



Labuan Bulletin

**OF INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS &
FINANCE**

Volume 12, 2014

ISSN 1675-7262

**LINK BETWEEN BRAND PERSONALITY AND BRAND
LOYALTY IN SPORTSWEAR BRAND AMONG
MALAYSIAN CONSUMER**

Suddin Lada¹

Labuan Faculty of International Finance, Universiti Malaysia Sabah

**Samsinar Md. Sidin,
Kenny Teoh Guan Cheng**

Faculty of Economics and Management, Universiti Putra Malaysia

Abstract

Brand personality plays a critical role in customer loyalty, and also has profound effects on a company's brand performance. This study seeks to investigate the influence of brand personality dimensions (sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness) on brand loyalty in the Malaysian sportswear industry. A total of 958 respondents from six different parts of Malaysia participated in this study. A survey using non-probability sampling was used in this study. Findings of this study provide empirical verification of the link among brand personality dimensions and brand loyalty. In addition, "ruggedness" is found to be the most contributing factors for brand loyalty. The present findings also suggest that marketing efforts for sportswear companies need to distinguish between the dimensions of brand personalities that are more significant to brand loyalty in sportswear industry.

JEL Classification: M31, M37, M16

Keywords: Brand Personality Dimensions, Brand loyalty.

¹ Corresponding author: Suddin Lada, Faculty of International Finance, UMS - Labuan International Campus, Jalan Sungai Pagar, 87000 Labuan Federal Territory, Malaysia. Email: suddin@ums.edu.my.

1. Introduction

The sportswear industry, encompassing both athletic footwear and apparel is very big business (Tong and Su, 2014; Tong and Hawley, 2009). According to International Sporting Goods intelligence (SGI), the international athletic apparel market was worth nearly US\$41.5 billion, and grew to nearly US\$78.1 billion at retail value during the fiscal years ended 2011 (SGI, 2012). Asian markets alone represent 16% of total sales yearly. Interestingly, the high growth potential of the international sportswear industry promises a lot of golden opportunities for international and Malaysian stakeholders. In 2009, the Malaysian sports industry contributed RM30.3 billion to the National Gross Domestic Product (Ithnin, 2012). Surprisingly, about 70% is purchased for leisure, casual or daily use rather than for actual sports. For seller perspectives, the growth of sports industry locally and internationally would seem to call for increased research in order to stay current trends and practices in the field. To remain competitive, various marketing efforts undertaken include creating brand personality specifically to enhance consumer loyalty to a brand. Furthermore, with very stiff competition where there are no real differences among the competitors, consumers begin to explore more personal meaning and attachment with brands and products, and this is where brand personality comes into consideration. Unfortunately, little attention has been given to better understand the main dimensions of brand personality as they have significant contribution in enhancing brand loyalty (Lin, 2010; Tong and Hawley, 2009).

Brand personality field has not yet been fully investigated and little systematic research has been conducted to understand or classify the use of brand personality (Louis & Lombart, 2010). Moreover, the issues of why and how brand personalities affect consumers' brand loyalty have not been addressed (Kim et al., 2001). Thus, it is crucial to know about brand personality development and its consequences such as satisfaction and brand loyalty (Keller & Lehmann, 2006; Maehle & Supphellen, 2008). Interestingly, the customers of today and tomorrow are knowledgeable and wish to be more than just customers as they seek relationships with products and brands they can trust. The relationship they seek must be able to offer them unique experiences and be in synch with their personal lifestyles and beliefs.

Sports products and brand are among the flourishing industries that seek to provide value and product experience along with the personality of the user. It should be noted that the once clear distinctions between performance and fashion, function and style, formal and informal that used to be important marketing factors

have are now blurred. Furthermore, the popular acceptance of casual dress for many more occasions has given sportswear the opportunity to invade the mainstream clothing market. Currently, most brand names have generally the same business plan that prioritises the importance of branding and marketing of sportswear. This is where brand personality comes into brand strategy consideration. Indeed the investigation is still in the initial stages and more investigation needs to be made to determine the fundamental association of brand personality and its relationship with brand loyalty. Findings from this study will help to determine the potential effects of brand personality and promote the multi-dimensional effects on post-purchase behaviour.

