

# RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CORPORATE IDENTITY AND CORPORATE REPUTATION: A CASE OF A MALAYSIAN HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR

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**Abstract:** Organizations need corporate identity for survival. This identity is developing through the projection of one positive image that will increase its public confidence about the quality and achievements of the organization. This paper attempts to identify corporate identity and reputations of Universiti Utara Malaysia from its future prospective clients. Specifically, this research test the relationship between corporate identity and corporate reputation based on a Malaysian higher education sector. Further tests were conducted to identify which corporate identity component will be a significant predictor of corporate reputation. It reveals that there is significant positive relationship between corporate identity and corporate reputation.

**keywords:** identity, image, reputation, corporate communication, marketing communication

## INTRODUCTION

Identity, image and reputation are the main agenda of organization thru corporate communication activities. In globalization, image is seen as one of the element that being highlighted by organization. Publics look products and services that offered by the organization is in bundle package. Therefore, Marken (1995) believes that corporate image not only to be projection but also have to protect so that the image is not being destroy.

Organization must accept that the public is now more concern about corporate image. This is because a good image can attract the whole public to using the products and services offered. A study by Opinion Research Corporation (ORC) found out that corporate image is very important to market their company and products and services. 97% respondent from the senior executives and middle agreed that image is the significant measurement in achieving and failing (Marken, 1990). These statements also support by Vidari (1993), say that manufacturing the product is not enough but a good image will help in marketing process.

Van Riel (1997) study found that there are three main concepts in corporate communication are always being studied by scholars. The concept is corporate identity, corporate reputation and communication management. Overall, corporate communication is refer to communication and added with advertising, media affair, financial communication, employee communication and crisis communication. In order to be effective, every organization needs a clear sense of purpose that people within it under-

stand. They also need a strong sense of belonging. Purpose and belonging is the two facet of identity. Every organization is unique and the identity must spring from organization's own roots, its personality, its strengths and its weaknesses.

The identity of the cooperation must be so clear that it becomes the yardstick against which its products and services, behavior and action are measured. This means that the identity cannot be simply being a slogan, a collection of phrases: it must be visible, tangible and all embracing. Every thing that organization does must be an affirmation of its identity.

In globalization world, both academic and business interests in corporate identity have increased significantly in recent years. Organizations have realised that a strong identity can help them align with the marketplace, attract investment, motivate employees and serve as a means to differentiate their product and services. Identity is now widely recognised as an effective strategic instrument and a means to achieve competitive advantage (Schmidt, 1995). Thus, many organizations a striving to develop a distinct and recognisable identity. Certain characteristics of an efficacious corporate identity include a reputation for high quality goods and services, a robust financial performance, a harmonious workplace environment, and a reputation for social and environmental responsibility (Einwiller and Will, 2002).

According to Melewar and Sibel Akel (2005), the globalisation of business has finally been embraced by the higher education sector in which education is seen as a service that could be marketed worldwide. Universities and other institutions of higher education

have to compete with each other to attract high quality students and academic staff at an international level. Hence, competition is no longer limited within national borders. As education and training become a global business sector, education marketing is developing standards more akin to consumer goods marketing. This presents several challenges for Malaysian universities such as the development of a more customer orientated service approach to education and an increased emphasis on corporate image.

In a market where students are recognized as customers, universities have to implement strategies to maintain and enhance their competitiveness. Higher education sector in Malaysia develop rapidly since 1990. Now, Malaysia having 20 public university offered verities of courses and hundreds private university. Competition is not only within the country but regionally and globally. The university needs to develop a competitive advantage based on a set of unique characteristics. Furthermore, universities need to communicate these characteristics in an effective and consistent way to all of the relevant stakeholders. Under these circumstances, universities have finally realized the role of corporate identity as a powerful source of competitive advantage.

They understand that if managed strategically corporate identity can help them develop a competitive edge over competitors (Olins, 1995). As a result, a growing number of universities have started to develop and implement corporate identity programmed as part of their strategic growth and expansion (Baker and Balmer, 1997).

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

### *Corporate identity*

Birkigt and Stadler (1986) derived from Cornelissen and Elving (2003) refer to corporate identity as the strategically planned and operational self-presentation of a company, both internal and external, based on an agreed philosophy, long term company goals, and a particular desired image, combined with the will to utilize all instruments of the company as one unit achieved by means of behaviour, communication and symbolism. Although universities are a higher education institution body rather than a corporate company, it has somehow embodied a corporate outlook in its quest to realize its mission statement as an agreed philosophy outlined earlier. Given this situation, university is highly prudent in its effort to achieve what it has set out to accomplish by

firstly rallying its tools and means to communicate its identity to its groups.

