

Image Management in a Touristic Destination: A Qualitative Approach Analysis of the Border City of Ciudad Juárez, Mexico

Carlos J. Gonzalez Macias, PhD

Maria T. Martinez, PhD

Santos A. Morales, MA

Department of Administrative Sciences,
Faculty of Tourism, Universidad Autónoma de Cd. Juárez, México

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Abstract

This paper summarizes an academic experience. It has been made by the contributions of a group of experts from a Mexican university participating in a discussion panel called "Image of a Touristic Destination". This was done within the framework of the activities carried out during the 8va. Catedra Patrimonial "Sergio Molina" on October 19-21, 2016. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the process of image management of a border touristic destination through the experience of Ciudad Juárez, in order to obtain an improvement in it. The concept of image is analyzed from its components of responsibility and participation in management between Government (message), Society (context), and Universities (management). The methodological approach selected was exploratory. The grounded theory method was selected and thematic analysis with the support of the Atlas-ti software was made. Suggestions are offered for actions which seek to highlight the positive aspects of the city as a touristic destination. The importance of generating responsibility and participation within a social network was highlighted. It was recommended to take advantage of the economic and intellectual resources in education of the Juarez society so that they can know their culture and history.

Keywords: Image, border, Ciudad Juárez, tourism destination

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to present all analytic elements from a discussion panel named "Image of a Tourism Destination". The panel took place as part of the activities from the event "8va. Catedra Patrimonial en Turismo Sergio Molina". This event is an encounter with different actors

from the academic, political, and social arenas. This event, celebrated at Universidad Autonoma de Ciudad Juárez, has become a useful tool which largely contributes to the generation of qualified human capital critical information in the analysis of tourism topics.

By accomplishing this kind of events, collaboration between government, society and organizations has been boosted. Also, a huge interest to participate in transcendental discussions which seek innovative solutions have been demonstrated. Also, solutions were provided on the complex situation faced by Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, México, as a touristic destination. However, one of the most meaningful achievements of this event is the involvement and participation of university students in the diverse stages of its organization. They participate as collaborators, as relators or moderators, contributing in a relevant way to the generation of productive knowledge.

Several authors define the image of the cities as the result from permanent change and transformation. This was produced by all social needs and requirements of the complex groups that generate them. The concretion of the city reflects all characteristics of the society inhabiting it. “The forms of a city are mirrors of the people’s ambitions and from the civilization who builds it” (Johnson, 1997:15). Thus, two of the main characteristics of a border city are, precisely, its dynamism and its constant change.

In the last three decades, an important increase of attempts made by leaders, urban planners, and decision makers from around the world to promote a positive and attractive image of their cities have been developed (Avraham, 2004). As a result of a complex stage distinguished by insecurity and violence experimented by some cities from Latin America, Avraham (2004) assures that, nowadays, these cities attempt to acquire a favorable image between investors, immigrants, and tourists. This was done in order to counterattack those unfavorable perceptions and stereotypes associated with them. In addition, it impedes upon a better future for their development.

Cities in Latin America are immersed in an irreversible process encompassed by demographic, economic, and urban growths. There are some areas of expansion at their periphery that are beginning to be incorporated for urban uses. Also, other areas that used to be peripheral are now completely consolidated and urbanized. In most of the central areas, especially the historical downtown, there are spatial, structural, and functional processes that show dislocation, degradation and sub utilization, impeding on its effective exploitation (Vergara, 2006).

As stated by Briceño and Gil (2005:14), “The deterioration of the urban image, produced by unclear intervention criteria, propose, as a consideration, to re-think the city by recuperating its sense, identity, and order, respecting its own growing schemes, from the colonial city to the

modern and contemporary, seeking the formal continuity of the image (unity inside diversity) to increase and improve the perceived quality”.

In that sense, the purpose of this research is to analyze the process of image management of a border tourism destination through the Ciudad Juárez experience. This study was carried out so that it can be improved. This work is divided into seven sections. The first reflects the context about the importance of the study in city or tourism destination image management for their development; the second addresses the problem, research question and work objective; the third include the theoretical framework; the fourth section is about the research method; the fifth present the results obtained from the discussion panel; the sixth develop the discussion from those results; and the seventh and last section include all offered conclusions.

Context

The complexity of the reality experienced by border touristic destinations, specially Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua Mexico, identify the planning and program creation focus towards tourism as an option for socioeconomic development. In other words, activities focused on tourism within the territory are shared with the city at the other side of the border, El Paso, Texas, to facilitate a quality of life improvement for the communities on both sides of the border. The interdependence between these two cities for their service and commerce functioning activities, urges an awareness of that shared situation in order to obtain more and better benefits for both. The image management of Ciudad Juarez since 2007 has been difficult. It is used for obtaining a deteriorate product mainly because of the severe insecurity and violence situation experienced from that year until 2011.