In subsequent sections of this paper we explain the theoretical foundation and hypothesis development of our study, describe variables, instrument and measurement tools under study and test our conceptual model, and this paper ends with discussions of theoretical and managerial implication of the results.

2. Theoretical Foundation and Hypotheses Development

Brand personality - The formal definition of brand personality is “the set of human characteristics associated with a brand” (Aaker, 1997, p. 347), that performs a symbolic or self-expressive function for the consumer (Keller, 1993, 2013), but perceptions of human personality are derives from a person’s behaviour, attitudes and beliefs (Park et al., 1986), and perceptions of brand personalities are developed and impacted by both direct or indirect customer contact with a brand (Plummer, 2000). As such, brand personality combines the brand-user-imagery with a brand over time. Aaker (1997) identified five key dimensions of brand personalities; they are Sincerity, Excitement, Competence, Sophistication, and Ruggedness as a framework for brand personality.

The brand is said to have a personality when consumers view a brand as having human characteristics (Beldona & Wyson, 2007). Good example of Beldona and Wyson’s argument is that, brands such as Harley Davidson are referred to as a dimension of ‘ruggedness’ in the Big Five of Aaker brand personality dimensions. Other dimensions are; Nike is for ‘Excitement’, Hallmark refers to ‘Sincerity’, while Wall Street Journal is likely to be a dimension of ‘Competence’ and Tiffany more towards the ‘Sophistication’ dimension. These brands have all been found to have strong personalities. Dimensions of brand personality are now an important notion within brand theory and factor-based research is a popular procedure utilized in the investigation of brand personality (Avis, 2012). Previously, the work of Aaker (1997) has

inspired the majority of research on brand personality (Tong & Su, 2014; Geuens et al., 2009, Freling et al., 2010). However, certain aspects of early factor models have been criticised, and this has resulted in an evolution and improvement in the methods employed. In reviewing the previous brand personality literature, so far very limited studies have been found (i.e. Avis, 2012; Arora & Stoner, 2009; Freling & Forbes, 2005) to discuss the fundamental importance of brand personality dimension in theory and application research. The most recent study is conducted by Tong and Su (2014), which focusing on testing the applicability of Aaker's brand personality framework in the context of sportswear brands. Thus, this has led to the creation of brand personality as a form of effective marketing and branding strategies that would lead to brand loyalty.

Brand loyalty - Brand loyalty is the behavioral response and is a function of psychological processes. It is a function of both behavior and attitudes. In relation with the above definition, a basic issue among researchers is whether to define the concept in terms of consumer behavior or consumer attitude (Solomon, 2009). According to cognitive learning theorist, brand loyalty must be measured by attitudes towards brand rather than by purchase consistency. Oh (1995) suggested that brand loyalty studies consists of three broad categories: attitudinal, behavioral and integrated approach, where the 'behavioral' approach examines the customer's continuity of past purchases, then measures customer loyalty by rate of purchase, frequency of purchase, and possibility of purchase. The 'attitude' approach infers customer loyalty from psychological involvement, favoritism, and a sense of goodwill towards a particular product or service. The integrated approach takes account of both behavioral and attitudinal variables, in order to create its own concept of customer loyalty (Kim et al., 2004).

Researchers commented that loyalty should be evaluated with both attitudinal and behavioral criteria (composite brand loyalty). Amine (1998) identified two distinguishing approach to describe loyalty construct; 1) the 'behavioral' approach which suggests that the repeat purchasing of a brand over time expresses consumer loyalty, and; 2) the 'attitudinal' approach which assumes that consistent buying of a brand is a necessary but not sufficient condition of 'true' brand loyalty and it must be complemented with a positive attitude towards this brand to ensure that this behavior will be pursued further. In conjunction with sports and leisure related brands, the term 'loyalty' has been viewed as a multidimensional construct by many researchers (Park & Kim, 2000; Pritchard, 1992). Park (1996) and Gahwiler & Havitz (1998) also supported this argument by

