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AAKER'S BRAND PERSONALITY AND MILLENNIAL BUYING BEHAVIOUR OF SMARTPHONE

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Abstract

Millennial Market is one of the most significant markets that many organizations are paying attention to in today's business world and the major reason for this is because of the growth and potentials the market possesses. This study examined the applicability of Aaker's brand personalities framework on millennial' experience in smartphone purchase with keen interest in University of Ilorin students. The study adopted a cross-sectional research design and the sample size of 397 was arrived at using the Yamane (1967) formula for finite population. The data was analyzed using inferential statistical (multiple regression) to test the hypotheses. The findings of the study show that Aaker's personalities scale (i.e., sincerity, excitement, sophistication, and ruggedness) have significant influence on the millennial experience in smartphone purchase with the value of $p = .000 < 0.05$. More so, it was established that Aaker's personalities framework scale (competence) has significant influence on millennial experience in smartphone purchase. It was therefore concluded that Aaker's personalities framework significantly influences customers experience in purchasing decision process especially the millennial. The study recommended that organization developing a customer's solution oriented products should ensure sincerity, excitement, sophistication, ruggedness and competence embedded into what they offer to the market.

Keywords: Aaker's Brand Personalities Framework, Millennial, Smartphone, Purchase

Introduction

Millennial is a segment of the market born around 1981 to 1996 and they are sometimes refers to as Generation Y. The peculiar trait of this generation is that they don't just spent for fun sake but rather prefer value benefit from any product they consumed. Product or brand personality research began in the early 1960s. Some of the previous researchers looked at the link between self-concept and car personality perception. However, these studies have been hampered by a lack of a consistent theory and a 10-point taxonomy of personality traits to characterize products and brands. Birdwell (1964), for

example, was primarily interested in the link between product and self-concept. He emphasized on the relationship between customers' self-concept and their perception of their car. However, brand personality. Both the automotive and human characteristics were well-suited to the descriptors picked. Dolich (1969) used human personality scales to investigate the personalities of four products (beer, cigarettes, bar soap, and toothpaste) and their relationships with consumers' actual and ideal selves. However, the lack of a consistent theory and a consensus taxonomy of personality traits to employ in characterizing products has hampered research. Because human and product personalities may have different antecedents, the validity of early product personality scales based on human personality has been questioned. As a result, product personality traits can be defined as symbolic consumption of the product via direct and indirect contact (Fournier, 1998). This approach, in particular, included measurement equipment to capture product individuality.

Aaker (1997) recognized this constraint and established the brand personality scale (BPS), which consists of five general dimensions: enthusiasm, sincerity, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness, based on the big five model of human personality. Since then, the brand personality factors have been used in a variety of settings and cultures to assess consumers' symbolic consumption and behavioral impacts (Aaker, Benet-Martinez, & Garolera 2001; Supphellen & Grnhaug 2003). As a result, while some aspects of human personality may be reflected in brands, others may not (Aaker, 1997).

Millennial generation has systematically taking over markets in modern day and organizations are working tirelessly to satisfy this market segment. These segments possess some unique features when making choice of brand in satisfying their needs. This particular market segment is a great influencer among their peers as it is easy for a particular company's brand to spread quickly with less promotional cost in as much the products or services meets their expectations. According to Ordun (2015) generation Y has special and its own peculiarity of buying patterns, they have been affected by the changes of global technological improvement and vice a versa they changed the world marketing activities easily every second. The most important intangible attribute of every product is the brand (Terech, 2018). Riemann (2020) as the business is thriving and customers are getting more sophisticated with company brand's information, there are huge efforts on the part of the organization toward employing number of brand consultancies, market research institutes, consulting firms, promotional agencies who are trying to evaluate and value brands by applying a plethora of different tools. It is on the

aforementioned background that this study intends to examine the Aaker's brand personality framework on millennial buying of smart phone. The study general objective is to examine the applicability of Aaker's brand personality framework on millennial experience in Smartphone purchase; while the specific objectives are to (i) determine the extent at which Aaker's personalities scale (i.e., sincerity, excitement, sophistication, ruggedness) influence the millennial experience in smartphone purchase (ii) ascertain the level at which Aaker's personalities framework scale (competence) contribute to millennials experience in smartphone purchase.

