



The Glamorous Multi-cultural Metropolis Hong Kong Re-branding and Marketing Communication of Hong Kong Image

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ABSTRACT

Hong Kong is a diverse city with many possibilities. It is not only the bustling side of Hong Kong that attracts people, but also the unique history and multiple cultures which is the fusion of Chinese and the Western civilization. So the connotation of Hong Kong should be paid more attention. It is important to rebrand Hong Kong by emphasizing the mixed culture, and try to analyze the marketing communication ways of the rebranding image.

Keywords: City image, City brand, Rebranding, Marketing communication, Hong Kong, Multi-culture.

1. INTRODUCTION

It is not only the economy that is taken into consideration for a city to stand out in the competitive world, but more importantly, the comprehensive strength of a city. The comprehensive strength of a city determines its international influence in the world, and provides more opportunities and benefits for city development. At the same time, with the influence of economic globalization, cities are becoming more homogeneous with each other in terms of culture, politics and management. But such homogeneous cities are the degradation of civilization, where people would be no longer attracted by the unique culture of the city and where the long-term benefits tend to diminish. Today, cities are highlighting their unique themes on the global stage and using it as a marketing strategy.

City theme is related to city brand that aims to condense, translate and reflect the city image into the desired brand image [1]. Then it is introduced to the concept of 'city branding' which is a way of regarding cities as corporation relevant to marketing and communication on a global scale. The idea of relationship between city brand and corporation brand appears in many leading journals [2]. Both corporate and city brands should make full use of their brand value to gain benefits [3].

Research on city brand marketing has been at the forefront in the West, oppositely the declining global interest in Hong Kong since the British left their last major colony in 1997 has led to a waning academic interest in Hong Kong's global status. There is evidence

in the declining number of journal articles focus on Hong Kong internationally [4][5][6]. But as the first Chinese city on the Global Cities 500 list, Hong Kong is a city that should not be underestimated from all perspectives which includes economy, culture and management. And Hong Kong is a financial center in Asia, people refer to Hong Kong as a bustling cosmopolitan city, which is the third largest financial center in the world after New York and London.

In 2001, the city government decided to brand Hong Kong as 'Asia's World City', but it was met with mixed opinions from the public. With the accelerating globalization of the economy, there are increasing convenience of online shopping and the shift from purely materialistic consumption to more spiritual one. So it is difficult to improve the city image by brand itself only as a shopping or financial cosmopolitan. At the same time, the COVID-19 has also added to the economic woes of Hong Kong like the dark clouds hovering around. When the epidemic decreases, more tourists will come to Hong Kong and Hong Kong's tourism industry even the overall economy will witness a new round of development. So it is necessary to grasp this chance to rebrand Hong Kong image to be more attractive. Policymakers should recognize that a single development focus and way could not create a valuable and successful city brand. The brand of a city is hardly dependent on a single theme and image alone, even if it is a strong one [7]. The overemphasis on Hong Kong brand as an international financial cosmopolitan has led to the loss of inherent uniqueness of Hong Kong, but with a distinctly global character [8]. It is therefore worth considering how to add new contents

and emotional links to Hong Kong image as a flesh-and-blood and three-dimensional image rather than a cold, fast-paced financial concrete forests.

While Hong Kong is a cosmopolitan city with a bustling and light, its historical and cultural flavor from both Chinese and Western culture and its folk atmosphere are also sentiments in many people's hearts. The special historical background in Hong Kong and the blend of Chinese and Western cultures have not only nurtured the spirit of Hong Kong, but also the root of the development of an international business metropolis, the root of Hong Kong. This paper will apply the corporate identity system in corporate marketing to the study of city brand marketing and communications, and use it as a 'city identity system' to find the concept, behavior and visual symbols of Hong Kong's intermingled history and culture to show the cultural and historical charm of Hong Kong, rebranding image of Hong Kong as a glamorous multi-cultural metropolis through a more systematic and comprehensive mechanism. The paper helps the public better understand the city, as well as to provide a sample for other cities with multiple cultures to shape their brand image and build the city brand based on unique cultures which multi-culture integration into.

At the same time, this paper also explores marketing communications based on the rebranding of Hong Kong as a glamorous multi-cultural metropolis. City as a communication medium and also a subject consists of three communication spaces: the physical space of the city, the virtual space created by modern media, and the combination of the two. City branding is not only about conveying functional information about a city purely through virtual media, but also about establishing an emotional and spiritual connection between the city and its citizens through a unique localized representation in the physical space of the city. In addition to being a physical entity that provides a platform for public interaction, the city itself also serves as a spiritual and cultural space, where there are records of the historical changes, expressions of the city's culture, collective memories of its inhabitants, and also the spirit of Hong Kong, creating a sense of belonging and emotional value identity for people and back to humanism.

