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**THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN BRAND ATTRIBUTES  
AND WORD OF MOUTH ON BRAND IDENTITY AND  
BRAND IMAGE**

**HAZEM MOHAMAD ABD AL GHANY AL KASASSBH**



**UUM**  
**Universiti Utara Malaysia**

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
UNIVERSITI UTARA MALAYSIA  
JULY 2017**

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WORD OF MOUTH ON BRAND IDENTITY AND BRAND IMAGE**

**By**

**HAZEM MOHAMAD ABD AL GHANY AL KASASSBH**



**UUM**  
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: **Prof. Dr. Abu Bakar Abdul Hamid (UPM)**

Tandatangan  
(Signature)

Pemeriksa Dalam  
(Internal Examiner)

: **Dr. Maria Abdul Rahman**

Tandatangan  
(Signature)

Tarikh: **03 Mei 2017**  
(Date)



Nama Nama Pelajar  
(Name of Student) : **Hazem Mohamad Abdal-Ghany Al-Kasassbh**

Tajuk Tesis / Disertasi  
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Nama Penyelia/Penyelia-penyelia  
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## Abstract

Companies all around the world have to deal with issues relating to brand image development and maintenance because brand image can affect their brand performance. Based on the attribution theory, this research examined the impact of the components of brand attributes, namely brand relevance, brand consistency, brand sustainability, brand credibility, brand uniqueness and word of mouth (WOM) of brand image. This study also evaluated the mediating influence of brand identity on the relationship between the brand attribute components, WOM and brand image. Insufficient empirical attention, particularly in relation to the attribution theory, was the driving force for the current study to be undertaken. Two hundred and fifty-four travellers via two airports located in the northern region of Malaysia participated in this study. A cross-sectional survey approach and the quota sampling technique were adopted to select the participants, and PLS algorithm and bootstrapping techniques were deployed to test the hypothesized relationships. The PLS path modelling reported significant results of the major hypotheses; brand sustainability was the only variable not significantly related to brand image. It was found that brand identity mediated significantly the relationship between brand attributes, WOM and brand image. Overall, the results provide support for the attribution theory in that brand attributes, namely brand relevance, brand consistency, brand sustainability, brand credibility, brand uniqueness and word of mouth can help shape consumers' perceptions which ultimately result in harnessing brand image. Finally, the study's implications for theory and practice, limitations, conclusions as well as directions for future research are provided and discussed.

**Keywords:** brand image, brand attributes, word of mouth, brand identity, Malaysia Airlines (MAS)

## Abstrak

Syarikat-syarikat di seluruh dunia perlu menangani isu-isu yang berkaitan dengan pembangunan imej jenama dan penyelenggaraan kerana imej jenama boleh mempengaruhi prestasi jenama. Berdasarkan teori atribusi, kajian ini menyelidik kesan komponen atribut jenama yang terdiri daripada kaitan jenama, ketekalan jenama, kemampanan jenama, kredibiliti jenama, keunikan jenama dan penyampaian dari mulut ke mulut (WOM) bagi imej jenama. Kajian ini juga menilai pengaruh pengantaraan identiti jenama dalam hubungan antara komponen atribut jenama, WOM dan imej jenama. Penggerak utama untuk menjalankan kajian ini adalah kerana perkara ini kurang diberikan perhatian yang empirikal terutamanya yang berhubung dengan teori atribusi. Dua ratus lima puluh empat orang pelancong di dua lapangan terbang yang terletak di wilayah utara Malaysia mengambil bahagian dalam kajian ini. Pendekatan kaji selidik keratan rentas dan teknik pensampelan kuota digunakan untuk memilih peserta kajian. Teknik algoritma dan pengikat but (*bootstrapping*) PLS pula digunakan untuk menguji hubungan hipotesis. Pemodelan laluan PLS melaporkan keputusan yang signifikan bagi hipotesis utama, dan kemampanan jenama pula merupakan satu-satunya pemboleh ubah yang tidak berkaitan secara signifikan dengan imej jenama. Identiti jenama didapati dapat mengantarkan hubungan antara atribut jenama, WOM dan imej jenama secara signifikan. Secara keseluruhannya, dapatan kajian menyokong teori atribusi bagi atribut-atribut jenama tersebut iaitu kaitan jenama, ketekalan jenama, kemampanan jenama, kredibiliti jenama, keunikan jenama dan penyampaian dari mulut ke mulut dapat membantu dalam membentuk persepsi pengguna yang pada akhirnya akan menghasilkan imej jenama. Akhir sekali, implikasi kajian bagi teori dan amalan, batasan kajian, kesimpulan serta arah tuju bagi penyelidikan pada masa hadapan turut disediakan dan dibincangkan.

