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FACETS OF CITY BRAND PERSONALITY DIMENSIONS

Review Article

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Abstract

Derived from Brand Personality, the concept of City Brand Personality has been studied in the tourism field. The purpose of this research is to identify the facets of the composing dimensions of City Brand Personality of the city of Iasi, Romania. The objectives of this research are: (1) allocating each of the personality traits associated to Iaşi one of the five main brand personality dimensions; (2) identify the facets of the Sincerity dimension; (3) identify the facets of the Excitement dimension; (4) identify the facets of the Competence dimension; (5) identify the facets of the Sophistication dimension; (6) identify the facets of the Ruggedness dimension. The results section presents in detail the facets of each dimension, as derived from the analyses. Factor analysis was conducted in order to identify the facets of dimensions of City Brand Personality of Iasi.

INTRODUCTION

This paper presents the dimensions of City Brand Personality from a different perspective. This research connects the results with Aaker's (1997) dimensions of Brand Personality.

In the context of economic growth and development based on tourism, research on destination image becomes very useful for area managers, such as area administrators. Particularly, research on tourists' perceptions on cities images are of great interest for cities' managers.

The present research has the purpose of identifying the facets of the composing dimensions of City Brand Personality of the city of Iași, Romania.

The objectives of this research are: (1) allocating each of the personality traits associated to Iași to one of the five main Aaker's (1997) brand personality dimensions; (2) identify the facets of the *Sincerity* dimension specific for the city of Iași; (3) identify the facets of the *Excitement* dimension specific for the city of Iași; (4) identify the facets of the *Competence* dimension specific for the city of Iași; (5) identify the facets of the *Sophistication* dimension specific for the city of Iași; (6) identify the facets of the *Ruggedness* dimension specific for the city of Iași.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Destination personality is a powerful metaphor in building a brand for a touristic city, beginning with tourists' perceptions on a specific destination (Ekinci, Hosany, 2006). Branding is an important strategic tool for describing the city in a unique manner and to use its competitive advantages for attracting more tourists (Kaplan et al, 2010). More importantly, city personality has a positive impact on tourists' intention to return to a specific place and also to recommend that place to others (Ekinci et al, 2007; Papadimitriou et al., 2015).

A small incursion in the City Brand Personality literature reveals that Aaker (1997) approached the main concept of Brand Personality for the first time and delivered a valuable construct with five dimensions: sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness. Each dimension was presented with specific facets. Subsequently, the construct was studied in various particular contexts. The construct of City Brand Personality was specifically analysed for specific cities, such as Las Vegas (Usakli and Baloglu, 2011) or specific countries, such as Malaysia (Ahmad et al., 2013), Poland for medium and small cities (Glińska and Kilon, 2014), South Korea (Lee and Suh, 2011).

Specific examples of dimensions of City Brand Personality dimensions are presented below.

Kaplan et al. (2010) revealed the dimensions of City Brand Personality as: (1) Excitement – with facets: passionate, outgoing, feminine, sympathetic; (2) Malignancy – with facets: unreliable, arrogant, self-seeking; (3) Peacefulness – with facets: calm, domestic; (4) Competence – with facets: authoritarian, sophisticated; (5) Conservatism – with facets: religious, uneducated; (6) Ruggedness. Usakli and Baloglu (2011) study underlined the dimensions of the city of Las Vegas as: (1) vibrancy, (2) sophistication, (3) competence, (4) contemporary, and (5) sincerity. Lee and Suh (2011) scale of City Brand Personality of South Korean cities is composed of: (1) sincerity, (2) excitement, (3) technology, (4) high-class and (5) feminity. Malaysian cities (Ahmad et al. (2013)) have the following dimensions: (1) peacefulness, (2) malignancy, (3) sophistication and (4) uniqueness. Polish medium and small cities' dimensions are (Glińska and Kilon, 2014): (1) conservatism, (2) peace and (3) neatness.

As a conclusion on the literature specifically approaching the construct of City Brand Personality, various dimensions have been identified, such as: competence, malignancy, ruggedness, contemporary, vibrancy, sincerity, peacefulness, excitement, conservatism, uniqueness, sophistication (Kaplan et al., 2010; Usakli and Baloglu, 2011; Ahmad et al., 2013).