In recent years, the importance of the corporate image has been recognized. One of the reasons behind this is the growing interest in studies of corporate image. The organization considers that the transmission of positive image is an essential precondition for establishing a commercial relationship with target groups (van Riel, 1995).

Congruent with statements by Birkigt and Stadler (1986) and Alessandri (2001) who posit that corporate identity needs to founded upon the mission statement of a corporate entity, university, in promoting their academic excellence has significantly rallied its forces in arriving at a logo that is very much representing the organization and what it has to offer based on its mission statement.

Olins (1995) outlines four stages in building an identity program. Firstly, investigation, analysis and strategic recommendations are carried out internally to determine what a corporate entity should represent. Insofar as university is concern, it considers factors such as its position, market share, core values, central idea, growth patterns, size, corporate culture, profitability and competitiveness in setting its goals. Olins (1995) argues that once internal analysis and strategic recommendations have been carried out, the next stage is developing the identity by means of behavioural change, identity structure and name and visual style. According to Birkigt and Stadler (1986), corporate identity is also communicated through the behaviour of a corporate entity where target groups are able to judge by the actions conducted by the entity in dealing with external forces or stimuli.

The creation of the logo is a part of its identity building process which represents what it stands for (Olins, 1995). In designing the visual style, university make use of different colours in the logo. To take words of Olins (1995), the purpose of a symbol is to present the central idea of the organization with impact, brevity and immediacy. The use of different colours and their representation in the logo of the university does present the central idea to portray university as a modern organization founded upon healthy principles and governance.

Olins (1989) argues that symbolism guarantees consistent quality standards and contributes to the loyalty of customers (in our case, student as customers to the university) and other target groups (the potential students). The third stage of Olins' Corporate Identity formation is launch and introduction to communicate corporate vision. The identity of university must communicate through the mass media, another medium of identity formation. The final stage

of identity formation is implementation and making it happen. I alignment with its mission statement to marker the university as a first choice, university should collaborate with other organization in its quest to raise awareness. Olins (1995) corporate identity management needs to be considered in the same perspective as financial management or information system management as part of corporate resource where continuous efforts as necessary to implement and maintain it.

However, Melewar and Jenkin (2002) identify four sub-construct to measure corporate identity or organization including communication and visual identity; behaviour; corporate culture; and market conditions. The model adapts a multidisciplinary approach in the analysis of corporate identity. It unites the psychological, graphic design, marketing and public relations paradigms of corporate identity. In this way the model represents different views and school of thoughts of corporate identity, aiming for a balanced combination between these different disciplines. Furthermore, in terms of its application, the model presents a practical tool for analysis with its simple structure summarised in a comprehensible graphic presentation.

**Communication and visual image** touch about corporate visual image; corporate communication; architecture and location and uncontrollable communication. Corporate visual identity of the organisation is reflected by five main components such as corporate name; symbol and/or logotype; typography; colour; and slogan (Dowling, 1986; Olins, 1995). According to Olins (1995) these components “present the central idea of the organisation with impact, brevity and immediacy”. Meanwhile, corporate communication defined by Van Riel (1995) as a management instrument to create and harmonise favourable relationships with external and internal stakeholders. As pointed out by Markwick and Fill (1997) it is vital to ensure that consistent corporate communication is delivered to all stakeholders. Melewar and Sibel Akel (2005) conducted studies corporate identity of University of Warwick classifies its stakeholders into two broad categories - internal; and external stakeholders. The external stakeholders cover a wide range of audiences from opinion leaders (business, media, academic, think tank, specialist education, government/political) to alumni and teachers. The internal audiences are divided into three main groups - students; academic; and non-academic staff. In a research study conducted by the University (Opinion Leader Research) it was found that overall knowledge of the University differs considerably between these audiences:

On the whole, a far higher proportion of internal as opposed to external audience’s state they know the University well. Among the internal audiences the academics in particular show a low level of knowledge of the university (Jones, 2001). Corporate communication covers management, marketing and organizational communications. Among the three, management communications is seen as the most important (Van Riel, 1995). Top level managers are seen as the main medium of management communications since they are responsible for transmitting the corporate philosophy and vision to the internal stakeholders (Melewar and Jenkins, 2002).

