



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***KEY DIMENSIONS OF CITY BRAND PERSONALITY OF
MELAKA HISTORIC CITY, MALAYSIA***

MUHAMAD FAZIL AHMAD

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PERSONALITY OF MELAKA HISTORIC CITY,
MALAYSIA**

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MELAKA HISTORIC CITY, MALAYSIA**

By

MUHAMAD FAZIL AHMAD

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in
Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

October 2015

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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By

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October 2015

Chair: Zulhamri Abdullah, PhD

Faculty: Modern Languages and Communication

A city can seek to take a particular brand personality through various branding strategies. Nevertheless, people may interpret the communicated messages through the prism of their perceptual experiences and, therefore, might react differently to a brand message as to what it was initially designed for. This research attempts to understand a measure on city branding pertaining to Melaka based on the Aaker's brand personality scale. The study specifically proposes the key dimensions of a city brand personality in promoting Melaka Bandaraya Bersejarah (Historic City) through its strategic communication campaign.

Political instability, a decline of public trust in the government and an environmental pollution are some of the issues concerned in the development of a city branding in the state of Melaka. Theoretically, little attention has been given to the application of brand personality in city branding in Asia as a whole, and specifically in Malaysia.

The current study in four phases, employed quantitative methods and was conducted entirely in Melaka City. The following methods were used in the data collection: library research method, descriptive survey and structured interview. In the first phase, library research and expert interview methods were used to secure a comprehensive yet appropriate dictionary of terms by collecting and compiling synonyms of Aaker's (1997) five brand personality dimensions. In the second phase, a pre-test study was conducted to identify and verify the key dimensions of city branding. In the third phase, a survey using questionnaires (the main study) was employed applying Aaker's brand personality scale. Finally, in the fourth phase, structured interviews were conducted to complement the results of the main study. Using structural equation modelling, the study investigated a model fit for city-brand personality dimensions of Melaka City.

The results showed that 'size ruggedness' originally developed by Aaker, was not reliable or valid, while the other four dimensions were refined using a confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation model. The factors were named 'Peacefulness' (factor 1), 'Malignancy' (factor 2), 'Sophistication' (factor 3), 'Uniqueness' (factor 4) and 'Conservatism' (factor 5). Compared to Aaker's scale, the "Sophistication" dimension was retained in 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 (opinion leaders, communication managers, executives and non-executive officers).

Theoretically, this study contributes to the existing literature (Communication) on brand personality as well as touches upon the theories of brand identification, preference and trust. The results of this study have a similar meaning in Japan, the United States (USA), Chile, Russia, Turkey and Spain especially in ‘sophistication’ dimension. The finding also proposes brand personality may indeed reflect the Neuroticism (Emotional Stability) dimensions of the “Big Five Model”. Essentially, the results showed that the revised brand personality is in dire need of being tailored to Asian values. In fact, this study revealed that a cultural component is a strong predictor of brand personality. Perhaps a measure can be employed as a policy by policymakers to re-brand Melaka City strategically. The substantial contribution of this study is the city brand personality has been successfully developed in a Malaysian context. Thus, this study may enrich current literature on branding and city branding, specifically in the Asian context.

Keywords: *Brand Personality, City Brand Personality, City Branding, City Image, Melaka City*

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**DIMENSI UTAMA PERSONALITI JENAMA BANDAR RAYA BAGI MELAKA
BANDAR RAYA BERSEJARAH, MALAYSIA**

Oleh

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Sesebuah bandar raya boleh menetapkan personaliti jenama tertentu melalui pelbagai strategi penjenamaan. Walau bagaimanapun, masyarakat mungkin mentafsirkan maksud yang disampaikan melalui sudut pengalaman persepsi mereka. Oleh itu, ia mungkin memberikan reaksi yang berbeza terhadap tujuan asal mesej jenama tersebut. Penyelidikan ini berusaha untuk memahami langkah penjenamaan bandar raya terhadap Melaka berdasarkan skala personaliti jenama Aaker. Kajian ini secara khusus mengusulkan dimensi utama personaliti jenama bandar raya dalam mempromosikan Melaka Bandar Raya Bersejarah melalui kempen komunikasi yang strategik.

Keadaan politik yang tidak stabil, kepercayaan masyarakat yang semakin menurun terhadap kerajaan, dan pencemaran alam sekitar adalah antara isu yang berkaitan dengan pembangunan penjenamaan bandar raya di negeri Melaka. Dari segi teorinya, tidak banyak perhatian diberikan kepada personaliti jenama dalam menjenamakan bandar raya di Asia amnya, dan di Malaysia khususnya.

