

City Branding and Video Production: The Case of Greek Semi-Urban Centers

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ABSTRACT

Today, branding directly affects the growth process for countries, regions, and urban centers. Particularly, a successful branding process, including the framework design and establishment of regulation tools, is necessary and quite important to be able to succeed on recognize and furthermore to enhance the catch-up process, enforce competitiveness level and development. The socio-economic implications from a successful branding are more apparent using some of the main socio-economic variables, such as public investment, employability, and socio-economic regional growth. In this context, the urban and semi-urban centers must clearly define their position in the market through branding and marketing policy. This text attempts to examine the contemporary role of branding and furthermore to examine and analyze the results in the process of development for semi-urban centers in Greece.

KEYWORDS

City Branding, Digital Industries, Semi-Urban Centers, Small Greek Cities, Video Production

INTRODUCTION

Greece is known for its rich history and culture, with its cities reflecting a remarkable diversity. However, the spotlight often overlooks smaller Greek cities, which offer an authentic and more intimate experience compared to their larger counterparts. These hidden gems feature narrow cobbled streets, traditional houses illuminated by the Mediterranean sun, friendly locals, the flavors of local cuisine served in family-run tavernas, and traditional festivals (panegiri) and vibrant celebrations. Such unique aspects characterize semi-urban centers.

Nestled in stunning natural landscapes, these towns, either in the mountains or overlooking the sea, provide stunning views and opportunities for outdoor activities. Small towns, each with its distinct identity, emerge as attractive destinations in Greece. The role of city branding plays a crucial role in contributing to their economic development.

City branding is a key tool in the marketing processes employed to promote a city. It involves a transformative process aimed at redesigning and rediscovering the identity of a place, building a new sense of connection to it. Video, as a medium, can play a crucial role in branding a city by

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offering visual storytelling to showcase its distinct characteristics. Through immersive storytelling and widespread digital distribution, videos have the power to create a compelling brand for a city, leaving a lasting impression on viewers.

This article attempts to examine the complex process of video production and its efficacy in urban branding. The goal is to develop a standardized tool for audiovisual production that can articulate the video production process in a clear, user-friendly, and valid manner for the city. The emphasis lies on creating a tool tailored for city branding initiatives.

The study begins by examining basic concepts, versions, and scales of branding in general, focusing on city branding. Notable examples of city branding applications are then presented. The article then tries to classify small Greek cities based on their development needs, offering a general example of implementation. The final attempt aims to create a video production planning tool, combining the basic technical requirements of video production with the demands and requirements of market promotion. The tool's purpose aim is to enable the creation of a personalized roadmap for each small town, guiding the production of a successful city brand video. The conclusion provides examples of the tool's application, both for the whole of Greece and for specific small cities.

METHODOLOGY

This study explores the role of audiovisual production, specifically video, in shaping a strong brand for small- and medium-sized Greek cities. Using a mixed methodology that includes literature surveys, literature review, and descriptive statistical analysis from secondary databases, the research incorporates mapping and cartographic visualizations. The study focuses on city branding, a convergence of economic geography and marketing, with the case study on small- and medium-sized cities falling within the fields of urban geography.

The study draws on existing literature to present data on branding-related issues. For the current case study involving small Greek cities, available data from the Greek population censuses and the average per capita income from 1950 onward, as provided by the Hellenic Statistical Authority, were used. In addition, European Union (EU) data were used for indicators related to the Les Favored Area.

The study includes the identity of small cities, considering basic indicators that combine population, per capita income, and the Les Favored Area index. These indicators are selected to serve as potential examples for the application of the standardization tool on a broader scale in Greece. In addition, the research includes a study of three individual cities based on the resulting city classifications.

The aim of the present research is to develop a framework for city branding, essentially a roadmap for the production process of the audiovisual product associated with city branding. The process highlights the initial combinations of parameters to be considered, followed by the proposal of a framework for selecting specific technical parameters based on the form and type of city. As a result, a tool selection grid is created in an attempt to create and optimize the methodology and techniques for the creation of the city brand.

Multi-criteria analysis (MCA) was used to create the standardization tool for video production. In the MCA process, different policy options are first identified, followed by a comprehensive evaluative comparison that includes outcomes, performance, impacts, and trade-offs between them. The multicriteria approach allows a choice between more equivalent solutions.

This study aids the client (city) in making decisions for branding through video production. The method attempts to provide the technical steps of video production rather than the strategic level, excluding the creative aspects of the video. The research provides an innovative model that outlines the steps with inputs for branding cities in Greece, incorporating their unique characteristics through video production.

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