Relationship between Brand Personality and the Personality of Consumers, and its Application to Corporate Branding Strategy

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<Abstract>

Many consumers enjoy the challenge of purchasing a brand that matches well with their own values and personalities (for example, Ko et al., 2008; Ko et al., 2006). Therefore, the personalities of consumers can impact on the final selection of a brand and its brand personality in two ways: first, the consumers may incline to purchase a brand or a product that reflects their own personalities; second, consumers tend to choose a company that has similar brand personalities to those brands that are being promoted. Therefore, the objectives of this study are following:

1. Is there any empirical relationship between a consumer’s personality and the personality of a brand that he or she chooses?
2. Can a corporate brand be differentiated by the brand personality?

In short, consumers are more likely to hold favorable attitudes towards those brands that match their own personality and will most probably purchase those brands matching well with their personality. For example, Matzler et al. (2006) found that extraversion and openness were positively related to hedonic product value; and that the personality traits directly (openness) and indirectly (extraversion, via hedonic value) influenced brand effects, which in turn drove attitudinal and purchase loyalty. Based on the above discussion, the following hypotheses are proposed:

Hypothesis 1: the personality of a consumer is related to the brand personality of a

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product/corporate that he/she purchases.

Kuksov (2007) and Wernerfelt (1990) argued that brands as a symbolic language allowed consumers to communicate their types to each other and postulated that consumers had a certain value of communicating their types to each other. Therefore, how brand meanings are established, and how a firm communicate with consumers about the meanings of the brand are interesting topics for research (for example, Escalas and Bettman, 2005; McCracken, 1989; Moon, 2007). Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 2: A corporate brand identity is differentiated by the brand personality. And there are significant differences among companies.

A questionnaire was developed for collecting empirical measures of the Big-Five personality traits and brand personality variables. A survey was conducted to the online access panel members through the Internet during December 2007 in Korea. In total, 500 respondents completed the questionnaire, and considered as useable.

Personality constructs were measured using the Five-factor Inventory (NEO-FFI) scale and a total of 30 items were actually utilized. Brand personality was measured using the five-dimension scale developed by Aaker (1997). A total of 17 items were actually utilized. The seven-point Likert-type scale was the format of responses, for example, from 1 indicating strongly disagreed to 7 for strongly agreed.

The Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) was used for an empirical testing of the model, and the Maximum Likelihood Estimation (MLE) was applied to estimate numerical values for the components in the model. To diagnose the presence of distribution problems in the data and to gauge their effects on the parameter estimates, bootstrapping method was used.

The results of the hypothesis-1 test empirically show that there exit certain causality relationship between a consumer’s personality and the brand personality of the consumer’s choice. Thus, the consumer’s personality has an impact on consumer’s final selection of a brand that has a brand personality matches well with their own personalities. In other words, the consumers are inclined to purchase a brand that reflects their own personalities and tend to choose a company that has similar brand personalities to those of the brand being promoted.