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GLOBAL IMAGE OF COUNTRIES AND IMMIGRATION FLOWS

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Abstract

Global dynamics, including globalization, resource mobility and capital flow, have profoundly transformed countries' long-term development policies and shaped migrants' motivations. Beyond traditional socioeconomic considerations, migrants prioritize a country's global brand and image, extending beyond economics to cultural, social and environmental factors. The paper aims to test the hypothesis positing a statistically significant correlation between the net migration index and the perceptions of a country's brand by external stakeholders. The study applies the ANOVA test to check the research hypothesis. The object of investigation is EU countries from 2000 to 2020. The ANOVA testing results highlight the significant influence of a country's brand on migration processes, serving as either a catalyst or an inhibitor. The study emphasizes the need to align national migration policies with effective national branding strategies to capitalize on the positive image of countries and attract intellectual capital. Policymakers should recognize the significant impact of a country's brand perception on migration patterns and consider sustainable practices to enhance overall attractiveness.

Implications for Central European audience: For the Central European audience, the study suggests that fostering a positive national brand is crucial in attracting skilled migrants and intellectual capital. Policymakers in Central European countries should consider integrating branding strategies into their migration policies to enhance global competitiveness

and address demographic challenges through the attraction of qualified professionals. Central European countries should strategically attract a diverse array of migrants by making use of their unique historical and cultural heritage, emphasizing achievements in democracy and human rights, maintaining an affordable yet high standard of living, capitalizing on their pivotal economic position and showcasing both traditional and contemporary contributions, thereby creating a compelling narrative for sustained economic growth and cultural enrichment.

Introduction

In the contemporary landscape of global dynamics, the intricate interplay of globalization, resource mobility and capital flow has not only ushered in a profound metamorphosis in the strategic orientations of countries' long-term development policies but has also markedly shaped the multifaceted motivations guiding migrants in their choices of migration destination countries (Pudryk et al., 2023). Beyond the conventional considerations of social and economic factors such as unemployment rates (Karnowski & Rzońca, 2023; Kharazishvili & Kwilinski, 2022; Kharazishvili et al., 2020), average wages (Dzwigol, 2022a; 2022b; 2023; Melnychenko, 2021), the quality of healthcare (Letunovska et al., 2021) and education systems, there is an increasingly prevalent awareness among migrants of the impact of a country's brand and image on the international stage. Arefieva et al. (2021) and Dacko-Pikiewicz (2019) have underlined that countries endowed with a robust and positive brand tend to exert a magnetic pull, making them more appealing for the migration of intellectual capital. This attractiveness is not merely confined to economic opportunities but encompasses a broader spectrum of cultural, social and environmental factors. Furthermore, in the contemporary era, the paradigm of migration decision making has expanded to encompass an array of critical factors, including but not limited to renewable energy (Dementyev et al., 2021; Kryvda et al., 2022; Dźwigol et al., 2019b; 2021; 2023), digitalization (Kwilinski, 2019; Kwilinski et al., 2020b; Letunovska et al., 2023; Miśkiewicz et al., 2022, Nesterenko et al., 2023, Trzeciak et al., 2022) and knowledge (Dzwigol, 2019; 2020a; 2020b). These elements have emerged as instrumental components shaping the choices of individuals seeking to relocate. Nations championing sustainable practices (Kwilinski et al., 2022a; 2020a; 2023a; 2023b; 2024) and technological innovations (Luo et al., 2023; Polcyn et al., 2022; Kryvovyazyuk et al., 2023; Ivashchenko et al., 2023) are now positioned as havens for migrants, drawing them in with promises of not only economic prosperity but also an avant-garde and environmentally conscious milieu. This multifaceted approach to evaluating migration choices signifies a paradigm shift in global priorities and individual aspirations. In an era where the world is increasingly interconnected and people are more cognizant of the broader implications of migration (Dzwigol et al., 2020b; 2019a; 2019c), the integration of these contemporary issues into decision-making processes reflects a heightened awareness of the interconnectedness between migration, environmental sustainability (Dzwigol & Dzwigol-Barosz, 2020) and technological progress (Verina et al., 2021; Titko et al., 2023). Considering these transformations, crafting effective strategies for

