EVALUATING THE ABILITY OF LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES TO PROMOTE STRONG BRAND IMAGE IN ALGERIAN CITIES

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Abstract: This work explains the role and importance of brand image in promoting tourism in Algiers. Its first objective is to create a model that evaluates and classifies the ability of local municipalities to develop a brand image of Algiers and to discover difficulties that could hinder its implementation. This paper is divided into three parts. The first section explained the role of brand image in tourism development. The second part is devoted to explain the method adopted. The authors chose MVAT method, based on multi-attribute analysis to assess brand image using the database of the bay of Algiers. The last section is devoted to explain the results of this work. Hence, this work revealed two kinds of results, on one hand, a model to assess the destination's ability to create a positive brand image. On the other hand, the classification of the destinations under study. So, this study leads us to consider that the Casbah is the only municipality that capable to promote the brand image of the bay of Algiers. It is important to mention that this model will serve as a decision-making tool for decision-makers when they decide to develop the brand image of a tourist destination in developing countries. It has the advantage of being flexible, so it accepts modifications in order to be improved. However, it is limited by information because it needs more information for a better diagnosis. Finally, it is well recommended to develop an image that is consistent with the local context of the city, as well as the necessary involvement of citizens in the construction of this image.

Key words: brand image, tourism, bay of Algiers, destination, MAVT, Model

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INTRODUCTION

The development of tourism has undergone several periods of development; indeed, it was during the 1980s that it enjoyed its real success, with the progress of the means of communication that facilitated mobility between countries where people became freer to choose their tourist destination, according to their own wishes, without any exogenous constraints. Tourism has great potential for the development of the city's economy and even the entire country. The World Tourism Organization has recorded a growth in tourism revenues as a result of the increase in the number of tourists and the development of the tourism industry. In 2018, the number of tourists worldwide reached 1.4 billion, an increase of 27 million compared to 2014 and 78 million compared to 2013. Also, there was a growth rate of 6% per year (UNWTO, 2018). In addition, "with the exception of the increased number of natural disasters, tourism will become the largest industry in the world" (Benghadbane & Khreis, 2019, p. 147).

It is important to mention that tourism is considered the cleanest industry with the lowest environmental impact compared to other industries. In addition, it is considered an important tool for the economic regeneration of the city.

The role of brand image in the development of tourism

In support of the increase in competitiveness between the world's cities, particularly in terms of tourism, the image of the city as a brand has become a strategy through which the city is created as an urban product. Its development has become conditioned by supply and demand in the global market. Thus, strengthening the brand image of tourism is an important way to achieve a more successful tourist destination in the long term (Ritchie & Ritchie, 1998; Caldwell & Freire, 2004; Kazemi et al., 2018). The use of brands in service industries such as tourism is more efficient than manufacturing (Buhalis, 2000; Kazemi et al., 2018). It is important to mention that the tourist's decision is strongly linked to the destination brand. The latter provides information on the destination to be visited, it plays an important role in differentiating the chosen destination from other destinations by shaping tourists' expectations of that destination (Gursoy & McCleary, 2004; Murphy et al., 2007; Kazemi et al., 2018).

Generally, tourists have a global vision of the tourist destination they want to visit, this is what is called the image of the city. This image is the result of the aggregation of several elements, namely tradition, the city's culture, its natural environment, works of art, music and even the celebrities who have their origin in this city (Schwaighofer, 2014).

This image can take many forms. Schwaighofer (2014) explains that there are four types of images, namely "an induced image, organic, transferred and perceived".

- The induced image is generally produced by advertising campaigns as part of urban marketing. It will be transmitted through brochures and tourist booklets....

- The organic image is the information obtained through conversations between citizens who live in the vicinity of tourist destinations, it is composed of several major elements such as local culture and traditions, the history of the place as well as beliefs.

- The transferred image is constructed by public authorities, with the objective of attracting tourists, and shaped by different institutions and travel agencies to convey the image of a destination to customers. It is generally transferred through the media.

- The perceived image has a direct relationship with the needs and expectations of tourists as a motivating factor to choose a specific destination. This perception differs from one person to another (Andreu et al., 2000; Schwaighofer, 2014).

Indeed, this destination will be kept or rejected if it meets or not the expectations of tourists. Then this destination will indeed be assessed in relation to the expectations of tourists who have or will visit this tourist destination (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003; Schwaighofer, 2014). Thus, the image of a tourist destination is the corollary of the

combination of several elements that cannot be studied separately. In this respect, the challenge to be overcome is to encourage tourists to visit a destination and ensure that they remain loyal to a tourism direction in the long term, this is the role of brand image.

