Original Article

Brand Ethical Personality Model in Iran's Consumer Products Market

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Abstract

Introduction: Some psychological research on ethics suggests that information about specific ethical characteristics of brands can be considered as the ethical "character" of the brand. The present study tries to draw the model of ethical personality of the brand in Iran's consumer products market.

Material and Methods: The current study was developmental-applied research and was conducted using a mixed method. In the qualitative part, the statistical population included all experts in management and marketing sciences, 29 of them were selected by purposeful sampling. The tool was semi-structured interviews and the results were extracted with content analysis method and NVivo software. In the quantitative part, the statistical population included all the consumers of the selected brands of the national festival of the top popular Iranian brands in the second half of 2016 in Tehran. From this society, a sample of 1670 people was selected by¬ stratified sampling method with proportional allocation. The questionnaire tool was researcher-made and the data were analyzed by performing exploratory factor analysis and then confirmatory factor analysis.

Results: The findings of this study included 74 ethical indicators in the qualitative part, and in the quantitative part of the research, among the 74 personality traits identified for the brands of consumer products in the Iranian market, only 22 ethical indicators have a sufficient factor load and the necessary sufficiency to explain. They had a confirmed model that was categorized into 5 personality factors.

Conclusions: The factors and indicators that make up the brand's ethical personality model include five factors; Pleasurable (dignified, distinguished, hardworking, always helpful, powerful and strong, skilled, attractive, creative); Qualified businessman (efficient, worthy and worthy, competitive); Efficient (friend of the little ones, old friend, funny); Intimacy agent (inefficient, uncommitted, duplicitous, unkind); Narcissistic agent (forceful, tyrannical, mischievous, narcissistic).

Keywords: *Ethical Personality, Brand, Consumer Goods*

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INTRODUCTION

Today, marketing specialists are aware of the importance of brand in the success of their organizations in the field of marketing, because the brand name is one of the few assets of the organization that can create a sustainable competitive advantage. Just as loyalty to a brand name is better than other types of loyalty (such as loyalty to price and so on); Because it creates more obstacles in the way of customer [1]. Trade name or brand; A name, term, sign, symbol, design or combination of these that is used to identify the goods or services of a seller or a group of sellers, or to distinguish these goods or services from the goods or services of competitors [2]. As explained by Katler, the brand should be seen as something much more than a mere name; But in order to preserve the

Persian vocabulary, the author tried to use the term trade name instead. At the same time, due to the fact that many translators have considered it permissible, and in order to prevent excessive repetition of a single word, which reduces the flow and beauty of the text, both terms have been used in the text.

The personality of a brand name is one of the significant structures that have been discussed in this regard. In recent decades, the attention of marketing researchers has been drawn to the fact that consumers may actually describe their personality traits by choosing brand names. In the personality approach to the brand name, the basic assumptions are on the bilateral and quasi-human exchange between the brand name and the

consumer [3, 4]. As some researchers [5] have shown, brand names are given to human-like characters that are activated in continuous two-way dialogues between the brand and the consumer. In the personality approach, if the brand is an attractive and relevant business personality, the emotional bond between the consumer and the brand is significantly strengthened. For consumers, brand names that have personality seem attractive because they use them as a symbol to show their personality and build their identity [6]. Brand personality for their producers can be an important source of differentiation from others and a tool to create an emotional connection with consumers [7, 8] Therefore, the function of a brand name goes beyond the components that make up goods and services and reaches the elements that intensify the effect of these components [9]. In this regard, brand personality is one of the concepts that allows us to evaluate and optimize the possibility of establishing a human relationship with the customer. The special position that authors such as Esch and Keller have given to the personality of the brand and its architecture is proof of this claim. Personality and brand value are factors that, although intangible; But the researchers completely place their position at the base of the pyramid of the needs of the identity of the brand name [9].

