



The Effect of Brand Personality Perceived by Outdoor Ware Consumers on Brand Attitude and Brand Loyalty

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Background/Objectives: The objective of this research is to examine the effect of brand personality of consumers on brand attitudes and brand loyalty. **Methods/Statistical analysis:** To achieve the research aim, this research involved a survey of 261 college students who had bought outdoor wears from March to May 2018. Data analysis revealed the following findings. **Findings:** First, it was established that attractiveness, self-expression, uniqueness, sense of identity, perceived by outdoor wear consumers, significantly impacts the brand attitude. Second, it was also established that attractiveness, self-expression, uniqueness and sense of identity, perceived by outdoor wear consumers, significantly affects brand loyalty. It was confirmed that brand personality perceived by real consumers of outdoor wears has significant effects on brand attitudes and brand loyalty. Through the systematic analysis of attributes related to actual buying behavior of outdoor wear consumers, this research provided the basis for developing effective consumer marketing strategies for makers of such brands. **Improvements/Applications:** Additionally, when applying brand personality to a sports site, consideration of brand personality depending on the objects or situation must be made. Therefore, research is necessary to comprehensively understand various personalities of outdoor wear brands, bearing in mind the consumers of different age groups.

Key words: *Boredom Susceptibility, Experience-Seeking, Thrill/Adventure, Disinhibition, Sports Socialization.*



Introduction

The Korean outdoor wear market has experienced rapid growth to the tune of 8 trillion won, which was the second largest in the world by 2014. Since 2012, the number of outdoor clothing brands in distribution in the Korean market has risen to over 100 (Baek-Youn et al., 2018). The variety of outdoor clothing brands and products has become diverse, and, with the development of the outdoor brand market, competition has grown among such brands (Ji-Yeon, 2013). Amid such a rapid change in the market, outdoor wear brands go beyond the purposes of making consumers discern products, and exist in consumer's memory in tangible and intangible forms, having decisive effects on the consumer's procurement behavior. Therefore, firms are cognizant of the importance of their brands (Jang and Chung, 2005). In tough competitive markets, it's crucial for firms to make consumers feel comfortable with their outdoor wear brands, and form a strong bond between consumers and the brands (Aaker et al., 2004).

Once a consumer experiences a positive emotion while using the brand he or she has procured, it creates a specific association to the consumer, leading the consumer to have favorable attitudes towards the product or service (Hirschman, 1983). Sensual and emotional image on a specific brand turns into a brand personality. Brand personality can be a crucial tool for a firm to distinguish its own brand from that of its competitors. Positive brand personality stimulates curiosity in consumers, resulting to their continued favoring and procurement of the brand. Strategically well-managed brand personality is favored among consumers, increasing the products' procurement, and, ultimately, promotes brand loyalty among consumers (Fournier, 1998); (Sirgy, 1982). Consequently, it is necessary for outdoor clothing makers to understand brand personality as perceived by consumers, and form close ties between its brand and consumers by striking a positive brand image on consumers and distinguishing its brand from that of its competitors.

As a person possesses their own personality, which plays an important role on human relations, brands also have their personality, and different dimensions of the personality impacts on the consumers differently. Brand personality is associated with various buying activities of the consumers, and its effects on consumers are also diverse (Ji-Yeon, 2013). Brand attitudes which are positive and negative evaluation of a brand, and emotional feeling and behavioral intention on the brand are overall positive or negative evaluation of consumers on a brand as a whole (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980). Consumer favorably evaluates a brand which fits well with the self-image the consumer attempts to establish and forms a positive brand attitude towards the brand (Sang-Dok and Young-Sam, 2010). Favorable consumers' attitudes towards the brand works positively to result in its selection, procure it, and heighten their brand loyalty. As brand personality results in procurement of the brand by consumers, it forms an important element of consumer behavior (Shimp, 2010).