Thus, the development of a city's brand image is defined according to Peel and Lloyd (2008) as including the creation of a particular image of the city through urban and environmental promotion, it constitutes an essential element in the promotion and development of urban spaces, especially those on waterfront, at a time when "cities are considered to be manageable as brands and vocabularies of "urban marketing" or "place marketing" have become common" (Merunka & Ouattara, 2006). Moreover, Haarhoff and De Klerk (2019) note that brand image is seen as the interaction between destination positioning and destination brand. The objective of this composition is therefore to make the image of the destination different with its competitive identity. Hence, the use of brand image development at a tourist destination has become essential to make a city known and differentiate it and give it a specific character in order to be distinguished from other cities in the world and to guarantee it as a long-term tourist destination.

Indeed, this phenomenon became more important during the 1990s, considering it as an important means of developing the various forms of industry, citing tourism in particular. Several factors can affect the choice of a tourist destination such as the cost of travel, comfort, quality of services offered, however, the most important factor that can have the greatest influence on the choice of a destination is above all "the brand of the city" (Iordache et al., 2014). The work of (Schwaighofer, 2014) perfectly explains the pillars on which a brand image of a tourist destination will be placed on.

It stipulates that this image must be based on four main elements, namely "Distinctiveness, Singularity, Acceptance, Translatability. To this end, he explains that a brand image of a tourist destination must be distinct. Then, it must appear stronger, unique and clearly defined. He adds that the second element to consider is singularity, explaining in this regard that a brand image must target a certain group of customers, because targeting all groups will create confusion among tourists and thus complicate the process of developing the brand image. So, in order to create a positive image of a tourist destination, it will be recommended to target a certain category of tourists in order to convince them to visit it. Acceptance is indeed a challenge to be surpassed, by giving a certain tourist destination brand image. Indeed, this image must be accepted by tourists but also by the citizens (Harrison-Walker, 2011). Finally, translatability is an important element through which a destination image must reflect the values of the city in a way that is clear to understand. Thus, these values must be respected by the various actors (Harrison-Walker, 2011). According to Merunka and Ouattara (2006), several factors are at the root of brand promotion, namely:

An important communication strategy, especially at the international level. Indeed, a communication strategy is essentially based on a mix of actors, namely the state, associations specialized in the field as well as other institutions. This is mainly done through a mass advertising campaign aimed at tourists.

It should be noted that personal communications and social network communications are an important factor in advertising cities as a destination.

Certainly, literature and cinema play an essential role in promoting the image of a tourist destination (Vladi, 2014).

Finally, it is well recommended to develop an image that is consistent with the local context of the city, this is achieved through the management of the organic image of the tourist destination.

Many cities have not clearly defined their images, due to several barriers. Is this the case for Algiers?

Aim and research objectives

Algiers wants to become a "world city", so Algiers has given more attention to the site of the bay of Algiers as a potential for the city's development. The question to be asked is therefore the following: can the municipalities of the bay of Algiers constitute a brand image project for the promotion of the tourist industry? Also, which municipality deserves more attention as a first priority in order to achieve our objective?

The main objective of this study is to evaluate and prioritize the capacity of a local site to catalyze the development or construction of a new brand image for the entire city (in this work we took the case of the municipalities of Algiers' bay). This objective will be achieved by creating a new model for evaluating and ranking the capacity of the municipalities of the bay of Algiers to promote the brand image and to discover the factors that could hinder the achievement of a positive brand image of Algiers.

The importance of this research paper is to demonstrate the importance of brand image in promoting tourist destinations. This research paper examines the capacity of strategic local sites to promote tourism production in all cities. In addition, this work has potential by providing a model that qualitatively and quantitatively assesses the ability of any destination to build a positive image. In addition, it has the possibility of classifying different destinations according to their brand image. This type of analysis helps decision-makers to prioritize the destinations to be developed in order to obtain a positive image of a chosen destination. It is important to mention that there are various studies that study the brand image of a destination using a theoretical model, citing mainly (Ghodeswar, 2008; Hanzaee & Saeedi, 2011; Qu et al., 2011; Martins, 2015; Shahzeidi et al., 2019).

It is remarkable that all these works have stopped at proposing a model except Shahzeidi et al. (2019) which suggest a qualitative and quantitative model for evaluation and prioritization of tourist sites in Iran. In the case of our work, we treated it differently. On the one hand, the case of Algiers has never been treated before, on the other hand, the authors tried to develop a model (qualitative and quantitative approach) adapted to the specificity of the case of Algiers, in order to prevent problems that could hinder the development of a positive image for Algiers, and to prioritize municipalities that deserve a first intervention to obtain better results in shorter time.

