Construction Of The City Brand In The Municipality Of Sogamoso Boyacá

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Abstract

The city brand is a territorial identity tool that highlights strengths and values in terms of economic development. However, there is a theoretical vacuum when defining it, as the elements that establish a city brand are sometimes not recognized by the inhabitants of a community, as they sometimes do not specify which of them should be taken into account for its construction, development and appropriation. From this perspective, the purpose of this study focuses on analyzing the research tradition in order to elucidate the key elements that must be taken into account in the construction of a city brand. Methodologically, the research is guide[1]d by a qualitative approach, a descriptive scope and an action research design. Based on the analysis of the research overview and the informants' references, it was possible to establish that there are various elements that constitute a city brand, among the most relevant of which are socio-economic, socio-cultural and socio-political factors, without neglecting other aspects of the community's heritage. In this sense, it is concluded that in order to build a city brand it is necessary to generate roots in the citizens so that they recognize the tangible and intangible heritage of their surroundings as a differentiating element from other communities.

Keywords: Economic development, City Brand, Cultural Heritage.

Introduction

The concept of city branding is recognized as a key distinguishing feature of a community or region. However, as Kolotouchkina and Blay (2015) point out, some governments tend to limit their focus on advertising campaigns aimed at promoting tourism, neglecting other distinctive aspects of the community that could boost territorial development in a more comprehensive way. This limitation in the construction of the city brand concept has led to the exclusion of differentiating elements that could highlight territorial identity.

In line with the above, Chandler and Owen (2011) highlight that emotional and relational differentiation is fundamental to the success of a city brand. Differentiation, therefore, emerges as the key element in its conceptualization, as it attracts both visitors and investors, giving the

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city brand a prominent positioning compared to other cities. However, according to Fernández and Huertas (2014), achieving a differentiating identity for each territory is a complex challenge, given that many population and emotional attributes are shared by different communities.

In this context, it is essential to simplify the identity of the territory by identifying value attributes that are distinctive and significant. The city brand, conceived as an idealistic representation of the urban territory, must be supported by values that strengthen its attractions and are expressed visually and communicatively both internally and externally, according to Rodríguez (2015). These territorial values will be fundamental in the construction of a city brand that reflects the identity and differentiating elements of the city.

Therefore, the objective of this research is to facilitate the identification of elements and characteristics of territorial value that allow the definition of a city brand with differentiating attributes. To achieve this, various stages in the process of brand configuration and appropriation are considered, including aspects such as the history and culture of the city, the identity of its population and the historically established urban image.

Overall, the aim is to achieve a conceptual approach to the city brand that integrates the meanings and perceptions inherent to the territorial values. A qualitative methodology is used that broadens the research referents, in order to facilitate the construction of unique city brands, from the singularity of each territory and the active participation of its members rooted in the community.

Literature review

This section provides a wide range of knowledge related to the concept of city branding, which allows the reader to understand and interpret the object of study.

City Brand

Brand identity is characterized by the integration of components, features and singularities that enable differentiation between communities. It is crucial to note, as Chandler and Owen (2011) point out, that differentiation is not limited to the divergence of the product itself, but relates to the emotional orientation and connection associated with the brand in terms of feelings, thoughts and ideas. Therefore, when applying this concept to a city brand identity, differentiation can be determined by the perceptions, emotions and thoughts of those who inhabit and contribute to its construction, rather than by the product that is being promoted as a city. In this context, it can be argued that brand identity is linked to three key components, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Brand Identity Components
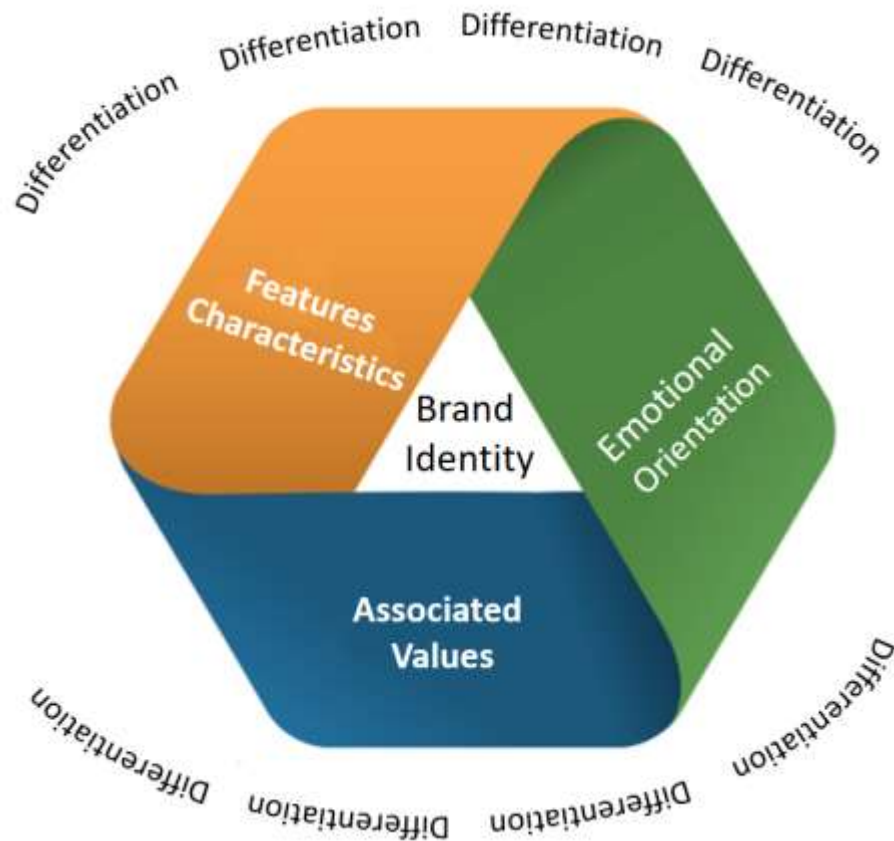
Note: The figure shows some key elements that relate to brand identity.

