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Dissertation title: Participational Model of City Brand Management Utilizing Crowdsourcing

Key terms: city brand management, crowdsourcing, public participation, local stakeholders, structural equation modeling (SEM)

The subject of this doctoral dissertation concerns the use of crowdsourcing initiatives in city brand management. The decision to address this topic was motivated by the following premises: the limited number of studies on participatory approaches to city brand management; the small number of studies related to city brand management, especially in small and medium-sized cities; and the lack of research on crowdsourcing initiatives analyzed from the perspective of city brand management in local governments.

As a result of the literature review, a research gap was identified in the form of the lack of a comprehensive approach to city brand management that includes stakeholder engagement through crowdsourcing initiatives. The following research problem was formulated: "How do representatives of municipal governments assess the role of crowdsourcing initiatives and their potential use in the city brand-building process?"

The main objective of this dissertation is to identify the factors determining the use of crowdsourcing initiatives by municipal governments and to develop a model of city brand management utilizing crowdsourcing.

Achieving the main objective was directly related to the following specific objectives: (C1) synthesis of knowledge on city brand management and the role of crowdsourcing initiatives in this process; (C2) identification of opinions of municipal government representatives on crowdsourcing initiatives implemented in city management; (C3) diagnosis of attitudes of municipal government representatives towards the potential use of crowdsourcing in city brand management; (C4) development of assumptions and verification of a participational model of city brand management utilizing crowdsourcing; (C5) formulation of recommendations for municipal governments on the possibilities of creating a city brand based on stakeholder engagement methods using crowdsourcing.

This dissertation employed the following qualitative and quantitative methods: literature analysis and critique, logical analysis and construction, bibliometric analysis, case study, in-depth interviews (IDI), as well as diagnostic survey using the Computer-Assisted Web Interviewing (CAWI) technique. Content analysis, statistical analysis, and structural

equation modeling were used to analyze the collected material. The integration of these methods enabled an in-depth analysis of the issue and the development of a contribution to the field of management and quality sciences.

Qualitative research made it possible to identify the opinions of municipal government representatives on crowdsourcing initiatives implemented in city management, while quantitative research allowed for the diagnosis of attitudes of municipal government representatives towards the potential use of crowdsourcing in city brand management. As a result of the qualitative research conducted, and subsequent verification of the obtained results in quantitative research, the main categories of benefits and barriers associated with the use of crowdsourcing initiatives by municipal governments were identified, as well as the factors that may increase interest in implementing crowdsourcing initiatives in the future.

A model of city brand management utilizing crowdsourcing has been developed. The model is based on relationships between the activity of local stakeholders on the city government's digital platforms, the use of crowdsourcing by the municipal government, the engagement of local stakeholders in developing the city brand strategy and the approach adopted by the municipal government in formulating the city brand framework.

This dissertation contributes to the field of management and quality sciences, offering both cognitive and practical value. The cognitive value of the study lies in the identification of the factors determining the use of crowdsourcing initiatives by municipal governments and the development of a model of city brand management utilizing crowdsourcing. The developed model advances existing participatory concepts of city brand management.

The practical value of the dissertation stems from its potential application in city management practice. The model of city brand management utilizing crowdsourcing can serve as a useful tool supporting local governments in making branding decisions. The formulated recommendations, in turn, provide local governments with guidance on creating a city brand through improving participatory methods of engaging stakeholders in city management.