

Do experiential events create city brand?

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Abstract

Purpose – This article analyzes to what extent mega-events are capable of developing powerful city brands that are internationally recognized – a topic that has been little studied to date.

Design/methodology/approach – We used the quantitative method. We carried out 398 surveys with citizens living in Aguascalientes (Mexico), during the mega-event known as the Feria Nacional de San Marcos.

Findings – The results allow us to verify that (i) with regard to background: residents' attitudes towards a city brand improve following experiences in mega-events in that city (H1) and (ii) with regard to effects: improving city brand attitudes increases residents' quality of life (H2).

Originality/value – To date, there is no literature investigating how experiences in cultural mega-events improve attitudes towards city brands and, consequently, improve quality of life. To fill this gap, this article investigates the great advantages which mega-events can bring to a city

Keywords – Mega-events; city brands; quality of life; residents.



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I Introduction

Cities are perhaps the places in which the intersection of economic, social and environmental interests, actions and conflicts are most intensely expressed (La Roca and Ferrer 2004). Jessop and Sum (2000) characterize cities, or entrepreneurial metropolitan areas, as those which implement proactive strategies when positioning themselves in the international scenario, thus creating cities which are attractive for tourism and investment, for example (Kavaratzis 2004).

The “city brand” concept is relevant because there are more and more reasons for cities to manage and control their images as brands (Kotler *et al.* 2004); the need to attract tourists, factories, businesses and talented people, the urgency in finding markets for exports (Dinnie, 2004), or the importance of increasing their citizens’ satisfaction (Zenker *et al.* 2009) are but a few of them. Financial constraints, alongside local authorities’ lack of knowledge and skills in effectively implementing and directing city brand strategies, leads them to frequently cooperate with other public and private institutions (Pascual-Esteve, 1999), with the ultimate aim of increasing the satisfaction of people living in a particular place (Zenker *et al.* 2009), as a result of a previously developed positive attitude towards the city brand (Merrilees *et al.* 2009).

Nowadays, different studies on marketing are giving increasing importance to experiences (Schmitt 1999; Kao *et al.* 2007), especially those that occur during mega-events (Ryan and Mizerski, 2010; Pitt *et al.* 2010; Dolles and Söderman, 2010). However, events’ ability to develop powerful, globally recognized city brands has been poorly investigated in the literature (Rodríguez and Vila, 2013), justifying the need for further research.

Among the existing strategies for developing the city brand concept, there are two interrelated paths that have been widely investigated over recent years: experiential marketing and event marketing. That is, the development, in cities,

of mega-events capable of arousing emotional experiences among citizens (Leonardsen, 2007; Dolles and Söderman, 2010) are seen as an alternative for leisure that is beneficial to citizens, translating into the consolidation of the city brand in which events occur. To date, studies addressing this issue have focused largely on emotions that sports events are capable of awakening (Kao *et al.* (2007); few have been concerned with addressing the effectiveness of other, cultural events. In any case, the goal is none other than the commitment to differentiation (building city brands), to demonstrate in this way that local governments can successfully manage their city brand if they choose to hold experiential events. This is because a good city brand translates, ultimately, into an improvement in the perception of quality of life among citizens (Kotler *et al.* 2004; Kavaratzis, 2004; 2008).

In the described scenario, this article seeks to demonstrate whether a festive, experiential mega-event that arouses emotions (independent variable) is capable of directly improving city brand attitudes among participants who live in that city (dependent variable) and, ultimately, indirectly improving their quality of life (dependent variable). Thus, the mediator of improving brand city attitudes between experimentation of an experiential event and improving quality of life role arises.

To this end, we gathered information from 398 citizens in Aguascalientes (Mexico), who were personally interviewed while participating in the experiential mega-event known as Feria Nacional de San Marcos in its 2011 edition, from April 23 to May 10, while informants were involved in the event’s various programs: sports, cultural, social, entertainment and nightlife. This information has allowed to contrast a model of structural relationships and analyzing raised by EQS technique to analyze the social perspective integrated from marketing such as a generator of perceived quality of life from its citizens.

