THE MEDIATING ROLE OF BRAND EQUITY IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE BRAND PERSONALITY AND OBSESSIVE SHOPPING BEHAVIOR OF SPORT CLOTHES CONSUMERS

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Abstract:

Brands are always considered as one of the most valuable assets of an organization. Making strong brands and essentiality of strong presence in mind are the proprieties of most organizations. Because in general believes, the strong brands can increase the competitive advantage. The brand personality and brand equity are variables that can be effective on customers and also affect their shopping behavior; therefore, the purpose of this study is to survey the mediating role of brand equity in the relationship between the brand personality and obsessive shopping behavior of sport clothes consumers. The statistic society of this research is constituted the sport clothes buyers of Tehran that 246 persons were chosen as the sample using Cochran's unknown sample size formula. For data collection, Aaker brand equity questionnaires (1996), brand personality questionnaire of Jones et al (2009) and obsessive shopping behavior questionnaire of Edwards (1993) were used. The results of study showed that there is a meaningful relationship between the brand personality and its components with brand equity and obsessive shopping behavior of sport clothes costumers. Also, the results of model showed that brand personality both directly and through the brand equity is effective on costumers' obsessive shopping behavior. According to these results, it can be suggested that for affecting the costumers' obsessive shopping behavior, the brand personality and brand equity should be reinforced for customers.

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1. Introduction

In most of countries and for most of people, brands are symbol and samples of consuming society. They create their power by showing advertisements and a commitment and guarantee to the consumers. Nowadays, a non-separated close relationship is seen between brands and people. In this effective and available relationship, sport brands have a special role. Sport brands are at the center of the popular brands for consumers. In this regard which they show an actual global language along with their words, codes, values, and resources and representatives. Nowadays, the sport brands are integrated with people's life. Most of the people show a high admiration to some of sport brands either for corporate and club brands. The sport brands are a social distinctive and daily life sign which all often have a power for social illustration and synonyms to freedom, life and power. Sport brands possess an enviable feature that is being best-known in the whole section because they growth in the parallel with the market they belong to (Cao, 2014). Most of the people show a high admiration to some of sport brands either for corporate and club brands. The sport brands are a social distinctive and daily life sign which all often have a power for social illustration and synonyms to freedom, life and power. Sport brands possess an enviable feature that is being best-known in the whole section because they growth in the parallel with the market they belong to (Tejari et al, 2014). In this regard, one of the most important subjects in marketing which has a determinant role in brand literature and specially notified is brand equity (Aaker, 1996). The brand equity is a set of assets and commitments which is related to the name and symbol (mark) of brand and will decrease and increase based on the value that is created by a product or service for the company and company's customers (Aaker, 1996). But according to the observations that were taken to this subject during these years, the conducted studies could not create a similar framework for this subject. Perhaps part of the main reasons for this matter is the various attitudes which are provided for explaining and measuring this concept (Christodoulides, & Chernatony, 2010).

Therefore, in order to create the distinction and also long-term development of brand equity, the notification is focused on the antecedents of that subject which have been always notified. One of the major antecedents of this concept which refers to the

brand image is brand personality (Porkaysta, 2009). The brand personality refers to the customers' image and interpretation formation of a special brand which is resulted from collected information or their experience of considered brand, and since the brand creates a particular identity for a product, achieving to a reputable brand is considered as one of customer's utilities in selecting a product (Hoeffler, & Keller, 2002). Today, in marketing of brands, the attributed personality is more considered than the inner personality of the brand (identity-brand), and most of experts estimate that consumers naturally attribute the characteristics and personality features to the brands. This human-made design and process emphasizes on the observations of behavior, operations, power of speech and brands strategies and techniques. So, a brand which uses the exclusive distribution channel is interpreted as a jobber and complex brand while a brand which uses the recycled components for its products can be interpreted as generous, sensitive and concerned Brand which this matter can be true about sport brands (Tejari et al, 2014). Hosany & Martin (2012) illustrate that a compatible picture that person has from itself toward the considered brand has also an important and significant role in forming the consumers' behavior; they have also illustrated that this compatibility is effective on the advertisements efficiency and in selection can lead to a facilitation in creating the positive attitudes toward the consumers, attitude, perceived quality, brand preference and brand loyalty. Although only creating a strong brand personality is not important but creating a personality fit to the users of brand is important. The consumers are willing to select the brands that have the brand personality congruent to their conceptions. So, the intricate matter that brand managers are faced with is how a brand personality must be created that being compatible with their purposed market people's personality.