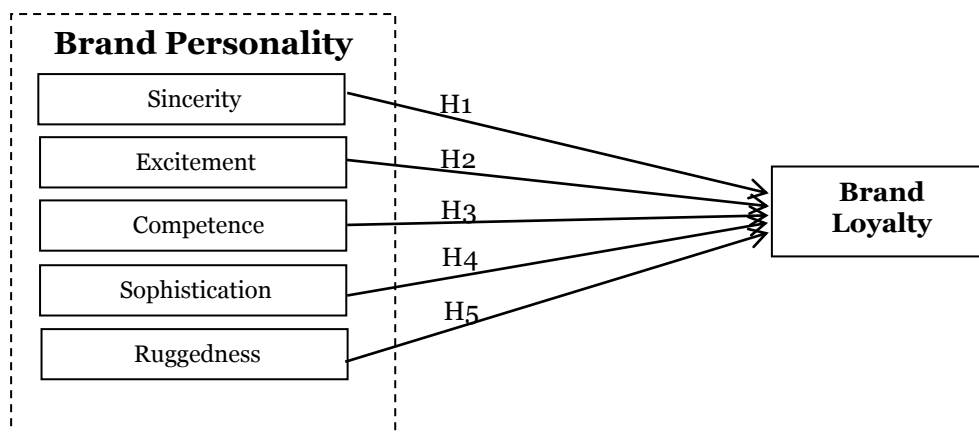
proposing both attitudinal and behavioral dimensions in measuring sports consumers' loyalty.

Brand personality dimensions and brand loyalty relationship - Studies have indicated that brand personality can have a significant and positive impact on consumers' attitude towards a brand (Ambroise, 2006) as well as brand loyalty (Mengxia, 2007; Kumar et al., 2006; Guo, 2003). Mengxia (2007) investigated how brand personality and consumers' brand preference, affection, loyalty and purchasing intention are related. The findings of his study show that brand personality can positively impact on brand preference, affection, loyalty and purchase intention. Additionally, Kumar *et al.*, (2006), Guo (2003), and Lin (2010) also explored the connection between brand personality and brand loyalty. In Kumar *et al.*'s study they discovered that consumers' brand loyalty for consumable goods may be affected by brand personality and Guo's findings revealed that brand preference can be significantly affected by brand personality as well. Brands with a distinct brand personality seem to prove more attractive to consumers while it is also conceivable that consumers have greater familiarity with the brands they prefer. Furthermore, Lin (2010) identified that competence and sophistication of brand personality have a significantly positive influence on affective loyalty.

Brand loyalty is established when the brand personality matches the self-image or personality of the consumer or when the brand offers the consumer benefits in a unique and gratifying way from the brand (Hanzaee *et al.*, 2011). In both cases, there is a certain personal attachment that the consumer develops to the brand. Based on the above, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

- H1: There is a relationship between Sincerity dimension and brand loyalty.*
- H2: There is a relationship between Excitement dimension and brand loyalty.*
- H3: There is a relationship between Competence dimension and brand loyalty.*
- H4: There is a relationship between Sophistication dimension and brand loyalty.*
- H5: There is a relationship between Ruggedness dimension and brand loyalty.*

Figure 1
Theoretical framework of this study



Source: Adopted from Aaker (1997) & Roy et al. (2009).

3. Methodology

Sampling and data collection - This study examines the influence of brand personality dimensions on brand loyalty. The main theories underpinning the theoretical framework of the proposed study consist of brand personality (Aaker, 1997) and brand loyalty (Roy, Butaney, and Bhutaney, 2009; Oliver, 1999). Hypothesis-testing is chosen as the most appropriate research design method for this study. Survey questionnaire is used for data collection method. A purposive sampling technique (also called as judgment sampling) is selected for the purpose of obtaining the data needed to achieve the objectives of this study. Data were collected from seven selected states (i.e. Georgetown, Kota Baharu, Klang Valley (Kuala Lumpur & Selangor), Johor Baharu, Kota Kinabalu, and Kuching). Overall, the data collection activities took about 5 months. A total of 1200 questionnaires were distributed. However, only 986 questionnaires were returned, of which 28 were unusable as they were incomplete, giving a final total of 958 or a 79.8% return rate.

