
Establishing the validity and reliability of Kuwait resources of nation branding model

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Abstract: To transform the economy of a nation and develop a strong national brand performance, various resources are needed and must be managed by the government to ensure that strong nation brand performance. This study is aimed at developing and assessing the validity and reliability of a model for the measurement of the perception of Kuwaiti businesspersons toward the implementation of nation branding management in Kuwait. A questionnaire is utilised for data collection and is distributed to a sample of 72 Kuwaiti business persons using the snowball technique. The reliability of all measures was confirmed using the results of alpha test ($\alpha > 0.7$) with minimum value of 0.835. For convergent reliability, AVE had higher values than the recommended threshold of ≥ 0.5 with minimum value of 0.513 and CR values > 0.6 . The study found that the proposed KRNB model is valid as well as reliable

Keywords: resources; nation branding management; NBM; nation branding performance; NBP; Kuwait nation branding model.

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1 Introduction

This study makes use of three constructs namely resources (which comprise of investment, tourism and export), nation branding management (NBM) and the nation branding performance (NBP) to investigate the perception of Kuwait businesspersons

towards the interrelations of these constructs. The antecedent of Resources is anticipated to influence the NBM and consequently the NBP and thus form a research model referred to as KRNB. Therefore, the objective of this study is to determine model validity and reliability of the KRNB based on the said three constructs. In the context of economics, McConnell et al. (2009) define nation resources as capital or no-capital stock that a country, organization or individual can use to transact or as a resource function in investment, tourism, or export. To transform the economy of a nation and develop a strong national brand performance, various natural and human resources are needed and this requires optimal utilization of the resources that the government possesses (Aronczyk, 2008).

In discussing investment as a critical nation's resources, Baumol and Blinder (2012) define foreign investment as the construction or the purchase of business assets, such as machinery, offices, or factories in a foreign country. Foreign investment causes an increase in financial activity due to high cash inflow leading to additional employment as well as the creation of associated externalities. In most of the cases of foreign investment, the recipient country obtains additional benefits, such as new technology, increased productivity in many sectors, and the creation of market and opportunities that stimulate further investment. The benefits of foreign investment in foreign countries is evident in Asian countries such as Malaysia and Philippines and those in the Middle East where investors from the US, EU, and Japan have built factories that came with modern production techniques that have been absorbed by local businesses (Krugman, 2016).

Tourism is also one of the resources of a country. Creating a 'brand', as well as developing it, is one of the core activities in the management of a tourist destination (Aaker, 1991). As a concept, Bianchi et al. (2014) noted that branding is not only applied to commodities and organizations, but also to various forms of tourism. In tourism marketing, destination branding is a critical topic as it enhances the differentiation and competitiveness of a destination. However, the establishment of a strong brand has increasingly attracted a lot of attention because of the increase in competition among various destinations for visitors (Joshi and Yadav, 2017).

Exports are also one of the resources of a country and therefore the percentage or share of the country exports out of the global export is taken; the net flow of foreign direct investments (FDI) is taken for investment parameters; tourism is measured in terms of the numbers of tourist arrivals with the World Bank government index used to measure the state administration weighted with GDP share of the state in the GDP of the world (Anholt, 2008).

1.1 Problem statement

Kuwait has traditionally relied on its vast oil resources to manage its economy and develop itself as a nation, just like many of its neighbours in the Middle East. However, it is equally true that some of its neighbours, such as the Qatar, Dubai, and Abu Dhabi have managed their own economies equally well, if not better, than Kuwait (Gulf News, 2016). These countries have improved their brand image on the world stage through ambitious construction programs and other cultural events and as a result have been able to draw substantial numbers of tourists to their own countries. In contrast, Kuwait has not been able to project itself as a favourable investment or tourism destination to the extent that its neighbours have been able to do. In a global and competitive economy, this has hurt Kuwait's prospects, especially in comparison to its neighbourhood (Quasem and

Baharun, 2012). In years 1998 and 2015, all oil exporting nations, like Kuwait, are faced with a new problem – diminishing oil prices (World Economic Forum, 2016). Since the revenues earned from oil exports are falling drastically, all nations in the region have to curtail government expenditure and look to alternative sources of revenue.