Kajian terkini yang dijalankan dalam empat fasa dan menggunakan kaedah kuantitatif ini dilangsungkan sepenuhnya di Bandar Raya Melaka. Kaedah berikut digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data: kaedah penyelidikan perpustakaan, soal selidik deskriptif, dan temu bual teratur. Dalam fasa pertama, kaedah penyelidikan perpustakaan dan temu bual bersama pakar telah digunakan bagi mendapatkan daftar istilah yang lengkap dan sesuai dengan mengumpulkan dan menyusun kata sinonim bagi lima dimensi personaliti jenama Aaker (1997). Dalam fasa kedua, kajian praujian dijalankan untuk mengenal pasti dan mengesahkan dimensi utama penjenamaan bandar raya. Dalam fasa ketiga, tinjauan menggunakan soal selidik (kajian utama) dilaksanakan dengan menggunakan skala personaliti jenama Aaker. Seterusnya, dalam fasa keempat, temu bual tersusun telah dijalankan untuk melengkapkan keputusan kajian utama. Model struktur persamaan digunakan untuk menyelidik model yang sesuai dengan dimensi personaliti jenama bandar raya untuk Bandar Raya Melaka.

Keputusan yang diperoleh menunjukkan bahawa “kekasaran saiz” yang asalnya dibangunkan oleh Aaker tidak meyakinkan atau sah, manakala empat dimensi yang lain diteliti dengan menggunakan analisis faktor pengesahan dan model persamaan

berstruktur. Faktor tersebut dinamakan sebagai “Keamanan” (faktor 1), “Malignansi” (faktor 2), “Kecanggihan” (faktor 3), “Keunikan” (faktor 4), dan “Konservatif” (faktor 5). Berbanding skala Aaker, dimensi “Kecanggihan” dikekalkan dalam dua item, iaitu “Menarik” dan “Menawan”. “Kelasakan” tidak dikekalkan dalam konteks Malaysia. Dimensi “Keikhlasan” ditumpukan kepada “Keamanan”, “Kecekapan” kepada “Malignansi”, dan “Keseronokan” kepada “Keunikan”. Oleh itu, skala bagi 24 item dalam personaliti jenama kelihatan lebih berkesan dalam menjenamakan bandar raya dalam kalangan pihak yang berkepentingan (pemimpin wawasan, pengurus komunikasi, pegawai eksekutif dan bukan eksekutif).

Dari segi teorinya, kajian ini menyumbang kepada bidang ilmu (Komunikasi) yang sedia ada berkenaan personaliti jenama, serta menyentuh teori pengenalan jenama, keutamaan, dan kepercayaan. Keputusan kajian ini mempunyai persamaan dengan keputusan yang diperoleh di Jepun, Amerika Syarikat, Chile, Rusia, Turki dan Sepanyol, terutamanya dalam dimensi ‘Kecanggihan’. Dapatan tersebut juga menyarankan bahawa personaliti jenama menggambarkan dimensi Kebimbangan (Kestabilan Emosi) bagi “Big Five Model”. Amnya, keputusan tersebut menunjukkan bahawa personaliti jenama yang dikaji perlu diselaraskan dengan nilai-nilai Asia. Selain itu, kajian ini turut mendedahkan bahawa komponen budaya ialah penentu utama bagi personaliti jenama. Oleh itu, para penggubal dasar boleh mempertimbangkan untuk melaksanakan satu langkah sebagai sebuah polisi untuk menjenamakan semula Bandar Raya Melaka secara strategik. Penyumbang utama daripada kajian ini ialah kejayaan pembangunan personaliti jenama bandar raya ini dalam konteks Malaysia. Oleh itu, kajian ini akan memperkaya keilmuan semasa dalam bidang penjenamaan bandar raya, khususnya dalam konteks Asia.

Keywords: *Personaliti jenama, Personaliti Jenama Bandar, Penjenamaan Bandar, Imej Bandaraya, Bandaraya Melaka Bersejarah*

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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 16th October 2015 to conduct the final examination of Muhamad Fazil Bin Ahmad on his thesis entitled “Key dimensions of City Brand Personality of Melaka Historic City, Malaysia” in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U. (A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Doctor of Philosophy.

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TO

The Ummah

“A brand is a name, term, sign, symbol/design, or a combination of them intended to identify the goods and services of one seller/group of sellers and to differentiate them from other sellers. Branding is not about getting your target market to choose you over the competition, but it is about getting your prospects to see you as the only one that provides a solution to their problem.”

