BRAND PERSONALITY OF ADIDAS AND ITS ANTECEDENTS

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ABSTRACT

In today’s competitive marketplace several sportswear brands exist. These sportswear brands offer their products at best of prices, services and quality. In such a scenario it is becoming very difficult for consumers’ to differentiate between the products available in the same product category. Brand personality thus plays a vital role by enabling the consumers’ to evaluate the products, by making the brands more distinctive and enduring. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to identify the brand personality dimensions of Adidas sportswear brand by using Aaker’s brand personality scale. The second purpose of this study is to find out how the brand personality of Adidas sportswear brand formed. The data was collected from 300 Panjab University students studying in Chandigarh. In order to analyze the data, factor analysis and multiple regression techniques were applied. The results indicated that four brand personality dimensions were extracted for Adidas sportswear brand namely Competence, Sincerity, Sophistication and Excitement. The factors forming the brand personality of Adidas were Logo, User Imagery and Advertisement Style. The findings of this study will enable the marketing practitioners to better understand the personality of Adidas sportswear brand from the mind of consumers’ and better distinguish Adidas brand from their competitors.

Keywords: Brand Personality Dimensions; Aaker’s Brand Personality Scale; Antecedents; Adidas

INTRODUCTION

21st century is an era of branded products particularly among the youth of the country who purchase products not only for their physiological need but for their emotional and self-expressive benefits. In today’s market scenario where homogeneity prevails among the products and it is becoming very easy to replace the products with that of the competitors. Therefore, it has becomes vital to look for the point of differentiation. This point of differentiation can be attained by developing a distinctive and enduring brand personality. Brand personality is defined as the set of human characteristics associated with a brand (Aaker, 1997). A distinctive brand personality helps in creating a set of unique and favourable associations in consumers’ memory (Adamantios et al., 2004; Johnson et al., 2000; Keller, 1993). In this study the sportswear industry is taken into consideration where the top sportswear brands such as Adidas, Nike, Puma and Reebok are competitively striving to build their brands in a way to attain maximum market share. In the formation of brand personality of sportswear brands, the marketing activities such as advertising, celebrity endorsements, events sponsorship, user imagery etc. plays an important role. All marketing activities and brand management decisions trigger attitudinal, cognitive, and behavioural responses on the part of the consumer and their buying decision. It has been found that many studies have been devoted to brand personality (Okazaki, 2006; Supphellen & Gronhaug, 2003; Venable & Rose, 2003) in which the main focus have been to study the effect of
brand personality or the issues of measuring brand personality. However, there is very limited research on brand personality especially in the case of sportswear brands and on the factors which form brand personality. Therefore, in this study the brand personality dimension of Adidas sportswear brands are identified along with the factors forming the brand personality of Adidas sportswear.

OBJECTIVES
1. To identify the brand personality dimensions of Adidas sportswear.
2. To determine the factors forming brand personality of Adidas sportswear.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Brand Personality

The emergence and development of brand is not a modern phenomena but it existed since time immemorial. Brands were used to differentiate goods of one manufacturer from the other. According to De Cheratony (1998) today’s brand consists of tangible and product related attributes as well as intangible, non-product related characteristics (the added value). Thereby, it is important to note that it is especially the added value which makes the difference between a brand and a simple product and which gives a company a competitive advantage (Aaker, 1996). It can be said that a brand is more than a product which can have dimensions which differentiate it from other products (Keller, 2008). The brand personality concept is based on the assumption that brands like human beings have a personality, which can be defined as the ‘set of human characteristics associated with a brand’. Plummer (1985) defines brand personality as being the perceptions of consumers about a brand. According to Batra et al. (1993) brand personality is the internal link of the whole brand image. Brand personality is a strategically important construct that can help firms achieve enduring differentiation and sustainable competitive advantage (Freling & Forbes, 2005; Plummer, 2000).