STUDY AREA

Algiers is the political, economic and administrative capital of Algeria. It is a coastal city with the highest population in Algeria with 3,154,791 inhabitants (DPAT, 2015). The bay of Algiers (Figure 1) is composed of nine municipalities (54.43 km²) which are different in surfaces and number of citizens. It is covering 6.73% of Algiers area with approximately 574880 inhabitants, and representing 18.22% of the population of Algiers capital.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This work stands on the application of a multi-attribute value theory (MAVT), it is based on mathematical representation to evaluate and rank the performance of service or activity to help decision-makers choose between alternative decisions.

It is based on the use of several attributes that are different in their type (qualitative or quantitative) and scale of measurement. It is important to mention that this method has the advantage of replacing quantitative data when they are not available with expert judgments. It's intention is to build a way to associate a real number with each alternative, in order to produce an order of preference on alternatives in line with the value judgments of decision-makers (Ferretti et al., 2014).

Through MAVT, all alternative values could be aggregated into a single value, the alternatives with the best value are the most valued.
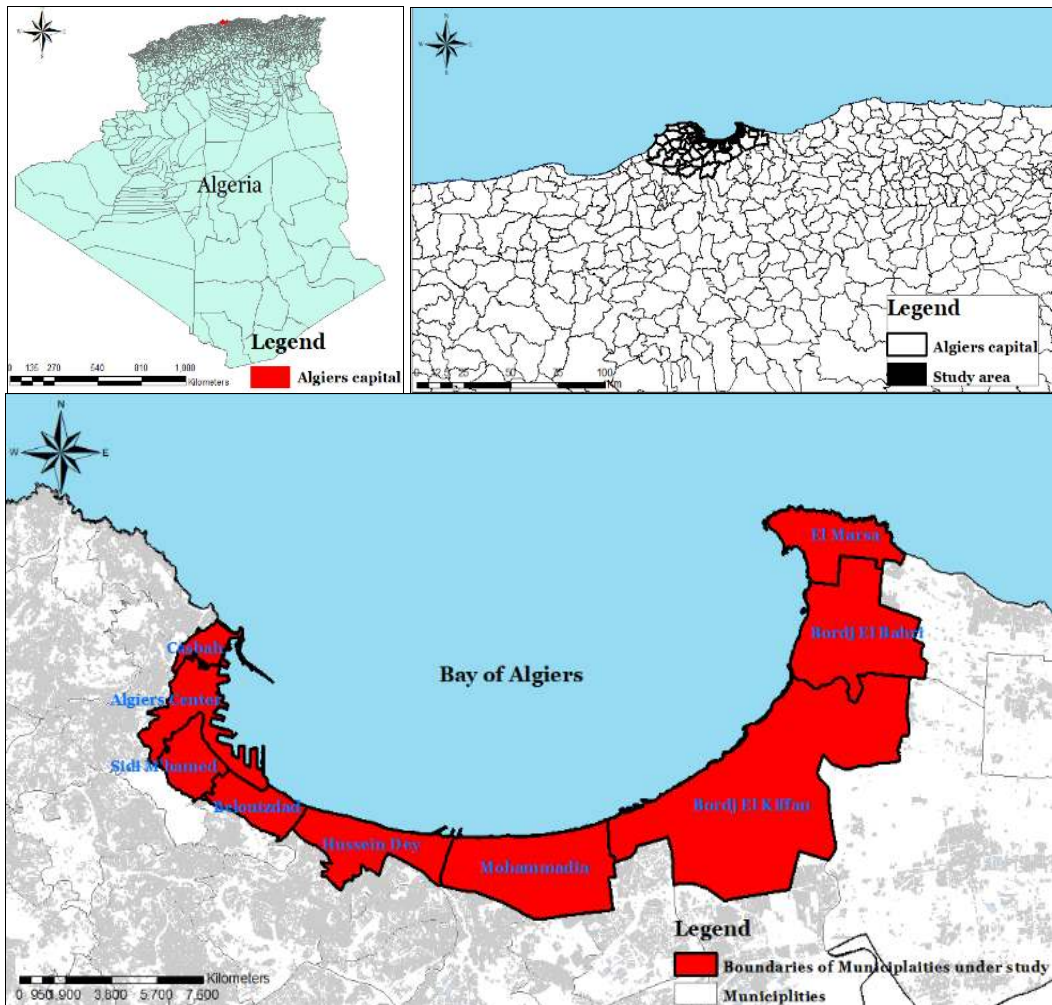
Figure 1. Presentation of the bay of Algiers

This method is carried out by adopting two steps:

- First, setting the appropriate objectives to evaluate. These objectives can be described according to a set of attributes. These attributes are extracted from analyzing the characteristics of the objectives under study, also previous researches in the same field may be a help. According to Jiang and Ji (2002) those attributes may be co-operative or conflicting. Thus, defining the appropriate attributes allows authors to better diagnose the underlined objective and, consequently react properly.

