

Description for general public

A key concern of any place branding activity is to legitimise it in the eyes of major stakeholders by providing material relevant to the actual impact of branding on the place itself. Such legitimisation requires place brand managers to assure that the objectives set out in the brand strategy are measurable with indicators that document progress in critical areas. However, the political nature and multifaceted characteristics of place branding process constitute a serious problem for those who develop effectiveness measures. There is often lack of correspondence between the perception research and the actual monitoring of how the strategic brand goals are implemented by the managing institution. In these circumstances there is a growing gap between the perception - related place brand results and the place management process. By and large, territorial entities do not apply systematic approach to the measurement of place brand strategy effectiveness. Frequently the measurement tools are created long after the strategies itself and performance indicators (if present) tend to be of little relevance to the brand strategic objectives. Furthermore, the data is fragmented and scattered amid different units/ departments.

In this project the authors propose a novel approach to brand strategy effectiveness measurement that corresponds with an interdisciplinary nature of place brands. The proposed approach seeks to combine the developments from the area of place marketing/ branding and public management. It results from an understanding of a place brand creation and management process not as a purely promotion-oriented activity but as a part of place management strategy, where place branding is treated as another public policy (Braun et al., 2014). Such understanding impacts significantly how the effectiveness measurement should be approached by city managers.

The nature of the proposed study is twofold: exploratory and empirical. Two corresponding types of research objectives are thus set out.

The empirical objective of the project is the diagnosis of the level of advancement of Polish district cities in the area of brand strategy effectiveness measurement.

The exploratory objective of the project is to develop framework for the effectiveness measurement system for the city brand strategy.

The planned research process will be divided into five phases:

1. The **first phase** is devoted to the analysis of brand strategies of selected Polish cities.
2. In the **second phase** the authors plan to conduct expert interviews to verify the theoretical assumptions based on which the measurement model is about to be created.
3. The **third phase** is dedicated to the in-desk analysis of the existing strategic documents related to city brand strategy (irrespective of the formal title).
4. **In the fourth phase** the authors will carry out a series of interviews with the representatives of municipalities responsible for the coordination of city brand strategies
5. During **the fifth** a framework of the effectiveness measurement system for the city brand strategy together with the proposition of structure of brand strategy performance indicators will be developed.

The proposed study is innovative in Poland and internationally as it proposes to measure the effectiveness of place brand strategy from input (managing institution) and output (different stakeholders) perspectives. Furthermore, to date, there has not been any significant effort to analyse the theme of brand strategy effectiveness through merging place branding/marketing perspective and developments from public management discipline.