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The present research has the purpose to identify the facets of the composing dimensions of City Brand Personality of the city of Iași, Romania.

In a previous research (Țugulea and Stoian, 2017), the brand personality of the city of Iași was assessed thru personality traits. 53 personality traits were selected based on their match with the specific city. The selection involved tourists, specialists in tourism, specialists in marketing and specialists in psychology.

Further on, Aaker's (1997) study was useful in order to group the resulted dimensions on the five main brand personality dimensions: sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness.

The objectives of this research are: (1) allocating each of the personality traits associated to Iași to one of the five main Aaker's (1997) brand personality dimensions; (2) identify the facets of the *Sincerity* dimension specific for the city of Iași; (3) identify the facets of the *Excitement* dimension specific for the city of Iași; (4) identify the facets of

the *Competence* dimension specific for the city of Iași; (5) identify the facets of the *Sophistication* dimension specific for the city of Iași; (6) identify the facets of the *Ruggedness* dimension specific for the city of Iași.

The preferred data analyses method of various studies on City Brand personality was exploratory factor analysis, Principal Components Method with Varimax rotation (Pike, 2002). Each of the resulted studies reveals specific city brand personality dimensions, for the specific context of analysis - specific city or specific country (Ahmad et al., 2013; Kaplan et al., 2010; Usakli and Baloglu, 2011).

METHODOLOGY

The database consists of 53 variables, representing 53 personality traits associated to the city of Iași. A qualitative analyses based on content analysis allocated each of the 53 personality traits to one of the five dimensions of Brand Personality as revealed by Aaker's (1997) study: sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness.

Successive exploratory Factor Analyses, Principal Components Method with Varimax rotation, were conducted for each of the five identified dimensions in order to underline the facets of each dimension.

Population and sample
The database consists of students' perceptions on the city of Iași, considering Iași would be a person. As presented in the research of Țugulea and Stoian (2017), the investigated target was represented by students that are not residents of Iași. The selected respondents were students from Faculty of Economics and Business Administration of Iași, on bachelor and master level of study.

Research results

Objective 1. Allocating each of the personality traits associated to Iași to one of the five main Aaker's (1997) brand personality dimensions
As presented above, the five dimensions of Brand Personality as revealed by Aaker's (1997) study are: sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness.

Content analysis was conducted in order to allocate each of the 53 items to one of the five dimensions of Brand Personality construct.
The results are presented in table no. 1.

Objective 2. Identify the facets of the Sincerity dimension specific for the city of Iași.
Each personality trait was assessed from the matching perspective with the city of Iași,

imagining the city was a person. The 7 points scale was used, with anchors in 1 - *Not at all a match* and 7 - *A very good match*.

Principal Components Method with Varimax rotation was conducted for each of the dimensions presented in table 1. Factor analysis was successively conducted for each of the five dimensions (Sincerity, Excitement, Competence, Sophistication and Ruggedness). Items with loading under 0.4 in the Component Matrix were removed. Also, items with similar loadings on two or more factors in Rotated Matrix were removed.

Factor analysis was conducted for the dimension *Sincerity*. The removed items during successive analyses were: helpful, romantic, hospitable and profound.

The final analysis delivered a two factors structure.

The value of KMO and Bartlett's Test is 0.844 (see table no. 2). As the value is over 0.6, the result of the test indicates that the items are suitable for a factor analysis.

The total variance explained by the two factors is 50%. The first factor explains 37% while the second factor explains 13% of the total variance.

Factor structure is presented according to the Rotated Component Matrix presented in table no. 3.

The two facets of the *Sincerity* dimension are:

- *Sociable* – with composing items: sociable, jovial, protector, opened, encouraging, altruist; the scale has a very good reliability, as Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is 0.830 (over 0.7).

- *Introverted* – with composing items: patriot, modest, conservator; the scale has an unacceptable reliability, as Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is 0.447 (under 0.5). The option "scale if item deleted" was conducted but there is no better scale structure if any of the items is removed. This scale needs further consideration, within a future qualitative and quantitative study in order to restructure the facet and test it for reliability.