1.2 Significance of the study

In the present business environment, taking a global perspective, every nation, city, and region are competing with other communities for investors, tourists, consumers, and exports. This is especially true in light of periodic global recessions or slow-downs during which foreign investment and commercial activities, including exports and imports, decline. There are signs of economic slowdown in many parts of the world and it is expected that government spending will also decrease, while at the same time international competition as destinations for investment will increase (Hannon, 2016). The competition brought to the global stage requires comprehensive marketing in order to export and attract the investors and tourists. Nation branding is one of the aspects that can be used by governments to promote the competitiveness (Szondi, 2010). Every nation has a reputation that is either negative or positive in the eyes of international investors. It is, therefore, essential for countries to carry out nation branding to improve the image of the country and dispel the negative perceptions labelled by other people in the world. Kuwait requires an efficient nation branding model to enhance its image and close the gap created by negated stereotypes.

1.3 Contribution of the study

Contribution of the study is to develop framework of the KRNB model and to assess the validity and reliability of a model for the measurement of the perception of Kuwaiti businesspersons toward the implementation of NBM in Kuwait.

2 Literature review

Nation branding is a new phenomenon that has gained a strategic role in government activities. The idea has been used by many countries in both domestic and international markets to represent the face of the nation in the competitive global business environment (Bolin and Ståhlberg, 2015).

Iceland's nation branding made it recognizable in the world via a strategy known as Iceland natural program (Dinnie, 2008). A case in point is the highly successful 'Malaysia, truly Asia' campaign launched in 2000 that has won numerous advertising awards and established a multicultural vibrant tropical Islamic identity to the nation that welcomes tourists as well as investors, and provides unique experiences for them (Bouchon, 2014). Another developing nation, Brazil, uses its national game, football, and internationally recognized footballers such as Ronaldo to create an identity for itself on the world stage (Mariutti and Trench, 2016). It has been proposed that the use of such campaigns and brand ambassadors allow businesses and other stakeholders to use the nation brand as a differentiating tool to help in the country's development (Dinnie, 2016).

The productivity of a country's resources is increased by investments, and, as a result, the resources lead to economic growth. While, currently, Kuwait don't have good infrastructure, inclusive of power, sewage, roads, and other crucial elements to run its cities, attraction of foreign direct investment may help enhance its educational system and this infrastructure by utilizing its plentiful natural resources in a better way (Haque et al., 2016). The challenges facing Kuwait, such as economic, the inadequacy of education to the labor force, and the weak competitiveness of some infrastructure, such as ports and airports, may be similar around the world (Cheon et al., 2015). Some challenges are not unique to Kuwait and are replicated in many states. According to researcher Davinia Hoggarth, Kuwait suffers from capturing market share that is attributed to its nation branding (Hoggarth, 2016).

The interpretation of resource-based view (RBV) theory has been in strategic approach terms. The approach describes the different abilities and diverse competencies of the organization. It can be used to explain the economics of the organization and to test the value addition that a firm is supposed to perform theoretically (Mahoney and Rajendran, 2006). Later, there was identification of three streams inside which the positioning of RBV theories can take place. They included evolutionary economics, structure, conduct, performance-based (SCP) theories of firm performance industry determinants, and neo-classical microeconomics (Barney, 2001). One of the RBV primary premises is that there is competitive heterogeneity due to close competitors who have various capabilities and resources that stabilize after certain duration. However, these durable differences do not suggest that the entities remain fixed over time. Several authors argue that, on the contrary, abilities are dynamic because entities build and integrate, change and adapt, and they reconfigure their functioning means of doing business. In relation to this, Peteraf and Helfat introduced the capability lifecycle concept that wanted to provide a theory that was dynamically resource based (Helfat and Peteraf, 2003). For instance, in the case of Kuwait, it might take a while to develop local expertise in several technological and medical areas since the necessary resources ought to first be obtained in a manner that is planned.

