

Conceptualising brand personality: A review and research propositions

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ABSTRACT

Brands are perceived to possess a personality that consumers use as an avenue for self-expression or to experience the emotional benefits by which the brand differentiates itself from others. Despite developments made in this area, the focus has been solely on the role of brand attributes and their utilitarian functions in influencing consumer attitudes. Very little progress has been made to show how brands are used for self-expressive purposes. This review thus discusses how consumers have a part to play in influencing how brand personality is perceived. This is based on the fact that as consumers build trusting relationships with their preferred brand, they will reinforce positive attitudes towards the brand. To build the theoretical framework, issues pertaining to brand personality dimensions, such as self-concept, self-congruity between brands and their consumers and self-expression using brands, will be reviewed. Further, the paper examines the impact of cultural dimensions of individualism and collectivism on self-congruity. This provides a base for examining the fact that the cultural orientation of consumers may have an implication towards the proposed influence of the consumer's self on the personality of the brand. Finally, the review examines the

effects of consumer demographic profiles on the consumer's self-congruity with brand personality. The review will generate and develop relevant research propositions. This will be justified by the conceptual and managerial implications that would radiate from the proposed study.

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INTRODUCTION

A brand is perceived to possess a 'personality' that consumers use to 'self-express' or to experience the emotional benefits of the brand. This will differentiate the brand from competitors in the same product category.¹⁻³ Despite developments made in this respect, prior research has focused solely on the role of brand attributes and utilitarian functions in influencing consumer attitudes.⁴ Little progress has been made in showing how brands can be used for the purpose of self-expression. This is despite research which shows that self-expression can be an important driver for brand preference and choice.^{5,6}

Consequently, the main aim of this paper is to address the issues regarding brand personality as a

vehicle for self-expression. Building from the literature, some research questions/problems are inherent. Does the consumer's self have influence on how the consumer perceives the personality of their preferred brand? Does the cultural orientation of the consumer's self influence the personality of the preferred brand? Do consumer demographics have any influence on the consumer's perception of the personality of their preferred brand?

As such the literature review revolves around these three issues. First, there is the suggestion that consumers have a part to play in influencing how a brand personality is perceived. This is in contrast to other research and propositions which suggest that brand personality is created by how marketers and advertisers intend to project it.⁷⁻⁹ As consumers build trusting relationships with their preferred brand, they will further reinforce positive attitudes (which includes their personality) on to the brand.¹⁰ Dittmar supports this notion when he suggests that individuals share in the process of transmitting, reproducing and transforming the social meanings of objects.¹¹ To build the theoretical framework issues pertaining to brand personality dimensions, such as self-concept, self-congruity between brands and their consumers and self-expression using brands, will be reviewed.

The second part of the research problem examines the impact of cultural orientation on self-congruity. This is done by building on

the findings of the effects of individualism/collectivism and the construal of the self.¹²⁻¹⁴ Aaker and Schmitt suggest that collectivists and individualists use brands as a vehicle to express themselves, but with different motives.¹⁵ This provides the base for examining the possibility that the cultural orientation of consumers may have implications for the proposed influence of the consumer's self on the personality of the brand.

The third part of the review examines prior research into the effects of consumer demographic profiles on product positioning. But very little research has been conducted into the effects of the consumer demographic profile on the consumer's self-congruity with a brand's personality. The reason could be due to the complexity involved, coupled with the inconsistencies that may have surfaced across geographical and cultural differences.

The review will generate and develop relevant research propositions. This will be justified by the potential conceptual and managerial implications that would radiate from the proposed study.

