Do Brand Personality Really Enhance Satisfaction and Loyalty Toward Brand? A Review of Theory and Empirical Research

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Abstract

It is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore the role of brand loyalty in today's competitive market. Brand loyalty is one of the most-cited concepts in marketing literature, and both academic and practitioners have accepted the range of benefits derived from it. Most firms attempt to measure satisfaction and loyalty for their brand, this is because the vital view whether a product successful or failed are customer loyalty. But, they do not think about vital influences to build satisfaction and loyalty. However, a major problem with this kind of effort is that measuring satisfaction and loyalty does not tell anybody how to achieve it. One of essential strategies to accomplish satisfaction and loyalty in branding strategy is brand personality. In the history of development loyalty, brand personality has been thought of as a key factor in brand theory; it is become more significant for companies. Recently, researchers have shown an increased interest in the impact of brand personality on brand satisfaction and loyalty. Further, creating loyalty in today's competitive market has become complicated due to standard similarity in consumer perception of product quality, increase in variety of superior brands and alternatives, low risk and high expectations of the customer's brand switching have completely changed. Based on the above issues, the present study was designed to determine the effect of brand personality as an important antecedent to brand loyalty in today's competitive market. The analysis is based on findings and theories from the consumer personality psychology and consumer behavior literature. These results provide important insights into the effects of brand personality in creating satisfaction and brand loyalty in order to have competitive advantage in today market.

Keywords: Brand personality, Brand satisfaction, Brand loyalty, Competitive market.

1. Introduction

In Today, brand loyalty plays a vital part in strategic management. How we can enhance brand loyalty of customers? This is one of the main challenges for most of professionals, which requires a lot of investigations. Also it brings double complexity of operationalization and conceptualization of loyalty concept (Louis and Lombart 2010). Loyalty to a brand is known as one of the most mentioned concepts in previous studies of marketing and practitioners and academics both have accepted its advantages. These days, brand loyalty has a key role in focus of strategic management. According to Jacoby and Kyner (1973) brand loyalty includes both attitude and behavior aspects of a customer. Organizations are considering managing and building loyalty remarkably to a certain brand. There were a lot of studies and also articles, which have been published, and they support the fact that loyalty results in more profitability (Kha 2008). Currently loyalty is known as the most optimum way that a firm can make sure it has long run profitability and survival (Baloglu 2002, Haghkhah et al. 2013).

Reichheld (1994) explained that all of the satisfied customers necessarily are not loyal. Despite those researches which suggest satisfaction is important but it is not efficient for obtaining loyalty of customers (Mittal and Lassar 1998) also showing that a customer who is satisfied might not be loyal necessarily (Hennig‐Thurau and Klee 1997). Moreover, Reichheld et al. (2000) asserted that the satisfied customer in the survey demonstrated that from 60% to 80% might defect from many businesses. Thus, the main marketing objectives and goals for any type of business are creating, maintaining and also improving customer loyalty for their brands (Dick and Basu 1994). It was noted that those organizations which emphasize on understanding customer brand loyalty will have more profitability and long run customer retention, also minimize marketing expenses and improve their competitive advantage as a result (Aaker David 1991, Reichheld and Sasser 1990, Reichheld et al. 2000). So, it is remarkably necessary for firms to identify the process of developing customer brand loyalty and satisfaction in current competitive context of the market.