2 Literature review

Below, we review the relevance of the city brand concept, to then address how experiential marketing in general, and event marketing in particular, can contribute to generating city brands. All with the ultimate aim of increasing the quality of life of residents, a concept that is reviewed and related to the brand in the fourth and final section.

2.1 City brand

The American Marketing Association defines (AMA, 1960) brand as “a name, term, design, symbol, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from competitors”. Applying techniques to create brands for nations, cities and places is increasing (Anholt, 2002, 2007; Hall, 2003; Dinnie, 2004; Kotler *et al.* 2004; Ponsonby-McCabe and Boyle, 2006;), given the strong global competition they face to retain industries and attract tourists (Dinnie 2004).

From a corporate perspective, brand strategies are similar among companies and cities, because the latter learn from the former, creating a gradual mutation in which business thinking is introduced in national institutions until they also become brands (Dinnie, 2004). The consolidation of the positive image of a country (or city) is as important as achieving a favorable position for a company (or brand) (Kotler *et al.* 2004). This is due, to a large extent, to the immense competition that countries currently live to attract the largest possible number of tourists, since it generates wealth and development in popular tourist destinations (Dinnie, 2004; Kotler *et al.* 2004).

Lynch (1960) originally defined the term city brand as the perceived image of a city according to geographical aspects. In his study, Ward (1998) provides a historical review of how cities have been marketed as brands since 1850, highlighting the role of the promotion variable in marketing strategy. In the same line, Ashworth

and Voogd (1990) present the general principles of city brand and defend a marketing philosophy in all aspects concerning urban planning. In this regard, Smyth (1994) analyzes the marketing of cities, through their association with iconic urban regeneration events (Merrilees *et al.* 2009). Recently, urban studies have also been conducted in the same line, considering the relevance a place brand may acquire in attracting tourists and business (Merrilees *et al.* 2009).

In conclusion, literature on city brand has recognized the relevance of the concept “brand” linked to a particular geographical area, but has not quantified the possibility that the different stakeholders involved in a city develop different perceptions of the brand image (Fitchett, 2005; Friedman and Miles, 2002; Virgo and De Chernatony, 2006). To cover this gap, the concept “city brand attitude” has been gaining strength, and been recently used in the study by Merrilees *et al.* (2009). This paper modifies the traditionalist perspective of creating a city brand image as the orientation of rulers, and evaluates the attitude of residents in a city while trying to understand, in particular, what are the key background (city attributes) capable of positively influencing city brand attitudes needed to consolidate the city. These authors conceptualize the term “city brand attitudes” as “the deeper understanding of how branding works in this particular context and provides a framework by which local governments can manage and modify such attitudes for the public good” (Merrilees *et al.* 2009: 362).

2.2 Experiential marketing

The literature review has allowed to note that there are several factors that relate to the generation of positive city brand attitudes among residents of a particular place. In this sense, some authors have opted for the creation of experiential mega-events in strategic points in the city which generates a positive acknowledgment of this place (Pitt *et al.* 2010.; Dolles and Söderman, 2010). In other words, the positive experiences in mega-events (defined as experiential marketing tools)

improve the attitude towards a particular city brand (Kavaratzis, 2008). That is, experiential marketing (understood through an event) recreates a subjective state of consciousness, with a variety of symbolic meanings, hedonic responses and aesthetic criteria (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982), which means consumption event experiences.

The first authors who worked on the effects of experiential marketing coined the term “experiential consumption” (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982). These authors proposed a model to explain the experiential purchase from the treatment of the information used for making decisions. Subsequently, the model was expanded to include value (Holbrook and Kim, 1985), cognition (Hirschman, 1985a), emotion (Holbrook, 1986) and global awareness (Hirschman, 1985a, 1985b) in experimental use.