Instrumentation:

Brand Personality Dimension - this study used the measurement developed by Aaker (1997) to assess the extent of brand personality in respective dimensions. In particular, a seven-point Likert scale was employed and respondents were requested to indicate their agreement level, in order to assess brand personality. This study contributes by showing how brand personality can influence individual behaviours towards a brand. A total of 42 items are used to assess the extent of brand personality in the dimensions – of sincerity, excitement, ruggedness, sophistication, and

competence. In this study, a seven-point scale (“1” = “Strongly Disagree”; “7” = “Strongly Agree”) is used to assess each item.

Brand Loyalty – Eighteen (18) items measuring brand loyalty were adapted from Oliver (1999) and Roy et al., (2009). Specifically, 12 items represent the attitudinal loyalty where four items represent cognitive loyalty, five items for affective loyalty, and three items for conative loyalty. Additionally, 6 items are used to measure behavioral Loyalty (Action). A multi-item seven-point Likert scale (anchored at 1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) adapted from Roy et al., (2009) was used to assess each item.

4. Analysis and Findings

Demographics - Table 1 presents the demographics of the 958 participants involved in the final sample, and it can be seen that with respect to gender, the males (50%) and females (50%) are equally distributed. In terms of age the 18-25 years age group makes up the largest respondents with 36.5%, followed by the 26-35 (35.7%) and 36-45 (22.8%) year’s groups respectively. Overall, about 95% of respondents are between the ages of 18-45 years. As for educational achievement, about 40.3% of the respondents possess qualifications of bachelor degree, 29.0% hold either a Certificate (16.8%) or Diploma (12.2%), and 22.7% possess qualifications of STPM and below, while the remaining 8% have earned either a Masters or PhD degree.

The monthly income with highest representatives in the sample is in the range of RM1001 to RM5000 monthly (47.4%). 11.5% of the respondents earn between RM5001-RM10000 monthly, while 8.5% of the respondents have reported to have an income under RM1000 monthly. Additionally, 0.4% of the respondents indicated an income of between R10001 to RM15000 monthly, while the remaining 32.3% are without any monthly income (is they comprise students, housewives, unemployed and retirees without pensions).

Table 1
Profile of respondents (n = 958)

Profile	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	479	50%
Female	479	50%
Age		
18-25 years old	350	36.5%
26-35 years old	342	35.7%
36-45 years old	218	22.8%
46-55 years old	34	3.5%
56 year old and above	14	1.5%
Education		
SRP/PMR	63	6.6%
SPM	109	11.4%
STPM	45	4.7%
Certificate	161	16.8%
Diploma	117	12.2%
Degree	386	40.3%
Master	72	7.5%
PhD or Higher	5	0.5%
Monthly Income		
No Income	309	32.3%
Less than RM1000	81	8.5%
RM1001-5000	454	47.4%
RM5001-10000	110	11.5%
RM10001-15000	4	0.4%
RM15001-20000	-	-
More than RM20000	-	-

Factor Analysis:

Brand Personality - The first run of the factor analysis on 42 items of brand personality dimension provided five factors with eigenvalues above one. However, some items were cross-loaded on other factors or different dimensions. After all these items were removed, factor analysis was run again. After the 3rd run (final run), the factor analysis yielded five factors as well with eigenvalues exceeding one, thus explaining 86.61% of the total variance. The Kaiser-Meyer-Okin value was 0.852 and Bartlett Test of Sphericity was significant at 0.000. Anti-image correlation of the remaining 32 items of brand personality was in excess of 0.50. The communalities of the 32 variables ranged from 0.614 to 0.976 (refer to Table 2). As for the remaining 32 items, the factor loadings ranged from 0.618 to 0.933, indicating that there were beyond the recommended cutoff point value of 0.3 and therefore practically and statistically significant. Generally, all the variables were significantly loaded on five factors as conceptualized; thus the same label was used for all these factors – sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness.

Brand Loyalty - There are eighteen (18) items used to measure “brand loyalty” – Cognitive (4 items), Affective (5 items), Conative (3 items), and Action loyalty (6 items). However, some items were cross-loaded on other factors or different dimensions. The final run of factor analysis had produced four factors with eigenvalues of more than one, which explain 75.39% of the total variance. The Kaiser-Meyer-Okin value was 0.797

and Bartlett Test of Sphericity at 0.000 was significant. Anti-image correlation of the remaining 16 items of brand loyalty was in excess of 0.50. The communalities of the 16 variables were from 0.586 to 0.882. The factor loadings for the remaining 16 items ranged from 0.550 to 0.877, which exceeded the recommended cutoff point value of 0.3 to be practically and statistically significant (refer to Appendix A). Generally, all the variables were significantly loaded on four factors as conceptualized, thus the same label was applied to all these factors – cognitive, affective, conative, and action loyalty.