The researchers that have researched in the field of consumers achieved this conclusion that companies which have strong and powerful brands and positive brand personality lead to the abundance profits for themselves. A desirable personality leads to many profits: reinforce the consumer preferences, increase in consumer sentiment, increasing the level of trust and loyalty and provide a basis for differentiation of products. So, when the brand personality has compatibility with customer, it can be expected that consumers have consistency in their shopping mood. The brand personality is as a non-physical part of knowledge to product/ brand/ company that forms the consumers' perceptions (Freling and Forbes, 2005). Know the question is that how we can keep the costumer which is nowadays too powerful, wise, seeking diversity and inaccessible for a long-term? Definitely, the answer of this question should not be searched in the quality of products and services because these cases become the minimum feature in the nowadays competitive market and if organizations

do not provide these minimums, they don't have any places in this competitive market (Amirshahi et al, 2009). Today, mangers more any times before should seek and follow the customers' needs for preventing the customer orientation to the competitions so that can better meet their future needs and establish long-term relationships (Hassani, 2012). Therefore, considering the matter of sport brands and strategies that should be adopted for their growth is so important and in this field, the research should scientifically searched, because if the subjects about sport brands are solved and enough information being available, the marketers not also can highlight their customers' needs but can better know the market and adjust it more effectively. Actually, the major reason for separating customers' groups and presenting the related definition is a subject that should be considered in recognizing their behavior type and even adopting the appropriate strategies in order to create and develop loyalty among the customers. It's obvious that adopting more simple and appropriate strategies can affect the customers' shopping behavior. But if this not happen, perhaps the brands loss their competitive ability and it will end their life with losing their portion in the market and lack of sales of their distributive products. So, it's essential that more investigations take place in the regard of effective factors on the shopping behavior of customers which in this research is consisted of brand equity and brand personality. It's hoped that through this research, a guideline provided for sport clothes companies, marketing managers and marketers so that they can explain the policies in their marketing field helping from this study.

1.1 Research history

Chen & Tseng (2010) is a research as airlines brand equity, brand preferences and purchase intentions attempt to survey the relationship between brand equity, brand preferences and purchase intentions in airline passengers' decisions in Taiwan. The results of collected data analysis showed that there is a positive relationship between brand equity, brand preferences and purchase intentions with the effect of moderating the cost of replacement.

Senthilnathan & Tharmi (2011) in a research as *"survey the relationship of brand equity and purchase intention"* considered the brand equity as an independent variable, purchase intention of product as dependent variable, and tried to survey the relationship between these two variables between children soap brands. The data was collected through identifying the 7830 families in a part of Sri Lanka and 200 families were selected randomly. The results of this research showed the strong relationship between brand equity dimensions (Brand awareness, brand loyalty, brand association, perceived quality of the brand) and purchase intention of the product, so that the

perceived quality of brand and brand association had devoted the highest and lowest scores to themselves, respectively.

Nigam & Kaushik (2011) in an article as "*the effect of brand equity on purchasing intention of customer*" focused on the brands of automotive industry of India according to the intensive competition in this industry. The purpose of this article was to clear the brand equity dimensions (and awareness, brand loyalty, brand association, perceived quality of the brand) for marketers to attract and keep the customers. The data of this research was collected by questionnaire with opened and closed questions. The achieved results showed that brand equity dimensions have meaningful effect on purchase intention.

Valette-Florence et al (2011) in a research surveyed the effect of brand personality and sales development on brand equity. The results showed that there is a meaningful and positive relationship between brand personality and a negative relationship between sales developments with brand equity. Finally, this research reached this conclusion that brand personality lead to the creation of brand equity.

