LINKING IDENTITY AND HERITAGE WITH IMAGE AND A REPUTATION FOR COMPETITION

Our study investigates the role of identity and heritage of a place in creating competitiveness of the place and its retailers by utilizing its image and reputation to improve its attraction to tourists. We explored the perceptions of tourists to test a conceptual model which was developed using concepts available in current academic literature. Data were collected relating to a famous retail store in London which is a popular destination. Findings from a survey of 294 store tourists visiting the store suggest that place heritage is the key to driver of competitiveness of both the retailer and place, through their image and reputation. The study has important implications for the expansion of current literature, theory development and business practices. Limitations of the study are outlined and directions for future research are considered.

Introduction

Places are defined as "Centers of felt value where biological needs, such as those for food, water, rest, and procreation, are satisfied" (Tuan, 1997, p. 4). Place is a relational space where the relations are stimulated and are part of the place itself and individuals recognize in it; place can have a strong identity and heritage thus individuals have a common history, experiences, emotions and refer to them (Twigger-Ross and Uzzell, 1996; Bauman, 2013; Wang et al., 2014).

Place identity and place heritage are different elements of place identification (i.e. place icons: Coliseum, Big Ben, etc.) that allow various groups of stakeholders to either grasp opportunities or communicate values of the place (Reed, 2002). Some stakeholders can recognise multiple opportunities for building or defending their own identities and esteem by linking them with a particular place (Uzzell, 1996; Rooney et al., 2010). Thus, place identity is a complex process based on memory interactions (Proshanksy et al., 1983; Twigger-Ross and Uzzell, 1996; Wang et al., 2014) about experiences, relationships, emotions and thoughts. Conversely, place heritage is a time-based concept that depends on history that can make a place relevant to the present and to the future (Balmer, 2011). Furthermore, place has an effect on stakeholders' emotional responses and feelings towards an organisation, which deepen as the relationship develops in a two-way process. First, there is a sense of identification with those with whom the indivuals have direct contact (Nebenzahl, 2004). Second, identification develops beyond the attitudes and mind-sets of individual associations with multiple internal stakeholders and becomes identification with the practices of the company as a case of corporate branding which is embodied in various designs (Aitken and Campelo, 2011; Hankinson, 2004; Zenker et al., 2017).

Place identity and place heritage are connected to place image not only in terms of social and cultural influences but they are also linked to spatial setting (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997; Hafeez et al., 2016). In addition, reputation and identification with specific objects represent the distinctiveness and uniqueness of places, which can also be related to physical identity along with spatial components (Dixon and Durrheim, 2000; Campelo et al., 2014).

Based on social identity theory, which is part of the basis of sense of place (Stedman, 2002; Twigger-Ross et al., 2003), and identification with a place (Uzzell et al., 2002), an organisation's stakeholders can define themselves in relation to their own place (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Bergami and Bagozzi, 2000; Elsbach and Kramer, 1996; Gioia and Thomas, 1996). According to Spencer (2002), the focus on place as environmental perception should be seen as complementary, and place can be considered as a social category to provide identity (Twigger-Ross et al., 2003). Thus, the perception of an environment is considered as a participatory experience between the physical setting and people.

In light of these arguments, this study aims to provide responses to the following queries: What factors develop favourability in place identity? (ii) What drives favourability of place heritage? (iii) Is there a relationship between place branding favourability, favourable place image, and favourable place reputation? and (iv) What are the main influences of reputation on brand competitiveness and retailer competitiveness? Our research seeks to examine perceptions of tourists about factors that potentially explain place heritage and place identity, and to study practices that influence place image and reputation for increasing the competitiveness of a place and its retailer. To address the research aim and answer the research questions, the key literature was reviewed. This paper contributes to the current academic literature on retailing by establishing linkages between identity and heritage concepts with the image and reputation of a retail outlet using empirical testing of data collected from a high-end retail store. The most popular retail store in London reputedly due to its heritage which constitute a distinctive conceptual category and necessitate precise approaches to a place management that differ from those requisites for younger place (Hudson, 2011; Urde et al., 2007).

One purpose of this paper is to provide insights that will help retail outlets visited by tourists to manage their competitiveness attract more tourists and generate higher revenue. The research first aims to identify the factors that are most likely to have a pertinent influence on favourable place image, starting from recognised place identity and strong place heritage. Second, given the significance of place identity and place heritage, and building upon the evidence discussed, this study aims to explore the concept and dimensions of place identity and place heritage. Third, it develops and empirically assesses a model concerning the relationships between favourable place identity, its antecedents and its consequences. Fourth, it examines the influence of favourable place heritage on place identity and vice versa. Fifth,

it investigates the impact of favourable place image on favourable place reputation. Finally, it tests the influence of a positive reputation on brand competitiveness and retailer competitiveness.