Brand Personality Dimensions

E-commerce normally means as transaction conducted over the internet. E-commerce is a large domain on conducting business over internet and E-retailing is a part of it. When we discuss on digitally / Internet enabled commercial transactions between organizations and individuals using latest web technologies as per the policies of the organization. The rapid growth of mobile telephony has provided a foundation for M-commerce namely E-commerce activities carried out via a mobile device, such as a cell phone it is called M-commerce. M-commerce also refers to the transaction conducted via mobile device or Wi-Fi network. The emerging technology behind m-commerce is based on the Wireless Application Protocol (WAP) architecture which includes use of other technologies such as SMS services over a number of carriers (Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM), Interim Standard 95 (IS95), Code Division Multiple Access (CDMA), Wideband Code Division Multiple Access (W-CDMA)), Bluetooth applications, 2G, 2.5G, 3G, Wi-Fi, IRDA etc. M-commerce covers terminals, standards, transaction models, middleware, or security; potential business models, methods; and design approaches to develop m-commerce applications.

Brand Personality Drivers

Creation of brand personality can be seen as a process where both the customer and a company creates brand personality from their own perspective. The perception of brand personality traits can be formed and influenced by any direct or indirect contact that the consumer has with the brand (Plummer 1985 dimensions paper). Aaker (1996) suggested the breath of factors both related and unrelated to the product, affecting perceptions of a brand personality.

The primary drivers of brand personality are the product related characteristics such as product category, package, price and attributes. Non product-related characteristics includes user imagery, sponsorship, symbol, age, advertising style, country of origin, company image, CEO and celebrity
endorsers. Therefore, the brand personality drivers both product-related and non-product related associates the personality traits with a brand either in a direct or indirect way. It can be concluded that there are many sources which can create brand personality but it is important how the marketers understand the importance of these drivers and use them in developing the desired personalities for their brands.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A survey type study has been designed with a set of questionnaires which were distributed among the students of Panjab University in Chandigarh. The students were falling in the age group of 18-25 years. Total of 300 questionnaires were distributed among the students in order to investigate which of the 42 traits taken from Aaker’s brand personality scale describes Adidas sportswear brand the most. Also, to determine the factors which form the brand personality of Adidas. The factors used to determine the brand personality dimension of Adidas sportswear were the brand personality drivers proposed by Aaker (1996). In this study only the users of Adidas sportswear brand were included in the sample, which came out to be 248 out of 300 respondents. The reliability of the study was tested using Cronbach’s alpha. The value obtained was higher than the acceptable limit of 0.70. In order to fulfil the validity requirements the constructs used for brand personality and brand personality drivers in this study were identified from the literature and were based on detailed analysis of conceptual and empirical literature. Also, principal component method of extraction was used which depicted that good amount of variance was explained by the extracted dimensions and factor loadings of nearly 50% of the items corresponded exactly to the items designed and proposed by the author to measure each dimension. Therefore, the conditions for face validity, content validity and construct validity were satisfied. The statistical tools naming multiple regression and principal component analysis were performed on the data for analysis.

DATA ANALYSIS

Brand Personality Dimensions of Adidas Sportswear

Principal component analysis with varimax rotation was applied on the 42 traits of brand personality in order to identify the brand personality dimensions for Adidas sportswear brand. In this research in order to check the sampling adequacy and appropriateness of data, Kaiser- Mayer-Olk test (KMO) and Barlett’s Test of Sphericity was performed. The values of KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy (0.898) and Barlett’s Test of Sphericity (1405.239, Sig=0.000) were above the acceptable limit. It indicated that the data was appropriate for Principal Component Analysis.

