

How Do Domestic Products Help Branding Bangladesh Globally?

Mushfeka Binte Kamal¹, Ruhul Amin^{2*}, Cathy Bipasha Sarkar³

¹Lecturer, Department of Business Administration, European University of Bangladesh, Dhaka, Bangladesh

^{2*}Lecturer, Department of Business Administration, Sonargaon University, Dhaka, Bangladesh

³M.Sc. in Strategic Project Management (European), Heriot-Watt University, UK

^{2*}**Corresponding Author:** ruhulbsmrstu@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper showed how nation branding can help Bangladesh capture the global market with the help of its domestic products. The study was qualitative in nature and based on secondary data only. This study found that nation branding can help the country increase its reputation. Bangladesh can brand the country and perform the nation branding in the outer world through its different domestic products, such as culture, tourism, exports industry, and public figures. These can brand and represent Bangladesh in the global market and thus, can bring more economic growth and more investments by branding the core products of our country to the foreign countries. According to this study, RMG sector, the tourist sector, the local brands of Bangladesh, and the famous public figures are working together to build the popularity of Bangladesh and improve the brand value at the global market. To create Bangladesh as a happening nation to the outer world, our country and local brand should increase its advertising and global promotional activities to create a strong brand value of the country.

Keywords: Nation Branding, Global Branding, Domestic Products, and Bangladesh.

1.0. Introduction

1.1. Background of the study

Nation branding refers to developing an identity for a nation that consists of several elements of national accounts, including foreign direct investments, exports, culture, sports, migrants, international relations, and many other aspects [12]. To reach the customers, a company may have multiple strategies among which branding is the most crucial one because the companies, at present, give emphasis on branding that represents their products and services to the world [2]. For example, the 'Aarong', a renowned Bangladeshi brand, whose tag line for its dairy products is "Milk for Good" and that of the 'Pran' is "Nature, the best source of nutrition". What comes to minds by the tag 'Milk for Good'? Definitely 'Aarong'; this is called branding. These things are also same for a country too. A country can be well recognized and focused in the global arena with the help of nation branding process [4]. AL Ries [21], a famous writer, market specialist, and the Chairman of the "Ries & Ries", an Atlanta-based consulting firm said, "Marketing is not selling. Marketing is building a brand in the

mind of the prospect”. Al Ries well said that creating confidence among the consumers to the respective products is very important as creating a brand value is important for a company’s image. Definitely, marketing is not only marketing but something more that can create a strong image of a country in the workplace through branding [21]. The American Marketing Association (AMA) defines the term brand as “a name, term, sign, symbol of design or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of the competitors. As the economy of Bangladesh is moving on with the vision 2021 and the country is getting ready to be a middle-income county, the global product branding is very significant to help it capture the international market. Recently, Bangladesh has become eligible to be listed as a developing country and this is recognized by UN [10]. Therefore, this study focuses on local branding with the perspective of some local dominating products, brands, and industry; difficulties and way-out of converting local branding into global branding, and how nation branding can help Bangladesh capture the global market with its domestic products.

1.2. Research Question

The research question surfaced from the literature review is ‘How do domestic products help branding Bangladesh globally?’

1.3. Objectives of the study

This study focuses on the domestic products, branding Bangladesh globally. A brand of a country represents its culture, values, norms, people’s attitudes, and so on. More specifically, it can be said that this article will focus on how nation branding can help Bangladesh to capture the global market with the help of its domestic products. The objectives of this study arrived from the research question are as follows:

- ? Developing a conceptual framework about Branding Bangladesh
- ? Capturing global market through domestic products branding
- ? Drawing up the importance of nation branding for Bangladesh
- ? Identifying difficulties and way-outs for global branding

1.4. Methodology of the study

For this article, qualitative research strategy was designed as no statistical data were collected by the researchers. In this study, the researchers used the secondary data, which were collected from various articles published in journals, books, newspapers, and websites.