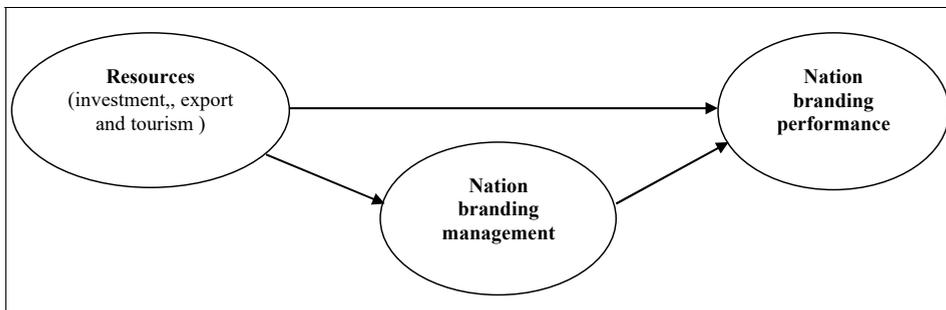
The other theory is the hexagonal theory of nation branding. It was proposed by Anholt so as to bring the ideas of branding services and products to the nation level. The dimensions of the hexagon model include investment and immigration, governance, culture and heritage, export brands, tourism, and people. Its objective is to assign the same mass of meanings in the nationwide perspective that is used regularly to help the country present itself as a significant player on the international stage or as a beautiful destination, and also in the case of a single service or product. Anholt recommended that the same way brands are distinguished based on certain dissimilar features every country has its own unique attributes and advantages. Two countries cannot be similar; that is, they are likely to have different cultures, governance systems, and resources. These features can act as the basis of unique identities that make it possible for a nation to brand itself in a way that is capable attracting foreign investments and human resources that bring about economic growth.

When Anholt's hexagonal model is combined with the RBV theory, the model can be used to promote tourism, a destination for investment, and nation products and (exports). Moreover, according to Diwan (2014), designing territorial brands may result in the quality of the nation's image and sustainability being easily established to enhance place branding, which is also connected with the RBV theory based on the above observations.

Attracting foreign direct investment, attractive products and services for foreign buyer, and attracting tourists and talents can be utilized as a source of advantages of RBV.

The purpose of this study is to determine the resources that would enable Kuwait to preserve its competitive advantage and also to assess how investment, tourism, and export trade are affecting the performance of nation branding. The theories used for this research RBV and Anholt's hexagonal model. RBV looks at resources that influence management and performance of nation branding while Anholt's hexagonal model explains nation branding along six dimensions; three of these dimensions were covered: investment, tourism, and export. The research recommends building a conceptual framework that is made up of resources, as inputs and performance of nation branding as the output. It is facilitated by the management of nation branding.

Figure 1 Conceptual framework: (KRNB)



Source: Developed for this research

The conceptual map proposed above has nation branding sources: resource variables, this interacts to give rise to the nation branding base, which is the NBM. The base in turn mediates the development of the NBP.

3 Methodology

In conducting validity and reliability tests, there are various types of validity, and include content validity, face validity, criterion-related validity, and construct validity (Blessing and Forister, 2013). Content validity checks the adequacy of the content of a test in sampling skills, knowledge or behaviours that the test wants to measure. On the other hand, face validity looks at how well the measuring instrument appears to measure what it is meant to measure and how well a test of intelligence judges by appearance. For example, by containing math problems, a test of math problems would be considered to have face validity (Bordens and Abbott, 2014).

To establish face validity, experts are requested to perform a thorough review of the questionnaire to make sure the measurement of the constructs is done. The validity can then be improved based on the expert's feedback (Wei et al., 2014). Before administering the construct model, its evaluation should first be performed. A pilot study could facilitate this. Before the actual study is conducted, piloting is necessary. As asserted by

Oppenheim (1996), all social studies should be piloted. Though pilot studies might be tedious, they are important for checking the reliability, validity, and practicality of the model (Cohen et al., 2007)

3.1 Sampling technique

Snowball sampling is a non-probability sampling method, in which the concept of chain referrals is used – an expert or ideally suited candidate is identified first, and this candidate is requested further to suggest peers that he feels would be able to contribute meaningfully to the study (Babbie, 2008). The snowball sampling technique was used and carried out in all Kuwait cities. The author has been tentatively identifying a few businessmen who are significantly engaged in promotional activities or are otherwise considered to be highly knowledgeable, from at least middle management and with minimum business annual revenue of 50,000 K.D. The author approached a few offices ask them to fill the questionnaire after first apprising them of the purpose and methodology of research. The author asked the first few respondents to recommend a few of their peers. Approximately 72 businessmen in Kuwait were located in this manner and their answers were recorded for further analysis.

