

Measurement and validity of Jennifer Aaker's brand personality scale for Indian apparel brands

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Abstract

In modern business, the rivalry has shifted from price to non-price, necessitating the use of not just the market, but also marketing tactics. Consumers are frequently connected to a product or a brand that is associated with their own identity. Positive purchase intention may be established through successful Brand personality as customers develop associations in their mental maps by responding to a brand. This study attempts to investigate whether the brand personality dimensions proposed by Aaker (1997) may be applied to Indian apparel businesses targeted at Generation Y. The study's findings support the commonly acknowledged dimensions of brand personality, which are vigorous, integrity, charismatic, uniqueness, and versatility. However, due to the postmodern lifestyle of Generation Y, ruggedness was not extracted. The study discovered a new personality dimension for apparel brands that are Unique and versatile and might be further explored in more detail in the future. We offer recommendations for apparel brand managers on different marketing mix activities they might use to communicate alternative brand personas to Generation Y.

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1. Introduction

The proliferation of brands poses a threat to a company's survival. If we don't offer a brand particular treatment and instead treat them as a group, the brand will become lost in the mass. Because it lacks a distinct brand identity thus price will be the sole deciding factor in brand selection. It is critical to have a brand distinction to compete in a hostile environment. Businesses must keep up with the present demand to thrive in the face of change given the expansion and reach of e-commerce throughout the nation and the rise in its sales. (Kumar et. al. 2022). Thus, Brand personality is a possible option for differentiating across different brands. Since the 1950s, the notion of brand personality has been in use. We generate brand uniqueness by associating personality attributes with the brand. Customers will treat brands with vim if they have a particular personality that appeals to them. So, in addition to their practical usefulness, products have symbolic utility, as defined by the phrase "brand personality." Consumers now buy items not just for their functionality but also for their symbolic value. Brand personality may be thought of as a process of characterization. It's a personification strategy that's being implemented. It is crucial to comprehend how consumers select things. Personality has been linked to a collection of human demographic features by brands. Brand personality is a multidimensional brand connection quality concept used to quantify a collection of human traits linked to a brand. It is a high level of product description. Consumers' perceptions of a brand's human qualities are referred to as its "brand personality."

The country's apparel market is expanding largely as a result of a young population and rising disposable income. The expansion of the Indian apparel market has also been significantly aided by the Indian government. It has implemented policies that have drawn foreign direct investment (FDI), stimulating economic growth in the process. Brand personality is frequently acknowledged as the weapon of competitive warfare in today's crowded, mass-communicated market where even strong brands are becoming more similar. Consumers sense the personality of a brand as they enter the connection with a brand. When customers interact with a brand, they begin to imagine what type of person the brand is. It is human nature to identify a brand by looking at it as if it were a live person. Only when customers come into direct or indirect contact with a brand it develops a personality. Because it exposes various features in different cultures, brand personality is a context-dependent phenomenon. Consumer behavior is influenced by brand personality, which leads to

increased sales and profitability. It aids in the development of consumers' sense of self-worth and provides the emotional components of brands. It aids in the creation of a distinct and favorable impression in the minds of consumers as well as the enhancement of brand equity.

Generation Y is a valuable market for apparel businesses; hence the study is exclusively done in the context of youth. They associate a greater meaning with clothing brands. Beyond being a need, clothing serves as a reflection of the individual, a means of social differentiation, and a means of keeping up with fashion trends. Generation Y has a sizable overall purchasing power and a significant share of the wallets for clothes brands. (erdogmus, cobanoglu, & turan, 2015) According to India's National Youth Policy (2014), young people are individuals between the ages of 15 and 29. Therefore, this age group will make up the study's population.

2. Literature Review

Customers seek out brands that have personalities resembling their own. (Ahmad et. al., 2015) Customers assess if a brand's visuals reflect their own personalities by comparing themselves to the brand. Consumers are more inclined to interact with a self-expressive brand that matches their self-image if it has a strong brand personality. (Lee et. al., 2018). Consumers who identify with a certain brand tend to stick with it and are pleased to promote it. Furthermore, perceived brand equity will rise. (Loureiro et. al., 2014). Marketers should devote resources to brand personality to create an emotional bond between customers and the hotel brand. (Tsaur et. al., 2021). It's important to position a brand differently from others to ensure that it is chosen over its rivals. Brand personality can help with this. Consumer brand relationships, greater brand commitment, high levels of trust, and higher loyalty are all made possible by a strong brand personality. (Jan & Shafiq, 2021) Brand personality serves as a way for marketers to not only distinguish one product from another but also to give their clients a competitive edge. Having a distinctive brand personality might provide you with a competitive edge. Brand personality serves as a way for marketers to not only distinguish one product from another but also to give their clients a competitive edge. Sincerity, passion, skill, and sophistication are attributes that are favorably associated with patronizing behavior. The kind and quality of the relationship that consumers have with a brand are influenced by brand personality. It can be used by managers as a tool to guide or reinforce the long-lasting relationship they want to establish or maintain between their companies and the target