To better understand the usefulness, for businesses, of creating pleasant experiences among consumers, it is necessary to understand the reasons why they acquire products and, further, why they want to have a unique experience with a certain brand. In reality, few human behaviors are as powerful as shopping (Puccinelli *et al.* 2009). Consumers buy for several reasons, which do not always include a special need for a good or service (Tauber, 1972, Puccinelli *et al.* 2009). For example, consumers look for entertainment, recreation, social interaction or intellectual stimulation (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003; Puccinelli *et al.* 2009). The construct of experiences is holistic in nature and involves the consumer in cognitive, emotional, social and physical responses (Verhoef *et al.* 2009). Experiential consumption itself generates value (Mathwick *et al.* 2001). The perception of experiential value is based on the interactions between the consumer and the goods and services (Mathwick *et al.* 2001).

Traditionally, literature interested in addressing the generation of experiences has centered on the point of sale as the “place” in which such experiences occur. From this

perspective the emphasis is on the variable of distribution (Ibrahim and Wee, 2002). In this field, we have studied the atmosphere of the store and its impact on the senses, music, color effects on consumers and affective responses to traders (Naylor *et al.* 2008). The main findings suggest that experiences are not created only on the basis of the elements that companies can control, but also depend on what happens in the environment (Verhoef *et al.* 2009).

As a result, it is important to establish other means capable of building pleasant relationships between brands and their target audiences, beyond the establishments that sell such brands: event marketing (Whelan and Wohfeil, 2006). This orientation-based experiential marketing event begins to be considered particularly suitable for reaching the target audience involving them as “active participants” to a behavioral level (Rodriguez, 2010). According to the definitions by Ritchie and Yangzhou (1987), Law (1993) and Getz (1997), there are many types of marketing events applicable to an experiential level. These can be classified by size (number of visitors, level of media coverage, economic impact on the region, duration and frequency), season (cultural, sports, economic, social, socio-political, etc.) (Freyer, 2000) and its impact exerted on the image of the city in which they take place (low impact, medium impact, high impact) (Law, 1993; Dolles and Söderman, 2010).

2.3 Event marketing

Whelan and Wohfeil (2006) define event marketing as hyper-dimensional, interactive realities concerning the brand in which consumers are actively involved at a behavioral level, eventually attaining an emotional bond with the brand. Thus, experiential marketing through an event is differentiated from mere sponsorship at points listed in Table 1:

Table 1
Differential characteristics of event marketing.

Characteristic	Definition
<i>Orientation to the experience</i>	Consumers experience living under the brand actively, which subjectively increases their quality of life (Weinberg and Nickel, 1998).
<i>Self-initiation by the organization</i>	The event to be created by the organization has the ability to control the impact on consumers and therefore has full control of the experience to generate feelings toward the brand (Weinberg and Nickel, 1998; Wohfeil and Whelan, 2004).
<i>Interactivity:</i>	There is a platform for interactive dialogue among participants in the event (participants, spectators and brand representatives) actively (Zanger and Sistenich, 1996).
<i>Drama:</i>	Consumers emotionally live the reality of the brand through a unique drama that should be away from the everyday and be put on a higher mark in the simple purchase (Zanger and Sistenich, 1996; Sistenich, 1999) plane.

Note. Source: Adapted from de Whelan y Wohfeil (2006).

From a demand approach, and according to Kao et al. (2007), events that generate emotional experiences should be evaluated according to the surprise that is generated, the participation or interaction they produce between attendees, and the level of immersion that the event can develop with its target audience. Going to events generates different feelings among participants: happiness, surprise and entertainment, among others (Kao et al. 2007).

From a supply approach, and according to authors such as Sola (1998) and Roche (1994), mega-events also have an extraordinary impact on the region where they are held, in terms of one or more of the following dimensions: (i) increased volume of tourists, (ii) visitor spending, (iii) advertising development leading to greater awareness and a more positive image of the place, (iv) increased infrastructure and organizational capacity. All this substantially increases the destination's capacity and attraction for visitors, also making it a better place to live in from the perspective of residents themselves.