RELEVANT LITERATURE

Brand personality

The understanding of how and when brand personality relates to a consumer's personality, and thereby influences a consumer's brand preference has remained a topic of keen interest.¹⁶ Brand personality can be defined as the

set of human characteristics associated with a given brand and it tends to serve a symbolic or self-expressive function rather than a utilitarian function.^{17,18} Brand personality, like human personality, is both distinctive and enduring. For example, the personality of Coke is seen to be 'real and authentic' while Pepsi is associated with 'youth, spirit and excitement'. These have endured over time in spite of efforts to augment or change them.¹⁹

Brand personality is one of the most universally mentioned features of a brand²⁰ and has been a fascinating subject for many researchers in the past.^{21,22} Several models have been suggested to define brand personality. For instance, Kapferer proposes that brand personality makes up one of the facets of the 'brand identity prism'. He stressed that brand identity reveals a brand's richness, which can contribute a strong differentiating advantage for the brand.²³ Others such as the NEO model,²⁴ Big Five prototypes²⁵ and ACL²⁶ all attempt to define traits that are related to the personality of brands. There is one inherent weakness, however. These models describe the personality traits that are perceived by consumers. They are not described as a set of consistent personality dimensions that are available across other brands.

Aaker attempts to bridge this gap by introducing five personality dimensions. They are sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness.²⁷ These are derived from 15 personality facets of brands. These

facets can be further deconstructed into 42 personality traits. The study was carried out on brands from 39 product categories, and these brands have been identified as consistently possessing these five major dimensions in personality. With this, one can further explore how these dimensions of brand personality would increase consumer preference and usage²⁸ or evoke consumer emotions.²⁹

The personality of a brand encourages consumers to perceive attributes they aspire to in the brand and hence the desire to associate with it.³⁰ For instance, Guess and Esprit signify youth, Marlboro cigarettes evoke images of masculinity, Gucci and BMW signify sophistication, Hewlett Packard conveys competence, Hallmark and Kodak relate sincerity and Nike signifies fitness or even Michael Jordan. It is also suggested that the personality dimensions of sincerity, excitement and competence tap an innate part of the human personality, while sophistication and ruggedness tap dimensions that an individual desires but does not necessarily have.³¹ Studies have also shown that the development of a brand's personality can be influenced by consumers' personality,³² self-congruity,^{33,34} culture³⁵ and demographics.³⁶

User imagery

Brand personality can be developed through a variety of marketing variables such as user imagery, packaging, sponsorships, symbols and advertising.³⁷⁻⁴⁰ The personality of a

brand can be created based on typical users (eg consumers who use the brand) or idealised users (as portrayed in the advertisement). User imagery is defined as the set of human characteristics associated with the typical brand user.⁴¹ While user imagery can be an important driving force to consumer decisions, it is also likely to be product specific. Keller believes that brand personality and user imagery are more likely to be related to products such as cars, beers, liquor, cigarettes and cosmetics.⁴² For example, both Mercedes and Calvin Klein have created a sexy and sophisticated personality for their products. The rugged and outdoor personality of Harley bikers is strongly related to Harley bikes. Sponsorships by brands in certain activities can also influence personality. For instance, the sponsorship of Freestyle ski by SWATCH reinforced its daring and youthful personality.

Keller, however, warns that user imagery and brand personality may not always be in agreement. Aaker made a similar proposition by stating that there are occasions where the user profile for a brand is inconsistent with the personality which the brand strives to project.⁴³ This phenomenon may dilute the heritage from the brand personality. The inconsistent user imagery will dominate over brand personality which is designed for a particular brand. An example reflecting such a situation would be the inconsistency developed between the user imagery and brand personality of the

newspaper *USA Today*. Non-readers of *USA Today* conceived a user image of its readers as shallow 'air heads'. This hurts the image of the brand. Hence, the newspaper management had to introduce advertising campaigns using prominent people to endorse the brand to reinforce the personality of a 'well-rounded' person.⁴⁴

Brand personality vs. product attributes

The concept of brand personality has driven many researchers to look beyond product attributes and benefits.⁴⁵⁻⁴⁷ Attributes of a product alone are not sufficient to build strong brand equity.^{48,49} Brands which compete on the product attributes only, as compared to brand personality, will face severe limitations.⁵⁰ It has been recognised that:

- a product by itself has limitations in differentiation. For example, when Procter and Gamble recognised that consumers prefer peanut butter that is fresh, they attempted to introduce and position Jif peanut butter for its attribute in freshness. The attempt failed and researchers discovered that consumers simply believed that all brands of peanut butter are the same in this dimension.⁵¹
- a product is easy to copy based on its attributes and has become functionally more similar.⁵² For example, bank operations have become so alike that they are now unable fully to express their individuality and identity.⁵³ A brand that relies on the superior performance of a

key attribute may eventually lose the edge on that attribute because the attribute will be the target for competitors.⁵⁴

- consumers do not react rationally all the time. The reality is that customers experience mistrust, confusion or impatience in most contexts. Hence, they do not or cannot seek out and process objective information about brands in a particular category. A consumer purchase decision is very much influenced by heuristic cues when coupled with the concept of self-congruity.⁵⁵

Contribution of brand personality towards marketing

The concept of brand personality can provide various avenues for brand marketing strategists to enhance their comprehension of consumer perceptions and attitudes towards the brand. They can also contribute to differentiating brand identity, to guiding communication efforts and to building brand equity.⁵⁶ The position of brand often occupies the mind of the consumers, generating confidence and creating the purchasing environment.⁵⁷

In an effort to comprehend consumer perceptions and attitudes towards a brand, marketing strategists can ask consumers to describe a brand based on their perceived personality of it. Such an effort can provide better insights into the emotions and relationships identified with a brand than by asking consumers about the attribute perceptions of the brand. The

identification of the personality of a brand is an efficient communicator of the personality of its owner or consumer. It confers the desired qualities of the user. For instance, mothers who use Ivory soap are perceived to be caring towards their babies, just as the gentle and loving personality identified with the brand.⁵⁸

The brand personality also provides the opportunity for marketing strategists to achieve differentiation. By endowing a brand with a unique personality, brand strategists can differentiate brands of products with similar product attributes. Plummer argues that for many product classes, the brand personality is the key element in understanding brand choice.⁵⁹

The brand personality construct also helps marketing strategists to develop a more guided approach in communicating with the consumers.⁶⁰ It provides depth and texture which makes it easier to keep communication effort on target. It assists marketers to synchronise and coordinate cohesive advertising, packaging, promotions and other elements of marketing mix activities with a common theme that communicates the personality of a brand.⁶¹⁻⁶⁴

Brand personality is a contemporary tool for marketing strategists to build and enhance brand equity. Over time, products have moved from a utilitarian perspective to a perspective of consumer–brand relationships.⁶⁵ The brand development concept may go beyond developing its personality

and into building cohesiveness from its personality, company culture and policy.⁶⁶

The concept of brand personality has provided an avenue for marketing strategists to explore ways to capture consumer interests and loyalty. For example, soap has been a product purchased according to a utilitarian concept. Consumers just expect soap to make them clean, smell good or moisturised. The emergence of brand as personality has transformed the strategy for marketing soap, however. The brand Ivory from Procter and Gamble has revolutionised the utilitarian concept and exploited it as an avenue for consumers' self-expression because of their willingness to achieve the 'Ivory girl' complexion.

Concepts of the 'self'

Researchers have been exploring many issues and concepts which the brand personality influences. Three issues that stand out are (1) self-concept,⁶⁷ (2) self-congruity⁶⁸ and (3) self-expression.⁶⁹⁻⁷¹ These concepts have direct influence between the concepts of 'self' and the preferred brand personality of consumers. They are the core issues towards reconciling the fact that the brand personality is able to enhance the identity and equity of a brand. The next few sections will expand on these concepts.

Self-concept

In the field of psychology, a variety of self-image constructs have been identified in consumer behaviour. These

include self-image, ideal self-image, social self-image and the ideal social self-image.⁷² Schiffman and Kanuk further support the idea that consumers tend to seek out brands that possess personalities that match their self-image or project the image that they would like to project to others.⁷³

Solomon defines self-concept as one's perceptions on the responses of one's self.⁷⁴ From a social interaction perspective, it is perceived that individuals form these self-concepts and use them to guide their purchase behaviour.⁷⁵ This phenomenon is based on the fact that the self can be extended to one's possessions and items that he/she associates with.^{76,77}

