Analyzing the Identity Aspect of Cultural Heritage of Isfahan City from the Viewpoint of Visitors With the Aim of City Branding

Análise do Aspecto da Identidade do Patrimônio Cultural da Cidade de
Isfahan a Partir do Ponto de Vista dos Visitantes com o Objetivo de Identidade Urbana

Nader Zali; Masoud Zamani-Poor & Amin Arghash

University of Guilan, Faculty of Arts and Architectures, Rasht, Iran
E-mails: N.Zali54@gmail.com; M.Zamanipor@gmail.com; amin_arghash@yahoo.com

Abstract

Using modern strategies and methods in city marketing is one way to attract more resources, and city branding seems as the most important tool in this process. The main purpose of this study is to examine identity aspects of cultural heritage of Isfahan (handicrafts, historical monuments, and lifestyle) - a city that is the symbol of Islamic culture and civilization of Iran- based on city branding criteria (Presence, place, pulse, potential, people, and prerequisite). The study is a field research and is based on data analysis. The result explored that historical monuments in viewpoint of three groups of Isfahan's visitors (residents, domestic and foreign visitors) carry a high international standing, possess the best quality of place, enjoy ample opportunities for city developing, are high in attraction and activities, have high transparency, sociability, and flexibility, also own the best infrastructure for different purposes in compare to the two other aspects of cultural heritage of Isfahan city (handicrafts and lifestyle). In other words, the most distinctive aspect of Isfahan that makes the identity of the cultural heritage is its historical monuments which have the capability to become an international brand.

Keywords: City branding; Isfahan; Cultural identity; Cultural capabilities

Resumo

Atribuir uma marca a uma cidade é uma prática comum adotada por muitas cidades no contexto de intensa ocupação urbana por recursos móveis, mercados, oportunidades e atenção. O primeiro passo essencial para conferir uma marca a uma cidade consiste no reconhecimento da identidade competitiva, a partir de um acordo estabelecido entre seus funcionários e seu público. Com base nisso, o presente artigo pretende primeiramente reconhecer a identidade da cidade de Isfahan a partir do estudo de documentos internacionais e da avaliação da opinião de diferentes pessoas (estrangeiros 40%, visitantes domésticos 40%, e residentes n=100=20%). Os resultados mostram que o consenso dominante entre os funcionários e o público de Isfahan sobre a identidade refere-se à identidade cultural, com base na civilização islâmica da cidade. Após estabelecer a identidade cultural como identidade dominante para a cidade de Isfahan, suas capacidades culturais baseadas em indicadores urbanos (presença, lugar, potencial, pulso, pessoas e pré-requisito), através das quais uma cidade pode ser compreendida, foram analisadas para conferir uma marca à cidade. Consequentemente, foi revelado que os elementos proeminentes da identidade cultural da cidade de Isfahan constituem seus prédios e monumentos históricos. Também foi evidente que o público realmente considera mais as características físicas (aparentes) do que as características culturais intrínsecas.

Palavras-chave: City Branding; Isfahan; identidade cultural; capacidades culturais

1 Introduction

It is in the context of tourism that a geographic location is (or includes) a destination brand. A destination brand is defined as a 'name, symbol, logo, word or other graphic that both identifies and differentiates the destination; furthermore, it conveys the promise of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination; it also serves to consolidate and reinforce the recollection of pleasurable memories of destination experience' (Kerr, 2006). Beginning of marketing for cities at least dates back to the nineteenth century. Marketing and an increasing in the tourism services sector have been intensified in cities with an increasingly looking for marketing for their own locations. Nowadays, due to the importance of marketing role in cities, the conscious use of marketing methods by a public organization is not only known as a secondary tool in solving the planning problems, but it is also considered as a rule and principle in place management (Kavaratzis, 2004).

To prove their individuality in achieving various economic, political, social or psychological purposes, cities have long sought to be distinguished from each other (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005). Along this historical route and an increase in cities' competitiveness, it is hoped to believe that the city branding's role as a people action resulting from a consensus among the public and the officials about the identity of the city, and as a strategic instrument for spreading competitive advantages of cities used by many of them around the world in the field of intensifying city competitiveness (Zhang & Zhao, 2009), and as a suitable tool for city marketing as well.