(American Marketing Association)

For any inquiries regarding the study of city brand personality, please feel free to contact us at the below-mentioned address:

<https://www.facebook.com/reputation.index>

<http://fazilahmad.blogspot.com/>

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In recent years, both brand and its branding have become major issues in the industry and in academia. The concept of a brand is a product or service that is related to an idea or image of consumers that they communicate and connect with. The definition of brand was first introduced by the American Marketing Association in 1960 and adopted by many specialists in the field such as Aaker and Keller. They defined brand as the company, which owns the idea, or image that is recognized by the name, logo, slogan or design of its company (Kapferer, 1992, 1997, 1999, 2001, 2004, 2007, 2008; Keller, 1992, 1993, 1998, 2001, 2003, 2008). The brand and branding activity is not necessarily the same. It is important to know what brand is if people want to understand brand (Aaker, 1991, 1995, 2000). The notion of brand is a late arrival and is relatively new, moved by some of the advantages and features of the brand, it especially insists on development and the activity itself i.e. the establishment, maintenance and expansion of a brand which is primarily based on perceptions of a company or personal knowledge of an organization. Brand and branding concepts are important to the marketing and communications fields. The difference between branding and brand activity is 'the brand' refers to the overall effect that the submission of products/services has on the client or customer. It is an effective combination of the elements of business and products and it goes on to support the language, visual and other aesthetic components. For example, a supplier who offers a customer exclusive rights to use a brand. It is fundamentally different from patents and copyrights (other assets), which are entrenched with an expiry date (Kotler & Armstrong, 2004). While, 'branding' is a process of developing strategies that businesses want their brand to make choices which support their brand goals and realize the scale of several components to meet their company goals.

Currently, the most important concept of branding is greater than ever before. The concept is something similar to an idea or a perceived image, often characterized by a service or product and marketed to people, with many other companies offering the same service or product. After continuous use of the brand, consumers feel confident with them (Aaker, 1991). The brand is the key driver for a successful service organization. It is important for brand development to have services because of the difficulty in differentiating products without physical differences. According to Einwiller (2001), a brand creates an entity that sets it apart from other generic products. Moreover, intense competition in the branding service also sells well. Branding plays an important role in the service sector because powerful brands increase the confidence of customers when purchasing an intangible product (Keller, 1993). It provides the ability for consumers to visualize a service. Strong brands render the best service to customers and help to better visualize and understand intangible products. Understanding brand value in the context of communication is seen as trying to define the relationship between customers and brands. Advertising professionals profess that branding is not

only a brand but also holds a strong reputation and a variety of standards that the company or building is likely to exceed (Allen, 2007). The brand is also an important part of online trading as branding allows companies to build their reputation and to expand on the original products and services, and insert the amount of income generated through the single brand.

Branding is also a way to build a significant asset that has a good communication strategy. If a company does not have a good communication strategy, or a less brilliant communication strategy, it cannot help the branding process. Branding shows the expectations placed on the products and services of the companies and may encourage the company to exceed these expectations or produce better products and services for the marketplace (Kotler & Gertner, 2002) since the message is essentially communicated with consistent information. In highlighting a city, it means that the brand should communicate a consistent personality and the difference between personality and perceived personality conveyed by the people of the city can build a strong and positive image about the city (Skinner, 2008). In other words, the brand should honestly communicate the personality of the product or service.

Meanwhile in this study, tourism refers to activities such as sightseeing or travelling to a destination which is more than 50 miles from home for more than a year because of recovery or other non-formal agenda. According to the World Travel Organisation, which is a UN agency, the word “tour” also refers to activities related to services. Tourism has become a popular pastime and a major source of income for most countries around the world (Edgell et al., 2008; Melanie, 2009). As tourism lovers, countries have maintained and updated their tourism services from time to time and consider tourism as one of their main sources of income. Melaka City should be considered for development as a tourism site since it is listed and recognised by UNESCO as one of the World Heritage Sites since 7th July 2008. Since its recognition by the world-renowned organization, the people of Melaka in particular, are responsible for maintaining the city of Melaka and its unique cultural heritage, art and historical sites (Syed Hassan et al., 2009).

Melaka Bandaraya Bersejarah (Melaka City) is the capital of the state of Melaka in Malaysia. It is also called the “Historic City of Malaysia”. Melaka City is an example of a Malaysian city with a strong personal brand. It carries a strong branding by itself because it is not just well known among Malaysians and local visitors but also to people around the world. Most people would immediately form associations when they hear about Melaka City i.e., “Visit Historic Melaka means Visit Malaysia”. These associations might be good and desirable for them. No historian has successfully determined the year the city was founded, though some say it was established somewhere between 1376 and 1400. It has unique public buildings, churches, squares and fortifications, reflecting the early stages of Melaka history from the 15th century of the Malay Sultanate until the Portuguese and Dutch colonization in the early 16th century. In Melaka, the visitor enters a world of exotic Asian treasures filled with European culture and characteristics (Ahmad, 1998).

