



Determinant Attributes of City Brand Personality That Influence Strategic Communication

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Abstract

This paper examines the determinant attributes of city brand personality that influence strategic communication of Bandar Melaka world heritage city UNESCO. The results will provide insight on the development of a city brand personality scale, that can be applied in the Malaysian context. Based on Aaker (1997), Brand Personality Scale (BPS), the study adjusted the scale used in the Bandar Melaka for strategic communication. The study approaches the issues from several perspectives including the marketing, tourism, strategic management and human communication in Bandar Melaka. It employs to administer the process of structural equation modelling to investigate the causal relationships between the dimensions of city brand determinants and city brand itself for strategic communication. Questionnaire surveys and interviews on measuring the determinants of city brand employs to examine the respondents' perceptions of the dimensions of city brand affected the overall city brand evaluations. Data collects from the internal stakeholders that involving directly or indirectly for planning and developing of Bandar Melaka. The study has found four dimensions of the city brand personality, "Peacefulness", "Malignancy", "Sophistication" and "Uniqueness". The City Personality Scale (CPS) proposes four dimensions with a total of seventeen items can be applied to the communication perspective of city brand in Malaysia. Implications for the stakeholders were discussed. They should consider the relative importance of brand dimensions in their overall city brand evaluations for strategic communication. City brand plays a pivotal role in contemporary strategic communication, and is the subject

of much literature, both professional and academic. This study is perhaps one of the first to investigate city brand personality for strategic communication in Malaysia.

Key words: City branding; City brand personality; Strategic communication; Bandar Melaka

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the city brand has become a major issue in both industry and academia. The city is keen to improve the image and brand value by maintaining their competitive edge. Some literature suggests that city brand personality is an essential element of a city; higher city brand personality creates an attractive brand. It is important to know what brands are if we want to understand the brand. To highlight the city brand means that the brand should communicate a consistent identity and the difference between identity and perceived identity conveyed by the people of the city that can build a strong and positive image disturb the city (Skinner, H., 2008).

Most of the literature on place branding and the city branding focused on how to build a brand (Kavaratzis, M. & M. J., Hatch, 2013). The real challenge here is how the city brand may become global and to avoid the future of nation branding with uncertain condition. On the other hand, it is about each and every country in the world is trying to develop their city branding activity. This study hesitates to use the word 'strategy' because lack of the general vision, long term commitment and coordination that describes the city branding initiatives of many countries. Dinnie (2008) noted that there was much

evidence that countries are getting better at to improve their nation brands.

While the research deliberates the relevance of the central concepts branding for the city brand (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005) and try whichever offer a general background for developing and managing city brands (Kavaratzis, M. & Mary Jo Hatch 2013; Kavaratzis 2004; Hankinson 2004; Hankinson 2001) and then to assess the appropriateness of specific branding tools to brand the city (Trueman *et al.*, 2004). It is the most recent development considered to apply the concept of the corporate brand and specific methods developed in this field as an alternative of a place branding (Kavaratzis 2004 & Trueman *et al.*, 2004).

LITERATURE REVIEW

City Brand Personality

Table 1
Aaker's (1997) Brand Personality Dimensions and Traits

Sincerity	Excitement	Competence	Sophistication	Ruggedness
Down-to-earth	Daring	Reliable	Upper-class	Outdoorsy
Family-oriented	Trendy	Hardworking	Glamorous	Masculine
Small-town	Exciting	Secure	Charming	Western
Honest	Spirited	Intelligent	Feminine	Tough
Sincere	Cool	Technical	Smooth	Rugged
Real	Young	Corporate		
Wholesome	Imaginative	Successful		
Original	Unique	Leader		
Cheerful	Up-to-date	Confident		
Sentimental	Independent			
Friendly	Contemporary			

Strategic Communication

Strategic communication is one of the central organising concept for this study as it describes the organisation's efforts through communication to adapt and respond to its social ecology (Hallahan, K. *et al.*, 2007). The reduction of environmental uncertainty and the collective processing of information by organisational members to produce organisational responses provide the context on which this study is based. Although strategic communication is recognized as a multidisciplinary, it remains in the heart of the practice of public relations and directed the management of communications on behalf of an organization (Van Ruler, B. & Vercic, D., 2004; Van Ruler, B. & Vercic, D. 2005). Strategic communication in the study of conscious practice on the part of the organization operationalised and summarizes the deliberate activities of its officers, employees, and communication practitioners to respond to environmental changes. This concept focuses descriptions of strategic communication as a goal or targeted communication effort, combined decision with knowledge and action based rounded (Bowman, C. and Asch, D., 1987; Hallahan, K. *et al.*, 2007). Figure 1 pictorially illustrates the hypothesized structural