**Kata kunci:** imej jenama, atribut jenama, penyampaian dari mulut ke mulut, identiti jenama, Syarikat Penerbangan Malaysia (MAS).

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## Excerpts of Fiducial

(يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اصْبِرُوا وَصَابِرُوا وَرَابِطُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ).

آل عمران (200)

(فَسْتَدْكُرُونَ مَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ وَأَفَوضُ أَمْرِي إِلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ).

غافر (44)

(أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِكَافٍ عَبْدَهُ وَيُخَوِّفُونَكَ بِالَّذِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِ وَمَنْ يُضِلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ هَادٍ (36) وَمَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ مُضِلٍّ أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِعَزِيزٍ ذِي انْتِقَامٍ).

الزمر (36-37)

(وَاتَّقُوا يَوْمًا تُرْجَعُونَ فِيهِ إِلَى اللَّهِ ثُمَّ تُوَفَّى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ).

البقرة (281)

(يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنْ جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَنْ تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصْبِحُوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ).

الحجرات (6)

(دَعُ مَا يَرِيْبُكَ إِلَىٰ مَا لَا يَرِيْبُكَ ، فَإِنَّ الصِّدْقَ طَمَئِيْنَةٌ ، وَإِنَّ الكَذِبَ رِيْبَةٌ)

سنن الترمذي والنسائي

(من إعتد على مائة .. (قل), وعلى سلطنة .. (ذل), وعلى علة .. (ضل), وعلى علة .. (اختل), وعلى الناس .. (مل), ومن إعتد على الله فلا .. قل ولا ذل ولا ضل ولا إختل ولا مل).

الامام علي بن أبي طالب

(البر لا يبلى، والذنب لا ينسى، والديان لا يموت، اعمل ما شئت، كما تدين تدان).

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

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ABBREVIATION	The Term
AMOS	Analysis of Moment Structures
AOR	Sultan Abdul Halim Airport
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
BR ATT	Brand Attributes
BR CO	Brand Consistency
BR CR	Brand Credibility
B ID	Brand Identity
BR IM	Brand Image
BR RE	Brand Relevance
BR SUS	Brand Sustainability
BR UNI	Brand Uniqueness
CBBE	Customer Based Brand Equity
CB-SEM	Covariance-based Structural Equation Modelling
CCA	Canonical Correlation Analysis
CMV	Common Method Variance
CI	Confidence Interval
COB	College of Business Management
$f_2$	Effect Size
GoF	Goodness-of-Fit
IMC	Integrated Marketing Communication

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<b>ABBREVIATION</b>	<b>The Term</b>
MAHB	Malaysia Airports Holdings Berhad
MAS	Malaysia Airline
LL	Lower Limit
PC	Composite Reliability
PEN	Penang International Airport
PAF	PAF Principal Axis Factoring
PBUH	PBUH Peace Be Upon Him
PhD	Ph.D. Doctor of Philosophy
PLS	PLS Partial Least Squares
$Q_2$	Construct Cross-validated Redundancy
$R_2$	R-squared values
SBM	School of Business Management
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Science
STDV	Standard Deviation
SWT	Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala.
UNESCO	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UL	Upper limit
VIF	Variance Inflated Factor
WOM	Word of Mouth

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Research Background

Means of travelling have become an important aspect of everyday life (Gilbert & Morris, 1995). People have been travelling to cities, countries, and continents since the ancient time (Button, 2008). The growing innovation and technological advancements have helped us reach a point where travelling has become highly frequent and convenient (Amato, 2004; Bardi, Coyle, & Novack, 2006; Tiernan, Rhoades, & Waguespack, 2008), and for this, the credit goes to the airline industry. According to Morrison and Winston (2010), the airline industry has expanded to such a great extent that for many economies it is one of the biggest sectors regarding contributions towards annual GDP.