During the last ten years, a new area in branding has emerged - the branding of cities. Cities have always had a personal brand, but it has not been made cognizant until recently when the concept was 'developed'. Many marketers have made an effort to take pictures of a city's attractions, as strong brands build a city, and communicate the positive personality of the city by often borrowing methods and techniques from the business environment and the brand image of companies (Moilanen & Rainisto, 2009). The question is why cities and the respective authorities want to have a strong brand. Does a strong brand support the economic development of a city? In most cases, a strong city branding brings more people and businesses to the city.

Literature on location branding and city branding mostly focuses on how to build a brand (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). This was seen in terms such as 'nation branding', 'region branding', 'destination branding' and 'city branding' (Morgan et al., 2002; Boisen et al., 2011). However, they did not care much about these and other evaluation efforts in the analysis of quantitative real-effects focused on the city (Allan, 2006). The aim of this study is to investigate whether a city has a strong city brand that has a measurable impact. The study also aims to determine the assumption validity that a strong city brand is associated to an attractive city and to check the internal publics, such as officers, employees, managers and directors of the company and its owners or shareholders.

1.2 Background of Study

Most countries have an international reputation and brand personality that is relatively stable and consistent over time and space. The issue of branding affects and influences the country's population due to the widespread internationalization of city branding. When people trust, respect and have strong feelings about a particular place or city, they would most likely assist people from these particular places or cities during an emergency or crisis. It is the wish of every place or city to have a positive image. This is not far from every organization's dream either. Organizations aside, let us instead focus on a positive image that is important from a branding perspective. Until recently, a city's brand was not perceived as an image because of the narrow perception linked to the challenge.

Some studies have attempted to investigate the possibilities of the intended use of branding as a strategy for communication and city or location management guidance towards city branding management. The established concepts and methods are borrowed from the general idea of branding, especially the emerging terms for the most popular brands of a company. The research deliberates the central concepts that are relevant to the branding of a city (Kavaratzis & Hatch; forthcoming, 2013) and tries a general framework for the development and administration of a city brand (Hankinson, 2001; Hankinson, 2004; Kavaratzis, 2004) and assesses the relevant tools for specific branding to brand a city (Trueman et al., 2004). Applying the concept of corporate branding and specific methods established in this field as an alternative to location branding is considered the most recent development in its field (Kavaratzis, 2004; Trueman et al., 2004).

The arrivals of tourists to Melaka had decreased for the first four months of 2014. A total of 4,121,854 tourists visited the state, compared with 4,128,365 the same period in 2013; a decrease of 6,511 visitors or 0.2%. This reduction was due to the decline of foreign tourists to Melaka, a total of 136,762 people or 10.3%. However, the arrival of domestic tourists increased compared to the same period in 2013, a total of 130,251 people or 4.7%.

Five countries, which represent the largest foreign tourist market are China (258,905 persons or 21.7%), followed by Singapore (246,528 persons or 20.6%), Indonesia (128,412 persons or 10.7%), Taiwan (59,940 persons or 5.0%), and Japan (40,896 persons or 3.4%). China remains the biggest market for foreign tourists for the period.

In terms of breakdown of domestic tourists visiting Melaka, Johor continued to outperform the shares of domestic tourists in tourist arrivals registered a total of 315,567 people or 10.8%, followed by Selangor with a total of 397,549 people or 13.6%, Kuala Lumpur in third with a total of 336,955 of tourists or 11.5%, Kelantan fourth with a total of 187,173 tourists people or 6.4% and Negeri Sembilan in fifth place with a total of 167,446 (5.7%) tourists.

Based on the Melaka health tourism statistic 2014, for the first four months of 2014, domestic tourists who seek health care in three major private hospitals in Melaka are 143,646 persons or 81.6% compared to 32,375 (18.4%) foreign health tourists in 2013. The main contributor is the presence of Indonesian health tourists (29,754 persons or 91.9%).

For the top tourist attractions in Melaka, Melaka River Cruise is the most popular tourist attraction with 278,766 visitors or 16.8%, followed by Muzium Negeri Melaka (246,201 persons or 14.8%), Memorial Kemerdekaan recorded 156,957 people or 9.4% tourists and the fourth most visited landmark is Menara Taming Sari with 153,795 persons or 9.2%. A total of 1,313,985 (79.0%) domestic visitors visited Melaka compared to foreign tourists amounted 348,881 persons or 21.0%.

