

The contribution of CSR activity to perceptions of a place brand - The case of Bristol

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Introduction

- This paper presents a new **investigation of the impact of sustainability** and environmental/social responsibility within a tourism orientated society.
- Previous studies have investigated the ‘brand personality’ of places
 - Little is known about the **contribution of place-specific CSR activities to brand perception.**
- This is a **collaborative research project** with **Visit West.**

1. City brand personality

Brand personality

- People have a personality (such as Costa & McCrae, 2008)
- Brands also have a personality (Aaker, 1997)
 - Sincerity
 - Excitement
 - Competence
 - Sophistication
 - Ruggedness
- This has been applied to many different industries and product categories, including **cosmetics** (Guthrie and Kim, 2008), **social media platforms** (Cortez and Dastidar, 2022), **mobile phones** (Teimouri et al., 2016)
 - Including brands relating to **tourism**:
 - Lodging brands – Airbnb (Lee and Kim, 2018)
 - Restaurants (Siguaw, Mattila, Austin, 1999)
 - Travel agencies (Ha, 2016)
 - Hotels (Lee and Back, 2010)

Brand personality

- Brand personality matters. Research (e.g. Rashid, 2020) has shown that brand personality positively affects
- Brand trust
 - Brand loyalty
 - Customer satisfaction
 - Brand love
 - Brand attachment
- **Sincerity** and **competence** have the strongest influence on brand success variables (brand attitude, image, commitment, purchase intention);
- **Excitement** and **ruggedness** have the weakest influence on brand attitude and brand commitment (Eisend, 2013)

Can places have a brand personality?

- Sometimes referred to as ‘destination brand personality’ (e.g. Hanna and Rowley, 2019).
- Many examples of the Aaker brand personality traits being applied to destinations:
 - **Cities** (Amatyakul and Polyorat, 2016; Xie & Lee, 2016; Ajeyalemi and Dixon-Ogbechie, 2017; Amatyakul, 2018; Glińska & Rudolf, 2019).
 - **Tourist destinations** (Ekinci and Hosany, 2006; Hosany, Ekinci, Uysal, 2006; Murphy, Moscardo and Benckendorff, 2007; Usakli and Baloglu, 2011; Aguilar, Guillen, Roman, 2016; Jovanovic et al, 2017)
 - **A region** (Cardoso, Portela, Dias, 2013)
 - **Holiday resorts** (Bekk et al., 2016)
 - **A container port** (Bastug, Sakar, Gulmez, 2020)

2. CSR and brand personality

How does CSR affect a brand?

- Recent findings:
 - CSR leads to **purchase intention** of a brand (Ramesh et al, 2018)
 - CSR affects **brand trust** (Hossaini and Kazeminia, 2019)
 - CSR leads to **brand resonance** (Kim, Nobi and Kim, 2020)
 - Advertised CSR supports **brand personality** and has knock-on benefits (Sander et al, 2021)
 - Corporate social responsibility (CSR) **mediates the relationship** between brand personality and brand image (Huang, 2023)
 - CSR leads to **happiness in a brand** through attachment (Gilal et al, 2023)
 - CSR increases **brand loyalty** (Khan and Fatma, 2019; Fatma and Khan, 2023)

CSR and destination branding

- CSR relating to tourism is known as Destination Social Responsibility [DSR]
- Outcomes of DSR can include (Agapito, Kronenburg, Pinto, 2022):
 - Encouraging tourism
 - Revisit intention
 - Responsible behaviour of tourists
 - Positive emotion of tourists
- Current research has established that:
 - CSR can make a destination more competitive (Kim, 2022)
 - CSR can affect tourist choices (Quezado et al, 2022)
 - CSR can affect destination branding (Phung, 2023)
 - DSR drives brand loyalty in a city (Tran, 2023)

How can CSR affect brand personality?

- CSR communication can affect brand personality (Tarabashkina et al, 2020)
 - e.g. Tea, coke and coffee (Mishra and Mohanty, 2013)
- CSR can affect perceptions of employers' brand personality (Azimi et al, 2023)
 - Brand personality of an employer matters (Farid and Taha, 2022)

How?

- CSR particularly improves perception of reliability (Huber et al, 2011)
- CSR supports perception of agreeableness and conscientiousness (Lombart, 2014)
- CSR may even be a separate dimension of brand personality (Madrigal and Boush, 2008)

What are the features of a city brand?