Table 2
Exploratory factor analysis for brand personality dimension

Items (Brand Personality Dimension)	Anti-Image Correlation	Communalities Extraction	Factor Loading				
			F1	F2	F3	F4	F5
Factor 1: Sincerity							
Sincerity-down to earth	.940	.945	.906	.190	.191	.227	-.014
Sincerity-family oriented	.780	.892	.909	.162	.119	.163	-.008
Sincerity-small town	.762	.834	.879	.237	.065	-.035	-.015
Sincerity-honest	.892	.935	.890	.201	.210	.244	-.009
Sincerity-sincere	.985	.927	.884	.195	.219	.245	-.014
Sincerity-real	.959	.855	.868	.277	.153	.040	-.009
Sincerity-wholesome	.902	.755	.804	.172	.263	.102	-.018
Sincerity-original	.788	.907	.925	.132	.120	.142	-.005
Sincerity-cheerful	.754	.839	.889	.204	.064	-.054	-.010
Sincerity-sentimental	.899	.926	.889	.194	.200	.240	-.010
Sincerity-friendly	.969	.824	.618	.322	.515	.272	-.004
Factor 2: Excitement							
Excitement-daring	.904	.976	.228	.932	.187	.139	.015
Excitement-trendy	.826	.913	.207	.798	.265	.403	.020
Excitement-exciting	.924	.937	.274	.908	.192	.030	.005
Excitement-cool	.929	.829	.154	.718	.357	.402	.009
Excitement-young	.915	.889	.277	.843	.195	.251	.014
Excitement-imaginative	.846	.976	.226	.933	.187	.141	.015
Excitement-unique	.831	.914	.206	.799	.267	.402	.019
Excitement-up to date	.849	.976	.228	.931	.192	.141	.015
Excitement-contemporary	.929	.822	.288	.772	.377	.037	-.007
Factor 3: Competence							
Competence-reliable	.751	.800	.259	.372	.762	.120	-.005
Competence-hardworking	.790	.892	.166	.202	.907	-.022	.017
Competence-secure	.686	.845	.160	.175	.886	.063	.016
Competence-intelligent	.790	.887	.166	.203	.904	-.024	.015
Competence-technical	.694	.859	.157	.192	.891	.056	.016
Competence-corporate	.751	.801	.259	.369	.764	.123	-.004
Factor 4: Sophistication							
Sophistication-glamorous	.919	.917	.247	.316	.006	.870	-.017
Sophistication-good looking	.931	.848	.191	.303	.067	.844	.048
Sophistication-charming	.943	.829	.266	.265	.066	.827	.000
Factor 5: Ruggedness							
Ruggedness-outdoorsy	.621	.805	-.059	.103	.027	.070	.886
Ruggedness-masculine	.625	.744	-.038	-.040	.020	.040	.860
Ruggedness-tough	.754	.614	.033	-.011	-.008	-.074	.779
Eigen Value			16.26	4.44	3.19	2.13	1.70
% of Variance			28.50	24.15	17.34	9.93	6.68
Total Variance Explained	86.613						
Measure of Sampling Adequacy	.852						
Approx. Chi-Square	76805.20						
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity							
df	496						
Significant Level	0.00						

Reliability analysis - The Cronbach's alpha value for each of the five dimensions of brand personality (independent variables) and brand loyalty (dependent variable) ranges from 0.796 to 0.982. The dimensions of Sincerity (0.981), Excitement (0.982), Competence (0.960), Sophistication (0.937), Ruggedness (0.796), and Brand Loyalty (0.804) all have high reliabilities. Results in Table 3 indicate that all variables are positively contributing to the overall reliability. In other words, brand personality dimensions and brand loyalty all have high reliabilities. In addition, the mean value are range between 6.14 - 6.24, indicated that Malaysian consumer have strong perception on brand personality dimensions and brand loyalty.