This distinction between effects of supply and demand is also manifested by Atkinson et al. (2008). Thus, for these authors, mega-events produce direct (supply) and indirect (demand) benefits. Direct benefits are not limited to attracting tourists boosting this industry, also contribute to increasing improving city

infrastructure attracting new business from other business sectors. Indirect benefits are more connected to perceptions generated among participants, from the recognition of the image of the city to greater attention from the media (Ritchie and Yangzhou, 1987; Atkinson et al. 2008; Curi et al. 2011). Combining both effects, we highlight that the organization of a mega-event is a clear example of how to contribute to the economic development of the place in which it is performed, allowing to generate a positive image to that place, partly thanks to the coverage the media attach the event in situation and in partly thanks to the development of pleasurable experiences through tourism occur between residents and nonresidents (Curi et al. 2011).

Roche (2003) suggests that mega-events (including cultural, recreational, commercial and sports) have a dramatic feature, attractive and popular mass character and international significance. Often they are promoted by international governmental and non-governmental organizations (Roche, 2003) or local counting with the participation of citizens and government. In any case, all these types of events give rise to interesting effects for the city in which they are held, usually expressed between the feelings of the average citizen.

Either way, what matters is the ability of the event used to run experiential marketing in

the consolidation of city brand that promotes the event. That is why the role of mega-events in consolidating brand images is a topic that is gaining interest, especially the sports mega-events. However, so far it has been studied only the impact exerted by this type of sports events (Curi *et al.* 2011) but not others (for example cultural).

As has been emphasized, the impact of mega-events to society can be as wide and varied as the types of mega-events existing. In this line, the present study seeks to determine to what extent emotional experiences in mega-events promoted by a particular city, are capable of producing pleasurable sensations that satisfy the desires of the attendees (Schmitt, 1999, Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982; Koa *et al.* 2007) and, consequently, improve the city brand attitude among participants (Merrilees *et al.* 2009).

This relationship has previously been shown in the literature in the study of Dolles and Söderman (2010), which postulates the participation of citizens in the experience of a mega-event (the World Cup in Germany 2006) as a source of enrichment of the city and recognition of their city as a brand. Specifically, the study of these authors emphasizes that the emotional experiences of the mega-event increased the value of the country brand. Experience that can translate to present study the characteristics of a city brand. Likewise, Mo *et al.* (1993), highlight the hospitality of the residents as a key to generate a pleasant experience in a destination (city brand), thereby achieving greater recognition among the residents themselves (city brand attitudes) like this towards the tourists and visitors. In the same line, recent studies show that the construction of a destination (city brand) can be generated based on cultural activities, entertainment and nightlife, the atmosphere of the city, trade and the number and type of events develop that destination (Zenker *et al.* 2009). The link between event (mega-event) and brand (city brand) has also been approached from the point of view of the image transfer from the event to the brand promoting/sponsoring the

event (Küster *et al.* 2009).

In addition, previous studies indicate an important relationship between emotional experiences in mega-events and city brand attitudes in which they are held, so it is possible to establish the first hypothesis of this research:

H1: *The emotional experiences in mega-events improve the city brand attitudes.*

2.4 Quality of life

Experiential marketing through a mega-event would have a first direct effect on city brand attitudes and a second indirect effect on the perceived quality of life in the city.

Regarding the concept quality of life, the literature shows different meanings. For the term quality of life, literature shows different meanings. As for economists, quality of life means “economic welfare”; to psychologists, it is “a general feeling of well-being, life satisfaction, subjective well-being and happiness.” For environmentalists, quality of life is “reforestation, air quality, clean water, wildlife preservation, etc.” For consumers, it means “satisfaction, information, and customer protection.” Managers of human capital define quality of life as “the quality of working life” (Sirgy *et al.* 1982; Sirgy, 2001). That is, the quality of life concept is elusive (Pennings, 1982); its definition and measurement are subject to debate from fields such as economics, sociology and geography, precisely because of the lack of a clear definition (Rogerson *et al.* 1988; Perry and Felce, 1995).

From the perspective of marketing, quality of life is equal to customer satisfaction with their welfare in every way (Sirgy *et al.* 1982; Sirgy, 2001). Many marketing scholars have linked the study of quality of life with the impact of satisfaction through various indicators (Sirgy *et al.* 1991), usually measured through the scale of “life satisfaction.”