This is, however, challenged by the malleable self-concept which suggests that people act differently in different situations.⁷⁸ They are influenced by social roles and cues and the need for self-presentation. This is due to the fact that a person has to find a balance between the various self-images (eg actual self, ideal self, social self, etc). Sometimes individuals express who they wish to be (desired self), strive to be (ideal self) or feel they should be (ought self), rather than who they consistently are across situations. Hence, a brand personality may not be consistently congruent to the need for self-expression all the time as it depends on the physical situational factors and social surroundings.⁷⁹

Self-congruity

The concept of self-congruity suggests that consumers tend to choose

situations and companions that reaffirm their self-schema.^{80,81} Hence, a brand with a reliable personality that is congruent to the personality of the consumer can play the role of a partner, associate or friend that the consumer is comfortable with. For example, for consumers who possess a personality that reflects excitement, then he or she is more comfortable associating with friends who are exciting. In the same vein, brands with such a personality would also be a preferred companion (for example, Pepsi defined to be spirited, young, up-to-date and outgoing is a preferred brand). This will further enhance the brand-consumer relationship and subsequently improve brand performance.

Based on the theory of self-congruity, consumers are known to prefer brands that are associated with a set of personality traits congruent to their own.^{82,83} Swann *et al.* support this theory by stating that consumers have an inborn preference for things that are familiar, predictable, stable and uncertainty reducing.⁸⁴ Brands with a strong positive personality can also function as status symbols, which also serve as a person's personal statement.⁸⁵

It can be argued, however, that the attitudes of a brand, which involve its personality, can also be developed from the reinforcement and projection of the consumer's personality onto it. This is based on the fact that as consumers build trusting relationships with their preferred brand, they will further reinforce positive attitudes (which include their personality) onto the brand.⁸⁶

Self-expression

The positive attitude towards familiar brands that are self-congruent is due to the fact that consumers exploit brands as an avenue for self-expression.⁸⁷ The premise of the self-expression model which is consistent with the self-congruity theory^{88,89} is that, for certain groups of consumers, certain brands can become vehicles to express part of their self-identity.

Fishbein and Ajzen argued that the ability of a brand to be used as an avenue for self-expression is based on its ability to develop beliefs in consumers of the experiential benefits.⁹⁰ Fazio and Zanna illustrated that attitudes formed by direct behaviour or experience are more accessible than attitudes based on information or indirect forms of behaviour.⁹¹ The feelings associated with a brand and the emotions they evoke can become so strongly associated that they are accessible during product consumption.^{92,93} Brands such as Kodak or Campbell, which project warm and emphatic feelings, can cause emotions to emerge.⁹⁴ Another example is the beer, Coors, which possesses an outdoorsy, active and healthy personality. It is able to help respondents express feelings of warmth, friendliness and wholesomeness when respondents were given a setting in the mountains. Hence, this supports the proposition that brand personality can transform the user experience leading it to an avenue for self-expression.

If the brand has strong personality, it can play an important role in the self-expression process. Levi jeans have succeeded in capturing consumers'

preference by creating a distinctive brand personality which reaches almost an 'icon' status in the consumer's mind.⁹⁵ In their advertisements, it focuses on the 'rebellious' and 'sexy' personality of the brand through strong imagery thereby reinforcing Levi's consumers' self-concepts and thus a means for their self-expression.⁹⁶ Furthermore, brands that portray personality dimensions that correspond well with the cultural meaning for a group of consumers may be a favourable vehicle for them to associate with these brands and to construct and sustain their social self.⁹⁷

The self-expression model can also go as far as becoming an extension or integral part of the self.⁹⁸ This would mean that it reaches a state where it is impossible to disentangle the user from the brand. When a brand becomes part of one's extended self, it will represent the individual's central identity and bring forth deep emotional attachment to the self.⁹⁹ An example would be the association between a full-time biker and his or her Harley. They are so attached that it becomes impossible to distinguish between them. The Harley brand will be the vehicle to express who the biker is and vice versa.