Generally speaking, to make a correct decision and to schedule effectively, city managers need a comprehensive knowledge to influence the city. To create healthy communities and to understand the costs and benefits of different patterns of development, managers need to possess sufficient knowledge, i.e. they have to know the current image of the city, then to design the image as they wish and to define actions for city improvement. The study of image and the identification of the city are crucial aspects of recognition in the process of urban planning strategy (Gholipoor *et al.*, 2010).

In Iran, while some cities demonstrate a good image, some others show a negative or weak one in the mind of people inside or outside the city (ibid). Isfahan city, is known as *half of the world* (Nesfe Jahan) by tourists (Pope, 2007). Isfahan city has a special position that authorities call it as the capital of Islamic culture and civilization of Iran[1]. Isfahan city has a pleasant weather, prominent areas like Naghsh-e-Jahan square, memorable monuments like Ali-Ghapoo and Menar-Jonban, and unique and unbeatable mosques like Sheykh-Lotfollah and Shah-Abbas Mosque. There you can see appropriate links between nature and architecture such as Khajoo and See-o- Se Pol (thirty three) bridges. And natural river of Zayand-e- rud completes all of these features (Heydarzade & Saeedi, 2011), has a special position that authorities call it as the capital of Islamic culture and civilization of Iran[2]. Thus the present study seeks two aims. The first aim is to analyze and examine cultural status of Isfahan city from the viewpoint of visitors (residents, foreign and domestic visitors) in compare to economic and politic aspects. The second aim is to analyze the identity components of cultural heritage of Isfahan city toward city branding. In respect to the aim of the study the proposed question is as follow;

> - In regard to city branding indexes, which component of the cultural heritage of Isfahan city was understood better by the visitors and has the capability to be an international brand?

2 Methodology

This study is a survey research that seeks practical objectives. Data are gathered in a field research and then are analyzed quantitatively .In its first stage, the study seeks to analyze the position of cultural heritage of Isfahan city comparing to the political and economical aspects. At the second stage, various identity aspects of cultural heritage (handicrafts, historical monuments, and lifestyle) based on city indexes of visualization, place, vibrancy, potential, community, and infrastructure are investigated. The main aim of this stage is to examine the aspects of cultural heritage from the visitors' point of view and to evaluate their capability to be an international brand. To do this the research is composed of 100 visitors (20 residents, 40 foreign visitors, and 40 domestic visitors) who are given questionnaires. The questionnaires were distributed to modern recreation areas and three top historical and cultural places that are privileged at both inside

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1 Approved by Cabinet in 2009 traveled to Isfahan. Retrieved from <www.ostan-es.ir>.

2 Approved by Cabinet in 2009 traveled to Isfahan. Retrieved from <www.ostan-es.ir>.

and outside the borders and have also been recorded in the United Nations Educational, Scientists and Cultural Organization, UNESCO. The places are as follow: Imam Square (Naghsh-e Jahan) recorded in 1979, with registration number 115 (UNESCO/ CLT/WHC, 2013(; Chehelsotoon Garden of Persian gardens recorded in 2011, Reg 1327 (UNESCO/CLT/ WHC, 2013), and Jame Mosque recorded in 2012, Reg 1379 (UNESCO/CLT/WHC, 2013). Questions were designed so that respondents had to rate them by an agreement scale, graded from 5 (the strongest agreement) to 1(the strongest disagreement). There were also open- ended questions where respondents were able to make more views and free suggestions.

3 Theoretical Framework
3.1 Review of the Related Literature

The concept of branding is an idea led to the production of a product with better quality than before. To be dependent on a noble and recognizable name emerged in about 200 years ago, when Josiash wedgwood found out that in order to promote his potteries among English aristocrats, he should etch his name on them. In 1930 Nile McElroy, the promotion department manager of "Procter and Gamble" company, established "P&G brand management system" in order to examine people's tendencies to nullify marketing strategies for competing brands (Pfefferkorn, 2005). Place branding has gained visibility as one of the hot topics among academics and practitioners (Hanna & Rowley, 2008). Although the concept of branding has been applied extensively to products and services, tourism destination branding is a relatively recent phenomenon (Kurgun, 2010).