national migration policies necessitates a comprehensive understanding that extends beyond traditional socioeconomic factors (Dzwigol-Barosz & Dzwigol, 2021; Hussain et al., 2021; Karnowski & Miśkiewicz, 2021). It calls for the development of programmes that actively promote and fortify the national brand, aligning it with the current global zeitgeist and values. This strategic alignment ensures that countries not only attract talent and intellectual capital but also project an image of forward-thinking, environmentally responsible (Chygryn & Miskiewicz, 2022) and technologically advanced societies (Dźwigoł & Trzeciak, 2023; Dzwigol et al., 2020a) – characteristics that resonate with the aspirations of the contemporary global citizen. Thus, the paper aims to test the hypothesis positing a statistically significant correlation between the net migration index and the perceptions of a country's brand by external stakeholders. This hypothesis underscores the evolving landscape of migration dynamics, wherein the subjective evaluations of a country's reputation, identity and global standing become integral components influencing the migratory choices of individuals and skilled professionals. As the world becomes more interconnected, the notion of a country as a brand takes on heightened relevance, affecting not only economic considerations but also the broader sociocultural fabric of international migration trends.

The rest of the paper has the following structure: The literature review brings an analysis of the theoretical background on countries' brands and immigration flows. Material and methods provides an explanation of research framework, data and sources. Results and discussion outlines the empirical results of the study, and finally, Conclusion summarizes the results of the investigation, policy implications, limitations and further directions for investigation.

1   Literature Review

One of the most cited works by Smith (2006) is dedicated to analysing the impact of globalization on migration processes between the United States and Mexico. Bhuyan et al. (2017) empirically confirmed the positive influence of a country's brand (using Canada as an example) on the migration of intellectual capital to the country. Dutch researchers Belabas et al. (2020) empirically confirmed the hypothesis that the identity and personalization of a city's brand influence the population migration movement. El Aouni et al. (2013b) investigated the influence of emigrants on the promotion of a country's brand. Based on the survey results of 131 Moroccan emigrants, the researchers concluded that emotional determinants (self-development, creativity, quality of life, traditions, religion, multicultural environment) are more influential than functional determinants (environment, infrastructure, level of economic development, innovation, social guarantees) in spreading information about the country-of-origin brand. The studies (Kwilinski et al., 2023c; 2023d; 2023e) outline that the connection between greenfield investment and a country's brand, as well as immigration flows, lies in the broader framework of sustainable development. Greenfield investment, with its focus on environmentally friendly initiatives, contributes to shaping a positive and sustainable national brand. This positive brand image, in turn, can influence immigration flows by making the country more appealing to individuals seeking environmentally conscious and socially responsible destinations (Kwilinski et al., 2023c; 2023f; 2023g). The alignment of green investment with a positive country brand not only fosters economic growth but also attracts intellectual capital, thereby affecting migration patterns in a way that aligns with global sustainability goals (Kwilinski, 2023a; 2023b).

Singh A. (1995) confirmed the hypothesis that immigrants are carriers of the values of their country of origin, through which the perception and image of their country are formed. Casado et al. (2010) determined that the perception of the image of the country of origin of immigrants is formed based on their accumulated experience, which they disseminate among the population of the destination country. The authors applied factor analysis and maximum likelihood based on varimax rotation. Sheth (2010) investigated the impact of migrants on the development of local tourism and local production, which are determinants of the country's national brand. El Aouni et al. (2013a) built a model to identify the strength and nature of the influence of emigration on the brand of the country of origin. Thus, scholars argue that emigrants and their social identity are key factors in shaping the image and brand of their country of origin.

Using Anholt's theory of the national brand (Anholt, 2007; Fan, 2010) and the push and pull theory of migration motives (Lee, 1966), Yousaf et al. (2020) developed a model that allows determining the relationship between the affective and cognitive image of countries of origin and migration destination. The model also considers migration motives and intentions. As a result, the authors emphasize that to limit "brain drain", governments of developing countries should strengthen their national brand and focus on forming a positive image among society, which is one of the effective tools for promoting the national brand.