Culture

Relationship between culture and brand personality

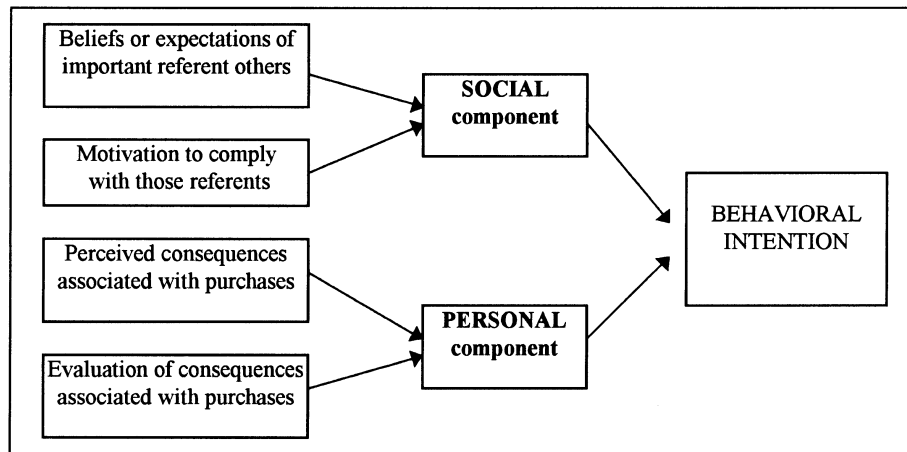
Usunier suggests that consumers are cross-culturally different in both their preferences for products and their behaviour.¹⁰⁰ McCracken's model of

consumers' consumption rituals further illustrates the impact of culture upon consumption choices. He emphasises that consumer goods are imbued with cultural meaning from the 'culturally constituted world' through instruments of advertising and fashion.¹⁰¹ Many researchers have exploited this perspective of 'cultural meaning' by focusing on how the constructs of self-congruity, self-expression and brand personality are influenced by the cultural orientation of consumers.¹⁰²⁻¹⁰⁴

The perspective of 'cultural meaning' proposed by Usunier in understanding consumer behaviour should be reviewed in relation to the cultural perspectives by Hofstede¹⁰⁵ and Trompenaars.¹⁰⁶ The dimension of 'individualism/collectivism' is conspicuously consistent in both models. This can be differentiated based on five major attitudinal and behavioural characteristics which include self-construal, roles of others, values, motivational drive and behaviour.

Individualism refers to a loose social framework where members are concerned with themselves and their immediate families. It has been identified that members of the individualistic culture tend to hold an independent view of self that emphasises separateness, internal attributes and the uniqueness of individuals. They place importance on individual needs and individual rewards. In contrast, a collectivistic society indicates a preference for a 'tightly knit social framework in which individuals can expect their relatives,

Figure 1: Fishbein's (1967) Behavioural Intention Model



clan or other group to look after them with unquestioning loyalty'. In addition, members of collectivistic cultures tend to hold an interdependent view of the self that emphasises connectedness, social context and relationships. Public 'face' is another characteristic of importance to collectivists.¹⁰⁷

Influence of culture on self-expression

Since brands are used by consumers as tools for self-expression¹⁰⁸ and the nature of the self systematically varies across cultures,¹⁰⁹ it is likely that the nature of self-expression between individualists and collectivists will differ accordingly. Research shows that an individualist uses brand personality to express the differences from his referent others while a collectivist employs brand personality as a vehicle

to express the similarity to his referent others.¹¹⁰ Hence, an individual may use brand personality to re-assert their differences or similarities (depending on their culture influence) rather than expressing the actual self based on the concept of self congruity.