Theoretical background and conceptual model

A large body of research has attempted to analyse and describe why place stakeholders should focus on building its reputation to increase its competitiveness (Freeman et al., 2007; Morgan et al., 2011). Researchers have also debated about why consumers react positively to a positive image or reputation of a place in a competitive market (Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001). In general, stakeholder perceptions determine place marketing strategies and practices are effective and place identity and place heritage (Twigger-Ross and Uzzell, 1996; Wang et al., 2014) are two main features of place marketing. Place marketing was initially explored as city branding, was confirmed as a powerful image-building strategy for a place by studies like Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2005). These Authors explored techniques and concepts useful for branding contemporary Europe explore its role in public sector urban planning and management for administrators through setting urban management goals, and conditions created by European integration. Another study conducted by Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2008) reviewed different stages of the historical development of place marketing by studying external historical contexts on various spatial scales, i.e. collective understanding, appreciation of a place, achievement of wider cooperation, and clarity in role allocation. An investigation carried out by Iversen and Hem (2008) discussed the nature of place umbrella brands to analyse their role in promotion of a place, i.e. a country through provenance associations as core values offered by the place brand. Iversen and Hem (2008) explained how transcendence can be linked with the transferability of associations created by partner brands using perceptions of similarity by identifying matches between shared provenances. These concepts, when viewed from the point of view of place image, place reputation (Wagner and Peters, 2009; Fan, 2010), and retailer competitiveness (Akotia, 2005) enrich the knowledge of place identity management across cultures. Simultaneously, they also highlight the gap in the literature about linkages being proposed between place identity, heritage and image by this study.

Identity, heritage and image of a place

Place identity is a relevant construct widely discussed in academic research (e.g., Foroudi et al., 2016; 2018; Lalli, 1992; Gospodini, 2002). Moreover, it is a complex process based on memory interactions (Twigger-Ross and Uzzell, 1996; Wang et al., 2014) about experiences, relationships, emotions and thoughts; hence it is a time-based concept that is never entirely "fixed" (Balmer, 2017). Place identity is characterised by four principles, i.e., distinctiveness, continuity, self-esteem, and self-efficacy (Ginting and Rahman, 2016). The enduring competitiveness of a place indicates continuity in its identity, identified by perceived distinctiveness, uniqueness and diversity from other places, based on the self-esteem instilled in the assessor from being in that location (Ginting and Wahid, 2016). Self-esteem refers to a self-assessment with which one identifies, generated by positive perceptions in terms of smugness about a place. Self-efficacy is an expression of a belief in one's capacity to work in a physical environment and social situation (Twigger-Ross and Uzzell, 1996).

By maintaining place identity, a special feeling among stakeholders (residents, tourists, investors) is provoked (Ruzzier and De Chernatony, 2013). Its significance can provide a distinctive experience to tourists; it can make the place easily recognisable, thus reflecting a superior place image. Then, place identity can support the quality of life and bring happiness to the residents and tourists, especially in terms of philosophy, personality and positioning. When people are happy and healthy, they contribute to developing a community (Sani and Mahasti, 2012). The wide range of stakeholders involved in the place branding process represents a key challenge for places that seek to use branding to improve their image (Weible, 2006; Bornhorst et al., 2010; Garcia et al., 2012). In light of the above, the formulation of the first hypothesis included in the model appears evident.

H1: A recognised identity of a place creates a superior image of the place.

The term heritage has been defined as 'traditions' or 'history' or 'inheriting' and has been used in conjunction with legacy in corporate marketing and in corporate branding contexts and relates to the present as well as to the future (Balmer, 2011). It is a temporal concept that, firstly, depends on history that can make a place relevant to the present and, potentially to the future. Heritage can be interpreted in terms of longevity, core values and symbols (Hakala et al., 2011; 2015). Thus, one way of creating place history is to link the place branding process

to a sense of cultural continuity and consistency (Percy and Elliott, 2009), by means of its ubiquitous and recognisable presence (Beasley and Danesi, 2002). However, Winkler in his study (1999) stated that a long history does not necessarily imply the development of a strong heritage over a very short period. As regards to symbols and visual elements, they identify the brand and express their peculiar meanings and values (Urde et al., 2007).

Given that heritage is a social construction, the understanding of place heritage depends on the evaluator's own historical and spatial context (Arantes, 2007), and in order to compare places we would need clear, more objective measurement criteria. According to Banerjee (2008), measurement of the place heritage of a country should be based on homogeneity, endurance, tolerance and impediment. Place heritage constitutes a distinctive conceptual category and necessitates accurate approaches to brand management that differ from those requisites for younger brands (Cooper et al., 2015). Some authors (Huppatz, 2005) have suggested that a community's history, heritage and cultural background, that form the modern world, have hampered people's ability to understand their surroundings (Braun et al., 2013). Thus, a place with a very strong and accepted heritage of a place is able to create a higher and more positive image, based on place heritage's components and their capability to improve the image itself.

H2: A recognised heritage of a place creates a superior image of the place.