market. Brand personality is one technique that supports the possibility of a long-term relationship process. Managers make decisions based on personality attributes rather than the "global personality of the brand." (Louis & Lombart, 2010) Understanding the impact of a brand's persuasion attempts and consumer responses relies heavily on brand personality. Brand personality affects consumers' expectations about and responses to products and services. Limitations on what brand behaviors can be expected and positively received by consumers are imposed by brand personality. (Guèvremont & Grohmann, 2012). Marketers will be able to determine which brands can be deemed similar to the brand in terms of brand personality for consumers by knowing how much their brand personality overlaps with competitors. (Chung & Park, 2015). For a business to succeed, it is useful and essential to shaping the brand personality. High levels of openness and agreement among consumers will lead to brand loyalty for hedonistic goods. The performance of the company is significantly impacted by brand personality in addition to its crucial role. The development of a distinctive brand personality may boost a company's brand's worth. (Lin, 2010).

3. Research methods

The majority of brand personality studies in the apparel industry employed Aaker's (1997) scale, so this study joined the bandwagon. The study's objective was to investigate brand personality traits relevant to Generation Y consumers shopping in the Indian clothes sector. The study employed a descriptive and cross-sectional research design. After asking respondents to rate the brand personality of their chosen clothing brand, the ten most well-known clothing companies were discovered to be the most well-liked brands in the study. One of the brand personality tests used the Aaker's brand personality scale, which includes the five qualities of "sincerity, enthusiasm, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness."

The study included 38 different items in total. The items were scored out of 5, with 1 being the least descriptive and 5 being the most descriptive (5). A pilot sample of 50 participants was used to test the final questionnaire's simplicity and understandability. India's Generation Y customers were the study's target market. To access the target demographic, Purposive sampling, a non-probabilistic sampling technique was used (Malhotra, 2007). This resulted in a sample of 420 consumers. Since New Delhi is thought to be representative of Indian consumers, it was chosen as the study's context.

4. Results

All items were used in an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) using SPSS 22.0. Since principal component analysis with varimax rotation is more suited for factor extraction, it was used during EFA. Through EFA, the five common factors Vigorous, Integrity, Charismatic, Unique, and Versatile were retrieved. Table 1 displays the factor loadings, variance explained, and reliability of the factors derived by EFA.

The Integrity factor in Aaker's scale is comparable to the original factor of Sincerity. Contrarily, vigorous captures the Excitement level of Aaker's original scale. The third component, charismatic, includes characteristics that align with the sophistication component of Aaker's scale. In the relevant investigation, two new dimensions, Unique and Versatile, were discovered.

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to assess the measures' validity based on the factor structure identified by exploratory factor analysis. Tables 1 and 2 present, respectively, the factor loadings, variance recovered, and composite reliability scores of the CFA analysis. Since there isn't much agreement on the best goodness-of-fit indices, a variety of them, including measures of absolute fit, incremental fit, and parsimonious indicators, were utilised to assess the model. (Hu & Bentler, 1995). In this investigation, all fit tests showed that the model fit was satisfactory. The

Table 1
Results of brand personality for apparel brands using EFA and CFA

FACTOR	ITEMS	EFA FACTOR LOADINGS	CFA FACTOR LOADINGS	P
VIGOROUS ($\alpha=0.903$ V.E= 36.069 CR=0.887 Vextra=0.531)	PRACTICAL	0.847	0.838	***
	TOUGH	0.756	0.798	***
	ADVENTUROUS	0.739	0.716	***
	INDEPENDENT	0.738	0.801	***
	CAREFREE	0.732	0.758	***
INTEGRITY ($\alpha=0.886$ V.E=8.771 CR= 0.888 Vextra=0.614)	ACTIVE	0.725	0.807	***
	ENERGETIC	0.666	0.574	***
	HONEST	0.825	0.83	***
	DEPENDABLE	0.732	0.737	***
	REAL	0.727	0.718	***
CHARISMATIC ($\alpha=0.892$ V.E=7.652 CR= 0.894 Vextra= 0.584)	SINCERE	0.725	0.724	***
	WELL-ORGANISED	0.702	0.715	***
	SELF SUFFICIENT	0.696	0.717	***
	POSITIVE	0.696	0.647	***
	FASHIONABLE	0.806	0.829	***
UNIQUE ($\alpha=0.863$ V.E=6.834 CR= 0.866 Vextra= 0.519)	CLASSY	0.765	0.732	***
	STYLISH	0.762	0.808	***
	PASSIONATE	0.72	0.748	***
	CREATIVE	0.683	0.766	***
	MODERN	0.683	0.696	***
VERSATILE ($\alpha=0.888$ V.E= 4.808 CR= 0.887 Vextra=0.616)	RARE	0.842	0.796	***
	ATTRACTIVE	0.723	0.729	***
	ADMIRER	0.696	0.74	***
	GORGEOUS	0.686	0.692	***
	TRENDSETTER	0.666	0.641	***
	SPECIAL	0.651	0.714	***
	ARTISTIC	0.784	0.78	***
	IDEALIST	0.767	0.785	***
	LEADING	0.707	0.78	***
	UPTO DATE	0.697	0.798	***
	WHOLE SOME	0.663	0.78	***

