INFLUENCE OF CORPORATE IMAGE ON BRAND PERSONALITY: A CUSTOMERS' PERSPECTIVE

Dr. Rajesh Kumar Upadhyay

Assistant Professor, IMS Unison University, Dehradun

Dr. (Prof) K. K. Agrawal

Director, Institute of Management Studies and Dean, Dept. of Commerce & Management, M. G. Kashi Vidyapith, Varanasi

ABSTRACT

Brand personality has a great influence on brand positioning, buying decision and loyalty of the consumers. A favorable, strong and unique perception of the brand in the mind of customers distinguishes it from those of competitors. Certain brands enjoy high market share and price as they have better perceived quality, greater awareness, strong brand association and higher customer loyalty. Hence understanding and meticulously creating the personality of the brands plays a vital role in its success and failure. The present study assesses the influence of corporate image on its brand personality.

Keywords: Personality, Brand Personality, Marketing Communication, Advertising

INTRODUCTION

Personality can be referred as the combination of uniqueness or traits that form an individual's distinctive character. There are substantial amount of research carried out on conceptualizing human personality, exploring its dimensions and understanding the meaning of each dimension. Similarly, in recent past, considerable amount of attention has been given to construct 'brand personality' which refers to the human like attributes associated with the brand. Although every brand has human like personality yet there is huge difference in the process of formation of human and brand personality. Where human personality depends on their attitude, belief, behavior, physical and demographic characteristics, in contrast, brand personality is formed by any direct or indirect contact that a consumer has with the brand.

Brand personality has a great influence on brand positioning, buying decision and loyalty of the consumers. A favorable, strong and unique perception of the brand in the mind of customers distinguishes it from those of competitors. Certain brands enjoy high market share and price as they have better perceived quality, greater awareness, strong brand association and higher customer loyalty. Hence understanding and meticulously creating the personality of the brands plays a vital role in its success and failure.

For the purpose of the study, four major ready to drink beverage brands namely Amul Kool (Amul), Real Frut Juice (Dabur India Ltd), Pepsi Cola (Pepsico India) and Nestle Ice Tea (Nestle India) has been selected since these brands have significant brand awareness among consumers. The focus of the study is Amul Kool as Amul is a prominent

cooperative firm that spreads awareness against various cotemporary social issues through its marketing communication (Picture-1). Every business operates for making profit and so does Amul, but its working with diary formers at grass root level not only benefiting the organization but also changing the life, enhancing the income and empowering the women of rural India.

Other three brands were selected on the basis of brain discussion with the experts. These four brands share a common ground of being ready to drink beverage brands and different with respect to the explicit social concern of the organization these brands belong to. Amul shows high concern towards society through taking up contemporary social issues in its advertisement, where as Dabur, Pepsico and Nestle do not put their thrust in raising such issues explicitly.

Picture-1

In a research paper published by Jennifer L Aaker (1997) on 'Dimensions of Brand Personality' in Journal of Management Research, a theoretical frame work of the brand personality construct has been developed by determining the number and nature of dimensions of brand personality.
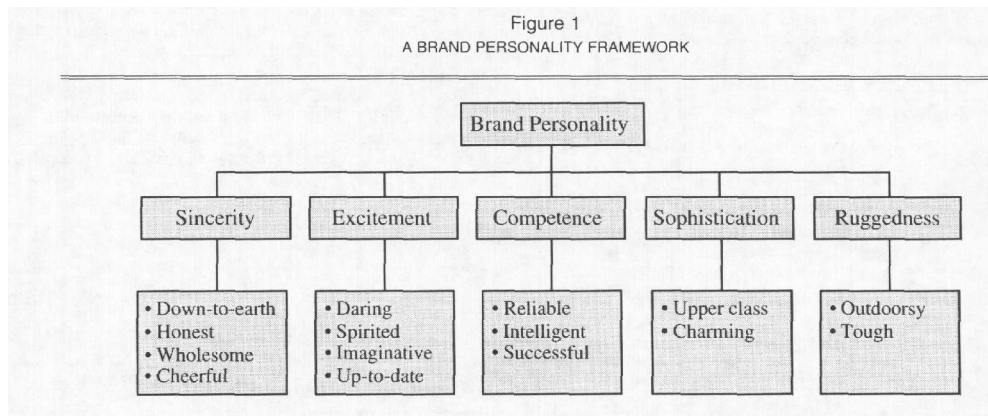
Source: Jennifer L Aaker (1997)