Tourists are encouraged to look into the heritage of a place whenever place identity is very robust. Image formation is defined as the construction of a mental representation of a destination from information cues delivered by so-called 'image formation agents' (Alhemoud and Armstrong, 1996). These agents include non-commercial information sources (i.e. word-of-mouth and actual visitation), induced information sources (i.e. marketing efforts of destination promoters) and autonomous information sources (i.e. news articles, movies and pop-culture). In destination marketing, induced image formation agents such as promotional materials become significantly important in promoting a destination and are even more influential on image formation in that they have higher credibility and the ability to reach wider audiences than induced formation agents. Most research about autonomous agents focuses on the strong negative influence of news media such as political issues, violence, terrorist activities, and natural disasters. However, little research has been devoted to

examining the impact of pop culture as an autonomous image formation agent, whether negative or positive (Lee and Bai, 2016).

H3: A recognised heritage of a place encourages tourists to accept its identity.

Heritage embeddedness through local culture or historic buildings allows place heritage to keep growing continuously. Thus, in accordance with Balmer (2011), place heritage refers to a distinctive category of brand wherever there is a degree of continuity in terms of brand promise, as articulated through place identity, behaviour and symbolism, to a variety of stakeholders, especially tourists who are aware of that heritage (Urde et al., 2007).

Image, reputation and competitiveness

Marketing studies (e.g. Brown and Dacin, 1997; Foroudi et al., 2014, 2016a; Gray and Balmer, 1998) have emphasised the differences between corporate image and corporate reputation. Corporate image is deemed to be a product of individual perception of reality (Barich and Kotler, 1991) on the basis of functional and emotional components that flow into the customer experience (Kandampully and Hu, 2007). Conversely, corporate reputation is an immediate picture of an organisation based on the aggregated multiple images held by all its internal and external stakeholders over time (Fombrun, 1996; Fombrun and Shanley, 1990).

Organisations encourage shareholders to invest in the company (Fombrun and Shanley, 1990) and the corporate audience relies on reputation when making investment decisions and product choices (Dowling, 1986). A company's uniqueness improves its visibility, and positively impacts the public impression (Fombrun, 1996). Place identity and heritage identity require increased emphasis on internal and external brand resources to influence tourist perception. Values and emotions used by the organisation to symbolise its key elements create differentiation strategies. Place identity necessitates management in relation to interaction connecting vision, culture and image in a competitive market. For this reason, managers should be concerned about brand competitiveness, depicted as the ability of a brand to compete in a market where all other players/firms are attempting to generate awareness, relationships and loyalty based on multiple reasons by means of multiple channels (Esu and Arrey, 2009; Gupta et al., 2016; Pike and Mason, 2011; Wong and Merrilees, 2008).

In addition, another challenge that retailers face in a competitive market place is retailer competitiveness (Lin and Chen, 2013; Ivanov and Mayorova, 2015; de Norohna et al., 2017).

Prior studies have identified these relationships and issues in isolation, however, there is no research that discusses the operationalisation of variables related to place identity, place heritage, image, reputation, or focus on brand competitiveness and retailer competitiveness specifics via the place identity theory. So,

H4: A favourable image of a place creates positive place reputation.

H5: Superior reputation of a place creates place competitiveness.

H6: Superior competitiveness of a place creates stronger retailer competitiveness.

By achieving these objectives, it is expected that the investigation will add to current knowledge about corporate branding and provide practical insights for managers and decision-makers.

Research methodology

Data collection

To explore the relationships between place identity and place heritage in addition to the influence on place image, place reputation, brand and retailer competitiveness, this study attempts to evaluate tourist perception towards a well-known retail store in London. High-end retail store enjoys a positive image and reputation which is connected with its retail brand name (Dennis et al., 2014; Foroudi et al., 2016b; 2018). Respondents of the survey were chosen based on the purpose of their visit a high-end retail store. A sample of 294 adult tourists participated in the study over a six-week period. Male and female tourists who were at least 18 years old and who had effectively completed at least secondary-school education were considered eligible to participate. Of the 294 valid responses, men completed 52%. Of the respondents in total, 42.9% were aged between 30 and 39, 29.9% were aged between 20 and 29 and this was representative of the tourist population. 77.2% of the participants held a postgraduate degree. 58.8% were students. Table I illustrates the respondents' characteristics in more detail.

<<Please Insert Table I>>

The measurement process

Prior to collecting the survey data, we conducted ten interviews with retailers, academics and marketers who were aware of the place. The questionnaires used measurement scales based on established scales from previous studies. Place identity was measured based on three sub-constructs (philosophy, personality and positioning), which were recognised by Melewar et al. (2017). Place heritage (Hakala et al., 2015), place image (Foroudi et al., 2016; 2018; Kandampully and Hu, 2007) and reputation (Urde and Greyser, 2015) scales were adapted according to the context. The items for brand competitiveness and retailer competitiveness (Gupta et al., 2016) were also obtained from existing scales. Based on the suggestion by Churchill (1979), specifying the content domain was carried out according to the pertinent literature and confirmed by 12 qualitative interviews that were used in the main version of the survey. The data triangulation increased the validity of findings as well as the wealth of the research conclusion (Churchill, 1979; Deshpande, 1983; Saunders et al., 2007). Then, the items were examined by the five academics/lecturers who were familiar with the concept for the clarity of wording, suitability, and content validity (Bearden et al., 1993; Zaichkowsky, 1985). Based on the received suggestions, some items were modified. All items were assessed based on seven-point Likert scales ranking from 1= "strongly disagree" to 7= "strongly agree". See Table II for the full scales used to measure all the variables.