α =Cronbach's alpha, Ve= variance Explained, CR= composite Reliability, V extracted ($>=0.50$)

*** $p<0.001$ km0=0.936, Bartlett's test of sphericity=7639.987 (degree of freedom=465, sig=0)

Source: Researcher's computation using primary statistics.

Table 2
Model summary statistics

Test Indices	Recommended Value	Results	Interpretation	Reference
CMIN/DF	Below 3	2.178	Very good fit	<i>Kline (2015)</i>
CFI	0 (no fit) to 1 (good fit)	0.932	Acceptable Fit	<i>Byrne (2001)</i>
GFI	0 (no fit) to 1 (good fit)	0.872	Acceptable Fit	<i>Jöreskog and Sörbom (1993)</i>
RMSEA	Less than 0.08	0.053	Very Good Fit	<i>Steiger (1990)</i>

Source: Researcher's computation using primary statistics.

scale's content validity was guaranteed because all of the items were modified versions of previous research that reflected the concept of brand personality. The fact that all factor loadings were statistically significant further indicated convergent validity. Because the average variance extracted (VExtra) scores for each component were above .50 and the square root of the V Extra for each construct was greater than the correlation between that specific construct and any of the other constructs in the model, all factors also demonstrated discriminant validity.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Generation Y is a crucial target market for clothing producers because of its sizable population, strong purchasing power, and interest in fashion and clothing as a means of self-expression in social settings. Managers of clothing companies must therefore understand this generation and, if necessary, modify marketing, retailing, and merchandising strategies to suit them. The purpose of this study was to ascertain whether the brand personality attributes presented by Aaker (1997) could be broadened and applied to Generation Y in the context of Indian garment industries. The research findings revealed that the five qualities of vigorous, integrity, charismatic, unique, and versatile might be used to categorise the personalities of fashion brands for Generation Y in India. Three of the five dimensions—Vigorous, Integrity, and Charismatic—match the five dimensions of the American brand personality structure (Aaker, 1997), indicating that these characteristics apply to Generation Y apparel

purchasers in India as well. In light of these personality choices, brand managers might then develop a brand identity for their companies and communicate it to consumers.

For instance, vigour factors and loyalty can be derived from energetic, active, carefree, and tough dimensions. Apparel companies can employ organised, self-sufficient, authentic, and positive qualities to build integrity. The concentrate of charismatic clothes firms may be on maintaining trendy, imaginative, contemporary, and sophisticated characteristics. Brand managers may focus on unique, trend-setting, and valued characteristics in order to be perceived as unique. Finally, brand managers need to focus on modern, wholesome, leading-type qualities for Versatility.

The lack of the Ruggedness attribute in Aaker's (1997) study suggests that Generation Y in India may not be attracted to clothing that has a rugged, masculine appeal. This could be attributed to the generation's desire to live a more urban, postmodern existence free from prevailing ideas about gender types, behaviours, and how to view and experience them.

6. Limitations and future research

The results may not be generalizable because the data was only gathered in a single country. Although the Indian Generation Y is similar to its counterparts around the world, if the survey were to be performed in different settings, the results might vary. An exploratory study could also be done to get a better understanding of how Generation Y consumers define the unique brand personality feature. Finally, there is no universally accepted beginning or ending point for the Generation Y age range, which makes it fairly large. Due to the variation in how people perceive apparel brand personalities, it is difficult to generalize Generation Y studies as a result of this reality. Future research may further segment this group, for instance by conducting separate studies on Generation Y customers who are in college and those who are in their middle years.

7. Managerial Implication

The findings have significant practical ramifications for the formulation of branding strategy. For effective positioning and distinction in today's competitive market, developing and managing a suitable brand personality has become essential. Brand recognition, brand perception,

and purchase intention among consumers are all significantly impacted by social media marketing. (Sharma et. al. 2023). Therefore, the increase in social media usage can serve as a fantastic platform for apparel brands to show off their features. Marketers may gain extra insight into how the construct can work for utilitarian items, symbolic products, and a larger class of products that are both symbolic and utilitarian by knowing brand personality in the Indian context.

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