Silvanto & Ryan (2014) noted that, according to the analytical report of the World Economic Forum, countries should develop a strategy for promoting their national brand to attract talent to the country. Polanco (2019) conducted a comparative analysis of state migration policies and levels of perception of national brands in the Philippines and Mexico. Based on the results obtained, Polanco (2019) concluded that the migration policy of the Philippines is oriented towards providing its labour resources with employment abroad.

It should be noted that there is no universally accepted approach within the scientific community for evaluating a country's brand. Anholt (1998; 2003; 2004; 2007; 2010) proposed using a hexagon to assess a country's brand based on the following parameters: tourism development; export volumes; government governance; investment volumes and the number of immigrants; cultural heritage; and population. Anholt (1998; 2003; 2004) emphasized that the national brand is the main channel of communication for promoting national identity. A consistent strategy of its promotion creates conditions for shaping the country's image in various sectors, promoting international trade and fostering development.

Based on Anholt's theory, Kilduff (2017) suggested the following components for assessing the country's brand perception by its external stakeholders: geographic location; local products/services; historical heritage; cultural level in the country; language; political and economic systems; social institutions; level of infrastructure development; global stars and prominent figures; photos and imagery. Buhmann & Ingenhoff (2014) developed a 4D model of a country's brand. The authors identified cognitive and affective components. The cognitive component includes three dimensions: functional, normative and aesthetic.

Based on the results of ordinary least squares (OLS) modelling, Ahn & Wu (2013) concluded that income inequality has a statistically significant negative impact on a country's brand. In contrast, GDP, crime rate and the number of cultural heritage monuments do not have a statistically significant influence on the value of the country's brand. Rojas-Méndez (2013),

based on the molecular method of national brands, identified seven dimensions for evaluating a country's brand, similar to Anholt's hexagon.

Vázquez-Martinez et al. (2019) determined the country's brand based on the evaluation of a composite indicator consisting of two groups of factors: rigid and flexible. The authors used structural modelling PLS-SEM (partial least squares structural equations modelling) and OLS regression analysis, allowing them to determine not only the correlation between each element of the composite indicator and the latent variable but also the correlations between the elements of the composite indicator.

The Brand Finance rating agency conducts evaluations based on the following blocks: business climate and trade; efficiency of government governance; international relations; culture and heritage; media; education and science; and social climate in the country (Nation Brands, 2020). Bloom Consulting calculates the country's brand based on the effectiveness of the development of the country's tourism sector, considering four groups of indicators: economic efficiency, digital transformation, CBS rating and the country's presence in the online environment.

The Good Country Index (2020) is one of the indices that assesses the attractiveness of country brands for migrants. This index evaluates 153 countries along seven dimensions, using Anholt's hexagon as the foundation of its evaluation methodology. It is worth noting that the methodology is updated each year based on identified shortcomings from the previous year and taking into account current trends worldwide.

Relying on two of the most common methods for evaluating a country's brand, the FutureBrand and Anholt GfK Roper Nation Brand Index, Fetscherin (2010) proposed an approach to defining a country's brand that allows avoiding subjectivity in assessment. According to Fetscherin (2010), the following dimensions of a country's brand were suggested: export volume – high volumes of exported goods and services indicate a strong country brand; the tourism sector; foreign investment volumes in the country; the number of immigrants in the country; and the effectiveness of government governance.

Based on the systematic review of the theoretical framework, the paper aims to check the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1: There is a statistically significant dependence of the net migration index on the perception of the country's brand by its external stakeholders.

2   Materials and Methods

The hypothesis centres on the proposition that the strength of a country's brand correlates with its appeal for intellectual capital migration. ANOVA, through its ability to dissect total variance into between-group components (linked to brand perception) and within-group components (linked to individual country variations), helps discern whether discrepancies in the net migration index can be attributed to variations in the brand perception (Miskiewicz, 2020; Adeseye, 2021; Kwilinski et al., 2022b; Chang & Benson, 2023). Furthermore, the net migration index, serving as a continuous variable that signifies both the magnitude and direction of migration flows, aligns well with ANOVA's capacity to handle continuous dependent variables. This makes ANOVA an apt tool for conducting a robust analysis,

explaining how variations in the perception of a country's brand contribute to statistically significant differences in the net migration index.