Table 3
Reliability Analysis

Construct/ Variables	No of Items	Cronbach's alpha	Mean	SD
1. Sincerity	11	.981	6.19	0.52
2. Excitement	9	.982	6.20	0.63
3. Competence	6	.960	6.24	0.47
4. Sophistication	3	.937	6.14	0.68
5. Ruggedness	3	.796	6.18	0.59
6. Brand Loyalty	16	.804	6.15	0.46

Correlation Analysis - Table 4 shows the correlation matrix of the constructs which indicate significant two-way correlation between specified variables. All of the correlations between variables were less than 1, and specifically below 0.85, and were statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level, endorsing a positive correlation among variables, constructs are truly distinct from each other and multicollinearity does not exist in the study (Allen & Bennett, 2010; Field, 2009). Thus, discriminant validity is justified and appears satisfactory.

Table 4
Correlations Analysis between Variables

Factors	1	2	3	4	5	6
(1) Sincerity	1					
(2) Excitement	.640**	1				
(3) Competence	.515**	.620**	1			
(4) Sophistication	.396**	.705**	.354**	1		
(5) Ruggedness	-.085**	-.132**	.064**	-.089**	1	
(6) Brand Loyalty	-.083**	-.189**	-.003*	-.155**	.707**	1

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level; ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level; Diagonal elements shown in bold are the square root of the average variance extracted.

Multiple Regressions - To examine the relationship between brand personalities and brand loyalty, a standard multiple regression analysis (MRA) was conducted. Before the interpretation of the MRA findings, many possibilities were considered. **First**, stem-and-leaf plots and boxplots showed the normal distribution of all the variables in the regression, which were also free of univariate outliers. **Second**, on inspecting the normal probability plot of standardised residual and the scatterplot of standardised residuals against standardised predicted values revealed that the assumed normality, linearity and homoscedasticity of residuals were met. **Third**, Mahalanobis distance is within the critical χ^2 for $df = 5$ (at $\alpha = 0.001$) of 16.99 for any cases in the data file, indicating that multivariate outliers are not of concern. **Fourth**, relatively high tolerance for all predictors in the regression model indicated that multicollinearity would not hamper the interpretation of the MRA the outcome. In addition, the average VIF is very close to 1 and this supports the conclusion that collinearity for this model is not problematic.

Hypothesis 1 – 5 posited that there is a direct relationship between brand personality dimension and brand loyalty. The results indicated that 50.9% variances in brand loyalty could be explained by brand personality dimension ($R^2 = .509$, $p < 0.00$). There are three dimensions of brand personality found to have positive and negative influence on brand loyalty, namely sincerity ($\beta = .060$, $p < 0.05$), excitement ($\beta = -.110$, $p < 0.01$), and ruggedness ($\beta = .693$, $p < 0.01$). However, the remainder two dimensions of brand personality: competence and sophistication are found to have no significant relationship on brand loyalty. Furthermore, results in Table 4 confirmed that dimension of ‘ruggedness’ is the most influencing factor to brand loyalty towards sports brands. On the other hand, these results provide support for H1, H2, and H5.

Table 4
Regression Analysis of Brand Personality and Brand Loyalty

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	Standard. Coefficient Beta (β)	Results
Brand Loyalty	Brand Personality				
	Sincerity	.053	.194	.060*	Supported
	Excitement	-.080	.027	-.110*	Supported
	Competence	.003	.031	.004	<i>Not Supported</i>
	Sophistication	-.028	.022	-.041	<i>Not Supported</i>
	Ruggedness	.541	.018	.693**	Supported
	R ²	.512			
	Adjust R ²	.509			
	Sig. F	199.6**			

