

'I'm a Mac' -- so what? Study finds way to measure brand personality appeal

April 18 2011

Companies spend millions to develop their brand's personality, in hopes that it can help sell products. But they've had no way of measuring whether that personality actually appeals to consumers. Now, research from North Carolina State University lays out a system for measuring the appeal of a brand's personality.

"We developed this means of measuring brand personality appeal (BPA) so companies can figure out how favorably their brand personality is viewed by [consumers](#) – and what they can do to enhance that personality's appeal to their market," says Dr. David Henard, an associate professor of business management at NC State and co-author of a paper describing the study.

The concept of brand personality helps consumers form attachments to specific brands. For example, Apple has its "I'm a Mac...And I'm a PC" campaign, which brands its products as young and hip. But does that brand personality actually get people to buy anything?

"Until now, researchers have only been able to determine whether a company has a brand personality," Henard says. "The only existing scale was Aaker's Brand Personality Scale, which could determine whether a brand personality is rugged, sophisticated, competent, exciting or sincere.

"What we've done here is develop a system that digs deeper to help companies link brand personality to concrete outcomes. For example,

does the brand personality actually make people want to buy their product?"

The researchers first broke BPA down into three components: favorability, originality and clarity. Favorability is how positively a brand personality is viewed by consumers. Originality is how distinct the brand personality is from other brands. Clarity is how clearly the brand personality is perceived by consumers. For example, Ford trucks are clearly recognized as having a "rugged" brand personality. A brand personality's appeal is determined according to the interaction of these three variables.

The researchers then used these three variables to establish a measurement system for BPA. The system consists of 16 questions that provide information on each of the three BPA variables. The questions can be applied to any brand personality, from Mercedes Benz to Mary Kay. By assessing consumer responses to these 16 questions, a brand personality is graded on its overall favorability, originality and clarity.

For example, a company may find that its brand personality has a moderate rating on favorability, but is viewed as highly original and clearly defined. High marks for originality and clarity make the brand personality more appealing than the moderate favorability rating might indicate. It also tells a company that it needs to focus its efforts on improving its favorability rating, rather than distinguishing itself from competitors, in order to boost the brand personality's overall appeal.

"This work gives us a much more thorough understanding of how the mechanics of brand personality work on consumers," Henard says.

More information: The paper, "Brand personality appeal: conceptualization and empirical validation," was co-authored by Henard; Dr. Traci Freling, of the University of Texas-Arlington; and Dr. Jody

Crosno, of West Virginia University. The paper is forthcoming from the *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*.

Provided by North Carolina State University

Citation: 'I'm a Mac' -- so what? Study finds way to measure brand personality appeal (2011, April 18) retrieved 20 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-04-im-mac-brand-personality.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.