An Analysis of the Relationship between Personality Traits and Brand Loyalty (a case study: physical education students, Tabriz University)

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Abstract

The present study investigated the relationship between personality traits and brand loyalty. The results indicated that there is a significant direct relationship between brave, egalitarian and introvert personality and brand loyalty; but there is not a significant relationship between a fair personality and brand loyalty; also brave and introvert personality have a significant direct impact on brand loyalty, but the fair and egalitarian personality do not have a significant impact on brand loyalty.

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Keywords: Personality Traits, brand loyalty, students;

1. Introduction

In recent years businesses have faced economic, political and social crises in the market, and the result of these crises is a decrease in the customers' trust in businesses (1). Today, many of the products which are in the level, are not significantly different form each other, but it is the brands that create differences between products and priority of one over the other. These differences are so big that currently many of the leaders in the market use their brand as a tool to create competitiveness (2). One of the problems which customers face when they want to buy their needed products is the task of choosing one brand among different and various brands. According to their knowledge of and attitude toward different brands, customers choose the products. The knowledge of and a comparison of different brands of products is a difficult and time-consuming task for customers because of their variety, and this may not lead to a correct decision in shopping. On the other hand the producers are looking for creating loyalty in the customers in contrast with their own brands, in order to change the shopping habits of their customers in their own favour (3). Loyalty has attracted the attention of many in the marketing literature during the last 8 years (4) and the world modern marketing has been under focus as well (5).

Loyalty has been defined in terms of different aspects of marketing such as loyalty to brand, loyalty to product, loyalty to services or loyalty to chain markets (4). The issue of loyalty to brand has been identified as a focal point in marketing literature and for the employees in this field (6), and it is among important or even vital issues in today's marketing and particularly in big markets (7) and it is also a very important issue for many companies in reaching their goals (8). Many definitions and explanations exist regarding loyalty to brand. According to Oliver (1999), loyalty reflects a deep commitment to new shopping, and being a permanent customer for a product or having future priority

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(9). Oker (1991), also considers loyalty to brand as a symbol of the producer's mind, which leads the customer toward permanent shopping from one specific brand during a long time (10). Olson and Jacoby (1970), also defined loyalty to brand as a non-accidental result, the existence of long term behavioural response, and the process of mental shopping of more than one brand (11).

Annually a huge amount of resources are used in creating brands for different businesses; but at the same time it can be stated that the texts related to brand loyalty in a business context has been in fact passive (6). On the other hand, todays, many of the organizations in aggressive and competitive markets have realized the importance of keeping the present customers; and because of this they of them conduct different kind of special activities to create a strong and long-term relationship i.e. loyalty with the customers (12). Many of the companies, particularly in sport industry, do their best to increase loyalty to brand among their own customers (13). On the other hand, personality features give the marketers and marketing managers the chance to know the most important factors in each level and compare their target market with their rivals, and then design their strategies and planning in order to attract and keep customers (14). Personality can be useful in the analysis of customer's behaviour for the selection and shopping of most of specific products and brands; and it is one of the concepts that has been under serious research regarding consumer's behaviour (15). Personality is an abstract concepts; often scientists have certain descriptions and analyses of personality, because of this there are many explanations for personality (16). Personality is an organized and unified set consisting of rather stable features, which differentiate one person from another (17); it is a psychological concept understood as a set of stable mental and psychological features that lead to human activities and experiences (18). In the present research, by personality features we mean the personality features by Bass, Valenzi and Eldridge, who classify personality in terms of 4 features of fair, brave, egalitarian and introvert. Many of the researchers believe that the existence of personal differences and different personality features differentiate the people's reactions toward situations (19). It is because of this that marketers are interested in understanding the features and meaning of people's personality and also how these features affect the personality of consumers. Many studies have been conducted regarding the personality features and tis relation with priorities for products and brands (15). The results of most of these researches have shown that those names are welcomed by customers that are in accordance with their internal features (20). It can be stated that although marketers cannot change the behaviour of their customers to match their products; but if they are aware of the personality features along with special reactions; they can do actions in order to make customers reconsider their choices (15).