Traditionally, marketing managers have conceptualized marketing performance in terms of sales, profit, and market share targets in

relation to a particular product over a period of time (Aaker, 1984; Day 1984). However, when looking only economic risk it is that marketing objectives are geared to financial growth, still likely to be acted incorrectly and irresponsibly socially speaking (Cespedes, 1993).

From the standpoint of marketing as a generator of quality of life, this philosophy seeks to develop products, services and marketing programs that can improve the welfare of consumers, to market products effectively and efficiently so that the effects are minimized side and negative among consumers and other audiences, while generating long-term benefits (Sirgy, 1996).

Some authors have linked quality of life with various marketing strategies, in which the main objective is to create better way of life among the citizens (Cuenca, 2000). It is understandable then that the quality of life remains presently a cornerstone in marketing studies and, the science of marketing increasingly strives to find alternatives to increase the human condition (Kilbourne *et al.* 1997).

In this regard, studies on city brand look the way to provide quality of life. The city brand has, on one hand, the basis for the development of policies to achieve economic development in an area, and, on the other hand, it serves as a conduit through which city residents identify themselves with the city (Kavaratzis, 2004). This does not mean that other audiences (visitors, investors, etc.) are considered less important, but it simply emphasizes the fact that all activities (economic, cultural, social, tourism or any other development of the city) are on behalf of residents of the city and among its objectives is to improve their quality of life (Kavaratzis, 2004).

Research by Kavaratzis (2008) in the section on the study of Athens, shows that the attitude among residents to Greece after the Olympic Games in 2004 became more favorable, becoming the Greeks in more extroverted citizens, more open-minded and more self-confidence

(Tatsiopoulos and Tziralis, 2007). That is, this event changed the attitudes of the Greeks to their country, triggering a sense of pride, which was reflected ultimately in an increase in their quality of life. Based on this study, it is possible to establish the following hypothesis of this research:

H2: *City brand attitudes increase the quality of life among residents.*

3 Methodological design

The purpose of this research is to clarify the relationship between emotional experiences in mega-events, the city brand attitudes and the quality of life by checking the two hypotheses together through structural equations.

In order to contrast the proposed model, it was decided to collect information on the mega-event *Feria Nacional de San Marcos* in its 2011 edition that takes place in the city of Aguascalientes, Mexico, from 183 years ago and in which >85 per cent of the events are free. This mega-event is known as *La Feria de Mexico*, because it received >8 million visitors during the exhibition period. The event is sponsored entirely by the Government of the State of Aguascalientes. Its internationalization began in 2010, following other major fairs of the world such as Seville in Spain, Nimes in France, Pomona in California and Calgary in Canada (Cifras, 2010).

The *Feria Nacional de San Marcos* is of paramount importance for the local economy since it generates an economic impact of more than \$200 million dollars'; It promotes the presence of more than 7 million foreign showmen, achieving greater international projection made of Aguascalientes in Mexico and in the world; as well as generating an average of 6 thousand jobs during the mega-event (Cifras, 2010).

3.1 Measuring concepts

The measuring instrument used in this research consists of 12 items Likert of five points.

One item to discriminate against informants and six more to determine the profile of the sample used. In order to analyze the different concepts proposed by the literature, different scales were refined and adapted to the population under study by a group of experts in a previous qualitative phase were identified. The questionnaire used for data collection was based on an extensive review of the literature being structured as follows (Table 2):

3.1.1 City brand attitudes

Items relating to the city brand attitudes were taken from previous scales on brand attitude (Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Alemán, 2001; Taylor and Hunter, 2003) and adapted to a situation in the city (Merrilees *et al.* 2009). In addition, they were translated to Spanish for later application, once the qualitative research phase was concluded.

3.1.2 Emotional experiences in mega-events

The measurement scale of emotional experiences in mega-events has been retaken from the analysis by Kao, Huang and Yang (2007) reapplied to measure vivid experiences in a sports event. Its adaptation has been successful in the

marketing of musical events (Rodriguez, 2010), and this is why it was also chosen for this study, with the adaptations referred to in the qualitative phase.

