

The Study of Exploring Taichung City Image by ZMET

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Abstract

City image building is the one of the most current trend to the most countries in the world. In the last decade, the per capita annual incomes has being increasing in Taiwan which stimulated the quality of living and the quantity of tourism from getting tremendous attention from all over the places. Hence, city image building also becomes important to the city governments. In 2010, Taichung City's status was elevated to be one of the five municipalities in Taiwan. However, the most updated safety and security report indicated that City of Taichung has always being rated as one of the worst city. This study discusses the importance of the rebuild of the city image, and hoping the suggestions for the city government on marketing and enhancing the competitive ability in the future will merge.

We employed the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET) to explore the mind maps with a series of visual elicitation among four Taichung and four non-Taichung City residents in order to distinguish the difference between them. We also constructed the consensus map to reflect their common thought and value system. As for the finding, we conclude that City of Taichung needs to develop its abundant resources, including natural sceneries, human technology, cultural and historical attractions. Especially to focus on introducing various find cuisine, creative designs, and architecture. In addition, the researcher presented several suggestions for government which hopefully will enable the Taichung City to become a most popular tourist attraction city in Taiwan.

Keywords : City image, consensus map, Taichung City, ZMET

Introduction

Along with the economic growth, Taiwanese are more capable to modify their living quality and develop tourism. City image reform has become one of major policies among many cities in Taiwan.

“Kaohsiung City Government” as an example has horizontal alliances, personnel training, film and television related system, a film shooting base and class studios, the

"Kaohsiung Film Festival" and so forth. In April 2009, City of Gaohsiung also provided a financial subsidy and presented a reward to a cooperative TV and Movie film production called "Black & White". The Black & White stimulated the recent tourism boom to the city. In comparison to the other four municipal cities which have more far reaching impact to their own city growth, Taichung, the newly born municipality city, however, has not had the positive impression to its people.

According to the statistics presented by National Police Agency, the criminal cases occurred consecutively in Taichung City which results Taichung City known as "the worse public security city". On the current stage, Taichung City Government establishes cultural, economic and international city as the vision of urban development, trying to build a friendly and healthy city. However, there are still a gap existing in between residents and government. From domestic or world-wide aspects, we know that tourism industry has great potential and development; the aforementioned efforts can not only raising awareness, but also cast a significant impact on marketing. It is the researchers hope to make contribution through this study which included uniqueness of the subject and methodology. After carefully examine the done research and literature review, I assert that most of the city image, urban landscape and environment science were focused on psychological. This study however, attempts to expand the level of city image, with integration of various methodologies.

Discussion

City image constructs their image by mass media; many tourists make a tour to confirm the truth of their said. City image can enhance the impression of city residents and non-city residents. Therefore, Taichung City maybe will become a very popular choice when people come to choosing a place for leisure activities. Based on the background and motivation, the objectives of this study are as follow :

1. To explore the city image and understand the mental models of Taichung City.
2. To discover people's impression about the city image of Taichung City, and to analyze the differences between Taichung residents and non-Taichung residents.

Literature Review

Definition of Image and City Image

Kevin Lynch (1960) proposes a theory for understanding the visual quality of cities. Lynch was particularly focused on the legibility, image, structure and identity of the urban environment where the city's constituent parts and patterns could be easily grasped and organized into a coherent, unified whole, namely the "image." (Tanu Sankalia, 2010)

In 1956, Boulding performed the related research of image. He expressed that human's behavior was composed of knowledge, information and individual perceptions of image. The

Image of the City by Kevin Lynch was first released in 1960; Lynch coined the words "image ability" and "way finding". Image of the City has had important and durable influence in the fields of urban planning and environmental psychology. Lynch represented "image" as a cognitive map, and in order to realize and sustain such a map, Lynch put forward a set of urban elements into which the city could be neatly compartmentalized. These were: Paths, Edges, Nodes, Districts and Landmarks.

Experience in Perception

City plays an important role in "post-industry" of experience in economic activity (Lorentzen and Hansen, 2009). Urry (1990) saying, "the post-tourist knows that they are a tourist and that tourism is a game or rather a whole series of games with multiple texts and no single, authentic tourist experience". Urry defines the term of the post-tourist as a phenomenon of postmodernity (Urry, 1990). As foreign are more difficult to find out the meaning of the place, so the city rely on people to build up the city image.