Regarding the mentioned items regarding brand and its role in developing business, it is completely clear that it is necessary to have special planning in the field of business in order to enhance the value of brand. Although brand loyalty has been under focus widely in marketing literature, and different studies have been conducted inside and outside of the country (5, 9, 11, 21, 22, 23, 24); but during the investigations in the present research is was determined that there has been no study regarding the relationship between personality features and brand loyalty in Iran. No doubt with entering the modern business world the importance of studies regarding brand increases. Currently in our country there are many sport brands such as Majid, Daee, Shekari etc. Because of the increasing importance of Iranian markets in sport products and the serious competition among business brands, and also regarding the fact that in our country in spite of domestic sport brand they are not very popular with the users; the issue is that why sport brand in Iranian business context is not comparable with its importance in universal or even local scale? Is it possible that brand do affect the behavioural aspects of consumers? How these names can help sport product companies? And how these companies can prove their products regarding specific brands in the market and make their customer loyal? Therefore, it is essential that companies, in order to grow and develop in the market, deal with the evaluation of the role of brands in the formation of customers' loyalty so that they can adopt their marketing strategies to create a strong brand with loyal customers. Therefore, the present article, unlike previous researches, which mostly dealt with the relationship between personality and brand loyalty in general, investigates the students' personality features and their interest in certain sport brand, and aims to recognize the relationship between personality features and brand loyalty in sport community and physical education students. On the other hand because of the newness of this topic i.e. the combination of consumer's personality and brand loyalty, there has been no research in this area in the field of sport. So it is impossible to have a comparison with the previous researches.

2- Methodology

This is an applied research in terms of aim and it is a kind of descriptive survey research in terms of nature. The data have been collected through field research and a questionnaire.

2-1 Research Spatial Domain

The spatial domain includes all students of physical education at all academic levels in Tabriz University. This research attempts to answer the main hypothesis of the research using appropriate sampling from this statistical population.

2-2 Research Temporal Domain

The data required for this research have been collected in period of one month, in October/November 2013.

2-3 Research Statistical Population and Sample

The statistical population consisted of all students of physical education at all academic levels in Tabriz University. According to statistics department of Tabriz University, the population was estimated at 424. Given that there was a big difference in the number of students at BA, MA and PhD levels; thus, the questionnaires were distributed among the students in correspondence with their number.

4-2 Determining Sample Size and Sampling Method

Since it was not possible to survey the entire population, simple random sampling method was used for the population. To estimate the sample size, the Cochran formula and Morgan table were drawn upon and given $\square = 0.05$ (that is; to reach confidence level of 95% and error 5%), the sample size equalled 202. Given that there was a big difference in the number of students at BA, MA and PhD levels, 129, 65 and 8 questionnaires were distributed among BA, MA and PhD students respectively. In the end, as some questionnaires might be filled wrongly and/or not returned, the number of distributed questionnaires was 220 considering in correspondence with their number. Of the distributed questionnaires and given the accessibility of the population, 202 questionnaires were returned exactly perfectly which were all usable. Thus, it can be said that the return rate of questionnaires is about 100%.

2-5 Data Collection Instruments

The research instruments include library studies and a questionnaire as well. The current research consists of 3 parts. The first part includes personal information and demographic characteristics questionnaire (gender, marital status, age, academic degree, median income, interest in a specific brand). The second part includes Bass-Valenzi Management Styles profile (25) falling into 4 items (fair, bold, egalitarian and introverted) and 27 questions. Finally, the third part includes Douwe et al's standard questionnaire of brand loyalty (26) which falls into six items (cognitive, affective, customer relationship management, time management, the rate of resources invested and senior management participation) and 25 questions. The questionnaire was close-ended and measurement scale was based on Likret scale which is a rating/ranging scale type. The questions include a range of 5 options upon which I completely disagree is on one side rated as 1 and I completely agree rated as 5 is on the other side of the continuum. In the middle of the continuum, the options include I disagree rated as 2, agreed to some extent and disagreed to me extent rated as 3 and I agree rated as 4. The respondent can select one of the options as it accord with his attitude and mark that one. In order to ensure of the questionnaire content validity, the professors and experts' opinions in this field were used as the criterion. After receiving and applying their opinions, the content validity was assured. In this research, the questionnaire reliability was 0.749 for the personality questionnaire and 0.941 for the loyalty questionnaire using Cronbach's alpha which is an acceptable value showing that the questionnaire is highly reliable.