3.1.3 Quality of life

According to previous studies concerning quality of life (Flanagan, 1978; Fayers *et al.* 1997; Lloyd and Auld, 2002), an overall measure of quality of life was included in the model proposed by Baker and Palmer (2006): How satisfied are you with your quality of life in general? However, this study also used three additional items to statistically test the construct validity and thus evaluate the level of the individual's perception about their quality of life more widely. One reason was that the measurement of the overall quality of life for a single item (Fayers *et al.* 1997) was questioned, since the use of individual indicators has been shown to reduce the reliability of models and constructs (Bollen 1989; Fayers *et al.* 1997; Fayers and Machin, 2000; Bentler, 2005). Therefore, this research has used the four items used by Baker and Palmer (2006) to measure the quality of life that had a strong reliability coefficient (0.91).

Table 2
Measuring concepts

City brand attitudes		Resource
CBA1	I am proud to live in Aguascalientes	Merrilees <i>et al.</i> (2009) from Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Alemán (2001); Taylor and Hunter (2003).
CBA2	Compared to the rest of the country, life in general is good in Aguascalientes	
CBA3	I prefer living in Aguascalientes than elsewhere	
CBA4	The people of Aguascalientes have a good reputation at a national level	
Emotional experiences in mega-events		Resource
EME1	The events provide entertainment	Kao <i>et al.</i> (2007)
EME2	The events are great	
EME3	I am very happy with the environment within the perimeter of the fair	
EME4	I am very happy to experience "San Marcos 2011"	
Quality of life		Resource
QOL1	How satisfied are you with your quality of life?	Baker y Palmer, 2006 (new 3 items). Based in Flanagan, 1978; Fayers <i>et al.</i> 1997; Lloyd y Auld, 2002).
QOL2	Are you satisfied with how you spend your free time?	
QOL3	How satisfied are you with your fitness level?	
QOL4	In general, how satisfied are you with your quality of life as a resident of Aguascalientes?	

4 Data analysis

Thus, a sample of 398 individuals integrated 51.5% of women and the remaining 48.5% by men. It was also observed that their average age is between 19 and 29 years in accordance with the highest percentage localized (48.5%), and it was observed that 51.3% remain single. The educational level has resulted in higher studies by 74.6%; with high school education (23.1%) and university (51.5%). 66.1% of the respondents are employed, while 22.9% of respondents are still students. The percentage of unemployed who attend this mega-event is low compared to unemployment rates in Mexico. Monthly income does not exceed \$3,000 pesos (220 USD) by 39.2% and only 25.1% have income in a range of \$6,001 to \$10,000 pesos (445-740 USD).

The scales and measuring instrument were subject to confirmatory factor analysis, in which all loads and “*t*” values were significant at $p < 0.01$ value. Reliability was tested by three analyzes.

First, with Cronbach’s α coefficient obtaining higher values .70, so this criterion was accepted (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). Second, an analysis of composite reliability index obtaining higher values .80 was achieved (Carmines and Zeller, 1979). Finally, to determine the reliability also an analysis of the average variance extracted (AVE), in which the results were higher than .50 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Table 3 contains the results of confirmatory factor analysis study.

Once proven the reliability of the instrument, we proceeded to analyze the validity using for this purpose, tests confidence intervals. The results in Table 4 show that none of the confidence intervals (italics) include the value “1”. As for the average variance extracted test it is found that the values of the AVE (on the diagonal) are superior to the square of covariance (below the diagonal) between pairs of factors analyzed. Therefore, we can say that the measuring instrument measured what, indeed, was expected to be measured.

Table 3
Reliability and convergent validity of the measuring instrument.