Indirectly, the State Government's efforts to increase the number of tourist attractions in addition to the existing ones have contributed to the drastic increase of tourists to the state. They also organized various tourism events that help promoting the tourism industry in Melaka. It is believed that with continuous efforts, the Melaka State Government's target to attract 15 million tourists in the year 2015 will become a reality. Indeed, this study was conducted in Melaka, a key city in Malaysia and a sample of a city brand as viewed by opinion leaders, communication managers, executive officers and non-executive officers in the Majlis Bandaraya Melaka Bersejarah, Majlis Perbandaran Hang Tuah Jaya and Tourism Melaka, Malaysia for verifying the approach of the brand personality scale. Melaka City, a World Heritage Site (Bandar Melaka Tapak Warisan Dunia), is a capital city chosen because it has been designated as an emerging city of historical significance and conducive to visit. UNESCO had declared Melaka City as a World Heritage Site 'Melaka City - Tapak Warisan Dunia' on 7th July 2008. It has its own identity and exhibits the early period of Malaysia's historical background.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Political instability, a decline in public trust in the government, and an environmental pollution are some of the issues concerned in the development of city branding in the state of Melaka. The study focuses on multiple components of brand personality as stated in the literature, such as affective, cognitive, overall image, identity and personality as well as key constructs found in brand literature, namely city brand personality. The study will look into the key dimensions of brand personality dimensions associated with city branding that applies specifically in the context of Melaka City's strategic communication. Aaker (1997) proposes that a brand personality with five dimensions of scales (BPS) as naturally common and brand personality can be used to compete in product groups and cultures. As brand personality is based on 'human characteristics' (Aaker 1997, p.347); it can be developed to embody both product-related and non-product related components (Sung & Tinkham, 2005). Aaker, Martinez and Garolera (2001) stated that brand personality dimensions should be adjusted when applying Aaker's BPS to different cultures. The Aaker's brand personality scale (BPS) has been employed as a basis when identifying underlying dimensions of brand personality in previous literature (Yi & La, 2002; Lim et al., 2003; Han & Lee, 2008; Usakli & Baloglu, 2010).

A distinctive brand personality has been argued to be important in creating a unique and favorable memory for developing reputation of the organization; this in turn enhances brand equity (Aaker, 1997; Park and Jung, 2010; Sung and Tinkham, 2005; Yi and La, 2002). The Aaker's (1997) study has attracted a large amount of attention from scholars in consumer behavior research. Aaker's (1997) Brand Personality Scale (BPS) includes "sincerity" (down-to-earth, honest, wholesome, and cheerful), "excitement" (daring, spirited, imaginative, and up-to-date), "competence" (reliable, intelligent, and successful), "sophistication" (upper class and charming), and "ruggedness" (outdoorsy and tough). Since then, the concept of brand personality has been applied to various cultures and areas including communication strategy.

As brand personality is based on 'human characteristics' (Aaker 1997, p.347), it can be developed to embody both product-related components and components not related to the product (Sung and Tinkham, 2005). McDonalds was considered by customers as a "competent" and "exciting" brand; while Burger King was considered as an "outdoorsy" brand (Siguaw, Matlila and Austin, 1999). Although applying the concept of brand personality to tourism literature is still a relatively new idea, tourism academics have agreed that it is useful to apply the concept of brand personality to destination marketing (Ekinici and Hosany, 2006; Usakli and Baloglu, 2010). Brand personality was introduced to tourism in Ekinici and Hosany's (2006) study where the applicability of the brand personality scale was tested in the context of tourism destinations. Since then, Aaker's (1997) Brand Personality Scale (BPS) has been employed when identifying a destination personality and investigating relationships between destination personality and tourist behaviors (Han and Lee, 2008; Murphy, Benchendorff, and Moscardo, 2007; Usakli and Baloglu, 2010).

There have been questions addressed in applying Aaker's BPS model to the different cultures (Aaker and Martinez and Garolera, 2001; Sung and Tinkham, 2005). Austin, Siguaw and Mattila (2003) addressed the likeliness of generalizing scale items. For example, the item of "Western" was noticed to be not suitable in non-Western cultures in Azoulay and Kapferer's (2003) study. They questioned, "Why are the equivalent terms 'Asian' or 'Latin' absent? Are the brands of the world either Western or not? (p.152)" They also argued that some items, such as 'feminine' of Aaker's model, cannot be generally applied to in different cultures as their connotations may differ between cultures. This is consistent with previous studies in tourism where Aaker's BPS was employed to measure destination personality; some items of the BPS were found to be irrelevant when applied to destination personality (Hosany, Ekinci and Uysal, 2006). For example, among the original forty-two items; only twenty seven were retained in Hosany et al.'s (2006) study; twenty items were retained in Murphy et al.'s (2007) study. Moreover, different personality dimensions have been identified according to respective countries (Murphy, Moscardo and Benckendorff, 2007; Uskli and Baloglu, 2010).

