

Success Factors of Summarecon Mall Bekasi:

A millennial perspective

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Abstract—Lifestyle and entertainment center are relatively central in today practice and it plays a critical role in forming healthy economic condition along with perceptions of the society within the region. Several of the shopping centers have failed to achieve key performance indexes in the region of Bekasi. The main objectives of this study were to research factors contributing to the success of Summarecon Mall Bekasi (SMB) and the brand image formation of SMB itself to develop suggestion for shopping center when wanting to attract the biggest generation cohort, millennial, whose sizeable disposable incomes. In this study, we evaluate the branding strategy and its importance for shopping centre, and the success factors using contingency theory. Our result conveys that characteristics of shopping center and word of mouth communication turn to be the most effective channel influencing millennial perceptions on shopping center, yet creative marketing tactics and social media channels were also found to be effective tools for building branding of shopping center.

Keywords—*millennials; shopping centre; consumer behaviour; buying behaviour*

I. INTRODUCTION

Global competitiveness undertakes around the capability of cities to attract investment, business, residents and visitors [1,2]. In order to reach these goals, many urban areas have turned to place branding strategies to develop strong competitive identities [3]. Many European and North American countries have successfully used place branding to enhance their cities and regions [4], however different challenges exist when implementing branding strategies in the developing countries [5,6].

Place-branding practices are designed to work in countries that encourage public and private involvement in the planning and development process. Yet this is complicated in the developing countries by top-down government structures, fragmented cooperation between government and private entities and the lack of involvement of diverse stakeholders [7,8]. While some of these factors can be considered typical place-branding issues to some extent, they are felt more strongly in cities that lack a sense of identity that stems from the past or any urban form and communities.

Instead they include a sense of place that is created by different actors to convey a specific purpose [9,10]. Urban

icons are elements of the urban landscape (buildings, monuments or natural elements) that serve as visual symbols which capable of transforming the complexity of the urban experience into knowledge and meaning through representational practices [11]. For that reason, urban icons have been considered important elements in the urban regeneration and city branding strategies, especially in the transformation of the image of the city [12]. As Wen and Sui [5] stated “city branding should be seen as an entire system that needs to be maintained long-term with the same message.” The goal of place-branding is to build a symbolic, comprehensive image of a city, including its unique features and people and subsequently communicate this image.

While much of the early conceptual framework for place branding has been developed and investigated, Berg and Björner [4] adapted a comprehensive framework of city branding and showed its applicability in Chinese mega cities. Given the above, utilising typology of place branding combined with the present investigation focuses on Indonesian millennial preferences of place branding resulted in two folded research purposes [4]. First, to examine how to build an attractive city branding. In the light of analysis, the second objective is to discuss what are the success factors of Summarecon Mall Bekasi (SMB) for the millennial audience and what millennials think about SMB. The research questions aim in this research are namely below;

- What are the critical factors of city branding?
- What is brand image millennials have about Summarecon Mall Bekasi?

Although city branding and city image management are no longer new concepts in the academic world, cities have always been brands [13] and branding is crucial for cities’ economic development by attracting residents and tourism [14]. However, city branding does not come without any challenges, city have multiple stakeholders with different aspirations. Although city usually already have an image and they can be persistent [15], city can be branded by using several methods ranging from planning and constructing the urban environment and engaging residents as opinion leaders to communication and media strategies.

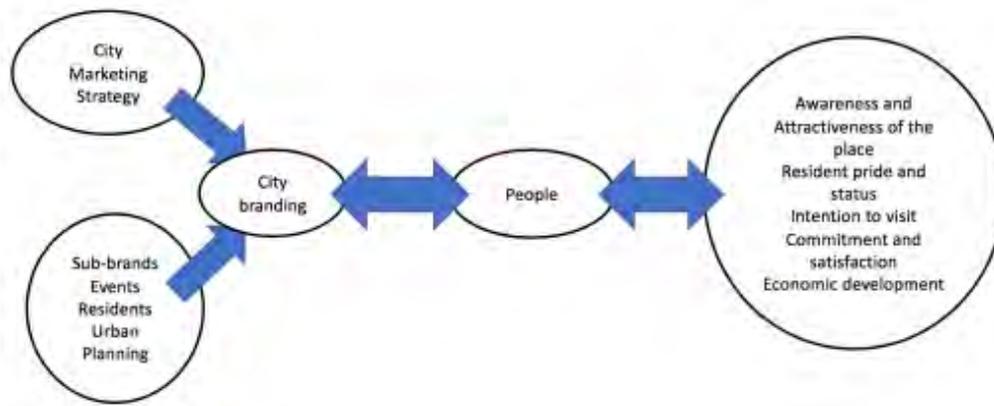


Fig. 1. Conceptual framework.