Particularly, Thomson, MacInnis & Park, (2005) discovered that positive and favorable attitudes of consumers lead to long-term ties between consumers and the brand. This means that while a consumer procures and uses a product, he or she continues to interact with the product, forming a close emotional relationship with it. The degree of consumers affection to a specific brand is defined as brand loyalty, and it directly affects buying behavior of the consumer (Suresh, 1993). Keller (1998) discovered that, when a consumer is exposed to a brand and gets persuaded by it, the consumer develops the brand attribute beliefs, and, based on that, develops positive brand attitudes, which have an important role in the process of forming brand loyalty.

In summary, positive brand personality will result in continuous favoring and consumers buying the brand, (Fournier, 1998) and brand personality affects the customers' response. Attitudes and favors of brand consumers raise the firms' market share, and the brand personality is an intangible asset which raises the firms' profits. It is the important basis of the firms' marketing strategy to continuously maintain a competitive edge. Particularly, in the situation where the domestic outdoor clothing has entered the mature stage, and its growth rate is decreasing; competition among outdoor brands has become tougher. Consequently, outdoor firms should prepare for differentiated brand marketing strategies matching the trends and desires of consumers, and raising their brand loyalties leading to more purchase of the brands.

It is necessary to examine the impact of brand personality perceived by brand consumers on brand loyalty such as brand preference, loyalty buying, and willingness to spread ideas including brand attitudes related with buying action. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to empirically analyze the effect of brand personality perceived by consumers on brand attitudes and brand loyalty.

Materials and Methods

Study subjects

This study aimed to conduct a survey on college students who are very likely and are willingly buy outdoor clothing. Therefore, using purposeful sampling method, this study selected 300 students who had previously bought outdoor wear, among those who were taking Physical Education as liberal arts course in C, H University as survey respondents. The survey was conducted for three months from March to May, 2018. Since they were highly likely to participate in leisure sports, and grow to be loyal customers of outdoor clothing, they would be potential customers for such clothing. From the 300 copies of the questionnaire, 261 were finally utilized for the analysis; excluding 39 where respondents did

not sincerely answer the questions, or left some un-answered questions. General characteristics of respondents are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: General characteristics of subjects

Variable		Frequency (NO.)	Proportion (%)
Gender	Male	168	64.3
	Female	93	35.6
Age	10s	75	28.7
	20s	167	64.0
	30s	19	7.3
Kind of wear the respondent bought	town wear clothing	84	32.2
	functional special clothing	112	42.9
	general sports clothing	65	24.9
Total		261	100.0

Survey Tool

The measuring instrument for this research is a structured questionnaire. It consisted of questions on general characteristics (gender, age, the kind of clothing the respondent has ever bought), and questions on brand personality, brand attitudes and brand loyalty. The respondent was requested to score his or her answer on a 5-point Likert scale. Brand personality is defined as a unique image of a brand. The scale applied in this study was the revised one of Brand Personality Scale (BPS) which was developed by Aaker (1997) and used by Kim, Ryoo & Sung (Chung-ku et al., 2002). Brand attitude is an overall evaluation on an outdoor wear brand, and it is the tendency of the consumer to positively or negatively evaluate the brand. This study utilized the 6 questions used by Wu & Wang (2011). Brand loyalty is a degree of affection to a certain brand, and this study used the 4 questions applied by Kim, Kang & Kim (Yong-ju et al., 2013).

Validity and reliability

To test the questions' validity, this study conducted confirmatory factor analysis. Similarly, to test reliability of the questions, this study calculated Cronbach's α value which illustrates internal consistency of answers to questions. The findings of confirmatory factor analysis are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Findings of confirmatory factor analysis of all concepts

