

# THE INFLUENCE OF BRAND PERSONALITY EVIDENCE FROM INDIA

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## ABSTRACT

*Nokia tops the list this year among India's most trusted brands. The purpose of this research is to analyze the influence of brand personality of NOKIA to perceived quality. Approximately 214 respondents from a well known management institute are selected for this purpose. Respondents are asked to rate five dimensions of brand personality (sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, ruggedness) on a five point rating scale. Similarly, they are asked to rate the four dimensions of perceived quality on a three point rating scale. This paper will help marketers frame proper marketing strategies for the same.*

**JEL:** M31

**KEYWORDS:** trusted brands, perceived quality, dimensions, sophistication, ruggedness

## INTRODUCTION

The results of the 2009 India brand equity survey are surprising. Nokia tops the list among the most trusted brands category and Colgate, which topped the 2008 list was second. Many factors lead to the success of Nokia. Newspaper reports reveal that the quotation "Handle with care" fits well for the success of Nokia phones. The brand has been handled with lot of care and finally succeeded in maintaining and winning the peoples trust. The importance of brand personality in the Indian context is increasing with each passing day.

Brand personality is defined as the articulation of brand personality traits. According to Aaker (1991), "Brand personality is a set of personal characters associated and related with the brand." Jennifer Aaker defined brand personality as "a series of human characters associated with the brand". Brand personality has become an important tool for positioning brands in the market. It also acts as an important tool for formulating advertising policies and selling. There are various methods for measurement of brand personality. A popular methods is the brand personality scale developed by Jennifer Aaker (Acker, 1997). The scale takes into consideration 42 traits which are reduced to five dimensions; Sincerity, excitement ,competence, sophistication and ruggedness.

Perceived quality on the other hand is defined as the opinion which the customer forms about the ability of the product or brand to fulfill his or her expectations. Usually perceived quality is based on firms current public image, customer experience with the product and influence of opinion leaders and others. It is also defined as customer perception of the overall quality or superiority of a product or service with respect to intended purpose. The dimensions of perceived product quality include, reliability, durability, serviceability and style and design. The various dimensions of service quality include tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy.

This paper seeks to analyze the influence of brand personality to perceived quality in India. The paper begins with a discussion of the relevant literature. The data and methodology and results sections follow. The paper closes with some concluding comments.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Little research exists in relation to brand personality and perceived quality. However, some relevant research appears in different field. Ke Xue (2007) conducted research on characteristics of mobile phones that had biggest influence to perceived quality. Ramaseshan (2007) investigated the moderating effect of the brand concept on the relationship between brand personality and perceived quality. Results revealed that excitement and sophistication dimensions are strongly related with brand personality.

A Study by Sung et al (2010) explained the relationship between brand personality dimensions, brand trust and brand effect. The study concluded that some brand personality dimensions relate directly to brand trust and some to brand effect. Louis et al (2010) also studied the effect of brand personality dimensions on three consequences: trust, commitment and attachment. The study uses nine personality traits.

Sponsor et al (2009) studied the impact of personality dimensions on brand association and brand attractiveness on a Thailand KFC and concluded that competence dimension are the most important influencing agent. Saptrashi (2009) conducted a study to analyze the brand personality for four brands in India. This study used the Aaker scale for analysis of four brands: Motorola, Raymonds, 7up and Samsung and concluded that 7up stood for sincerity, Samsung for innovativeness, Motorola for feistiness and Raymond for excitement.

Swaminathan et al (2009) conducted research to find out the role of consumer attachment on the impact of brand personality. It concluded that in situations of high avoidance, consumers prefer exciting brands and in situations of low avoidance consumers prefer sincere brands. Chu et al (2009) analyzed the brand personality of China. The results suggest three dimension of Chinese brand personality including and excitement and additional traits like traditionalism, joyfulness and trendiness.

Mulyanegara (2009) highlights the relationship between consumer personality and brand personality in fashion products. The conclusions differed by gender. Male respondents dominate on neuroticism and female's on consciousness dimensions. Gibbons (2009) analyzed the personality of banks on the basis of the Aaker (1997) scale. Thomas (2008) analyzed the personality of the Colgate brand using Aaker's (1997) scale.

Madrigal et al (2008) studied the social responsibility dimension as an important element of brand personality. The study analyzed social responsibility as one of the unique dimension of brand personality and has an equally important role in consumer's willingness to reward. Rathnayak (2008) studied the impact of brand personality and its impact on brand feelings among young television viewers in Srilanka. The study revealed that sincerity and excitement dimensions have an impact on viewer's feelings of warmth, security and appeal.