Researchers believe that personality is the sum of all the ways that a person reacts to his environment and emphasize the measurable characteristics of personality; A point without which scientific work becomes very difficult. They propose two methods to investigate personality, which are Myers-Briggs type indicator and Big five model; And then they bring up the flaws in the validity of the first one and conclude that only the big five model has an acceptable validity [10]. Personality traits are the characteristics that distinguish a person or thing from others. In fact, this word is used a lot in psychology and the study of human personality. However, in the last two or three decades, this word has been used many times for business names. Besides, in some researches, the moral character of the brand has been emphasized. Some psychological research on ethics suggests that information about specific ethical characteristics of brands can be considered as the ethical "character" of the brand [11]. A brand can represent more than the purpose of the organization. The brand can represent the organization's attention to ethics. Ethical brands are formed by the discourse of "doing the right thing" and are supposed to give meaning to employees' lives. When ethics is linked to a corporate brand, organizations will experience the participation and commitment of their employees [12]. Furthermore, when brand values are ethical in relation to social and/or environmental

responsibilities, this becomes organizational culture and the brand is claimed to have an ethical character. The moral character of the brand is built both internally and externally. External factors as well as employees who are supposed to embody brand values are directly involved in its creation. Therefore, the moral character of the brand focuses on the position in the society as well as the importance of the brand values to be "right."

An important part of the deficiency in our knowledge today regarding the moral character of the brand goes back to the path that has been taken in the process of producing existing knowledge. It is true that the moral character of a brand name and the moral character of a person are very similar and even related; But they are not the same. It seems that this difference has been ignored from the very beginning and caused the birth of the concept of moral personality to rely too much on its older sister in the human dimension. In other words, instead of starting from induction, everything is compared to human personality from the beginning. Therefore, the main goal of this research is to design the brand's ethical personality model in the consumer products of the Iranian market.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The type of this research in terms of the goal is developmental-applied research that uses a mixed approach (qualitative and quantitative) in its research method.

In the qualitative part, the statistical community includes specialists and experts in the field of management and marketing who have the necessary knowledge, expertise and expert opinion in the subject of the research and who are at least 24 years old and have a master's degree. The people selected from this community are known as the panel of experts. To select the members of the expert panel; Contrary to what is common in quantitative surveys, they are not selected based on probability sampling. One of the methods used in this field is targeted or judgmental sampling. Therefore, the panel of members of the expert group, which included 29 people, were selected as a targeted or judgmental non-probability sampling. The tool was semi-structured interviews and the results were extracted with content analysis method and NVivo software.

In the quantitative part, the statistical population of the research in the quantitative part includes all the consumers of the selected brands of the National Festival of the Top Popular Iranian Brands in the second half of 2016 in Tehran, who are at least 18 years old and have used the goods and services of the aforementioned brands once in the past year. or have faced it. 1670 consumers were selected from this society by stratified

sampling method with proportional allocation. The demographic characteristics of the sample are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Demographic Characteristics

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	914	55
Female	756	45
Marriage		
Single	781	47
Married	889	53
Education		
Diploma	517	31
Associate degree	382	23
Bachelor's degree	554	33
Master's and Doctoral degree	217	13

The instrument was a researcher-made questionnaire. In order to check the validity of the (researcher-made) instrument or questionnaire, in addition to the fact that all the factors and indicators (characteristics) were extracted from the theoretical foundations, research background and interviews; The final questionnaire was sent to the expert panel members and the validity of each of the items as well as the entire questionnaire was confirmed by the panel members. Therefore, the validity of the instrument or questionnaire was assessed and accepted as face validity (of course, after collecting the field data by factor analysis methods, the validity of the research instrument was tested and confirmed). After ensuring the validity of the research tool, the reliability of the questionnaire was investigated, and the value of Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the research questionnaire in a pilot sample was equal to 0.88, which indicates the high reliability of the research tool. The data were analyzed by performing exploratory factor analysis and then confirmatory factor analysis.