2-6 Data Analysis

Data were analysed using SPSS 18. Descriptive statistics have been used for categorization of raw scores, table design, frequency distribution, dispersion indices like mean, standard deviation, etc. One- Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test inferential statistics (k-s) in order to test the normality of data distribution, the Pearson correlation test to test the hypotheses and simultaneous regression test to investigate the impact of personality upon loyalty have been used.

3- Research Findings

After extracting data and information, the research findings were analysed. The demographic results show that most of the students (54.5%) are female. 84.7% of the students are single. The most percentage of mean age (45.0%) belongs to the group aged 18-22. Most of the students are at BA level (63.9%) and most of them (83.7%) are unemployed (they are students), and 57.9% of them have no income. In the end, 12.4% of the students are interested in domestic brands and 87.6 of them like foreign brands.

Table 1. Demographic Profile Analysis

Gender				Marital Status				Interest in Brand			
Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Single	Percentage	Married	Percentage	Domestic	Percentage	Foreign	Percentage
92	45.5	110	54.5	171	84.7	31	15.3	25	12.4	177	87.6

Academic Degree						Job					
BA	Percentage	MA	Percentage	PhD	Percentage	Student	Percentage	Employee	Percentage	Self-Employed	Percentage
129	63.9	65	32.2	8	4.0	169	83.7	17	8.4	16	7.9

Median Income											
Below 300 thousand Tomans	Percentage	300-500	Percentage	500-700	Percentage	700-1 million	Percentage	Above 1 million	Percentage	Without Income	Percentage
32	15.8	24	11.9	7	3.5	12	5.9	10	5.0	117	57.9

Age									
18-22	Percentage	23-26	Percentage	27-30	Percentage	31-34	Percentage	34 above	Percentage
91	45.0	90	44.6	13	6.4	5	2.5	3	1.5

In order to test the normality of scores variables distribution, One- Sample Kolmogorov- Smirnov test was taken. Given the significance levels of the test, it is concluded that all variables are normally distributed (p-value > 0.05). Mean, standard deviation and reliability for each item are as in the table below:

Table 2. Normality and Stability

Questionnaire	Items	mean	Standard deviation	Kolmogorov - Smirnov	Alpha
Loyalty Questionnaire	Loyalty	3.7822	0.46360	0.847	0.749
Personality Questionnaire	Equitable Personality	3.2034	0.33038	1.223	0.941
	Bold Personality	3.2960	0.49443	1.204	
	Egalitarian Personality	2.3226	0.51594	1.195	
	Introverted Personality	3.8723	0.41046	1.306	

The current research contains 4 hypotheses:

H 1: in order to test the relationship between fair personality and brand loyalty, Pearson correlation test was taken. The Pearson correlation coefficient is 0.06 and p-value is 0.40. As Pearson test significance level is above 0.05, independent variables hypothesis is not rejected. In other words, there is no significant relationship between fair personality and brand loyalty.

H 2: in order to test the relationship between bold personality and brand loyalty, Pearson correlation test was taken. The Pearson correlation coefficient is 0.238 and p-value is 0.001. As Pearson test significance level is below 0.05, independent variables hypothesis is rejected. In other words, there is a direct significant relationship between bold personality and brand loyalty.

H 3: in order to test the relationship between egalitarian personality and brand loyalty, Pearson correlation test was taken. The Pearson correlation coefficient is - 0.17 and p-value is 0.015. As Pearson test significance level is below

0.05, independent variables hypothesis is rejected. In other words, there is an inverse significant relationship between egalitarian personality and brand loyalty.

H 4: in order to test the relationship between introverted personality and brand loyalty, Pearson correlation test was taken. The Pearson correlation coefficient is 0.229 and p-value is 0.001. As Pearson test significance level is below 0.05, independent variables hypothesis is rejected. In other words, there is a direct significant relationship between introverted personality and brand loyalty.