As an initial examination of their performance within the sample, the primary measures were subjected to a series of factor and reliability analyses. Reliability was assessed with Cronbach's alpha. As illustrated in Table II, Cronbach's alpha of all measures was higher than (Cronbach's alpha .867>.70), representing adequate internal consistency (Nunnally, 1978). IDPER4 (rugged), CR7 (willingness-to-support), support (BC4), and RC1 (capability enhancement) were removed due to multiple loadings on two factors. Vision (IDPV3), competition (IDPOS1), relevance (CR4), and recognisability (CR6) were dropped during structural equation modelling due to problematic cross-loadings on extra factors. The remaining items loaded considerably on the intended constructs, with composite reliabilities ranging from 0.884 to 1.000 (See Table III). Discriminant validity was examined through confirmatory factor analysis, it was measured by average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct and compared with the square correlation between them (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Based on Fornell and Larcker's (1981) recommendation, the variance extracted for

each construct was compared to the square of each off-diagonal value within the Phi matrix for that construct. The results show that the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct ranged from 0.839 to 1.000, and the items represent a distinct underlying concept. Moreover, a good rule of thumb is that an AVE of .5 or higher indicates adequate convergent validity (Hair et al., 20106).

<<Please Insert Table II >>

Analysis and results

Reliability and validity of measurement

According to the recommendations of Anderson and Gerbing (1988) and Hair et al. (2006), the two-stage approach to structural equation modelling (SEM) was employed to test the importance of all pattern coefficients of the seven hypotheses, using 294 available observations in the analysis. In the first stage, the measurement model (inner-model) was examined by using AMOS 22 and this was carried out to identify the causal associations between the observed items (variables) and the latent (unobserved) construct. The validity of the construct was tested by confirmatory factor analysis in this stage (Hair et al., 2006). The second stage was tested using the structural (i.e. regression path) model (outer-model), which explained the causal relations among the observed constructs (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988).

The items were measured with unidimensional and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and the majority provided an acceptable fit (NFI = .923; CFI = .960; IFI = .961; TLI = .956; RFI = .914; Chi-square = 617.423). However, GFI (.869) and AGFI (.842) are below the acceptable cut-off level. Hair et al. (2006) state that no specific value on any index can separate models into acceptable and unacceptable fits. Convergent validity was checked with the values of CFA loadings and standard errors. All item and construct loadings were noteworthy (t-value/CR>1.96).

We tested the proposed conceptual model using structural equation modelling. Hypothesis 1 posits that a recognised identity of a place creates a superior image of the place. The result, however, does not support this hypothesis (γ=.158, t=.348, p .727). Hypothesis 2 predicts the

relationship between place heritage and place image and was fully supported (γ=.447, t=8.524). H3, however, was not supported. In the hypothesized model, the effect of place heritage and place identity did not reach significance (γ=.044, t=1.312, p .189). The result illustrated in Table IV supports hypothesis 4 (place image > reputation) (γ=.449, t=7.093). Hypothesis 5 was also fully supported (γ=.299, t=4.688). Superior reputation of a place creates retailer competitiveness. The last hypothesis (H6: superior competitiveness of a place creates stronger retailer competitiveness), which predicts the relationship between brand competitiveness and retailer competitiveness, was fully supported (γ= .215, t=2.989) (See Figure).

<<Please Insert Table III>>

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Discussion and implications

The paper extends the present studies on place identity, heritage identity, image and reputation, and investigates their influences on brand and retailer competitiveness. Thus, the study is based upon the theoretical contributions of social identity theory (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). The study investigates the perceptions of tourists visit the store. They were asked about factors that drive place identity and heritage to impact on place suitability for corporate image and reputation building, as well as, upon brand competitiveness and retailer competitiveness. Although the literature pays much attention to place branding in terms of mechanisms, strategies and practices, impact on brand and retailer competitiveness has received little attention to date. To fill this gap and using the theories set out above, our research pushes beyond the current boundaries to identify the relationship that links place identity, place heritage, image, reputation, and competitiveness (brand and retailer) concepts.

Place identity, when measured using the lens of philosophy, personality and positioning (Melewar et al., 2017), uses a time-based concept (Balmer, 2017) that can be identified in terms of distinctiveness, continuity, self-esteem and self-efficacy (Ginting and Rahman, 2016). Nowadays, many place branding strategies are oriented to developing a unique and distinctive identity in the minds of their stakeholders (Foroudi et al., 2016a) with a view to improving quality of life and degree of happiness, and thus benefiting the image of the place.

