Collaboration between brands and cities
A promising engagement based on Personality fit

Submitted by
Valérie Pansini
European Master in Business Studies

Kassel, Germany  22nd October 2012
Abstract

“The most powerful brands are those with the richest personalities”. (Morgan, Pritchard, and Pride, 2010).

This concept is especially valid these days due to numerous of brands overwhelming us and the mounting challenge of a brand to distinguish itself globally. All products, despite their effectiveness as services, people, or cities are facing the need to develop their own and distinctive personalities. In this study, the combination of both the personality of products and cities have been reviewed and researched.

Marketers are establishing strategic brand alliances to create potential synergies and to leverage brand equity. A necessary condition for the success of the alliance is the fit between the brands. This study focuses on personality fit between parent brands, assuming that a higher fit is achieved with similar traits.

This thesis is intent on discovering how brands and cities, with similar personalities, can collaborate. The author is interested in understanding the relation between brands and cities from a general perspective. Specific cases will be cited for exemplification. Based on this concept, the study analyses brands and cities in clusters. It points at finding a relationship between the clusters but not between the single brands.

The findings will provide a significant contribution to the underdeveloped topic of city and brand relationship, proposing practical implications to marketers.

Keywords: personality fit; brand personality, destination personality, brand alliances.
Introduction/Background

Brands are mainly defined under a holistic concept more than a product-oriented perspective. (Wood, 2000). This point of view is emphasized since mostly all products are branded nowadays (Kaplan, Yurt, Guneri, and Kurtulus, 2010).

Brands are constantly trying to differentiate themselves due to a high level of competition in the market. The functional benefits of a product or service have become more and more homogeneous (Ivens & Valta, 2012) and easy to imitate among rival products. Therefore, the practical purposes of what a product can offer cannot be used by a brand as a unique selling proposition. Consequently, the product features are outmanoeuvred by a brand that commands with an emphasis on attitude and/or strong personality. To compete in the current marketplace, it is more valuable for brands with similar attributes to separate itself from its competitors and take a front position by kindling a personal identity with its customers and to attract new, potential target audience.

A distinctive personality is an intangible benefit that influences product perception (Freling & Forbes, 2005) and helps establishing effective brands (Lombardi, 2007).

Marketers, infinitely seeking new possibilities of growth, have been focused in recent years on establishing alliances with other brands in order to increase brand equity (James, 2006). Over the course of time, these collaborations have evolved and formulated diverse product categories.

Indeed, brands are trespassing market segments and establishing alliances with products that seem, at first glance, unrelated since their product category fit is low (Lanseng & Olsen, 2012). The relation between the products of the combined alliance is, indeed personality related and not product related.

“Fit” is a necessary postulation to establish a successful alliance. However, it has been proven that consistency among the brands can be reached at different levels: product fit, brand fit, personality fit, category fit, and consumers’ goals (Lanseng & Olsen, 2012; Gammoh & Voss, 2011).

Moreover, as mentioned above, cities can qualify as brands since they are viewed as a bundle of tangible and intangible elements (Ekinci, Hosany, and Uysal, 2007).

The distinctive personality of a city helps to attract tourists and other stakeholders: consequently, it enhances its perceived image and value (Crockett & Wood, 2004). The brand personality of a city can be identified with “the characteristics associated with the city brand” (Kaplan, Yurt, Guneri, and Kurtulus, 2010).
Problem statement

Taking into account, the increasing evolution of alliances that have been established for the growth of the brand equity, this study is aimed at enlarging the possible connection that a brand can have. In line with former and reliable studies (James, Lyman, and Foreman, 2006; Chang, 2009), we assume that a profitable alliance is achieved when the parent brands have similar personalities.

A few studies have already attempted to analyse brand personality in different forms of collaboration, as brand extensions (Diamantopoulos, 2005; Lau & Phau, 2007) and co-branding (Lanseng & Olsen, 2012). However, this relation has been evaluated only among products and/or services and never between a city and a product brand. Hence, there is a gap in the research studies that this thesis aims to cover.