An image constitutes a relevant element for the identification of a destination context, and understanding it for its surrounding circumstances. However, those without could not be correctly understood, such as institutional, socio-economical, infrastructural, and resource availability for which it is important to promote the image’s improvement (Martinez, 2016).

Due to its border condition, Ciudad Juarez is required to improve its image due to existent interdependence with the neighbor city for socio-economic development and to be attractive to other countries. This is mainly because:

[...] A powerful and positive national image make the attraction of immigrants, tourists, investors, talents, and positive media coverage, easier and cheaper, as well as to export products, services, ideas, and culture. A weak or negative image generally means to invest more to gain less (Anholt, 2011:110).

The aim of the present research is to analyze the touristic destination image management process through the experience of Ciudad Juarez.

However, this is with the purpose of obtaining a profound overlook in order to identify all the study elements which are proper to an improved image as a result of an adequate management. This will allow us to acknowledge, in a descriptive manner, the evolution of this concrete case, starting from 2007. Also, it will provide the identifying relevant aspects of image management that allow an understanding of tourism in a border city. This is alongside all those elements that conditions the destination development.

Literature Review

Since the decade of the seventies, cities have been competing among themselves to gain investors, tourists, and future residents. Some of these activities include the opening of new markets, the revalorization of private capital and the emergence of urban management governance, and impulse marketing to be converted into a valuable tool for the positioning of cities in a global level (Castillo, 2016).

According to Vergara (2006), in Latin America, important changes have been produced in matters of operation, management, and renovation. For example, the historic downtowns from several cities were improved by various models of success. At the same time, in many cases, it has gone farther into one of its characteristic contradictions. In other words, there is the simultaneity of an incalculable heritage value with poverty and social segregation of most of its inhabitants. This, however, is among the degradation of social and spatial environments.

Before a city commercialization begins, local authorities must assure that it will bring all necessary basic services and will also properly maintain the existent infrastructure. This is in a bid to satisfy the needs of residents, visitors, businessmen, and local companies. If they perceive no improvement in basic services, it will be difficult for them to succeed in a marketing campaign and, in fact, in most of the cases, all efforts will be useless (Avraham, 2004).

Even though the image of a destination is the reflection of its identity, "...its management is a complex labor, in the long term, implies an integral planning seeking to attract investments, increase political and cultural presence, and strengthen touristic competitiveness and productivity in it" (Fuentes, 2007:81). Per Kotler, Haider and Rein (1994:137) defined the image of a city or destination as:

[...] "the sum of beliefs, ideas or impressions that a person gives about it. Images represent the simplification of a great number of associations and information segments connected to the location. They are product from the mind trying to process and essentialize enormous quantities of information about a place. An image is more than a simple belief, is a complete set of beliefs about a site and the

people's images about a place do not reveal their attitudes towards it”.

Nowadays, few times is intended to create and design an urban form in the destination that consider all those elements that bring cohesion and contribute an adequate model per its attributes. This aspect of the image, in its entirety, is overlooked or putted aside to the mere occasional attention of the urban variables provided in municipal zoning ordainments or territorial planning variables. Thus, these variables have demonstrated to be indifferent to those qualities of perceptual cohesion of the image (Briceño & Gil, 2005).

In addition to the above mentioned, Spreirengen (1971:42) affirms the idea of when it is desired to adequately manage the image of a destination. However, Spreirengen (1971:42) opines that it is precise to “...create the necessary life conditions to allow all human being's different activities, in relation to the physical form perceived from the city, having into account the permanent change they represent”.

Consequently, this is the reason the destination image manager's responsibility cannot be spoken about, without considering sustainability in it. This image management is responsible for proposing a destination's context review from a social, environmental, and economical perspective. Macías, Valdovinos and Rogel (2015) mentioned that the action areas for a destination image management not only represent places where managers perform their practice, but also represent project intervention opportunities with future vision which is proper for an efficient manager. Therefore, this could have a significant impact in contributing to the evolution into a sustainable culture that will make the image to last through time. It is relevant to affirm, then, that the sustainability produced by management in the destination is directly related to the resources generated by it (image, forms, colors, etc.) and the answer brought by those resources to the changing environmental, social, and economic scenarios (González, Zizaldrá & Mercado, 2015).

The image of a destination is a vast researched topic, but the usage of the brand personality in tourism is relatively new. In the consumer behavior literature, Aaker (1996:347) defines brand personality as “the grouping of human characteristics associated to a brand”. In addition, he provided evidence for a valid construction of the brand personality through a scale procedure. This scale is commonly used as the Brand Personality Scales (BPS), which considers five generic dimensions: sincerity, enthusiasm, competence, sophistication, and robustness.