3.2 Questionnaire development

During the present research, I took several steps to improve the content validity of the questionnaire. The first step was carefully to review the constructs and their definitions, and how I operationalised them. After carefully aligning the constructs with research objectives, I went through a few questionnaires that have been used in previous studies and validated by experts. I adapted some of the questions and prepared additional questions after a thorough literature search to understand the measurement of nation brand concepts within my defined research context.

3.3 Sample size recommendation (Smart-PLS)

The use of Smart PLS for modelling variance-based structural equations requires deciding about the minimum sample size. The software offers a number of options that are related to the data itself, such as whether normal distribution can be assumed or not, what types of different scales have been used, and the number of variables. Researchers have proposed some rules of thumb to help determine a minimum sample size – conventional factors such as the effect size, desired power of the test, and the significance level to be used should also be taken into consideration. Another important factor is that the PLS algorithm uses ordinary least squares regressions to estimate the partial regression relationships in the model, so that the sample size requirement is not substantially dependent on the actual complexity of the model being estimated (Peng and Lai, 2012). Keeping these considerations in mind, in the present research it was desired to have a statistical power of 0.8 and a significance level of 5% along with a minimum R^2 value of 0.25. The statistical power and significance values were chosen because these are standard values in the social sciences, while the percentage of variance explained by

the independent variables or the adjusted R^2 value should be at least 25% for the model to be considered suitable. Accordingly, since there were three constructs and four arrows pointing at a construct in the model, and the recommended sample size for $\alpha = 0.05$ was 65 as shown in the next table (Hair, 2014) the actual sample size used in the research was 72.

Table 1 Sample size recommendation in a PLS-SEM for a statistical power of 80%

Maximum number of arrows pointing at construct	Significance level											
	1%				5%				10%			
	Minimum R^2				Minimum R^2				Minimum R^2			
	0.10	0.25	0.50	0.75	0.10	0.25	0.50	0.75	0.10	0.25	0.50	0.75
2	158	75	47	38	110	52	33	26	88	41	26	21
3	176	84	53	42	124	59	38	30	100	48	30	25
4	191	91	58	46	137	65	42	33	111	53	34	27
5	205	98	62	50	147	70	45	36	120	58	37	30
6	217	103	66	53	157	75	48	39	128	62	40	32
7	228	109	69	56	166	80	51	41	136	66	42	35
8	238	114	73	59	174	84	54	44	143	69	45	37
9	247	119	76	62	181	88	57	46	150	73	47	39
10	256	123	79	64	189	91	59	48	156	76	49	41

Source: Hair et al. (2014)

The pilot for this study was carried out in Kuwait. A consent form was first administered to the participants as evidence of their voluntary participation before they proceeded with filling the questionnaire. A total of 72 Kuwaiti businesspersons were involved in the pilot study and the non-probability snow ball sample technique was used for data collection. The data was first collected in Excel and was then exported to Smart-PLS v.3.2.7.

Cronbach's alpha (α), which is also referred to as coefficient alpha, was created in the 1950s by Lee Cronbach. It is used to assess internal consistency or reliability. Reliability refers to a test's ability to obtain a particular measure. Consider an organization that conducts a job satisfaction survey for its workers. High reliability implies that the survey is capable of measuring job satisfaction. On the other hand, low reliability indicates that the survey is suitable for something else or maybe nothing at all. Cronbach's α coefficient was used in conducting reliability analysis with reliability being confirmed with an alpha value of above 0.7 (Hair et al., 2009)

For resources construct questionnaire cover following area like how to attract foreign direct investment, how attract products and services for foreign buyer, and how attract tourists. For NBM construct, the researcher covered questions on the perceptions towards nation image, diaspora, promotion, customer and citizen relation management and Brand tracking studies. For NBP the research question cover nation brand loyalty, nation brand awareness, nation brand association and nation product perceived quality.