Purpose/Research Questions

The purpose of this thesis is to examine a connection between city and product personality. The guiding research question of the study will, therefore, be

RQ: How can brands cooperate with cities?

In order to support this research query, a main hypothesis has been made and will be tested throughout the study:

H1: Personality fit has a positive impact on the collaboration between brands and cities.

As a result, there are two sub-hypothesis that derive.

H2: Similar personality is a determinant in the association of brands and cities

H3: The cooperation links clusters of brands and cities more than singular products.

Significance of the study

The study implies relevant benefits for both academic and managerial enlightenment.

Firstly, the originality of the work consists in connecting cities and brands under personality traits. While these two topics have been analysed previously, they have been never investigated together.

Secondly, it will enrich the brand personality literature, adding new contexts in which it has been studied. To the best of my knowledge, brand personality has never been studied in-depth in the retail apparel sector except for self-congruity (Helgenson & Supphellen, 2004).

Moreover, the study contributes to the validity of brand personality scale of Geuens, Weijters and De Wulf (2009) and city personality scale of Ekinci & Hosany (2006).

Additionally, there are significant and prominent benefits to be derived from a managerial point.
Discovering a way to establish a bond between cities and brands will enable marketers to expand their possible actions and current alliances and enhance their brand value. Understanding how consumers link brands and cities can be highly profitable if the combined infusion of these two products ultimately produce a desirable, integrated image and thus, creating a valuable sponsorship with one product brand endorsing the other.

**Review of literature**

Only major contributions for the study have been included in the table of references. Other studies that will be used in the paper can be found in the footnotes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author (Year)</th>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author (Year)</th>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>Destination image and</td>
<td>Hosany, S.</td>
<td>International</td>
<td>Relationship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Caprara, Barbaranelli, and Guido, 2001; Grohmann, 2009
2 Freling & Forbes, 2005; Valette-Florence, Guizani, and Merunka, 2011
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author (Year)</th>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fit between brands</td>
<td>Revisiting perceptual fit in co-branding applications</td>
<td>Thompson, K. &amp; Strutton D. (2012)</td>
<td>Journal of Product &amp; brand management. 21 (1)</td>
<td>Fit between brands in alliances and extension product</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

5 Barelds & Barelds-Dijkstra, 2007
---|---|---|---|---

**Methodology**

**Research design:** The undertaken research described herein is an exploratory study, aimed at discovering a new possible arena and linkage between cities and brands.

Facts and theories illustrated in the paper are obtained, adapted and supported by existing scientific studies and papers. Moreover, a quantitative research approach will be conducted to obtain primary data regarding the relationship between cities and brands. The research strategy chosen in the thesis is a self-administrated, anonymous online questionnaire.

**Stimuli:** The study focuses on one product category: the apparel industry. The choice of this product category used is due to the following reason:

Clothing brands are renowned globally. Therefore the concept of product familiarity and awareness is already established. Well-known brands have been chosen for salient reasons, in line with criteria followed by Aaker (1997). Moreover, brands and cities with different personality have been selected to achieve a greater variance of possibilities.

**Selection of participants:** The participants are all European.

The recommended sample size, for this study, consists of 384 participants. This number was suggested by Saratankos (1998) and replicated by Prayag in his study (2007) for large population (more than one million).

**Interview procedure:** Respondents rated the personality traits for the given brands on a 7-point Likert scale (1= not descriptive for the brand at all, 7= extremely descriptive for the brand).
Similarly, this procedure was again repeated specifically for the rating of the given cities. A third part of the questionnaire was designed at drawing a parallel to cities and products. Respondents were asked to indicate where they perceived the giving brands would go to live. The rational process behind this is to ascertain the connection between the personality of the cities and the personality of brands.