The global air transport industry supports 63 million jobs worldwide and contributes \$2.7 trillion (3.5%) to global GDP (International Air Transport Association, 2014). Advanced transportation is considered critical for promoting trade and boosting human socialisation and economic growth (Browning, 2003). The success of an airline carrier in a highly competitive market relies on the services it provides to customers (Button, 2008), which ultimately defines how the company maintains its overall brand (Chong, 2007). The choice of airlines much depends on customer preferences and perceptions of the brand image of a specific brand (Button, 2008; Nel, 2014). In this regard, a brand image emerges from brand

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## Appendix A

### Research Questionnaire



**Pusat Pengajian  
Pengurusan Perniagaan**  
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

**Universiti Utara Malaysia**

College of Business COB  
School of Business Management SBM  
Universiti Utara Malaysia  
06010 UUM Sintok  
Kedah Darul Aman, Malaysia  
Tel: (+604) 928 7401 | Fax: (+604) 928 7422  
Email: [sbm@uum.edu.my](mailto:sbm@uum.edu.my)

Dear Prof / Reader / Dr / Mr / Mrs / Ms,

#### **ACADEMIC RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE**

I'm a Ph.D. student at University Utara Malaysia (UUM). Currently, I am conducting a new study to explore the influence of brand attributes and word of mouth on brand image. I would like to express my gratitude and deep appreciation for your consent to participate in this survey. 10 to 15 Minutes is required from you to complete this questionnaire, please do not hesitate to answer all the questions based on your conviction, experience, and your personal information. Your answers are not judged whether right or wrong. Worth to mention, this survey addressing Malaysia Airlines (Known as MAS) and Aviation industries in general, through several variables which mentioned above.

Important note: this study is just for Academic Purposes, Therefore, it will be treated with complete confidentiality and discretion.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,  
Hazem Mohammad Al-Kasassbeh.  
Research Student at; College of Business COB.  
School of Business Management SBM.  
Universiti Utara Malaysia  
06010 Sintok, Kedah, Malaysia  
Phone: +60133215411  
E-mail: [Hazem@student.uum.edu.my](mailto:Hazem@student.uum.edu.my)

- ❖ Directive; Based on the scale below, please fill in the blank by ticking (/) in the appropriate box for your answer;

. Strongly Disagree.    2. Disagree    3. Neutral    4. Agree    5. Strongly Agree

**First Section: Brand Image.**

Statements	Scale				
	1	2	3	4	5
MAS has a unique personality.					
MAS has a powerful personality.					
MAS has a favorable personality.					
MAS has a professional reputation.					
MAS services superior to other Airlines.					
MAS performance is a consistent success.					
I am familiar with the potentials of MAS					
A convenient image consists in my mind when I think of MAS.					
I like MAS.					
I respect MAS.					
I appreciate MAS.					
MAS reflects who I am.					
MAS and I share a similar vision for travel.					
MAS is compliant with my character image.					
Looking to find out more about MAS.					
Seeking for finest airlines instead of MAS.					
Searching for more comfortable airlines instead of MAS.					

Statements	Scale				
	1	2	3	4	5
MAS is a well-established brand					
MAS is stable brand					
MAS is dependable brand					
MAS is trustworthy brand					
MAS always concerned about consumers.					

