

Sustainable City Branding and Imaging from Youth Perspectives of Local Culture and Identity

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Abstract

Global cities encounter new challenges on city branding. In Hong Kong, social unrest by identity politics in the rise of new localisms since 2014 had enlarged the mismatches between the city's identity and core values communicated by the government and its realities perceived and experienced by young locals. This study proposes a new bottom-up approach to cocreate sustainable city branding and image communication strategies that should recall images and memories of positive associations from the young locals. Ten city branding videos launched after 2014 were case studies to investigate the effectiveness of cultural and emotional branding. Multimodal semiotics and discourse analysis were applied to interpret the complex meaning of the videos by different modes of representations. In addition, young locals of student and working class discussed their perceptions, articulations and re-articulations of local cultures and identities in city branding and image communication based upon the videos in focus groups.

Keywords: city branding; emotional appeals; image communication; local culture and identity; multimodal semiotics; young locals