Literature Review

Concept of Brand Personality

Brand Personality is one of those strategies to accomplish loyalty especially among the millennial who are the major audience that has taken the lead in almost buying decisions of every household (VEMT, 2019). According to Malik and Naeem (2013) brand personality is an integral part of brand image, it is considered a critical tool to differentiate a brand from other competing brands to the target market. In the opinion of Melin (1997) brand personality is a procedure based on the inspiration of those final users to select which brands to patronize in a similar way that they choose which peer groups or associations of human beings to follow.

Long before academia produced any acceptable notion, practitioners in advertising and marketing used the term "brand personality" (Azoulay & Kapferer, 2003). Gardner and Levy (1955) proposed that brands possessed personality traits. Consumers were invited to share their impressions on businesses using expressions to identify persons, movie stars, and animals later in motivation study projections based on metaphors in focus groups (Azoulay & Kapferer, 2003). Marketers noticed that in developed markets, "non-product-based brand attributes" began to play a larger role in customer purchasing decisions (Azoulay & Kapferer, 2003). Customers' preferences are formed not just by how they view the goods functionally, but also by how they perceive the brand's personality (Aaker, 1997).

An important contribution to brand management was the introduction of the link between human personality qualities and brands. At this period, personality was viewed as one aspect of brand identity, defined as those characteristics of human personality that may be assigned to the brand. Aaker's definition of brand personality is "the set of human traits connected

with a brand" (Aaker, 1997), which refers to brand personality as a whole rather than just one aspect of brand identification. Since then, experts have repeatedly claimed that brands, like people, develop personality traits (Aaker, 1997; Fournier, 1998; Keller, 2003).

The work of Aaker aimed to define brand personality and established a scale to assess it. Her paradigm was largely based on psychologists' research into human personality (Azoulay & Kapferer, 2003). Since Aaker's research publication in 1997, her technique has dominated brand personality research, and her definition of the word has been widely mentioned and used in studies. Consumers identify distinct and relatively enduring attributes with a certain brand, much like they do with personality traits (Aaker, 1997). This association, which is frequently exploited in marketing efforts, aids consumers in developing a bond with a particular brand (Aaker, 1997). Each consumer is drawn to certain brand personas due to psychological inclinations. The correct personality in a brand can make a customer feel like the brand is suited for them, leading to brand loyalty (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 2003). According to researchers, customers choose brands that have a personality that matches their own self-concept, "an ideal self (Malhotra, 1988), or certain feature of the self (Kleine, Kleine, & Kernan, 1993), through the usage of a brand" (Aaker, 1996).

Aaker's (1997) paradigm is built on five dimensions: Sincerity, Excitement, Competence, Sophistication, and Ruggedness, which are based on the "big five" qualities of human personality which are shown in the table below:

Brand Personality				
Sincerity	Excitement	Competence	Sophistication	Ruggedness
Down-to-earth	Daring	Reliable	Upper class	Outdoorsy
Honest	Spirited	Intelligent	Charming	Tough
Wholesome	Imaginative	Successful		
Cheerful	Up-to-date			

Source: Aaker (1997)

Each dimension represents a set of essential characteristics. Sincerity is defined as being down-to-earth, honest, wholesome, and cheerful; Excitement is defined as being daring, spirited, imaginative, and contemporary; Competence is defined as being reliable, intelligent, and successful; Sophistication is defined as class and charm; and Ruggedness is defined as masculinity and toughness. According to Aaker (1997), the different

types of brand personalities can be distinguished, and the multiple ways in which the brand personality construct influences consumer preferences can be understood by isolating these distinct dimensions rather than treating brand personality as a unidimensional construct.

Aaker's research included 631 participants who scored 37 brands on 114 personality traits. Those brands were carefully chosen to represent a diverse range of product and service areas. The majority of brand research follows Aaker's approach (Azoulay & Kapferer, 2003), however the scale has faults. Aaker's brand personality framework has been criticized for excluding negative factors from the scale development (Bosnjak, Bochmann & Hufschmidt, 2007), whether the scale can be used as a general scale (Austin, Siguaw & Mattila, 2003), and whether the selected attributes are proper personality traits (Austin *et al.*, 2003). (Azoulay & Kapferer, 2003). Aaker's scale, on the other hand, has been widely utilized in brand research and has served as a foundation for the development of new measures of brand personality, such as the scales developed by Geuens *et al.* (2009) and Bosnjak *et al.* (2007; Avis, 2012).