**Second Section; Brand Attributes.**

Statements	Scale				
	1	2	3	4	5
MAS enjoys great popularity.					
MAS suitable with my character.					
MAS compatible with my preferences.					
MAS enhances familiarity between travelers.					
MAS enhances communication between travelers.					
MAS is a reliable Airline.					
MAS and other Airlines are similar to me.					
MAS is a friendly Airline.					
MAS a pleasant Airline.					
MAS always gives a good feeling.					
MAS able to direct any crisis well.					
MAS able to fulfill the diverse requirements.					

The effect of MAS and other Airlines are the same.					
The need to MAS and other Airlines are the same.					
MAS provides efficient services.					
MAS provides steady services					
MAS offers believability in its services.					
MAS name is a source of trustworthiness.					
MAS has the preference regarding its services.					
MAS has the capability to commit to its promises.					
MAS is a competent brand able to determine what should be done.					
MAS is a different Airline.					
MAS is a unique Airline.					
MAS is a distinct Airline.					
MAS offers superior advantages.					
Recommend others to travel with MAS instead than other Airlines.					
Seek for recommendations from others about the best Airlines.					
Prefer a knowledgeable person to talk with about the best Airlines.					

**Third Section; Word of Mouth**

Statements	Scale				
	1	2	3	4	5
Prefer an experienced and competent person to give an advice concerning the best Airlines.					

Feel confident when you give or take advice regarding best Airlines.					
Give up some of your time when you asked advice regarding best Airlines.					
You can perceive the advantages of MAS based on someone description.					
You can identify the characteristics of MAS based on someone description.					
The extra price is not an issue for you in case you are advised about the best airline					

**Fourth Section; Brand Identity.**

Statements	Scale				
	1	2	3	4	5
The prosperity of MAS is my success.					
I care about what the others believes about MAS.					
I Feel flattered when someone is praising MAS					
I used a plural form when talking about MAS.					
I can identify MAS identity.					
MAS express my personality.					
MAS make me feel a preferable person.					
My character and my lifestyle compatible with MAS character.					

**Fifth Section; Respondent Background**

Instructions: Please fill in the blank by ticking (/) in the appropriate box for your answer.

1. Your gender is; Male  Female

2. Your age is;

18 to 30 years	31 to 40 years	41 to 50 years	51 to 60 years	More than 61 years
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1. Your Educational Attainment is;

Secondary education	University degree	Graduate (Higher Education)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Your income per month (Malaysian Ringgit) is;

Less than 3000	3001 to 6000	6001 to 9000	9001 to 12000	More than 12001
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Your Nationality is; .....



4. Do you travel with MAS previously?

Yes

No

5. If you do not have yet travelled with MAS, do you intend to travel in the future?

Yes

No (why?)