Since then, Aaker's study (1996) has replicated several consume brands within different categories of products in different cultures. Nevertheless, research about such scale in sites and touristic destinations is rare. According to the conceptualization from this author's research, the

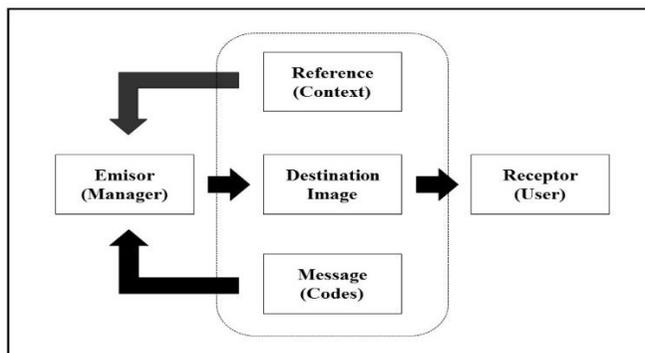
personality of a destination is identified as a multidimensional construction and it is defined as the conjunction of human characteristics associated to a touristic destination.

Some other authors defined the image as the sum of all beliefs, ideas, and impressions that persons associate to a destination (Crompton, 1979; Kotler, Haider & Rein, 1994). Valls (1992) introduced a definition from a consumer point of view, conceptualizing branding image of a country as a group of consumer’s perceptions. Bigne, Sanchez and Sanchez (2001) define the destination image as the subjective interpretation of reality by the eye of the tourist. Therefore, the image perceived by tourists from a destination is subjective in its major part because it is based on the perception that each tourist has from all the destinations he has visited or heard of. Its ambiguous character, subjective and immaterial, and its great number of elements and attributes makes it complicated to define, and does not reach a consensus about the matter (Ferreira, 2011).

Following the ideas of Briceño and Gil (2005:15), “...the conceived image of a city is determined by a totality of experiences considered in regards to the observed situation or object; being the reason they become references, preceding situations or perceptive experiences”. Thus, this is the reason the utilization of the communication process diagram is useful for that purpose.

In Figure 1, it can be observed that every destination is immersed in its own context. This context refers to all those characterizing attributes, such as historic, industrial, artistic, cultural, and social sites, among others. In addition, a destination has its messages codified per institutional and organizational policies and the intentions they wish to transmit to their different receptors, like inhabitants and visitors. Therefore, it is very important for the image manager (emisor) to consider all those mentioned aspects. As a result, the managed image generates a positive and identifying perception.

Figure 1. Diagram of the image management process



Source: Own elaboration in 2017.

Management responsibility and participation, according to the above diagram, involves a narrow collaboration between Government (message), Society (context), and Universities (management). Government, whom must elaborate public policies and has the legislative power to create ordinances according to the codes related to the messages, wanted to transmit information about the destination. Society (inhabitants and visitors) conform and give form to the destination's context and is the receptor (user) of the message as well. Universities possess the knowledge and power to research that context to generate adequate management theories and techniques.

In that sense, management intervention in the social sphere could be explained as follows: the managed image will contribute to the way people interact and organize in order to satisfy their needs. This is done by facilitating spaces, objects, and information in a way that the interaction will be harmonic, fair, equitable, and which includes and promotes the integral development of all members of that society.

The manage image, in the environmental sphere, guide the means in which society interact with its environment, and on how it uses and preserve natural resources such as air, water, and soil. All these natural resources were generated for the wellbeing of all members of society. The image should promote a caring culture towards biological diversity, ecosystems, and ecological cycles. Additionally, it must promote adequate and rational exploitation levels, and incorporate environment friendly materials and processes in all destination image projects.

In a way, the economic area should contribute all wealth generated in the destination to be equally distributed and beneficial to all the economic and commercial sectors of society. Images have a relevant impact on the creation of consuming products, in commercial promotion strategies, for the development of a rational consume culture. It is also used for transformation into a more equitable society with better productive capacity.

Additionally, it produces an impact in the political sphere, collaborating with the development of adequate institutional structures, participating in democratic development and formation strategies, and promoting the inclusion of all the community sectors.

Image will help to clarify the exercise of economic and political powers. It will favor the inclusion and participation of community in all decision making. Also, it will contribute to the development and application of laws, at all institutional levels, to protect society and environment.

As it can be observed, the work of destination image management becomes very extended. This is possible by considering each and all those areas in charge of assuming certain degree of responsibility. Thus, this involves considering sustainability through the participation of more disciplines. Therefore, this management is multi-disciplinary. It involves the

participation of diverse disciplines to obtain a more assertive and responsible approach about its tasks. To management, one of its more important needs must be its ability to proactively collaborate, in a prominent and productive way, with other disciplines. All this is performed in order to develop prestigious, distinctive, and effective commerce techniques on goods, services, tourism, talent, and culture (Anholt, 2011).