Methodology

This study adopted a cross-sectional research design using the quantitative method to gather information and analyze with the aim of investigating the applicability of the Aaker's personality framework in relation to millennial experience when it comes to smartphone purchase. The population comprises of the undergraduate students of the University of Ilorin irrespective of their faculty. Criteria for the strata of customers remains that; they fall within the category of millennial age group (generation Y and partly generation Z) The study population remains 49,153 (fourth nine thousand, one hundred and fifth three) which represents the registered undergraduate students for the 2020/2021 academic session obtained via the official website of the school. The study employed purposive sampling technique first and then used simple random sampling technique to select respondent from the sample size. Yamane (1967) formula was adopted in selecting the sample size since the researcher is constrained in examining the whole population. Primary source of data employed through structured questionnaire administered on the target respondents and the secondary source from journal, textbook and online sources. The reliability test through the cronbach alpha coefficient table gives an average value of 0.87. The study independent variables remain the Aaker personality framework and the dependent variable is the millennial buying behaviour of smartphone

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where;

n = Required Sample Size

N = is the sample population

e = is the level of precisions (0.05)

$$\frac{49,153}{1+49,153(0.05)^2}$$

Sample size =397

Study Hypotheses

H₀₁: Aaker's personalities scale (i.e., sincerity, excitement, sophistication, and ruggedness) does not have significant influence on the millennial experience in smartphone purchase

H₀₂: Aaker's personalities framework scale (competence) does not have significant influence on millennial experience in smartphone purchase

Data Analysis

H₀₁: Aaker's personalities scale (i.e., sincerity, excitement, sophistication, and ruggedness) does not have significant influence on the millennials experience in smartphone purchase

Table 1a: Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.969 ^a	.938	.938	.26539
a. Predictors: (Constant), sincerity, excitement, sophistication, and ruggedness				

Source: SPSS Output, 2023

Table 1a presents the model summary. It shows that the correlation r is .969 (i.e. r = .969) which indicates that there exists a positive relationship between Aaker's personalities scale (i.e., sincerity, excitement, sophistication, and ruggedness) and the millennial experience in smartphones purchase (which is a predictor or independent variables). It is also clear from the model summary table that the r² which is the coefficient of determination is 93.8%. This implies that 93.8% of millennial experience in smartphones purchase can be explained by the Aaker's personalities scale (i.e., sincerity, excitement, sophistication, and ruggedness) while the remaining 6.2% is explained by other factors that are not captured in the model.

Table 1b:ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	246.356	1	246.356	3497.915	.000 ^b
	Residual	16.199	230	.070		
	Total	262.555	231			
a. Dependent Variable: Millennial Buying Experience						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Aaker's personalities scale (i.e., sincerity, excitement, sophistication, and ruggedness)						

Source: SPSS Output, 2023

Table 1b, ANOVA table explains the F-statistics as shown from the table 1b is significant since the probability value of .000 is less than the alpha value of 0.05, thus the model is fit. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This implies that there is significant relationship between Aaker's personalities scale (i.e., sincerity, excitement, sophistication, and ruggedness) and the millennials experience in smartphone purchase

Table 1c:Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.309	.065		4.762	.000
	Aaker's personalities scale	.895	.015	.969	59.143	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Millennial buying experience						

Source: SPSS Output, 2023

From the coefficient table 1C, it clear that the overall significant effect for the independent variable (Aaker's personalities scale (i.e., sincerity, excitement, sophistication, and ruggedness) and the dependent variable (millennial experience when purchasing smart phones) is less than 0.05 significant levels. Therefore, there is a significant impact of the independent variable on the

dependent variable which implies that the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. The Beta value of 0.969 for the Aaker's personalities scale (i.e., sincerity, excitement, sophistication, and ruggedness) and the millennial buyers experience (dependent variable) implies that positive change and increase in Aaker's personalities scale (i.e., sincerity, excitement, sophistication, and ruggedness) will lead to 96.9% increase in millennial buying experience of smartphones.