The resources construct questionnaire addresses issues such as the ways of attracting tourists, encouraging foreign direct investment, and drawing the interest of foreign buyers to products and services. The NBM construct focuses on people's perceptions toward

brand racking studies, promotion, the nation's image, the customer-citizen relation management, and diaspora. Concerning NBP, the questions address issues such as the nation's brand association, brand awareness, brand loyalty, and its perceived quality of products.

4 Results and findings

4.1 Face validity

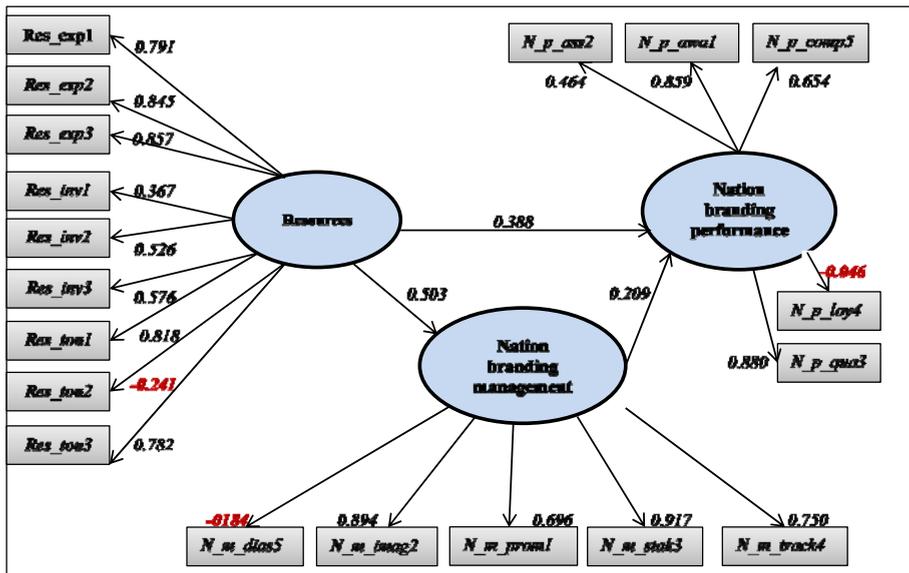
In this study, several steps were taken to enhance questionnaire face validity. In the first step, the researcher performed careful review of the constructs together with their definitions and how they were operationalised. Following this was going through a number of questionnaires employed in previous studies and that received expert validation. After a thorough literature search, some of the questions were adapted and additional questions were also prepared to understand the measurement of nation brand concepts within the defined context of the research. In the next step, a rating form for interviewers was prepared and then the questionnaires were submitted to four experts on the subject matter. The suggestions provided by the experts were then reviewed and this was followed by altering of some of the questions to avoid inadequate phrasing or ambiguity. For example, one of the initial questions read as follows: "There are abundant natural resources in Kuwait." This was not specific enough. I edited it and referred to "oil and natural gas" as the resource. There was also ambiguity about the beautiful nature of Kuwait, but after conducting the review, this 'beauty' was specified using features such as waterfalls. In the same way, the unity program of the nation was also described in a more relevant manner. In my view, the expert reviews and the alterations made significantly improved questionnaire face validity.

Construct validity was also checked using a pilot study as well as an expert review. This was done to ensure appropriate framing of the questionnaire and making sure the collected data is relevant to the topic of the study. Data analysis was also used to check construct validity. Non-correlation of various measures was taken as a possible situation that they are not measuring the same construct and, therefore, there is no generalizability of the results of the study. Seventy two respondents were used for the pilot study and this was followed by statistical analysis to check for construct validity. For a pilot study, 10 to 30 participants were suggested by Hill (1998).

4.2 Pilot test

Primary assessment of the structural model was done and involved the determination of how well the theory is maintained by experiential data and to make a decision if the theory is empirically confirmed for the hypothesis that was predicted, under investigation. The primary results of the model are illustrated in Figure 2, which reveals low factor items loading: *res_tour2*, *n_m_dias5* and *n_p_loy4*.

