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Chicken or the Egg of Nation Branding and Economic Development

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Introduction

The term ‘nation branding’ and the application of its numerous techniques for the promotion and development of a nation is a new yet rapidly growing phenomenon, yet this practice is nothing revolutionary as nations have historically in one way or another promoted their interest to achieve political, economic and cultural goals (Dinnie, 2008). The only difference now is that unlike before where the numerous national policies worked in isolation, nations today faced with immense global competition both on international and domestic fronts purposely make directed and synchronized efforts to reach out to target groups in the hope of boosting investment, tourism, exports and attracting talent while at same time wishing to improve quality of life for its citizens through economic development. This paper examines the reason/s behind the rapid growth of the top performing nation brand for 2013-2014, Qatar based on the ‘Nation Branding Hexagon Model’ (Anholt, 2002) and the relation with economic development in the hope to address which follows which.

Indisputably there exists a strong correlation between countries that have manufactured strong brands and those that are strong brands themselves, yet it still uncertain which resulted in which. The mere existence of nations today is insufficient for stimulating economic activity. Have strong nation brands emerged due to the presence of a vibrant and dynamic national industry, established as an outcome of the emerging economic streams of comparative advantage specialization or have the soft power and intangible benefits of nation brands paved way for these countries success? (Fan, 2006). Smaller nations and nations with particularly tumults pasts find themselves constantly competing with one another for attention from their target audience which remain unaware of them due to inadequate or unsynchronized activities by national stakeholders.

Nation branding is defined as ‘the sum of people’s perceptions of a country across national competence such as the cultural, political, commercial, tourist appeal, investment potential and human assets’ (Anholt and GMI, 2004) has lead nations to alter their economic development into marketing challenges (Kotler et al., 1997). The more ambitious advocates of the nation branding concept see it as “a *component of national policy*” (Anholt, 2008, p.23) and an important part of the planning, governance and economic development strategy never as a short-term campaign.

Like nation branding, economic development too is a long-term investment for the conceptualization of innovative ideas, sharing of knowledge, and infrastructure, based on the cohesive functioning of the economic and social institutions and with collective action and cooperation between the public and private sector (Vesal, 2014). Although nations may have an imbalance of natural and economic resources, yet each nation nevertheless possess abundance of intangible untapped capital in the form of their culture, history, geography, and labor force which they can proficiently use to further their economic development in today service driven global economy (Anholt, 2005).

Where some nations have been handed down their nation brands others have had to make conscious effort to develop theirs. Just as the fruits of economic activity do not appear overnight eradicating pre-existing stereotypes linked to a nation does not come easy and requires consistent effort, a strategic plan and a long-term commitment on behalf of all stakeholders (Dinnie, 2008). Through utilizing soft powers and employing nation branding techniques nations can also strengthen their currencies, restore and build confidence and credibility for investors, impact international rating mechanisms for favourable reviews,

influence international politics and foster better international partnerships; indirectly building national confidence (Dinnie, 2008).

For transition economies the brand image, good or bad is consequence of time and hardly portrays the reality of economic development and progress taking place in these nations. Whereas developing nations and government machinery may have made headway in economic development their image stagnates for years and sometimes even centuries, unless deliberate efforts are made to reposition the nation brand (Anholt, 2015). Now as times are evolving and government administration is shifting focus towards a more public service delivery model the use of brand image for connecting with the public is all the more relevant diffusing the gap between public and private sector performance. This deliberate repositioning may be in the form of public diplomacy, customer relationship management, public relations, advertising, brand strategy formulation and implementation or a combination of all of the above (Dinnie, 2008) but whatever form it takes, just as companies 'live their brands' nations too have to start doing the same as this is what statecraft is in today's interconnected world (Risen, 2005).

Theoretical framework

With the passage of time the need and significance of nation branding is being realized by countries of the world. Antidotes to bridge the gulf between Britain's current reality as a highly creative nation to the image the world held of the island immersed in its colonial heritage could only be achieved through rebranding Britain (Leonard, 1997). Similarly, "no nation wants to remain anonymous" all nations wish to be distinguishable in terms of their distinct brands with the hope of economic growth and influence in world issues (Ferguson, 2001 cited in Odia & Isibor, 2014). The concept and practice of nation branding with respect to the stage of economic development rest on the identification and categorization of nations on the bases of their identity and image. Martinovic (2002) categorizes nations into three types:

1. Innovative/post industrial countries: Global leaders that have established brands (tangible and intangible) and reach out to consumers on the basis of their brand identities.
2. Technological determined/industrial countries: Focus on developing their technological competencies through exporting value added products and promote inward investment through focusing on education and applied sciences.
3. Natural resources-based countries: Make their presence in world trade through offering their abundant natural resources.

Most countries present an identity that is a combination of any of two (Lee, 2009). The request to apply nation branding to reverse the economic gap existing between the developing and developed countries was made by Anholt (2003/2) and de Vicente (2004), yet a dearth of literature exists when it comes to clarifying the relationship between nation branding and economic development. Where much research has been done on emphasizing the importance of nation branding in achieving competitive advantage the progression from achieving competitive advantage to economic development has been left unattended.

Kaneva (2011) organizes the concept of nation branding along three dimensions, *Technical-economic*, *political*, and *cultural*. The technical-economic dimension, the most written about in existing literature out of the three deals with concept in terms of economic growth, efficiency and capital accumulation and provides a functionalist perspective of nation branding seeing it as a methodology for increasing competitive advantage in the international

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market. It examines the concept from the marketing and tourism perspective. The political dimension relates to the development and participation in international relations and effect of national image on other nations and examines the concept from the public relations and international relations and communications. The cultural dimension relates to study of the concept in purview of media and cultural studies and their effect on the cultural identities in a nation (Kaneva, 2011). In view of these dimensions, nation branding can be defined as “a process by which a nation’s images can be created, monitored, evaluated and proactively managed in order to improve or enhance the country’s reputation among a target international audience” (Fan, 2009, p. 6). Nation branding activities help in image development through creating a conducive atmosphere for the products of a country so they can perform in the international economy resulting in image development of a country (Amine and Chao, 2005). Based on the above analysis, this research uses the “National Brand Hexagon Model” presented by Simon Anholt (Anholt-GMI Nation Brands Index 2005)¹, to form the bases for this research as the nation brand hexagon model provides established theoretical and methodological grounds relevant for the empirical and conceptual development of measuring the nation brand value and thus helping build the relationship with economic development.