Objective 3. Identify the facets of the Excitement dimension specific for the city of Iași.
After successive factor analyses, two items were removed: forgiving and honest.
The final analysis delivered a one factor structure. This factor is one-dimensional.
The value of KMO and Bartlett's Test is 0.814 (table no. 4). As the value is over 0.6, the result of the test indicates that the items are suitable for a factor analysis.
The total variance explained by the factor is 42.8%.
The dimension *Excitement* has its own unique facet. The composing items are: independent, communicative, curious, creative, emotional, courageous, familiar, optimist and helpful. The reliability of the scale measured with Cronbach's

Alpha coefficient is 0.784. The scale has an acceptable reliability (> 0.7).

Objective 4. Identify the facets of the Competence dimension specific for the city of Iași.

No item was removed after the first run of factor analysis.

The value of KMO and Bartlett's Test is 0.820, over 0.6 (table no. 5).

Two factors were revealed out of the analysis, explaining 56.87% of the total variance. The first factor explains 43.24% and the second factor explains 13.63% of the total variance.

Factor structure is presented according to the Rotated Component Matrix in table no. 6.

The two facets of the *Competence* dimension are:

- *Energised* – with composing items: powerful, determined, entrepreneur, confident, hardworking; the reliability of the scale measured with Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is 0.808. The scale has a good reliability.
- *Empathic* - with composing items: calm, understanding and tolerant; the reliability of the scale measured with Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is 0.527. The scale has a doubtful reliability (<0.6). Removing any of the three items from the scale does not improve the overall reliability. The scale needs further consideration in future qualitative and quantitative research.

Objective 5. Identify the facets of the Sophistication dimension specific for the city of Iași.

After successive factor analyses, three items were removed: changeable, sensitive and enigmatic.

The final analysis delivered a two factors structure.

The value of KMO and Bartlett's Test is 0.823 (table no. 7). The items are suitable for a factor analysis.

The two factors revealed explain 52% of the total variance. The first factor explains 38.43% and the second factor explains 13.65% of the total variance.

Factor structure is presented according to the Rotated Component Matrix in table no. 8.

The two facets of the *Sophistication* dimension are:

- *Appealing* – with composing items: stylish, passionate, attractive, charming, perceptive, relaxing and charismatic; the scale has a good reliability, with Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.812.
- *Nostalgic* - with composing items: nostalgic and monotonous; the scale is totally unreliable thou, as the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is 0.313. The scale needs further research.

Objective 6. Identify the facets of the Ruggedness dimension specific for the city of Iași.

No item was removed after the first run of factor analysis.

The value of KMO and Bartlett's Test is 0.740, over 0.6 (table no. 9).

Two factors resulted from the factor analysis. The first factor explains 29.19 % of the total variance and the second factor explains 25.92% of the total variance. The two factors explain 55.11% of the total variance.

The factor structure is presented according to the Rotated Component Matrix (see table no. 10).

The two facets of the *Ruggedness* dimension are:

- *Masculine* – with composing items: fighter, protector, dynamic and resistant; the scale has an acceptable reliability, with the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.730 (over 0.7).
- *Negative* - with composing items: envious, ironic, proud and backbit; the scale has an acceptable reliability, with the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.691(very close to 0.7).

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this research was to identify the facets of the composing dimensions of City Brand Personality of the city of Iași, Romania. The 53 items describing personality features associated to the city of Iași were structed into five dimensions, as revealed by Aaker (1997) for Brand Personality in general. The allocation of each item into a factor was based on a content analysis.

The dimension *Sincerity* consists of facets of *sociable* and *introverted*. The dimension *Excitement* consists of a single facet. The dimension of *Competence* consists of the facets of *energised* and *emphatic*. The dimension *Sophistication* consists of facets of *appealing* and *nostalgic*. The dimension *Ruggedness* consists of facets of *masculinity* and *negativity*.

The resulted facets for each dimension are presented in table no. 11.

The facets *introverted, emphatic* and *nostalgic* need further investigation. At this point, with the actual structure of these facets, these scales are not reliable.

These results are particularly useful for the managers of the city of Iași. Managers can use the reliable scales of the resulted facets in order to monitor the projected image of the city for certain features. For example, after an important project or event in the city, one of more of the facets' scales can be selected in order to assess the specific aspect of the city image. Managers could assess whether the energetic facet of the city is improved or not, for example.