Fishbein emphasised that a consumer's behavioural intention is dependent on the weight placed on both the social and personal components as illustrated in Figure 1.¹¹¹ Hence, for individualists who are strongly influenced by the personal component, it is likely that they will use brand personality to express their unique and internal attributes and personality. Aaker and Schmitt, however, question the inconsistency in the 'personal component'. They suggest that the behavioural expressions of

individualists are motivated to emphasise their differences as compared to their reference groups. In contrast, collectivists who usually succumb to the need to portray conformity will use brand personality as an avenue to express their similarities to members of their referent groups. This is where the social component of Fishbein's behavioural intention model becomes dominant and is consistent with Aaker and Schmitt's research findings.¹¹²

Influence of consensus decision on self-concept

Since the strength of consensus decision making varies between individualists and collectivists,^{113,114} this will also influence the decision about brand association based on self-congruity and hence brand preference. Research shows that collectivists make decisions more frequently based on consensus while individualists tend to be influenced both by consensus and attribute cues of a particular brand.¹¹⁵ This echoes prior findings by Markus and Kitayama.¹¹⁶ They suggested that when public display of one's own internal attribute or feelings is at odds with what others feel or think, individualists will attempt to follow their internal feelings and act on the basis of them. This is because these feelings are regarded as diagnostic of the independent self. In contrast, collectivists would feel that one's inner feelings might be less important in determining one's consequent action. Hence, this may suggest that the choice of brand association based on

concepts of self-congruity and self-expression may also be weakened by group consensus decision making in a collectivistic culture.

Influence of cross-cultural meaning to brand personality

The cross-cultural meaning of brand personality dimensions differs between members of the individualistic and collectivistic cultures.¹¹⁷ Hence, it may influence the usage of brand for self-expression between cultures. Brand personality traits that are consistent with the interdependent self-construal (eg dependent, peaceful and harmonious) are emphasised strongly by members of the collectivistic culture. In contrast, individualists with independent self-construal place greater value on achievement, competition and independence.¹¹⁸ In research on members from the collectivist culture, Aaker found that the dimension of 'ruggedness' was absent among the Big 5 brand personalities. Instead, the dimension of 'dependence' was found.¹¹⁹ The implication would be that these two dimensions might have confused consumers from differing cultures who may not find it congruent to their personality preference.

Demographics

Influence on brand personality

Consumers still make decisions to purchase a brand based on pricing, quality and product attributes. People

from different age groups, education background and lifestyle may have differing perceptions of a brand.¹²⁰ For example, consumers at different stages of their family life cycle are perceived to project different purchasing behaviour due to their changing financial situation and typical product interests.¹²¹ Since the perception of human personality traits can be inferred based on demographic characteristics, then consumers may also perceive incongruent personality traits to a brand based on their demographics construct.¹²² Hence, one who is financially weak may be price sensitive and may ignore self-congruity with brand personality.

Further, many younger consumers tend to be variety prone and thus exhibit little brand loyalty. This phenomenon questions the strength of the effects on self-congruity and self-expression. The relationship towards brand personality between various groups of consumers from contrasting demographic backgrounds has not been addressed clearly in studies to date.

RESEARCH PROPOSITIONS

Building on the literature, a number of gaps are visible. Generally, researchers call for more diverse geographical and demographic profiles to be included in future studies in order to shed new light on possible universality in attitude formation. This should be coupled with research that deals with more dimensions of brand personality. More

specifically, there are a number of issues that have to be addressed.

First, previous research perceived the development of brand personality as an active role for marketers and advertisers. The focus on the role of consumers is less evident.^{123,124} We have inferred from the review that the perceived personality of a preferred brand for consumers can actually be influenced by their personality preference. This is based on the fact that consumers who possess a favourable perception of a brand are more likely to build a trusting relationship with it.¹²⁵ Thus, consumers will reinforce positive attitudes such as their preferred personalities onto the brand's personality.

As consumers interact with their preferred brand, they do not only participate actively in receiving the personality that the brand projects. At the same time, they transmit and create a new personality for the brand.¹²⁶ Ultimately, a consumer who prefers a certain brand will perceive that its personality is congruent to his/her preferred personality and will project their preferred personality onto the brand. This is in contrast with other research where self-congruity was seen to develop from the fit found between the personality of the consumer and of the brand. The following hypothesis summarises the preceding discussion.

H1: The personality perception of a preferred brand is influenced by the personality preference of the consumer.

