	0.543	29.30%
Identity	0.044	0.035			
H2: Cognitive image			0.159	0.209	3.32%
H3: Affective image			0.092	0.179	1.64%
Country brand	0.185	0.037			
H4: Identity			0.371	0.407	15.10%
H5: Reputation			0.154	0.241	3.71%