H₀₂: Aaker's personalities framework scale (competence) does not have significant influence on millennials experience in smartphone purchase

Table 2a: Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.953 ^a	.907	.907	.36003
a. Predictors: (Constant), Opportunity to process brand information				

Source: SPSS Output, 2023

Model summary table 2a, shows that the correlation r is .953 (i.e. $r = .953$) which indicates that there is a positive relationship between millennials experience in smartphone purchase (dependent variable) and Aaker's personalities framework scale (competence) (which is a predictor or independent variables). It is also certain from the model summary table that the r^2 which is the coefficient of determination is 90.7%. This implies that 90.7% of millennials experience in smartphone purchase can be explained by Aaker's personalities framework scale (competence) while the remaining 9.3% is explained by other factors that are not captured in the model.

Table 2b: ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	292.218	1	292.218	2254.434	.000 ^b
	Residual	29.812	230	.130		
	Total	322.030	231			
a. Dependent Variable: millennials experience in smartphone purchase						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Aaker's personalities framework scale (competence)						

Source: SPSS Output, 2023

The ANOVA table 2b, F-statistics as shown is significant since the probability value of .000 is less than the alpha value of 0.05, thus the model is fit. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This implies that there is significant relationship between Aaker's personalities framework scale (competence) and millennials experience in smartphone purchase.

Table 2c: Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.175	.092		-1.895	.059
	Competence	1.070	.023	.953	47.481	.000
a. Dependent Variable: millennials experience in smartphone purchase						

Source: SPSS Output, 2023

From the coefficient table 2c, the overall significant effect for the independent variable (Aaker's personalities framework scale (competence) and the dependent variable (millennials experience in smartphone purchase) is less than 0.05 significant levels. Therefore, there is a significant impact of the independent variable on the dependent variable which implies that the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. The Beta value of 0.953 for Aaker's personalities framework scale (competence) (independent variable) implies that positive change and increase in opportunity to process brand information will lead to 95.3% increase in millennials experience in smartphone purchase.

Discussion of findings

Based on the result of null hypothesis I, the result showed that "There is significant relationship between Aaker's personalities scale (i.e., sincerity, excitement, sophistication, and ruggedness) and millennial experience in smartphone purchase. Therefore, null hypothesis is rejected while the positive alternative is accepted with the value of r being 0.969. More so, it is also clear from the analysis that the R^2 which is the coefficient of determination is 93.8% which means 93.8% of millennial experience in smartphone purchase can be explained by the Aaker's personalities scale (i.e., sincerity, excitement, sophistication, and ruggedness) while the remaining 6.2% is explained by

other factors which are not captured in the model. This result was in accord with the previous study conducted by Bialik and Fry (2019) which expound some information about the uniqueness of millennial (Generation Y) compare to other early and old generations who have no ability to process information adequately due to paucity of information about specific brand.

For hypothesis II, that Aaker's personalities framework scale (competence) has significant influence on millennial experience in smartphone purchase. The model summary showed a correlation value of 0.953 which is approximately 95.3% association between the variables examined. Furthermore, the R^2 which is the coefficient of determination is 90.7% which implies 90.7% of millennials experience in smartphone purchase can be explained by the Aaker's personalities framework scale (competence) while the remaining 9.3% is explained by other factors which are not captured in the model. The result of the coefficient of the independent variable reveals that there is a significant impact of the independent variable on the dependent variable. The result is in agreement with the study of Guttman (2019) where he explicitly explained the components of Aaker's brand personality framework and the role, they played in influencing buyers to personalized a product.

Conclusion

This study examined the applicability of Aaker's brand personality framework on millennial experience in smartphone purchase. The study concluded that Aaker's personality scales (i.e., sincerity, excitement, sophistication, and ruggedness) have significant influence on the millennial experience of smartphone purchase. More so, it was established that Aaker's personality framework scale (competence) has significant influence on millennial experience in smartphone purchase. Conclusively, it was established that Aaker's personality framework significantly influences customers experience in purchasing decision process especially the millennial.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were suggested:

- (i) Organization's developing a solution-oriented products need to pay attention to some features in its brands such as sincerity, excitement, sophistication, and ruggedness as these are some of the key things' customers look for when making their purchasing decisions.

- (ii) It is also suggested that in dealing with millennial market, organization need to pay attention to the competence of the products they are offering as this serve as a cogent factor they consider before making their decisions.

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