The Anholt- GfK Roper Nation Brands Index² looks at a country's image by examining these six dimensions of national competence all of which are treated equally with no weighting. The Anholt-GfK Roper 2014 Nation Brands Index Report, six dimensions are:

1. Exports: Assess image of the country’s products and services and consumers preference for them
2. Governance: Assess public opinion/ perception of the country’s competency to govern and participate in global issues e.g. poverty, justice etc.
3. Culture: Discloses international perception of a country’s culture and arts
4. People: Studies the competency of human resource, level of education, and social skills in opposition to discriminatory attitude of citizens toward foreigners
5. Tourism: Identifies tourist attractions of the country and travelers interest in visiting the destination
6. Immigration and Investment: Studies the attractiveness of a place in terms of livability (live, work and study) in addition to socio economic situation of the country

Increasing nation branding activities over a period of time based on the factors present in the brand hexagon (e.g. exports, investment, etc.) creates leverage to the net exports and conversely have an impact on the GDP and welfare of the nation, reliant on fact that COO has a positive effect on consumer perception and buying decision (Englund, 2012). Anholt claims that with a more creative approach towards the application of COO, emerging market can cash-in on economic growth alongside achieving country’s branding goals (Anholt, 2013).

Economic development too has no longer been left to the ambit of public policy; globalization has created challenging market situations leaving nations to compete for skilled manpower, tourist and multinational establishments and their investments. The good and service produced and exported from a country contribute to the reputation, self-confidence and success of a country (Mihalache & Vukman, 2005). The struggle for finding export

¹ To measure the image and reputation of the world's nations and keep record of their profiles, Simon Anholt developed the Nation Brands Index® in 2005.

² Since 2008, the Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands Index annually measures the image of 50 nations, along six dimensions (Nation brand hexagon)

markets for ones products has made the case for nations to manage and control their brands all the more stronger and the desire to achieve competitive advantage requires strategic brand management (Kotler & Gertner, 2002). Public sector managers are too is not far behind in employing branding tools to promote the interest of the government to the build stakeholder trust (Eshuis and Klijn, 2012).

On the basis of the literature reviewed this paper will use the following definition of economic development “the development of capacities that expand economic actors’ capabilities. These actors may be individuals, firms, or industries (Feldman et al., 2013, p.2).

Methodology

This is an exploratory research aiming to explain the relationship of nation branding/strategies with regard to economic development adopted by the fastest performing nation brand, Qatar (2013-14); selected on the basis of ranking published in the annual reports by Brand Finance. The purpose of employing this type of research is to develop a foundation for future research on this topic especially in context to areas for development in Pakistan. In order to achieve a systematic outlook of the collected data and help us reach a clearer understanding of what happened, why, and what was done about it, the research will use a case study methodology to analyze the nation branding strategies of the respective countries. The selection of the case study to explore the nation branding practices method holds ground in explanation of the case study as ‘a research design focused on a bounded situation or system an entity with a purpose and functioning parts with emphasis on intensive examination of the setting’ (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Keeping in view the trends and factors that differentiate a country and a nation brand and to study the subject in its current setting, the research case Qatar as a reference for a way forward for Pakistan was selected based on the following criteria:

1. Is a top performer for the year 2014
2. Classified as a ‘small state’ in Asia
3. Considered a top investment destination
4. Has a strategic plan for brand communication and goal achievement
5. The nation has a multitude of nation branding events based on a longitudinal range

Under the terminology of this new marketing phenomenon of nation branding which originates from product-evaluation research (country-of-origin - COO) that started shortly after the world wars, place marketing used mainly by cities and regions today took off and developed into the categorizing of places / nations as brands in essence the concept of nation branding, the choice of theory – the brand hexagon model used in developing branding strategies existing and in practice for the last century and try to establish the link with economic development. The Nation Brand Hexagon Model of 2002 by Anholt in view of the scope of the theme, enhanced to Competitive Identity Hexagon Model 2006 (Nömm, 2007) has been used to link theory with practice.

Due to financial and time constraints, the use of secondary data from a variety of traditional and non-traditional sources such as publications in journals, newspapers, government reports, blogs etc have been employed for a cross sectional overview of the different national strategies adopted by Qatar to find answer to the following research question:

Research Question: Have adoption of Nation Branding strategies lead to economic development in developing countries?

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In order to address the main research question, the following sub-questions have been identified:

- 1: What are nation branding strategies, and their relation to economic development?
- 2: Which nation branding strategies have contributed to the fastest performing nation brands 2013-14 (Qatar)?
- 3: Recommendation from branding campaigns of top performers for developing nation branding campaign “Emerging Pakistan”.

The findings from previous research conducted by Country Brand Index 2014-15 states that ‘awareness alone does not make a strong country brand’ there are multiple underlying factors that make or break a nation brand. Qatar has a high level of awareness but is complemented by sound ‘Business Potential’ and is also perceived driven by innovation and proficiency in energy and technology – qualities which all correlate to Qatar’s brand strength. Keeping in view the trends and factors that differentiate a country and a nation brand and to study the subject in its current setting, Qatar has been selected based on the following criteria:

1. Top performer for 2014
2. Classified as a ‘small state’ in Asia
3. Considered a top investment destination
4. Has a strategic plan for brand communication and goal achievement
5. Has a multitude of nation branding events based on a longitudinal range

The strength of a nation brand is measured across 4 segments (market, tourism, governance, people and skills) also known as the Nation Brand Impact™ framework and is measured by the Brand Strength Index (BSI). BSI score of a country combined with GDP data gives us the brand value of each nation. Each nation brand is assigned a credit rating from AAA+ to D based on these scores (Brand Finance Report, 2013). In 2015 Singapore became the highest rated (AAA) and strongest nation brand in the world whereas Iran became the top performing nation brand after its re-emergence and the moderate approach of its leadership towards international cooperation valued at \$159 billion in 2015, up 59% from 2014’s \$100 billion (Brand Finance®, 2015). Centered on ‘The Nation Brand Index’ published each year by Simon Anholt and Global Market Insight (GMI), Qatar’s rank as top performers for 2014 respectively; along a consortium of indicators that form an image of a nation as perceived by the international public.