2.0. Literature review

As per the study of Aveline [3], today is the age of globalization and it has forced the marketers to envisage global branding. Because of their commonness and pervasiveness, it is imperative to address a successful branding strategy to achieve sustainable competitive advantage in today's rapidly changing global markets. So, it is indispensable to understand brand, trace the significance of global branding, and discuss the issues pertaining branding of Bangladesh through a successful implementation of Vision 2021. Keller [13] said that a brand is something that resides in the minds of consumers. Brand is defined as a name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of them intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors [16].

According to Keller [13], recognizing that brands represents one of their most important intangible assets. Firms are increasingly looking to leverage their brands across geographical boundaries and regions. Three keys for global brand success are defined here:

- (i) Understanding the global consumer context;
- (ii) Building a solid global marketing foundation; and
- (iii) Striking a balance in global brand management.

A brand's symbolic meaning originates with its underlying purpose and is expressed as a field vibration that radiates from the very core of a company. Keller and Lehmann [14] perceived that global branding is the strategy, which is used to lift up local products into the global markets. According to Keller [13] a powerful brand strategy combines the logic and the magic mix of rational and emotive elements that, together, combine to give a brand engagement, connectedness, distinction, and focus:

- **Resonance** – How will people react?
- **Resilience** – How strong is the strategy competitively?
- **Results** – What difference will it make?
- **Resolution** – How will the new strategy galvanize people from the inside-out?
- **Radiation** – Will it spread? Are the ideas in this strategy capable of great mobility?
- **Redefinition** – Is it radical? Does it have stretch?
- **Recognition** – Does it still have the brand's DNA?

Anholt [2] proposed a concept of branding hexagon, where he distinguished six main factors influencing country image. Nation branding focuses on the nation as a whole through its people, culture, heritage, investment, immigration, governance, exports, and tourism. Kaneva [12] assumed that nation branding refers to developing an identity for a nation that consists of several elements of national accounts, including foreign direct investments, exports, culture, sports, migrants, international relations, and many other aspects. Anholt [2] perceived that nation branding involves a holistic and well-concerted effort to highlight the key competitive advantages offered by the nation. The vision of Bangladesh incorporates participatory democracy, efficient, and honest governance, which will transform Bangladesh into a major commercial hub through creating a competitive economic environment sustained by a well-trained and skilled workforce [7]. The Vision 2021 has already helped the country in nation branding by making it eligible as a developing country in the eyes of UN [10].

3.0. Conceptual framework

The following conceptual framework has showed that tourism, culture, people, and exporting industry can brand Bangladesh in the global market through improving images and awareness about Bangladesh.