The items with the factor loading of 0.40 and greater were considered in the rotated component matrix as suggested by Hair et al. (1998). Also, the items which exhibited low factor loadings (<0.40), high cross loadings, low communalities (<0.50) were candidates for elimination (Hair et al., 1998). After considering the above criteria, 25 items were deleted. A final 4-factor solution was obtained accounting for 58.935% of total variance, with all the communalities above 0.50. Table 1 depicts the 17 item factor structure along with their respective factor loadings, Eigen value, percentage variance, communalities, cronbach’s alpha, mean and standard deviation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scales</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Factor Loadings</th>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Factor 1</td>
<td>Factor 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.621</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uptodate</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliable</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>0.688</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardworking</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>0.699</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>0.728</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligent</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
After the extraction of four factors from the analysis, naming of factors was done. These factors acted as the dimensions of brand personality for Adidas sportswear brand. According to Hair et al. (1998) the items with higher loadings were considered to be more important and to have greater influence on factor naming. Also, naming was done by comparing the nature of the items with those in Aaker’s (1997) study. The four extracted dimensions were named as Competence, Sincerity, Sophistication and Excitement. All the four brand personality dimensions with their traits correlated somewhat in the right way in accordance with the original Aaker’s brand personality scale used in the study. Except for the few traits which got eliminated during the analysis and the others which were assigned by factor analysis to the other dimensions. The dimension Competence in the original Aaker’s (1997) study comprised of 9 traits whereas the newly formed Competence dimension in this research comprised of 4 traits (Reliable, Hardworking, Secure, Intelligent) from the original scale and one trait (up to date) from another dimension. In case of second extracted dimension- Sincerity, out of 11 traits from the original Sincerity dimension, only 5 traits (Honest, Sincere, Realistic, Wholesome, and Friendly) constituted the newly formed Sincerity dimension. The third extracted dimension Sophistication consisted of 3 traits (Charming, Good looking, Glamorous) from the original Sophistication dimension and one trait(Successful) from the original dimension Competence. The last extracted dimension Excitement, comprised of only 3 traits (Trendy, Spirited, Imaginative) out of the total 11 traits in this study.

The reliability coefficients for the newly extracted dimensions were found to be above the acceptable limit (Table1). According to George and Mallery (2007), an alpha value for a set of data that is greater than 0.7 is reliable and acceptable. Also, in case of exploratory studies the Cronbach’s value is acceptable at the value of .60 (Hair et al., 1998). It can be concluded that the brand personality dimensions extracted in this research are suitable to determine the brand personality of Adidas sportswear.

**Brand Personality Drivers of Adidas Sportswear Brand**

Multiple regression technique was used to identify the significant drivers of Adidas brand personality. The non- product related drivers of brand personality naming Sponsorship, Logo, User Imagery, Advertisement Style, Company Image and Celebrity Endorsers acted as independent variables and the brand personality of Adidas sportswear brand acted as dependent variables in the analysis. It is hypothesised that there is no significant relationship between the non- product related brand
personality drivers and the overall brand personality of Adidas. Table 2 depicts that the brand personality drivers – Sponsorship, Logo, User Imagery, Advertisement Style, Company Image and Celebrity endorsers explained 52.7% of variation in the brand personality of Adidas sportswear brand. As shown in table 2, the standardized beta coefficient value for the brand personality drivers was found to be significant for the three drivers naming Logo (0.369, p=.000), User Imagery (0.301, p=0.000) and Advertisement Style (0.093, p=.048). The value of standardised beta coefficient was maximum for Logo followed by User imagery and Advertisement style. It means that Logo was the most influencing brand personality driver in case of Adidas. Therefore, these drivers had significant contribution in determining the brand personality of Adidas sportswear brand. The remaining drivers showed non-significant contribution in forming the brand personality of Adidas. Thus, the hypothesis that there is no significant influence of the brand personality drivers in forming the brand personality of Adidas with respect to Logo, User Imagery and Advertisement Style is rejected.

**Table 2. Determinants of brand personality in case of Adidas**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
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<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.361</td>
<td>.154</td>
<td>8.846</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsorship</td>
<td>.061</td>
<td>.031</td>
<td>1.956</td>
<td>.052</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logo</td>
<td>.224</td>
<td>.034</td>
<td>6.547</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>User Imagery</td>
<td>.189</td>
<td>.032</td>
<td>5.854</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertisement Style</td>
<td>.057</td>
<td>.030</td>
<td>1.991</td>
<td>.048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company Image</td>
<td>.044</td>
<td>.035</td>
<td>1.274</td>
<td>.204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celebrity Endorsers</td>
<td>.055</td>
<td>.032</td>
<td>1.692</td>
<td>.092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R²</td>
<td>.527</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**CONCLUSION**