The BSI value without the GDP is to some extent the truest reflection of governments’ management of their nations’ brands, thus a correlation between rising BSI and GDP may provide an answer to our research question but as Amartya Sen (1999) work states that provision of substantive freedoms and autonomy that allows for individuals to fully participate in economic activity are the pillars of economic development (Sen, 1999). Whether these pillars also hold true for growing nation brands as well will be looked into through this paper.

Qatar

Peterson (2006) apprised that as if compared to other countries, Qatar has a very short history of gaining independence that dates back to 1971. Internationally Qatar may have little recognition apart from being merely seen as a wealthy Arab nation because of its gas reserves (Ryman, 2007). Albeit a small state (only over 2 million inhabitants in total) but enormously

rich with the natural gas reserves (world's third largest) Qatar has given significant priority to its national interests and effectively demonstrated its standing as a sovereign state in recent times through successfully projecting its image globally and making its mark as an immensely looked upon Gulf state. (The Report Qatar 2013, Oxford Business Group).

After independence, Qatar joined the Arab League and the United Nations. It was the founding member of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and has also served as a non-permanent member on the UN Security Council (Peterson, 2006). A constitutional monarchy with the right to rule conferred by the traditional hereditary system, Qatar witnessed an important era in its history in 2013 where the current Emir Sheikh Tamim passed the new constitution bringing all citizens to be equal in terms of race, religion, language and gender (The Report Qatar 2013, Oxford Business Group). In short, through these means, Qatar has efficaciously safeguarded its foreign policy objectives from the very beginning of its independent existence.

In 2014 Qatar was designated the status by Brand Finance as top performer amongst 100 leading countries to become the world's 36th strongest brand on the basis of its performance in people and skills and investments. The rapid rise in the nation brand ranking and increase in brand value of 39% was contrary to reputational issues with respect to allegations of corruption encircling Qatar's bid for the World Cup.

Based on Qatar's Master Plan and its National Vision 2030 Qatar not only wishes to differentiate its capital city in the tourism sector, but also to transform Qatar into a developed and progressive country by 2030 in terms of economic, social and human development. In 2012, Qatar became the richest nation in terms of per capita and one of the fastest growing economies in the world (The Report Qatar 2013, Oxford Business Group). One can argue that there are several reasons for attaining such reputation, amongst which is its thoughtful policy regeneration towards Qatar national branding. Almaskati (2014) also affirms that Qatar has succeeded in building a solid identity for its nation and achieved recognition and reliability around the globe with its consistent efforts/strategies towards nation branding using its soft power³.

Almaskati (2014, p.4) further apprised, "The exposure of the conflicts in the Arab world provided the Qatari state with immunity from the foreign public against the criticism of the lack of democracy within the region. By hosting mediation events alongside contributing aid to other states the state has positioned itself as a soft power. Qatar has immensely invested in education, promotion of human rights, and gender equality. The state of Qatar has made major investments to change the outdated stereotypical views towards Middle Eastern countries when it comes to culture, and Middle Eastern values. Branding the small island through international media, as a crisis mediator, and sports, Qatar has built an image for itself as a credible actor that has the ability to influence the dynamics of international relations." The Qatari state has been nurturing its nation branding profile by diligently securing major Middle East region events to enhance its image. "Qatar's nation branding strategies focus on the political and social image of the nation to further enhance the country's soft power" Almaskati (2014, p.10)

Qatar's History of Nation Branding

The Economist (2008) quotes, "In 1952, the year that Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al Thani was born, Qatar had fewer than 40,000 people, most of them barefoot nomads and fishermen,

³ Soft power empowers a country securing foreign policy objectives and constructing strategic relationships with other states

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and not a single school.” Nothing resembling the nation he rules today. Were it for his father quotes a former US ambassador to Qatar, Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad Al-Thani (Emir of Qatar 1972-1995) Qatar would have remained low key in comparison to its neighbor’s Saudi Arabia and other Gulf States with a vision to elevate and differentiate Qatar’s status among the nations of the world and amongst neighboring countries endowed with the same resources as Qatar (Hazime, 2011), Doha’s premiere Education City is now home to some of the world’s top most colleges and Qatar has the highest income per capita in the world (Ismail, Flamenbaum, & Doyle, 2011). The following are some of the efforts that helped Qatar to attain positive national image and establish a sound national/international brand:

1. Acquired memberships in international organizations
2. Founding member of GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) and aggressively contributed towards GCC economic endeavors
3. Contributed in GCC security concerns (Gulf War - 1991)
4. Lengthy history of oil production and swift expansion of natural gas projects
5. Venue on the international sporting circuit
6. Arranged several major conferences
7. Hosted USA Central Command before and during Iraq War (2003)
8. Sponsored Al Jazeera Network (promoted liberalization through free press - satellite television known for its uncompromisingly direct reporting and confrontational programming criticizing Arab governments) and acquired large audience
9. Donated (2005) \$100 million towards Hurricane Katrina (USA) relief
10. Took several initiatives toward democratization and safeguarding the equality of women

Where Qatar’s oil wealth has long been part of its brand image and exploration and export of natural gas coupled with oil exports contributed \$126.5 billion to GDP in 2010, the dependency on the hydrocarbon sector identified as a threat has been addressed by the Qatari government, and since the 90’s effort to reduce the reliance on oil revenue have been made to build the Qatar Brand from “ground up” with monumental investments in infrastructure and capacity (Ismail et al., 2011).