Aaker (1997) has examined the growth and expansion of a theoretical framework of the brand personality dimensions to be a main phase for marketing researchers with the brands' symbolic meanings. She conceptualized and hypothesized the brand personality by measuring consumer perceptions of American brands and established a scale of 42 traits with five underlying dimensions (includes sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness) of brand personality (Aaker, 1997) (see Table 1). While Austin *et al.*, (2003) and also Murphy, *et al.*, (2007) claimed that the extent of the brand's personality will possible to be used effectively when combined data is in all groups of diversified products, however the scale may have important limits. Sung and Tinkham (2005) also examined that the dimensions construction of the brand personality replicated in Korea as well as the United States and China (Shu-Chuan Chua & Yongjun Sung, 2011).

relationships among constructs.

The study embarks on the following conceptualization of constructs hypotheses:

The way city brand (Bandar Melaka) perceives to have the human personality and the underlying dimensions of its personality.

H1: Aspects of the brand personality scale and trait are related to engagement with city brand personality (Bandar Melaka), providing a profile of how the brand is viewed by engaging stakeholders.

The brand personality scale fit in Bandar Melaka brand with (City Brand Personality of Bandar Melaka) Peacefulness, Malignancy, Sophistication, Uniqueness and Conservatism.

H2: Peacefulness has a significant positive effect on city brand personality (CBP)

H3: Malignancy has a positive influence on city brand personality (CBP)

H4: Sophistication will have significant positive effects on city brand personality (CBP)

H5: Uniqueness have a significant positive effect on city brand personality (CBP)

H6: Conservatism will have significant positive effects on city brand personality (CBP)

The evidences to determine the influence of City Branding Personality towards the development of Strategic Communication of Bandar Melaka.

H7: City Brand Personality (CBP) will positively influence the Bandar Melaka stakeholders towards the development of Strategic Communication