In general, the stages of research implementation or the steps taken in this section are;

In the first step, an extensive study was conducted regarding the history and different models of the brand and its ethical dimensions

In the second step, considering the purpose and novelty of the research title, especially in Iran, in order to analyze the information from the qualitative research method and semi-structured interviews with the members of the expert panel (experts and key informants) with an emphasis on the exploratory approach to identify other personality traits of the names It was used commercially

In the third step of this section, the results of each of the interviews were entered into the Nvivo software in text form, and the answers and opinions of the expert panel members were identified as main and sub-themes and organized in tables.

Finally, in the quantitative section, using exploratory factor analysis and then confirmatory factor analysis, moral indicators were placed in different personality categories.

RESULTS

Results of the Qualitative Section

In the qualitative part of the research, the ethical characteristics of the brand were identified in the Iranian consumer market. After reviewing and entering each of the interview letters in the form of a text file into the Nvivo software, the analysis work began. In this way, codes were assigned to each of the experts' comments and answers to the interview letters, and similar answers were given the same code. Finally, after software monitoring and analysis, 74 personality traits were extracted from the qualitative part of the research as personality model variables of consumer product brands in the Iranian market (Table 2).

Results of the Quantitative Section

After determining the personality traits of the brands of consumer products in the Iranian market in the qualitative part of the research, in this part, these traits were given to the statistical sample or the consumers of the brands of these products in the city of Tehran, so that they could comment on the personality traits of each of the selected brands.

Considering that the current research was supposed to include a measurement model, first an exploratory factor analysis was carried out in order to examine the validity of the constructs after extracting the required indicators using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and finally the desired instrument. To measure the moral character of the brand. In the quantitative part, the research sample can be divided into two parts, including the survey sample and the validation sample; In such a way that the survey sample is used to produce the model (perform EFA) and the validation sample is used to evaluate the produced model (perform CFA) [13]. The total sample size in this research is equal to 1670 questionnaires, of which 550 questionnaires were used for EFA and 1120 questionnaires were used for CFA. As a factor extraction method for exploratory factor analysis, principal component analysis (PCA) and direct oblimin era have been used to obtain the background structure of the relevant indicators. In the following, the results of exploratory factor analysis are presented.

The studied structure consisted of 74 indicators (adjectives), all of which were measured in a spectrum with values from 1 to 5. For this structure, Kaiser-Meyer-

Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's sphericity test were used for the suitability of the sample to perform exploratory factor analysis. The KMO size was equal to 0.95 and the significant value of Bartlett's test was less than 0.001, both of which indicate the suitability of the data for exploratory factor analysis. In the current analysis, after repeating the exploratory factor analysis three times and removing indicators with factor loadings smaller than 0.5, finally 35 indicators were left whose absolute factor loadings were greater than 0.5. In this case, the value of KMO index was equal to 0.93 and the significant value of Bartlett's test was less than 0.001. Also, principal component analysis with five explanatory factors was about 65% of the total variance. Figure 1 shows the pie chart of this exploratory factor analysis.

Table 2. Ethical Indicators Identified for Brands of Consumer Products in the Iranian Market