Table 3. The relationship between the components of personality and brand loyalty

Factors	Loyalty	Equitable Personality	Bold Personality	Egalitarian Personality	Introverted Personality
Loyalty	1	0.060	0.238	-0.170	0.229
		0.400	0.001	0.015	0.001
	202	202	202	202	202
Equitable Personality	0.060	1			
	0.400		-	-	-
	202	202			
Bold Personality	0.238		1		
	0.001	-		-	-
	202		202		
Egalitarian Personality	-0.170			1	
	0.015	-	-		-
	202			202	
Introverted Personality	0.229				1
	0.001	-	-	-	
	202				202

In order to examine the impact of personality on brand loyalty, simultaneous regression test was taken. Multiple correlation coefficient is 0.319 and coefficient of determination is 0.102. The coefficient of determination shows the variance value explained by the model. Numerical value of determination coefficient is 0-1. The closer this value is to 1, the stronger is the model relation. One of the regression prerequisites is that criterion variable does not have autocorrelation and errors are independent of each other. Durbin-Watson test is taken to test this prerequisite. If numerical value of Durbin-Watson is between 1.5 and 2.5, it is concluded that criterion variable does not have autocorrelation and errors are independent of each other. The value of Durbin-Watson is 1.66. Since this value is between 1.5 and 2.5, it is concluded that criterion variable does not have autocorrelation and errors are independent of each other.

Table 4 – Model Summary [b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.319[a]	.102	.083	.44384	1.655

a. Predictors: (Constant), Equitable Personality, Bold Personality, Egalitarian Personality, Introverted Personality
b. Dependent Variable: Loyalty

In order for the regression model to be significant, there should be a linear relationship between criterion variable and predictor variables. In order to test the linear relationship between criterion variable and predictor variables, F test was carried out. The significance level of F test is 0.001. Given that p-value of F test is below 0.05, there is a linear significant relationship between criterion variable and predictor variables.

Table 5. ANOVA[b]

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4.393	4	1.098	5.575	.000ª
	Residual	38.807	197	.197		
	Total	43.200	201			
a. Predictors: (Constant), Equitable Personality, Bold Personality, Egalitarian Personality, Introverted Perso						
b. Dependent Variable: Loyalty						

The table below shows non-standardized coefficients and standardized coefficients along with their significance levels. Non-standardized coefficients indicate variables' coefficients in the regression model and standardized coefficients are used to show the effect. When absolute value of this value is higher, there is a stronger effect. According to the table, it can be concluded that bold personality and introverted personality have a direct significant effect upon brand loyalty (p-value is <0.05). However, fair personality and egalitarian personality have no significant effect on brand loyalty (p-value >0.05).

Table 6. Coefficientsª

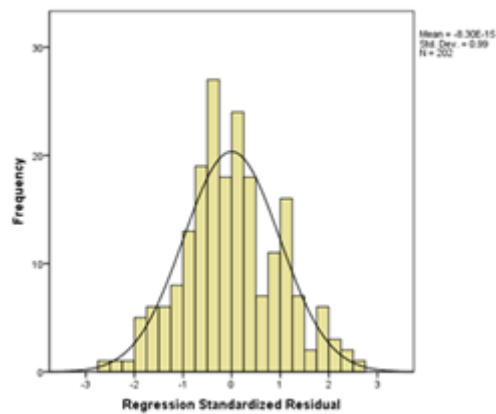| Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.637	.493		5.346	.000
	Equitable Personality	.016	.097	.011	.165	.869
	Bold Personality	.177	.065	.189	2.721	.007
	Egalitarian Personality	-.095	.063	-.105	-1.507	.134
	Introverted Personality	.189	.080	.167	2.358	.019
a. Dependent Variable: Loyalty						

Figure 1: Loyalty Dependent Variable

4- Discussion

The aim of the paper was to investigate the relationship between personality traits and brand loyalty among students of Tabriz University. Nowadays, brand is considered as the main asset of any organization (27). Brand and trademarks play a significant role in modern society. In fact, they are present in all aspects of our lives including economic, social, cultural and sport aspects (28). On the other hand, advances in technology and ever increasing market competition, consumers brand loyalty is the great asset to any organization (29). True brand loyalty manifests itself when consumers have a high attitude of the brand and show this in their repurchasing (13). The type of connection that consumer establish with the brand based on levels of loyalty is a noteworthy parameter for the managers. In today's marketing, assuming a place in consumers' mind in a way to make them loyal to a specific brand is of high importance (23). Consumers' personality traits enable marketers and managers to attain the knowledge of important factors of each level and compare their targets markets with their competitors' markets. In this way they

would be able to use strategies to attract consumers. Moreover, personality traits help in the analysis of consumers' behaviour in choosing and purchasing specific goods and brands (14).