The component of **behaviour** consist management behaviour and employee behaviour. Given the current need for economic accountability and the increased focus on consumer choice, universities are viewing students and staff as customers. Consequently, to maintain the desired level of service quality the relationship between administrative staff and academics, and administrative staff and students has become more structured. Thus, the behaviour of management at universities increasingly resembles a commercial company.

Increasingly, academics acknowledge that a “corporate identity refers to an organisation’s unique characteristics which are rooted in the behaviour of employees” (Balmer and Wilson, 1998). As a result of reduced government funding and a larger social focus on consumer choice universities design courses that are in accordance to what consumers want rather than what universities believe should be taught. This new way of looking at “customers” of education has created a need to review the relationship between the customers and university employees.

Nevertheless, in the context of a university, the identification of the customer and the employee is not an easy task. First, as identified by Sirvanci (1996) the student-university relationship is not a typical customer-employee relationship. The university student differs from a “conventional” customer in the sense that the university student does not have full freedom of choice with the product (knowledge/education), responsibility for paying the price and might not even “qualify” to purchase the product.

Second, in an environment where the students are classified as internal customers the classification of academic staff is problematic. Academics are classified both under internal customer and academic staff. Evidence shows that relationship between academic and administrative staff is an area of potential conflict (Pitman, 2000). The tension is likely to originate from the fact that academic staff have different motives for working in a university from

administrative staff members and used a different value system from their own.

**Corporate culture** has been an important focus of academic management since the early 1980s (Wiedmann, 1988). Culture is the commonly held and relatively stable beliefs, attitudes and values that exist within the organisation (Williams *et al.*, 1993). Jarzabkowski and Wilson (2002) studies found the culture of University of Warwick is based on the following tenets: success-orientated; entrepreneurial and competitive; intra-organisational competition; low tolerance for non-performers; pioneering; competing at the highest level of sectoral environment, (Harvard, Berkeley, Cambridge and Stanford); and “strong centre, strong department”.

However, in an academic institution agreement on a single value set is difficult to achieve. Baker and Balmer (1997) in their study about the corporate identity of University of Strathclyde identify that the problem arises mainly from the fact that each member of the university is an expert in a specific area and has therefore a very strong view about how to proceed in this area. In the absence of a general direction for the academic community to proceed in, this sub-cultures and multiplicity in identities may harm the successful implementation of a corporate identity programme.

The component of corporate culture basically involves the element of nationality; goals, philosophies and principles and organizational imagery and history. Top ranking university accommodates students from different nationalities. With increasing numbers of overseas students and academic staff the role of nationality is decreasing. However, student intake for public university in Malaysia controlled by government. Appointment academic staff also needs special permission from the government. As is common among other Malaysian universities, it capitalises mainly on the English language as the main language of commerce.

Moingeon and Ramanantsoa (1997) stress the interaction between history and corporate identity. They point out that the way history influences the definition of corporate identity, i.e. “identity is the product of the history of the organisation” (Moingeon and Ramanantsoa, 1997). They further state that identity influences history and shapes the perceptions and actions of the organization members. Thus, identity also produces history. History created an identity in support of the entrepreneurial self-image and income generating orientation of the university (Jarzabkowski and Wilson, 2002).

Lastly, component of corporate identity focus on **market conditions** involving nature of the industry and marketing strategy. Malaysia higher education

market is crowded and competitive. The general rule in the market is that prospective students will often attend a leading university because of its overall reputation, even though it may be relatively weak in the specific subject chosen. The teaching and research assessment exercises that have been conducted regularly and the magazine (such as *The Times Higher Education Supplement* etc) publications of the ranking of universities reveal that certain universities are more respected and are perceived to be general leaders in the field.

However, the generic characteristic of higher education makes the projection of a differentiated identity difficult. According to Melewar and Sibel Akel (2005), some universities such as Cambridge, Oxford, Imperial College, Durham, LSE, UCL, York, Nottingham, Manchester and Bristol have succeeded in this difficult task. These universities have a higher visibility as brands. Globalization of higher education presents new challenges for the universities in the UK. Increasing competition from overseas institutions and the desire to attract international students for prestige and income reasons make it inevitable for universities to develop a strong brand.