In one of the earliest and most insightful matters published in the field of urban or city marketing, claimed that city marketing has evolved in three stages (Kavaratzis, 2008):

The first generation in his view was locomotive smokestack chasing who made the manufacturing jobs through attracting companies with subsidies and the promise of low operating charges but higher profits at existing or replacing sites. The second generation was called target marketing which includes manufacturing attractions and service jobs in target industry as they take advantage of profitable growth. There are still efforts to tempt growth factors from other areas for promoting; meanwhile this promotion includes improvements in physical infrastructure, professional training and stressing good cooperation of public- private sectors.

The third generation, 'product development' is a combination of the objectives of the first two stages but the emphasis is on the career prospects of these agencies. Given that present agencies' prospect includes global competition, human and intellectual resources along with low operating costs and quality of life.

Various studies with different purposes have been done related to city branding around the world. In their essay "City branding and the Olympic effect: A case study of Bejing", Zhang & Zhao (2009) sought to examine the degree of matching between the identity and core values as determined by the city authorities and the realities as perceived by visitors and residents; also they evaluated the Olympic effects as a great event on Bejing branding process, they have reached two major conclusions: the first one was that there was a mismatch between the identity and core values as branded by the city authority and what was perceived and experienced by visitors and residents; and the second one was that the Olympic Games; overall, great events leave limited publicity and impacts on the city branding process.

De Carlo *et al.* (2009) have attained key results in designing cultural brand for Milan city. The highlights of the results are as follow; the first one was that each part of the development and branding strategies should have innovation in enhancing positive features and dealing with negative features. One of the requisite conditions for the success of a brand is the participation of a wide range of beneficiaries.

In their research, Dragolea & Cotirlea (2012) have targeted a cultural element called National Museum of Unity in Romanian Albaiulia city towards city branding. They identified positive and negative aspects understood by tourists and specified activities which must be done by the museum over the year compared to previous years in order to increase tourist flow.

In 2005, with the use of contemporary developments in marketing theory and practice, Kavaratzis & Ashworth show how it is possible to correlate product branding to the city branding as a powerful depicting strategy to the current city. And they are also trying to define a framework for an effective strategy for city branding. Karvatzis & Ashworth (2005) also found out that if they want to extend the products branding theories, it is necessary to take the city branding into account

as well, for the city to be a product which remains. It includes distinctive features like spatial scale, spatial hierarchy, inherent multiplicity, and etc. that differentiate city branding from product branding. They believe that if these distinctive features are recognized, it is possible to include the product branding in this process and achieve a valid and effective form for place management; otherwise, it is considered an irrelevant deviation.

In a modeling study, Gholipoor *et al.* (2010) evaluated the effective key factors in shaping city image towards effective city branding among Tehran citizens. The study proved that the components of priorities of "Tehran Inner Image Shaping" model are respectively economy, trade, scope of services, the city's international status, transportation and communication infrastructure, traffic, social issues, heritage constructions preservation, the environment, architecture and city attraction, citizen self-awareness, culture, education and university. They have also offered suggestions for improving various aspects of the city; for example, in the cultural field, they have suggested an increase in diversity and plurality of events, boosting cultural festivals in Tehran and providing more access possibility to culture and cultural products for citizens.

To summarize the recent research in the field of branding, it can be deduced that for transferring the fundamental branding concepts from commercial products to the city area, distinctive features of commercial products and of city should be taken into consideration.