Given that it can be said that Aaker's BPS needs to be modified when applying it to different cultures as the perceptions of personality are culturally specific. However, little effort has been made to apply Aaker's BPS to the context of Melaka City. Little is known about how culturally specific items and dimensions should be used when applying Aaker's BPS to the Malaysian perspective. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to provide a city personality scale that can be applied specifically to the strategic communication perspective. This study aims to answer three research questions; first, What are the personal attributes of brand personality of Melaka City perceived by the internal stakeholders?; Secondly, What are primary dimensions of city brand personality of the Melaka City? And thirdly, What are Melaka City's experiences in managing city brand personality? Following previous studies (Siguaw, Mattila, and Austin, 1999; Ekinci and Hosany, 2006), the study has constructed on the basis of Aaker's (1997) BPS to develop a city personality scale. By doing so, it enables researcher to test the applicability of Aaker's scale in the Malaysian context and also it facilitates comparisons with past research (Ekinci and Hosany, 2006). The development of this scale will give city communication managers insights how to present and promote the Melaka City for the people. By identifying personality dimensions, communication managers will gain a better insight into internal and external stakeholders.

In the case of Melaka City in this study, the cultural diversity stands out as an outlet for the city and therefore needs to be considered from several viewpoints. In this study, two main perspectives would be discussed; first, Melaka City's planning and development of brand personality (communication side) and second, the way city brand (Melaka City) is perceived to have a humanistic personality. Therefore, the study could help in efforts to make Melaka City a more cordial city, to formulate a distinct and attractive brand personality, and to communicate this personality more efficiently.

This study focuses on the internal stakeholders of Melaka City Municipal Council who are directly involved in strategic city planning and development, such as Majlis Bandaraya Melaka Bersejarah (MBMB), Majlis Perbandaran Hang Tuah Jaya (MPHTJ) and Tourism Melaka with the motto "Melaka Maju Negeriku Sayang, Negeri Bandar

Teknologi Hijau”. This study examines the city brand based on Melaka City’s personality and identifies the personality based on the communication perspective towards development and prosperity of Melaka City (Bandaraya Bersejarah) for strategic communication. It integrates several mechanisms of city brand conceptualized in the literature such as affective, cognitive, and the overall brand and the most important construct in the literature was city brand personality (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999b; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Ekinici & Hosany, 2006; Hosany, Ekinici & Uysal, 2006; Ekinici, Sirakaya-Turk, Baloglu, 2007; Safak Sahina & Seyhmus Baloglua, 2011). The country of origin is the most significant demographic factor over affective and cognitive brand determinants (Beerli & Martin, 2004). The brand differences caused by ethnicity might contribute towards many theoretical and practical implications. This information could be used by the government, the city municipal council and other city authorities to adjust the advertisement adoption efforts, channels, touring packages as well as the destination offerings, which finally provide people with a satisfied outing due to the city branding process.

1.3.1 Research Questions

This research aims to identify a set of rules intended to bring about a certain result by exploring key dimensions for the city’s branding based on brand personality. It would reflect the outcome of the verifying approach on strategic communication that affects city branding, Hence, this study aims to answer the following questions:

- RQ1: What are the personal attributes of brand personality of Melaka City perceived by the internal stakeholders?*
- RQ2: What are primary dimensions of city brand personality of the Melaka City?*
- RQ3: What are Melaka City’s experiences in managing city brand personality?*

1.3.2 Research Objectives

The general objective of this study is to determine the key dimensions of city-brand personality that apply specifically in the context of Melaka City’s strategic communication. While, the specific objectives of this study are:

- RO1: To provide attributes of brand personality of Melaka City.*
- RO2: To identify the primary dimensions of city brand personality of Melaka City.*
- RO3: To determine Melaka City’s experiences in managing city brand personality.*

Today, people in a particular city not only want to be courted by the place they choose to live in but they are eager to establish a multifaceted global relationship there. They expect the city brand to play a positive and active role in their lives. Therefore, the strategic goal of brand personality is to create a strong and meaningful bond with the people and thus become part of their lives, memories and as one of the most important relationships in their social network.