5. Discussions

The findings from this analysis have demonstrated that the brand personality-loyalty relationship of sportswear brand is strongly associated with Ruggedness (i.e. Outdoorsy, masculine, tough, western, and rugged), Excitement (i.e. Daring, trendy, exciting, cool, young, imaginative, unique, up-to-date, and contemporary), and Sincerity (i.e. Down-to-earth, family oriented, small town, honest, sincere, real, wholesome, original, cheerful, sentimental, friendly). This result is a positive implication for the sportswear industry. In effect, the sportswear brand is perceived as rugged and exciting. As a result, sportswear brand has a solid platform to use further advertising campaigns to strengthen its brand and garner wider support. On the other hand, the sportswear brand does not have such a strong association with Competence (i.e. Reliable, hard-working, secure, intelligent, technical, corporate) and Sophistication (i.e. Glamorous, good-looking, charming). This may raise some concerns for the sportswear company in a fiercely competitive marketplace where competence and sophistication are crucial requirements for loyal consumers. Particularly, the lowest scoring traits are reliable, hard-working, secure, intelligent, technical, corporate, glamorous, good-looking, and charming, which imply that the sportswear brand is in need of new transformation, and innovation. According to Wieden (1992), NIKE could be regarded as an innovative and creative sportswear company because NIKE has spent billions of dollars over time in creating good image through their marketing strategies. Similarly, for Adidas, consumer is at the heart of everything they do. At Adidas, personalization is one of the brand's lead innovation concepts, and it is Adidas's goal to be the most personal sports brand by 2015 (Adidas Annual Report, 2011).

Scoring the lowest are Competence (i.e. Reliable, hard-working, secure, intelligent, technical, corporate) and Sophistication (i.e. Glamorous, good-looking, charming). It is well known that sportswear brand is a brand undertaken mostly by male consumer. The weak performance of competence and sophistication dimension may be due to the merger of product functionality and brand personality, which employs several items such as 'reliable, hard-working, secure, intelligent, technical, and corporate' that also confuse cultural context with features of brand personality. This implies that the sportswear company's efforts in various marketing and advertising programmes that promote elements of reliable, hard-working, secure, intelligent, technical, corporate, glamorous, good-looking, and charming into their sportswear brand do not appear to generate consumer brand loyalty among Malaysian consumer.

6. Conclusion and Recommendation

Overall, the results of the present study confirm the strong influence of brand personality on brand loyalty, and provide strong support for the value of research on brand personality in the sportswear industry. As for the contribution of individual brand personalities to the prediction of consumer loyalty, the highest coefficient belongs to dimension of 'ruggedness', followed by 'excitement', and 'sincerity'. In other words, dimension of ruggedness have the most impact on brand loyalty. This means that for every unit of improvement in dimension of ruggedness the amount of brand loyalty to the brand increases. And the more it decreases the more would the brand loyalty decline. A high degree of variance on consumer loyalty is predicted by the dimensions of brand personality, which indicates the importance for managers to evaluate the brand personality of their brands, and further develop them by creating suitable marketing strategies and tactics based on ruggedness of the product/brand, if behavioural and attitudinal loyalty is to be built. In terms of the individual dimensions of brand personality and brand loyalty, the results of the research offer significant implications for sportswear management.

Today, sportswear industries have become more competitive than ever. The findings provide evidence that the brand personality dimensions are very important to fully understand the sophisticated level of consumer loyalty. In fact, the findings show that brand personality has a positive effect on brand loyalty. Thus, managers should be aware of how different personality perceives their sports product/brands. In particular, the results of this study show that "ruggedness, sincerity, and sophistication" personalities are more loyal compared to excitement, competence types of personalities.

This study is not without limitations. Even though this present (quantitative) survey study has been objectively and prudently done, it is still limited by differences in its overall execution with some consequent weaknesses. Several areas of this research uncover the necessity for future branding research in the sportswear industry. This study is limited to the sportswear brand in its empirical study (i.e. lack of generalization of the study findings). It is not known whether these results can be generalized to other brands. This is because there is a fundamental difference between consuming sports products/brands and other types of products/brands. Thus, further investigation is required if there is a plan to apply the results to other brands. In the attempt to investigate other brands in this model, future research may include more antecedence and consequences such as geographical, competitiveness, and more product/brand-related factors.

To be successful across consumer segments, it is no longer sufficient to use mass marketing. The appropriate approach in current times is to identify and understand the habits of consumers and to fulfil the modern and sophisticated lifestyle; there is a need to develop effective marketing approach that is based on specific age and gender (Ross, 2006). By assessing brand personality among various age and gender groups,

product/brand managers may be able to develop product and marketing programs to target their specific needs. For the foregoing reasons, it is necessary for future branding research in the sports industry to be conducted to extend this line of research. In addition, this study also suggests that future research should focus on one category of sportswear brand (i.e. Nike; Adidas; & Puma); which is considered as premium mass-market brand, or individual brands. These brand categories appear to be a potential market in Malaysia (Yee and Sidek, 2008).