Based on the current development within loyalty studies, it is mentioned organizations are concerned about the fact that the customers will be less loyal compared to past times (Dekimpe et al. 1997, Bennett and Rundel-Thiele 2005, Kapferer 2005). Schriver (1997) explained in United States, loyalty would not be the same as many years ago. Brand loyalty appears to be a little decreased by referring to many well-known national brands. It can be said that the accepting private brands is growing in current market context (Howell 2004, Dekimpe et al. 1997). Moreover, this context of severe competition as well as fast market penetration of new

services and products toward market results in customers to have product knowledge which means having broader choice of proper opportunities and alternatives (Ballantyne et al. 2006). Thus, it is important for all manufacturers and companies to concentrate on making their products different from other competitors for creating preference and inclination for their services and products (Bennett and Rundel-Thiele 2005). Researchers and practitioners both realized that brands as same as humans have specific personalities which might make them different in customer minds. Hence, brand personality results in loyalty and satisfaction for a certain brand. Thus, the main goal of this research is reviewing impact of brand personality on two key factors as brand loyalty and brand satisfaction. The main discussion is as followings. At first, the existed relationship between brand and customer and the brand personality importance for customers brand satisfaction will be explained. Then, this study covers a discussion about brand personality importance to brand loyalty of customers in competitive market.

2. Relationship between consumer and brand

Brands are known as valuable and intangible properties for firms and are the certain tools, which create long run relationship with customers and support the rights of that company (Kotler et al.). According to Doyle (1989), having a successful brand will result in more market share and more profitability. While product features are being copied easily and customers will take granted the product quality (Van Rekom et al. 2006) so a strong brand will be necessary to increase organizational performance. Brand can be known as promise of bundles of attributes, which a person buys and leads to satisfaction. Those attributes, which create a brand, might be illusory or real, emotional or rational, invisible and tangible (Ambler and Styles 1996).

Currently, a lot of studies have been raised to identify the interactions between customer and brand (Rajagopal 2006, Koll and von Wallpach 2014, Trump 2014, Hollebeek et al. 2014). The things that customers know about brand will impacts their response which is the way that they act and feel regarding a brand (Keller 1993, Alba and Hutchinson 2000). A lot of studies demonstrated that those customers that have strong relationship with a certain brand would spread no negative information about that specific brand and have positive attitude for brand.

Past studies reviewed the impact of brand relationships on reaction of customers to those negative brand acts and realized that those customers with strong relationship to brands will show no negative reaction to bad comments about a certain brand (Swaminathan et al. 2007, Ahluwalia et al. 2000, Ahluwalia et al. 2001, Cheng et al. 2012, Lisjak et al. 2012). The reason for the overlook or forgive from customers is that they have personal relationship with brand (Lisjak et al. 2012, Cheng et al. 2012). So, one threat for a brand as a negative brand reaction will act as the self-threat (Cheng et al. 2012, Lisjak et al. 2012). Individuals' response for threats in such a direction that lets them to keep a positive look from them to minimize raised dissonance while self was being questioned (Steele and Liu 1983). Therefore, while threat for brand is a threat to self so customers might eliminate this threat through buffering their brand evaluation or also setting the brand on pedestal as well (Trump 2014).

Brand personality concept is a metaphor, which is used for showing the relationship between brand and customers (Aaker 1997, Plummer 1985). It is used as the related determinant for added value of a brand. Brand personality makes sure a fixed brand image for many years (Aaker 1996) and lets customers to explain their personalities (Aaker 1997). Associations of brand personality while highly activated in memory will also impact customer attitude and behaviors into a specific brand (Valette-Florence et al. 2011, Wysong 2000). So a customer can understand himself being related to a brand according to existed adequacy between brand and his unique personality (Louis and Lombart 2010). Moreover, each brand has a specific personality, which is visible for us in many ways and situations. Likely customers are assuming a product with positive and strong brand personality when becoming more familiar and comfortable and it will be less risky compared to a competing product, which has no specific brand personality. Smith and Colgate (2007), studied about emotional bond of customers with brands and the fact that there might be affections between them. Also, the findings demonstrated that those brands, which have defined personality aspects, would be more qualified mainly those with exciting and unique personality.