3.2 City Branding and Evaluation Variables

City branding by putting pressure on cities lack brand increase their speed in development path (Stigel & Frimann, 2006). Product branding and marketing are sources of inspiration for designing city branding. Branding a product is representative of a range of physical, social and psychological attributes and beliefs that are associated with that product. Branding is a conscious strategy to select some attributes of a product. It is considered as core values of a product in order to facilitate the process by which consumers can confidently recognize them. Those core values form the product's identity. Although some, like Peterson (1981) object that cities are not like products that are involved in direct transactions of markets, proponents argue that the concept of product branding can include city branding as well. One of the crucial strategies in city branding is the creation of city's identity which employs a wide range of history, demography, economy, and policy (Zhang & Zhao, 2009). City identity is an easy but difficult comprehensible concept. At the first step, everyone thinks that can understand and identify both identity concept and city term, whereas in a professional sense, understandings of the two are very difficult (Behzadfar, 2007). Holloway & Hubbard assert that interaction with "place" may take place "through direct experience with the environment or indirectly through media representations". However, what is important is that how the information is processed and through subjective process leads to perceptions of stable images of place which are a basis for their daily interaction with their environment. Such subjective plans allow people to navigate through complex realities, for "our surrounding is usually more complicated than our feeling about it". In fact, branding is engaged with those mental images. "Place brand management", is an attempt to influence and improve the mental plans that is considered as an optimal path for the current needs and future demands of a place (Kavaratzis, 2008).

In general, place identity is affected by physical functions and by experienced emotional aspects of the environment. Place dependency is associated with a strong understanding of the relationship between individual and specific location. This relates to the quality of current location and quality of other alternative places that are comparable with the current place (Ujang, 2012). Branding process helps a city to define its identity in order to draw attention and to be distinct from other cities and helps the city to promote and publicize itself better (Dragolea & Cotirlea, 2012).

People often focus on issues like climate, environment, transportation and traffic, living standards and costs, sports and leisure facilities, social order and cultural life of the city to view and think about city in practical terms. Anholt (2007) comes up with six analytically distinct aspects through which a city is understood and the brand of a city can be evaluated. These aspects, as the city branding hexagonal indexes, include Presence (familiarity and contribution to global culture), place (physical aspects), potential (economy and educational opportunities), Pulse, community and people (cultural alignment) and Prerequisite (living standards and infrastructure) which cover both tangible and intangible dimensions of economic and social developments. Table 1 has given the branding indexes of city in summary.

Aspect	Meaning
Presence	The city's international status and standing; the city's global contribution
Place	The city's appearance and physical attributes, such as cleanliness of environment
Potential	The city's opportunities for future development
Pulse	The city's vibrancy and exciting ways of life with lots of interesting activities for residents and visitors
People	The city's friendliness, openness, cultural diversification and safety
Prerequisite	The city's basic infrastructure and public amenities

Table 1 The aspects of people's perception of the city (Anholt, 2007).

Identity and traditional values of a city cannot be ignored like a neutral statement, but as a claim, they should be evaluated with different benefits to be cleared that they are justifiable or not. Creation of identity for a city is a crucial part in branding discussion (Zhang & Zhao, 2009). Hence, in regard to the research orientation that is analysis and examining of capabilities of Isfahan cultural identity, cultural identity and its other components will be evaluated.

3.3 Cultural Identity and its Components

Undoubtedly, culture is the most important and richest source of identity. Individuals and groups always adopt an identity with recourse to cultural components and elements. Because these components and elements have a remarkable ability to meet people's need as they want to be distinct from or integrate into mass of people. In other words, culture creates either differences or integration. When we talk about culture we are referring to the ways in which humans, individually or collectively, in relationship with others make their life meaningful. In traditional societies, power and high performance of boundaries create an exclusive space for specific cultures. Such cultures could therefore benefit from immunity based on the use of such proprietary to find an absolute position. Since there was no culture competitor and cultural alterations were very few, humans' needs to absolute and stable resources have been met appropriately. But globalization process not only destroyed exclusive position and immunity of cultures, but also reduced their ability in drawing traditional identity. In a world without borders, various cultural components and elements inevitably clash with each other so they get together (Behzadfar, 2007). Maintaining meaning and identity of city

elements is very important, because it reinforces identity, community feelings, and the sense of place (Ujang, 2012).