The 'five' determined brand personality dimensions are Sincerity, Excitement, Competence, Sophistication and Ruggedness. The author also developed a valid, reliable and generalized measuring scale to measure these dimensions. The similar measurement scale has been used in this study to assess the brand personality of four ready to drink beverage brands.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Exploration, validation and construct representing fundamental personality traits have been the major area of research in psychology since early 20th century (John and Srivastava, 1999). Among the major personality trait theory proposed (Allport and Odbert, 1936; Cattell, 1943; Fiske, 1949; Smith, 1967; Goldberg, 1981), the most popular and generalized is Big Five model propounded by (McCrae and Costa, 1990). The Big Five model describes the individual personality differences using a trait analysis approach based on five human traits namely extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability and openness to experience.

McCracken (1989) found in his study that primary driver of the brand personality is the set of human characteristics associated with stereotype user of the brand. Jennifer L Aaker (1997) in her land mark study on dimensions of brand personality defined brand personality as "the set of human characteristics or traits that consumers attribute to a brand". In 1998, Keller concluded in his study that one of the major objectives of brand management is to build brand personality and brand personality reflects how customer feels being associated with the brand. Base on 'Big Five' model of human personality propounded by McCrae and Costa, Aaker (1997) developed a brand personality measure consisting of 42 individual personality traits and five dimensions namely sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness.

Freling and Forbes (2005) in their study found that brand personality plays a vital role in success of the brand. They also concluded that the strong and favorable brand personality creates stronger and unique brand association which results into higher preference, usages and loyalty. There are number of a factor that contributes in consumer's perceived brand personality.

Blythe (2007) found that marker heavily use advertising to communicate the meaning of product and create its brand personality. As no study has been done so far to determine the influence of corporate image on brand personality in Indian context, this study is an attempt to take up the same.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to carry out an exploratory research to assess the comparative personalities of four beverage brands namely Amul Kool (Amul), Real Fruit Juice (Dabur India Ltd), Pepsi Cola (Pepsico India) and Nestle Ice Tea (Nestle India) and also to understand the impact of corporate image on creation of brand personality. Thus the paper has three objectives:

- To find the perceptual difference in the image of corporate, the four beverage brands belongs to, based on their explicit social concern.
- To determine the relative brand personalities of these four beverage brands.
- To estimate the impact of corporate image on brand personality of these beverages.

METHOD

Instrument Preparation

The questionnaire used for the study has been divided into three sections. Section A deals with customers demographic profile contains four questions that inquires about age, gender, occupation and income of respondent.

Section B meant to gauge the perceived similarity in the image of corporate, the four beverage brands belongs to, based on their explicit social concern. For this purpose, all the possible pair of the four corporate where made namely Amul & Dabur India Ltd, Amul & Pepsico India, Amul & Nestle India, Dabur India Ltd & Pepsico India, Dabur India Ltd & Nestle India and Pepsico & Nestle India. Respondent were asked to rate the similarity of these pairs using four point scale where, 1 – Highly dissimilar to 4 – Highly similar.

The Multi Dimensional Scale PROXSCAL within SPSS 21.0 Analysis tool was used to combine the responses and create a single perceptual map through an aggregate analysis. The PROXSCAL routine created distances based on a Euclidean scaling model of two dimensions.

Section C of the questionnaire was design to assess the perceived personality of the beverage brands. Total 15 questions were framed using Jennifer Aakers scale of measuring 15 different traits of brand personality. Respondent were asked to rate each of the beverage brands using four point scale ranging from 1 – Not at all descriptive(Matched) to 4 – Extremely descriptive on each trait. Further these fifteen traits were divided in to five dimensions of brand personality namely sincerity (down-to-earth, honest, wholesome and cheerful), excitement (daring, spirited, imaginative and up-to-date), competence (reliable, intelligent and successful), sophistication (upper class and charming), and ruggedness (outdoorsy and tough) identified by the Aaker. Reliability of the questionnaire was checked by conducting pilot study on ten respondents. The value of Cronbach's á was above the acceptable range of 0.6 as mentioned in below table.

ReliabilityStatistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.765	15

The Multi Dimensional Scale ALSCAL was used to create distances based on a Euclidean scaling model of two dimensions for each of the brand to understand the personality of each brand separately.