Research implications

This research is original because there is no previous research to determine the facets of the City Brand Personality of a city, prior to their allocation to one of the five dimensions revealed by

Aaker (1997). Content analysis was used in order to allocate items into dimensions.

Managerial implications
The results are useful especially for city managers of Iași, Romania. The resulted reliable scales of the identified facets can be used in order to assess, at various moments, the specific image of the city (*sociable, excitement, energised, appealing, masculinity* and / or *negativity*).
Also, these results are useful for travel agencies in order to use key words (derived from facets) in order to promote the city.

Limitations of the research
The most important limitation is that these results are based on students' perceptions only. They are partly tourists and partly inhabitants, but not totally tourists or inhabitants. From this point of view, it is very probable that their opinion is more reliable, as they had the chance to know the city in more depth. Another limitation of the research is that there are resulted facets with doubtful reliability (*introverted, emphatic, nostalgic*). The scale associated to these facets, as presented in this paper, cannot be used in order to assess them. These scales need further research and refine.

Future research
A future direction is to refine the scales of the facets with reliability issues (*introverted, emphatic, nostalgic*). Qualitative analyses followed by scale reliability quantitative analyses are required in this case.
Another future direction could be to re-conduct the entire research on a different target, specifically tourists only. Results might be slightly different, as tourist only get to know the city for a few days and don't have the chance to understand it in more depth.

Biographical sketch
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Tables

Table no. 1
Personality traits of Iași grouped into five dimensions of Brand Personality (Aaker, 1997)

Dimension	Allocated feature
Sincerity	Solidary Protector Sociable Opened Helpful Altruist Conservator Honest Forgiving Encouraging Modest Patriot Hospitable Profound Jovial Romantic
Excitement	Independent Communicative Curious Creative Emotional Courageous Familiar Optimist Helpful
Competence	Hardworking Determined Entrepreneur Powerful Tolerant Confident Calm Understanding
Sophistication	Perceptive Attractive Charismatic Changeable Enigmatic Charming Relaxing Monotonous Nostalgic Passionate Sensitive Stylish
Ruggedness	Envious Proud Ironic Backbit Dynamic Fighter Protector Resistant

Table no. 2
KMO and Bartlett's Test - Sincerity

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.844
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	759.568
	df	45
	Sig.	0.000

Table no. 3
Rotated Component Matrix - Sincerity

	Component	
	1	2
sociable	0.791	
jovial	0.770	
protector	0.761	
opened	0.710	
encouraging	0.679	
solidary	0.648	
altruist	0.451	
patriot		0.728
modest		0.651
conservator		0.619

Table no. 4
KMO and Bartlett's Test - Excitement

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.814
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	474.989
	df	21
	Sig.	0.000

Table no. 5
KMO and Bartlett's Test - Competence

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.820
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	704.109
	df	28
	Sig.	0.000

Table no. 6
Rotated Component Matrix - Competence

	Component	
	1	2
powerful	0.798	
determined	0.733	
entrepreneur	0.700	
confident	0.684	
hardworking	0.661	
calm		0.812
understanding		0.707
tolerant		0.464

Table no. 7
KMO and Bartlett's Test - Sophistication

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		,823
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	637,246
	df	36
	Sig.	,000

Table no. 8
Rotated Component Matrix - Sophistication

	Component	
	1	2
stylish	0.747	
passionate	0.722	
attractive	0.703	
charming	0.700	
perceptive	0.683	
relaxing	0.629	
charismatic	0614	
nostalgic		0.771
monotonous		0.745

Table no. 9
KMO and Bartlett's Test - Ruggedness

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		,740
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	467,956
	df	28
	Sig.	,000

Table 10
Rotated Component Matrix - Ruggedness

	Component	
	1	2
fighter	0.795	
protector	0.743	
dynamic	0.725	
resistant	0.699	
envious		0.784
ironic		0.720
proud		0.702
backbit		0.663

Table no. 11
City Brand Personality of Iaşi – dimensions and facets

Dimension	Facets
Sincerity	sociable
	introverted
Excitement	excitement
Competence	energised
	emphatic
Sophistication	appealing
	nostalgic
Ruggedness	masculinity
	negativity