Recognizing identity of a city should be based on constitutive components of character of that place. The constitutive components of character of a city are; natural, artifact, and human components which each one has its own attributes and variables. Some variables are as follows (Behzadfar, 2007):

- Natural components: mountain, river, material, hills, plains, etc.
- Artifact components: individual buildings, roads, neighborhoods, squares, curbs, etc.
- Human components: culture, language, religion, customs, education, etc.

The combination of the mentioned components forms the cultural characteristics (cultural identity) of a city. Due to the fact that the variety of cultural components are immense to be used in evaluating cities, it's better to evaluate them in macro-scale (Zhang & Zhao, 2009):

1. Indigenous liberal arts and crafts;
2. Heritage constructions;
3. Lifestyle, customs and traditions.

4 Basic Research Findings and Analysis

The data of the field research extracted from distributed questionnaires primarily reveals the cultural status of Isfahan city comparing to the other factors such as politics and economics and secondly analyses capabilities of cultural elements which make the identity of the Isfahan city from the respondents' view (foreigners, domestic visitors, and residents) via indexes (presence, place, potential, pulse, people, and prerequisite) by which a city can be perceived when a city is going to be branded. Those elements include handcrafts and indigenous liberal arts, heritage constructions, lifestyle, customs and traditions.

Questions were designed so that respondents had to rate them by an agreement scale, graded from 5 (the strongest agreement) to 1(the strongest disagreement). There were also open- ended questions where respondents were able to make more views and free suggestions. An overall of 100 people participated in the surveys. Among them, 20% of respondents were Isfahan's residents, 40% were domestic visitors, and 40% were foreigners.

Since in every planning, the first step is recognizing the target environment and society. The present study has pointed to the environment. Therefore, in the first step of the field research, the researcher attempted to recognize and identify the target society (foreign visitors, domestic visitors and residents), thus the mean age was studied primarily. Overall, the average age of the target audience was 37/5 with a standard deviation (SD) 13/5, i.e. 70 percent of the audience were in 24-51 age range; in other words, the age group of Isfahan people mainly include young and middle-aged people. More than 50% of respondents, 80% of foreigners and 70% of domestic visitors, as separately shown in chart 1, have university education (bachelor degree or higher degree). And according to chart 2, most of respondents are employees or those who have public occupations. Chart 3 shows that more than 60 percent of foreign visitors have high or very high income. On the whole, over 80% of the total respondents have medium to high income.
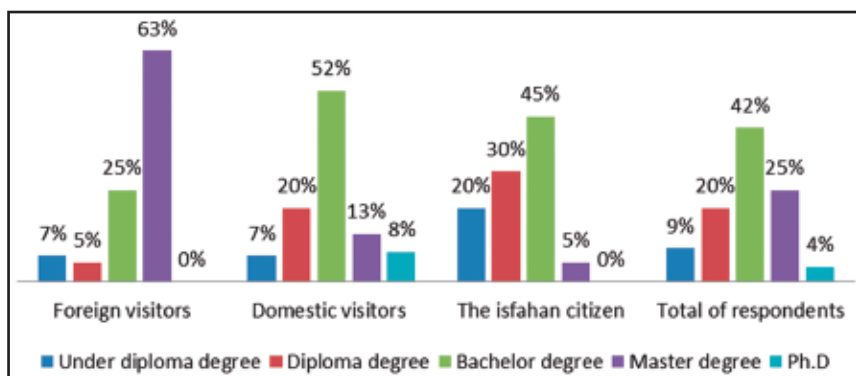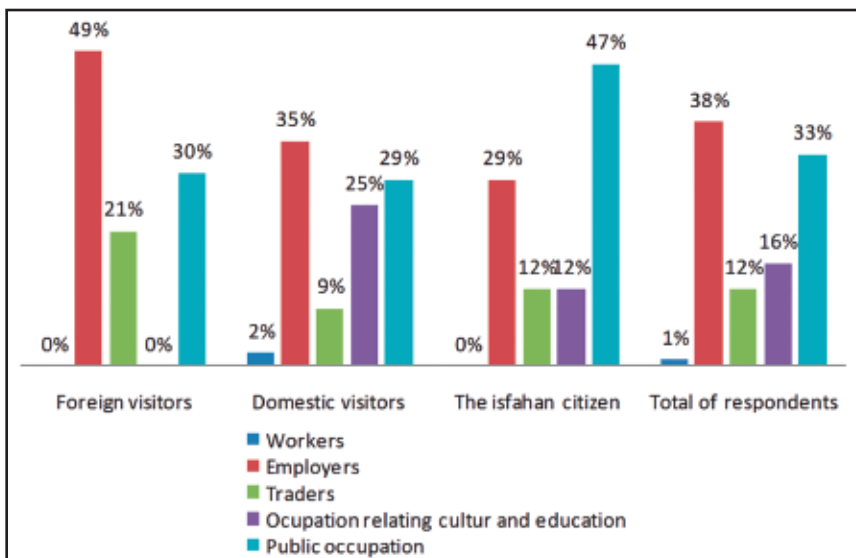