**Analysis:** Sphinx software is the statistical program used to design and analyse the questionnaire.

**Overview of chapters**

The paper is divided into 5 main chapters, according to the topic presented. To facilitate the reader, an outline of the structure will follow. Chapter 1 gives a general description of the study that will be treated in details throughout the rest of the thesis, providing a background of the topic studied and an explanation of the relevance of the study. Chapter 2 presents the concepts of brand personality, destination personality and the related scales used to evaluate these items. An extended review of the literature supporting these subjects will be provided. Chapter 3 considers the different strategic alliances that a firm can establish, focusing the attention on the possible alliances that a brand can set up with a city. After this digression on literature overview, Chapter 4 will present the empirical research, reviewing the methodology used and the data analysis. Finally, a summary of the work including the conclusions of the research and the implication derived will be presented in Chapter 5.

**Table of contents**

**Chapter 1: Introduction to the study**

1.1. Abstract
1.2. Introduction
1.3. Problem statement
1.4. Purpose/research questions

**Chapter 2: Brand personality**

2.1. Introduction to branding
2.2. Dimensions of a brand
   2.2.1. Brand identity
   2.2.2. Brand image
2.3. Brand equity
2.4. Brand personality
2.5. Brand personality scales
   2.5.1. Human personality and the Big Five
   2.5.2. Aaker’s Brand Personality Scale
2.5.3. Criticism of BPS
2.5.4. A new measure of Brand Personality

Chapter 3: Place branding and destination personality
  3.1. Identifying cities as brands
      3.1.1. Cities as corporate brands
  3.2. Place, city and destination branding
  3.3. Place branding frameworks
  3.4. Place image and place identity
  3.5. Place personality
  3.6. Destination personality scales
      3.6.1. Destination personality scales

Chapter 4: Strategic alliances
  4.1. Different types of alliances
  4.2. Importance of fit
      4.2.1. Different types of fit
      4.2.2. Similarity

Chapter 5: Empirical analysis
  5.1. Methodology
  5.2. Data analysis

Chapter 6: Conclusion
  6.1. Theoretical implications
  6.2. Managerial implications
  6.3. Limitations and future research
## Plan of work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Brief Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20/09/2012 – 19/10/2012</td>
<td><strong>Review of existing literature</strong></td>
<td>Review and selection of relevant theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20/10/2012 – 30/10/2012</td>
<td><strong>Structure Thesis</strong></td>
<td>Work on Exposé</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05/11/2012 – 30/11/2012</td>
<td><strong>Theoretical Framework</strong></td>
<td>Write chapter on brand personality and city personality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/12/2012 – 14/12/2012</td>
<td><strong>Methodology Phase</strong></td>
<td>Study of methodology and design of questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15/12/2012 - 17/12/2012</td>
<td><strong>Implementation of questionnaire</strong></td>
<td>Before launching it, a pilot test will be conducted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17/12/2012 – 15/01/2013</td>
<td><strong>Running questionnaire &amp; continue theoretical part</strong></td>
<td>While questionnaire is running, write fit theory and co-branding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16/01/2013 - 24/01/2013</td>
<td><strong>Intermediate presentation</strong></td>
<td>Intermediate report preparation (+ end questionnaire)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/02/2013 – 15/02/2013</td>
<td><strong>Time lag</strong></td>
<td>Time left in case of unexpected delays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15/02/2013 - 15/03/2013</td>
<td><strong>Analysis of questionnaire</strong></td>
<td>Analyse results and create clusters with results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15/03/2013 – 30/03/2013</td>
<td><strong>Elaboration of results</strong></td>
<td>Work on outcomes from questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/04/2013 – 20/04/2013</td>
<td><strong>Conclusions of thesis</strong></td>
<td>Analyse thesis and write conclusions and implications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20/04/2013 – 30/04/2013</td>
<td><strong>Finalization and proofreading</strong></td>
<td>Proofreading and bibliography review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/05/2013 – 25/05/2013</td>
<td><strong>Presentation of thesis</strong></td>
<td>Work on final presentation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References