Factor		Std loading	Std error	t-value	AVE	CR	Cronbach's α
Attractiveness	It is attractive.	.812	.086	13.314***	.794	.918	.908
	It is likeable.	.776	.090	13.153***			
	It is unique.	.753	.085	a)			
Self-expression	helps me to express myself.	.805	.083	12.778***	.782	.906	.898
	reflects my personality.	.761	.080	12.684***			
	raises myself.	.734	.089	a)			
Uniqueness	It is not related with other brands.	.785	.090	13.085***	.771	.900	.854
	It is very different from other brands.	.730	.089	12.379***			
	It doesn't have any common characteristics with other brands.	.694	.088	a)			
Sense of identity	I am interested in how the brand is evaluated.	.792	.085	12.248***	.763	.898	.857
	I accept praise of the brand as praise of me.	.749	.088	11.015***			
	I consider brand growth as my growth.	.710	.084	11.452***			
	I get angry if someone blames the brand.	.667	.090	a)			
Brand attitude	It is trustworthy.	.826	.085	13.112***	.794	.911	.848
	I feel that it is better than other brands.	.807	.089	13.679***			
	I trust the brand.	.780	.091	a)			
brand loyalty	It is good brand.	.804	.090	13.409***	.793	.901	.820
	I favor it over other brands.	.783	.084	12.630***			
	I have kept buying the brand.	.761	.087	11.709***			
	I can recommend it to others.	.759	.085	a)			

* $\chi^2=273.94$, $df=85$, $p=.000$, GFI=.903, AGFI=.894, NFI=.927, CFI=.931, RMR=.039, RMSEA=.045
a) In confirmatory factor analysis, it is fixed as 1.000.



Study procedure

To conduct the survey, together with two research assistants, visits of the classrooms of Physical Education course of the universities were done, with the approval of professors and students on the survey. After, the research purpose and contents were explained, students who had previously bought outdoor wear were selected, and copies of the questionnaire distributed to those who were willing to participate in the survey. They were requested to fill out the answers by themselves in a self-administration method. After answering all the questions, the copies of the questionnaire were collected.

Data Analysis

Among the collected copies of the questionnaire, were those the respondents did not answer sincerely, the rest were analyzed using SPSS 22.0 and AMOS 22.0. First, frequency analysis was conducted to establish the general characteristics of respondents. Second, factor analysis and reliability test were conducted to test validity and reliability. Third, to examine the relationship among variables, a correlation analysis was conducted. Forth, to examine the relative effects of independent variables on the dependent variable, multiple regression analysis was performed. All the statistical significance levels were set at $p < .05$. regression analysis was also performed. The significance level was found to be $\alpha = .05$.

Results

Correlation analysis

As shown in Table 3, to examine the relationship among brand personality, brand attitude, and brand loyalty, this study conducted a correlation analysis, and found out that all correlation coefficients were less than 0.7, proving that there was no problem in multicollinearity Kim (Gye-Soo, 2010).

Table 3: Correlation matrix among constructive concepts

	Attractiveness	Self-expression	Uniqueness	Sense of identity	Brand attitude	Brand loyalty
Attractiveness	1					
Self-expression	.452**	1				
Uniqueness	.378**	.348**	1			
Sense of identity	.475**	.435**	.361**	1		
Brand attitude	.461**	.467**	.345**	.347**	1	
Brand loyalty	.563**	.459**	.432**	.350**	.483**	1

** $p < .01$

The effect of brand personality on brand attitude among outdoor wear consumers

To examine the effect of brand personality on brand attitude among outdoor wear consumers, this study carried out multiple regression analysis. As shown in Table 4, brand personality had a significant effect on the brand attitude ($F=72.495$, $p<.001$), and its explanatory power was 46.3%. All the sub-variables of brand personality were found to have significant effect on the brand attitude. Beta values for sub-variables were as follows: attractiveness ($\beta=.412$), self-expression ($\beta=.433$), uniqueness ($\beta=.286$), and sense of identity ($\beta=.214$).