ANOVA facilitates the assessment of statistical significance, indicating whether the observed differences in means are likely due to actual differences in brand perception rather than random chance (Connelly, 2021; Hakhverdyan & Shahinyan, 2022). A crucial step in this analytical process involves the segmentation of the overall variation observed in the dataset, denoted by SS_T (total sum of squares), into two discernible components:

$$SS_T = SS_B + SS_W \tag{1}$$

where SS_B is between-group variation and SS_W is within-group variation.

Between-group variation encapsulates the extent of variation in the dependent variable, elucidated through the differences in group means. In essence, SS_T explains the divergence between the averages of distinct groups, contributing valuable insights into the overarching patterns that may exist:

$$SS_B = \sum_{j=1}^{k} n_i (\overline{x_j} - \bar{x})^2 \tag{2}$$

where $\overline{x_j}$ is the mean in the j-th group, n_i is the number of observations in all k groups,; k is the number of groups and $\bar{x}$ is the mean in all k groups.

Within-group variation encapsulates the variation within each individual group, elucidating the nuances and intricacies inherent to each subgroup. This component provides a granular understanding of the inherent heterogeneity within groups, contributing to a comprehensive view of the overall dataset.

$$SS_W = \sum_{j=1}^{k} \sum_{i=1}^{n_i} (\overline{x_j} - \bar{x})^2 \tag{3}$$

These three variations, including SS_T, SS_B and SS_W, essentially function as estimators of the broader population variation. Conceptually, their interrelation underscores the intricate dynamics of the study variables, offering a nuanced perspective on how the dependent variable manifests both across and within distinct groups.

Furthermore, ANOVA can capture interaction effects, providing insights into how the relationship between brand perception and the net migration index may vary across different external stakeholders or subgroups. This is particularly relevant when considering that external stakeholders may have diverse perspectives on a country's brand.

The implementation of ANOVA requires a comprehensive examination of the characteristics of the formed data sample. This involves scrutinizing the distribution pattern by applying the Shapiro–Wilk normality test and assessing the equality of variances using Levene's test. These statistical procedures are pivotal for ensuring the robustness and reliability of ANOVA results.

The Shapiro–Wilk normality test (Khatun, 2021; Hernandez, 2021) was employed to assess whether the generated data sample adhered to a normal distribution. This test provides essential information about the shape and symmetry of the data, which is crucial for ANOVA. The evaluation is carried out based on the following formula:

$$W = \frac{[\sum_{i=1}^{n} a_{n-i+1}(x_{n-i+1} - x_i)]^2}{\sum_{i=1}^{n}(x_i - \frac{1}{n}\sum_{i=1}^{n} x_i)^2} \tag{4}$$

where W is the statistic value, $x_{1,2,...n}$ is the formed research sample and a_{n-i+1} is the tabular coefficient.

Simultaneously, Levene's test (Mishra et al., 2019; Darma et al., 2020) is utilized to examine the equality of variances within the generated data sample. Variance homogeneity is essential for the validity of ANOVA results, as the analysis assumes an equal spread of data across groups. Levene's test employs the following formulas:

$$W = \frac{(n-k)}{(k-1)} \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{k} n_i (z_i - z_m)^2}{\sum_{i=1}^{k} \sum_{j=1}^{n_i} (z_{ij} - z_{mi})^2} \tag{5}$$

$$z_{ij} = \begin{cases} |y_{ij} - \widehat{y}_i| \\ |y_{ij} - \widetilde{y}_i| \end{cases} \tag{6}$$

where W is the statistic value, $z_{1,2,...n}$ is the formed research sample, y_{ij} is the value of the j-th observation of the i-th group, $\widehat{y}_i$ is the mean of the i-th group, $\widetilde{y}_i$ is the median of the i-th group, k is the number of distinct groups to which the samples belong, n is the total number of observations, and n_i is the number of observations in the i-th group.