Factor	Indicator	Load	t Value	Cronbach's α	CR	AVE
EME. Emotional experiences in mega-events	EME1	0.689***	14.821	0.853	0.896	0.634
	EME2	0.722***	15.793			
	EME3	0.807***	18.429			
	EME4	0.854***	19.984			
CBA. City brand attitudes	CBA1	0.821***	18.950	0.837	0.846	0.582
	CBA2	0.654***	13.938			
	CBA3	0.889***	21.264			
	CBA4	0.661***	14.134			
QOL. Quality of life	QOL1	0.725***	15.188	0.799	0.806	0.512
	QOL2	0.812***	17.514			
	QOL3	0.659***	13.481			
	QOL4	0.654***	13.346			

Notes: N= 398 *** $p < .01$; ** $p < .05$; * $p < .10$;

$\chi^2 (p) = 519.079 (0.0000)$, $df = 177$; NNFI = 0.903; CFI = 0.918; IFI = 0.919; RMSA = 0.07

Source: Authors

Table 4
Discriminant validity and value intervals.

	CBA	EME	QOL
CBA	0.582	<i>(0.511 ; 0.671)</i>	<i>(0.203 ; 0.419)</i>
EME	0.349	0.637	<i>(0.271 ; 0.483)</i>
QOL	0.097	0.142	0.512

Notes: Below the diagonal: estimated correlation between factors; Diagonal (bold): average variance extracted (AVE); Above the diagonal (italics): confidence intervals for the estimated correlations

Source: Authors

After checking the reliability and validity of the scales that make up the proposed model, we proceeded to make the model estimates a structural equation model using the robust maximum likelihood method for its ability to

overcome variable non-normality problems (Bentler, 2005) by using the EQS 6.1 and SPSS 18 software; results are shown in Table 5. Goodness of fit statistics suggest that the structural model fits the data structure well.

Table 5
Estimation of the planned model

Structural Relationship	b standardized	t Value	Criterion
H1 Emotional Experiences in Mega-events à City brand Attitudes	0.578 **	9.327	It is accepted
H2 City brand Attitudes à Quality of Life	0.304 **	4.924	It is accepted

Notes: N = 398 **p < .01 ; χ^2 (p) = 536.523 (0.0000), df = 179 ; NNFI = 0.900 ; CFI = 0.915 ; IFI = 0.915 ; RMSA = 0.071

Source: Authors

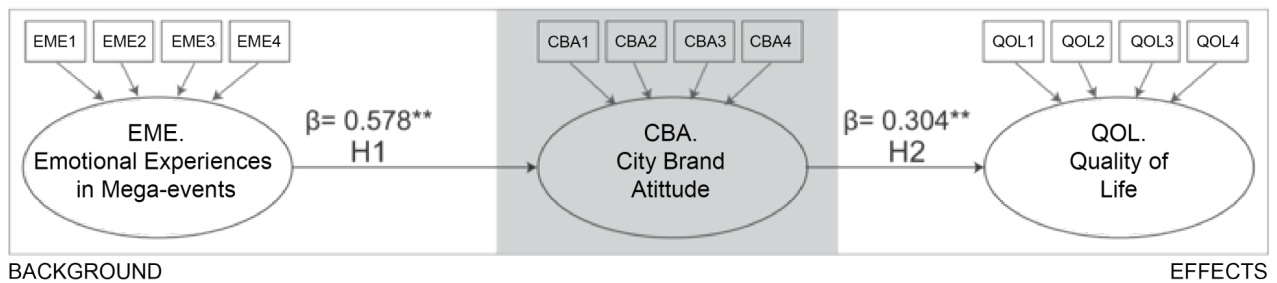


Figure 1. Solution to the proposed model.

N = 398 **p < .01;

χ^2 (p) = 536.523 (0.0000), df = 179 ; NNFI = 0.900 ; CFI = 0.915 ; IFI = 0.915 ; RMSA = 0.071

Source: Authors

As for the *emotional experiences in mega-events*, a significant and positive value as far as impact on city brand attitudes relationship is found. Indeed, the hypothesis H1 finds that the city brand attitudes among residents increases when emotional experiences living in mega-events

(= 0.578, p < 0.01). This hypothesis agrees with theoretical support provided in the Dolles and Söderman (2010) study, in which the experiences in the World Cup Germany 2006, enriched the city achieving recognition of the country brand with a sustainability perspective by citizens.