Figure 2 Initial pilot test results (see online version for colours)



The results indicate that collinearity among the predictor constructs in this study was not an issue ($r < 0.8$) as the VIF output for each construct was less than the cut-off threshold of 5. However, as shown in Table 1, there were reliability and validity issues with variables: NBM, National Branding Performance and Resources due to low factor loading of the highlighted item. According to Henseler et al. (2009) and Götz et al. (2010) manifest variables with outer loading 0.7 or higher are considered highly satisfactory. While loading value of 0.5 is regarded as acceptable, the manifest variables with loading value of less than 0.5 should be dropped (Chin, 1998, Hair et al., 2010). Hulland (1999) argued that 0.4 should be the acceptable loading value where Henseler et al. (2009) suggested that manifest variable with loading values between 0.4 and 0.7 should be reviewed before elimination. If elimination of these indicators increases the composite reliability, then discard or otherwise maintain the factors. Items (N_p_ass2) with value is 0.458 and (Res_inv1) with value is 0.364 are not effecting the composite reliability and therefore will not be deleted. Except for these values, for this study the cut-off value taken for outer loading is 0.5, an iterative process, is adopted for elimination of the manifest variables by considering Henseler et al.'s (2009) suggestion.

Table 1 Construct reliability and validity (before discharging three items with very low value of factor loading*)

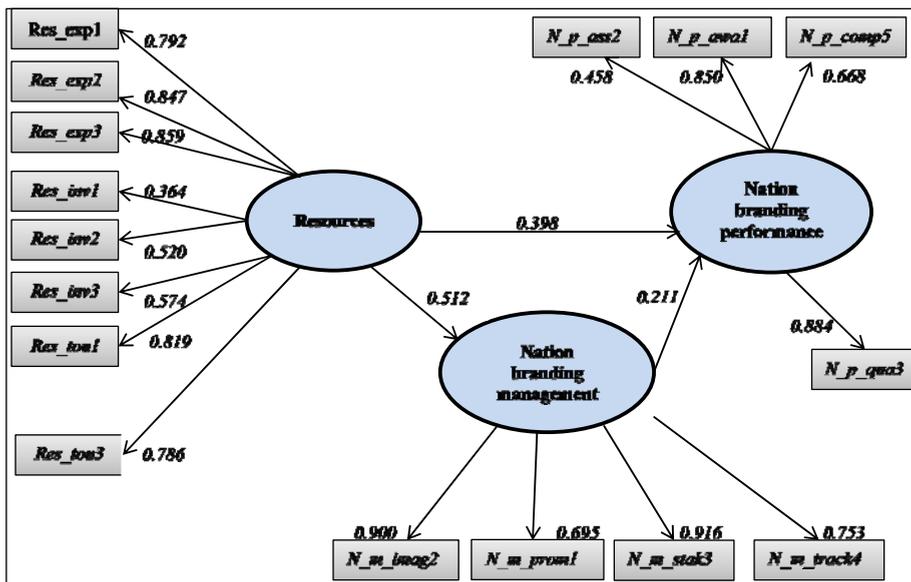
Variables	Cronbach's alpha (α)	rho_A	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted (AVE)
National branding management	0.677	0.863	0.806	0.544
National branding performance	0.614	0.785	0.736	0.432
Resources	0.785	0.880	0.854	0.462

Note: *The three items are: res_tour2, n_m_dias5 and n_p_loy4.

Cronbach’s α coefficient was used in conducting reliability analysis, with reliability being confirmed with an alpha value of above 0.7 (Hair et al., 2009). As shown in Table 2, the reliability of the measures was confirmed for the measures, as follows: Resources ($\alpha = 0.785$). However, reliability was not confirmed for National Branding Performance ($\alpha = 0.614$) and National Branding Management ($\alpha = 0.677$) as their alpha were below the threshold value ($\alpha > 0.7$). Additionally, convergent validity was also examined using the sample of the pilot test. Convergent validity is the degree to which a measure has a positive correlation with alternative measures of the same construct (Hair et al., 2009). Checking the outer loadings of the indicators is done when checking for convergent validity. AVE and CR are also used in checking for convergent validity. AVE measures the extent to which the individual construct items (e.g., res_tour1, res_tour2, res_tour3) correlate with other items in the same construct (e.g., Resources). While CR measures internal consistency reliability, it does not presume equal indicator loading as in Cronbach’s alpha. ρ AVE values were found to be higher than the recommended cut-off point (≥ 0.5) except resources, as illustrated in Table 1. Therefore, based on the results of factor loading, convergent validity, and reliability tests, the analysis disclosed the following items were disclosed from the analysis: res_tour2, n_m_dias5 and n_p_loy4.