| Row	Ethical Factor	Row	Ethical Factor	Row	Ethical Factor	Row	Ethical Factor
1	Beauty	20	Thrift	39	Naughtily	58	Distingushed
2	Competetive	21	Narcissist	40	Luxury	59	worthy
3	Forceful	22	Cute	41	Fair	60	
4	Permanent friend	23	Healthy	42	Normal	61	Attractive
5	Stable	24	Imitator	43	Powerful	62	Sweet
6	Hopeful	25	Veteran	44	Supporting children's right	63	Availability
7	Creative	26	Expert	45	Lively	64	Diligence
8	Old friend	27	Happy	46	Loyal	65	Variety seeker
9	High quality	28	Reliable	47	Exciting	66	Being special
10	Kind	29	Relaxing	48	Memorable	67	Problem solver
11	Reputed	30	Genuine	49	Intimate	68	Up to date
12	Lier	31	Honest	50	Valuable	69	Uncertain
13	Merciful	32	Insincere	51	Trouble maker	70	Self confidence
14	Famous	33	Pleasant	52	Inefficient	71	Majestically
15	Patient	34	Resistant	53	Energetic	72	Comfortable
16	Uncommitted	35	Fraudulent	54	Advanced	73	Unvaluable
17	Clean	36	Tyrannical	55	Unkind	74	Safe
18	Attendant	37	Optimism	56	greedy		
19	Traitor	38	Profession	57	Dignity		
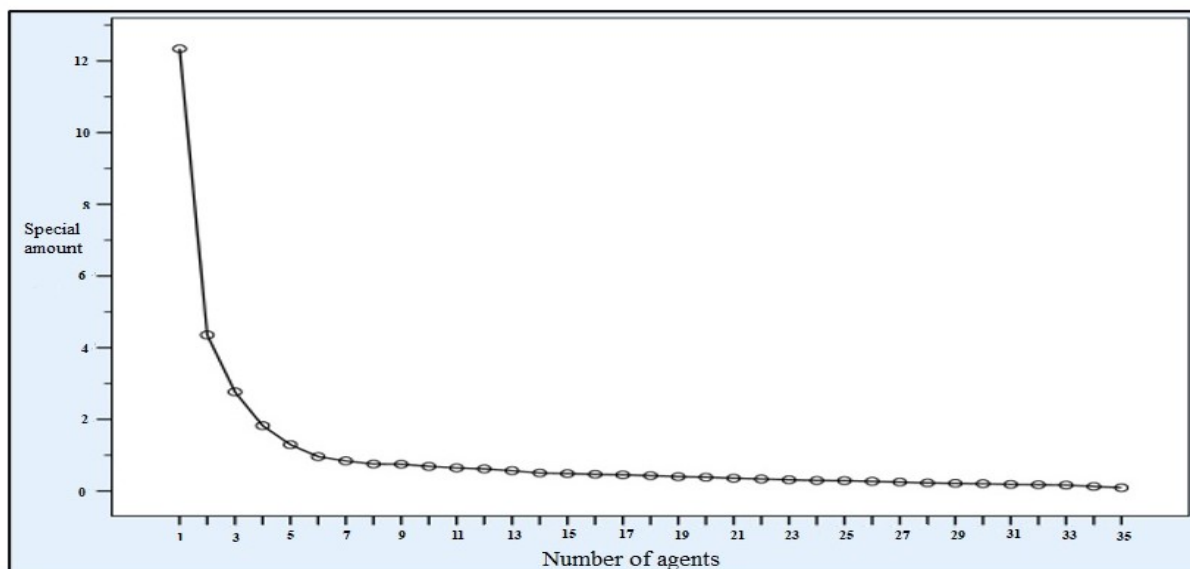
Figure 1. Pie Chart for Final Exploratory Factor Analysis

According to the diagram in Figure 1, from the sixth factor onwards, the eigenvalues are smaller than 1, and therefore, the use of factors 1 to 5 will be appropriate according to the result of this diagram. As seen in Table 3, all factor loadings are greater than 0.5; Therefore, all the indicators have been properly loaded on their respective factors (in order to prevent confusion, only factor loadings with an absolute value greater than 0.5 have been shown in Table 3).

Considering the appropriateness of all criteria of exploratory factor analysis, it can be said that there are 5 factors in the present questionnaire. Therefore, the

results of this exploratory factor analysis will be used in the confirmatory factor analysis section. After some research in dictionaries and consultation with some experts, the moral factors found in Table 5 are suggested as follows:

Pleasurable, Qualified businessman, Efficient, Intimate Narcissist.