1.4 Significance of Study

This research is a new field that has not been fully investigated, particularly in the Malaysian context. To explore the key dimensions of city brand based on brand personality concepts is relatively new. This academic study would unveil key development strategies that could influence the development and prosperity of Melaka City. This effort increases existing knowledge and literature on the development and success of Melaka City, particularly in the planning and implementation of developed city status with good brand personality. It also serves as a supplement to earlier research on Melaka City. This research also aims to analyse the deliberative aspects of brand personality and to discuss the possibility of using these deliberative aspects to measure the development and determinants of the city brand of Melaka City. Do the city brand determinants include any deliberative qualities of brand personality? Can the city brand determinants increase the legitimacy of Melaka City's municipal authority and Tourism Melaka?

Furthermore, existing literature in this study would enhance development in this area, where necessary. The integrated framework design is to detect if the developers had included Melaka City's sustainable and holistic brand personality traits and the overall development of the city. Although Melaka City's local government said that they had developed the comparative analysis of 31 city brand personality scales (see Table: 4.14.2, p. 209) and reached a consensus based on the perception of opinion leaders, communication managers, executive and non-executive officers, there are still numerous other criteria for the development of city brand personality. Further improvements in Melaka City have to take into consideration its credibility as a pioneer of city brand personality in Malaysia.

Based on the progress of research by Melaka City's local government on the development and prosperity of the city, there is no clear framework to integrate the results. Therefore, to integrate this academic study, the results from development strategies and planning indicators and development priorities study, as well as the development strategies study were combined to explore the city's branding. All the results were evaluated to determine if the current trends in Melaka City actually met the criteria such as that of developed countries with brand personality, to find the criteria used by different cities in the world and areas of development that the local government should pay more attention in future. The research gathered literature in city brand and brand personality. Therefore, it provides the first-hand information which future research could develop on this area.

1.5 Keywords Definitions

According to Sullivan (2001), the operational definitions are to “indicate the precise procedures or operations to be followed when measuring a concept” (p. 35). While Neuman (2003) defines it as: “operationalization links to a conceptual definition of a specific set of measurement techniques or procedures and the construct's operational definition” (p. 174). The operationalization of keywords definition and terms in this study are as follows:

Table 1.5.1: Keywords Definition

Keywords	Definition
Melaka City	The capital city of Melaka (Malaysia).
Branding	It refers to the process involved in creating a unique name, sign, symbol, colour combination, slogan or other relevant attributes used to differentiate a city from its competitors mainly through advertising campaigns with a consistent theme. It is the identity of a specific city. A protected brand name legally is called like a brand name / trademark. The word branding has continued to develop to include personality, identity and image; it affects the personal character of a city.
Brand Personality	It is a kind of human attribute that the brand would have if it were human.
City Brand Personality	The set of human characteristics associated with the brand of the city. It is the method of how the brand expresses itself and behaves.
City	It refers to a relatively large and permanent urban settlement with the unique attribute and it is bigger than a town. In Malaysia, a city is a place that has succeeded in obtaining the precise right to develop a city. In this research, the city refers to Melaka City.
City Image	It can be defined as the sum of beliefs, ideals and impressions people have about a certain place. A place making approach can help define the existing identity of a city through social, cultural and place-based research as well as looking at the community's aspirations for the city's evolution.
Country	It refers to a nation state, which is a geographical area considered to be the actual territory of a sovereign state, or a smaller, or former, governmental entity asserting ultimate control over a geographical area. Usually, but not always, a country coincides with a free area and is linked with a nation, state or government.
Human Personality	Human personality is used to describe brand personality. Human personality traits are not only an implicit (perceived) component, but also a real (objective) component that is independent of being perceived by persons who possess them.
Nation	It refers to a historically constituted, stable community of people, on the basis of a common language and similar to each other in territory, economic life and psychological manifestation that collectively form a common culture.
Strategic Communication	Strategic communication can be defined as a full orchestration of actions, words and images, and the need to

	monitor, measure, analyse, and evaluate. This means infusing communication efforts with an agenda and a plan. In general, this plan is to promote the brand of an organization, urge people to do certain actions, or advocate particular legislation.
Uniqueness of Melaka City	Melaka City is unique in its architecture, culture and food. The Dutch and the Portuguese colonized it in the past and it had a close relationship with the Chinese empire; it has a lot of unique architecture and culture.

1.6 Delimitations

Semi-structured interviews with prominent scholars were set to validate the research survey for the actual study, as well as to pre-test the survey questionnaire to confirm the items used. The study checked through the pilot study regarding the validity and reliability of the research instrument. The survey was personally administered to the respondents by the researcher. This was to determine the strength of the concepts and help verify the consistency and accuracy of the research instrument through a structured interview with opinion leaders. This method provides some general guidelines for future researchers on how to develop city brand personality in relation to other cities. The pre-viewed validity and reliability procedures used and results are reported in the next chapter of the study.