Chart 1 Education level of respondents

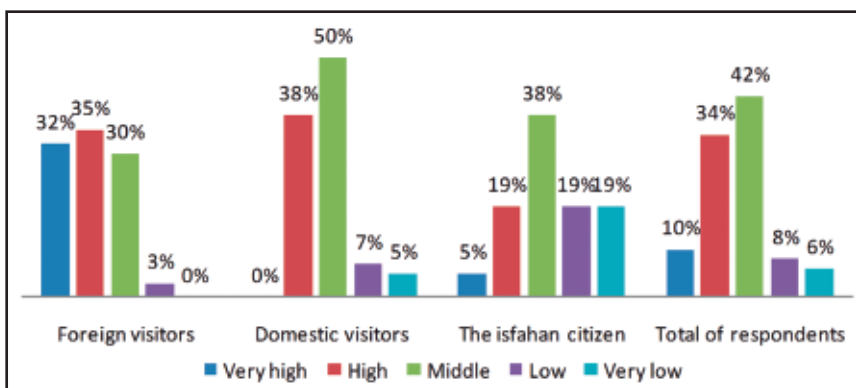Chart 2 Type of respondent's occupation

Chart 3 Respondent's income levels

The survey mentioned above reveals respondents' qualities especially foreign and domestic visitors. What is found is that the majority of visitors are young and middle-aged people with medium to high income and jobs that offer regular holidays, or even free jobs.

Cultural status of Isfahan will be analyzed from the respondents' view along the rest of research. Table 2 verifies that the cultural status of Isfahan city compared to two other dimensions, i.e. policy and economy, at the national or transnational level has a high and prominent position in respondents' view; indeed, cultural factors with 4/2 of the poll present more or less remarkable differences compared to city's political and economic status which have respectively gained an average 3/9, 3/8 at national and international levels. Generally, the conclusions that follow from the survey is that in the audiences' view like the officials and authorities as mentioned in documents, cultural status of Isfahan in comparison to other dimensions has a special and more prominent position.

The next step follows to evaluate the components which make the identity of the city in order to find which component has been perceived

better from the audiences' view. The employed indexes as mentioned in theoretical principles include presence, place, potential, pulse, people, and prerequisite (Anholt, 2007). As table 3 shows, the components of the city's buildings and monuments with a 3/8 average has a better condition than the other two dimensions, handcraft and indigenous liberal arts and lifestyle, in presence component. These two components imply international status and position of the city. This proves that people and visitors have better perceptions of heritage constructions in comparison with handcraft arts and lifestyle.

Related to the "place index", results show that handcraft, local arts, historical buildings and monument components from the view point of audiences have almost been rated at the same level (4 and up), while lifestyle, customs and traditions in this index received poorer ratings. It can be resulted that physical characteristics of this index are weaker compared to the handcraft arts and historical buildings in the audiences' view. Evaluation of components through "potential index" cleared that components of historical monument received high score than two other components.

In other words, based on people's view, these components have a much better chance of developing than other cultural components that create identity. This feature of historical buildings and monument components is true through two other indexes- vibrancy and socialization. It clears that this component is more exciting, more interesting, more varied for audiences and has higher transparency as well.