3. The importance of brand personality to consumers' brand satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is known as one of the common variables of studies because it has culminating impact on future behavior of customers for example repurchase and giving positive comments to potential customers about a certain service or product (Jani and Han 2014). The customers are known, as core of thinking of firms these days and making them satisfied is one of the main factors of competition between firms. For catching customer satisfaction all of their needs and desires should be understood as well as tastes, demands, limitations and abilities for buying products. The effective variables can be identified on customer behaviors by means of having information for using them in decision-making process of organizations. Thus, product of firms has to be according to their expectations.

A few investigations concentrated on effect of personal factors such as personality on satisfaction (Jani and Han 2014, Gountas and Gountas 2007). In this case, there is not enough evidence on this relationship (Jani and Han 2014). From these few researches about satisfaction and personality the outcomes are not converge enough (Vázquez‑Carrasco and Foxall 2006). So regardless many excoriating reviews of personality role in explaining and predicting customer choice (Kassarjian and Sheffet 1991), Many current scholars suggested that there should be more consideration (Louis and Lombart 2010, Odekerken-Schröder et al. 2003, Bloemer et al.). Customer satisfaction is a critical variable in keeping market share. When a customer perceives good value from a product or service instead of money so it will positively impacts organization market. The demand of customers is increasing and in a lot of markets there are many options to be chosen compared to past times.

By the way, the customer satisfaction from a brand in not efficient and there should be high satisfaction. The reason is that brand satisfaction needs to be resulted in brand loyalty. Creating loyalty to a certain brand is not any longer a certain choice for the businesses rather it is the only single way for creating stable competitive advantage. Having loyalty of key customers is one of the major marketing goals, which is common among key players in all of the industries. The recognition is increasing about the fact that the main goal of measuring customer satisfaction has to be customer loyalty. Having more customer satisfaction will leads to more loyalty for a company and customers will less overtures from existed competition.

4. The importance of brand personality to consumers' brand loyalty

Aaker in1997 reported the first systematic study of the brand personality. There is an increasing interest about brand personality between scholars during past years (Aaker 1997, Arora and Stoner 2009, Austin et al. 2003, Ridgway and Myers 2014, Tunca 2014, Das 2014, Rutter et al. 2013, Das et al. 2012) and its necessity is more obvious than before. Customers sometimes anthropomorphize brands through endowing them all by personality traits and often marketers reinforce and create these mentioned perceptions by means of brand positioning. Traits of brand personality bring emotional value or symbolic meaning which can help to brand preferences of customers and while compared to functional attributes they are more enduring (Rajagopal 2006). Brand personality is known as all of the traits of personality utilized for understanding an individual and related to brand, is a term in relational marketing field. It contributes better recognition of creating and keeping relationships among customers and brands. Additionally, it defines how these relationships affect customer behavior (Fournier 1998, Ambroise 2006, Louis and Lombart 2010). Researches asserted that customers can continually assign characteristics of personality to brands (Aaker 1997, Venable et al. 2005). Brand personality concept creates a direction for marketers to make difference between services and customers in customer minds and also preferences of choice can be impacted (Freling and Forbes 2005a).

One of the most appealing and attractive concepts of marketing is brand personality (Rajagopal 2006). The way that a persons' personality impacts different dimensions of customer behavior was the main focus of many studies but brand personality investigations are few even though in marketing field many studies already have been done and published. For instance, experts like Plummer (1985) and Aaker (1996), mentioned the brand personality importance in achieving all of the organizational objectives of loyalty, satisfaction and profitability (Rajagopal 2006). Aaker (1997) revealed the empirical findings of her study on measuring brand personality. In addition, Aaker (1996), explained brand personality role in developing brand power and asserted the need and importance of empirical investigations but there are few studies to demonstrate that how brand personality impacts critical marketing factors for example brand loyalty and brand satisfaction. Brand personality is one of the main concentrations of many practitioners and academicians such as (Geuens et al. 2009). Certain brand loyalty has a key role in brands' success. It results in the fact that customers understand brand personality and also providing a strong relationship to brand (Doyle 1989). According to (Kim et al. 2011) results of Aaker study are confirmed and realized that brand personality will influence word of mouth by means of impacting customer brand loyalty and brand preferences.