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Place heritage is a social and temporal construct based principally on history. Its determinants as theorised by Hakala et al. (2015) are considered able to impact directly on image of the place, creating a favourable opinion for the relevant stakeholders. Similar to earlier studies conducted on place branding, our findings also demonstrated that place heritage will increase place image, thus giving a special importance to heritage as a fundamental basis for a successful place branding strategy. However, the research describes a lack of correlation between place identity and place heritage. The key contribution for place managers is the necessity to be more concerned about providing core values, symbols and longevity (place heritage) of place branding to influence place image. Despite the fact that the findings were unexpected, they confirm the results that place image is an outcome of place heritage, and it mediates between reputation and competitiveness. These results are in line with previous studies by Urde and Greyser (2015) and Gupta et al. (2016).

The significant relationship between reputation and competitiveness (in terms of brand and retailer) reveals that if customers perceive good overall impressions of the place and their expectations are met, they have a positive judgement of the place (reputation), which impacts on brand and retailer competitiveness. This finding confirms the idea that the solidity of place image, offering a suitable reputation to generate a strong position in a highly competitive marketplace, depends upon the level to which brand competitiveness is able to impact on retailer competitiveness as well. As expected, brand competitiveness is positively impacted by retailer competitiveness. This confirms the significance of long lasting performance to increasing place competitiveness.

Conclusions

Our study provides scientific evidence for the relationship the favourability of place identity, place heritage, place branding, place image and reputation, in supporting the competitiveness of brand and retailer. The results of this research empirically illustrate that retailer competitiveness in a tourist place or location depends largely on its image and reputation, which is connected to its identity and heritage. Our findings contribute to existing academic knowledge about place marketing and management by integrating literature from different domains such as marketing, psychology and history. Our results also indicate that place

heritage has a positive influence on place image, in turn leading to a favourable reputation. Previous studies have investigated links between the identity and heritage of a place and place image, but they have ignored the main constructs involved in such relationships. Unexpectedly, based on the respondents' perceptions, there was no impact of place identity on place image. In addition, our results reveal that place image positively influences reputation, brand and retailer competitiveness.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretical Implications

The current study is one of a very few emerging studies which contributes to the extent theory about the relationships between place identity, place heritage and place image, and to the further connections between place image and reputation, also brand competitiveness and retailer competitiveness. The key contribution of this study is to extend knowledge on linking identity and heritage with image and reputation of a place to ensure competitiveness and their evaluation by tourists visiting a well-known retail store in London. A deeper explanation of the relationship between the superior reputation of a place and retailer competitiveness also indicates that brands could exercise a certain influence both inside and outside their territory. In doing so, new conceptual model frameworks have been developed (e.g. Foroudi et al., 2016; 2018; Ginting and Wahid, 2016; Hakala et al., 2011; 2015). Such a model has not been investigated previously in tourism, travel, marketing and management literature.

The next contribution is related to the detailed tourists' responses, which illustrate a deeper explanation of the relationship between superior reputation of a place and retailer competitiveness which indicates that brands could exercise a certain influence. Foroudi et al. (2018) has found that corporate logos are related to corporate image and influence on internal and external organizations' communication, though, they have rarely examined this relationship. However, the current research explicitly explored this association. Consequently, we have addressed the gaps in current knowledge and responded to prior calls for investigation from the perspective of marketers (Cooper et al., 2015; Foroudi et al., 2016; 2018; Ginting and Wahid, 2016; Hakala et al., 2011; 2015). This study identified these gaps in current knowledge: (i) Which factors develop favourability in place identity? (ii) What are the key factors that drive favourability of place heritage? (iii) What are the relationships

between place branding favourability, favourable place image, and favourable place reputation? and (iv) What are the main influences of reputation on brand competitiveness and retailer competitiveness?

From a theoretical perspective, this study integrates social identity theory (Ashforth and Mael, 1989) and the resource based view into place branding studies, based on the consideration that place can be considered as a social category that provides identity (Twigger-Ross et al., 2003) and is able to confer a participatory experience between the physical setting and people. In this direction, the paper is able to expand the present studies on place identity, heritage identity, image and reputation, while investigating their impacts on brand and retailer competitiveness. In other words, it fills a theoretical gap and identifies the relationship that connect place identity, place heritage, image, reputation, and competitiveness (brand and retailer) variables.

Our study found that heritage is a key component of place branding and impacts directly on place image, activating a virtuous cycle generating brand and retailer competitiveness. This is a new and surprising result that confers centrality to heritage as a component able to trigger positive mechanisms to create competitiveness in terms of brand and retailer. This paper extends the existing literature of place branding, place image and place reputation, integrating and consolidating previous research (de Norohna et al., 2017; Foroudi et al., 2014, 2016a; Gray and Balmer, 1998; Ivanov and Mayorova, 2015; Lin and Chen, 2013). Based on a comprehensive review of the literature and empirical studies, our research makes a contribution by recognising the main drivers of each measurement of place image, place reputation and competitiveness, providing a structured theoretical model which yields new insights. Furthermore, the analysis shows how place branding impacts brand and retailer competitiveness by examining the indirect and direct associations between research constructs previously unexplored in the literature. Thus, our study adds knowledge to the understanding of if and how place image enhances reputation, and how such links, in turn, impact brand competitiveness and retailer competitiveness.