Research Method

The used method design is from a qualitative nature, seeking the comprehension of human activities and the understanding of the phenomenon reality. The basic sustentation was found at Glaser and Strauss (1967) Grounded Theory. Also, their constructivism paradigm was used to guarantee a strong research design because it is an adequate method according to the nature of reality beliefs. The Grounded Theory approach proposes, as an inductive analysis generator, a qualitative process with the objective to develop theoretic proposals based on empirical data (Trinidad, Carrero & Soriano, 2006).

The selected methodological approach is obtained from an exploratory nature because there are few applied studies where the research is related to a touristic destination image management in a border context. The findings analysis was carried out using the application of a constant comparative method, theoretic sample criteria, and conceptual saturation of the founded categories.

The selected focus and used techniques was derived from a contextualization of the study ground and the research objectives definition. The selection of the research type and the theoretical model conceptualization was made based on the context characteristics and all the findings from the literature review. As it can be observed, there are some relevant considerations derived from the contextualization and the incipient approaches to the border touristic destination image management study. Thus, this is in favor of an inclination towards a qualitative focus. According to Brewer and Hunter (1989), the importance acquired by qualitative studies is due to the difficulty to identify a study object population.

Data Collection

To select the participants for the Touristic Destination Image panel, a search was made for individuals with knowledge and experience related to the topic of interest. A non-probabilistic sampling form was used. In this sample, all the decisions related to the persons to be included in the sampling were taken based on a variety of criteria. These criteria include specialized knowledge in the research topic. It also entails the capacity and willingness of the participants who would be more susceptible to contribute adequate

data in terms of relevance as in depth. Therefore, this type of sampling is known as “purposive sampling” and is frequently used in qualitative focused studies.

This study was made from an inductive analytical perspective that allows the accomplishment of a theoretic model to study the border touristic destination image management parting from an identification of all actors’ role, their influence in the destinations development, and the particularities from a border allocated city. Therefore, the used theoretic sampling form, having in mind the purpose of generating theoretic models to study the border touristic destination image management process, was, in first order, to collect data and then codify, analyze, and decide which data to collect and where to find it. This is aimed at developing a better theory as it was refined. It was a sampling directed by its own theory because it was the foundation (Requena, *et al.*, 2006).

Thus, the thematic analysis involved six steps:

1. Review: A review of the transcriptions from the panel participants’ comments.
2. Sharing: In a face-to-face reunion with the group of experts, the findings from the panel comments were discussed from the topics as they were emerging, as well as the atypical values.
3. Preliminary Codification: The creation of a preliminary codification scheme was made to identify the thematically general concepts and its components. This implied collaboration levels for the development of all relevant aspects and their linked themes. They were manipulated until it was assured that they gave answers and they were related to the study’s objectives, as well as with the themes and atypical values identified in the reunion.
4. Codification: The obtained data was codified in the *Atlas.ti* qualitative software, with the consultation in refining and interpretation from some of the experts.
5. Tendencies Identification: This refers to the identification of the relevant tendencies and patterns related to the analysis’ object. They are all related to the necessary elements based on the development of a touristic destination image improvement management process and the creation of an image management theoretical model.
6. Interpretation: It is a revelation of a more refined interpretation of the codified data significance, through a tendencies and patterns comparison with all the existent knowledge in the literature and the study objectives. This comparison, once made, was exposed to the experts’ confirmation.

The data provision and transformation was made with the support of the *Atlas.ti* qualitative software in an analysis of semantic networks. Furthermore, this facilitated the elaboration of networks between the nodes

(codes, links, and relations) in a way all founded relations could be graphically visualized. The “network” function from the qualitative software *Atlas.ti* was used to graphically reflect the relations between meanings from all the different codes, coming from the poured comments at the discussion panel.

Findings

In this section, a synthesis is presented from all the discussion panel participants’ commentaries. For a better identification, a code was assigned to each one of the participants, which is composed by the prefix PP (Panel Participant), and afterwards by a number that means an identification order between the panel participants. For example, PP1 means Panel Participant number 1. The identity of all the panel participants along with their respective codes could be found at Annex 1.

PP5. Inter-disciplinary Image Management of a Destination

This participant made the following contributions, in which the importance of inter-disciplinarity is highlighted for a city image management. However, this includes those known and recognized as touristic destination.

“Because a city image does not function from a disciplinary point of view, it requires the participation of various actors. An example of this could be observed in the city’s accesses, particularly at the border-crossing bridges. Seen from a country’s optical, the border-crossing bridges are the accesses”.

“Making an analogy of the home place, the home’s entry is always the one in better conditions, because it is the first impression that wanted to be shown, but paradoxically, these accesses are overlooked as the backyard of the country. Nevertheless, to change this requires a transformation, not only in image, but the mentality about the place as well. This becomes a complex problem that includes the participation of various social actors where the solution is not generated with only a project. This should be a more evolutionary and well planned solution”.