Regarding the effects in terms of *quality of life*, the empirical study allowed us to demonstrate a significant and positive relationship between constructs city brand attitudes and quality of life ($= 0.304$, $P < 0.01$), as the H2 hypothesis of this research. Thus, it can be assumed that as positive city brand attitudes improve, so does the perception of quality of life among residents of a particular place. Kavaratzis (2008) had demonstrated this relationship in his study among residents of Athens during the Olympic Games in 2004, during which the Greeks developed new attitudes towards their country (city brand), which was reflected in an increase in their quality of life. This, in turn, can point to the existence of an indirect effect of emotional experiences in mega-events on the perceived quality of life among residents.

5 Conclusions, implications and future research

The overall proposal was intended finding was based on analyzing the role of the strategy of experiential marketing embodied in the development of events as a direct antecedent of city brand attitudes and thus demonstrate the effects produced on perceived quality of life. Thus, with regard to history, it is found that the city brand attitudes among residents can directly increase when emotional experiences living in mega-events (H1). As regards effects, it shows that, in terms of quality of life, the empirical study has demonstrated a significant and positive relationship between the constructs city brand attitudes and quality of life (H2).

In light of these results, it is concluded that this investigation has made progress in the implementation of experiential marketing channeled through the emotional experiences in mega-events, since to date there was no evidence of empirical research referenced in mega-events the characteristics of the *Feria Nacional de San Marcos*, Mexico.

Therefore, and from the results, public managers it intends to innovate, first, in the development of an efficient strategy for recognition of city brand through the development of mega-events, in which attendees experience pleasant emotions that result in the consolidation of a city brand strong and recognized. This will bring benefits to local residents in terms of perceived quality of life, which can be expected to result in attracting tourists and businesses triggering an interesting economic development.

As already mentioned, the attitudes derive intentions, so if you are looking to attract industries, qualified personnel or tourists to a particular city, you first must have the support of the residents themselves, i.e., their favorable city brand attitudes.

Finally, the quality of life would be the most desirable goal to live in a particular place. Research has offered positive support on the relationship between city brand attitudes and perception of quality of life. This implies, then, that a timely strategy for rulers who are interested in enhancing the quality of life of residents of a place must go through improve city brand attitudes, generating pride in where they live. To do this, it becomes a priority, providing all services at the request of citizens are most needed to live with high quality of life.

In addition, despite the results of this research, it is crucial to recognize certain weaknesses in this study, as shown in light of positive expectations for the academic community and marketing managers.

As for the sample chosen and the procedure for collecting information, they may have not been the most optimum, because sometimes informants were more immersed in the event than in answering the survey, which could have led to a response bias.

On the other hand, the measurement scales used in this study are an adaptation of other scales, and adapted from a language other than Spanish spoken in Mexico and even have been used to evaluate other events or situations and

even before this study did not they had been used in the Mexican context.

Despite the profile of the sample was obtained, no analysis was performed to determine differences of the model based on the demographic variables collected, and it would be interesting to identify whether there is any divergence when specifying one of these variables and the initial model (assessed in this study).

Finally, once the above limitations are overcome, it may be possible to replicate this study in other contexts to test the hypotheses in different environments within mega-events with different characteristics – comparing, for example, a mega-event that was organized entirely by a local government with a mega-event organized mostly by the population, or to compare results while experiences are occurring in a sports or any other different mega-event.

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1. Definition of research problem	√	√	√
2. Development of hypotheses or research questions (empirical studies)	√	√	√
3. Development of theoretical propositions (theoretical Work)			
4. Theoretical foundation/ Literature review	√	√	√
5. Definition of methodological procedures	√	√	√
6. Data collection			√
7. Statistical analysis			√
8. Analysis and interpretation of data	√	√	√
9. Critical revision of the manuscript	√	√	
10. Manuscript Writing	√	√	√
11. Other (please specify which) Revision of the paper	√	√	