Hamidizadeh et al (2012) survey the relationship of personality dimensions and brand equity and the mediating role of moral features. In order to analyze the data of questionnaire and test assumptions, the descriptive tests and changing test of R2 was used by using Hierarchical regression analysis and structural equation. The results show that two dimensions of responsibility and dynamics have meaningful effect on brand equity and moral features variable plays the role of moderator on the relationship of responsibility and dynamics variable on brand equity. But only the relationship between dynamics and brand equity is meaningful.

Moussanejad (2014) conducted a survey on the role of brand equity based on the customer in personality effectiveness process on purchase intention of the customer. The statistic society was consisted of all customers of Mellat Bank in Qazvin that data of customers were collected using questionnaire. Also four major assumptions were introduced that were tested using Structural equation modeling techniques. The results showed that brand personality has meaningful effect on brand equity based on the customer and their purchase intention. Also, the brand equity has also positive effect on customers' purchase intention and handles the role of mediator for other two variables. According to the results of this research, it's suggested to organizations and their marketing managers to create a positive brand personality and through this way leads to the distinctions in customers' minds than other brands and develops the brand equity and reaches to a comprehensive perception of consumers' behavior.

Ismailpour et al (2014) attempted to survey the effect of brand personality and reputation on brand equity dimensions (case study: Golrang company). In this research,

the effectiveness of brand personality and reputation on the brand equity based on the quad-dimensional models of Aaker was surveyed. The statistic society of the research was the consumers of health products in chain supermarkets of Rasht. The statistic sample was consisted of 384 samples. For assumptions testing, the modeling and correlation structural equation was used. The results of research showed the positive and direct effect of brand personality and reputation on quad-dimensional brand equity.

Loureiro et al (2014) surveyed the way of brand personality, brand identity and quality of service effectiveness on the band equity. The results of this research showed that the brand personality, brand identity and quality of service separately and directly have meaningful and positive effect on brand equity.

Horváth & Birgelen (2015) is a reasrch surveyed the role of brand in obsessive buyers' purchase intention and behavior against the non-obsessive buyers. The results of this research showed multi interesting differences between obsessive and non-obsessive buyers. It seems that non-obsessive buyers concentrate on functional advantages of branded products and avoid of buying unbranded products while obsessive buyers consider the social and emotional advantages and mostly decide to buy less expensive (cheaper) and more numbers of products to reach the diversity in their shopping. The non-obsessive buyers develop the trust to brand and enthusiasm and willingness by pay more costs for their favored brand than other brands while obsessive buyers even try to fight against the name of a famous brand. In addition, the obsessive buyers change the brands more than non-obsessive buyers.

2. Methodology

2.1 Objectives of the Study

1. Examine the relationship between the brand personality and its components with brand equity in consumer's sports apparel.
2. Examine the relationship between the brand personality and its components with purchase behavior in consumer's sports apparel.
3. Examine the relationship between brand equity and its components in consumer's sports apparel.
4. Examine predict the consumer's sports apparel purchase behavior through brand equity and brand personality.

2.2 Sampling Design

The study statistical population consisted of all buyers' sports apparel in Tehran that their number was unknown. For this reason, after a preliminary study and inserting standard deviation in formula Cochran 246 people were selected as sample randomly.

2.3 Data Collection

The present study is the correlation due to objective of study. To collect data, were utilized questionnaires of Aaker (1996) for brand equity, and jones et al. (2009) for brand personality and Edwars (1993) for obsessive purchase behavior. To respond to this questionnaires of the samples were asked to give their opinion in the range of 5 scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) for of questionnaires. In order to collect data, questionnaires based of localized and distributed on the location of the Clothing stores Sports in Tehran and were collected.

Hypothesis:

1. There has relationship between the brand personality and its components with brand equity in consumer's sports apparel.
2. There has relationship between the brand personality and its components with purchase behavior in consumer's sports apparel.
3. There has relationship between brand equity and its components in consumer's sports apparel.
4. The research model has a good fit.