Evaluation of infrastructures is another noteworthy point that these three cultural identity

Isfahan position and status from the viewpoint of respondents	Cultural	Economical	Political	Dimensions
	4.2	3.9	3.8	average

Table 2 Cultural status of Isfahan in regard to respondents' mental image

Suitable dimension for branding Isfahan city	cultural heritage aspects of Isfahan suitable for branding	Evaluation measures						
		Presence	place	potential	Vibrancy (pulse)	People	prerequisite	Average
culture	Indigenous liberal arts and handicrafts	3.1	4	3.4	3.3	3.3	3.8	3.5
	Heritage constructions	3.8	4.2	3.8	3.9	3.6	3.8	3.8
	Lifestyle and customs and traditions	2.9	3.2	3.5	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3
	average	3.6	3.8	3.5	3.5	3.4	3.6	3.5

Table 3 Evaluation of cultural components of Isfahan in line with city branding

components reveal. According to audiences of Isfahan city, infrastructures of handcraft arts and historical works are at the same level. On all evaluations and assessments, however, historical buildings and monuments have gained the highest average through five other indexes. This means that although there are almost equally suitable infrastructures for handcraft arts and for historical monuments, historical works have been understood better by audiences (foreign visitors, domestic visitors, and residents). In other words, according to the ideas of the people and visitors of Isfahan, the most manifest cultural and identity element of the city are buildings and historical works compared to handcraft and lifestyle.

Survey indicated three cultural and identity components of Isfahan have been perceived by audiences with an acceptable score of 3 and up. But it is important to know that in each stage of branding strategy, enhancing the positive attributes and addressing negative points in order to achieve success seems essential (De Carlo *et al.*, 2009). Improving socialization level and enhancing the international status and position of the city (visualization) can accelerate the movement of Isfahan on course of changing to an international-cultural-tourism city because of its cultural-rich potential.

Taking into account that great international events can provide a good chance in promoting and advertising a city's features (Zhang & Zhao, 2009), some parts of the field research have referred to the international events. For example the study posed a question about the international Film Festival for Children and Adolescents, which is held annually in the city. To what extent are audiences familiar with it and thus familiar with the city? It was resulted that despite the fact that more than half of the audiences considered Isfahan as a suitable host for international events; more than half of the audiences didn't have any information about it. By the way, what is clear from this review is that Isfahan has missed a good chance for promoting and advertising its tourism capabilities, especially it has in large part missed its tourism potential based on cultural elements because of inappropriate informing. It seems that by removing barriers, Isfahan can increase its speed on course of introducing its tourism capabilities based on cultural elements and be hoped to change into a brand based on cultural tourism.

To analyze the differences in the mean of research variables according to different types of respondents (residents, foreign and domestic visitors), the outcomes of table 4 reveals that there is no meaningful differences among indexes of potential (with a significance level of 784/0), vibrancy (with the significance level of 589/0), People (with the significance level of 590/0), and infrastructure (with the significance level of 089/9) according to various types of respondents while there is a meaningful difference among mean of Presence and place indexes with three types of respondents. Meanwhile, it indicates that there is a meaningful difference between Presence mean and Iranian visitor (with the average of 97/2), foreign visitor (with the average of 90/2) and residents of Isfahan (with the average of 15/4). Consequently it is understood that the Presence mean among residents of Isfahan is more than Iranian and foreign visitors. In other words it can be said that residents of Isfahan in compare to the two other types of visitors believe in a higher status for Isfahan city at international level whereas domestic and foreign visitors have almost the same look toward Isfahan city.   Table 5 shows that according to various types of the respondents there is no significant difference in the heritage constructions mean (at the significance level of %858). It also indicates there is a meaningful difference between indigenous liberal arts and handicrafts and lifestyle mean and different types of respondents. Furthermore, it can be inferred that there is a meaningful difference between lifestyle and Iranian visitors (with the average of 18/72), foreign visitor (with the average of 18/94), and the residents of Isfahan (with the average of 22/94); generally, the average of lifestyle for the residents of Isfahan is at the upper level than Iranian and foreign tourists.