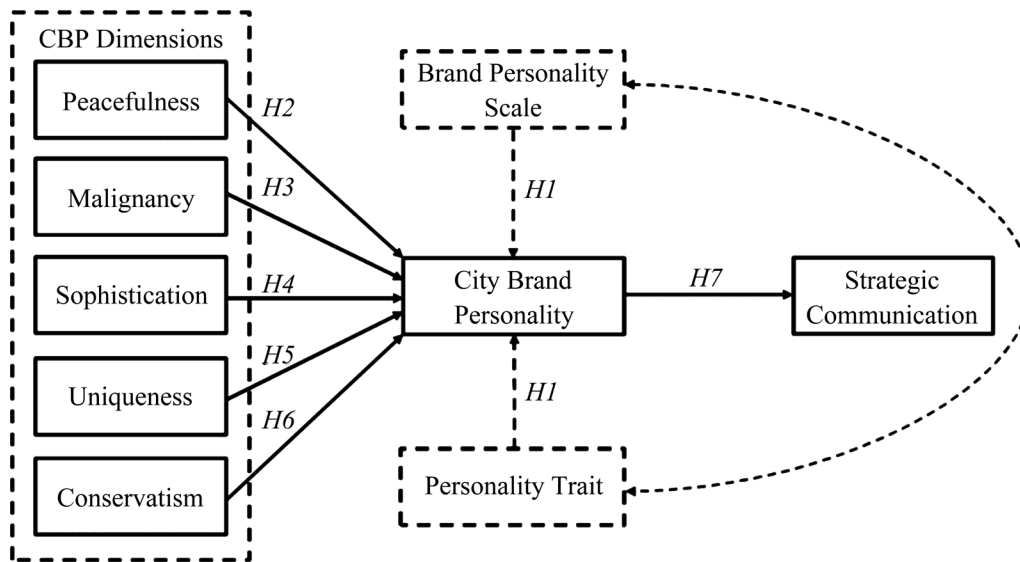


Figure 1
Theoretical Framework of Hypothesed Structural Model

METHOD AND DATA COLLECTION

The forty two (42) items of Aaker's BPS with additional items suggested by the experts, corporate communication managers, selected respondents and based on literature reviews assessed to find unsuitable to describe a city's personality trait in the first phase. One hundred and twenty (120) items were used in phase one and seventy (70) items were used in phase two afterward sorting with the factor analysis process. The study incorporated with quantitative research globally, opinion leaders and expert opinions, the selected sample chooses from 1000 selected internal stakeholders (communication managers, executive officers and non-executive officers) that are working in Majlis Bandaraya Melaka Bersejarah - MBMB, Majlis Perbandaran Hang Tuah Jaya - MPHTJ and Tourism Melaka in Tourism Promotion Division (*Bahagian Promosi Pelancongan*) at Melaka Chief Minister's Department (*Jabatan Ketua Menteri Melaka*) and relevant secondary sources for statistics that link to the city brand personality to assets, growth, the rise and expansion of the concepts. A multiple regression analysis also uses to discover the appeals of brand personality

for Malaysian city branding, with correlation analysis was to examine the relationship between the measuring determinants of city brand, while a Structural Equation Modelling plans to develop a model fix on determinants city brand dimensions attribute and strengthen the brand personality for strategic communication. It provides the action towards strategic communication based on city brand personality.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

As shown in Table 2, the highest top 10 personality items are completely from Malignancy, Peacefulness, and Sophistication which confirms the Malignancy, Peacefulness, and Sophistication character of Bandar Melaka: 13 belong to Peacefulness, 6 to Malignancy, 5 to Sophistication and Uniqueness respectively and 2 to Conservatism. One other finding is that the attributes related to the Conservatism dimension such as "Impatient" and "Religious" were placed in the middle mean score, which means that the respondents do not strongly associate a dimension of Conservatism in Bandar Melaka.

Table 2
Principal Component Analysis of Brand Personality Items

Personality Items	Mean	Factor Loadings				
		FAC 1	FAC 2	FAC 3	FAC 4	FAC 5
Factor 1: Peacefulness						
Strong	1.904	.778				
Good-natured	1.814	.739				
Realistic	1.848	.713				
Sincere	1.948	.707				

To be continued

Continued

Personality Items	Mean	Factor Loadings				
		FAC 1	FAC 2	FAC 3	FAC 4	FAC 5
Loyal	1.864	.697				
Successful	1.750	.655				
Imaginative	1.878	.633				
Respectable	1.748	.633				
Family-oriented	1.818	.619				
Hardworking	1.908	.618				
Clever	1.916	.615				
Sentimental	1.960	.600				
Peaceful	1.764	.548				
Factor 2: Malignancy						
Small-town	2.568		.786			
Nervous	2.560		.750			
Tough	2.350		.720			
Fickle	2.406		.690			
Determined	2.234		.638			
Reticent	2.450		.613			
Factor 3: Sophistication						
Glamorous	1.834			.658		
Leader	1.814			.595		
Extraordinary	1.884			.575		
Charming	1.804			.558		
Tender	1.884			.507		
Factor 4: Uniqueness						
Unique	1.590				.717	
Exciting	1.596				.716	
Popular	1.542				.715	
Attractive	1.590				.588	
Spirited	1.740				.539	
Factor 5: Conservatism						
Impatient	1.998					.664
Religious	1.860					.637

Note: City Brand Personality items were evaluated by 1: perfectly descriptive to 5: not descriptive at all. Varimax rotation with Kaiser Normalization was used.

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)

Structural equation modelling (SEM) was based on second-order factor carried out to the four hypothesis connections with five levels of concept test dimensions of the personality of the brand with the brand of the city (see Figure 2). The initial/original model was not within an acceptable range with the *NCI* (*df*) (4.60) being above 3, *RMSEA* (.126) not being within recommendations, and both *GFI* (.731) and *CFI* (.731) being under .90 (Hu and Bentler, 1999; Reisinger and Mavondo, 2006). A confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to assess the convergent and discriminant validity of the scale. And the chi-square values, the other indices used as the value of chi-square is known to be dependent on the sample size (Bollen, 1990). Among other indices, the goodness of mean fit index (*GFI*), adjusted goodness of fit index (*AGFI*), the comparative fit index (*CFI*) and the square error of approximation (*RMSEA*) and SRMR were examined (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Byrne, 2010). Due to size constraints of the sample (*n*-1000 out of *N*-1600) composite means were considered for all scales as new variables in the evaluation of the structural model