Practical Implications

Based on its theoretical results, the investigation suggests useful managerial ideas for decision-makers, in terms of place branding, place image and place reputation, in order that they appreciate the effective association of tourists' perceptions of brand and retailer competitiveness. Place identity and place heritage require increased emphasis on internal and external place resources to exert an influence on tourists' perception. In other words, this paper presents a comprehensive picture of the conditions where favourable place heritage could impact directly on place image, facilitating achieving a solid reputation, brand competitiveness and retailer competitiveness. The research will assist managers to understand the most significant relationships of the construct described in the hypotheses.

The relationship between place heritage and an individual's perception of a place can contribute to what the place represents to tourists. The connection between place and the individual could be used to develop a positive place image and reputation, which could influence the relationships between brand and retailers' competitiveness and would benefit them by contributing to destination image and promoting tourism. Place identity and heritage considered in some past studies to be the key antecedents of place image; however, the effect of place identity was not found to be relevant in our study.

Though place heritage is the most basic determination of place image, managers should put greater emphasis on values and emotions used by the organisation to symbolise its key elements to create differentiation strategies. It is suggested that the study also be applied in different contexts. The results of the study help place branding experts and retailers to design and maintain their values, symbols and longevity as pre-requisites for successful place strategies.

Limitations and future research

This study has a number of limitations which may restrict the generalisability of its results. The first limitation is that the context is considered from a combined viewpoint of tourists. This aspect may influence the perceptions and interpretations towards the research constructs being investigated. Another limitation is that although the data are derived from a well-known retail store which is very popular amongst tourists in a developed marketplace, the

emphasis of place branding strategies may be examined from the viewpoint of different features of marketplaces such as ethnicity. The next limitation is that it has not captured the safety features that travellers consider today before choosing a travel destination.

We recommend future researchers should examine more deeply these aspects of context they are dealing with. For example, we suggest that there is a need examine the differences in perceptions of tourists regarding place heritage be examined. We also anticipate that this research, if conducted in developing markets, would yield different results. Therefore, because the results of this study may be different in different markets, consideration of context specific innovative constructs for testing the model is advised. We encourage other researchers to extend the findings of this research by exploring relationships of the constructs that are the focus of this study and value co-creation with consumers. Given our unexpected findings related to place identity, perhaps a different conceptualization or using different items to measure place identity would be worth exploring. We also anticipate that this research, if conducted in developing markets, would yield different results. Therefore, because the results of this study may be different in different markets, consideration of context specific innovative constructs for testing the model is advised. Furthermore, replicating the research model in different contexts and settings should improve the generalisability of the results.