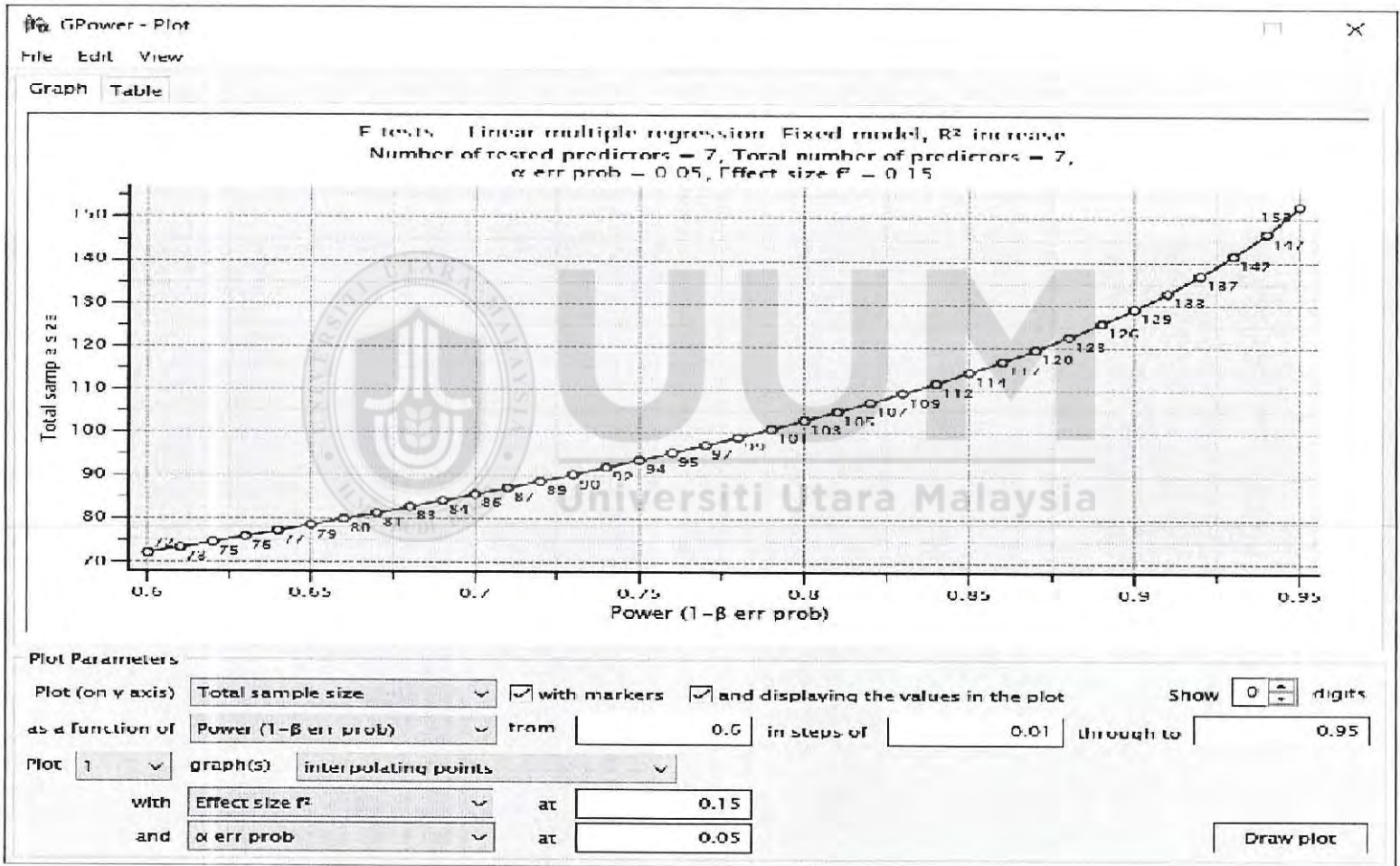
UUM

Universiti Utara Malaysia

**Thank you**

## Appendix B

### Output of power Analysis



## Appendix C

### Smart PLS Output - Measurement Model.

#### Quality Criteria/Overview

	AVE	Composite Reliability	R Square	Cronbachs Alpha	Communality	Redundancy
BR IM	0.712877	0.939338	0.715256	0.930667	0.432877	0.057464
BR RE	0.556334	0.871676		0.838763	0.556334	
BR CO	0.569367	0.861120		0.803090	0.418367	
BR SUS	0.608091	0.844386		0.796063	0.608091	
BR CR	0.592029	0.878428		0.827079	0.572029	
BR UN	0.682931	0.895828		0.844630	0.682931	
WOM	0.583597	0.873586		0.838776	0.485597	
BR ID	0.616416	0.894729	0.608934	0.865447	0.516416	0.073967

**Appendix D**  
**Blindfolding Procedure Outputs**

CV Red.

	<b>1-SSE/SSO</b>
<b>BR IM</b>	0.292909
<b>BR RE</b>	0.332108
<b>BR CO</b>	0.205867
<b>BR SUS</b>	0.355992
<b>BR CR</b>	0.387163
<b>BR UN</b>	0.464282
<b>WOM</b>	0.295837
<b>BR ID</b>	0.298979



Indicator Crossvalidated Commuality

<b>Total</b>	<b>SSO</b>	<b>SSE</b>	<b>1-SSE/SSO</b>
<b>BIM 1</b>	254.000000	173.172727	0.318218
<b>BIM 2</b>	254.000000	178.363547	0.297781
<b>BIM 3</b>	254.000000	170.510714	0.328698
<b>BIM 4</b>	254.000000	157.638992	0.379374
<b>BIM 5</b>	254.000000	144.661408	0.430467
<b>BIM 6</b>	254.000000	150.254099	0.408448
<b>BIM 7</b>	254.000000	146.795210	0.422066