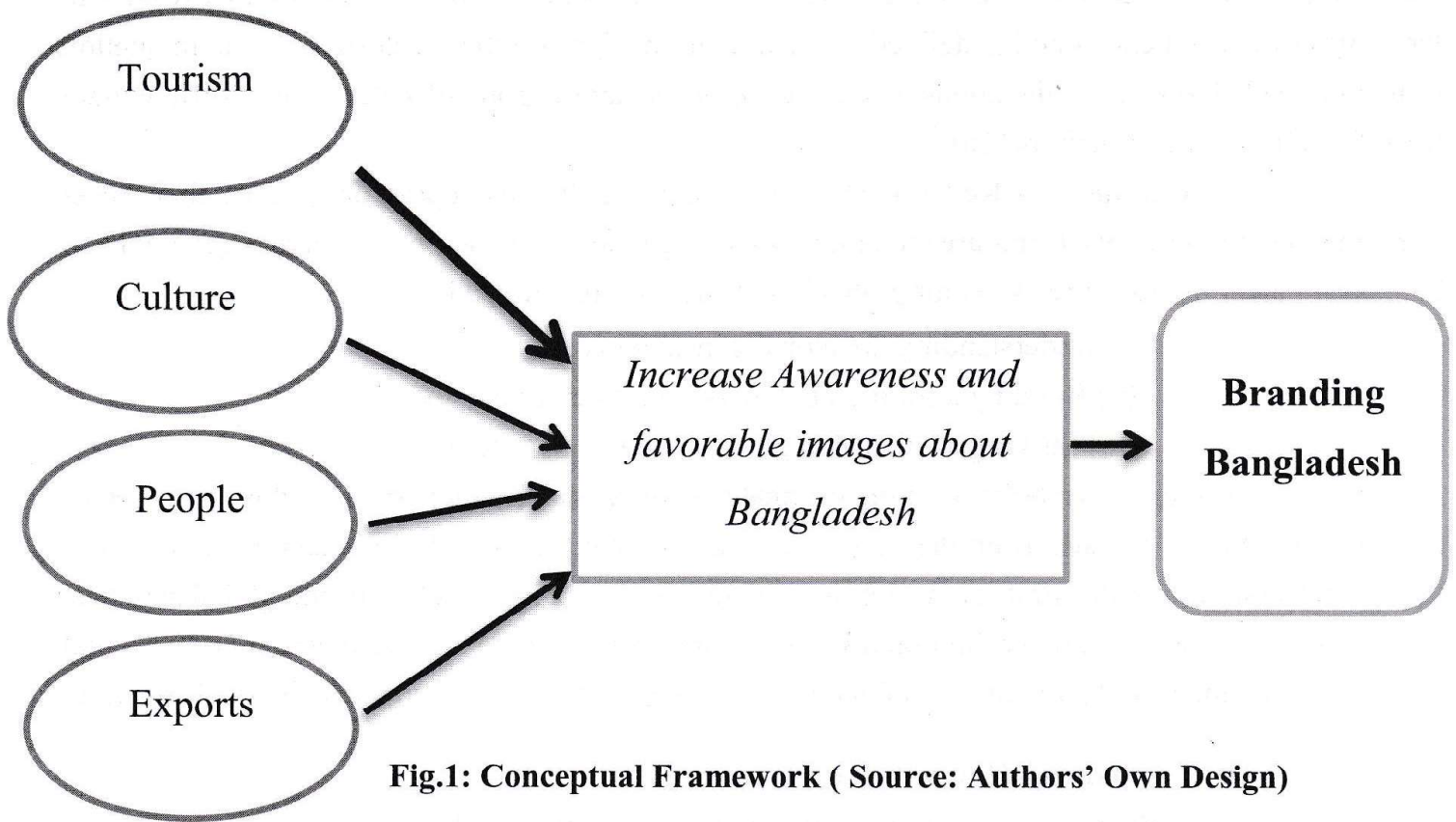


Fig.1: Conceptual Framework (Source: Authors' Own Design)

4.0. Branding Bangladesh through domestic products

The government of Bangladesh has a huge role to play in this regard. It is the duty of our marketers to brand our achievements to the world. The impact of nation branding affects our entire economy and the standard of living of the citizens concerned [6]. As a nation, the people of Bangladesh have to realize that the very concept of nation branding is not only for foreigners, rather we, the people of the country, are the biggest stakeholders of this concept. Without our support and embodiment of the brand identity, all nation-branding efforts will be futile. The manufacturers of the products have to remember that nation branding needs effort, time, dedication, and persistence and they must ensure adequate capacity building, improvement in productivity, healthy industrial relations, professional management, and new export destinations and communicate with international audience to implement Bangladesh Vision 2021 through Branding Bangladesh [19].

4.1. Exports industry of Bangladesh: The future global brand!

4.1.1. RMG sector of Bangladesh

Bangladesh is one of the most prominent emerging economies in the current world. One of the best sectors of Bangladesh to earn foreign currency is the garment sector. In the year of 2012, the garments sector earned around \$19 billion dollars and \$30186.62 in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2013-14. The industry provided 80% of the total export that is around \$24 billion. It proved that the garments sector is truly the largest industry in this penurious country [11]. Bangladesh is in the second place after China in exporting readymade garments around the world. According to the McKinsey and Company, a worldwide recognized consultancy firm, the exports volume of the readymade garments of Bangladesh could be doubled in the next 10 years. Several reasons like unpredictable customer demand, market variation, intense competition, lack of price variation, and low barrier to enter the industry make the garments sector one of the most competitive business sectors around the world [17].

So, in which sector, Bangladesh can go ahead in branding is the RMG (Ready Made Garments) sector. It would not be hard to say that Bangladesh, in near future, is going to capture leading position of branding in the RMG sector. Recently, the manufacturers and retailers are concentrating on developing branding based on apparel and textile industry to meet the sustainable customer demands and profitability. And it's true that only global branding can help get more market share in the international market, which can lead our country to be a strong economical based holding country [11].