Now after conducting and receiving the results of exploratory factor analysis; The moral character of the brand in the consumer products of the Iranian market was determined and extracted along with the moral indicators of each factor. In this section, the identified structure (consisting of factors and indicators) has been investigated in terms of reliability and validity of the structure. For this structure, Cronbach's alpha coefficient, construct validity, convergent reliability and divergent reliability were calculated and confirmed. The fit indices of the CFA model were also examined. A sample of 1120 consumers was used to fit the CFA model

(as mentioned earlier). The measurement model of this construct includes five factors identified as hidden variables and indicators (moral qualities or personality traits), each of which is considered as manifest variables. After fitting this model to the data, a number of indicators with factor loadings smaller than 0.6 were removed, and the model was re-executed and the values of factor loadings were examined. During several stages of implementing the model and removing indicators with a factor load smaller than 0.6, a model was finally obtained in which all indicators had a factor load greater than 0.6. Also, to improve the fit of the model, a number of corrections suggested by the software were used. These corrections were made by creating covariance between a number of error sentences of the model. Figure 2 shows the measurement model after removing the indicators and applying the mentioned corrections. The numbers shown in Figure 2 are standardized factor loadings.

Table 3. The Results of the Final Exploratory Factor Analysis

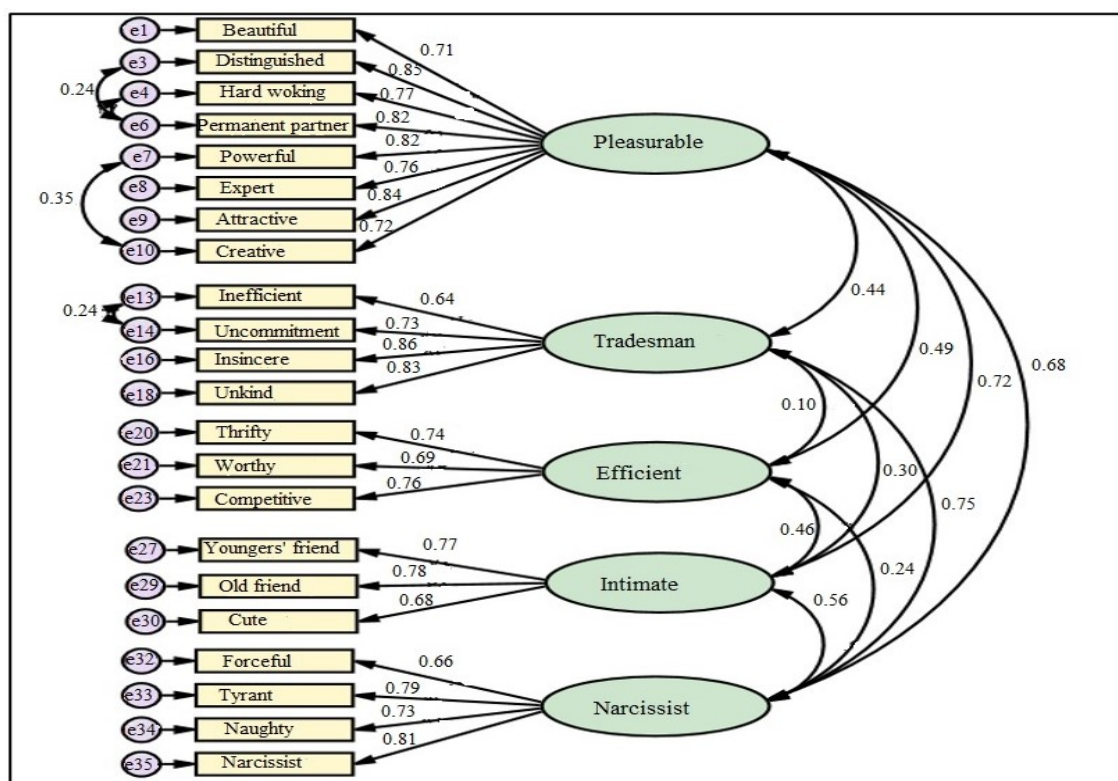| Index name	Identification Factors				
	F_1	F_2	F_3	F_4	F_5
Beauty	0.94				
Luxury	0.88				
Distinguished	0.86				
Hardworking	0.82				
Cute	0.81				
Permanent partner	0.74				
Strong	0.74				
Expert	0.74				
Attractive	0.72				
Creative	0.68				
Comfortable	0.60				
Patience	0.59				
Inefficient		-0.81			
Uncommitment		-0.78			
Traitor		-0.75			
Insincere		-0.70			
Worthless		-0.69			
Unkind		-0.67			
Deceptive		-0.64			
Thrifty			0.89		
Worthy			0.77		
Fair			0.76		
Competitive			0.74		
Up to date			0.73		
Reputed			0.60		
Sweet				0.85	
Supporting children's rights				0.77	
Special				0.73	
An old friend				0.65	
Optimism				0.64	
Greedy					-0.77
Forceful					-0.70
Tyrant					-0.64
Mischievous					-0.63
Narcissist					-0.57