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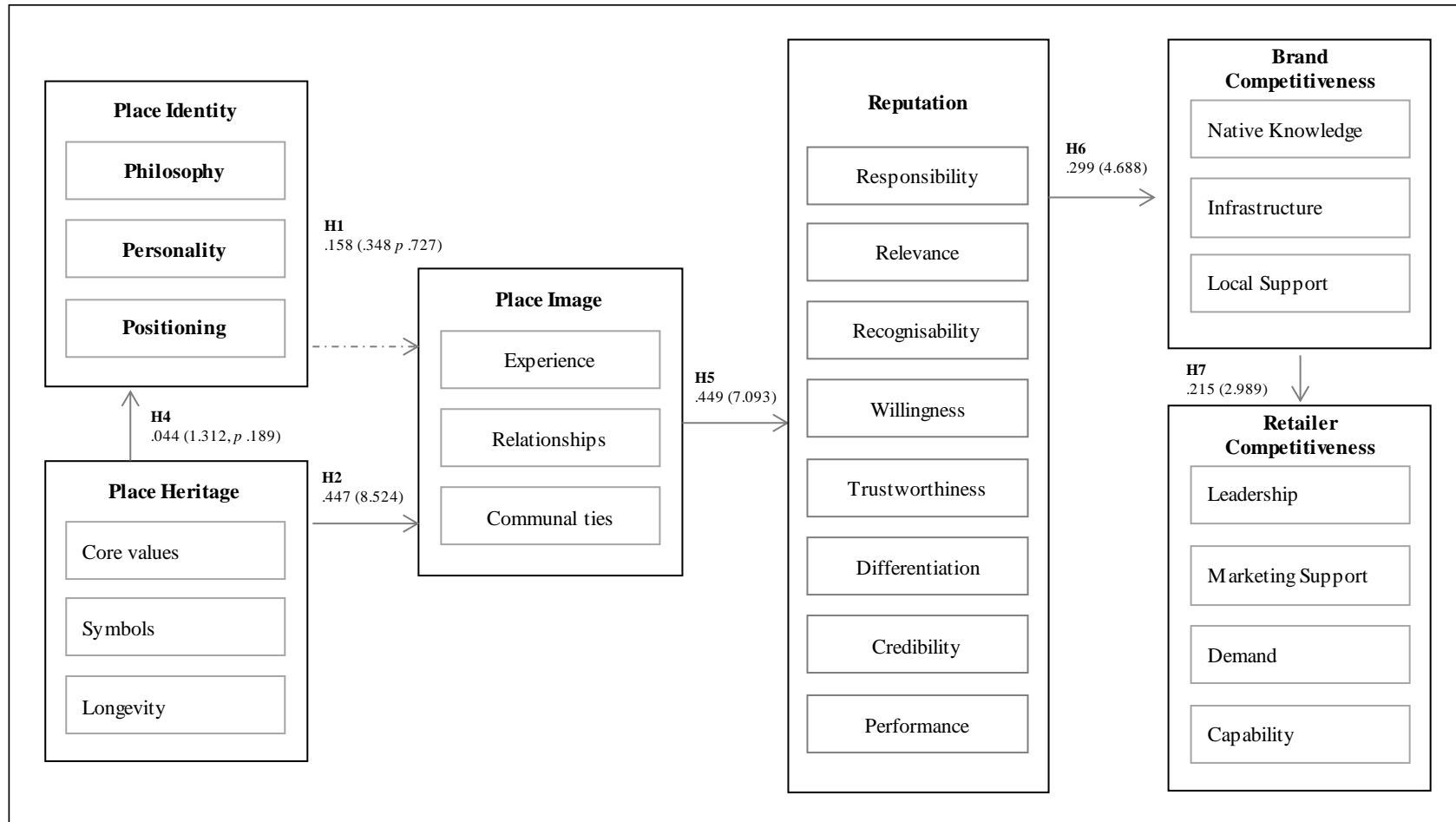
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Figure: The validated model

Place Identity
- Philosophy
- Personality
- Positioning

H1
.158 (.348 p .727)

H4
.044 (1.312, p .189)

Place Heritage
- Core values
- Symbols
- Longevity

H2
.447 (8.524)

Place Image
- Experience
- Relationships
- Communal ties

H5
.449 (7.093)

Reputation
- Responsibility
- Relevance
- Recognisability
- Willingness
- Trustworthiness
- Differentiation
- Credibility
- Performance

H6
.299 (4.688)

Brand Competitiveness
- Native Knowledge
- Infrastructure
- Local Support

H7
.215 (2.989)

Retailer Competitiveness
- Leadership
- Marketing Support
- Demand
- Capability

Table I: Respondent characteristics (294)

	Frequency	Percent		Frequency	Percent
Gender			**Degree**		
Female	141	48.0	High school	14	4.8
Male	153	52.0	Undergraduate	53	18.0
Employment			Postgraduate and above	227	77.2
Lawyer, dentist or architect etc.	10	3.4	**Age**		
Office/clerical staffs	26	8.8	19 years old or less	11	3.7
Worker	5	1.7	20 to 29 years	88	29.9
Civil servant	8	2.7	30 to 39 years	126	42.9
Craftsman	21	7.1	40 to 49 years	35	11.9
Student	173	58.8	50 to 59 years	20	6.8
Housewife	31	10.5	60 years old or more	14	4.8
Retired	20	6.8			

Table II: Study constructs and scale items, descriptive statistics, factor loadings, constructs correlation matrix, and reliabilities

		EFA Loading	Mean	Standard Dev.	Cronbach's alpha	Correlation							
						IDPV	IDPER	IDPOS	PHRT	PIM	CR	BC	RC
Place Identity													
Philosophy											(Melewar et al., 2017)		
Definition: Philosophy is the core values and assumptions that constitute the goals, vision, mission, and values espoused by the management board or founder of the place (Simoes et al., 2005).													
The heritage of a place explains its philosophy through its					.867	1							
Goals	IDPV1	.817	5.9388	1.03670	Removed – Vision (IDPV3)								
Value	IDPV2	.859	5.8401	1.12296									
Mission	IDPV4	.824	5.6565	1.25612									
Personality											(Melewar et al., 2017)		
Definition: Personality is the sum total of the characteristics of the place such as behavioural and intellectual characteristics, which serve to distinguish one place from another and these characteristics are the attitudes and beliefs which are shared by the place's visitors (Melewar et al., 2017)													
The identity of a place based on its heritage explains its personality through					.910	.183**	1						
Sincerity	IDPER1	.854	5.3027	1.50999	Removed – Rugged (IDPER4)								
Excitedness	IDPER2	.915	5.4320	1.40712									
Competence	IDPER3	.931	5.5204	1.40620									
Sophistication	IDPER5	.847	5.2823	1.59090									
Positioning											(Melewar et al., 2017)		
Definition: Positioning can be referred to as "the respondents' perception towards the place's target market, competition, product category and brand promise" (Melewar et													

al., 2017, p. 583)