4.1.2. Aarong: A dominating local brand in Bangladesh

Today, Aarong is in the top position in the handcrafted products retail business. Aarong is making a brilliant contribution to develop the industry of handcrafted products all over Bangladesh. It is now beyond of being just a retail business. Today, Aarong is promoting the handmade traditional products not only in the country but also in the international market [1]. According to Yasmin [26], Aarong is not only a traditional brand of handicraft products but also they take good care of the design of the products to make them convenient, maintain quality, and make the products in a mix of traditional and contemporary demand of the customers. For their outstanding performance in handicraft and making the products globally known, Aarong received the prestigious 'Best Brand Award' in 2009 and the 'Most Effective Outdoor Communication Award' from the Brand Forum. They also won the respected UNESCO Seal of Exchange for their handicraft products [26]. This organization is helping Bangladesh move towards the prosperity through nation branding by selling Bangladesh's traditional products in the abroad. Many foreigners know Bangladesh only for Aarong and thus, showing interest to use other Bangladeshi (BD) products, helping Bangladesh to capture a strong place in abroad or global market.

5.0. Tourism sector of our country

For the last 10-12 years, Bangladesh is concentrating on capitalizing the tourism sector. Bangladesh has enormous natural sites that can be used for establishing tourism sector. Many ancient archeological sites enrich the history of Bangladesh, such as the Paharpur Buddhist Monastery, Mahasthangarh, Mainamati, and so on [20]. Recently, UNESCO declares Paharpur as world Heritage site [5]. Dhaka itself has some special sites like Lalbagh Kella, Ahsan Manjil, Satgambuj Mosque, Dhakeswari Mandir, and so on. These places can do branding of Bangladesh to the world tourists. People can recognize our country easily when they remember memories and views of these places.

Bangladesh is a river based country that is surrounded by rivers and forests. Cox's Bazar is the longest unbroken sea beach in the world. The length of the beach is 120 kilometers consisting miles of sands. There is also the largest mangrove forest in the world, namely the Sundarbans where the Royal Bengal Tiger can be found. The wildlife of Sundarbans may amaze the tourists with its vastness of 6000sq km and cross connections of rivers and streams [5].

6.0. Culture of Bangladesh

Our cultural facts and heritages should be highlighted all over the world. The rest of the world already knows some of them. The Ekushey February considered as the International Mother Language Day. Pohela Boishakh, an event enriched with cultural factors, should also get recognition around the world [25]. To do the branding of Bangladesh, we should consider the food and cuisine. The culinary tradition of Bangladesh is distinctive and delicious. The spices and masalas are very much different from other countries. The primary food is the steamed rice served with curries, vegetables, lentil soups, fish, meat, and so on. The people of Bangladesh prefer sweets made from milk. Some of the most famous sweets are Rosogolla, Chom-Chom, Kalo Jam, Rashamali, and so on [15]. There are almost 40 types of fresh water fish available all over the country. That is why Bangladesh is considered as a fish protein dominant country. Freshwater fish is also produced privately in huge areas. Besides the freshwater fish, saltwater or sea fish are also playing important role in the food market of Bangladesh. Hilsa is considered as the national fish and it is considered as the Icon of Bangladeshi food. In Pohela Boishakh, people eat Panta-Ilish as a tradition [25].

Cuisine and food culture may represent the country and the perception of the people. Bangladesh should use this cuisine factor to network the country to the rest of the world for the nation branding. On the other hand, our local saree Jamdani is also a symbol of our country for the outer world. Hilsa & Jamdanihs got recognition by receiving Geographical Indications (GI) from the Department of Patents, Designs and Trademarks (DPDT) [23]. These products can represent our county name in the global market through nation branding.