Corporate and marketing strategies are effort to promote university internationally. For example, University of Warwick strategies as “enhancing and promoting the University's reputation, particularly on the international stage” and “maintaining and developing our strengths in institutional governance and management” and “show that the university is planning to continue its business-like development”

Corporate and marketing strategies not only determine desired future states of the organization but they also influence the formation of brand and corporate perceptions. Thus, the way an organization defines its corporate strategies has a significant impact on how it is perceived by its stakeholders. Simoes and Dibb (2001) state that the notion of corporate identity is linked to the corporate brand concept. Also according to Ind (1997) corporate branding is more than a visual projection of the organization—it is a manifestation of the organizational core values.

### **Corporate Reputation**

Corporate reputation addresses the key question of what distinctive attributes are assigned to an organization. It is formed over time by repeated impressions of the corporate image whether positive or negative (Gray and Balmer, 1997; 1998; Alessandri 2001). According to Balmer (2001), it is the enduring perception held of an organization by an individual, group or network that forms a collective

system of beliefs and opinions that influences people's actions with regards to an organization. Reputations are self-validating in which beliefs derived from one source of opinion are confirmed by another source, even though the sources are not based on first-hand information. Hence, it must be in an organization's interest to acquire a favourable reputation among its key stakeholder groups. In doing so, it has to achieve and maintain a certain competitive edge that is different from the others. According to Bromley (1993), a business reputation has to be based on accomplishments or worthwhile efforts to gain public's goodwill not purely publicity efforts.

According to Genasi (2001), having a better understanding of a organization reputational strengths and weaknesses against its competitors will enable it to set measurable goals to address issues of concern and providing a rational basis to develop a corporate reputation management program. To earn a positive reputation, university needs to consider its emotional appeal, vision and leadership, financial performance, work environment, social responsibility, and products and services. Hutton, (2002) suggest 10 core dimension of corporate reputation including ethics, workers, financial performance, leadership, management, social obligation, customers focus, quality, reliability and emotional appeal.

## HYPOTHESIS

Corporate identity is always being correlations with name, logo and organization visual features. But, the corporate identity concept being widened by Melewar and Jenkin (2000) with including the elements of non-physical such as behavior and corporate culture. Another concept that must be highlighted is the concept of corporate image. Salame and Salame (1975), Chajet (1989), Olins (1978) and Birkght and Steadler (1986), corporate image as anything about organization behavior by internal and external public. Image and identity are being evaluated by customer, community, employees and other stakeholder and both elements is creating the reputation is being developed. According to Van Riel (1997), reputation is the highest appreciation from the eyes of publics.

The studies reviewed above demonstrated the importance of corporate identity in determining and influencing corporate reputation. However, only a few researches could be identified addressed corporate identity influencing university's corporate reputation. University with good identity will get a competitive advantage and also increased their

reputation. This is because, university has a strong character and personalities are reflected from the identity and reputation. Additionally, corporate identity will create a strong image of the university. This leads to the following hypotheses:

*Hypothesis 1a: Communication and visual identity has a positive impact on corporate reputation.*

*Hypothesis 1b: Behaviour has a positive impact on corporate reputation.*

*Hypothesis 1c: Corporate culture has a positive impact on corporate reputation.*

*Hypothesis 1d: A Market condition has a positive impact on corporate reputation.*

## METHOD

In this section, data gathering procedures, respondents, and measurements of variables are detailed. This study involves students in matriculation centre in Malaysia.

### Respondents

Respondent in this research are future prospective clients of the University Utara Malaysia (among students from matriculation colleges in Malaysia). Survey packets were sent directly to 500 students. The sample n=496 (99.2%) in nine matriculation centre. The rationale for choosing this sample is that all respondents are prospective clients of university and their perception is essential to determine the image of the university.

Approximately 78.23% (n = 388) are female and 21.77% (n = 108) are male. This sample distribution reflects the norm of students in Malaysia. The majority of the respondents (70.97% (n = 352) respondents from account stream, 29.03% (n = 144) from science stream in matriculation centre.

### Measurement Instrument

Based on corporate identity model developed by Melewar and Jenkin (2000), there are five main components to developing corporate identity. This model is being using in study of company services. Melewar and Storrie (2001) found out this model is suitable for company in the service sector. Melewar and Sibel Akel (2005), also applying the same model to study the corporate identity Warwick University. Details of instrument used in this study are as follows:

The instrument used to assess corporate identity includes 72 items base on corporate identity model developed by Melewar and Jenkin (2001). These items represent four components of corporate identity are communication and visual image, behaviour,

corporate culture and market conditions. Each item is measured using 5-point Likert type scale.