Moreover, many experts stated that brand personality has a key role for differentiating between identical products because it is weighted less by means of attributes, which are physical (Biel 1993). Studies demonstrated when physical attributes of a brand such as price, features and material might change so brand personality is the quality, which will not be changed (Biel 1993). It acts as the competitive advantage for organization (Aaker 1996) and will have significant impact toward brand equity (Batra et al. 1993, Biel 1993, Keller 1993). When, Biel (1993) considered personality like one of the drivers of customer purchase process, Plummer (1985) realized it can be utilized for marketing a certain brand in different cultures. So brand personality is very important for achieving all of the organizational goals, which result in loyalty, satisfaction and also profitability. Brand personality is known as an appealing and attractive concept of marketing. Aaker (1996) explained this concept as a main aspect of brand identity and maybe the closest factor to decision making of customers to purchase.

As Hawkins et al. (2001) mentioned, all of the customers would buy a product, which has matched personalities to their own personalities. Plummer (2000) stated that brand personality has two sides that are both

critical. One of them is input and is about the fact that how brand managers prefer their customers to consider their brand and other one is the way that customers feel and think about a brand. Also Plummer noted that these sides of brand personality might be known as brand personality profile and brand personality statements. So each single brand has its own personality that is obvious for us in different contexts. It can be said that it is assumed imperative for this research to investigate brand personality that will be critical for all of the marketers in making decision and eventually will show itself as a necessary factor for success of branding (Naresh 2012).

Freling and Forbes (2005a) stated that now brand has a cornerstone position in case of marketing strategies and brand personality concept and its impact on customer behavior is known as a remarkably important topic in different studies. Recently, brand personality researches are dominated by conducted study of Aaker (1997) that is the first systematic research in this specific field. She explained brand personality according to 114 traits or objectives among 37 brands, which cover different product groups. This scholar provided a theoretical framework of five dimensions regarding brand personality. Three of them are five-factor model elements about human personality in psychology (See Goldberg, 1990). The dimensions of brand personality of framework developed by Aaker are sincerity such as honest, down to earth, cheerful, wholesome, excitement such as spirited, daring, up to date, imaginative, competence such as intelligent, successful, reliable, sophistication such as charming, upper class and also ruggedness such as tough, outdoors.

According to the mentioned points above, this study uses the extensive review of knowledge about brand personality of current. Thus, this study reviews previous researches about constructs of brand personality with considering (1) discuss about using metaphor from personality for brand; (2) discuss about structure of dimensions in case of scale for brand personality and making comparison between it and dimensions of human personality as well as (3) evaluating core methodological aspects for developing this scale. The study of three mentioned above goals suggests valuable implications and insights for application and development of brand personality scale. However, the research to date has tended to focus on the conceptualization and development of a measurement scale of brand personality rather than the impact of brand personality on consumer behavior. Table.1 demonstrates some of studies about brand personality. Most studies are focused on providing an instrument to measure brand personality and in depth and comprehensive content.

Table1. Empirical studies that have been conducted on brand personality.

Authors (year)	Study description	Result
Aaker (1997)	The presented theoretical framework by Aaker for brand personality and measurement scale for dimensions of brand personality.	Forty-two items compromise five aspects of brand personality: excitement, sincerity, competence, ruggedness or sophistication.
Siguaw et al. (1999)	This research is measured brand personality in 9 restaurant brands.	Brand personality aspects differences of 9 brands have been defined even though there were not huge differences.
Kim et al. (2011)	This research studies impact of brand identification and brand personality toward brand loyalty.	This research studied the effect of brand personality on management of brand assets through utilizing customer identification concept with brand.
Aaker et al. (2001)	This research reviews how dimensions of brand personality are different and structured in three cultures Japan, USA and Spain.	Culturally specific and culturally common meaning might be shown through commercial brands.
Supphellen and Gronhaug (2003)	This research explains the impact that marketing of West has on consumer products in Russia. In particular, the below have been realized: differences and similarities were defined by means of Aaker scale for brand personality, Western brands' personality impact Russian brand attitudes; effectiveness of brand personalities in West is very critical to customers not very concerned about the country of origin.	The sophistication and ruggedness traits of personality have significant and positive influence toward attitude into Ford brand.