The results of this research proved the acceptability and applicability of dimensions of brand personality framework suggested by Aaker (1997) in case of Adidas sportswear brand. The original framework suggested by Aaker (1997) was with five dimensions namely Sincerity, Excitement, Competence, Sophistication and Ruggedness. However, four brand personality dimensions were formed in this research for Adidas sportswear brand naming Competence, Sincerity, Sophistication and Excitement. These newly formed dimensions comprised of only some of the traits of the original dimensions from Aaker’s scale. Also, it was found that the brand personality traits locate under different newly formed dimensions than in Aaker’s study (1997). Therefore, it can be concluded that the 5 factor solution of brand personality by Aaker (1997) cannot be fully replicated. Instead the 5 dimensional BPS needs adaptation when applied to sportwear brands. The influence of culture and product category may be one of the explanations for the emergence of dimensions that differ from those in Aaker’s (1997) study (McCracken, 1986). This finding further reinforces a research done by Aaker and Schmitt (1997) that suggests that the symbolic use of brands appear to differ considerably across cultures.

After determining the brand personality of a brand it becomes imperative to know how the brand personality is formed or what are the factors that influence it. In the present study the non-product related brand personality drivers proposed by Aaker (1996) were considered for determining the relationship between the brand personality of Adidas and the brand personality drivers. The results
indicated that the overall brand personality of Adidas sportswear brand was found to be influenced by the brand personality drivers naming Logo, User Imagery and Advertisement Style.

IMPLICATIONS

In today’s competitive market scenario, creating and managing a particular brand is becoming tough. Therefore, effective positioning and differentiation of a brand is essential. For this it is important to launch a distinctive and attractive brand personality in the market. The findings of this study suggest that marketers and brand managers should concern themselves with the personality of Adidas brand in order to differentiate it in the competitive market place as well as to make the brand enduring and sustainable. Further, by exploring the antecedents of brand personality, the brand personality can be created and positioned in a much distinctive and effective manner. The role of brand personality drivers become more vital in cases when the brand personality of a brand becomes stagnate or changes for the worse as a result of which the consumers brand preference, brand loyalty and brand equity decreases. Therefore, by knowing the specific drivers responsible for forming the brand personality of a particular brand the problem can be resolved. The findings of this research recommend that Logo, User Imagery and Advertisement Style play a significant role in influencing the brand personality of Adidas brand. Among these three brand personality driver, Logo was the most dominating factor on which the marketers must emphasise followed by User Imagery. The findings of this research could serve as a starting point for industry practitioners to understand more about brand personality of sportswear brands and its antecedents. The construct of this research could act as a reference in designing and repositioning Adidas sportswear, which would ultimately fit the desired personality of its targeted consumers’.

LIMITATION AND SUGGESTIONS

The first limitation of this research is the meaning of traits among the consumers from whom the sample is taken. In the present study it was found that the meaning of individual traits for Adidas brand was interpreted differently by the respondents. This suggests that greater care must be taken in future to clearly define the meaning of traits to respondents. Secondly, in this research Adidas sportswear brand was taken as a general concept regardless of its designs, functions or sub categories like shoes, clothing, equipments and accessories. Consumers’ as per their preference for certain design, functions or categories may have different perception for a brand. Therefore, future studies can study the brand in more depth by taking into consideration its various categories. Also, all the users of Adidas sportswear brand were taken in the study and the perception of non-users were ignored. It will be interesting to figure out the difference in perception of users and non-users with respect to the brand personality of Adidas sportswear brand. A preliminary investigation into the applicability and relevance of personality traits in the context of sportswear has been taken up in this study. An established scale, the BPS was borrowed which was originally developed to measure brand personality in consumer good settings. As a result, the personality traits may not fully represent the gamut of personality traits associated with sportswear. Future research could use qualitative research design, such as focus groups or projective techniques, to elicit destination-specific personality characteristics. The antecedents of brand personality were restricted to the non product related brand personality drivers. Hence, other factors responsible for forming the brand personality should be included in future studies. This can be done in a better way by asking the respondents quantitatively about the factors.

REFERENCES