The measurement of corporate reputation in this study relied primarily on scale from corporate reputation index (Hutton, 2002). This instruments consists core dimension as perceived ethics, workers, financial performance, leadership, management, social obligation, customers focus, quality, reliability and emotional appeal. This study employs their 10 items scale to measure corporate reputation. Each item is measured with a 5-point Likert type scale.

Prior to the actual study we conducted pre-test study among respondents in the matriculation colleges. The pre-test conducted sought to determine the degree of stability, trustworthiness, dependability of the measurement used in this study, as there are very limited study on corporate identity and corporate reputation. Result of the pre-test shows Cronbach's alpha for communication and visual identity is .90, behaviour is .87, corporate culture is .86, market condition is .80 and corporate reputation scale show that the Cronbach's alpha is .90.

Before testing the hypotheses, data are also tested for coding/data entry errors and tests for normality are conducted for each of the survey items as well as the constructs that are created by computing individual items. Tests for normality include kurtosis measures, skewness measures, and visual inspection of histograms. The majority of items appear to be within normality. Kurtosis measures are below one. Skewness measures are around zero, and analysis indicates normal-shaped histograms. Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics for corporate identity dimensions and corporate reputation.

## RESULTS

Data is analyzed by using multiple regressions to test the relationship between corporate identity and corporate reputation concerning respondents' score. Multiple regression techniques are chosen because they allow researchers in social science to deal with complexity in human behaviours (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003). The central idea of the multiple regression method is that it is used to test the relationship between a dependent variable and two or

more independent variables (Greene, 2003). Thus, using a multiple regression technique we can also determine specific independent variables that have a major impact on a dependent variable in the case the corporate identity and corporate reputation.

The hypotheses deal with the relationship between corporate identity and corporate reputation among matriculation colleges student respondents. Positive relationship is predicted. Results of a simple regression analysis suggest that there is a significant positive relationship between corporate identity and corporate reputation ( $r = .734$ ,  $p < .005$ ), Table 2 displays the findings of the relationship between corporate identity and corporate reputation for matriculation colleges respondents. The results suggest that there is a direct relationship between corporate identity and corporate reputation for respondents. Specifically, it indicates that corporate identity has high a correlation with corporate reputation.

**Table 2. Ordinary Least Square (OLS) between Corporate Identity and Corporate Reputation**

<b>Corporate Identity</b>	<b>.734*</b>
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Notes: N = 496;  $p < .05$

Since this first test finds a significant positive relationship between corporate identity and corporate reputation, further tests are generated to test whether the specific corporate identity can influence corporate reputation of the university (Hypotheses 1a, b, c and d). It is predict that the positive relationship communication and visual identity has an impact on corporate reputation. We also predict that the behaviour, corporate culture and market condition has a positive impact on corporate reputation of the university. In order to test these propositions multiple regressions is used. In each regression model, corporate reputation is regressed against the four corporate identity dimensions, i.e. communication and visual identity, behaviour, corporate culture and market condition. Regression weights and multiple correlations display in Table 3.

**Table 1. Descriptive Statistics, Correlations, and Reliabilities of Variables**

Variabel	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Communication and visual identity			88.42	13.57	(.1)		
2. Behaviour		65.08	10.52	.620*	(.1)		
3. Corporate Culture		47.61	7.78	.574*	.700*	(.1)	
4. Market condition		26.89	4.61	.542*	.649*	.706*	(.1)
5. Corporate reputation	135.98	18.09	.662*	.713*	.692*	.627*	(.1)

\*Significance at 0.05 and 0.01

**Table 3. Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for Corporate Identity and Corporate Reputation**

Predictor Variable	SE	B	$\beta$	t	p
Communication and visual identity	0.366	.048	.275	7.576	.000 *
Behaviour	0.512	.073	.298	7.020	.000 *
Corporate Culture	0.579	.102	.249	5.695	.0001*
Market condition	0.430	.160	.110	2.684	.008 *

$R^2 = .635$   
Adjusted  $R^2 = .632$   
Overall Model  $F = 213.62^*$   
Degree of freedom = 491  
\* $p < .05$

The overall pattern of results in Table 3 indicates a significant relationship between corporate identity and corporate reputation. Results shows that all the four corporate identity are significant predictors for corporate reputation  $F(4, 491) = 213.62, p < .05$  and  $R^2 = .635$ . These results provide support for past research Balmer (1997), Fombrun (1996), Fombrun and Shanley (1990), Gray and Balmer (1998) as well as provide support for the current hypothesis that corporate identity significantly with corporate reputation. The test reveals that all four corporate identity dimensions are significant predictors of corporate reputation for matriculation college's students.