7.0. People: Representatives of Bangladesh

Bangladesh has many names that can represent the country to the world. Some of them dedicated their lives for the country, while at present, some are making their place internationally. These people play an important role in case of branding the nation into the eyes of global market. The Father of the nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, was one of the reasons behind the victory of a nine-month bloody liberation war. His daughter, Sheikh Hasina, the current Prime Minister of Bangladesh, has been one of the iconic politicians of the country. Under her government, Bangladesh has become a developing country. She became the ninth most powerful women politician in the list of Forbes. In 2017, Sheikh Hasina marked her place in the “Women Presidents and Prime Ministers” book as a women politician of Bangladesh. In 2017, this woman has been declared as 'Mother of Humanity' by British media brands [9]. People from other country recognize Bangladesh with the name of Sheikh Hasina.

As an entrepreneur, a banker, economist, and socialist, Muhammad Yunus is also recognized all around the world. As a result of introducing micro finance and micro credit idea, he won the prestigious Nobel Peace Prize in the year 2006 along with his founded organization, i.e., Grameen Bank. They won the Nobel Prize under the title of “Efforts through Micro Credit Economic and Social Development from below” [22]. After winning the Nobel Prize, Muhammad Yunus also won the US presidential Medal of Freedom in 2009 and in 2010, won the ‘Congressional Gold Medal’. He is also known as good public speaker, who gave many valuable speeches in different countries to represent Bangladesh. In the field of sports, Shakib Al Hasan is representing the country as an international cricket player who is continuously ranking the top position in all formats of ICC cricket, including ODI, Test, and T20 [8]. This man is branding Bangladesh through playing and performing well in different leagues and clubs of other countries.

8.0. Difficulties and way-out of achieving global branding

Rahman (2015) mentioned in his writing published in the famous local newspaper - The Daily Star- that creating a global brand is very tough because of some tragic and difficulty events [24]. Now, it is the right situation to make a re-brand of Bangladeshi products and associate those with positivity to make it internationally recognized. But, the people and organizations related with rebranding or branding Bangladesh must remember that it will not be a piece of cake. There will be different and critical curves to explore and develop such a design that will help maintain a sound relationship among the associates of branding [18]. Industries related with branding and rebranding must understand that a drastic change needs to be happened to successfully and positively place Bangladesh in the international market. It will help them make a global product and catch international

market. But, the people and organizations related with rebranding or branding should keep in mind that a product may be sold well in the national market, but it could be worthless in the international market. That is why, making a global product and brand is essential to enter the international market [18].

8.1. Centre of excellence: Its strategy to convert local brand into global brand in Bangladesh

For example, in Bangladesh, the boutique industry mainly focuses on the major festivals rather than targeting daily demands. In order to develop branding of Bangladesh, a new era has begun because of the development of the 'Centre of Excellence'. The Centre of Excellence will focus on creating next generation workers with proper knowledge and training. These workers will help industries make value added and globalized products and capture international market through building a good image and branding [18].

9.0. Conclusions and recommendations

9.1. Conclusions

The concluding remarks indicate that all the famous companies in the world have earned market share through good services and branding strategy and it is also the same in case of Bangladesh and its industries. Many of our local products, such as garments and apparels, leathers, medicine, and so on are being exported with the names of Aarong, Walton, Pran, Square, Beximco, and so on. This is possible only for the good branding strategy of these organizations, which include good products, services, keeping promises through quality and good communication with the present and potential customers. So, to be a market capturer in the global market and fulfill the vision 2021 of Bangladesh, a good branding strategy with good products and services should be developed. The ending of this article claims a quote from 'Philip Kotler', father of marketing. He said, "A good brand gets developed historically, not overnight".

9.2. Recommendations

Through reviewing several secondary sources of data, the authors of this study recommend the followings:

- To be a global market leader and strong competitor in the global market, Bangladeshi companies should remember that a positive branding strategy creates a positive image and confidence in the customers' minds about products and services.
- Bangladesh is accomplishing satisfactory performances in the economic indexes. At this moment, creating positive feelings through the combination of good products and environment among the global investors and the stakeholders is a pre-requisite in increasing the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).

- Increased advertising and promotional activities are needed for the tourism sector to encourage tourists to visit Bangladesh.
- The local brands of Bangladesh also must emphasize on the field research to create the brand value of products of the companies.

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