To evaluate a country's brand, based on previous studies (Shymon et al., 2020; Goda, 2021; Fernández-Crehuet et al., 2021; Chygryn et al., 2022), the FutureBrand rating agency methodology (FutureBrand, 2023) was utilized. This methodology employs a comprehensive assessment, incorporating insights from surveys conducted with over 2500 respondents. The evaluation spans diverse dimensions, encompassing civic values, living standards, business friendliness, cultural heritage, the tourism sector and the distinctiveness of local products. The methodology categorizes countries into four primary groups based on the results of this evaluation:

1. Countries: This group represents countries with a perceived low level of recognition for their brand. These countries may face challenges in establishing a strong and positive brand image.

2. Status countries: In contrast, countries falling into this category are perceived as having a high potential and a commendable quality of life. They stand out as destinations with promising prospects and a favourable living environment.

3. Experience countries: This group comprises countries that are perceived as rich in cultural values, traditions and cultural heritage. They are recognized for their deep-rooted cultural aspects, contributing to a distinct and appealing identity.

4. Country brands: Countries in this category enjoy a high level of brand recognition. They have successfully positioned themselves as destinations with a strong and positive brand image, making them highly appealing to a broader audience.

Similar to previous works (Pudryk et al., 2021; Rajiani & Kot, 2020; Stryzhak et al., 2021; Niva et al., 2023), the assessment of migration levels is carried out using the net migration index calculated by the International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2023). This index encapsulates both immigration and emigration figures, providing a comprehensive overview of the net migration balance over the specified period. The selected research focus

encompasses EU countries, considering the region's significance in international migration trends and its complex socioeconomic landscape. The chosen timeframe, from 2000 to 2020, allows a nuanced analysis of migration patterns, capturing potential shifts, trends and influencing factors that have shaped the demographic landscape of the EU countries under consideration.

3 Results and Discussion

The results of checking the nature of the distribution of the formed data sample using the Shapiro-Wilk test are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 | Shapiro-Wilk test results

Parameters	Country brand	Net migration
Test statistics	0.978	0.985
Indicator of deviation from normality	1.343	1.213
z score	0.638	0.186
Prob > z	0.263	0.423

Source: Developed by the authors. Note: *z* – *z* score; Prob. – probability

The test statistic (*W*) is a value between 0 and 1. The closer it is to 1, the more the sample resembles a normal distribution. In this case, both test statistics are close to 1, suggesting that the distributions of both country brand and net migration are not significantly different from a normal distribution.

The value of the indicator of deviation from normality allows us to quantify how much the distribution of the sample deviates from normality. A smaller value indicates less deviation. In this case, both indicators (1.343 for country brand,1.213 for net migration) are relatively small, further supporting the notion that the distributions are not significantly different from normal. The *z* score measures how many standard deviations an observation or data point is from the mean. Smaller *z* scores indicate data points closer to the mean. In this context, the *z* scores are relatively small (0.638 for country brand,0.186 for net migration), suggesting that the data points are not excessively far from the mean. The *p* value is the probability that the observed data would occur if the null hypothesis (data come from a normal distribution) were true. A smaller *p* value suggests stronger evidence against the null hypothesis. In both cases, the *p* values are larger than conventional significance levels (e.g., 0.05), indicating that there is not enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis of normality.

The results of the homogeneity of variance test conducted on the generated sample data using Levene's test are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 | Homogeneity test results

Parameters	Country brand	Net migration
Test statistic for mean	0.92	0.93
Test statistic for median	0.93	0.93
Test statistic with 10% trimmed mean	0.92	0.92

Source: Developed by the authors

The test statistics for the mean are 0.92 for country brand and 0.93 for net migration, while those for the median are 0.93 for both groups (Table 2). Additionally, the test statistics with a 10% trimmed mean are 0.92 for country brand and 0.92 for net migration. These values, being close to 1, collectively suggest that there is no substantial evidence to support a significant difference in variances between the country brand and net migration datasets. Therefore, the variances appear to be homogenous across the two datasets.