Our main investigation aim is to determine the corporate identity that influence university's corporate reputation. As mentioned earlier we predict communication and visual identity, behaviour, corporate culture and market condition will be significant predictor relationship with corporate reputation of the university. Table 3 indicates that for communication and visual identity  $t(496) = 7.576, p < .05$ , behaviour  $t(496) = 7.020, p < .05$ , corporate culture  $t(496)=5.695, p > .05$  and market condition  $t(496) = 2.684, p < .05$  have significant impact on corporate identity with almost 63.5% variance in corporate reputation.

## DISCUSSION

This study suggests that corporate identity of the universities plays an important role in influencing corporate reputation. As can be seen in Table 3, for communication and visual identity, behaviour, corporate culture and market conditions show a significant relationship with corporate reputation.

This finding shows an important aspect of corporate identity and corporate reputation in Malaysia higher education sector. For higher education

sector in Malaysia, all component of corporate identity (communication and visual image, behaviour, corporate culture and market condition) play an important role in influencing and perhaps in determining their corporate reputation. This finding has interesting implications. First, finding reveals Matriculation College's student's looks at all aspect of corporate identity of the university. This finding supported by the literature on corporate identity sees corporate identity management as a combination of various variables (Melewar and Sibel Akel, 2005). Higher education sector in Malaysia, especially university should focus more on their identity to ensure reputations of the university were increased.

Second this finding is noteworthy for global competition in higher education sector. For university who intend to globalize their institution, this result indicate that the corporate identity management should take into account its personality (Balmer, 1995; Birkight and Stadler, 1986; Olins, 1978), its corporate strategy (Wiedmann, 1988) and the three parts of the corporate identity mix (behaviour of organizational members, communication and symbolism) in order to acquire a favourable corporate reputation (Fombrun, 1996) which results in improved organizational performance (Fombrun and Shanley, 1990). If the results are generalizable, maximizing the all corporate identity (communication and visual image, behaviour, corporate culture and market conditions) should have a positive effect on the university's corporate reputation.

Our findings suggest that corporate identity of Malaysian university both instrumental and relationships communication in influencing their corporate reputation. One explanation for identity is now widely recognised as an effective strategic instrument and a means to achieve competitive advantage (Schmidt, 1995) and being researched by more academics and practitioners.

## Conclusions and Limitations

Because of this study focused only one university in Malaysia, it represents a limited test on the corporate identity and corporate reputation. Even this limited test, however, suggests that corporate identity do effect corporate reputation. The next step is to assess the external validity of the obtained results by replication of the study in other Malaysia university settings, and other tasks at hand. For example future research should test whether similar effect can be found in other public university or private university operating in Malaysia or foreign university based in Malaysia are similar or differ than those in public or private Malaysian university.

We also noted that, because of this study derive from one source that is the potential clients, thus there is possibilities of common method biases exist in this study. Thus, future research should consider obtaining data from multiple sources. For example, rating of corporate identity can be obtained from existing clients (students). Even though our results are encouraging in associations between corporate identity and corporate reputation.

However, additional dimensions of corporate identity needed to be considered. Such additional research can play a vital role in developing understandings about what and whether corporate identity should deviate from 'best' corporate reputation. If further research identifies corporate identity dimensions such as the Balmer, 1995; Birkight and Stadler, 1986; Olins, 1978 corporate identity instrument such as personality, corporate strategy (Wiedmann, 1988), which may lead to information that could provide helpful indications of best corporate identity for university to maintain their corporate reputation. Additionally, we also aware there are some limitations in corporate identity model used in this study. Thus for those who interested to continue with study the use of seven dimension of corporate identity (Melewar and Karaosmanoglu, 2006) scale would provide better explanation about corporate identity in organizations.

In sum, this study represents an initial research effort to identify corporate identity (communication and visual image; behavior, corporate culture, market condition) in which will influence the corporate reputation of the university. This investigation is also the first to focus on specific corporate identity in Malaysia University. The results of this research suggest university in Malaysia should consider corporate identity programmed for their long term planning.

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