According to Almaskati (2014), the following are few of the efforts that helped Qatar to attain a positive national image and establish a sound national/international brand:

1. Reconstructed national identity through massive investments in public diplomacy with NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) and MNCs (Multinational Corporations), promotion of Qatari values and cultural exchange/awareness through friendly conduct towards other nations, hosted several events to promote tourism, and providing financial help to other states who had pressed and in need of support.
2. Supported Muslim brotherhood in Egypt over the role of political Islam and took a firm stance within the region making Qatar’s situation internationally credible (a sovereign state which makes its own decisions albeit pressures from GCC members) and diplomatically chic.
3. Qatar has demonstrated to be an effective international player by performing a role of regional intermediary and instituting dialogues with Taliban and Hamas groups, which the USA has trouble intermixing, and this has provided Qatar further credibility

and legitimacy. Resultantly, Qatar is now perceived as a state that has the capability to resolve regional clashes, an inimitable trait that brings folks together to reach to agreement on problematic subjects.

4. Published several achievements, including tactful reforms carried out by the Qatari government including to obtain international credit and appreciation on international news, websites and social media, this has not only created superior social effect within the international audience but has also reiterated that the progress in technology.
5. The formation and progression of Qatar Airways and its associated brand “QATAR” (Qatar Airways is a world class flight carrier that epitomizes excellence in everything it does, operates services across all continents, roughly over 120 destinations), The spitting image of Qatar Airways constructs a repute for the country of Qatar as a state that is culturally cognizant and is engaged to brilliance in its amenities.
6. Qatar, is the sole gulf country to maintain official relations with Israel, building trust for the small state by western partners in terms of foreign policy plan, and to ascertain that the general distribution of power within gulf region works in Qatar’s favor. To sum things up, the relationship has worked in favor of both countries; Qatar has profited through supplying gas to Israel vis a vis securing its diplomatic relations with USA, whereas Israel has forwarded its political interests along with advancing diplomatic associations within the region.

Investment

Qatar Investment Authority (QIA) established in 2005, with a long-term policy goal of securing earnings for future generations has worked well to create an enormous international portfolio a combination of direct investments, equities, and fixed income estimated by the Sovereign Wealth Fund Institute to worth \$170bn.

Although Qatar’s growing investment portfolio and amendments in investment laws over the past years 2000, 2004, 2009 resulted in a decline in inflow of foreign direct investment (FDI) yet majority contribution in the industrial sector come from foreign investments. Similarly, in 2013 yet there was a quadrupling of FDI outflows positioning the state as an international powerhouse for investment. The “World Investment Report 2014” by the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) states FDI outflows from West Asia to have increased by 63.1% in 2013 to \$31bn, up from \$19bn in 2012. Branding the capital of Qatar transforming it from a desert city to an international venue for education sports events viz a viz bringing in investment lead to initiatives to improve FDI inflow by the Ministry of Economy and Commerce together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Qatar Investment Promotion Department and Qatar Chamber of Commerce and Industry Development included establishing new special economic zones (Qatar Science and Technology Park, inaugurated in 2009) offering investors tax exemption and relaxation from custom duties and quota. Other measures included easing of foreign ownership up to 49% and even 100% in some sectors e.g. business consulting, ICT, culture, sports, entertainment and distribution and full repatriation of profits by foreign financial institutions operating in Qatar (The Report Qatar 2013, Oxford Business Group). With Qatar’s investment strategy aligned with its Sustainable development goals as communicated in Qatar National Vision 2030 (QNV 2030): to broaden economic diversification, boost non-oil growth, improve value addition in the

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hydrocarbons sector and build up human capital, Qatar was witnessed to give preference to investment projects that procured local raw materials, manufactured goods for export, innovated and developed new products, employed innovative technology, promoted knowledge transfer and enhanced human resources (US department report 2014 on investment climate in Qatar).

People

Formulated on the goals mentioned in Qatar Vision 2030: Environmental Development to balance economic growth, social development and environmental protection; and Social Development to pursue a just and caring society that is based on high moral standards Qatar has put education and human resource development amongst its top concerns and priority projects (Qatar Vision 2030, 2008). The formation of ‘*Education City*’, a government backed initiative to make the Qatar brand as an international education and research destination, has resulted in Qatar achieving place in the top 20 performers in this sector (Brand Finance, 2014) (Table 3).

As mentioned earlier Qatar’s nation brand performance based on the Brand Finance’s report indicates that Qatar’s brand value increased by 39% (from \$184 billion to \$256 billion) in 2014, making Qatar 2014’s top performing nation brand. The notable change came about in the Branding Strength Index in the category of People and Skills highlighting the fact that branding efforts not only helped the country to “both keep their skilled citizens, avoiding ‘brain drain’, as well as attract international talent” (Murthy, 2015).

Led by the Qatar Foundation’s Qatar Science & Technology Park (QSTP), inaugurated in March 2009 Qatar has worked to promote collaborations on research issues important for

TOP 10 PEOPLE & SKILLS 2014			
TOP PERFORMERS		TOP MOVERS	
Country name	BSI Score	Country name	BSI Increase
Switzerland	82	Indonesia	4
Singapore	80	Russian Federation	3
Norway	78	Zambia	2
United States	78	Azerbaijan	2
Sweden	78	Romania	2
Netherlands	76	Algeria	2
Finland	76	Switzerland	2
Germany	76	Qatar	1
Canada	76	Norway	1
Denmark	75	China	1

TABLE 3: TOP PERFORMING NATIONS, CATEGORY PEOPLE AND SKILLS- ANNUAL REPORT BRAND FINANCE 2014

Qatar’s development: energy, environment, healthcare, information technology and telecommunications. With 27 partners including names like, ExxonMobil, GE and Virgin Healthcare the project brings \$225 million worth of research and development investment to Qatar.⁴

Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development has been active in

⁴ <http://www.qstp.org.qa/home/about-us>

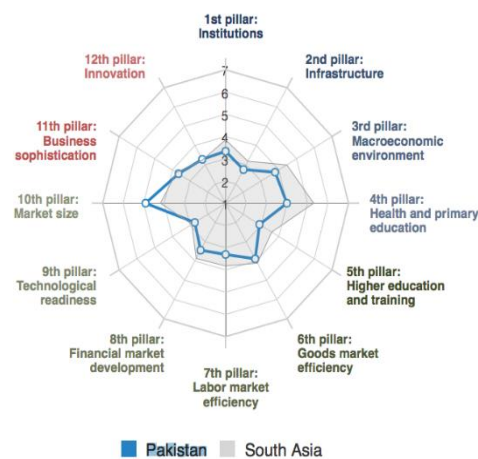
developing the Qatari educational landscape through hosting R&D labs of some of the world's leading multinational firms and being home to 6 of the world's most renowned universities.⁵

Another strategic move to promote the Qatar brand is the establishing of the Qatar National Research Fund. The Qatari leadership is well aware that depending on its wealth of hydrocarbon for a sustainable future is unrealistic hence the leadership through the efforts of the Qatar foundation and the Qatar National Research Fund provides grants to local and international researchers for research that is aligned with the national interest of Qatar and involves a domestic partner in wake of developing local human capital for the future. In doing so the fund awarded \$100 million in 2009 and \$140.5 million in 2012.⁶

To address societal issues Qatar hosts the Doha Debates that address the most volatile issues in the region and are telecasted live on BBC. Through this Qatar wishes to promote its brand along the lines of a nation that values free speech, public dialogue and the fostering of critical thinking. The Emir of Qatar and Sheikh Mozah have taken all possible measures to promote and brand Qatar as a hub of modern education in the region but only time will tell about the effectiveness, outcomes and sustainability of these projects. In using its natural resources and soft powers Qatar has been successful in boosting its reputation as a nation brand to be recognized amongst the leading nation brands of the world (Ismail et al., 2011). Whether this has any relationship with Qatar's economic development will be seen further along in this paper.

Pakistan

After attaining independence in 1947, Pakistan a federal republic, today with a population of 207 million⁷ has to the status of an emerging market as classified by MSCI in June 2016. Yet deteriorating political and economic conditions coupled with security issues has hindered Pakistan from optimal utilization of its abundant resources and workforce. Even with a huge contribution towards fighting the war on terror Pakistan has been unable to achieve a competitive advantage and build a positive image for itself, one that would speed up economic development and raise the living standards of 24.3% (2015-16)⁸ of Pakistanis living below poverty. With an increase of 4.5 % in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2015-16, Pakistan majorly remains an agro-based economy (20.88% of GDP) followed by manufacturing (20.3% of GDP), export of goods and services (11% of GDP) with heavy



⁵ <https://www.qf.org.qa/about/about>

⁶ <http://www.qnrf.org/en-us/About-Us/Vision-Mission>

⁷ United Nations estimates, July 2016

⁸ Economic Survey of Pakistan 2016

FIGURE 1: GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS INDEX 2016-17-WEF

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reliance on foreign remittance which does not compute well with the growing population needs. Other economic development indicators do not fair too well either, with unemployment at 5.9% in 2016⁹, according to the UNDP Education index Pakistan with a literacy rate of 57% was amongst the least educated countries in the world at 0.37 (out of 1) in 2013¹⁰ with a 58% literacy rate in 2016-17¹¹. Having a HDI value of 0.538 in 2014 — placing the nation falls in the low human development category, at 147 out of 188 countries and territories (UNDP/HDI Report, 2015). According to World Bank's Ease of Doing Business rankings Pakistan ranks 147th (2018) easiest country to do business in out of 189. According to World Economic Forum Report 2016-17 on Global Competitiveness Index Pakistan (122/138) (Schwab & Xavier, 2016) is the only country amongst the South Asian economies that has failed to improve macroeconomic environment, health and primary education levels.

Based on the policy document Pakistan vision 2025, in 2017, Pakistan stood at 50th position in nation brand ranking, according to the report by Brand Finance with a 34% change in value from the previous year. In 2016 Pakistan was amongst the top performers backed by IMF economic reforms (Brand Finance report, 2016). The nation has shown a slow yet steady climb up the nation brand ranking scale that too in absence of any concrete branding strategy and numerous challenges due to power shortfalls, security and terror threats.

As noted by Fan (2006, p.6), “Nation branding, in essence, concerns applying branding and marketing communications techniques to promote a nation’s image”, the negative perception surrounding the image of Pakistan as stated by Fan and Shahani (2014) on the average increased, placing Pakistan at number two spot amongst the most negatively viewed countries just behind Iran¹². Main reason being negative media coverage, lack of awareness and access to reliable statistics and published material on major cities, personalities, exports and tourist sites, a constant political dilemma, and clubbing of Pakistan with Afghanistan and the history of conflict with respect to Kashmir. 9/11 and 7/7 attacks have also added to the negative image of the nation, branding it as ‘extremist’ and ‘fundamentalist’ by the west.

Many a times a nations image is based on misconceptions resulting in negative consequences (Papadopoulos & Heslop, 2002) and often there exists a huge gap between perception and reality (Dinnie, 2008) reiterated by Fan (2010) where the external image of a nation always lags behind the reality, thus is it crucial that Pakistan and its people address this lacuna which is only based on partial reality, ignorance and ambiguity (Florek, 2005) and weighing down on self-confidence of Pakistani citizens domestically and internationally (Fan and Shahani, 2014); for which to begin with like as in the case of Turkey acknowledgement of the image crisis and defining the problem followed by continuous and articulate communication to defined audience is the key to bridging the image gap, and rebuilding the brand Pakistan.