“The three columns of sustainability are highlighted for a destination image project: society, economy, and environment. Additionally, it emphasized the necessity to involve society by promoting roots, identity, and sense of belonging. It mentioned the fact that Juarez society is the one that really would create an attractive and strong identity for tourists”.

A good communication between all the interacting actors is necessary for the creation of an evolutionary, planned and flexible project, resistant to all government changes. However, by nature, it tends to interrupt the continuity of programs designed by relieved public administrations. Here, an

inter-disciplinary focus collaborates, on a long-term basis, to achieve the participation of all social actors in the change of a touristic image.

PP7. Responsibility of Design

The participant emphasize, through her commentaries, on the importance held by design for an adequate and sustainable destination image management. Therefore, it is through this discipline that a product per positive images will be obtained. Images are long pursued by residents and visitors of a destination.

“We are looking for a project which involves various social actors, where each of them accomplish a determinate role from their disciplines or in conjunction with other actors”.

“In the case of design, being understood as a whole, it will be the one in charge of spaces, objects, and communications planning. Also, the thematic contexts will work in conjunction with other areas. It requires responsibility and professional ethic where all disciplines are committed in search of the common wealth”.

“To work with various actors turns complex any project development. In other words, I as a professional have a responsibility, but by working with other disciplines have to coincide with the same management and quality parameters (academy, government, and society)”.

It notoriously established a reference to the disciplines to be considered important. Also, it shows the way they influence to improve the destination image and to establish those that will correspond to those work responsibilities. Some examples of disciplines are mentioned, such as design, architecture, and management. Hence, they should work together. Three important actors are emphatically mentioned: education, government, and society. They show the necessity of an interdisciplinary destination image management, especially if they want to be sustainable.

PP8. The Sustainability of a City Image

At the commentaries from this panel participant, sustainability is identified as a fundamental factor to be achieved in a destination image. It is regarded as a product based on adequate management of the environmental, economic, and social needs. They have proper inhabitants and visitors of the destination because they will be the ones who, parting from their perceptions, will identify and transmit the managed image.

“The development of these kind of projects must put sustainability into account. Any complex project includes a sustainable vision, which englobes political, social, environmental, economical, and cultural aspects. This sustainable vision is not particular from a project. It is desirable to

consider how it permeates from each individual's participation and compromise”.

“This could be achieved through education with the purpose to generate roots, identity, and citizenship in a way that, in the future from a city image point of view, each citizen would be a touristic guide”.

“It must be put to attention and refer to the concept of “Toponegligence”, which is the lack of interest in spaces; in a local level, it reflects in the community's scarce participation in the initiatives proposed by the actors”.

In relation with the identity theme and sense of belonging, it is proposed to motivate the participation of the Juarez community. Also, it aims to orientate actions towards the rescue of the cultural heritage. The base for these initiatives should be education from the educative institutions to achieve a change in Ciudad Juarez.

PP2. Destination Image Management

This panel participant manifests the importance of an adequate image management, which comprehends an integration of all destinations' resources. This is aimed at achieving the best result possible in the perception of its own residents and in those with the role of visitors.

“By speaking of a destination image, it must strongly be considered that it is the sum of the attractive and global attributes being offered, in addition to the group of communicative actions taken target in the mentioned city. So, these actions must be administered”.

“An image management is a fundamental element in the marketing strategy to be implemented in any touristic development”.

“It is very important to consider that it (image management) must contemplate a series of diverse aspects, such as quality of the city, its geographical distribution, its communication messages and the cost of living in or visiting it; this is because it is only through this way a competitive destination image could be produced”.

In the destinations, managing and controlling their image results from the strategy of integrating the resources with which it is counted. However, this encourages, promotes, and motivates visitors to become interested in places of leisure, recreation, business, and historical information that it has. Through this way, it is possible to strengthen the expected image.

PP4: The Destination Image Formation Process

To this participant, the formation of an image means the development of a mental construction which is based on just a few obtained perceptions. Thus, these perceptions are selected by the receptor from a platform full of information. In the case of the destination image management, this cumulus

of information presents lots of sources of origin, such as promotion printings, other people's opinions, and, in general, mass media.

“By visiting the destination, its image is affected and modified based on firsthand information and from the visit experience”.

“The touristic destination image generates a direct effect over the satisfaction experiences, which is proper for a visitor. Meanwhile, perceptions from the managed destination image are difficult to measure; such perceptions, in a general way, could denote positive or negative effects in the destination consumers”.

“The important role of the analyzed theme, in terms of comprehension of the traveling persons' behavior as well as the efficient marketing strategies design, remarks the need to develop integral methodologies and to measure this concept with precision. The compromise and participation of all stakeholders is required for a city image improvement project”.

Subsequently, actions have been taken by the government sector in its three levels (federal, local, and municipal) to improve the image of touristic destinations. Nevertheless, those efforts are not enough due to several reasons. One of the reasons is the lack of program continuity derived from changes in the public administration offices, resulting from electoral processes. A mayor coordination between public and private sectors is required. In addition, the application of a city brand in the city image management has been limited to the existing gap between business and urban managements.