2. RE-BRANDING HONG KONG IMAGE AS A GLAMOROUS MULTI-CULTURAL METROPOLIS

2.1. Mind Identity of Hong Kong rebranded image

City Mind Identity is the core part of the City Identity System, i.e. the reshaping and sublimation of the common values of the city, which also means the spiritual concept of the citizens formed under the certain historical

pattern. It includes the value identity and the code of conduct of citizens.

It was a combination of times and circumstances that created such unique history of Hong Kong and the essence of the fusion of Chinese and Western cultures - the Hong Kong spirit. Over a period of more than 100 years, the unique spirit of Hong Kong was formed when Hong Kong people faced adversity and had to struggle in order to survive. In the course of its historical development, Hong Kong has incorporated the rational thinking and contractual spirit of Western culture into its own spiritual development, and has also inherited the spirit of Chinese culture, which is inclusion, tolerance and capacity make greatness.

In the process of globalization and modernization, people inevitably encounter anxiety about their city cultural value identity. Since the Opium War in the 19th century, British, Chinese mainland and local Hong Kong identities were entwined, and various values collided and contradicted each other. Due to the political situation at the time, Hong Kong people were not clear about their identity and had difficulty in tracing their cultural origins, resulting in a Hong Kong cultural discontinuity. From the East to the West and back to Eastern culture, the return of Hong Kong gave an answer to Hong Kong citizen's sense of 'historical disconnection and cultural discontinuity'. In the process of historical change, Hong Kong people have gradually found their own values, identity and the core of Hong Kong's spirit formed by the influence of both Chinese and Western history and culture after being lost and rethought for a long time.

In the commemorative activities held in Victoria Park, people expressed a sense of loss by playing a role of the victim's mother in the form of drama, in order to awake their own oriental identity. And people who had been lost in the historical changes also exhibited works of paper boats returning to harbor in the form of exhibitions, which had an impact on the society and the times, making people reflect on Hong Kong's value identity. Cultural and value identities was gradually formed through culture practices and theoretical debates, and then came to the 'Hong Kong identity'. It can be said that the spirit and value identity of Hong Kong are based on certain special history and mixed culture, and also parts of unique culture of Hong Kong.

2.2. Behavior Identity of Hong Kong rebranded image

City Behavior Identity is a concentrated expression of the city's cultural spirit and values, and Hong Kong's culture behavior is often reflected in the local arts and cultural industries. In 1970s, the colonial government of Hong Kong recognized the importance of arts which was like a magnet. The government believed that if London and Sydney had orchestras and ballet groups, Hong Kong

should also have them in order to attract a high level of expatriates [9]. So since the late 1990s, Hong Kong has also been active in the creation of cultural events and the formation of cultural agglomeration industries. Due to its relatively liberal cultural climate, there was the arrival of dozens of the world's leading galleries. The Art Basel Hong Kong, one of the most important art fairs in Asia, attracts the top galleries and collectors around the world. After more than two decades of development, Hong Kong's cultural industries have developed into a sizeable scale and have created tremendous achievements. They have contributed more than 15% to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and have played a catalytic and driving role in the economic transformation, facilitating the overall economic advancement towards a knowledge-based economy.

West Kowloon Cultural District is the largest arts and cultural center in Hong Kong. The government has continued to invest in upgrading existing arts and cultural facilities as well as building new ones such as the M+ Museum and the Hong Kong Palace Museum. Cultural industry in Hong Kong serves as a medium to tell the Chinese story in a more touching and vivid way. On the one hand, Hong Kong is vigorously promoting cooperation with the Chinese mainland in arts and culture-related fields, especially focusing on the Greater Bay Area (GBA). On the other hand, it leads local citizens to participate in arts and cultural events around the world, building cultural bridges and gathering the world's attention.

However, the fact is that cultural industry in Hong Kong has always been a controversial topic for local residents. Aside from the fact that the content of the exhibition is more 'international' and less focused on the local culture of the city, the commercial value behind the West Kowloon Cultural District has been a key point of attack for opponents since the project inception. It is feared that the main driver of this project is neither artistic talent development nor the promotion of Hong Kong culture, but a global race to attract the attention of the media and investors [10]. About ten years ago, the investment of this project added HK\$71 billion to Hong Kong's gross domestic product, while the cultural content which was the essence and real mission of the project only created HK\$3.72 billion in tourism revenue by attracting tourists, oppositely. Hong Kong's local culture seems to be merely an ornament and an economic gimmick. It is still an important issue in the progress of cultural development in Hong Kong and still needs to be discussed from multiple perspectives.