After deleting the three items, the result of factor loading as depicted in Figure 3 indicate high factor loading for each variable.

Figure 3 Pilot test results after delete three items (see online version for colours)



Note: *The three items are: res_tour2, n_m_dias5 and n_p_loy4.

The reliability of all measures were confirmed using the results of alpha test ($\alpha > 0.7$), as illustrated in Table 2. For convergent reliability, ρ AVE had higher values than the recommended threshold of ≥ 0.5 and ρ CR values > 0.6 . The convergent validity was confirmed by the pilot test because all the ρ CR values were higher than ρ AVE values.

Table 2 Construct reliability and validity

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Cronbach's alpha</i>	<i>rho_A</i>	<i>Composite reliability</i>	<i>Average variance extracted (AVE)</i>
National branding management	0.835	0.866	0.891	0.675
National branding performance	0.724	0.795	0.816	0.540
Resources	0.851	0.883	0.888	0.513

Discriminant validity was also examined after the three items were deleted. Discriminant validity refers to the degree to which a construct is distinct from the others by experiential standards. Therefore, the assertion of discriminant validity implies that a construct is distinctive and covers aspects that are not taken by other constructs in the model. Assessing discriminant validity between constructs can be done in several ways. Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) is one of the ways of assessing discriminant validity. Hair et al. (2009) also indicated that discriminant validity cannot be assessed using cross-loading. In Table 3, HTMT is shown in bold. Discriminant validity is confirmed as HTMT values are less than 0.85 and heterotrait-heteromethod correlations are less than monotrait-heteromethod correlations (Campbell and Fiske, 1959; John and Benet-Martínez, 2000), and this provides confirmation for discriminant validity of the construct that is being investigated.

Table 3 Heterotrait-monotrait ratio

<i>Variables</i>	<i>National branding management</i>	<i>National branding performance</i>	<i>Resources</i>
National branding management	-		
National branding performance	0.711	-	
Resources	0.749	0.837	-

5 Conclusions

Evaluation is a very important component when it comes to improving the management of nation branding (Dinnie, 2016). Anholt (2011) noted that a good relationship between management of nation branding and resources is very essential in relation to improving the performance of nation branding in Kuwait. When management of nation branding is put into practice or implemented, it becomes one of the key elements that backs up the improvement (Valaskivi, 2016). Presently, there is lack of a KRNB model for assessing implementation of management of nation branding, particularly in Kuwait. For that reason, there is establishment and evaluation of psychometric features of a model to rate the Kuwait businessmen's view or insight toward the implementation of management of nation branding. Based on Miller (2012), it is very important to present the validity and reliability value of a questionnaire because it enables other researchers to be confident with the superiority of data they obtain later. Considering the fact that in this study there is no model that is validated and suits its objective; therefore, this model has to be technologically advanced by a researcher. This model is advanced in relation to the model of Anholt Hexagon and literature reviews. This study notes that the Cronbach alpha value is between 0.724–0.851. Mitchell and Jolley (2013) considers this quite

acceptable. On the other hand, Nunnally and Bernstein (1978) states that for internal consistency of a test, the 0.7 value has to be more than that. Moreover, the factor loadings value toward factors are also very high, and, therefore, it gives adequate information about construct validity despite the fact that, there is consideration of the significant interpretations by the researcher.

This is the study to provide a useful framework for evaluation of NBM in Kuwait. It is accepted that NBM components will be aimed primarily at Kuwaiti businessmen, and the perception by pupils may be less easy to identify. Furthermore, the success of this proposed framework is dependent upon the quality of the evaluations undertaken. In order to gain a more meaningful formative and summative evaluation, perceptions from different samples, such as the residences, citizens, head teachers, administration groups, and the ministry officers are greatly needed. If evaluative approaches are not developed excessively, the interrelationship between factors that greatly contributed to NBM implementation will remain elusive. Furthermore investing in the development of resources that have little impact on nation branding might not really help in improving the performance of the nation.

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