The notion of city branding, also known as territory branding or city branding, has gained relevance in the contemporary world as it represents the political, touristic, industrial and identity image of a city, forging its own identity based on values and a distinctive personality. It is important to highlight that the city brand is a fundamental tool for promoting the virtues of places. According to Filimon and Danub (2010) and Pino et al., (2015), its use in territorial development strategies improves the promotion and dissemination of communities externally, adding value in global competition. Territorial development actions associated with city branding derive from rigorous studies that assess the appropriateness of interventions in the production models of local territorial systems and their most prominent vocations, as well as the perception of strategic images to foster brand identity.

From a strategic perspective, Golikov et al. (2018) note that city branding emerges from strategic planning that, by creating meanings around the territory, facilitates connection with local inhabitants and organizations. Over the past twenty years, governments in various cities and regions have made efforts to define their vision, build their identity and shape their images, with the aim of making communities more attractive to new residents, businesses and visitors, resulting in increased economic development. Furthermore, Pedeliento and Kavaratzis (2019) suggest that, in the future, city branding, integrated with urban spatial planning and strategic planning, will promote economic restructuring, social inclusion and cohesion,

political engagement and citizen participation, thus strengthening the identity of a place or community, which in the long term can contribute to improving the well-being of citizens.

Territorial values in the construction of territorial marketing

Territorial values, both tangible and intangible, encompass a variety of cultural, human, religious, symbolic, gastronomic and landscape aspects that are fundamental for the construction of the city brand (Arteaga et al., 2019). These values stand as pillars in the definition of the city brand and in territorial marketing strategies, as they are essential and differential elements for the promotion and dissemination of the city.

While brands are often conceived as a means to add value and meaning to products, companies or places (De-San-Eugenio and Ginesta, 2020), a city brand must be intrinsically linked to the territorial values that represent it. These values are inherent to the city, reflecting unique characteristics and attributes that build its personality and shape the perception and identity of its inhabitants and visitors.

It is important to highlight that city brands, in their current consolidation, must be rooted in a series of economic, social and cultural values. Their construction implies long-term marketing and branding strategies that go beyond mere tourism promotion actions. Their objective is to promote the external projection of the city and position it effectively, while satisfying the needs of all its audiences (Heredero and Chaves, 2015).

The communication of a city's values begins with the construction of its brand, which encapsulates the attributes, values, benefits and specific personality of that particular territory. This brand becomes the vehicle to convey the city's identity through its attractions (Lesmes and Callejas, 2018).

On the other hand, the marketing of territories is presented as a powerful tool for operational promotion, which is carried out through a process of socio-historical construction, from below and from within. This process involves the study, research, valorization and promotion of the territory, in order to highlight its specificities and unique characteristics that make it competitive in the global arena. The objective is to stimulate local development while maintaining and respecting the essence and identity of the territory (Mahecha and Restrepo, 2012).

It is important to recognize that, throughout history, many nations have needed to constitute or reconstitute their identities, which has involved the design or redesign of their brands. This process has become essential to project symbolically significant changes both internally and externally. However, the creation of a city or country brand and the implementation of marketing strategies can generate mixed reactions in some people (Durán et al., 2020).

It is essential to avoid creating a false identity that is divorced from the reality of the city. Instead, it should aim to reinvent the city's image according to its changing dynamics, adapting its distinctive and unique elements. This implies presenting itself to audiences in a new and attractive way, supported by marketing and promotional image strategies. This

approach emerges as a viable way to achieve a successful city brand (Morales and Cabrera, 2016).