1.7 The Organization of the Study

This study is divided into five main chapters: Introduction (Chapter One), Literature Review and Theoretical Framework (Chapter Two), Research Methodology (Chapter Three), Results and Discussions (Chapter Four), and Summary, Conclusion and Implications (Chapter Five). These five chapters are operationalized through the four-phased research process in a slightly interactive manner.

Chapter One: Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to emphasize the importance of city brand and brand personality which allow readers to witness a few examples of how certain cities have been currently branded. This is followed by an overview of how a city is using its personality as a tool to strengthen and modify attributes of its brand.

Chapter Two: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

This chapter introduces the reader to previous research pertaining to city brand and branding. It also discusses the quantitative analysis of the development and application of brand personality related to place/city brand personality which contributed to the conceptual framework of the present study. Furthermore, it introduces relevant theoretical frameworks that serve as references for the author when collecting and interpreting data during the empirical study of city brand in Melaka City based on brand personality.

Chapter Three: Research methodology

This chapter provides a detailed summary of the choice of methods used in the research. Motivation for the research approach chosen, the process of data collection and types of statistical analysis are explained in detail.

Chapter Four: Results and Discussions

The purpose of this chapter is to present and analyse the statistical results gathered from semi-structured interviews and the pilot study, to validate the items chosen. This chapter also presents and analyses data that has been studied. First, the demographic information of the sample is presented with the help of descriptive statistics and these demographic variables include specifications of the respondents. The next analysis deals with inferential statistics that measure exactly how all the variables describe the brand personality of Melaka City. Then, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with a varimax rotation was carried out on the data to determine the dimensions of the scales used respectively in order to shed light on different aspects of the research problem and to develop city brand personality dimensions. Finally, the SEM approach shows the fitness of the city-brand personality model, which in this case is Melaka City. The last part of this chapter provides the findings of the empirical investigation. It includes data gathered during interviews with opinion leaders from Melaka City.

Chapter Five: Summary, Conclusion and Implications

The author presents the summary and conclusions of the research in this chapter. Theoretical and empirical contributions are explained and recommendations for further research tabled.

1.8 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter highlights the purpose of the study, underlines its background as well as provides a brief idea of the research method. The chapter also includes the significance of the study, the statement of the problem, conceptualization of constructs of the hypotheses and research questions, key word definitions as well as the validity and reliability of the study.

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Pilot interview link:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dG83eU1ONVJaM0x2SjBka09MUEQ5RkE6MQ>

Interviews

Interview (2012-06-05), with the Mayor of Melaka Historic City Council (Datuk Bandar, Majlis Bandaraya Melaka Bersejarah) His Hon. Datuk Zainal bin Abu D.M.S.M, BKT. (Face to face interview, 1 hour)

Interview (2012-06-05), with the Director of Corporate Management and Public Relations Department of Melaka Historic City Council His Hon. Mr. Mohd Derus Che Mat. (Face to face interview, 1 hour)

Interview (2012-04-22), with Prof. Sameer Hosany, Royal Holloway, University of London, Egham Hill, Egham. Winner of the Charles R. Goeldner Article of Excellence Award for the most significant work published in the Journal of Travel Research during 2006. (E-mail)

Interview (2012-04-22), with Martina Alvarez-Loewenstein, an assistance of Simon Anholt. Simon Anholt is a brand expert petitioner, he has advised the governments of more than 40 countries on questions of national identity and reputation, public diplomacy, trade, tourism, cultural and educational relations, export and foreign investment promotion. (E-mail and articles reviews as advised)

Interview (2012-04-26), with Andrea Lucarelli, a Ph.D candidate at Stockholm University School of Business, Sweden. His research interests focus on metropolitan cities and co-branding process. (E-mail)

Interview (2012-04-20), Haji Johari Bin Abdul Samad, Pengarah Pengurusan Majlis Bandaraya Melaka Bersejarah, on behalf of the Mayor of Bandar Melaka. (Face to face interview, half an hour)

Interview (2012-04-20), with Encik Abd Kadir Bin Md Idris, Pengurus Besar Bahagian Promosi Pelancongan (BPP) Jabatan Ketua Menteri Melaka. (Face to face interview, 1 hour)

Interview (2012-04-20), with Encik Lim Sze Koon, Penolong Pegawai Tadbir Bahagian Promosi Pelancongan (BPP) Jabatan Ketua Menteri Melaka. (Face to face interview, 1 hour)

Interview (2012-04-20), with Nurul Shidah Bte Saadun, Pegawai Tadbir (Korporat) Jabatan Korporat dan Khidmat Komuniti, Majlis Perbandaran Hang Tuah Jaya, Bandaraya Pintar, Melaka. (Face to face interview, 1 hour)