A conceptual framework above can be applied to the topic of city branding. The aforementioned literature reviews showed that city branding activities presented on the left in the conceptual framework namely sub-brands, events, residents and urban planning affect the city brand image people possess about the city. City marketing strategies such as communications media, messages and social media also bring impact towards people's perceptions about the city which contributing to the formation of the city brand image that people have. The formed city brand image which people possess, results in and interacts with outcomes such as awareness and attractiveness of the place itself, possibilities to identify with the place resulting in increased resident pride and status. City branding activities also help in constructing a stronger reputation for the city and branding can lead to positive effects such as intentions to visit and bolder commitment to start a business. All the outcome of city brand image contributes to economic development of the city, region and even country. The interaction is two ways; hence the aforementioned outcomes also affect people and the brand image they perceive about the place.

A. City Branding

A brand is a "name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers" (www.ama.org) [16]. Brands add value to a product, provide social and emotional value and they also have distinctive importance in differentiating products from the competitors [15] and they play a crucial part in the creation of consumer identity as well [17]. As places are crucial players in the formation of consumer identities and their impact is enormous for everyday lives, places and their reputation have always been managed by place leaders [13]. New developed urban areas have been promoting themselves as they have always had the need to attract customers, investors, settlers and visitors [18]. There have been many definitions of place or city brands, yet one of the well knowns comes from Kotler et al. [1], they define the image of a place as "the sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions people have toward a certain place" cited in Avraham. Meanwhile, Ashworth and Kavaratzis [19] define place branding as applying marketing techniques and strategies to develop cities, regions and countries economically, politically and culturally. City branding is a tool

for making the place famous [18] and known places are generally seen as more attractive [20].

B. The Importance of City Branding

The goal of city branding and city image management is to improve the city's position as attractive leisure tourism spots and business locations and as productive places where to study, work and live [21]. There are three main target groups which need to be satisfied by city brands namely; visitors, companies and residents [20]. Positive place branding is a crucial factor in decisions of those target audiences such as where to go during a leisure period and where to set up a business [22]. Place branding makes people aware of the place's existence [23] and increase the attractiveness of the place [24]. These images that people perceive about places can affect decisions of people concerning vacationing, investing and migrating [15]. The formed associations of a city lead to brand effects such as willingness to stay at a place and commitment [25] and satisfaction [26] which are crucial effects for city's future. Thus, it can be argued that city branding contributes to economic development [14].

The benefits of branding are extensive and can be relatable to city as well. These benefits include identification with the city, credibility guarantee and intangible value [27], promise of performance [28], trust [29] and facilitation of consumer choice process [30]. The name of city adds extra values to the experience and this can be seen in practice when many product brands add city names to their products to create status and other positive associations to benefit from [21]. City branding simplifies and it is also a cost-effective tool in order to create a strong reputation [13].

II. RESEARCH METHODS

A conceptual framework linking place branding and actor-network theory (ANT) was used to develop a mixed-method methodology; collected secondary research by scholars and primary research collected by qualitative interviews in order to investigate the development of Summarecon Mall Bekasi brand during the first stages of the project. The goal was to identify critical elements of place branding in Summarecon Mall Bekasi which leads to success on two segments targeted by the project: regional visitors and local residents. Due to Summarecon Mall

Bekasi was the first development of its kind in the region, it is a unique and representative case and is used for theory development in this particular type of urban development and location [31]. In addition, the chosen method to research the millennial perceptions of Summarecon Mall Bekasi as preferred lifestyle and entertainment centre in Bekasi and its success factors was qualitative interviews. Qualitative research method is well fitting when wanting to research related emotions, experiences, feeling, perceptions or motivations of people which is indeed what the primary research was conducted for [32].

A. Primary Research

The chosen method to research the millennial perceptions of SMB as a lifestyle and entertainment centre and the success factors was qualitative interviews. 18 interviewees were selected for the primary research. The sample size was decided to be relatively small, between 15 – 20, as it provides insights while still being sufficiently small for analysing each answer comprehensively within the time and resource constraints [33]. The sample size enables constraining and comparing the individual answer comprehensively while still providing sufficient data for some generalities. The interviews were conducted in the period of two weeks during October 2018. Most of the interviews were conducted in person, yet due to time constraints, a few interviews were conducted through Facebook Messenger and Whatsapp.