Generally, the noteworthy point of the analysis is that the foreign and domestic visitors' views toward different aspects of cultural heritage of Isfahan city are almost the same. According to table 5, the three types of the respondents have near attitudes to heritage constructions in respect of the city indexes (Presence, place, potential, vibrancy, People, and prerequisite). The trilateral agreement of the residents, foreign and domestic visitors on heritage constructions dimension from one side and having higher average than the two other cultural heritage dimensions from other side made the heritage constructions aspect of Isfahan city to carry better status compared to the other aspects. To say that heritage constructions of Isfahan city have the highest degree at international level, located in the best place, has most possible opportunities for city developing, is high in attraction and diversity of activities, possess higher transparency and popularity as well as the best prerequisite for many goals.

Type of respondent	number	Presence	place	potential	Vibrancy (pulse)	People	prerequisite
Iranian visitor	40	2.97	3.64	3.59	3.63	3.46	3.63
Foreign visitor	40	2.90	3.7	3.49	3.43	3.34	3.48
Residents of Isfahan	20	4.15	4.4	3.66	3.53	3.59	3.96
F		21.13	9.61	0.244	0.533	0.530	2.49
Sig		0.00	0.00	0.784	0.589	0.590	0.089

Table 4 The Difference In Variables' Mean Based on Various Types of the Respondents.

Type of respondent	number	Indigenous liberal arts and handicrafts	Heritage constructions	lifestyle
Iranian visitor	40	20.95	23.02	18.72
Foreign visitor	40	19.55	23.25	18.49
Residents of Isfahan	20	23.31	23.66	22.94
F		4.76	0.153	7.09
Sig		0.012	0.858	0.002

Table 5 The Differences in Historical Monuments' Mean Based on Various Types of the Respondent.

5 Concluding Remarks

The research aimed to analyze and examine the cultural position of Isfahan city firstly from the viewpoint of the visitors (residents, domestic and foreign visitors) in compare to other aspects like politics and economics and secondly to analyze identity components of cultural heritage of Isfahan city toward city branding. To do so, questionnaires were made and distributed among the visitors of the city (foreigners, 40%, domestic visitors, 40%, and residents 20%, n=100=). The questionnaires aimed to draw a distinction between cultural heritage status of Isfahan city and political and economical aspects of the city. They were also designed to raise questions in relation to measure various aspects of cultural heritage of the city (**Heritage constructions**, handicraft arts, and lifestyle) based on the standards of city branding.

The results of the research reveal that the visitors of Isfahan city believe that Isfahan has a higher and more significant cultural status than its other dimensions like politic and economic. According to the analysis of cultural heritage of Isfahan which makes the identity of the city

and is based on the standards of city brands, it was concluded that Isfahan's visitors preferred **heritage constructions** more than components of handicraft arts and people lifestyles. And also as the visitors' responses showed it was evident that heritage constructions aspect in view of visitors (residents, foreigners, and domestic visitors) have the highest international status, location, possible opportunities for developing the city, attraction and diversity of activities, the highest transparency and sociability and finally the best infrastructure for different purposes in compare to the two other components. Given that, the visitors were more attracted by the appearance of cultural heritage like heritage constructions whilst the intrinsic features of cultural heritage of the city were less perceived. It seems that this matter can be criticized from two sides. One is that the officials and residents of Isfahan did not function properly in promoting this capability; second the visitors are attracted by unique beauty of the city in a way that they forget to pay attention to the intrinsic aspects of cultural heritage of the city. What seems certain is that beautiful appearance of heritage constructions spring out of a unique nature which is indicator of the very essence of the work. Hence, even if the latter is true, ignorance of the officials in promoting the intrinsic aspect of cultural heritage of Isfahan city cannot be neglected. In fact, to earn money and to apply cultural heritage more officials had better take both appearance and intrinsic aspects of the city into consideration. Consequently, heritage constructions as the most significant aspect of city identity can be treated as an international brand if there will be an appropriate schedule, serious look of the officials, and sufficient declaration by modern methods of propaganda.

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