For this reason, territorial marketing, by studying, researching, valuing and promoting the territory in order to stimulate its local development, becomes a response to globalization processes. In this context, it seeks to generate a unique and distinctive identification of the territory, aimed at the international market (Rodríguez, 2015). To achieve this objective, it is necessary to outline strategies that integrate territorial values as a key element of differentiation.

Territorial marketing strategies, based on these values, aim to communicate the positive and attractive characteristics of the city to residents, visitors and potential investors. The aim is to increase the added and differentiating value of the territory in order to attract tourists, retain users and improve the market of international flows, thus strengthening its characteristics and implementing development projects (Golikov et al., 2018).

Today, marketing-driven actions have been implemented to position cities as attractive tourist destinations, in order to provide a satisfactory experience to visitors and contribute to their loyalty to the destination. However, leaders must consider the commitment to generate economic welfare to combat unemployment, strengthen industrial zones and avoid population migration. This difference in territorial marketing management with respect to corporate marketing is crucial (Proulx and Tremblay, 2006).

In this context, it is essential to clearly define the vision of the territory for the future. This vision will serve as the basis for establishing policies and strategic plans to achieve the desired territorial objectives. According to Puig (2008), city marketing is effective when it communicates who we are, what we do and what we achieve as a territory, which contributes to generating and transmitting trust, as well as positioning and maintaining it.

Materials and Methods

The research methodology for this study is qualitative, as it focuses on the subjectivity of the information provided by the study subjects, such as their statements, testimonies, motivations, values, beliefs, aspirations or feelings (Viñas, 2001). Furthermore, the scope of the study is oriented towards the descriptive method, with the purpose of understanding emerging and predominant situations, customs and attitudes through the accurate description of activities, objects, processes and people (Guevara et al., 2020).

To facilitate the characterization and structure of possible changes in the city of Sogamoso, longitudinal analysis was used, which seeks to reveal and find the causes of change in the city over time. The timeline becomes the central element for both the research design and the analysis of the data obtained, which makes it a useful approach to study the emerging social dynamics of descriptive research (Arnau and Bono, 2008).

In terms of design, the study is framed within the method of action research, because as Ferrance (2000) notes, this methodology allows participants to inquire about their practices carefully and systematically, in order to transform the reality faced by the subjects, from the formulation of guidelines or strategies aimed at solving the problems surrounding the object of

study. In this sense, through this method integrated in the research process, we seek to establish guidelines and actions to consolidate the city brand in the municipality of Sogamoso Boyacá - Colombia.

Furthermore, the study has a participatory character, as it involves the key research informants in the analysis of their own reality. This is achieved by establishing a dialogue to improve the level of depth, reliability and understanding of the real problems, as well as linking them to action and socializing the information (De Schutter and Yopo, 1983).

Unit of study

The unit of study was established by delimiting a sample of 12 key informants, experts closely linked to the factors that make up the city brand. The method of expert selection was based on the criterion of convenience, consulting professionals with developed knowledge of the factors under study. The selection of informants by convenience was developed taking into account the following selection criteria:

- **Residence and Representativeness:** Individuals resident in the city of Sogamoso, with a close link and a high degree of representativeness in the city with respect to the factors or categories of study: politics, culture, economy and/or society.
- **Professional and Human Impact:** Subjects who, through their human and professional development, have impacted the city with contributions of a political, cultural, economic and/or social nature.
- **Leadership and Spokespersonship:** The characters were identified as spokespersons who have constituted and built their leadership from their different spheres and sectors, representing the thinking and characteristics of their population groups. Their contributions and analyses contribute to constructing a discourse that enriches the theory.

These criteria ensure that the selected informants possess the necessary experience and knowledge to offer valuable and informed perspectives on the factors that make up the city brand "Sogamoso City of Sun and Steel".

Categories of Study

Due to the qualitative nature of the research, study categories have been proposed that will allow a conceptual approach to the City Brand of the municipality of Sogamoso, Boyacá - Colombia. These categories have been selected on the basis of their relevance for understanding the different aspects that make up the identity and perception of the city. The study categories are socio-economic, socio-cultural and socio-political factors.

Socio-economic factors: This category covers elements related to the economic structure of Sogamoso, including industrial, commercial and service activity. Sogamoso's economy is deeply influenced by its nickname "City of Sun and Steel", reflecting its historical role in the steel industry and energy generation. Analyzing socio-economic factors is crucial to understanding how the local economy affects and is affected by the city brand, including job creation, investment attraction and sustainable economic development.