The heritage of a place explains its positioning through its					.907		.122*	0.077	1		
Target market	IDPOS2	.890	5.4490	1.35094	Removed – Competition (IDPOS1)						
Product category	IDPOS3	.932	5.4796	1.32626								
Brand promise	IDPOS4	.919	5.4694	1.39137								

Place Heritage (Hakala et al., 2011; 2015)

Definition: Place heritage refers to "clearly identifiable places which-in historical contexts-help to denote a tourist destination. Often, heritage tourism relates to historical phenomena relating to the distant past" (Balmer, 2011, p. 294)

The heritage of a place reflects on its					.954		.508**	0.085	0.024	1	
Core values	PHRT1	.823	5.6224	1.36895							
Product brands	PHRT2	.875	5.6939	1.28850							
Longevity	PHRT3	.867	5.6361	1.32714							

Place Image (Kandampully and Hu, 2007)

Definition: Image is "the immediate mental picture an individual holds of the place". It can "materially affect individuals' sense of association" with a place and is likely to have an impact on behaviour" (Foroudi et al., 2014, p. 2271)

The image of a place brand reflects on its					.880		.292**	0.036	0.062	.525**	1
Brand experience	PIM1	.775	5.3946	1.28821							
Brand relationships	PIM2	.873	5.5442	1.25152							
Brand communities	PIM3	.847	5.4558	1.18138							

Reputation (Urde and Greyser, 2015)

Definition: Reputation is "endowed with a judgment and is the overall evaluation of consumers" (Foroudi et al., 2014, p. 2271)

The reputation of a place brand reflects on its					.968		.311**	-0.024	0.082	.418**	.401**	1

Responsibility	CR1	.850	5.7585	1.22802	Removed – Relevance (CR4), Recognisability (CR6), Willingness-to-support (CR7)
Trustworthiness	CR2	.935	5.9116	1.23335	
Differentiation	CR3	.936	5.9422	1.23102	
Credibility	CR5	.932	5.9184	1.24484	
Performance	CR8	.899	5.8299	1.25230	

Brand Competitiveness (Gupta et al., 2016)

Definition: Brand competitiveness is about brands competing against each other by reflecting on capability to capture the market using innovative marketing ideas (Gupta et al., 2016).

The competitiveness of a place brand is linked with tourists'				.936	.363**	0.045	0.059	.402**	.399**	.333**	1
Native knowledge	BC1	.880	5.3503	1.31013	Removed - Support (BC4)						
Relationship	BC2	.926	5.4422	1.19229								
Infrastructure	BC3	.930	5.4320	1.22842								

Retailer Competitiveness (Gupta et al., 2016)

Definition: Retailer competitiveness is about retailers competing at the local level using innovative marketing initiatives (Gupta et al., 2016)

The competitiveness of a retailer amongst tourists explains a place's				.950	.266**	.019	-.005	.285**	.250**	.218**	.132*	1
Brand leadership	RC2	.937	5.0374	1.39549	Removed - Capability enhancement (RC1)							
Brand value	RC3	.936	5.0544	1.33620									
Marketing support	RC4	.911	5.0816	1.32711									

Table III: Study constructs, reliabilities, and discriminant validity

	CR	AVE	MSV	ASV	Brand Competitiveness	Place Identity	Heritage	Place Image	Reputation	Retailer Competitiveness
Brand Competitiveness	0.940	0.839	0.116	0.068	0.916					
Place Identity	1.000	1.000	0.018	0.007	0.136	1.000				
Heritage	0.955	0.876	0.305	0.136	0.312	0.028	0.936			
Place Image	0.884	0.717	0.305	0.140	0.341	0.087	0.552	0.847		
Reputation	0.969	0.863	0.179	0.099	0.277	0.096	0.421	0.423	0.929	
Retailer Competitiveness	0.950	0.864	0.099	0.056	0.179	-0.031	0.315	0.303	0.235	0.930

Table IV: Results of hypothesis testing

Standardised regression paths			Estimate	S. E.	C.R	p	Hypothesis
H1	Place Identity	--->	Place Image	.158	.453	.348	.727	Not-Supported
H2	Place Heritage	--->	Place Image	.447	.052	8.524	***	Supported
H3	Place Heritage	--->	Place Identity	.044	.033	1.312	.189	Not-Supported
H4	Place Image	--->	Reputation	.449	.063	7.093	***	Supported
H5	Reputation	--->	Brand Competitiveness	.299	.064	4.688	***	Supported
H6	Brand Competitiveness	--->	Retailer Competitiveness	.215	.072	2.989	.003	Supported

*** $p < 0.001$

Notes: Path = Relationship between independent variable and dependent variable; β = Standardised regression coefficient; S.E. = Standard error; p = Level of significance.