were used (Settoon, Bennett & Liden, 1996). The result means that was not enough for the first SEM model fit. After reviewing the items based on modification indices and determining the starting SEM, we found that the estimation of a standard indicator of the Conservatism dimension is low (<0.3). Then the indicator has been dropped, SEM was carried out again, the result shows that the model is improved fit significantly. The model has a χ^2 -value significant ($\chi^2 = 112.371$, *df* = 132, *PC* 0.001). An insufficient fit of data to the hypothetical model. Although the chi-square value is significant (*p* < 0.001), the use of the chi-square test as the sole measure of adaptation in an SEM model is not recommended due to its sensitivity to size sample (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Therefore, the model was fit to be reviewed by another fit indices; the fit indices (*GFI* = .96, *CFI* = .95, *IFI* = .95, *RMR* = 0.93, *RMSEA* = .062) suggests that the model fits the data satisfactorily (Hu and Bentler, 1999; Reisinger and Mavondo, 2006; Byrne, 2010). Ultimately trying to study a plausible model that the statistical power and explanatory, the interpretation of the results could enable the trust has to be established, was a success.

The results clearly indicate that the model should be accepted but need some sort of purification to fit the model of this research. The first step includes the use of confirmatory factor analysis, in order to develop an acceptable level. Testing a model to assess whether the observed variables really measure their underlying theoretical constructs and whether the measurement model provides acceptable evidence of sample data. Then, with the structural equation modelling using the method of

maximum likelihood, the dimensions were verified to see if they really measure the most important concept of brand personality. A confirmatory factor analysis was again used to test the sufficiency of the measurement model and can be joined to assess the discriminant validity of the scale of Brand Personality. A scale of four items for each of the four dimensions of the personality of the brand is chosen, the revised scale has a total of 17 items.