2.4 Data analysis

A. Hypothesis 1: There has relationship between the brand personality and its components with brand equity in consumer's sports apparel.

Table 1: Estimated Spearman correlation coefficient for the brand personality and its components with brand equity

Variable	Brand Equity	
	Spearman correlation coefficient	**P. Value**
Brand Personality	0.712	0.001
Responsibility	0.669	0.001
Dynamism	0.631	0.001
Sensitivity	0.434	0.001
Audacity	0.685	0.001
Simplicity	0.732	0.001

According to the results table above, there is significant relationship between the brand personality and component's Audacity, simplicity, responsibility and dynamism is strong with brand equity variables (correlation coefficient higher of the value 0.6) and component's sensitivity with variable of brand equity is average (correlation coefficient between the 0.4 and 0.6) (0.05≥ Sig). In other words it can be said that increase brand personality and its components, increases the consumer brand equity.

B. Hypothesis 2: There has relationship between the brand personality and its components with purchase behavior in consumer's sports apparel.

Table 2: Estimated Spearman correlation coefficient for the brand personality and its components with purchase behavior

Variable	Purchase Behavior	
	Spearman correlation coefficient	P. Value
Brand Personality	0.896	0.001
Responsibility	0.938	0.001
Dynamism	0.823	0.001
Sensitivity	0.590	0.001
Audacity	0.626	0.001
Simplicity	0.940	0.001

According to the results table above, there is significant relationship between the brand personality and component's Audacity, simplicity, responsibility and dynamism is strong with purchase behavior variables (correlation coefficient higher of the value 0.6) and component's sensitivity with purchase behavior variables is average (correlation coefficient between the 0.4 and 0.6) (0.05≥ Sig). In other words it can be said that increase brand personality and its components, increases the consumer purchase behavior.

**C. Hypothesis 3:** There has relationship between brand equity and its components in consumer's sports apparel.

Table 3: Estimated Spearman correlation coefficient for brand equity and its components with purchase behavior

Variable	Purchase Behavior	
	Spearman correlation coefficient	P. Value
Brand equity	0.720	0.001
Perceived quality	0.277	0.001
Brand association	0.373	0.001
Brand awareness	0.266	0.001
Tend to accept the brand extension	0.958	0.001

According to the results table above, there is significant relationship between the brand equity and its component's tend to accept the brand extension is strong with purchase behavior variables (correlation coefficient higher of the value 0.6) and component's perceived quality, brand association and brand awareness with purchase behavior variables is low (correlation coefficient lower than 0.4) ($0.05 \geq$ Sig). In other words it can be said that increase brand equity and its components increases the consumer purchase behavior.