B. Secondary Research

The secondary research was done in the form of literature review in providing a basic concepts of place branding and to better understand the factors contributing to the success of places and their brandings. The sources for the secondary research conducted in the literature review are mostly articles from academic journals concerning urban planning, city brand management, and city marketing. The secondary research delivered a platform on which to build the conceptual framework.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Success Factors of City Branding

Various scholars have suggested different frameworks and success factors for building a city brand. Were among the first researchers to try to create a framework for place marketing [34]. Aforementioned, some scholars suggest that the traditional marketing mix with its 4Ps and other product branding strategies can be used to brand cities as well [24] yet in gaining real success, special strategies should be applied as city brands are perceived in a significantly different way in comparison with product brands [14,33].

1) *Umbrella brand and sub-brands*: Braun and Zenker [26] suggested that a city should have an umbrella brand and several target group specific sub-brands under that umbrella brand. A diverse brand architecture with a strong umbrella brand and sub-brands are needed to enhance the customer-focused city brand management [26].

2) *Events*: Major cities have used events namely expositions and sports events as a tool to improve their economies and to build a more positive image [35] as they form strong connections to places and are a means of promotion the city to its target audiences [15].

3) *Residents*: Residents have generally been considered as the target group of the city brand and marketing, yet there is a broad agreement that residents are the core of city branding. Residents should be treated as co-producers of city brand, its brand, products and services [36].

4) *Urban planning*: Urban planning is generally considered as an integral part of place branding and improving a city's image. All communication and interaction with the city such as the city design, people, and building from perceptions of the city and thus urban planning is crucial [13,14]. Braun and Zenker [26] argued that the place's physics is the most important factor of place communication as the tangible characteristics are what have great effect on people's perceptions of the city and its brands.

B. Findings – Success Factors of Summarecon Mall Bekasi

1) *City marketing & communications*: All the respondents mentioned word of mouth communication as the most important channel affecting their perception about the entertainment centre and how they gain information on the mall. 5 interviewees also mentioned social media as a crucial way to obtain latest updates about the mall and participating tenants. Facebook and Instagram were the most important channels mentioned. However, there were 2 interviewees who pointed out that the content on social media needs to be real and authentic instead of sponsored post which are not liked.

2) *Events*: Events was another factor which was discovered to influence millennial perception on Summarecon Mall Bekasi. Events were found to add visibility and consciousness of the entertainment centre and to make it more attractive. The interviewees also mentioned the uniqueness of the events as a crucial factor. If the event is unique and interesting enough, it has a positive effect on Summarecon Mall Bekasi in general. Having varied events and happening in the shopping mall was considered to be a very important matter.

C. Discussion

The majority of interviewees had visited Summarecon Mall Bekasi since its grand opening back in 2013. People had visited mainly due to its strategic location. The most appraised icon of Summarecon Bekasi as the umbrella brand was its landmark, the inverted pyramid. Events in the Summarecon Mall Bekasi like culinary feast and music festival were associated with the entertainment centre.

In overall, millennials in this study considered the brand image of Summarecon Mall Bekasi as positive, they were found to appreciate intentionally and development in Summarecon Bekasi. The more they had heard about what was going on in the entertainment centre from peers or seen about it in media, the more attractive it was considered to be.

Aforementioned, millennials get most of the information on the shopping mall from their preferred key opinion leaders along with friends. Social media is playing a big role in influencing perceptions on the commercial centre as well. Millennials in Bekasi like an innovative and growing business which offers good service offerings along with appreciate any public transportation connection in the Bekasi region and into and out of Summarecon Mall Bekasi.

City brand managers should underline the general atmosphere in the city, as that is very important for the millennials. Events can be a great way to add life and buzz to the city, so enhancing the vent and cultural offerings in the city could be one way in which to catch the eye of millennials. Events for student would target millennials audience effectively and could be a unique and personal way to experience the city. Branding through schools in the city could be handy as millennials get a lot of information and participation on cities. Cities should be marketed as plausible places where to build a partnership, therefore policy makers should be more supportive for entrepreneurs and start-ups. In urban planning, architecture should be made visually pleasing and distinctive along with having a safe neighbourhood with good transport options is another factor which is attractive for millennials as ease of use of the public transportation was considered to be a crucial factor for millennials and thus it should be made simple to use and well-functioning. In addition, old architecture with unique character and history is somehow appreciated and should be kept in mind as that creates distinctive identity and atmosphere for the city with which to compete and which is very important for millennials.

IV. CONCLUSION

Undeniably this study has limitations; due to limited time and other resources the number of interviewees was relatively small. Therefore, the result cannot be generalised to the whole population of millennials in Indonesia

Further research on city brand and particular place branding could be done on different city in Indonesia. Research with millennials with more international experience or millennials from different countries residing in Indonesia could be fascinating along with comparing and contrasting differences between perceptions of city brands of different generations would also be an interesting field of study. Another crucial fiend of study would be city marketing channels and their effectiveness for different background of audiences to dig deeper and out which channel and what type of content are the most important players in catching the audience's eye.

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