Sung et al. (2005)	This research, reviewed relationship between brand attachment, brand personality and brand loyalty. Then, the difference among brand community none members and members have been compared in case of perception of brand attachment, brand personality and brand loyalty.	Brand personality was one of the best preceding factors, which impacted brand attachment that as a result impacted brand loyalty.
Freling and Forbes (2005a)	Attempts to offer empirical support for impact of brand personality, which is the direct impact that brand personality has on different customer driven results.	These outcomes show that brand personality have positive impact on product evaluation and exposed subjects to brand personality have more significant brand associations, proportions of brand association, unique brand associations, congruent brand associations and finally more strong proportion of brand associations.
Sung and Tinkham (2005)	This research reviews aspects of culture common as well as culture specific for brand personality inside Korea and US.	Six common cultural dimensions from brand personality and two specific to each of these cultures were defined.
Ambroise et al. (2005)	This research examines the effect of brand personality toward brand commitment and brand attitude for two product groups.	These experts mentioned the effect of brand personality on attitude of customers into a brand for product groups assumed in their study: sportswear and cola.
Freling and Forbes (2005b)	This research examines the effect of brand personality on customer results.	The findings explain that brand personality has positive impact on brand associations, which are unique, favorable, strong and congruent.
Ramaseshan and Tsao (2007)	This research evaluates moderating impacts of brand toward relationship between perceived quality and brand personality.	Regardless of brand consideration, sophistication and excitement traits of brand personality have positive and significant impact on perceived brand quality when excitement has positive and significant impact on perceived quality of brands, which are symbolic, sophistication, has positive and significant impact on perceived quality of brands which are experiential.
Beldona and Wysong (2007)	To define brand personality of store can impact customer perception into store brands and how these personalities may be different while customers are permitted to experience a product.	Findings demonstrated that national brands have powerful brand personality traits while they are compared to brands of store. By the way, these differences eliminated when customers were permitted to experience and taste the product.
Zentes et al. (2008)	This research examines empirically the scale of brand personality proposed by Aaker. in her famous article used for various products in various countries, the retailing application is rare.	Results revealed that Aaker brand personality scale is helpful for retail brands of Germany, which acts well to make difference among retailers, and those brand personality dimensions, which directly impact customers, store loyalty.

Swaminathan et al. (2009)	This research studies if styles of interpersonal attachment can moderate impacts of brand personality.	The attachment style of a customer moderates the impact of brand personality on marketing results such as brand choice, purchase likelihood and brand attachment.
Grohmann (2009)	This research provides two-dimensional scales for measuring feminine and masculine brand personality. The extensive validation and development was explained.	The outcomes demonstrated that brand would fit according to dimensions of gender of brand personality and perception of product gender of extension category increases purchase intention and extension evaluations.
Lee (2009)	This research evaluates relationship among brand personality and customer personality as customer's self-concept and defines applications for strategies of branding in customer market.	The results support positive relationship among brand personality and customer personality as self-concept. The mentioned relationships had significant impact on customer identification with a certain brand.
Mulyanegara and Tsarenko (2009)	This research defines the relationship between brand personality and customer personality as being measured by those constructs showing big 5 dimensions in fashion products context.	The results of this research reveal that some of the big 5 dimensions have significant relationship with preference on specific brand personality dimensions. Results relevant to gender demonstrate that female and male customers are different in way of expressing their own personality in case of brand personality.
Sung and Kim (2010)	This research investigates and conceptualizes the existed relationship between five dimensions of brand personality and also brand trust and brand affect. This study also suggests that some dimensions of brand personality are related more to brand trust and other ones are more related to brand affect.	The results demonstrate that brand personality enhances brand trust and brand affect that results in building brand loyalty. Practical and theoretical implications and contributions are explained.
Lombart and Louis (2012)	This study reviews the effects of retailer personality on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty to retailer, which was measured by future intentions of behavior and attitude.	This study suggests a model for consequences of retailer personality and explains that retailer personality is the critical concept which experts need to consider while developing their loyalty and satisfaction programs.
Ekhlassi et al. (2012)	The main objective of this study is evaluating the relationship between age, customer personality, brand personality and income of Iran's cell phone market.	The findings demonstrated that positive relationships between brand personalities (Adventurousness, responsibility and activity) and customer personalities (Conscientiousness, Agreeableness and Extroversion). Moreover, the existed differences between women and men, income and their influence on brand personality perception are being measured. Outcomes did not reveal difference among customers regarding their income, gender and brand personality.