- Second, moving from the abstract concept to the measured attributes is the main objective of this part of the work. "Those attributes may be natural (extracted directly from definition of objective), constructed (they specify a finite number of degrees to which objectives are met), proxy (they are indirectly related to the definition of objective)" (Ferretti et al., 2014, p. 4). Thus, these attributes can be expressed quantitatively or qualitatively. In this work we've used only quantitative attributes. Hence, a detailed explanation of this method is indicated in the work of (Ferretti et al., 2014; Da Cruz & Marques, 2017; Cheniki et al., 2019).

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RESULTS

This work present two kinds of findings namely:

A decision-making model

This model was developed based on an analysis of the literature on brand image and applied experiences in different tourist destinations, as well as recommendations from different researchers and authors' proposals to promote the brand image of a destination. Also, it takes in consideration the specificity of destinations located in developing countries, particularly in Algeria. This model was developed on the basis of ten main attributes (natural spaces, natural & architectural heritage, equipment, cultural heritage, events, aesthetic value, environmental value, social media, service quality, ICT services). This model was developed using a top-down approach, it was developed based on the definition of the concept of the image of the city and the brand image of the destination and the objective of this work which is to develop and promote a brand image of a tourist destination and the analysis of the development of the brand image concept of a destination and the possibility of promoting a destination to make it more attractive.

Therefore, the attributes of the model tree (Figure 2) have been elucidated below:

Tangible attributes

(A) Natural spaces: This attribute measures the presence of natural areas in tourist destinations, which can be green spaces, forests, but also blue spaces such as beaches.

(B) Natural & architectural heritage: This attribute is measured on the basis of information provided by UNESCO on the classified heritage and the reports about national heritage provided by (Parquexpo, 2016) and (D.F.C.V, 2019).

(C) Equipment: This attribute takes into consideration all equipment related to the tourism industry such as hotels, mobility, leisure, cultural equipment, telecommunications equipment. This information was obtained using GIS of Algiers, Google Map and the report of (DPTIC, 31-12-2017).

Intangible attributes

(A) Cultural Heritage: This attribute measures cultural activities such as artistic and literary productions and history. The information were extracted from the report of (DCH, 2003).

(B) Events: This attribute measures the different events that occur in each municipality of the bay of Algiers, whether local, national or international.

(C) Aesthetic value: It takes into consideration the visual aspects of the city being evaluated, here in this work, the authors took into account the state of buildings, visual pollution such as the presence of satellite dishes. So, collecting information was based on (ONS, 2011), (DPAT, 2011).

(D) Environmental value: This attribute measures the environmental aspect of each municipality in the bay of Algiers, we have chosen to measure the following variables (polluting facility, water quality, authorized and unauthorized beaches). The needed information were extracted from the report of (DPAT, 2011).

(E) Social media: This attribute measures the popularity of each municipality through social media pages such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

(F) Service quality: This attribute was calculated using customer satisfaction and recommendation ratings based on different sources such as the Google Map indications.