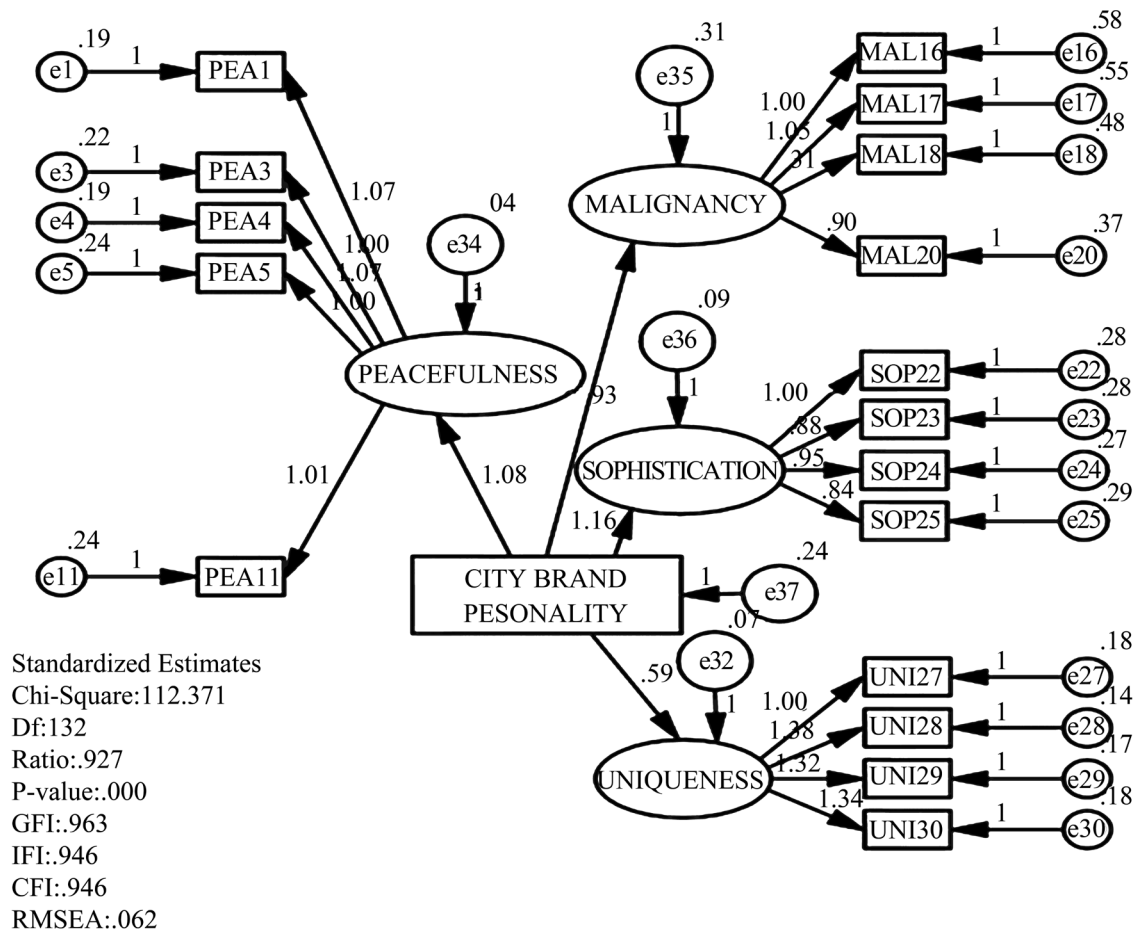


Figure 2
City Brand Personality (CBP) Revised Model

Table 3 shows the summary of the results of the measurement model, which comprise with the mean value, the correlation matrix, composite reliability, Cronbach's alpha, and the average variance extracted (AVE). Construct reliability was measured by estimating the AVE, which reveals the total amount of variance captured by the latent construct composite reliability (CR) and latent construct. It is also CR replicates to the internal consistency of the construct indicators while AVE reflects to the amount of variance captured by the indicators of the construct (Hair *et al.*, 2010). The discriminant validity is prepared by low correlations between constructs, and it is

clearly evident, when the correlation between the factors is less than 0.8 (Yanamandram & White 2006). The recognized measure of the critical ratio (*t*-value) items vary from .66 to 54.55 & loads of standard items ranged from 0.48 to 0.81, supporting the convergent validity of the constructs (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). The square root of the AVE value of each construct was greater than its correlations with other constructs (Fornell & Larcker 1981). Squared correlations between pairs of constructs what were less than the AVEs. The empirical support for the discriminant validity of measures.

Table 3
Result of Measurement Model

Dimensions	Traits	Completely Standardized Estimates*	Error Variance	Construct Reliability	AVE
Peacefulness	Strong	.756	.242	.54.556	.607
	Realistic	.809	.194		
	Sincere	.768	.222		
	Loyal	.808	.195		
	Clever	.755	.273		
Malignancy	Small-town	.707	.579	.775	.557
	Nervous	.766	.548		
	Tough	.735	.485		
	Determined	.774	.372		
Sophistication	Glamorous	.780	.278	.716	.593
	Leader	.784	.277		
	Extraordinary	.827	.267		
	Charming	.681	.291		
Uniqueness	Unique	.732	.187	.666	.501
	Exciting	.688	.136		
	Popular	.714	.168		
	Attractive	.689	.176		

* All completely standardized estimates are statistically significant at p value of 0.05 levels

As shown in Table 4, the discriminant is reached. The hypothesized multi-group model was well fitted across two groups, which demonstrates that it is possible to proceed to the next step where the measurement of factorial measurement tested in the whole group. In the future step, the measurement invariance was tested. There was no significant difference between the two groups approach of the difference in chi-square. The Chi-square difference 17 was lower than 112.371 at *p* value of 0.05

levels. The chi-square value provides a comparison point in determining the extent to which the structure is the same across the calibration and validation samples (Byrne, 2010). The results of the chi-square difference tests suggested that the pattern of factor loadings and factor variances were invariant in both groups. This illustrates that the identified of four dimensions can be applied across two different samples.

Table 4
Discriminant Validity

Constructs	Peacefulness	Malignancy	Sophistication	Uniqueness
Peacefulness	54.556*			
Malignancy	2.061	.555*		
Sophistication	3.448	.172	.416*	
Uniqueness	2.467	.065	.215	.266*

* The bold diagonal elements are the square root of the variance shared between the constructs and their measures. Off diagonal elements are the correlations between constructs

CONCLUSION

The results showed that the size ruggedness originally developed by Aaker (1997), was not reliable or valid (H1), and the other four dimensions have been refined by a confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation models, and 24 items were remained in the pilot study. The factors were named 'Peacefulness' (factor 1), 'Malignancy' (factor2), 'Sophistication' (factor 3), 'Uniqueness' (factor 4) and 'Conservatism' (factor 5). Compared to Aaker's scale, the "Sophistication" dimension was retained into two items; "Glamorous" and "Charming". "Ruggedness" was not retained in the Malaysian context. The "Sincerity" dimension was narrowed down to "Peacefulness", "Competence" to "Malignancy" and "Excitement" to "Uniqueness". Thus, it seems the scale of 24 items brand personality to work

better in the city branding among internal stakeholders. The results show that the model does not fully apply to the Aaker brand personality and apply the new concept of brand personality which has a strong cultural component as a moderator, but this hypothesis needs through future research in a different city and country are reviewed.