D. Hypothesis 4: The research model has a good fit.
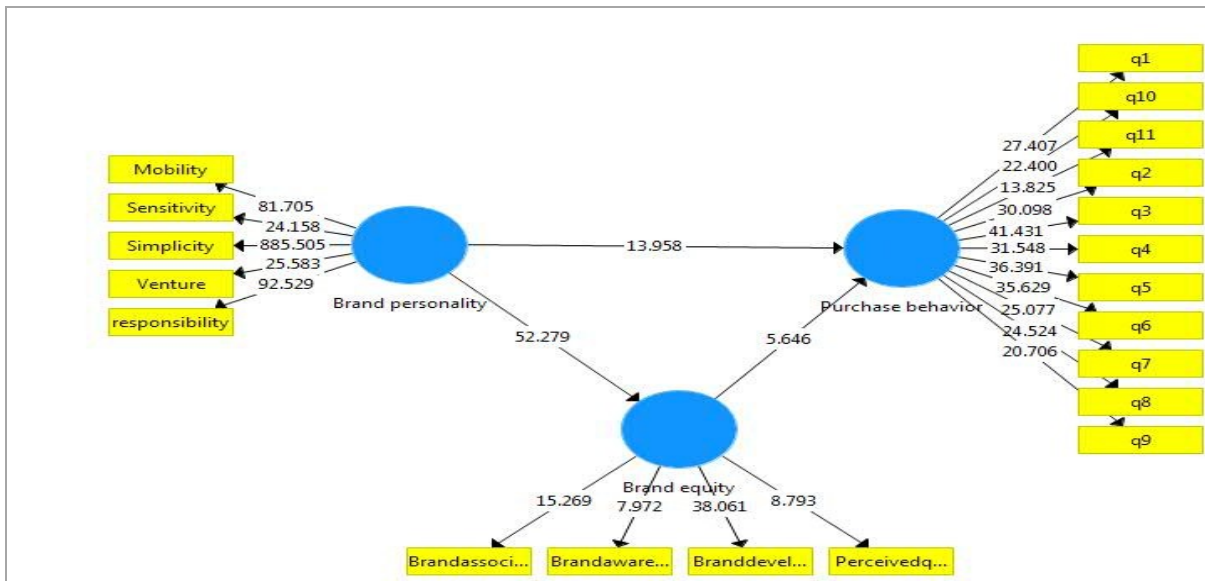
Figure 1: The research model in a significant mode
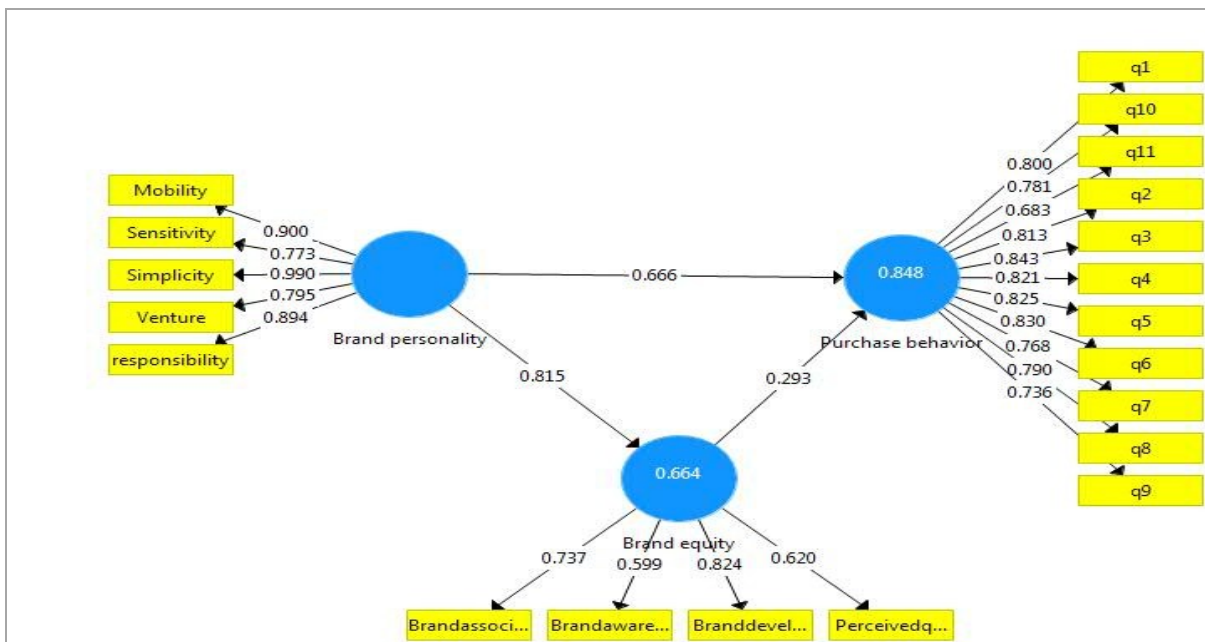
Figure 2: The research model in a standard mode

Table 4: Evaluation criteria of external models and the whole model

Index / Variable	Quality criteria				
	AVE	HTMT	Cranach's Alpha	CR	SRMR
Acceptable	<0.5	<1	<0.7	<0.7	> 0.08
Brand equity	0.491	0.811	0.72	0.791	
Brand personality	0.763	-	0.92	0.941	0.130
Purchase behavior	0.625	0.955	0.94	0.948	
P. Value	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	-

The results showed that the established model are supported by the empirical data, in other words fitted data the is appointed model and all criteria except AVE brand association that its value is below 0.5 and SRMR value is above 0.08 and this implies on the desirability of structural equation modeling but because mediator variable has a role on mentioned equation, and should be reported both a direct effect and an indirect effect, therefore, the amounts offered in the following table until clarify the role of mediator variable.