(G) ICT services: It measures the ability of different visitors to connect to the internet. It takes into account the visitor's ability to be integrated into an intelligent atmosphere (it facilitates mobility, discovery of different places to visit and contact with other people). In order to measure mobile internet strength (2G, 3G, and 4G) the authors used "Speed Test" android application for mobile.
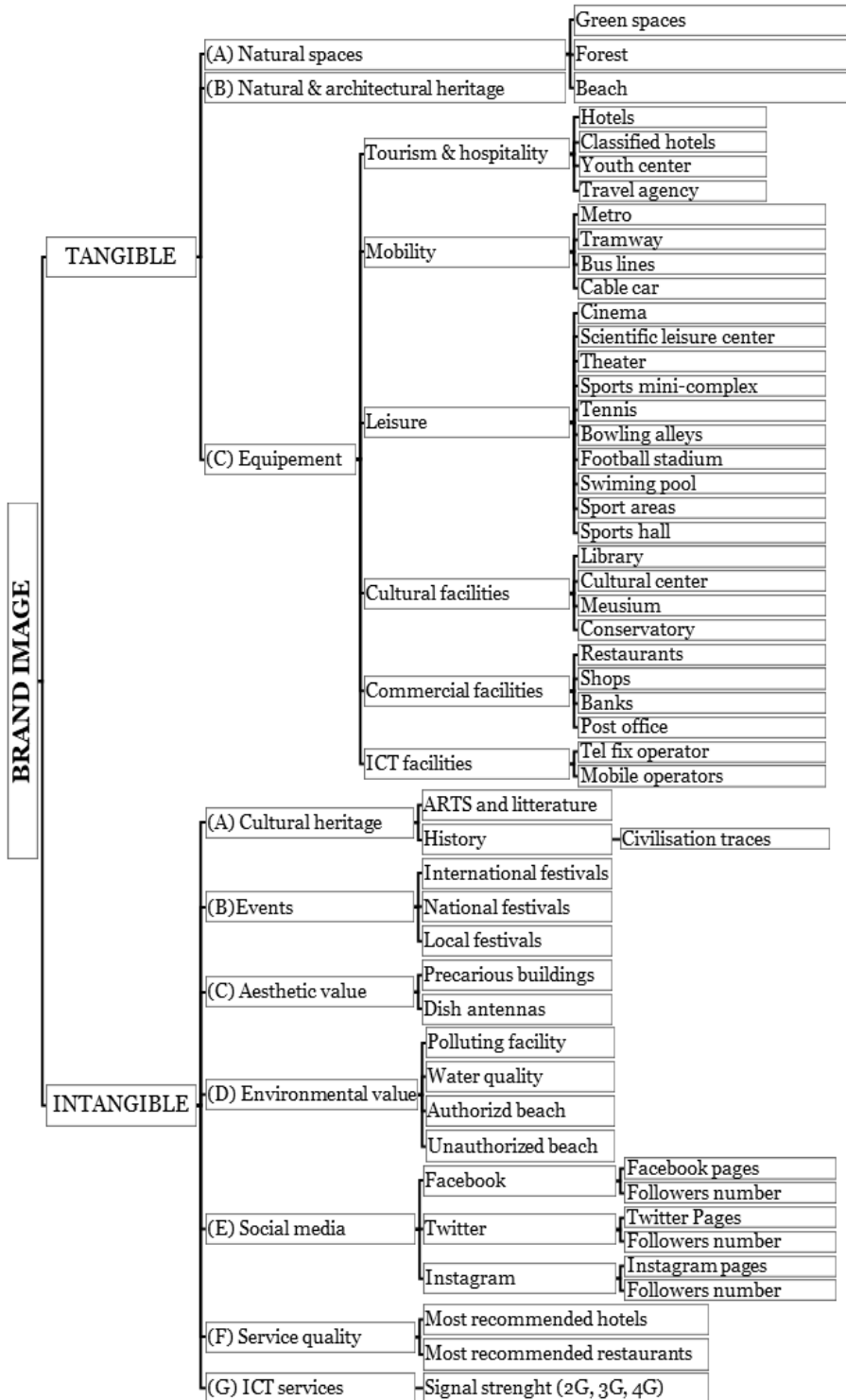
Figure 2. Model' tree structure

Evaluation and prioritization of different municipalities

This part of work was realized using three main steps:

First, standardizing raw values using z-score formula (Equation 1) as it is explained by (Abdi, 2007).

Z-score formula: $Z = \frac{Y - M_Y}{S_Y}$ Equation 1

Second, calculating the weight values of each attribute following AHP method (Saaty, 2002, 2008). So, (Table 1), presented values obtained from calculating weight values of intangible attributes based on expert's evaluation.

Table 1. Standardized matrix (in the case of intangible attributes)
Data Source: Authors, based on experts' evaluation

attributes	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Weight
A	0,37	0,34	0,46	0,29	0,42	0,42	0,23	0,36
B	0,06	0,06	0,05	0,08	0,05	0,04	0,13	0,07
C	0,18	0,28	0,23	0,25	0,28	0,25	0,20	0,24
D	0,07	0,03	0,04	0,04	0,03	0,03	0,10	0,05
E	0,12	0,17	0,12	0,21	0,14	0,17	0,18	0,16
F	0,07	0,11	0,08	0,12	0,07	0,08	0,15	0,10
G	0,12	0,01	0,03	0,01	0,02	0,01	0,03	0,03

Lambda Max = 7,084
CI   = 0,014 < 0.1 (significant)
CR   = 0,01 < 0.1 (significant)

Table 2. Brand image scores and ranking Source: Authors using the conceived model

Casbah	+1,046736
Algiers Center	-0,01711
Mohammadia	-0,02498
Hussein Dey	-0,03712
Bordj El Kiffan	-0,03945
Bordj El Bahri	-0,05701
Sidi M'hamed	-0,19333
Belouizdad	-0,19458
El Marsa	-0,35445

Third, measuring brand image of each municipality using the designed model and the database of the municipalities of the bay of Algiers.