<b>BIM 8</b>	254.000000	131.464016	0.482425
<b>BIM 9</b>	254.000000	184.206789	0.274776
<b>BIM 10</b>	254.000000	157.328710	0.380596
<b>BIM 11</b>	254.000000	157.147549	0.381309
<b>BIM 12</b>	254.000000	156.790286	0.382715
<b>BIM 13</b>	254.000000	136.815018	0.461358
<b>BIM 14</b>	254.000000	138.153586	0.456088
<b>BIM 15</b>	254.000000	159.224449	0.373132
<b>BIM 18</b>	254.000000	184.318001	0.274339
<b>BIM 19</b>	254.000000	150.681611	0.406765
<b>BIM 20</b>	254.000000	140.902260	0.445267
<b>BIM 21</b>	254.000000	157.754715	0.378918
<b>BIM 22</b>	254.000000	170.381096	0.329208
<b>BR P1</b>	254.000000	211.357823	0.167883
<b>BR P2</b>	254.000000	163.190764	0.357517
<b>BR P3</b>	254.000000	134.764108	0.469433
<b>BR S1</b>	254.000000	164.634320	0.351833
<b>BR S2</b>	254.000000	174.275533	0.313876
<b>BC E1</b>	254.000000	172.080901	0.322516
<b>BC E2</b>	254.000000	166.405034	0.344862
<b>BC E3</b>	254.000000	184.123489	0.275104
<b>BC P1</b>	254.000000	228.330815	0.101060
<b>BC R1</b>	254.000000	252.545505	0.005726
<b>BC R2</b>	254.000000	206.772410	0.185935



<b>BS G1</b>	254.000000	194.120961	0.235744
<b>BS G2</b>	254.000000	159.442437	0.372274
<b>BS S1</b>	254.000000	155.081623	0.389442
<b>BS S2</b>	254.000000	145.667132	0.426507
<b>BC 1</b>	254.000000	160.458461	0.368274
<b>BC 2</b>	254.000000	138.555591	0.454506
<b>BC 3</b>	254.000000	128.904879	0.492500
<b>BC 4</b>	254.000000	167.388337	0.340991
<b>BC 5</b>	254.000000	182.996115	0.279543
<b>BU 1</b>	254.000000	168.771723	0.335544
<b>BU 2</b>	254.000000	130.546012	0.486039
<b>BU 3</b>	254.000000	117.297950	0.538197
<b>BU 4</b>	254.000000	127.673810	0.497347
<b>WOM C1</b>	254.000000	170.865043	0.327303
<b>WOM C2</b>	254.000000	180.489347	0.289412
<b>WOM C3</b>	254.000000	170.284004	0.329591
<b>WOM C4</b>	254.000000	146.499965	0.423228
<b>WOM E1</b>	254.000000	213.534998	0.159311
<b>WOM E2</b>	254.000000	194.792988	0.233098
<b>WOM III</b>	254.000000	177.830674	0.299879
<b>WOM II2</b>	254.000000	161.508110	0.364141
<b>WOM II3</b>	254.000000	193.911240	0.236570
<b>BID 1</b>	254.000000	135.797412	0.465365
<b>BID 2</b>	254.000000	174.412814	0.313335

<b>BID 3</b>	254.000000	181.417611	0.285757
<b>BID 4</b>	254.000000	165.454760	0.348603
<b>BID 5</b>	254.000000	145.364346	0.427699
<b>BID 6</b>	254.000000	139.613772	0.450339
<b>BID 7</b>	254.000000	140.240098	0.447874
<b>BID 8</b>	254.000000	170.537056	0.328594