Table 5: Examine direct, indirect and total effects

Path	Effect		T-value	P. value
Brand personality- Purchase behavior	Direct Effect	0.666	13.958	0.001
	Indirect Effect	0.238	52.279	0.001
	Total Effect	0.905	5.646	0.001

According to the obtained values, effect of brand personality variables is significant through third variable on the purchase behavior of customers. This means that the independent variable (brand personality) is affected on the mediator variable (brand equity) and finally on the dependent variable (purchase behavior).

3. Discussion and Conclusions

One results of this research is the relationship between brand personality and its components (responsibility, dynamism, Sensitivity, Audacity, simplicity) with brand equity. In fact, there is a belief that the brand personality plays a role in defining brand equity and this is the same conclusion that were obtained in the final model in this study. In fact, it was found that brand personality has a significant positive impact on brand equity. This result is consistent with other research results such as Dehghan et al. (2013), Esmaeilpou et al. (2013), Hamidizadeh et al. (2012), Walt Florence et al. (2011) and Lorio et al. (2014). In general, customers often consider human aspect with giving

personality to brands, for them and marketing create or reinforce this perception often with the help of positioning. Positioning successful brand personality in a product category, requiring models that enable distinct the unique personality characteristics from features that they are common of the product category for all brands. This view suggests that a strong brand personality is much more than the properties of the product. As a person, a brand can appear also as humorous, formal, and intelligent and…; that match these properties with a buyer's properties can lead to higher brand value to the buyer. Also one of the results was that there is statistically significant the relationship between the brand personality and its components (responsibility-taking, Dynamism, Sensitivity, Audacity and simplicity) with purchase behavior. As well as in the model, the result obtained that brand personality is affected on obsessive customer purchase behavior that this result is consistent with Mosanezhad (2014) and Horvath and Byrgln (2015). In explaining this result, it can be concluded that the personality can create symbolic advantages for customers and as a means used for costumer's ostentation and expression of its personality. Customers Personality could be affected solely on the relationship between customer and a brand, while brand personality is the basis for type of the relation between customer and brand. The brand personality could be to help also transfer of the product characteristics to customers and causing functional advantages for customers.

Customers are more seeking brands that match its personality with their character are more inclined to buy such a brand. When the customer find such a brand, may overlook of other brands defects and that a brand select to purchase. Manufacturing companies and branding should consider this point that their products to produce for what society and to influence and to success of their customers, must their brand coordinate with the characteristics of the target community. For example, a brand that has a simple character couldn't have an impact on the community as much as bold brand be impact on the youth. In addition to these results, it was found that there is statistically significant the relationship between brand equity and its components (perceived quality, brand associations, brand awareness and brand extension) with purchase behavior. The results of the study also showed that brand equity is affected on customers' purchase behavior that this result is consistent with other research results such as Chan and Tsing (2010), Sntyl Nathan and Taremi (2011) and Niyam and Kashyk (2011). One of the practical ways to increase brand equity, leading to purchasing decisions of customers, is according to the imagination and mental attitude, the popularity and perceived quality of the brand that it influences on consumer behavior that explained can be considered as an effective strategy for gaining competitive advantage. A brand that has more equity to customers, when deciding to

purchase the first option that comes to mind customer. Companies that have better quality in terms of clients and customers are better known, more powerful brand to their customers. A powerful brand can increase customers trust when buying goods and to help them better understand the intangible factors, and so customers more expressed a desire to purchase such brands.

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