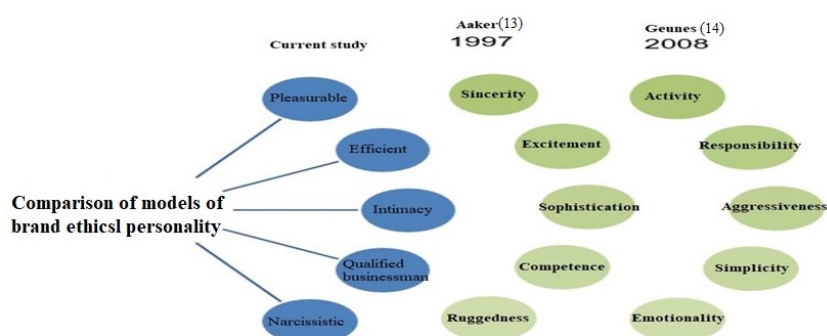**Figure 2.** The Final Fitting Result of the Model after Applying the Corrections

Figure 3. Comparing the Model of Brand Moral Character in Consumer Goods in the Iranian Market with Previous Researches

The acceptable values of these indices are less than 0.05 for SRMR and more than 0.9 for each of CFI and TLI. For RMSEA, values up to 0.08 are acceptable and indicate a good fit of the model to the collected data. According to the researchers, because the index depends on the sample size, values from 2 to 5 indicate a reasonable fit for it [14]. Therefore, for the confirmatory factor analysis model, all the indices are in the desired range. Therefore, the fit of this model to the collected data is accepted.

Also, all the t values calculated for the coefficients reported in Figure 2 are greater than 1.96, and therefore all the indicators are significant in the confirmatory factor analysis model. Also, the values of all the standardized coefficients are greater than 0.6, which

indicates their high explanatory power in the respective factor. Therefore, the model presented in Figure 2 can be mentioned as a model of brand moral character in consumer products of the Iranian market, which includes 5 dimensions and 22 indicators.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the current research are in line with the findings of some researches in this field and show that the components of the brand personality structure in the Iranian market consist of five factors (Figure 3) [15, 16], but what makes the current research different It is possible that the major constructs in previous researches had forgotten an important factor, which was moral and value burden. Therefore, the first difference between the

new model of brand personality and the previous models is that it has been able to naturally and experimentally, and without using the subjective judgment of the researcher, take into account moral attributes. The interesting point is that the current research shows that the possibility of the simultaneous existence of ethical traits and unethical behaviors in a particular brand is completely possible. Ethical or beautiful traits, and unethical or disgusting traits, at the same time with various intensities and weaknesses, have been clearly and meaningfully identified in each of the 167 brands that have reached the ranking stage.

Although due to adherence to the principles of the scientific method, the researcher did not insist on creating an artificial similarity between the brand and human; But this similarity has shown itself in the research process. As in human society, characters are usually not black and white at all, and may be found anywhere in the spectrum of colors, from gray to other colors; Brands also have the same characteristic. The reviewed brand names that were recognized as having personality, all scored points in terms of ethical factors; And the ethical qualities of none of the brands were just beautiful, or just ugly.

Below are some suggestions for using the findings of this research. Obviously, the mentioned cases are only preliminary proposals that require more research. Also, the possible applications for these findings are not limited to the following, and various paths can be adopted in the sequence of this path.