Sociocultural Factors: This category focuses on the cultural and social aspects that define Sogamoso. It includes the analysis of traditions, customs, cultural events, historical heritage and community life. Sogamoso is known for its cultural richness, highlighted by the Temple of the Sun and its importance in the Muisca culture. Assessing socio-cultural factors is essential to identify how these elements contribute to the identity of the city and the perception of both residents and visitors.

Socio-political factors: This category covers elements related to political administration and governance in Sogamoso. It includes the analysis of public policies, citizen participation, government transparency and efficiency, and political stability. Socio-political factors are relevant to understanding how the decisions and actions of local leaders impact on the perception of the city brand, and how these can foster or inhibit development and social cohesion.

The integration of these categories in the analysis has allowed for a holistic understanding of the Sogamoso City Brand. It also provides a solid basis for developing strategies to strengthen the identity and positioning of the city at regional and national level.

Stages of the research process

The research process of this study was developed in three clearly defined stages, each with specific objectives that contributed comprehensively to the understanding and construction of the City Brand of the municipality of Sogamoso, Boyacá. These stages are fundamental for structuring an effective analysis and formulation of strategies that strengthen the identity and positioning of the city.

- **Stage One:** Analysis of Socio-economic, Socio-cultural and Socio-political Factors

The first stage focused on analyzing, based on the theoretical references and the arguments of the key informants, the socio-economic, socio-cultural and socio-political factors that can be representative for the construction of the City Brand of the municipality of Sogamoso, Boyacá. This phase involved the collection of qualitative data through in-depth interviews and focus groups, thus allowing for an in-depth understanding of the perceptions and experiences of informants regarding the various aspects that make up the identity of Sogamoso. The analysis of this information provided a solid basis for identifying the distinctive characteristics of the city and the challenges and opportunities present in its socio-economic, cultural and political environment.

- **Second Stage:** Formulation of an Action Plan

In line with the study design, the second stage aimed to formulate an action plan that would integrate socio-economic, socio-cultural and socio-political factors in the construction of the City Brand. This stage focused on the development of specific strategies that would address the elements identified in the first stage. The action plan was designed to promote sustainable economic development, preserve and enhance cultural heritage, and strengthen governance and citizen participation. It also sought to establish mechanisms for the effective implementation of these strategies, thus ensuring coherent alignment between project objectives and the needs and expectations of the local community.

- **Third Stage:** Discussion and Validation of the Action Plan

Finally, the third stage addressed the discussion on the need to build the City Brand in the municipality of Sogamoso, Boyacá. This phase involved the presentation and validation of the formulated action plan to various key actors, including municipal officials, community leaders, local business people and other relevant stakeholders. Through participatory workshops and roundtables, a constructive dialogue on the proposed strategies was promoted, allowing for the necessary feedback and adjustments to ensure their relevance and feasibility. This stage was crucial to consolidate a collective consensus and commitment around the vision and objectives of the City Brand, thus ensuring its effective and sustainable implementation over time.

Results

The results of the study were oriented towards the fulfilment of the objectives set out, guiding each stage of the research process. This section presents an analysis of the data collected, offering a comprehensive view of the socio-economic, socio-cultural and socio-political factors that influence the construction of the City Brand of the municipality of Sogamoso, Boyacá. Through the interpretation of key informants' responses and the analysis of the information collected, the main challenges and opportunities for the development of the municipality were identified.

- **Results Stage One:** Analysis of Socio-economic, Socio-cultural and Socio-political Factors

In the first stage of the study, surveys and focus groups were conducted with the aim of analyzing the socio-economic, socio-cultural and socio-political factors that are representative for the construction of the City Brand of the municipality of Sogamoso, Boyacá. This phase allowed for the collection of qualitative data that reflect the perceptions and experiences of key informants regarding various aspects that make up the identity of the municipality of Sogamoso. The analysis of this information provides a comprehensive understanding of the distinctive characteristics of the city, as well as the challenges and opportunities present in its socio-economic, cultural and political environment.

The 12 key informants agreed that the socio-economic factor is fundamental for the construction of the City Brand of the municipality of Sogamoso. From the informants' perspective, Sogamoso has significant potential due to its economic diversity, which includes sectors such as agriculture, livestock, industry and commerce. Informants highlighted that the presence of natural resources and the strategic geographical position of Sogamoso facilitate economic development and the attraction of investment. These positive economic characteristics contribute to an image of progress and dynamism, essential for the strengthening of the City Brand.

However, some informants participating in the focus group have revealed that there are important challenges in the socio-economic sphere that limit the development of the municipality. One of the recurrent problems mentioned was the lack of adequate infrastructure, especially in terms of roads and public services. This deficiency has a negative impact on the competitiveness of Sogamoso and the quality of life of its inhabitants. In addition, the need to

diversify the local economy and encourage entrepreneurship was mentioned, as dependence on certain economic sectors can make the municipality vulnerable to market fluctuations.