Further Multiple Discriminant analysis was used to plot two dimensional graphs to understand the relative personality of each brand from a graphical perspective. It also facilitated identification of dimensions of the perceptual map derived from the similarity data using PROXSCAL.

Sampling Procedure and Administration

Primary data was collected through a survey questionnaire that was prepared to know about perceived brand personality of four different beverage brands under consideration. Teachers and Students of management institutions in Dehradun had been chosen for collection of data as the questionnaire was based on the assessment of a highly intangible aspect such as brand personality which required the respondents to have an exposure to business management curriculum for appropriate response.

DATA ANALYSIS

PROXSCAL has been used to generate two dimension perceptual map of four corporate under consideration. PROXSCAL like other multi dimensional scales used to create perceptual mapping that enables the researcher to determine perceived relative image of set of objectives (Firms, Products, Ideas, or other items associated with commonly held perceptions). The purpose of MDS is to transform respondent judgment of overall similarity or preference into distance presented in multi dimensional space. Stress Measurement and squared correlation index (R^2) are the two statistics that indicates the optimal statistical fit for the multi dimensional model. Most commonly used measure that indicates the 'proportion of the variance of the disparities' is the 'Kruskal's S-stress'. The R^2 measure in MDS represents the same measure of variance as it does in other multivariate techniques. A low S-stress and high R2 value (above 0.60) suggests a better fit.

Figure-2: Aggregate Perceptual map based on similarity data for corporate
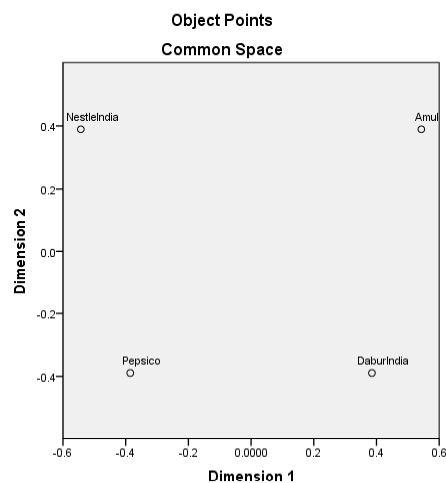
102

Figure-2 represents aggregate two dimensional perceptual map based on similarity data for four corporate with respect to their explicit social and consumer concern. The value of stress for the matrix is = 0.03 and RSQ = 0.92. Thus, the value of stress is very low and the value of R^2 indicates that 92% of the variance of disparities is accounted for. Hence it signifies that the two-dimensional configuration obtained is an adequate reflection of the similarity evaluation by respondents.

As figure-2 depicts, the position of Amul is high on the both horizontal and vertical dimensions, creating a distinct image of it as compare to other three corporate. The perceptual map is evident the distinctiveness of Amul over other corporate with respect to their social and consumer concern.

The Multi Discriminant Analysis has been applied to determine the relative difference in the personality of the four ready to drink beverage brands. Discriminant analysis is applicable to any research question with objective of understanding group membership, whether the group comprises individual, firms, product or nay other object that can be evaluated on the series of independent variable (Joseph F. Hair et.al., 2009).

Table-1, indicates the functions with their associated eigen value. In multiple discriminant analysis, number of factor depends on number of groups under consideration, and it is always one less than the number of groups (G-1) if number of predictor is larger than this quantity. As we have four groups with 5 predictors, number of factor got extracted are three.

Table 1: Eigen values

Function	Eigenvalue	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Canonical Correlation
1	.588[a]	86.6	86.6	.609
2	.075[a]	11.0	97.6	.263
3	.016[a]	2.4	100.0	.126
a. First 3 canonical discriminant functions were used in the analysis.				

From the table-1, it can be infer that factor one with eigen value (ratio of between group to within group sum of squares) 0.588 accounts for 86.6% of explained variance. Similarly, second and third function with 0.075 and 0.015 eigen value accounts for 11.0 and 2.4 percent of the explained variance respectively. It also make it clear that nearly all of the variance (97.6%) explained by the model is due to the first two discriminant functions. The third function can be ignored.

Table-2 indicates the determination of significance of discriminant function base on the value of Wilks' ë (Lambda). Wilks' ë is the ratio of within group sum of squares to the total sum of squares. Its value varies between 0 to 1. Large value of Wilks' ë (close to 1) indicates that group means do not seem to be different. Small value of Wilks' ë (close to 0) indicates that the group means seem to be different.