The results of the Shapiro-Wilk and Levene's tests indicate a normal distribution of the generated data samples and equality of their variances, allowing a parametric ANOVA test. The ANOVA test results for the four groups of countries (countries, status countries, experience countries, country brands) based on FutureBrand agency data (Table 3) confirm the hypothesis of a statistically significant difference in the levels of the net migration index depending on the perception of the country's brand by external stakeholders.

Table 3 | Parametric ANOVA test results

Country group	Contrast	Std. err.	Prob>z
Countries – status countries	0.204	0.002374	0.00876
Countries – experience countries	0.326	0.002374	0.01245
Countries – country brands	0.441	0.002374	0.02226
Status countries – experience countries	0.021	0.002374	0.02226
Status countries – country brands	0.034	0.002374	0.32656
Experience countries – country brands	0.024	0.002374	0.05328

Source: Developed by the authors. Note: Std. err. – standard error; Contrast – coefficient; z – z score; Prob. – probability

According to Table 3, there is a statistically significant difference between the levels of migration processes in the groups of countries: countries and status countries (contrast = 0.204, p = 0.008); experience countries (contrast = 0.326, p = 0.012); country brands (contrast = 0.441, p = 0.022); status countries and experience countries (contrast = 0.021, p = 0.022). However, there is no statistically significant difference between the groups of status countries and country brands based on the net migration index (p = 0.327). It is determined that the enhancement of a country's brand increases the likelihood of an increase in migration flows: in status countries by 0.204, in experience countries by 0.326 and in country brands by 0.441 (with the reference group being "countries"). The empirical results of the ANOVA testing reveal that, amid the intensification of globalization processes, the country's brand serves as a catalyst or inhibitor of migration processes within the country. The obtained results indicate that in the formulation of strategies for updating national migration policies, it is essential to develop a programme for the promotion and strengthening of the national brand.

Conclusion

This study delved into the causal relationship between the global image of countries and immigration flows, employing the ANOVA technique and utilizing a dataset spanning from

2000 to 2020, focusing on EU countries. The key findings underscore significant differences in migration processes among various groups of countries, namely, countries, status countries, experience countries and country brands. The contrasts, delineated as 0.204, 0.326 and 0.441, accompanied by their corresponding *p* values (0.008, 0.012 and 0.022), accentuate the statistical significance of these discernible differences. Notably, the observed contrast between status countries and experience countries underscores a statistically significant variation (contrast = 0.021, $p = 0.022$).

Equally crucial is the observation that no statistically significant difference is discerned between the groups of status countries and country brands based on the net migration index ($p = 0.327$). This finding implies a certain level of similarity in the migration processes characterizing these two distinct groups. Furthermore, this likelihood is augmented by 0.204 in status countries, by 0.326 in experience countries and by 0.441 in country brands, with the reference group being "countries".

The empirical findings of this study not only provide valuable insights into the relationship between a country's global image and immigration flows but also carry substantial policy implications. To optimize migration management and outcomes, it is strongly recommended that policymakers prioritize strategic interventions aimed at enhancing a country's brand. One key policy avenue involves targeted efforts to elevate civic values within the country (Spicka, 2020; Trushkina et al., 2020; Dzwigol et al., 2021; Dzwigol-Barosz & Dzwigol, 2021; Szczepańska-Woszczyna & Gatnar, 2022; Szczepańska-Woszczyna & Muras, 2023). Strengthening the sense of shared identity, citizenship and community engagement can contribute to a positive national image, making the country more appealing to potential migrants. Initiatives promoting inclusivity, diversity and social cohesion can play a pivotal role in shaping this aspect of the country's brand. Furthermore, policies aimed at improving standards of living should be prioritized (Dacko-Pikiewicz, 2019; Kharazishvili et al., 2020; Kwilinski et al., 2020a; Letunovska et al., 2021; Szczepańska-Woszczyna et al., 2022; Wróblewski & Lis, 2021). Investments in healthcare, education, affordable housing and overall economic well-being can significantly enhance the overall attractiveness of a country for potential immigrants (Letunovska et al., 2022). A positive correlation between a robust standard of living and increased migration flows underscores the importance of these policy measures.