Informants also pointed out that socio-economic inequality is a persistent problem in Sogamoso. Despite the economic potential, significant gaps exist between different population groups, resulting in disparities in access to opportunities and resources. Informants emphasized the importance of implementing inclusive policies that promote equitable development and reduce these inequalities. The general perception is that greater socio-economic equity would strengthen the social fabric of the municipality and contribute to a more positive and cohesive image of the Marca Ciudad.

Overall, the analysis of the socio-economic factor revealed both significant strengths and weaknesses. Positive aspects, such as economic diversity and growth potential, should be harnessed and promoted in building the City Brand. However, it is essential to address challenges related to infrastructure, economic diversification and socio-economic equity to ensure sustainable and balanced development. Effective management of these socio-economic aspects is essential to project an attractive and strong image of Sogamoso as a prosperous and dynamic city.

In continuity with the analysis of socio-economic factors, it is equally relevant to examine the socio-cultural factors that influence the construction of the City Brand of the municipality of Sogamoso, Boyacá. This category is transcendental, as the cultural and patrimonial richness of a city constitutes an essential component of its identity and attractiveness. Through the focus group, the 12 key informants provided valuable insights into the socio-cultural elements that define Sogamoso.

Informants agreed that Sogamoso has a significant cultural heritage that should be highlighted in the construction of its city brand. Among the most representative tourist sites, the Temple of the Sun, the Eliecer Silva Celis Archaeological Museum and the Sogamoso Theatre were mentioned. The Temple of the Sun, for example, is an icon of the Muisca heritage and a tourist attraction that can be promoted to enhance the city's cultural image. The Eliecer Silva Celis Archaeological Museum, meanwhile, houses a priceless collection of pre-Columbian artefacts that tell the story of the region's ancestral history. Informants underlined that these sites not only attract visitors, but also strengthen the sense of local identity and pride.

Despite these positive aspects, informants also pointed to several areas for improvement in the socio-cultural sphere. A recurring concern was the lack of adequate promotion and maintenance of tourist and cultural sites. According to participants, the infrastructure of these sites often does not live up to their historical and cultural importance. In addition, the lack of effective marketing strategies and underinvestment in cultural tourism have limited Sogamoso's potential as an attractive destination for both national and international visitors.

The need to encourage greater community participation in the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage was also highlighted in the opinion of informants. Educational programs and cultural activities involving the community can play a crucial role in this regard. Informants stressed that without the support and active participation of local inhabitants, any effort to build and strengthen the city brand would be incomplete. The perception is that an engaged citizenry

that is proud of its heritage is fundamental to projecting an authentic and positive image of Sogamoso.

Another negative aspect identified by informants is the cultural fragmentation within the municipality. Despite its rich heritage, there is a lack of cohesion in the promotion and appreciation of Sogamoso's diverse cultural manifestations. Informants suggested that spaces and events should be created that celebrate cultural diversity, thus fostering greater integration and appreciation for all cultural expressions present in the city. This would not only enrich local cultural life, but also strengthen the external perception of Sogamoso as an inclusive and culturally vibrant city.

Overall, the analysis of socio-cultural factors highlights both strengths and areas that require attention in building the Sogamoso City Brand. Adequate promotion of tourist sites, active community participation and cultural integration are key aspects that need to be addressed in order to develop a city brand that truly reflects the cultural richness and diversity of Sogamoso. Addressing these challenges will project a cohesive and attractive image of the city, contributing to sustainable development and the well-being of its inhabitants.

To complete the analysis of the relevant factors in the construction of the City Brand of the municipality of Sogamoso, Boyacá, it is essential to address socio-political factors. These factors encompass political dynamics and local leadership, as well as public policies and citizen participation in decision-making. The 12 key informants provided a broad view on how these aspects influence the perception and development of the city.

First, informants highlighted the importance of political leadership in building the City Brand. Committed and visionary leadership can drive projects and policies that strengthen Sogamoso's identity and development. However, informants pointed out that, at times, there has been a lack of continuity in public policies due to changes in the municipal administration. This political instability can negatively affect the implementation of long-term projects and the perception of Sogamoso as an organized and efficient municipality.

Furthermore, informants agreed that citizen participation is a crucial component for the success of any city branding initiative. In Sogamoso, citizen participation in decision-making is still limited. Informants stressed the need to create more effective mechanisms to involve the community in the formulation and implementation of public policies. The inclusion of diverse voices and perspectives would not only strengthen local democracy, but also ensure that projects and policies truly reflect the needs and aspirations of the population.

Another relevant aspect identified by informants is transparency and accountability in public administration. The perception of corruption or mismanagement can significantly undermine efforts to build a positive city brand. Informants expressed the need to strengthen transparency practices and promote a culture of accountability within local government. Implementing these practices would not only improve citizens' trust in their leaders, but also project an image of Sogamoso as a city governed in an ethical and accountable manner.