Table 4: The effect of brand personality on brand attitude

Independent Variable	B	SE	β	t	Tolerance Limit
Constant	.957	.132		7.251***	
Attractiveness	.395	.058	.412	6.814***	1.188
Self-expression	.421	.059	.433	7.136***	1.287
Uniqueness	.274	.062	.286	4.415***	1.276
Sense of identity	.205	.064	.214	3.205**	1.272

$R^2=.463$, $F=72.495$, $p=.000$

** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

The effect of brand personality on brand loyalty among outdoor wear consumers

To examine the effect of brand personality on brand attitude among outdoor wear consumers, this study conducted multiple regression analysis. As shown in Table 5, brand personality had a significant effect on brand loyalty ($F=63.594, p<.001$), and its explanatory power was found to be 39.8%. All the sub-variables of brand personality were found to have a significant effect on the brand attitude. Beta values for sub-variables are as follows; attractiveness ($\beta=.427$), self-expression ($\beta=.374$), uniqueness ($\beta=.258$), and sense of identity ($\beta=.172$).

Table 5: The effect of brand personality on brand loyalty

Independent Variable	B	SE	β	<i>t</i>	Tolerance Limit
Constant	1.130	.179		6.314***	
Attractiveness	.412	.058	.427	7.259***	1.188
Self-expression	.359	.060	.374	5.982***	1.287
Uniqueness	.245	.059	.258	4.154***	1.276
Sense of identity	.163	.061	.172	2.673*	1.272
R ² =.398, F=63.594, p=.000					

Discussion

The purpose of this research is to examine the effect of brand personality on brand attitude and brand loyalty among outdoor wear consumers. As a result of the findings of this research, the following observations were made:

First, it was established that attractiveness, self-expression, uniqueness, sense of identity perceived by outdoor wear consumers has a significant effect on the brand attitude.

This was proved by Cho & Seo (2007), and a study report on how the matching of brand personality and self-image has a positive effect on brand attitude; Choi (2004) supports the findings of this research.

A consumer who experiences positive emotion when he or she uses a specific brand forms a favorable attitude towards the product (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982), (Hirschman, 1983). Personality as a unique image of a brand, develops into the object of favor and non-favor like in the case of the human personality. Consequently, consumers who favor a certain personality of a brand would be satisfied with the product, as opposed to those who do not favor such a personality (Yong-Man et al., 2007). As a result, when a consumer is exposed to a brand, that he/she thinks that the unique personality of the brand is suitable to express



them, or matches the ideal self-image, the consumer favors the personality Song-Hyeon and Bong-Han, 2007). Aaker & Jennifer (1999) research findings suggested that those who are not sensitive to the thinking or behavior of other people have more favorable brand attitude when the self-schema and brand personality match, while those who are sensitive to thinking or behavior of other people have more favorable brand attitude when the situation and brand personality match.

Meanwhile, it is known that the more a consumer perceives that the product image is as their own, the more they are motivated to buy and consume the product. Specifically, consumers tend to identify with and favor the brand whose image matches their own personal or social images, or whose image can enhance their own (You-Jae and & Ji-Young, 2004). Consumers tend to favorably evaluate the brands which matches with the self-image they are pursuing and form a positive brand attitude (Sang-Dok and Young-Sam, 2010). Cho & Seo (2007) argued that, since a consumer's attitude towards a sports brand is formed long before the consumer searches for its information and how he/she treats it, it is necessary to emphasize on the emotional aspect of the brand rather than its technological aspect in order to win brand loyalty of the consumers.

Brand personality, which is the main concept of brand image, is based on symbolism of the brand perception by consumers, and how outdoor wear consumers perceive personality of a brand could affect their behavior with the product. As outdoor wear consumers forecast the value of a product or service, pay for it to buy it, they determine the value of the product or the service through comparison of cost and benefit of purchasing the product or service, and the value perceived in this way is psychologically and socially converted into a positive attitude towards the brand (Aaker, 1996).

As hitherto described, brand personality plays the biggest role in forming the outdoor wears' image, and as such, brand marketing needs to approach it through emotional characteristics or image. Specifically, brand maker needs to enhance brand satisfaction of consumers by creating a brand personality which corresponds to the consumers self-images or satisfies the desire to purchase it (Yong-Man et al., 2007). Additionally, manufacturers of outdoor wear need to develop products which are different from those of their competitors or use marketing strategies to stimulate curiosity among consumers or to make more favorable products.