Table-2: Wilks' Lambda

Test of Function(s)	Wilks' Lambda	Chi-square	df	Sig.
1 through 3	.577	110.955	15	.000
2 through 3	.916	17.718	8	.023
3	.984	3.221	3	.359

It may be noted from table -2 that the Wilks' ë associated with initial two functions are 0.577 & 0.916 which transforms to 110.95 & 17.71 chi-square value with 15 and 8 degree of freedom respectively have p value less than 0.05. Hence there is significant difference exist among the group based on these two functions. As far as third function is concern, significance level is o.359 which is beyond the acceptable range. Hence the third function can be ignored.

Table-3, the standardized discriminant function coefficients is indicating the partial contribution of each variable to the discriminant functions, controlling for other independents entered in the equation. It is used to assess each independent variable's unique contribution to the discriminant function.

Table-3:Standardized Canonical Discriminant Function Coefficients

	Function		
	1	2	3
SINCERITY	.567	-.054	-.122
EXCITEMENT	.525	-.147	.376
COMPETENCE	.316	.696	.021
SOPHISTICATION	.377	.726	-.078
RUGGEDNESS	.329	-.095	.896

From table-3, it can be understood that initial two variable namely sincerity and excitement are the highest contributor to the 1st function. Similarly for the second function biggest contributors are competence and sophistication. Likewise, ruggedness is the major contributor for the third function.

In contrast, Table -4 is the structure matrix also called the factor matrix of structure coefficients, shows the whole (not partial) coefficients, similar to correlation coefficients of each variable with each discriminant function. It serves like factor loadings in factor analysis, that is, by identifying the largest absolute coefficients associated with each discriminant function.

Table-4: Structure Matrix

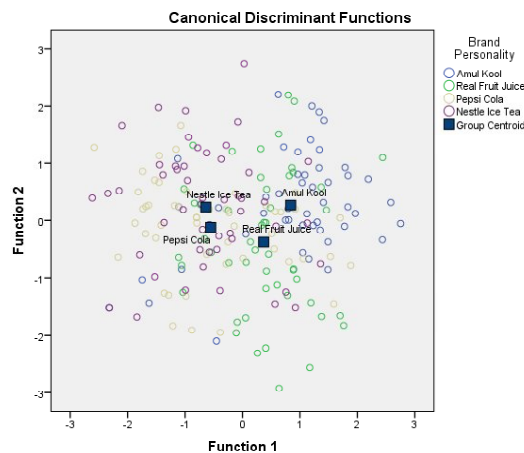|	Function		
	1	2	3
EXCITEMENT	.640*	.138	.449
SINCERITY	.604*	-.017	-.002
SOPHISTICATION	-.283	.747*	.001
COMPETENCE	.449	.683*	.220
RUGGEDNESS	-.222	-.011	.923*
Pooled within-groups correlations between discriminating variables and standardized canonical discriminant functions Variables ordered by absolute size of correlation within function.			
*. Largest absolute correlation between each variable and any discriminant function			

Pooled within-groups correlations between discriminating variables and standardized canonical discriminant functions Variables ordered by absolute size of correlation within function.

*. Largest absolute correlation between each variable and any discriminant function

Table-4 clearly indicate that function one is highly associated with variable sincerity and excitement, function two is major repetitive of variable sophistication and competence and the third function which is not found very significant for the study, represent ruggedness.

Figure-3 is the graphical representation of centroid of all four corporate under the study. Centroids are basically the mean value for the discriminant score for particular group.

Figure-3: Graphical representation of Centroid

As reflected in figure-3, Amul Kool is scoring high on both the axis where axis X (Function 1) represent sincerity and excitement and axis Y represents competence and sophistication. Hence it is obvious that it has got distinct and better perceived brand personality as compare to other brands.

Table-4, the classification function coefficients measures the extent of association between the discriminant score if variables and the groups.