On the other hand, informants also mentioned the importance of inter-institutional partnerships and collaborations for the development of Sogamoso. Cooperation between the

municipal government, civil society, the private sector and other entities can leverage available resources and capacities, promoting a more comprehensive and sustainable development. However, informants indicated that, so far, these collaborations have been sporadic and unsystematic. Fostering a collaborative working environment and establishing strategic alliances can be a crucial step towards strengthening the city brand.

Finally, informants noted that social stability and security are key factors that impact perceptions of the city. The presence of effective security and social welfare programs contributes to a positive perception of Sogamoso as a safe and prosperous place to live and work. Informants highlighted that, although Sogamoso does not face critical levels of insecurity, it is necessary to continue working on policies that promote peace and security, as well as on the creation of socio-economic opportunities that mitigate the risk factors associated with crime and social conflict.

In itself, the analysis of socio-political factors reveals both strengths and areas for improvement that are crucial for the construction of the Sogamoso City Brand. Political leadership, citizen participation, transparency, inter-institutional alliances and social stability are essential components that must be considered and strengthened in order to project a positive and cohesive image of Sogamoso. Addressing these challenges with effective and collaborative strategies will allow building a city brand that reflects Sogamoso's reality and potential, contributing to its comprehensive and sustainable development.

- **Results Second Stage:** Formulation of an Action Plan

In the second stage of the study, a comprehensive action plan is formulated to improve the socio-economic, socio-cultural and socio-political factors of the municipality of Sogamoso, Boyacá, in order to consolidate its City Brand. This action plan is based on the results obtained in the first stage and addresses both the strengths identified and the areas for improvement pointed out by key informants.

To promote sustainable economic development and reduce socio-economic inequalities, it is essential to implement a plan to improve and expand road and utility infrastructure. This should include paving streets, upgrading roads and modernizing water and sewage systems. In addition, it is necessary to create a municipal investment fund for critical infrastructure projects, prioritizing those areas that facilitate economic development and improve the quality of life of the inhabitants. In parallel, training and support programs will be established for local entrepreneurs, providing access to financing, mentoring and coworking spaces. Diversification of the local economy will be promoted through tax incentives and support programs for emerging sectors such as technology, eco-tourism and creative industries.

On the other hand, to reduce socio-economic inequalities, it is advisable to implement inclusive policies that promote socio-economic equity, such as scholarship programs for low-income students, job training for women and youth, and access to health services and decent housing. Also, create partnerships with non-governmental organizations and private companies to develop social responsibility projects that address the needs of the most vulnerable communities.

In the socio-cultural sphere, the action plan seeks to strengthen the cultural identity of Sogamoso and promote community participation in the preservation and enhancement of the cultural heritage. In this sense, it is necessary to encourage tourism promotion that highlights the main cultural sites of Sogamoso, as well as to ensure the conservation and proper maintenance of these sites through the allocation of resources and the implementation of programs for the restoration and improvement of tourism infrastructure. To encourage community participation, it is necessary to establish educational programs and cultural activities that involve the community in the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage, including workshops, cultural festivals and school competitions on the history and culture of Sogamoso.

In addition, events and festivals that celebrate the cultural diversity of Sogamoso are necessary, fostering integration and appreciation for all cultural manifestations present in the municipality. Cultural exchange and collaboration programs with other cities and regions will be developed to enrich local cultural life and project an inclusive and vibrant image of Sogamoso. The creation of a municipal cultural council composed of representatives from various sectors of the community will also be key to advise and collaborate on cultural and tourism initiatives.

In terms of socio-political factors, through the action plan it is necessary to strengthen local governance, foster citizen participation and improve transparency and accountability in public administration. It is pertinent to implement training and development programs for local political leaders, focusing on management skills, strategic planning and ethical leadership. In addition, mechanisms for the evaluation and monitoring of public policies will be established to ensure the continuity and effectiveness of municipal projects.

To encourage citizen participation, digital platforms and physical spaces can be implemented where citizens can actively participate in decision-making and policy formulation. Also, organize regular community assemblies and forums to discuss issues of public interest and collect citizens' opinions and suggestions. To improve transparency and accountability, it is advisable to establish a system of external and public auditing to monitor the management of municipal resources and the execution of projects. Also promote a culture of transparency by publishing regular management reports and conducting awareness campaigns on the importance of accountability.