- A previous study (Vinyals-Mirabent, Kavvaratzis and Fernandez-Cavia, 2019) identified 19 'attractions' within a destination:
 - Landscape and natural resources
 - Cultural attractions and activities
 - Leisure attractions and activities
 - Architecture and heritage
 - Local culture and history
 - Events, fairs, and festivals
 - Food and drink
 - Shopping
 - Nightlife
 - Sports
 - Social life and locals
 - Infrastructure and transportation
 - Accommodation
 - Tourism products and packages
 - Weather
 - Service; political and economic factors
 - Safety
 - Wellness

Methodology – Three studies

Study 1 – Destination managers

- Investigation into the intended brand identity communicated by the region. Quantitative approach.
- Looking for relationships between
 - Perceived brand personality (using Aaker's scale)
 - Sustainability (using the Rodrigues, Borges, and Vieira [2021] scale),
 - Gauging the perceived importance of destination features (Vinyals-Mirabent, Kavartzis and Fernandez-Cavia, 2019)

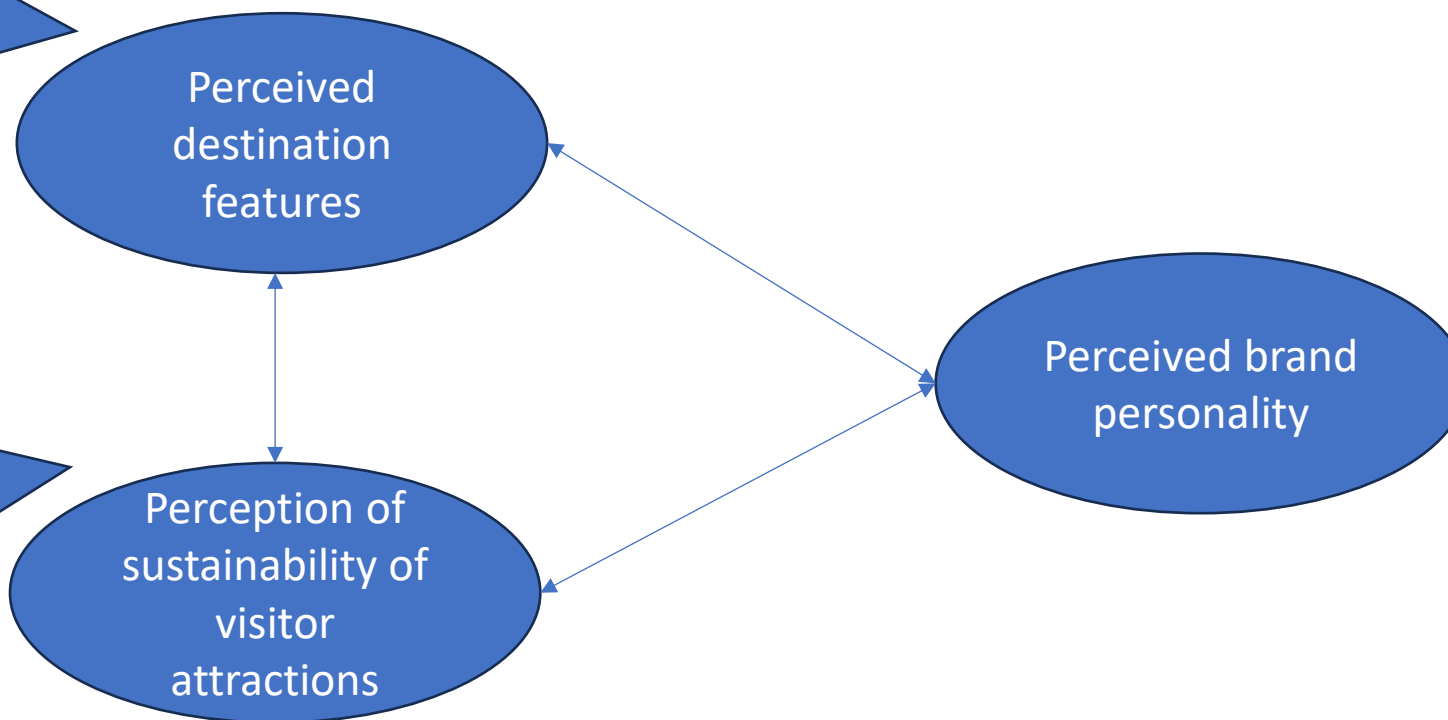
Theoretical model

How important are these aspects of the Bristol brand?

- The surrounding landscape
- Customer service
- Shops Accommodation

To what extent to you agree that activities for visitors to the Bristol region:

- Prevent waste
- Reduce emissions like CO2
- Use locally sources products



Imagine you are required to describe Bristol using human personality traits. To what extent do these words describe Bristol:

- Trendy
- Daring
- Sincere

Methodology – Three studies

Study 2 – Social media analysis

- Social media content promoted by these communicators will be presented to an external audience to assess whether the desired brand personality, important aspects, and sustainability are recognised by recipients.

Methodology – Three studies

Study 3 – Visitors

- Study 3, in 2025, will then compare the Study 1 findings to views of international visitors, including:
 - Students
 - Investors
 - Tourists

Q&A and feedback

Thank you for your attention!

We welcome feedback on the overall design of the project ahead of data collection

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