Ha and Janda (2013)	The goal of this research is recognizing the relationship between key outcomes and brand personality in automobile industry of China.	According to result, brand personality has a key role for building brand trust and improving perceived quality, an important outcomes for highly competitive industry of automobile in China. Also perceived quality is crucial in mediating the exited relationship between brand commitment and brand personality. Perceived quality does not impact brand trust. In case of automobile industry in China, high levels of perceived quality of certain brands need convincing those none purchasers about value of brand and the fact that provided information is beneficial.
Ridgway and Myers (2014)	The main objective of this research was examining if being exposed to a logo customers assign their personality traits to brand is corresponding with common color associations.	Results demonstrated that brand personality traits of customers attributed to colors of brand logo based on common color associations for some colors in study.
Das (2014)	This research attempts to study the fact that if brand personality of retail is different for various retail brands. Also this research investigates if the perceptions toward retail brand personality are different between female and male shoppers.	Outcomes demonstrated that brand personality of retail is different for various retail brands. This research also showed that perception toward retail brand personality is different between female and male shoppers. So this is the first research conducted empirically to define if brand personality of retail is different for different genders and brands or not.

The results, as shown in Table 1, indicate that the importance of brand personality to repurchase behavior and brand loyalty of customers was not the main focus of past studies. Numerous studies have attempted to explain and develop the scale to measure brand personality instead of emphasis on the importance of brand personality on customer behavior. Experts understood that the existed relationship between customers and brands can be reinforced by means of brand personality (Blackston 1993, Aaker 1996) through creating liking or feeling into brands (Aaker 1996). At last, researches shown that brand personality has positive impact on purchase decision (Blackston 1993, Aaker 1996, Biel 1993). Regardless this remarkable importance the study about brand personality is limited. Because of few consensuses about nature of brand personality, so the symbolic utilization of brands also is very limited.

5. Conclusions
The current research considers many investigations, which present brand personality vitality in competitive market. In this regard, this article will motivate managers in marketing field to bring their own brand a good brand personality. It will underscore that brand personality impacts brand loyalty directly. Also this paper reveals the fact that brand personality impacts both type and relationships' strength about a specific brand. It would be beneficial for managers to empower a relationship for keeping and establishing a relationship among different brands and the target market. This study moreover states that brand personality dimensions might change.

With considering brands and products, it seems that human beings should anthropomorphized goods to increase interactions with those nonmaterial objects (Brown 1991). There is not any issue in assignation of individual features to brands (Aaker 1997) or also developing relationships with certain bands (Fournier 2003). It is important for future studies to recognize highly complex underlying factors and impacting the relationship between customers and brands. Knowing how brand personality was built in customer minds is necessary for optimum use of marketing tools in any organization. Efficient brand management, covering brand personality is very important in achieving total organizational objectives of loyalty, profitability and satisfaction.

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