### CV Com.

	<b>1-SSE/SSO</b>
<b>BR IM</b>	0.368559
<b>BR RE</b>	0.332108
<b>BR CO</b>	0.205867
<b>BR SUS</b>	0.355992
<b>BR CR</b>	0.387163
<b>BR UN</b>	0.464282
<b>WOM</b>	0.295837
<b>BR ID</b>	0.383446



### Indicator Crossvalidated Redundancy

Total	SSO	SSE	1-SSE/SSO
BIM 1	254.000000	181.093813	0.287032
BIM 2	254.000000	179.725371	0.292420
BIM 3	254.000000	197.728122	0.221543

BIM 4	254.000000	171.912989	0.323177
BIM 5	254.000000	161.254445	0.365140
BIM 6	254.000000	172.597263	0.320483
BIM 7	254.000000	167.023321	0.342428
BIM 8	254.000000	155.329848	0.388465
BIM 9	254.000000	205.975055	0.189075
BIM 10	254.000000	182.779800	0.280394
BIM 11	254.000000	172.203768	0.322032
BIM 12	254.000000	167.799758	0.339371
BIM 13	254.000000	143.240232	0.436062
BIM 14	254.000000	147.175367	0.420569
BIM 15	254.000000	179.482208	0.293377
BIM 18	254.000000	198.336283	0.219148
BIM 19	254.000000	185.124151	0.271165
BIM 20	254.000000	180.165619	0.290687
BIM 21	254.000000	197.807401	0.221231
BIM 22	254.000000	207.131080	0.184523
BR P1	254.000000	211.357823	0.167883
BR P2	254.000000	163.190764	0.357517
BR P3	254.000000	134.764108	0.469433
BR S1	254.000000	164.634320	0.351833
BR S2	254.000000	174.275533	0.313876
BC E1	254.000000	172.080901	0.322516
BC E2	254.000000	166.405034	0.344862





BC E3	254.000000	184.123489	0.275104
BC P1	254.000000	228.330815	0.101060
BC R1	254.000000	252.545505	0.005726
BC R2	254.000000	206.772410	0.185935
BS G1	254.000000	194.120961	0.235744
BS G2	254.000000	159.442437	0.372274
BS S1	254.000000	155.081623	0.389442
BS S2	254.000000	145.667132	0.426507
BC 1	254.000000	160.458461	0.368274
BC 2	254.000000	138.555591	0.454506
BC 3	254.000000	128.904879	0.492500
BC 4	254.000000	167.388337	0.340991
BC 5	254.000000	182.996115	0.279543
BU 1	254.000000	168.771723	0.335544
BU 2	254.000000	130.546012	0.486039
BU 3	254.000000	117.297950	0.538197
BU 4	254.000000	127.673810	0.497347
WOM C1	254.000000	170.865043	0.327303
WOM C2	254.000000	180.489347	0.289412
WOM C3	254.000000	170.284004	0.329591
WOM C4	254.000000	146.499965	0.423228
WOM E1	254.000000	213.534998	0.159311
WOM E2	254.000000	194.792988	0.233098
WOM III	254.000000	177.830674	0.299879

WOM II2	254.000000	161.508110	0.364141
WOM II3	254.000000	193.911240	0.236570
BID 1	254.000000	154.918319	0.390085
BID 2	254.000000	183.126041	0.279031
BID 3	254.000000	207.246762	0.184068
BID 4	254.000000	201.622983	0.206209
BID 5	254.000000	180.072288	0.291054
BID 6	254.000000	166.450218	0.344684
BID 7	254.000000	147.258002	0.420244
BID 8	254.000000	183.779936	0.276457

**Construct Crossvalidated Commuality**

Total	SSO	SSE	1-SSE/SSO
BR IM	5334.000000	3368.105975	0.368559
BR RE	1270.000000	848.222547	0.332108
BR CO	1524.000000	1210.258155	0.205867
BR SUS	1016.000000	654.312154	0.355992
BR CR	1270.000000	778.303383	0.387163
BR UN	1016.000000	544.289495	0.464282
WOM	2286.000000	1609.716370	0.295837
BR ID	2032.000000	1252.837869	0.383446