Table-4: Classification Function Coefficients

	Brand Personality			
	Amul Kool	Real Fruit Juice	Pepsi Cola	Nestle Ice Tea
Sincerity	1.177	1.152	.869	.794
Excitement	1.099	.938	.675	.719
Competence	1.475	1.159	.969	1.038
Sophistication	1.383	1.067	1.200	1.330
Ruggedness	.456	.495	.851	.411
(Constant)	-21.007	-17.020	-14.641	-14.708
Fisher's linear discriminant functions				

It is observed in the table -6 that the discriminant score of Amul Kool is highest in sincerity (1.18), Excitement (1.10), competence (1.48) and sophistication (1.38). Hence it can be inferred that Amul Kool is superiorly associated with most of the brand personality dimensions as compare to Real Fruit Juice, Pepsi Cola and Nestle Ice Tea.

DISCUSSION

Consistent with previous studies in the context of brand personality (Hoeffler and Keller, 2002) that have suggested that engagement in CSR activities would bolster the 'sincerity' facet of brand personality, the Major finding of the study can be concluded as follows

- Perceptual map created on the basic of the responses received from the consumers, where horizontal axis represents the explicit social concern and vertical axis represent perceived consumer concern of the corporate clearly indicates that Amul has better perceived corporate image on both the dimensions as compare to the other corporate namely, Dadur India, Pepsico and Nestle India.

- Discriminant analysis reveals that Amul Kool is perceived as most sincere, exciting, competent and sophisticated brand. However, Amul Kool lacked in ruggedness. Pepsi Cola perceived to be the most outdoorsy, masculine and toughest brand. Real fruit Juice is considered to be the most sincere, exciting and competent brand next to the Amul Kool. Similarly, Nestle Ice Tea perceived to be the second most sophisticated brand.

- Preceding analysis empirically support the argument that brand personality is positively affected by the image of the corporate it belongs.

CONCLUSION

This study emphasized on the notion that explicit social and consumer concern of the corporate forms better personality of its brands. The output of the research suggests the marketer to align their corporate communications to give competitive edge to their brands. In times when firms are finding it increasingly difficult to beat the clutter and capture a share of consumers' heart, mind and wallet, the study elucidate that an

appropriate corporate communication can help in building a strong brand, creating loyal customers and diversifying form the competition.

LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

- The research work regarding perceived personality of four beverage brands namely Amul Kool, Real Fruit Juice, Pepsi Cola and Nestle Ice Tea is purely based on the survey of the respondents from Dehradun.

- The study is conducted from teachers and students of management institutions in Dehradun for the convenient of researcher. The findings of the survey should not be generalized at the national or international level.

- The findings may remain biased in nature as per values ethics and competencies of the respondents.

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ANNEXURE

Questionnaire

A

Kindly furnish the following information.

Gender: Male/ Female   **Age**: _____

Occupation: Service/Business/Other   **Monthly Family Income**:--_____

B

Kindly assess the similarity of the mentioned corporate on the basis of their **concern for social issues and concern for consumer on four point scale where**

1-Highly dissimilar, 2 - Dissimilar, 3- Similar, 4- Highly Similar

Pair of Brands	Similarity
Amul & Dabur India	
Amul & PepsiCo	
Amul & Nestle India	
Dabur India & PepsiCo	
Dabur India & Nestle India	
PepsiCo & Nestle India	

C

Given Below are 15 Human Traits. Assuming the mentioned brands as a human being, kindly rate their personality on each of the traits on four point descriptive (well-matched) scale, where-

1-Not at all descriptive 2- Descriptive, 3- Highly Descriptive, 4- Extremely Descriptive

Sr. No.	Attributes	Brand			
		Amul Kool	Real Fruit Juice	Pepsi Cola	Nestle Ice Tea
1	**Down-to-earth** (down-to-earth, family-oriented, small-town)				
2	**Honest** (honest, sincere, real)				
3	**Wholesome** (wholesome, original)				
4	**Cheerful** (cheerful, sentimental, friendly)				
5	**Daring** (daring, trendy, exciting)				
6	**Spirited** (spirited, cool, young)				
7	**Imaginative** (imaginative, unique)				
8	**Up-to-date** (up-to-date, independent, contemporary)				
9	**Reliable** (reliable, hard working, secure)				
10	**Intelligent** (intelligent, technical, corporate)				
11	**Successful** (successful, leader, confident)				
12	**Upper class** (upper class, glamorous, good looking)				
13	**Charming** (charming, feminine, smooth)				
14	**Outdoorsy** (outdoorsy, masculine, Western)				
15	**Tough** (tough, rugged)				