PP1. Territorial Fragility as a Security Condition for Tourism in Ciudad Juarez

In the opinion of this panel participant, the touristic activity is very important for Ciudad Juarez economy. Nevertheless, the dynamic of this activity is merely linked to the border economic context than the physical and historic attractiveness of the city. This is because Ciudad Juarez is closer to North American cities than from the Mexican. From its desert climate with extreme temperatures, the city has its principal touristic problem in the urban infrastructure failures.

“These failures refer to several aspects: 1. the absence of an urban transportation system; 2. the massive existence of empty land lots; 3. the bad shape of the communication ways; 4. the streets' bad illumination; and 5. the lack of a pluvial drain system. The city is planned to conduct the vehicular and commercial displacement towards the United States, in criteria which involve the urban conception of Ciudad Juarez as a “passing” city”.

“This de-territORIZATION/de-localization of the urban planning was well exploited by organized crime, which developed its activities over an illegal and, at the same time, territorial fragile social base”.

“The touristic activity of Ciudad Juarez is not based on traditional touristic attractions (sun, beaches, museums, architecture), but on economical and legal ventures offered by the city to foreign tourists. Despite all the infrastructure and urban services necessities, the facts that touristic attractions of the zone have remained unaltered have supposed a relatively common presence of tourists”.

“This situation has unincentivized the initiatives of tourism public policies, which barely recently is tried to revert. If the territorial fragility is not assumed as an essential problematic to the touristic development policies planned in Ciudad Juarez, there will be no possibilities of a structural solid allocation of the activity”.

In the framework of territorial questioning, insecurity has been mentioned as a major source of that problem. Another central data derived from the territorial demarcation shows that the city (Ciudad Juarez), from its origins, was considered as a “passing” city. The main problem for this participant is the territory not having power over it.

PP3. Love Jrz Project: From a Monument to a Movement.

For this participant, Ciudad Juarez is a city that, without any doubt, is undergoing transformation for as long its history is, and more in the last years. Her commentaries envision the idea where all the citizens must be conscious that the awaited change should be driven with a sum of efforts, not isolated. Therefore, the change in the perception of the city image as a destination would be possible with everyone’s participation, and not just by a few.

“After the situation about insecurity lived these past years reached a point where most of us were looking for answers and solutions, Love Jrz was born as an answer to a need that is impossible to ignore. This was with the donation of a monument by an advertising enterprise, Big Media. At the same time, the goal was to create a movement; so this was not another sculpture in the city. That is the reason it went from a monument to a movement. In less than a week on its Facebook page, more than 100 thousand people joined. Everyone were looking forward to remark the good things about the city, which was something that haven’t much be seen in recent years”.

“In this way, we grew and acknowledge there was more to do, more changes to achieve, histories to remark and recognize. Afterwards, we constituted our Civil Association. Nevertheless, in everything we do, we wanted to be different, not to be unnoticed or challenge people’s perception

about civil associations. We needed to be auto sustainable, while we foment love, respect, and roots for the city. That is why Love Jrz Products were conceived”.

“Almost by an accident, Jrz was transformed into what a lot of people consider as a city brand. We seek to invite persons to be part of this change. We don’t sell souvenirs, we look forward to taking the unmatched experience of being a “Juarense” (by birth or adoption), farther than what the media say it is. We have one year in action, generating an impact and promoting citizen participation, reuniting all essential actors in society. There is a lot more to do, but we are sure that significant changes are coming, not only for our beautiful city, but for our unique and exceptional region”.

According to the commentaries made about a city brand, it is to remark that all improvement does not only depend on one factor, but on team work. Also, it emphasizes the need of a “chip” change whereby every change should not come from outside, but rather to self-generate the changes that will reflect a better city.

PP3. The Importance of Advertising in an Image Management

The participant manifested that it is a well-known fact about the important role advertising plays in the success of any brand or product. This is also true for one of the most important brands that sometimes do not sell as it is, a city brand.

“In the last years, advertising had an important role to stablish the perception one have of a city or a country. Technology and its advances have permitted that the city positioning should be exceptional in the whole world. They have used proper marketing techniques (such as BTL’s, activations, among others) to involve people with the city brand”.

“Icons have been created, instantly recognized in the world. To a city like Juarez, it has not been an easy job because a lot of changes have happened. Nevertheless, it is a job that must be continued until the goal of many has been reached...for Juarez to be recognized as a competitive city, not only at a national level but at an international level”.

“It is focused on the importance of advertising to attract tourism and to foment love and roots in our city, and such advertising and its advances have influenced these changes”.