Secondly, brand personality just like attractiveness, self-expression, uniqueness, sense of identity perceived by outdoor wear consumers has been found to have a significant effect on brand loyalty.

According to Nam & Choi (2002) and Cho & Seo (2007), brand personality has a positive

effect on brand loyalty. Sirgy (1982) also presented similar results. Kim, Ryoo & Sung (2002) also revealed that brand personality has a significant effect on brand loyalty, which makes users of a product to view it as attractive, unique, and likeable, and spread the news to others.

From similar previous research, we can predict that the higher the self-expression and uniqueness of a brand personality, the more its attractiveness and consumer's identity with the brand, and that brand identity leads to re-buying of the brand, spreading of the news to others, and such activities will ultimately have a positive effect on asset value of the brand. These expectations support the findings of this research, and show that if a consumer has a favorable attitude on a specific brand, he or she is more likely to buy the brand. In that regard, Aaker (1992) argued that continuous buying of and loyalty to a specific brand is an essential element of brand assets, and that if the maker can heighten the brand loyalty of the consumers, the maker can then defend its consumers against the attack of its competitors. Brand loyalty is a crucial marketing indicator by allowing the brand maker to reduce marketing expenses, create new customers, activate positive oral evaluation of consumers, and inhibit the possibility of consumers shifting to its competitors (Dick and Basu, 1994).

Meanwhile, to individuals, the action of selecting and using a brand is the opportunity to express or enhance oneself. Depending on the degree to which a brand assists one to express oneself, one forms identity with the brand. Such an identity results to the consumers orally spreading the idea to others. A consumer's identity with the brand not only helps the consumer to expand himself or herself, but also results to a continuous relationship of the consumer with the brand in the midst of competition with other manufacturers (Chung-ku et al., 2002). In particular, if a consumer perceives a brand as a partner with whom he or she interacts and has relationship, the consumer can easily reach the state of brand loyalty as compared to ordinary consumers. If consumers maintain a good continuous emotion on a brand, they love and feel passionate about the brand, and consequently form ties with the brand developing brand loyalty. In other words, if a consumer forms loyalty to a brand, it increases the possibility that the consumer will continue to use it (Baek-Youn et al., 2018).

Currently, the Korean outdoor market is experiencing a rapid change of fad. Therefore, it becomes increasingly challenging to maintain sustainable differential advantages. In this regard, the establishment of consistent brand personality and long-term management of brand assets are the most important assets (Yong-ju et al., 2013). Consequently, outdoor wear makers need to raise brand loyalty by considering diversified consumers' desires and predicting lifestyle changes, and through the supply of custom-made brand products and services. By applying such differentiated strategies, the brand makers can establish emotional ties and relationships between product or service and its consumers.



Conclusion

The objective of this research is to examine the effect of brand personality of consumers on brand attitudes and brand loyalty. To achieve the research aim, this research involved a survey of 261 college students who had bought outdoor wears from March to May 2018. Data analysis revealed the following results:

First, it was established that attractiveness, self-expression, uniqueness, sense of identity perceived by outdoor wear consumers significantly impacts the brand attitude.

Second, it was also established that attractiveness, self-expression, uniqueness, sense of identity perceived by outdoor wear consumers significantly affects brand loyalty.

It was confirmed that brand personality perceived by real consumers of outdoor wears has significant effects on brand attitudes and brand loyalty. Through the systematic analysis of attributes related to actual buying behavior of outdoor wear consumers, this research provided the basis for developing effective consumer marketing strategies for makers of such brands.

It is necessary for outdoor wear makers to develop differentiated products and marketing strategies which strengthens a continuous relationship between the brand and consumers through consideration of diversified consumer desires and predicting lifestyle changes. Further, brands need to match the brand personality with what consumers want and making them have favorable attitudes towards the brand. Additionally, when applying brand personality to sports sites, consideration of brand personality, depending on the objects or situation, should be made. Therefore, research is necessary to comprehensively understand various personalities of outdoor wear brands, bearing in mind the consumers of different age groups.



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