Strategic interventions in business environments can also be instrumental. Policies that foster entrepreneurship, innovation and a favourable climate for businesses can enhance the country's economic appeal. A strong and dynamic economy is often a magnet for skilled professionals and investors, positively affecting migration dynamics. Preserving and promoting cultural heritage is another avenue for policymakers to consider (Spicka, 2023; Syrová & Špička, 2023). Initiatives that celebrate and showcase a country's unique cultural identity can contribute to a positive brand image. Cultural festivals, heritage preservation programmes and the promotion of artistic endeavours can all play a role in shaping a country's global perception. Finally, highlighting and promoting unique local products can be an effective strategy (Melnychenko, 2021; Moskalenko et al., 2022; Polcyn, 2022; Kwilinski et al., 2023e). This can encompass anything from distinctive goods and services to culinary delights. By showcasing the uniqueness of local offerings, a country can carve out a niche identity that sets it apart, contributing to a positive brand image. By strategically boosting a country's image across these dimensions, policymakers can not only positively influence

migration dynamics but also potentially attract a diverse array of migrants, contributing to economic growth, cultural richness and overall national development. This underscores the intricate and interconnected nature of a country's global image and its attractiveness for immigration.

The study implies that Central European countries can benefit from a comprehensive approach to migration management that considers the interplay between a country's global image and various factors influencing migration decisions. Strategic interventions in civic values, standards of living, economic environments, cultural promotion and showcasing of local products can collectively contribute to a positive brand image and attract a diverse array of migrants, fostering economic growth and cultural richness. Central European countries can capitalize on their rich history and cultural heritage as a unique selling point. By investing in the preservation and promotion of historical sites, traditions and artistic expressions, these countries can craft a narrative that distinguishes them from other regions. This cultural authenticity can serve as a magnet for individuals seeking an immersive experience, attracting those who are drawn to the deep-rooted traditions and historical landscapes that Central Europe has to offer. Moreover, a strategic focus on civic values should take into account the historical context of these countries' struggles for democracy and human rights. Emphasizing these achievements not only enhances the global image but also establishes a connection with migrants who value political stability and the protection of individual freedoms. Initiatives that promote civic engagement, democratic values and social justice can further solidify this appeal. In terms of standards of living, Central European countries can make use of their comparatively lower costs of living compared to their Western counterparts. Efforts to maintain affordability while simultaneously improving infrastructure, healthcare and education can make these countries attractive for individuals seeking a high quality of life without the financial burdens often associated with Western Europe. Economically, Central European countries can build on their strategic location as a gateway between Western and Eastern markets. By fostering international partnerships and trade agreements, these countries can position themselves as key players in the global economy. Additionally, supporting industries with high growth potential, such as technology and innovation, can create job opportunities and stimulate economic dynamism. Cultural promotion should not only highlight historical aspects but also celebrate contemporary achievements in arts, science and innovation. Showcasing Central European contributions to modern culture can attract forward-thinking individuals who seek to be part of a vibrant and evolving cultural landscape. Showcasing of local products can extend beyond traditional goods to include innovative technologies and sustainable practices. By emphasizing the region's commitment to environmental responsibility and cutting-edge industries, Central European countries can attract individuals who are interested not only in cultural richness but also in contributing to and benefiting from a progressive and sustainable society.

The limitation of the study lies in its exclusive focus on EU countries. To enhance its applicability, consideration will be given to extending the research to include other regions or diverse types of countries, such as developing versus developed. Broadening the geographical scope will assist in tailoring specific policy recommendations for different country categories. Moreover, this study predominantly relies on quantitative data. Future investigations will incorporate both quantitative and qualitative data, sourced from in-depth

interviews, focus groups or case studies. This holistic approach is expected to yield a more comprehensive understanding of the intricate interplay between a country's global image and the complexities of migration decision making. Furthermore, the relationship between migration and a country's brand is a complex issue influenced by a wide range of determinants, including digitalization, political stability, governance efficiency, voice and accountability. In this context, the future investigation will expand the list of variables that affect the linkage between migration and a country's brand.

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