2.3. Visual Identity of Hong Kong rebranded image

City Visual Identity is concerned with the intuitive and intensive feelings brought to people by the style and appearance of exterior of the city, which are cityscapes,

city signs, outdoor advertisements, buildings etc. They are a certain of culture, and also integrate and convey the local culture of Hong Kong in a form of emphasizing visuals. When it comes to the city signs, for example, the Hong Kong Tram incorporates relevant visual elements related to Hong Kong in the medium of tram bodies, stations and so on. The new logo of Hong Kong Tram, which owns a history of over 100 years, uses the green color of the 'Bauhinia leaf' to show the concept of environmental protection while emphasizing the Hong Kong culture image behind the city flower. And the graphic evolves from the front shape of the tram, where the lights illuminate the road ahead, demonstrating the hard-working, forward-looking spirit of Hong Kong. At the same time, a campaign has been launched to showcase the happy memories that Hong Kong people have created with Tram, which are parts of the tram culture history and also parts of Hong Kong's culture history that has been passed down for over 100 years.

At the same time, neon lights seem to have become a part of Hong Kong's culture, and a symbol of Hong Kong. The cluster of neon lights totally match the brilliance of Hong Kong, so neon lights are the visual label of Hong Kong. As an important manifestation of outdoor advertising, neon itself is a historical product of the fusion of Chinese and Western cultures. Combining the ancient Chinese art of calligraphy with modern advertising techniques, it is a Western import that has quickly acquired a Chinese name in China. Where there is neon is popular and lively, and where there is population, there is culture. The twinkling lights float on the sea, the hustle and bustle flows through the city, the concrete forests that represent industrial development are grounded by the neon lights. And neon signs outline the streets and communities of Hong Kong, making the city come alive and vibrant. Behind the neon lights, there is an opposite image side to the bustling city image of Hong Kong - the culture of folk daily life.

When it comes to city symbols, the red-white-blue nylon bag is not only a product from the fusion of Chinese and Western cultures in Hong Kong, but also represents the spirit of Hong Kong. Originally from Japan, the red-white-blue nylon bag was introduced to Hong Kong in the early 1970s. As a visual culture, red-white-blue nylon bag has witnessed the different faces and developments of Hong Kong throughout its history. Whether it is for building shelters under the economic development, or for visiting relatives in the Chinese mainland or moving house after the reunification with China, this nylon bag has been used by Hong Kong people to the fullest extent. The red-white-blue nylon bag is as resilient, tough and adaptable as the people in Hong Kong, this is why it becomes one of the synonyms for the spirit of Hong Kong. Owing to its special spirituality, the red-white-blue nylon bag has played an important role in many local cultural creations, and even been used as inspiration by some of the biggest international brands. It

can be said that the little nylon bag represents the magnificent Hong Kong culture and Hong Kong spirit, and showcases the culture brand image of Hong Kong to the world.

Hong Kong is a small city, but it has a unique culture and a valuable spiritual heritage, which is often reflected in its architecture. Walking through the streets and alleys in Hong Kong, one can often see distinctive historical buildings, each with its own story, which form the common memory of Hong Kong people. In its centuries of development, Hong Kong has absorbed and incorporated both Eastern and Western cultures, ancient and modern traditions, and traces of this unique city story can be found in the different historical buildings. There are the Chinese style Kwun Yum Temple in Hung Hom, the Southeast Asian style Haw Par Mansion and the European architectural features of Lui Seng Chun, all these old buildings represent this city's culture from different historical periods and are unique and irreplaceable living cultural assets of Hong Kong. The value of the Blue House is not only in its architecture, but also in the rich history of the community and its folk memories. In particular, it exudes a spirit of neighborly mutual assistance that is a reflection of Hong Kong local life culture.

3. MARKETING COMMUNICATION OF HONG KONG REBRANDED IMAGE AS A GLAMOROUS MUTI-CULTURAL METROPOLIS

3.1. Marketing in the virtual spaces

3.1.1 Media Marketing

Due to the rapid development of the Internet, people generally get used to using social networking software to gain a deeper understanding of the world in a more efficient way, including the culture and history of a city. Promoting Hong Kong to the world through the Internet is a quick means of marketing Hong Kong image after it has been re-branded. The Hong Kong Tourism Board has conducted integrated promotions and publicity of Hong Kong's rich history and culture on Chinese mainland social media platforms, hoping to expose the public to more information and diverse culture about Hong Kong and also travel experiences at every step of the traveler's journey. Some related apps are developed and videos about the history and culture of Hong Kong are uploaded here to attract more people's attention and interest through interactive comments and games, building up Hong Kong re-branded image as a 'glamorous multi-cultural metropolis' further.