Like Qatar’s vision 2030, the government of Pakistan too in an initiative to resolve the quagmire of perception vs. reality announced under Pakistan Vision 2025 “Passionate Pakistan” (Aug 2015)¹³, nation branding campaign which aimed to minimize the imbalance between economic and social development. In 2017 the ministry of commerce took the lead in launching a national brand-building initiative “Emerging Pakistan” to portray the

⁹ <https://www.tradingeconomies.com>

¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹ Economic survey of Pakistan 2016-17

¹² BBC countries rating poll 2014

¹³ Planning commission of Pakistan

economic development taking place in the country. Bringing to light positive attributes of Pakistan and positioning it internationally as an attractive destination for investment, promoting Pakistan's exports, craftsmanship, and culture utilizing Pakistan's most important asset its people the ministry of commerce started the process of amalgamation of the 'Emerging Pakistan' concept in its sphere of activities.

Furthermore, the ministry also initiated outreach programs to further the ownership of 'Emerging Pakistan' brand through continued social media presence, creation of 'Emerging Pakistan' web portal (www.emergingpakistan.gov.pk/), designation of Brand Ambassadors, and 'Emerging Pakistan' themed international exhibitions. And again, in January 2018, 'Rising Pakistan' campaign was initiated alongside the afore mentioned brand campaign by the minister for Planning, Development and Reforms professor Ahsan Iqbal to highlight the positive image of Pakistan internationally.

Analysis

Here one can argue do nation branding strategies impact development or do they play a role in the development of a nation, does differentiating and image building through adoption of nation branding strategies provide support to the economic/social development in a country? The answer may be a simple 'yes'. Where branding today has become a backbone for the projection of all aspects of a nation's tangible and intangible assets it would be difficult to detach a country's development agenda from the efforts required to improve competitiveness and awareness of the country's products, services, environment and governance ideologies. Anholt (2008) states that the use of brand management techniques is widely becoming an integral part of a government planning and economic development agenda. The importance and benefits of image management especially for developing nation brands can be gauged by the extension of opportunities nation branding bring for the industries and the nation's products Abimbola (2006).

The late Mathias Akotia (2009) advocated the importance of branding and the success achieved by America and developed nations as a result of it and the lack of it being the cause of poverty in developing countries. In contrast Fan (2005, p. 9) highlights the point "the correlation between countries that have produced strong brands and those that are strong brands themselves is undeniable, yet the direction of causation is unclear". In explaining the significance of nation branding in context of sustainability of nations in alignment with the marketing context Kotler et al., (1997) states that nations have been coaxed into "transforming national economic development into marketing challenges" the ability to attract investors, tourists and skilled workers rest on the quality of economic development in the country. Premium prices and increased share in the international markets is an outcome of well-coordinated and attractive product and brand communication. Hence widely accepted is the fact that place and its economic development provide the impetus for attaining competitive advantage in a global economy (Clarke, 2002; Castells & Susser, 2002; Porter, 2001; Castells, 1996) and nation branding is the panacea for creating a link between the two.

Based on the brand hexagon model (Anholt, 2002) the paper has so far identified the segments and strategies used for nation branding by Qatar. We will now assess the relationship of the strategies one by one with the economic development prior and proceeding to the years 2014 in which the countries were ranked top performers.

Qatar Nation Branding Efforts and Relationship with Economic Development

Successful nations today have mastered the art of when to use which. Nye (2004a) continues in stating nation branding to be the quintessential example of modern ‘soft power’ – the ability to make individuals pay attention to one’s countries achievements and believe in its qualities (Aronczyk, 2008). Qatar achievement in utilizing this soft power approach towards image building by targeting international audiences through nation branding campaigns that arouse the interest and encourage the emptying of wallets have resulted in Qatar attaining top performer status in 2014. The integration of branding programs and strategies by the semi-governmental and governmental agencies of the Gulf in the last decade is exemplary of the ambitious efforts of these nations to make branding not just a communications strategy but a vital component of national policies for economic development (Anholt, 2008). In doing so Qatar too like its neighbors Bahrain and UAE has put nation branding high on its political agenda, in the hope of projecting its image to the international community as an attractive destination for investment, business, tourism and employment (Ibahrine, 2011). In comparison Pakistan has a long way to go with harmonizing and developing a national policy that is representative of a comprehensive communication strategy that pitches the abundance of resource and exemplifies the cultural heritage of this nation brand to the world.

Qatar continuous economic diversification and vigorous government expenditure in non-hydrocarbon sectors became a driving force for gross domestic product (GDP) growth in 2013, expanding at rates of 10.1% (2012) and 11.4% (2013). With government, family and social services segments being the main contributors followed by financial and real estate services (14.3%), construction (13.6%) and trade and hospitality services (12.8%) (MEC, 2015). In the case of Pakistan, primarily an agro based economy the gradual shift to manufacturing paved way for economic and social development from a low income to a middle income economy, however a small private sector, concentration on few sectors and lack of product diversification has left ample room for policy interventions and development in the country, resulting in lack of awareness of the nation across the world.

Ismail et al. (2011, p.7) research findings conclude that “neither theories’ concerning fiscal conditions nor domestic pressure can fully account for Qatar’s approach to recent reforms and initiatives” ...liberalization has occurred in tandem, rather than in lieu of economic prosperity in Qatar, thus holding nation branding as the best answer to the series of events and decisions taking place in Qatar. Fuelled by a robust economic system and coupled with a vision to differentiate itself from neighbouring states Qatar leadership has played a vital role in the efforts and decisions made to rebrand the nation internationally.