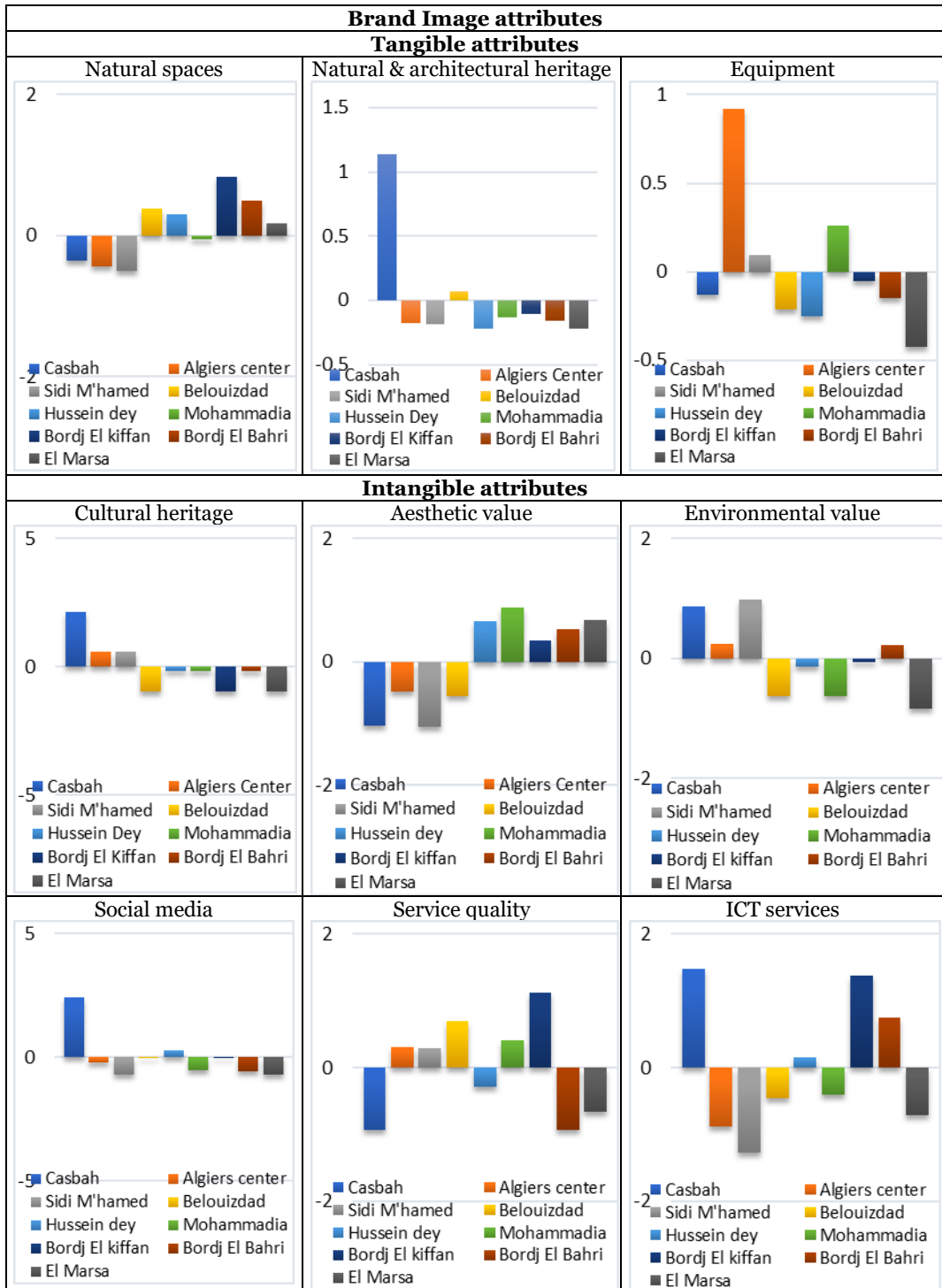The key results of this study were presented in two main points:

Rating the ability of municipalities of the bay of Algiers to promote brand image of Algiers

In order to measure and prioritize the capacity of the different municipalities of the bay of Algiers to promote the Algiers brand image, it was necessary to build and use the model (Figure 2). Therefore, the measurement attributes defining this model yielded the following results (Table 2). Casbah was ranked as the best municipality that is already able to develop a brand image in order to place Algiers as an attractive destination followed respectively by Algiers Center, Mohammadia, Hussein Dey, Bordj El Kiffan, Bordj El Bahri, Sidi M'hamed, Belouizdad, El Marsa.