Means-End Chain Theory and Laddering

Means-end chain analysis and laddering has been the most prevalent approach to identify and represent the content and structure of customers' mental models. Laddering is the method of probing during in-depth, one-on-one interviews that was designed to understand the deeper base of consumer decisions by attending to the various consequences of a choice (Christensen & Olson, 2002). The output of the laddering study is a hierarchical value map, which represents the consensus mental for a group of respondents (Reynolds & Gutman, 1988).

In analyzing residents' attitudes to tourism, the interviewer can ask the respondents to describe tourism's impacts in their own words. For example, questions such as "In your opinion, what are the most important impacts of tourism development in your area?" can be put to the respondent. "Income generation" and "traffic congestion" could be the respondent's answers. Income and traffic congestion can therefore be considered as attributes of tourism development. It is to be noted that answers relating to the initial questioning can also refer to consequences or personal values rather than attributes (Veludo-de-Oliveira et al., 2006). However, previous experiences have shown that it is more likely that responses to the initial questions would be more related to attributes than consequences or personal values (Woodruff & Gardial, 1996).

Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique

Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET) was developed by Dr. Gerald Zaltman at the Harvard Business School in the early 1990s. ZMET is a technique that elicits both conscious and especially unconscious thoughts by exploring people's non-literal or metaphoric expressions. The purpose of ZMET is to elicit metaphors and constructs and to

establish relationships among the constructs using both verbal and nonverbal stimuli.

Gwendolyn(2002) thought that over 80 percent of all human communication is nonverbal, including touching, tone of voice, gestures, posture, distance, time, eye contact, pupil dilation and so on. By the way of these nonverbal, people can exchange information, it similar to “can only sense, can't instruct in words. ”ZMET gathers the perspectives of the social phenomenon, psychology, and organizational behavior to analyze what the customer wanted.

Zaltman and Coulter(1995) used ZMET to test and provide an illustration of the technique's use to study brand images, finding that brand image is synthesis of product attributes, consumer consequences and personal values.

The ZMET Approach to Measuring Mental Models

There are two theoretical assumptions underlying ZMET, showing the strength of ZMET as a method of eliciting and mapping consumers’ mental models(see Zaltman, 1997).

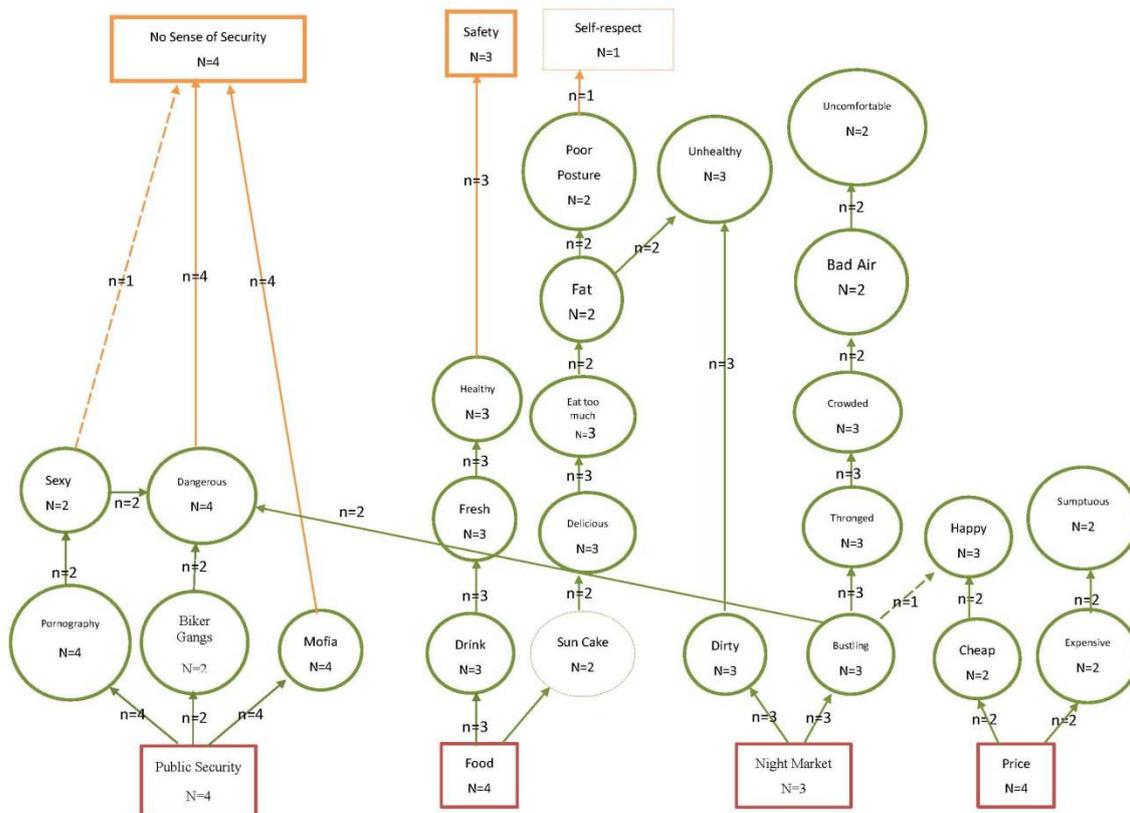
- **Unconscious Tacit Content.** Much of the content of consumers' mental structures is unconscious or tacit (below the surface-level thinking of conscious awareness). Thus such meaning is difficult to directly access. Methods to elicit such knowledge and bring it to the surface where it can be interpreted and mapped are needed. Zaltman (1997) notes that metaphors are an important tool for eliciting such hidden knowledge. ZMET uses metaphor as a research tool to elicit deep meaning.
- **Images in Mental Models.** Much of the current thinking in cognitive science is sympathetic to the view that thoughts are image based and language is a tool humans use to try and convey their mental images to others (Damasio 1994; Pinker, 1994; Zaltman, 1997). If thoughts are indeed image based, then the content of cognitive structures necessarily are images. Thus, ZMET asks respondents to select several pictures that express their thoughts and feelings.