The importance of team work is referenced when positive advertising notes are managed, which strengthen the image. In addition, it provides a platform to generate an adequate external perception. By promoting the goodness of its people, the city attributes, and to keep information about the city more positive than negative, there will be a way to offer Ciudad Juarez as “our home”.

Discussion

This research analyzes those notable aspects of the touristic destination image management, the process made for its advance, and it takes into account the border situation which characterizes this case study. Findings demonstrate the influence of the border in generating elements of interdependence related to the tourism services offerings. The visit of United States tourists depends to a great extent on the immigration and security policies of that country that could be modified according to the needs and priorities of its governmental agenda. The warnings emitted by the United States government in order to prevent visitors from crossing to Ciudad Juarez augment the insecurity perception about the city and harm its image.

One of the academic approaches about strategies that all interested stakeholders could do to improve the image of a city, is the approach of Avraham (2004). Avraham (2004) presented various options that could be remarked: to foment visits to the city; to host projection events; convert the negative characteristics into positive; to change the city's name, logo or slogan; to cultivate the local resident's pride; to solve the problem that originated the negative image; to send counter-stereotype messages; to ignore the stereotype; to recognize the negative image; and to geographically associate with the campaign.

In the participant's commentaries analysis, the necessity to improve the city image is manifested. As mentioned above, it was referred with some of Avraham's proposals. As an example, the creation of Project Jrz could be mentioned because it is used as a "city brand" by the participants. Therefore, generating programs that promote visits to the city are actions routed for that goal. The commentaries referring to the necessary basic services and the existent infrastructure, needed for the fulfillment of the urgent necessity of an improvement in the city image, coincided with Avraham's proposals as well. The proposal affirms that before initiating the commercialization of a city, local authorities must assure that it really brings necessary basic services and give regular maintenance to the existent infrastructure. Also, it must satisfy the needs of residents, visitors, businessmen, and local companies. If there is no evidence of an improvement in basic services, it would be difficult to succeed in a marketing campaign and, in fact, in most of the cases, efforts becomes useless (Avraham, 2004).

In relation to a city image, Blasco and Cuevas (2013) reference to a critical episode was derived from a negative image associated with the violence experienced in the city five years ago. They also mentioned that, despite it, the border-crossings number at the international bridges went up to 22 million annually. However, this places emphasis on the fact that there is no actual knowledge of the profile and needs of visitors. The commentaries of the panel participants affirm that Ciudad Juarez continue its great

economic and commercial dynamism based on the number of international border-crossings registered in recent years. In addition, because of it, the people's perception in respecting the city image is improving.

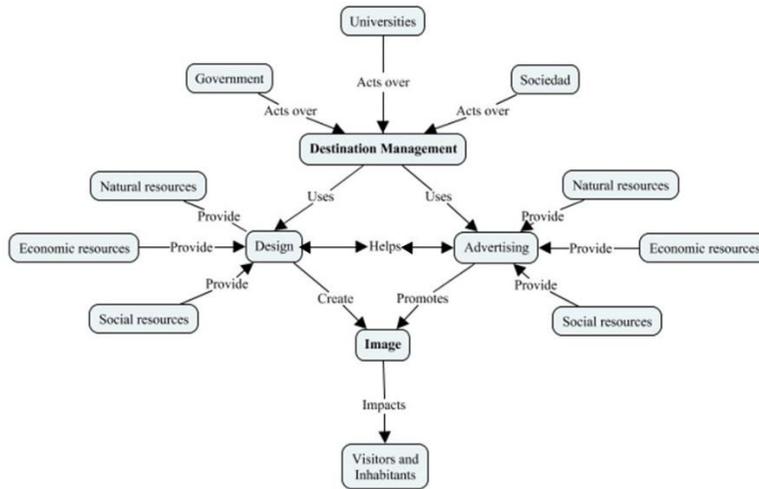
On the other hand, in respecting the architectonic and urbanistic image of the city, Jusidman and Almada (2007) showed Ciudad Juarez characteristics as an urban industrial center. They remark the high indexes of contamination and environmental problems, as well as an ample gap between the rich and poor people. This was strongly manifested in the urban landscape. This landscape, sometimes uncomfortable for visitors, as stated by Canally & Timothy (2007), on the Mexican border side of the territory is an awkward reality which must be attended to. Furthermore, this attention is required if the city wishes to be an attractive location for international visitors.

Vergara (2006) appoints the fact that most cities in Latin America are immerse in an irreversible process of demographic, economic, and urban extension growths. In addition, in most central areas, especially in historic downtowns, there is the presence of inarticulation, degradation, and sub-utilization processes that impede an effective usage of these areas. The insecurity and violent issues suffered by Ciudad Juarez have generated new ways of action towards motives and needs that always have a significant impact on visitors' decision making. This, however, is sometimes limited by deficient structural arrangements in the city.