People and Skills and Economic Development

The influx of huge number of workers as a result of infrastructure projects lead to an acceleration in population growth in Qatar, with expatriates accounting for 87% of the population and 94% of the labour force, while unemployment was 0.2% in the fourth quarter of 2013. It can be assumed that increase in project activities as an outcome of nation branding resulted in population growth of 10.5% between 2013-14 (12-month annual average) consequently leading to a second round of growth especially in the services sector (QNB

report, 2014). Qatar foundations efforts to position the country as an international education hub with state of the art learning facilities and distinguished teaching staff, collaboration and accreditation from world class universities, hosting of numerous sport events as part of soft diplomacy unbiased and neutral stance via Aljazeera network has greatly enhanced and improved the image of Qatar and its people as forward thinking and progressive (Qatar Vision 2030). On the contrary in Pakistan negative portrayal of media and regional conflicts downgraded the non-existent nation brand leading to divesting of investment and economic downturn. The role of the government in controlling and rectifying the negativity in these trying times was absent and leaves room for future research.

Expansion in economic activity and increase in average per capita income in Qatar has resulted in a substantial improvement in living standards. The Human Development Index, jumped from 0.875 (2013) to 0.910 (2014); reflecting successes in education (illiteracy 6.9%) and health sectors (average life expectancy 75.5 years in 2014) (MEC, 2014). Hence rapid yet steady economic growth and careful government policies have made Qatar one of the wealthiest nations in the world with per capita income reaching more than QAR 369,000 (US\$102,000) in 2013 (MEC, 2015). The World Economic Forum (2013), placed Qatar and UAE amongst the top 20 most competitive economies in the world (Fig 3). As for Pakistan between 2001 and 2013-14 poverty reduced drastically from 35% to 10%, yet with an

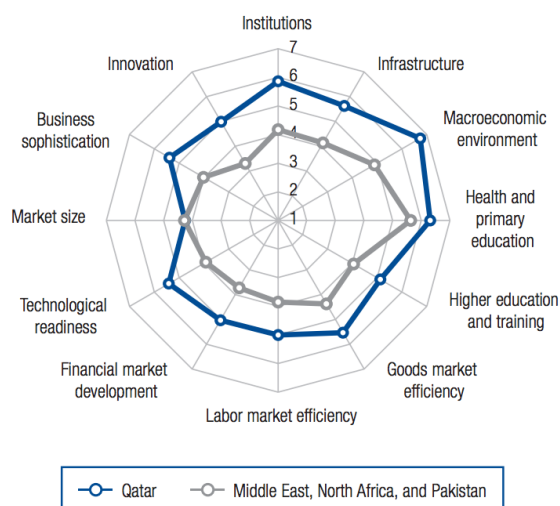


FIGURE 3: GLOBAL COMPETITIVE INDEX - WEF 2013

increasing middle class the perception did not support the statistics. With a 2% contribution of the GDP on education sector the desired increase in literacy could also not be seen. The health indicator have not fared any better. The need for implementing measure to facilitate business and reduce corruption are widely called upon and place Pakistan in the bottom tier of the south Asian countries in terms of human development.

Investment and Economic Development

From the theoretical side Hansen & Rand (2006) maintain that FDI is very crucial for economic growth enhancement for it not only brings capital, technology but also know-how through the process of knowledge transfer in the recipient country. Where the government of Qatar has a strong interest and involvement in the economic developments taking place in the country, it also has an intense focus in encouraging private investment in multiple sectors e.g. health care, education, tourism and financial services (US State Department, 2014). Part and

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parcel of the Vision 2030 Qatar aspires to achieve leadership status in the domain of business and foreign investment. Factors such as political stability, high quality infrastructure, one of the lowest corporate tax rates the world over (10%), 100% equity for foreign companies (Banco & Santander, 2018) have assisted FDI inflow in the field of information technology, culture and sports. Qatar has also attracted considerable investment in the areas of enhanced oil recovery and production, and developments in Qatar's gas industry (US State Department, 2014). Having won the hosting rights for FIFA World Cup 2022 (in 2010) and with infrastructure investment required to the tune of US\$150 billion, investors and companies are rushing to get a piece of the pie. Yet on the contrary like employment laws, Qatar investment liberalization policies too are progressing at a slow pace; aimed at protecting local companies from international competition and awarding preferential treatment to user of indigenous material in view of diversifying the economy brought a set back to the inflow of FDI in 2013 coupled with high cost of living and a small domestic market and lack of skilled labour.

In July 2013, Morgan Stanley Capital International (MSCI) Inc. announced Qatar graduation to the status of an emerging markets which aided the perception building of the nation amongst investors and bankers and lead to increased FDI inflows in the following year 2014. A limitation for this analysis is that the Government of Qatar does not publish detailed statistics for foreign direct investment (FDI) in Qatar or the government's direct investments overseas.

However, according to The World Bank, foreign direct investment net inflows in Qatar were valued at US \$326.9 million in 2012 and US \$1040 million in 2014 which resulted in Qatar being top performer in respect to investment category of nation branding rankings. Ranked at second place (2013) in terms of ease of paying taxes for the fourth year running by a report published by Price Waterhouse Coopers, the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation, Qatar had a score of 71.2 and ranked 30th in 2014 Index of Economic Freedom (Miller et al., 2014).

Pakistan investment climate has been hampered by political instability, security environment, electricity shortage and the general obstacles faced in establishing business in the country. A non-existent policy for attracting foreign investment has also resulted in few ventures and low FDI inflow then expected until now.

Conclusion

On exploring the nation branding practices of Qatar and their relationship with economic development it would be difficult to say which comes first, the chicken or the egg. Does economic development lead to the need for nation branding or does nation branding lead to economic development? As could be seen in two cases the basis for the development of branding campaigns if not different were not similar either. Where Qatar stands to be a nation with one of the highest GDP per capita in the world, yet wishes to indulge in nation branding efforts for the softer approach to involvement in international events and decisions. What can be said is that undeniably considerable amount of economic development is a prerequisite for nation branding. No nation today wishes to stand alone, survival of the fittest is no longer about hard-core political hegemony but about living in a globalized world as a distinction known for its unique product and service offering. What can be concluded is that nation branding is not a technique that enhances or creates a country's image, but the products the service and the people who through effective and quality produce and communication build reputations which translate to growth in brand equity and on the way, improve the lives and

economic conditions of the individual who fall prey to common clichés attached to one's nation due to lack of time and awareness resultant of the face paced world that we live in.