Finally, the action plan should also include the promotion of inter-institutional alliances and collaborations for the development of Sogamoso. It is necessary to establish collaboration agreements with civil society organizations, private companies and other governmental entities to develop joint projects that benefit the community. The creation of inter-institutional working committees makes it possible to coordinate efforts and maximize the impact of development initiatives in Sogamoso. In addition, it is a priority to create comprehensive citizen security programs that include crime prevention, attention to victims and rehabilitation of offenders. Also, the development of policies and programs that promote social and economic inclusion, reducing the risk factors associated with crime and social conflict.

This action plan provides a comprehensive and strategic approach to address the socio-economic, socio-cultural and socio-political challenges identified. Its implementation contributes significantly to the consolidation of the City Brand of the municipality of Sogamoso, projecting an image of progress, cohesion and well-being for all its inhabitants.

- **Stage Three:** Discussion and Validation of the Action Plan

In the third and final phase of the study, the proposed action plan was discussed and validated with key stakeholders, including municipal officials, community leaders and local entrepreneurs. This phase aimed to collect recommendations and validate the feasibility and effectiveness of the action plan to improve socio-economic, socio-cultural and socio-political factors in the municipality of Sogamoso, Boyacá, and thus consolidate the City Brand.

Municipal officials stressed the importance of the proposal to improve road and utility infrastructure as a key pillar for economic development. They noted that modernizing infrastructure will not only attract investment, but also significantly improve the quality of life of citizens. However, they recommended prioritizing the identification of the most critical areas to ensure an immediate and tangible impact. They also highlighted the need for efficient and transparent management of the funds allocated to these projects to ensure their success.

Community leaders emphasized the importance of encouraging citizen participation in all stages of the implementation of the action plan. They stressed that the inclusion of the community in decision-making will strengthen the sense of ownership and commitment to the development of the municipality. They stressed the need to establish clear and accessible mechanisms for citizens to express their opinions and actively contribute to the proposed initiatives. In addition, they suggested the creation of educational programs and training workshops to empower the community and ensure their effective participation.

For their part, local entrepreneurs expressed their support for measures to diversify the economy and encourage entrepreneurship. They recognized the potential of emerging sectors such as technology and eco-tourism to drive sustainable economic growth. However, they recommended facilitating access to finance and simplifying administrative procedures for the creation and operation of new businesses. They also emphasized the importance of establishing strategic alliances between the public and private sectors to maximize available resources and capacities.

In terms of socio-cultural factors, stakeholders underlined the relevance of promoting and preserving Sogamoso's cultural heritage. Municipal officials and community leaders agreed that adequate tourism promotion and maintenance of cultural sites are essential to project a positive image of the city. They recommended the implementation of cultural marketing campaigns and the organization of events that celebrate Sogamoso's cultural diversity and richness. Furthermore, they pointed out the need to involve local schools and universities in the promotion of cultural heritage through educational programs and extracurricular activities.

In socio-political terms, the discussion focused on the importance of strengthening local governance and transparency. Municipal officials recognized that continuity in public policies and accountability are crucial for the success of the action plan. They proposed the creation of a monitoring and evaluation system to track the implementation of initiatives and adjust strategies as necessary. The formation of a citizens' council to act as a consultative body and oversee municipal management was also suggested.

On the other hand, community leaders and local business people highlighted the importance of social stability and security in building a positive City Brand. They recommended the implementation of comprehensive security programs that include both crime prevention and the promotion of social cohesion. They emphasized that security is a determining factor in attracting investment and improving the quality of life of inhabitants. In addition, they underlined the need for inclusive policies that promote equity and reduce social and economic inequalities.

Overall, the discussion and validation of the action plan revealed a broad consensus on the importance of addressing socio-economic, socio-cultural and socio-political factors to consolidate the Sogamoso City Brand. Key stakeholders, including municipal officials, community leaders and local entrepreneurs, provided valuable recommendations that enrich and strengthen the action plan. The effective implementation of this plan, with the active participation of all sectors of the community, will allow projecting an image of Sogamoso as a prosperous, inclusive and culturally rich city, contributing to the comprehensive and sustainable development of the municipality.

Discussion

The study of the collective imaginary allows us to delve deeper into the thinking and perceptions of citizens, providing a comprehensive understanding of the elements and characteristics of territorial value that make up the city brand. This process is essential for territorial marketing to highlight and communicate more effectively the distinctive values of the city through various promotional strategies and tools.

In the specific case of Sogamoso, key informants' testimonies reveal that the territory has been significantly influenced by political, social, economic and cultural changes, which has also affected the perception of the collective imaginary. This phenomenon has led to a loss of credibility of the socially shared reality that constitutes the imaginary of the city (Duarte, 2015).

The brand "Sogamoso, City of Sun and Steel" currently does not fully reflect the established value promise. The imaginary of steel, in particular, has lost strength in recent years, which suggests that the brand should be conceived with a comprehensive vision of the city, without remaining an imaginary distant from the current reality of the territory. The value proposition must be anchored to paradigms in line with the contemporary reality of Sogamoso.