Aaker asserts that little is known about the psychological mechanism by which brand personality operates across cultures.¹²⁷ The culture of collectivism and individualism is found to have an influence on the self-concept of a person,¹²⁸ the usage of brand for self-expression¹²⁹ and the meaning of brand personality dimensions.¹³⁰ However, little research has been carried out on its effect on consumer brand preferences based on self-congruity towards brand personality.

Further, research on cross-cultural consumer behaviour has mostly been carried out in countries with either extreme cultures in collectivism (eg China or Japan) or individualism (eg USA). Few or none have been carried out to examine the collectivism/individualism in a cosmopolitan and heterogeneous country such as Singapore or Hong Kong. These countries represent major Asian cultures intersecting with Western cultures under modern conditions. It would therefore be interesting to explore these concepts in a country with both Asian and Western cultures influencing the culture of individualism and collectivism.

Since collectivists are more prone towards consensus decisions of their reference groups,^{131,132} the strength of the relationship of their preferred personality and the personality of their preferred brand may be weaker compared to individualists. Further, collectivists are known to use brands to express their similarities with their reference groups. Individualists on the

other hand utilise a brand to express their uniqueness.¹³³ This may influence a collectivist to place less importance on expressing their 'real self' with a brand but rather to express conformance with their reference group. To explore the influence of culture on the relationship between a consumer's personality preference and the personality of their preferred brand, the following hypothesis is developed.

H2: The influence of the personality of the consumers on the perceived brand personality of their preferred brand is stronger for individualists as compared to collectivists.

Consumer buying behaviour is observed to differ based on their age groups, gender, life cycle (eg marital status) and user status (eg user and non-user).¹³⁴⁻¹³⁶ As such, demographics may also have an influence on the concept of self-congruity, since it is one of the constructs that defines consumer behaviour.

Modernisation in a highly developing country has somewhat influenced the values and behaviour of Asians¹³⁷ and this may have an influence on the younger or better-educated consumers. Hence, the trend in changing of values among people from different demographic groups may also influence the concept of self-congruity. If this holds true, then the strength of congruity for the various personality dimensions of a brand to the self-concept (ie personality preference) may

differ for diverse demographics groupings. Thus it is hypothesised that:

H3: The influence of the personality of the consumers on the perceived brand personality of their preferred brand differs for different (a) age groups, (b) user status groups (ie users and non-users), (c) marital status (ie single and married), (d) gender.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Brand personality is an important element in building brand preference. This may be influenced by the concepts of self-congruity, self-expression, cultural behaviour and demographics of consumers. The objective of the research propositions is to test, empirically, the concept of self-congruity towards perceived brand personality for a preferred brand using a different perspective. Conceptually, we argue that

- consumers who have a strong preference for a brand can in fact endow and influence its perceived personality with their self-concept
- individualists have a stronger tendency to enforce their personality dimensions onto their preferred brand as compared to collectivists. This is due to the differences in their inherent characteristics
- brands that are positioned to meet certain consumer profiles (demographics) would most likely

develop stronger congruity between the consumer and the brand

- consumers who both prefer a brand and also associate with it will influence the perceived personality of the brand with both their desired and innate personality dimensions.

The preceding conceptual underpinnings are signposts for marketers and strategists in their development of marketing issues and communication messages. Building on these, the managerial contributions radiating from the empirical studies include the following:

- the understanding of personality dimensions required for targeting a specific group of consumers will enable marketers to manipulate the brand's personality via suitable marketing tools (eg endorsers projecting congruent personality to the brand) to establish brand preference
- the identification of specific demographic profiles that best reflect the personality of consumers in a particular market segment can help develop brand personality more effectively. This will help to build and drive brand preference
- the type of marketing strategy to pursue (market development, penetration, etc) would dictate the type of personality dimensions to endow to a brand. Consumers who associate with or dissociate from the brand of a product category are

triggered by different personality dimensions of the brand

- the comprehension of consumer behaviour with reference to their cultural orientation would assist marketers to establish suitable personality dimensions onto a brand. This will enhance brand preference to suit consumers of individualistic–collectivistic orientations.

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