3.1.2 Promoting through Cantonese songs

For more than half a century, Hong Kong culture has been popular through Hong Kong pop songs (Cantonese songs) and Hong Kong-made films, adding to the charm of this city which has a multicultural mix of East and West.

Combining literature and melody, Cantonese pop songs serves as a medium for both aesthetic orientation and the dissemination of Hong Kong culture. Those songs convey a highly distinctive local culture with cosmopolitan elements of the city, carrying the collective memory, sense of belonging and local value identity of Hong Kong people. Whether it is 'Lee Tung Street' or 'Nathan Road', the combination about historical architecture in Hong Kong with love stories happened there of Cantonese songs creates an emotional connection between the city and citizens. And behind the lyrics are the reflections of Hong Kong citizens on the loss of culture and history in the course of commercial development and also feelings of nostalgia. More importantly, they hope the history and culture of Hong Kong deserve more attention and need protection.

At the same time, humanistic concerns and the spirit of Hong Kong are another key topic in Cantonese pop songs. In a sense, Cantonese songs are a collective statement of the Hong Kong public mind: the inevitability of emotional lack in such quick-fixed modern city life, or a record of people's confusion and sobriety in the midst of historical changes. 'Below the Lion Rock' is also an expression of the spirit of Hong Kong, with lyrics that resonate with many Hong Kong people, pointing out the hard-working spirit of Hong Kong and solidarity of people. Cantonese popular songs are both a mirror and a carrier of Hong Kong's cultural history, and also form an integral part of Hong Kong's culture. In the other word, Hong Kong people have a greater sense of belonging to the city culture and non-locals have a better understanding of the culture and spirit of Hong Kong through those Cantonese songs, which produce fetters between the glamorous city and public. The use of rich elements of the city's cultural history and strong urban humanistic sentiments in Cantonese songs is the result of the dual effect of strong accommodating ability of urban culture in Hong Kong and love and belonging from citizens to the city.

3.2. Marketing in the physical space of the city

3.2.1 Marketing of festivals and events

In their study of festivals and places, Lau and Li reiterate the importance of festivals in enhancing the 'sense of place' of visitors and residents, which is relevant to their daily lives [11]. Large-scale offline events that showcase the city's historical and cultural appeal can also contribute to the rebranding of the city.

The annual Cheung Chau Bun Festival is a local folk festival in Hong Kong. From the fifth to the ninth day of the fourth month of the lunar calendar, thousands of residents on Cheung Chau Island take part in the festivities with drums and gongs, making it a spectacular event. Many Hong Kong festivals are also related to traditional Chinese festivals and incorporate local ethnic cultural characteristics, providing a chance for Hong Kong citizens gathering together to experience the festive atmosphere and the centuries-old history and culture in Hong Kong through offline activities on the festival day.

3.2.2 Marketing of urban architecture

There is a strong relationship between a city's culture and heritage and the extent to which its past is valued. One aspect that has received attention is the building heritage [12].

In recent years, the Hong Kong Tourism Board has launched the West Kowloon in-depth tour program, which invites visitors to experience the diverse arts and cultures of the Yau Ma Tei and Jordan areas. It organizes five themed walks with regional characteristics, involving over 50 unique attractions and shops. The in-depth tour program focuses the attention of the local and global on Hong Kong architectural heritage further, where people can interact with the buildings and communities while learning about Hong Kong's story and local culture. The program makes the city's architectural landscape a 'culture heritage living fossil' which also means an important medium for Hong Kong's cultural history.

4. CONCLUSION

Hong Kong's single image as a shopping and international economic city needs to be rebranded since there are many wonderful aspects of Hong Kong waiting to be discovered. Many people say that Hong Kong is a cultural desert, it is the mixed culture and complex history of Hong Kong that disrupts the timeline of cultural studies. It is neither as time-honored as traditional Chinese culture, nor has it fully absorbed pure Western culture. And it is like a grafted plant which in an awkward situation. But in fact, the fusion of different cultures has also provided Hong Kong with a globally distinctive cultural status which differentiates from the other monocultural cities and also can be attractive in a unique way.

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