• The Casbah was ranked as the best with higher scores (+1,046736) followed by Algiers Center, Mohammadia, Hussein Dey, Bordj El Kiffan, Bordj El Bahri with average scores (-0,01711, -0,02498, -0,03712, -0,03945, -0,05701). Besides, three other municipalities were ranked as the worst.

Table 3. Evaluation of brand image using the municipalities of Algiers bay
(Data source: Algiers bay database)

Brand Image attributes

Tangible attributes

Natural spaces	Natural & architectural heritage	Equipment

Intangible attributes

Cultural heritage	Aesthetic value	Environmental value

Social media	Service quality	ICT services

- It is important to mention that the Casbah is the only municipality that has obtained a positive overall score by measuring all the attributes of this model.

Difficulties in achieving a brand image in the bay of Algiers

After measuring all attributes associated to the brand image in the nine municipalities of the bay of Algiers, (Table 3) demonstrates different scores obtained from measuring each attribute of that model. The analysis of results obtained and represented in (Table 3) demonstrate that there are two kinds of barriers to the promotion of Algiers bay municipalities to be a brand image. First, barriers related to tangible attributes. Second, those related to intangible attributes.

Tangible attributes

- 4/9 municipalities under study have not succeeded in preserving natural spaces in their urban spaces (Casbah, Algiers Center, Sidi M'hamed, Mohammadia).
- 7/9 municipalities are poor in term of natural and architectural heritage (Algiers Center, Sidi M'hamed, Hussein Dey, Mohammdia, Bordj El Kiffan, Bordj El Bahri and El Marsa).
- 6/9 of municipalities did not have sufficient tourist infrastructure (Casbah, Belouizadad, Hussein Dey, Bordj El Kiffan, Bordj El Bahri and El Marsa).

Intangible attributes

- 6/9 municipalities have failed to preserve cultural heritage in their urban areas (Belouizdad, Hussein Dey, Mohammadia, Bordj El Kiffan, Bordj El Bahri, El Marsa).
- 4/9 of municipalities have failed to promote the aesthetic value of their urban spaces (Casbah, Algiers Center, Sidi M'hamed, Belouizdad).
- 5/9 of municipalities failed to protect their environment from pollution (Belouizdad, Hussein Dey, Mohammadia, Bordj El Kiffan, El Marsa).
- 7/9 municipalities are barely inactive in social media spaces (Algiers Center, Sidi M'hamed, Belouizdad, Mohammadia, Bordj El Kiffan, Bordj El Bahri, El Marsa).
- 4/9 municipalities did not provide a good service to tourists (Casbah, Hussein Dey, Bordj El Bahri, El Marsa).
- 5/9 municipalities failed to provide a good internet services to customers (Algiers Center, Sidi M'hamed, Belouizdad, Mohamadia, El Marsa).

DISCUSSIONS

This paper aimed to assess the capacity of the municipalities of the bay of Algiers to build and promote a brand image and to discover which municipality should be a priority. To achieve this objective, the authors therefore used the Algiers bay database, which played an important role in achieving this objective.

Few works attempt to evaluate a brand image in the case of Algerian cities, in particular, this work aims to prioritize the capacity of local municipalities to promote a brand image for the entire city. It was therefore relevant to build and develop a model to evaluate the branding strategy to be adopted in the case of Algiers. In addition, this model takes the particularity of extracting barriers that could hinder promoting a brand image to attract leisure tourists and businessmen in particular.

In this aim the authors have attempted to develop a model based on the context of an African developing country in order to evaluate the capacity of their cities to adopt brand image strategy by helping decision-makers to make appropriate decisions to solve issues associated with brand image strategy.

The assessment of the capacity of the bay of Algiers to promote a brand image in order to attract tourists gives us the following results:

• Casbah is ranked as the municipality most capable of adopting a brand image strategy for the development of the Algiers brand image (the scores obtained during the measurement were positive). However, the global score was not very far from the average. Besides, the other municipalities had negative results. This means that they were not yet in a position to adopt a branding strategy. The authors tried to assess the capacity of the municipalities of the bay of Algiers to promote a brand image strategy using a designed model. Fortunately, Algiers' bay municipalities' data base played an important role in achieving the underlined objective. However, some attributes weren't used due to a lack of information (i.e. security level in each municipality), or non-existence of this service. This work is following the line of several research works in the field of brand image. However, it is different because it explores and ranks the possibility of promoting a branding strategy and assesses local municipalities to see which municipalities should be given priority in order to promote a positive brand image for the entire city, examining two types of obstacles: tangible and intangible.

