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Nation Branding: A strategic national tool for economic growth the Case Study of Brand Spain (Marca España)

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Abstract

Background: Positive nation branding is associated with positive outcomes for the country in different fields, including tourism, trade, foreign direct investment, political and/or social advantages. This occurs when the nation successfully communicates a competitive edge, receive a positive perception, and as a result earn a positive global positioning in one or multiple fields. Therefore, governments, organizations, and scholars are exploring the subject and its association to prosperity. However, there is a doubt about how attainable the process can be especially for developing nations, especially with the theoretical debate about what variables can actually construct a solid nation brand. This communication explores brand Spain and highlights its steps from being a country torn by civil war and a dictatorship less than six decades ago to becoming one of the most advanced nation brands in the world.

Method: This communication analyses the case of Spain through a qualitative approach, combining documental analysis of academic and statistical sources with a critical analysis of those documents.

Results: Different authors have researched Spain and its nation branding efforts from an economic, social, and political perspectives. The steps that Spain took merging both good internal communications and policy practice along with effective global communications through nation branding have led to place Spain in the top 11 nations globally (Brand Finance Directory 2021) and the second most desired destination for tourism in the world

(UNWTO 2021). Franco's fall was the tipping point for Spain's rise when the new leadership unified Spain under one goal and one vision, which was creating a higher standard for Spanish people through an effective collaboration between all government institutions, private sector, and the public (good internal communication practice). This was followed by a successful



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branding strategy that was constructed through working on the country first followed by communicating the competitive edge globally (external communication - branding).

Conclusion: Nation branding is gaining more attention by multiple players due to its association with nations' economic prosperity. Despite the rough journey of growth, Spain transformed itself into a global modern Utopia desired by tourists, investors, and talented immigrants. It is one of the rare nations that different researchers in the field have called it 'the perfect case in nation branding' (Torress, 2019) and (Aronczyk, 2013). Spain ranks amongst the most competitive nation brands globally in a robust global economy (Brand Finance Directory 2021). Today brand Spain is efficient enough to be a selling communication strategy to Spanish sub-brands due to its brand equity (Aronczyk, 2013). This case study can potentially open the door for other nations to use the Spanish experience as a reference in developing and competing on the global scale through a successful nation branding strategy.

Keywords: Nation Branding, Communication Strategy, Tourism, Economic Competitiveness, Sustainability.