Investigating the positive and negative moral traits attributed to animals and their place in the personality of brand names: Throughout history, humans have had a bipolar emotional relationship with animals. On the one hand, fear and hatred of powerful hunting animals, and on the other hand, envy and admiration for their superiority, such as speed, dignity, freedom and the like. This influence went to the point where some tribes and tribes believed in protective spirits and animal-gods, some of which are symbols of tribes, territories, and teams today. Such animal traits and symbols have been used by some brand names today. Some of these uses were directly in the names, some were part of the names, and some were in symbols and advertisements. It is important that the companies wanted to convey some praiseworthy traits to their audience with these choices.

Development of a model for examining the moral character of personal, organizational, and national names with an Iranian approach: It is suggested that researchers and also those involved in brand management develop models for separating, distinguishing, and distinguishing the personality of personal, organizational, and national brands and analyzing and comparing them with personality. Develop ethical brand related products. Development of general and detailed models (one or more factors), single factor and multi-factor for formulating and implementing an action plan for improving or managing the moral character of the brand; It is important to have sufficient generalizability in product lines.

Development of a center for monitoring brand names: in a situation where the issue of resistance economy is considered one of the most important issues of the country; It is suggested that a research center to monitor Iranian brands should be activated first inside and then abroad and to monitor the influencing variables related to brands, including the personality of the brand. Cooperation with some institutions, companies or foreign institutions in the same direction can be beneficial in this regard.

Repetition of past studies with regard to new traits: Considering that moral and beautiful traits and immoral and ugly traits are new issues in the form that has been proposed in this thesis and have not been investigated in this form so far. , it is suggested that the effect of brand moral character on other managerial and marketing dependent variables (such as the effects of brand personality compatibility with consumer personality, the effect of brand personality on customer loyalty, etc.) should be investigated in future researches.

The present study faced some limitations:

Due to the high number of attributes obtained and the limitations of the questionnaire, the researcher had to reduce the number of attributes. Although this reduction was done using the opinions of the interviewees; But it is still possible that some attributes have been missed.

Due to the large number of brands, in few sectors, it is possible that a number of attributes (perhaps attributes specific to weaker brands) did not have the opportunity to enter the scale production process.

The purpose of the scale production part was to develop a tool that can be used to evaluate brand personality in the entire geographical area of Iran. Considering that there were no resources and facilities to collect questionnaires in all regions of the country, and considering that the demographic structure of Tehran is mostly made up of immigrants who have migrated to this metropolis from various ethnic groups and regions of the country; It has been assumed that the characteristics of the population of Tehran can represent the whole country. Therefore, there may be some error in generalizing to the whole country. This is relevant to the

results of the second part of the research, that is, the classification of brands.

The researcher inevitably selected the brand names artificially based on the strength of their personality, which of course was done using the opinion of the interviewees. Therefore, in the future, by strengthening the personality of the current impersonal names and entering them into the pool of brand names used to extract traits, there may be changes in the personality characteristics of Iranian brand names. Paying attention to this point can prevent future system errors.

Due to the fact that the use of available sampling method was inevitable, it is necessary to be careful in generalizing the findings. It should also be noted that the scale obtained in the first part is only related to the products, that is, the consumer goods and services of the Iranian market; And it is recommended to be used with caution for other markets

CONCLUSION

According to the results of this research, it is very clear that like the Iranian culture, the moral and personality characteristics of the brand in the consumer products of the Iranian market are completely different compared to other parts of the world. Based on the results of the

current research, the factors and indicators that make up the model of brand moral personality include five factors; 1) Pleasurable (dignified, distinguished, hardworking, always helpful, powerful and strong, skilled, attractive, creative); 2) Qualified businessman (efficient, worthy and worthy, competitive); 3) Efficient (friend of the little ones, old friend, funny); 4) Intimacy agent (inefficient, uncommitted, duplicitous, unkind); 5) Narcissistic agent (forceful, tyrannical, mischievous, narcissistic).

Ethical Consideration

Ethical issues (such as plagiarism, conscious satisfaction, misleading, making and or forging data, publishing or sending to two places, redundancy and etc.) have been fully considered by the writers.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interests.

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