This research aims to have the human personality and to know the underlying dimensions of its personality. To this end, a study of the brands of the city to the existing framework was conducted. The results of the study indicate that personality traits define and differentiate the brands are the same way with the brands of conventional products. For example, further analysis shows, on the basis of these results that respondents of Bandar Melaka perceive Unique, Exciting and Attractive. A more comprehensive analysis of the brand personality for the Bandar Melaka is clearly possible, but not incorporated

in this research, because it is beyond the scope of this study. The results also showed respondents believe Bandar Melaka is Peacefulness (H2), Malignancy (H3), Sophistication (H4) and also Uniqueness (H5) and a little bit had no idea about the Conservatism dimension (H6). This study identified four dimensions of brand personality for the Melaka City. Therefore need adjectives with negative meanings not work to test human personality and usually not included in the questionnaires. However, the evaluation of the dimensions of brand personality may be different, because this method does

not distinguish a self-assessment of the subject but is quite similar to the assessment of the personality of the other person. Therefore, the study suggests that the city can also be identified with their negative and positive personality traits, similar to humans, and this assumption and finding is an important impact of research in the communication literature. The finding implies that City Brand Personality (CBP) positively influences the Bandar Melaka stakeholders towards the development of Strategic Communication (H7). The figure 3 shows the Bandar Melaka city brand personality attributes.

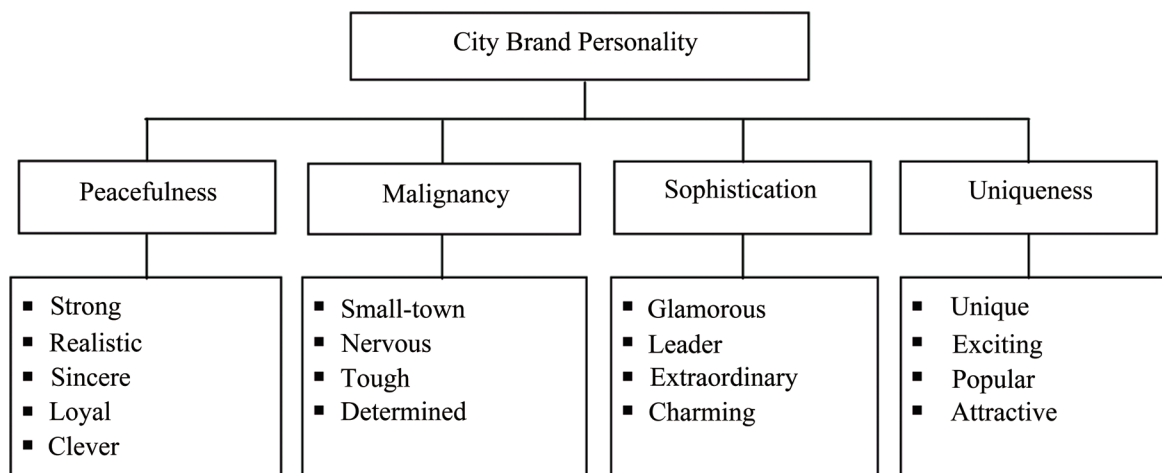


Figure 3
The Bandar Melaka City Brand Personality Attributes

One of these four dimensions - Sophistication - is consistent with U.S. dimensions of brand personality (Aaker, 1997). It showed in view of the subsequent research in Japan, Russia, Chilian, China and Spain (Aaker *et al.*, 2001), congruences become stronger in relation to other factors in this study. For the reason that of the people tendency, socially appropriate responses, self-reporting leads to effects that may be being influenced by a number of researchers to designate this as a most important flaw in the personality study (Bowen *et al.*, 2002; MD Kaplan *et al.*, 2010).

To consider important measures are brand awareness and brand loyalty (as measured at the individual level) and market share (in terms of product-measures) and brand image. As a final point, potential moderators of the effect of brand personality (e.g., familiarity contribution, the type of product and the type of goods) evaluated so that the manager conscious of the factors that are deliberately limited or to improve the efficiency of the brand personality. That does not mean it does not have the scientific study of the personality of the brand, but the research so far absorbed the analysis of personality instead effects, we know that brand personality, but if the numbers added. Therefore it is extremely important to carefully consider the empirical process in detail, as the brand's personality framework was that the dimensions of

personality developed, and how to limit the generalization of the results of the brand personality.

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