These visual images become a projective medium to help informants identify and communicate the content (both thoughts and feelings) and connections within their mental models. ZMET lets people know the idea of itself and sharing with the researchers as the survey tool. It closes to the interviewee, so the ideas emerge and then assembled into a meaningful mental model, sensory images and consensus map. Through the study, it can provide the theory more feasible to be adopted by the market.

Research Methodology

This is a qualitative research with the emphasis on city image. City image is related to visual experience, thus I adopted the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET). ZMET is a new measurement using visual metaphor and pictures to induce consumer’s information

Figure2: N on-Taichung City residents' consensus map



The most important finding of the study is to distinguish the image between Taichung City residents and non-Taichung City residents. Most of the images of Non-Taichung City residents are come from mass media, its ultimate value are: “no sense of security” and “safety”, it shows that most people hold negative evaluation. Beside, Taichung City residents are more positive because they think that many constructions, cultural history, innovative, and new perspective are be rethink , such as: romantic atmosphere of literary Art Green Park, combining food and arts becoming a public open space and the wedding industry popular to visit. The city image of Taichung City residents and non-Taichung residents can serve marketer to establish and promote the city's marketing as the important role of reference values.

Conclusions

The study included four Taichung City residents and four non-Taichung City residents. High involvement people were selected as interviewees through the use of RPII scale.

All these results indicated that government and marketing representatives can construct the cities with enhancement on various areas such as: art, humanities, history and education. Through the visual media, people can visualize and realize the achievement of Taichung city.

The value of this study is shown in integrate city image, visual media and means-end chain.

Although there are many public domains about cities have been studies, however, these literatures were more language and words oriented. It is discovered that rarely any existing studies pay attention on to the city image. People not only recognize by words and language but also by pictures. People sometimes said, “A picture is worth a thousand words”, because not having the right words might force us to struggle with the concept until it makes more sense to us. On the other hand, the picture elaborates and delivers the message more effectively across the board, although language and words are the way that people communicate with each other, pictures can construct the meaning that language and words cannot deliver.

The elements of city image contain natural ecological, environment, and living cultural. Some of these are specific, some are abstract. This study used the new methods to deal with the issue of city image, hoping to generate a new idea through review of the theories along with the employment of the novel measurement to make some contributions to Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique.

We acknowledge the limited small quantity of the participant maybe insufficient to accurately reflect the reality, thus to better eliminate the deviation of the result, we encourage and recommend future researchers who are interest to employ the ZMET for similar study to enlarge the number of their reach groups. We also recommend the government to conduct a large-scale survey of Taichung City image as and anticipating the finding may bring practical and informative suggestions to them.

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