Recommendations

In light of the above analysis on the nation branding practices and their relationship with economic development of Qatar, this paper would like to recommend for Pakistan viable options to consider when designing and implementing a nation branding strategy for the uplift of Pakistani national image.

Anholt (2007) states, 'Places can only change their images by changing the way they behave'. And the citizens of any nation whether based locally or internationally are its brand ambassadors. The task of any nation branding campaign for the promotion of a positive image internationally should begin with building the confidence of its citizens (Endzina & Luneva, 2004; Martinovic, 2001), retain talent at home through adequate intrinsic and extrinsic rewards and foster opportunities for development through minimizing structural inefficiencies as learnt from the experience of and the strategy adopted by Qatar to attract and retain talent as mention by Murthy (2015). It is recommended that continuous reinforcement of the achievements of its citizens, organizations, government bodies etc. over a long period of time need to be promoted internationally, using different media forms.

Further the offset of diplomatic and cordial relation amongst domestic inhabitants can be cashed-in on through improved and responsible media coverage. In current circumstances, Pakistan is not only thwarted due to local media sabotaging its reputation, through lack of informative and positive promotional happenings in the country, but also portrayal by international media of only negative and unproductive developments in the country. In this context the example of Qatar's media management and communication strategy (e.g. Al Jazeera network) through investing in prime international events to rebrand the image and draw attention to the changing landscape of the country have proved fruitful (King, 2008) diminishing the negative perception created in the minds of international audience due to lack of awareness. Fan and Shahani (2014) also carried out a similar study in which respondents were shown positive images of Pakistan and its landscape as a response of which the views and perceptions of the respondents dramatically changed with regard to Pakistan. It is recommended that investment in prime international events and a strategy for positive image building through media may be designed to create awareness of all the good that is taking place in Pakistan.

Also, a vital component to formulating a successful nation branding strategy also relies on the coherent and continuous involvement of all stakeholders working in various fields (public, private, non-profit etc.) for the growth and development of the nation. Unlike the disharmony and multiple brand identities created e.g. 'Emerging Pakistan' initiative launched in August 2017 by the Ministry of Commerce, and "Raising Pakistan" by ministry of Planning, Development and Reforms; the Government of Pakistan should be the building block for consensus building amongst the various stakeholder on the nation branding agenda, and defining pragmatically the goals and the means to achieving those goals. The Government of Pakistan needs to allocate the task to a separate entity that can plan and execute this through bringing all stakeholder on board. The positioning of the Ministry of Commerce at the centre of planning and relating the strengths of Pakistan; its product, craftsmanship and scenic locations in its "Emerging Pakistan" campaign is a good start yet this effort will be unfruitful if all other ministries and institutions are not consulted and only marketing gimmicky without attention to the actual problem is addressed. Image enhancement of a nation should

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begin with projecting a unified front followed by product development and quality maintenance, branding may provide temporary respite but it will not reimburse for bad products. It is recommended that the aim of the government should initially be educating all stakeholder on the importance of image building displaying a unified front to the rest of the world.

Macroeconomic theories show that liberalizing trade and leveraging net exports lead to economic development as in the case of Qatar, yet diversification of exports and moving up the value chain from export of raw material to processed and knowledge based goods and service for a nation is essential if the nation wishes to gain competitive advantage in the international arena in the current scenario. In view of this it is recommended that, Pakistan needs to improve conditions for attracting FDI (Foreign Direct Investment), create ease in doing business not only for its own citizens but also for international companies wishing to invest in Pakistan. In comparison to Qatar, Pakistan is a gold mine and has a greater competitive advantage in terms of labour and natural resources (which has remained untapped due to technical/operational expertise) yet security and political uncertainty has hindered FDI inflow resulting in low economic development and negative image generation. A guide could be formulated to educate and inform stakeholders about keeping uniformity on the domestic and international front. For a country that has so much to offer in respect to culture, exports, talent, and tourism nation branding is a mean of reconstructing the nations image internationally as done by Qatar.

But most importantly it is crucial for Pakistan keeping in mind the huge segment of the population which comprises of youth that increase in the government budget towards education takes place, a crucial prerequisite for development (Qatar case - investment in education and knowledge development). As the backbone of any developed nation is an educated workforce. There is no shortage of talent, yet streamlining and channelizing of this capability and resource is of utmost important. Vision 2025 wishes to transform Pakistan from an agricultural economy to a high-income economy by 2047 where miracles are possible and this gigantic leap can only materialize through deliberate and continuous efforts made in the field of education, thus it is recommended that the consideration of a dual education system (e.g. like the one in Germany - to be explored in future researches) may be considered and developed along with promotion of subjects and teaching of entrepreneurial skills.

Where successful nation branding leads to popularity and attention amongst the international audience yet the process of nation branding needs to start with the nations' citizens. Belief and support from the nationals is the decisive factor in building a strong nation brand!

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WINNERS (% BRAND VALUE CHANGE)						
Country name	Brand Value Change (%)	Brand Value Change (USDbn)	Brand Value 2013 (USDbn)	Brand Value 2012 (USDbn)	Brand Rating 2013	Brand Rating 2012
Malaysia	48%	99	304	205	AA	AA-
Sri Lanka	46%	14	45	31	A+	A+
Thailand	43%	107	359	252	AA-	A
Turkey	41%	201	688	487	A+	A
Singapore	39%	113	404	290	AA+	AA
Bangladesh	38%	23	83	60	A-	A-
Kazakhstan	37%	33	120	87	A-	A-
Philippines	37%	52	193	141	A	A-
Peru	36%	39	146	107	A	A-
New Zealand	36%	40	152	111	AA	AA-

Source: Brand Finance 2013

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Best Performers



Source: Brand Finance 2014

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