Ellis et al (2008) studied the effect of advertising music on perceived brand personality. The study revealed that brand personality dimensions does affect consumer responses. Another study by Swee (2006) studied the influence of metaphors and products on brand personality perception and attitudes. The study revealed that symbolic brands with methphorical advertising are considered to be more sophisticated and exciting.

Even though some research exists, there seems to be lack of research in this field that focuses on India. The study aims to fulfill the following objectives: 1) To identify the effect of brand personality on perceived quality. 2) To identify the if dimensions of brand personality have an impact on perceived quality. 3) To study the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The authors hypothesize that brand personality dimensions affect perceived quality.

**DATA COLLECTION AND METHODOLOGY**

Data from 214 respondents from a well known management institute are collected using a survey. The respondents are between 21-25 years and are dependant on their parents for income. The sample includes 95% males and 5% females. The survey was conducted in the classroom after the students are given an overview of what brand personality is and its various dimensions. The survey was administered by faculty in the area of brand management. Subjects are asked to rate the 42 traits of brand personality on a five point rating scale (1-strongly disagree, 5-strongly agree). Later, these 42 traits are categorized into five dimensions i.e., sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness. Next, they are asked to rate the five dimensions of perceived quality on a three point rating scale including, reliability, durability, serviceability, style and design. The data is analyzed with the help of SPSS 12.0 software. Correlation analysis is used to identify the effect of brand personality dimension on perceived quality.

**RESULTS**

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics including mean and standard deviations for each of the brand personality dimension. For Nokia the mean of sincerity is (45.7356) and excitement (44.0854) indicating that sincerity and excitement have an important role to play for Nokia. The evidence indicates that sophistication and ruggedness dimensions do not play a strong role for Nokia. Because the sample consists primarily of male respondents, the results must be interpreted with care.

Table 1: Brand Personality Dimensions of NOKIA

Brand Personality Dimensions	Mean	Standard Deviation
Sincerity	45.7536	2.90007
Excitement	44.0854	3.57426
Competence	33.5265	5.58436
Sophistication	18.5682	2.30014
Rugged	18.0009	2.62594
Perceived Quality	14.000	1.63120

*This table shows the mean and standard deviation of brand personality dimensions of Nokia. It also shows the mean and standard deviation of the perceived quality.*

The correlation results are presented in Table 2. From the table it is clear that the competence dimension has the highest correlation with perceived quality. The ruggedness dimension has a negative correlation with perceived quality. Therefore, in case of Nokia the competence dimension affects perceived quality of customers followed by sophistication and sincerity.

Table 2: Correlation of Perceived Quality with Brand Personality Dimensions

Perceived Quality	Sincerity	Excitement	Competence	Sophistication	Ruggedness
1.00	.076	.059	.133	.098	-.041

*The table shows the correlation between the various personality dimensions of Nokia with perceived quality.*

**CONCLUDING COMMENTS**

This study examines the Brand quality dimensions of Nokia. A survey including 214 respondents was conducted to examine Nokia to identify how personality affects perceived quality of Nokia. The results show some dimensions of brand personality have a tremendous impact on perceived quality. Four dimensions of brand personality are positively related to perceived quality. The competence dimension of brand personality affects the perceived quality of Nokia mobile users to the greatest degree followed by sophistication. Ruggedness, on the other hand, has a negative correlation to perceived quality. These

findings imply Nokia has endowed the brand Nokia with competence. The results indicate that Nokia should work to improve upon the ruggedness dimension.

The sample chosen includes respondents from a particular age group only. The choice of brands is limited and including only Nokia. Moreover, the sample included primarily male respondents hence the results should be interpreted with caution. More research should be conducted including a more diverse sample and more brands to make broader inferences. Research of similar nature can also be conducted on other brands in the trusted brands category.

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### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I express my thanks to my husband Philip, ITM Business School, my sister Sujata for helping me in writing this paper.

### **BIOGRAPHY**

Dr. Sangeeta Trott is working as an Assistant Professor in ITM Business School, Navi Mumbai and has more than seven years of experience in teaching and research. She holds a PH.D in brand management and specializes in teaching brand management, services marketing, consumer behavior, marketing research and, integrated marketing communication. She is gold medalist in marketing and is also NET qualified. She has published various research papers in international seminars and conferences and is a member of All India Management Association. She can be contacted at 09320104830, 09833890100: email-id is sangeetat@itm.edu, dr\_sangeetasimon@yahoo.co.in, sangeeta.trott@gmail.com.