The city brand should be developed based on a marketing study focused on global competition, highlighting differentiating elements and specific attributes of the territory (Regalado, 2014). Furthermore, its design requires dialogue and consensus among all

stakeholders of the city, to ensure a harmonious projection into the future (Puig, 2008, p.11). The creation of the imaginary "City of Sun and Steel" should be related to local festivities and cultural events, such as the Julian Festivities of the Sun and the National Reign of Steel, established in the 1960s, as this expression is part of the collective imaginary of Sogamoso, but requires full alignment with the territorial values that a current city brand should represent.

It is evident that the municipality of Sogamoso has been known as "The City of Sun and Steel", a denomination that has been informally adopted as a city brand, but in essence, it is still a collective imaginary. To consolidate a solid and authentic city brand, it is necessary to incorporate the distinctive territorial values that make Sogamoso unique. However, this is a challenge for the municipal administrations, which must develop strategic planning to position Sogamoso as a tourist, cultural and industrial centre.

Historically, Sogamoso has been shaped by diverse cultures and customs, including the llanera influence since the beginning of the last century. The city went from being a colonizing centre to being culturally colonized. The arrival of foreigners to Sogamoso, driven by the founding of Acerías Paz del Río in the middle of the 20th century, has favoured economic development, but in terms of city branding it may have an impact on the loss of local identity, causing Sogamoso's culture to lose prominence.

Despite having a rich cultural and patrimonial heritage, it is unfortunate to observe that Sogamoso is perceived today as a place that was prominent in the past but currently lacks opportunities in various areas of economic development, especially in those areas that historically gave it prosperity. The relevance of this research lies in the need to identify and/or rescue the urban values of Sogamoso, which are essential to understand the principles and attitudes that are important in the urban environment. These values must be current and reflect the local reality, influenced by the culture, history and unique characteristics of the city. Only by integrating these factors will it be possible to consolidate an authentic and robust city brand that projects Sogamoso as a dynamic and vibrant centre, capable of competing on the global stage and attracting both visitors and investors.

Conclusions

The study of the city brand in the municipality of Sogamoso, Boyacá, has allowed an understanding of the various factors that influence the construction and consolidation of a coherent and attractive urban identity. Throughout the research, three fundamental categories have been identified and analyzed: socio-economic, socio-cultural and socio-political factors, all of which are essential for the development of a solid city brand that is representative of the local reality.

First, socio-economic factors highlight the importance of a diversified and resilient economy for the consolidation of the city brand. Sogamoso's economic diversity, encompassing sectors such as agriculture, livestock, industry and commerce, provides a solid foundation on which to build an image of progress and dynamism. However, significant challenges were identified, such as the lack of adequate infrastructure and socio-economic inequality, which need to be addressed to ensure equitable and sustainable development. Overcoming these obstacles is critical to projecting an image of Sogamoso as a prosperous and competitive city.

In terms of socio-cultural factors, Sogamoso has a rich cultural heritage that can be a fundamental pillar in the construction of its city brand. Emblematic sites such as the Temple of the Sun, the Eliecer Silva Celis Archaeological Museum and the Sogamoso Theatre represent not only tourist attractions, but also symbols of local identity and pride. However, the lack of adequate promotion and maintenance of these sites, together with the need to encourage greater community participation in their preservation and promotion, are aspects that urgently need to be addressed. A strong city brand should reflect and celebrate cultural diversity and historical heritage, integrating the community in these efforts.

Socio-political factors also play a determining role in the consolidation of the city brand. Committed and visionary political leadership is essential to promote policies and projects that strengthen Sogamoso's identity. The research revealed the need for greater continuity in public policies and more active citizen participation in decision-making. Transparency and accountability are equally important to strengthen citizens' trust and project an image of ethical and efficient governance. In addition, collaboration between government, civil society and the private sector can leverage the resources and capacities of the municipality, contributing to more comprehensive and sustainable development.

To consolidate an authentic and robust city brand, it is essential to incorporate current values that reflect the local reality. These values should be the result of an inclusive and consensual dialogue between all stakeholders, ensuring that the Sogamoso city brand is not just an empty slogan, but a genuine representation of its culture, history and unique characteristics. The construction of this brand needs to be based on a deep and nuanced understanding of socio-economic, socio-cultural and socio-political factors, and focus on projecting a cohesive and attractive image of Sogamoso as a dynamic place with many opportunities.

In sum, the path towards creating an effective city brand for Sogamoso requires a comprehensive strategy that addresses both the challenges and opportunities identified in this research. Only through a coordinated and sustained effort, involving all sectors of society, will it be possible to project a positive and authentic image of Sogamoso, positioning it favourably on the regional, national and international stage.

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