The results of this research showed that a great majority of students (87.6%) tend to use foreign brands. Adidas, Nike and Puma were the first three popular brands among the sample population. It shows that domestic brands didn't have a good rank in this sample. Reports have indicated that Nike, Adidas and Reebok have manufactured 33% of sport clothing and athletic shoes in 2007 (4). The results of some studies have illustrated that Malaysians have a tendency to use brands like Nike, Adidas, Puma, Reebok and Fila. This has led the owners of these brands to extend their productions in Asia in order to increase their sales (13). On the other hand, purchasers have a wide choice: they can either go for foreign brands or choose domestic ones. Working in a competitive environment, mangers of both domestic and foreign brands are in a desperate need of finding the reasons why consumers prefer specific brands (30). It seems that the ever increasing import of foreign brands, advertisement in media and the change in consumers' perceptions have weakened domestic brands. Therefore, managers are recommended to focus their attention to strategies which ensure brand loyalty because the main purpose of any company is to have loyal customers.

The results of the present study demonstrated that there is a meaningful relationship between daring, egalitarian and introverted personalities and brand loyalty. This is in consistent with the results of the study done by Yi Lin (2010) on "the relationship of consumer personality trait, brand personality and brand loyalty: an empirical study of toys and video games buyers". He showed in his study that personality traits and brand loyalty are positively and meaningfully related (11). It was shown in Afshari (2009) and Long (2010) that consumers with different personality traits have different understandings of the brand (11) and choose those brands which fit their personalities (20). Considering that brand loyalty has marketing benefits such as significant reduction in marketing expenses, greater commercial leverage, consumers' resistance to competitors' offers and increase in returns (31) and because of the meaningful relationship between personality traits and brand loyalty, companies and organizations should continuously watch over their communications with the customers and get an appropriate understanding of their needs and perceptions in order to provide them with the goods and services that best fit their personalities. Generally speaking, managers are recommended to take measures to create, preserve and increase brand loyalty.

The results also showed that there is no meaningful relationship between fair personality and brand loyalty. This was in contradiction with the results of Yi Lin's (2010) study (10). This inconsistency may be attributed to age and cultural differences.

Finally, the results of simultaneous regression showed that daring and introverted personality meaningfully affect brand loyalty; however, fair and egalitarian personalities did not meaningfully affect brand loyalty. As there's no research devoted to loyalty to sportswear brands, no comparison can be made in this regard.

Based on what was said above, brand loyalty prevents the entrance of competitors into the market, increases companies' ability to act against competitors' threats and raises sales and profits (24). In addition, personality traits can also be fruitful in the analysis of consumers' ways of choosing and purchasing specific certain goods and services (15). Amber concluded in his paper that managers have to design different plans for different personalities so as to increase brand loyalty (32). Managers cannot change personalities but they can get acquainted with them to target a specific group of consumers (15).

Success in competitive and complicated markets in which goods and services much similar to each other are presented needs a reliable brand that can capture the souls of consumers. In order to increase consumers' loyalty to a brand, managers should know them and understand their needs and wants. They should provide facilities appropriate for different personality traits in order to make them loyal to a brand. Manufactures of sportswear, therefore, have to take customers' personality traits into consideration if they wish to make them loyal to their brands.

5- Conclusion

The present study aimed to investigate the relationship between personality traits and brand loyalty among students of Tabriz University. The results showed that there is a meaningful relationship between daring, egalitarian and introverted personalities and brand loyalty but such a relation does not exist in the case of fair personality and brand loyalty. Moreover, daring and introverted personality meaningfully affect brand loyalty; however, fair and egalitarian personalities did not meaningfully affect brand loyalty. Considering the results of the study and meaningful relationship between personality traits and brand loyalty, companies should always watch over their communications

with the customers and get an appropriate understanding of their needs and perceptions in order to provide them with the goods and services that best fit their personalities. Managers should also take measures to create, preserve and increase brand loyalty. Although managers are unable to change their consumers' personalities, they can get acquainted with them to target a specific group of consumers. For this reason, managers are recommended to focus their attention to strategies which ensure brand loyalty in that the main purpose of any company is to have loyal customers.

Acknowledgment

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