

Revalidation of brand personality scale for sport sponsorship evaluation

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**Marketing
Session 9**

**Thursday, May 29, 2008
4:00 PM - 5:00 PM**

**Poster
Abstract 280**

In the marketing literature, the concept of brand personality received much attention as previous literature asserts that it enables differentiation strategies (Crask and Laskey, 1990; Halliday, 1996), generates consumers preference or actual usage (Biel, 1993), increases the level of emotional attachment (Landon, 1974), build loyalty and trust (Fournier, 1998), and augments individual meanings associated with the brand to consumers (Levy, 1959). In addition, given the fact that today consumers perspectives toward the value of products has been changed from utilitarian notion to relationship between a consumer and brands, the importance of brand personality has been more highlighted.

To measure brand personality, Aaker (1996) developed the brand personality scale (BPS) using the five-factor model which includes sincerity, excitement, competency, sophistication, and ruggedness. Results of previous studies (e.g., Aaker, 1997; Kowalczyk & Rawlich, 2002; Ross, 2007) were not consistent in regard with generalizability and robustness of the scale across different cultures and symbolic functions of brands. Furthermore, researchers in the sport literature (e.g., Musante, Milne, & McDonald, 1999; Ross, 2006) have suggested that the original BPS should be respecified to measure the personality of sport properties (e.g., sport events).

Although the importance of image-based communication practice has increased, in the context of sponsorship evaluation study, little efforts have been made to develop a psychometrically sound measurement scale when evaluating sponsorship effectiveness using image-based matching technique. Accordingly, the objective of this study was to reexamine the factor structure of the original brand personality scale (Aaker, 1996) and propose a valid and reliable brand personality scale particularly applicable to both commercial brands and sport properties.

The survey was administered at six different universities and ten fitness clubs in seven large cities in South Korea during the 2006 FIFA World Cup. The research sample totaled 2696 subjects (52.7% male and 47.3% female). The age of respondents ranged from 18 to 63 years old.

The items of original BPS were adapted and translated into Korean and later back into English with the help of two professors teaching Korean in the Midwest region of the United States. A pilot study was conducted to assure the accuracy of the translation with 15 South Korean graduate students at a large Midwestern University in the United States. We made modifications on the scale items based on the respondents' recommendations (e.g., wording change).

To ensure familiarity of brands to all participants, several well-known brands were chosen for this study. The brand selection was based on results of a pilot test in which participants was asked to indicate their familiarity and experiences about selected brands (i.e., ten global brands from five different industry categories and three popular sporting events in S. Korea). The results of the pilot test suggest that a set of six brands including four commercial brands and two sporting-event brands is usable in the current study.

For the purpose of this study, we employed a four-stage procedure. First, separate confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) using LISREL 8.54 were conducted for each brand. In this stage, a convenience sample of 700 subjects at three large universities and three fitness clubs in Korea was used. Second, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed in order to identify the personality dimensions of each brand with the same sample as used in the first stage. Third, the measure was purified based on the critical ratios, standardized regression weights, standardized residuals and modification indexes. Last, CFAs for each brand were utilized to validate the refined scale. In addition, the reliability and validity of the refined scale were tested. In this stage, the refined survey questionnaire was administered to a self-selected sample of 1996 from six universities and seven fitness clubs in six different cities in Korea.

The poor fits of CFA across all brands examined clearly indicated that the original model should be refined. The EFA generated a number of underlying theoretical constructs for each brand and identified items consistently highly loaded on the same dimension across brands. The results indicated that the five-factor with the different number of observed variables for each brand (ranging from 18 to 28 items) accounted for over 70% of the total variance explained for each brand personality. As a result of scale purification, the refined five-factor model with 15 items was developed.

2008 North American Society for Sport Management Conference (NASSM 2008)

Finally, the results of CFA for the refined BPS revealed a good fit (RMSEA=.05, NNFI=0.97, CFI=0.97, SRMR=.06 for Adidas; RMSEA=.05, NNFI=0.96, CFI=0.97, SRMR=.05 for Coca Cola; RMSEA=.08, NNFI=0.93, CFI=0.95, SRMR=.07 for Gillete; RMSEA=.07, NNFI=0.92, CFI=0.94, SRMR=.06 for Toshiba; RMSEA=.08, NNFI=0.91, CFI=0.93, SRMR=.07 for World Cup; RMSEA=.08, NNFI=0.97, CFI=0.97, SRMR=.06 for Korean Baseball League). For all brands, the reliabilities for all five factors met the minimum standard (.70) recommended by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), ranging from .76 to .91. The average variance extracted (AVE) for each factor ranged from .60 to .75, indicating that the amount of variance explained by the constructs was greater than the variance explained by measurement error.

In sum, the results of the current study suggest the refined BPS model exhibited a good model fit as well as evidence of sound convergent and discriminant validity and acceptable reliability. In this presentation, we will discuss theoretical and practical implications based on the results and suggest future research directions.

Keywords: Brand personality scale, sponsorship evaluation, scale validation.