Findings in this research coincide with Castillo (2016:157) who affirms that "...the application of a city brand to the city image management has been limited by the gap between business and urban managements". At the panel participants' commentaries, the importance of the concept of "competitive identity" proposed by Anholt (2011) was reaffirmed. This was done under the argument that the reputation of a country, city, or region determines its advance and prosperity as can be seen in the brand image in a commercial product. The competitive identity is a necessary concept because the world has turned into a market. The fast advancement of globalization implies that Mexico, as any other country, must compete to obtain its share of the world's demand in business and leisure tourisms. As a result, it must attract investors, students, businessmen, sportsmen, and commercial and cultural events. This will help Mexico to gain attention and respect from international mass media, other countries governments, and people from around the world. This is despite the fact that this identity can only be possible through the participation of all society actors.

Figure 2 show the relations between the more relevant codes and categories found in all the commentaries from the panel participants in a semantical network analysis.

Figure 2. Semantic network from the panel commentaries



Source: Own elaboration in 2017.

Conclusion

At the end of the panel, each one of the participants offered specific proposals to achieve a better and more adequate image management of Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, as a touristic destination. They were determined to take actions towards highlighting the city goodness. It was proposed to advertise three positive events for each negative event that happens in the city. For society to stop being passive spectators, movement is the key. Also, it is desirable that the Municipal Government, as a main actor, assume the responsibility to create, inside its governmental structure, a Tourism Office with enough budget and personnel. This is with the aim of promoting the city development on this matter, and to foment a tourism service quality culture.

The creation of an Urban Imaginary was also proposed. The importance of generating responsibility and participation from the social section was highlighted in the commentaries. The adequate usage of the economic and intellectual resources in the education of the “juarenses” society was also recommended. This will help them to know and learn all about their culture and history. In addition, the participants recommended that information about this problematic should be provided to universities to induct active roles from those institutions. Universities could also help to promote the city's policy about improvement proposals of image and tourism in Ciudad Juarez.

From the above proposals, it can be concluded that it is necessary to accomplish the responsible and compromised participation of all the interested actors. This is aimed at managing a destination image, through

design and advertisement, with the purpose of achieving a positive and sustainable perception in visitors and inhabitants, whom will be the receptors of that image. As stated above, the following destination image management process was proposed. For a better understanding, this is represented in Figure 3 below.

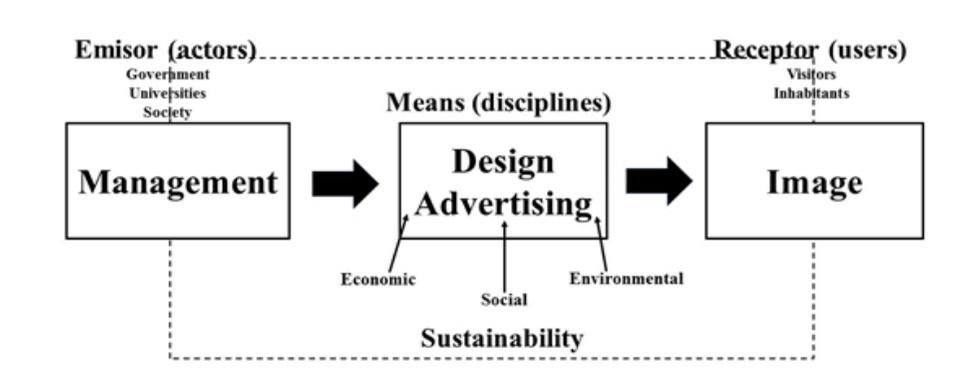


Figure 3. Destination image management process
Source: Own elaboration in 2017.

Figure 3 shows how the three main actors (Government, Universities, and Society) must perform the image management. Also, there is a compromised collaboration between them with the goal of generating most quantity of ideas and information about the characteristic attributes of a destination that give its identity. There are attributes that will be the components of all the designed and advertised messages by using and maximizing all destinations' economic, social, and environmental resources. This is done in such a way to gain sustainability on them. All the above mentioned has the objective of achieving a positive and long-lasting image through time in visitors and inhabitants.

In conclusion, this research is important for all changes taking place in some countries of Latin America with similar image problems. Therefore, it could help to direct an analysis from the subjacent transformations and respective implications in all image improvement policies.

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Annex 1.

Panel participants

Name	Professional formation	Code of identification
Dr. Norberto Emmerich	Political Science	PP1
Dr. Carlos Jesús González Macías	Public Administration	PP2
Lic. Laura Fernanda Ibarra Rodríguez	Advertising	PP3
Dra. María Teresa Martínez Almanza	Economy	PP4
Dr. Leonardo Andrés Moreno Toledano	Graphic Design	PP5
Lic. Luis Fernando Rodríguez	Administration	PP6
Dra. Erika Rogel Villalba	Graphic Design	PP7
Dr. Salvador Edmundo Valdovinos Rodríguez	Graphic Design	PP8

Source: Own elaboration in 2017.