The application of that model in the case of the municipalities of the bay of Algiers led the authors discover the following realities:

The results obtained from using the brand image model in the case of the municipalities of the bay of Algiers revealed different values from municipality to another. Only one municipality was considered the best (Casbah), but it has faced many obstacles (i.e. the scarcity of natural spaces, it is noted by (DPAT, 2011) that the Casbah municipality has only 23 green spaces, and one beach that is not allowed, and lack of forests, also, our research revealed that this municipality suffers from the low presence of tourist facilities especially hotels particularly classified ones, service quality is very poor, after consulting the hotels and restaurants most recommended by customers, we discovered that the number of customers who recommend this service in the municipality of the Casbah is very low (basing on Google Map information).

The aesthetic value also has a disadvantage for the development of a brand image in this municipality due mainly to precarious buildings; a study carried out by (CNERU, 2007) revealed that from general analysis of 2189 plots which is composed of 83% of constructed plots and 17% which were empty. Of these parcels built there are 30% that were in advanced degradation, 50% in extreme degradation, 10% were in ruins and the remaining 10% were closed). Therefore, decision-makers must focus on solving these barriers extracted from model in order to promote the brand image in these municipalities; they only have to solve the problems that need to be solved the first. Therefore, the role of decision-makers in the Casbah is to find a way to solve those problems to obtain an attractive brand image for Algiers. Besides, the other municipalities have not been able to promote a brand image for an attractive tourist destination. The authors discovered that the municipalities of the bay of Algiers suffer from tangible and intangible barriers. Hence, in order to build a positive brand image of Algiers it is imperative to solve problems related to brand image strategy in the aim to attract tourists. However, the brand image model has also some limitations.

It is based on numerical values delivered from different disciplines to achieve the underlined objective. Hence, the lack of information is considered as an obstacle to assess the objective under study, particularly cities in African developing countries where it is difficult to obtain information if it already existed. In addition, the same value in all samples led to drop some variables (variables that had the same value in all municipalities were automatically ignored when standardizing, in this study, events were rejected because all municipalities shared the same events).

In addition, the compensatory nature of the model generally delivers global scores, it does not consider the detailed information of each attribute (i.e. low scores were offset by high scores).

This paper will play a significant role in the understanding of brand image strategy in cities in African developing countries; it will be an aid-tool to help decision-makers to make best decisions. This model was constructed on the basis of different attributes that define the concept of brand image in cities in developing countries. So, this model will serve as reference for assessing the brand image of the tourist destination; it could be applied in many other cities, particularly in developing countries that have the same objectives as Algiers.

In order to create a clear brand image in Algiers, we have built this model that vise of attracting mainly leisure tourists and businessmen, this choice is in the same line of the Master plan for development and urban planning of Algiers (Parquexpo, 2016). This model presents the advantage to be applied in the case of other cities around the world because it can be customized by adding or deleting certain attributes and variables that could be associated to the objective under study.

CONCLUSION

This paper examines the capacity of local municipalities to promote a brand image for the city as a whole. To this end, the authors attempted to design a model that assesses and ranks different municipalities based on their ability to develop a brand image.

This work has therefore given decision-makers a decision-making tool that helps them to choose the best option to develop a brand image in Algiers.

This decison-making tool has the advantage to be applied in different cities around world, in a condition, that it must have the same objectives as this model (this model targets leisure tourists and businessmen). Otherwise, it can be modified according to the characteristics of these cities. Also, it is flexible, so, researchers could add or remove attributes depending on the characteristics of the city under study.

In addition, this model could easily be transformed into design model in order to build software or android application in a way that is easy for decision-makers to use, this operation is well explained in the work of (Prasad et al., 2011).

However, this model needs pieces of information to allow for a better diagnosis, and is therefore limited by the information.

It is important to mention that, the two main elements to be taken into account in the development of a brand image of a tourist destination are as follows:

First, it is necessary to target a category of visitors to attract, because the concentration on several categories of users makes this image blurred and difficult to achieve.

Secondly, involve citizens in these kinds of strategies, because the citizen must feel concerned about these kinds of large-scale and important projects.

Indeed, tourism can guarantee citizens quality jobs and ensure a link between local economic activity and tourism.

It should be noted that citizens play an important role in strengthening the brand image of the city of Algiers, especially through social networks such as Facebook and Twitter and Instagram. Indeed, a simple visit to social network sites shows us the great effort made by citizens to transmit a positive image of Algiers to the world.

Many people who contributed through their cameras to show the world how beautiful Algiers is and deserves a chance to be visited.

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