Acknowledgement: This study is funded by Research Acculturation Grant Scheme (RAGS). Ref. No: UPM/700-1/2/RUGS. Project No. 0602122311RU.

REFERENCES

- Aaker, J. L. (1997). Dimensions of brand personality. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 34(3), 347-35.
- Aaker, J. L. (1997). Dimensions of brand personality. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 34(3), 347.
- Adidas Annual Report. (2011). Global Brands Strategy, 68-81.
- Allen, P and Bennett, K. (2010). *Pasw statistics by spss: a practical guide*. Version 18.0. Cengage Learning: Australia.
- Ambroise, L. (2006). La personnalite´ des marques: une contribution re´elle a` leur gestion? *Revue Franc, aise du Marketing*, 207, 25-41.
- Amine, A. (1998). Consumers' true brand loyalty: The central role of commitment. *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, 6(4), 305-319.
- Arora, R & Stoner, C. (2009). A mixed method approach to understanding brand personality. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 18(4), 272–283.
- Avis, M. (2012). Brand personality factor based models: a critical review. *Australian Marketing Journal*, 20, 89-96.
- Beldona, S. and Wysong, S. (2007). Putting the “brand” back into store brands: an exploratory examination of store brands and brand personality. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 16(4), 226–235.
- Field, A. P. (2009). *Discovering statistics using spss*. Third Edition. Sage Publication Ltd. London.
- Freling, T. H., Crosno, J. L., and Henard, D. H. (2010). Brand personality appeal: conceptualization and empirical validation. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 39(3), 392-406.
- Freling, T. H., and Forbes, L. P. (2005). An empirical analysis of the brand personality effect. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 14(7), 404–413.
- Gahwiler, P. & Havitz, M. E. (1998). Toward a relational understanding of leisure social worlds, involvement, psychological commitment, and behavioural loyalty. *Leisure Sciences*, 20, 1-23.
- Geuens, M., Weijters, B., and Wulf, K. D. (2009). A new measure of brand personality, *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 26, 97–107.
- Guo, Y. (2003). Facilitating flow in the Internet shopping experience. *Proceedings of the Ninth Americas Conference on Information*

- Systems. Association for Information Systems, Tampa, FL (August), 3318-3325.
- Hanzaee, K. H., Khoshpanjeh, M., and Rahnama, A. (2011). Evaluation of the effects of product involvement facets on brand loyalty. *African Journal of Business Management*, 5(16), 6964-6971.
- Ithnin, H. (2012). Potensi pakaian sukan. *Harian Metro: Bisness*, 24 September 2012, pp. 34.
- Keller, K. L. (1993). Conceptualisation, measuring, and managing customer-based brand equity. *Journal of Marketing*, 57, 1-22.
- Keller, K. L. (2013). *Strategic brand management; building, measuring, and managing brand equity* (4th edition). Pearson Education (UK) Pte. Ltd., 46.
- Kim, C. K., Han, D., & Park, S. B. (2001). The effect of brand personality and brand identification on brand loyalty: Applying theory of social identification. *Japanese Psychological Research*, 43, 195–206.
- Keller, K. L. & Lehmann, D. R. (2006). Brands and branding: research findings and future priorities. *Marketing Science*, 25(6), 740-759.
- Kim, M. K., Park, M. C., and Jeong, D. H. (2004). The effects of customer satisfaction and switching barrier on customer loyalty in Korean mobile telecommunication services. *Telecommunications Policy*, 28, 145–159.
- Kumar, R., Luthra, A. and Datta, G. (2006). Linkages between brand personality and brand loyalty: a qualitative study in an emerging market in the Indian context. *South Asian Journal of Management*, 13(2), 11-35.
- Lin, L. Y. (2010). The relationship of consumer personality trait, brand personality and brand loyalty: an empirical study of toys and video games buyers. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 19(1), 4–17.
- Louis, D & Lombart, C. (2010). Impact of brand personality on three major relational consequences (trust, attachment, and commitment to the brand. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 19(2), 114–130.
- Maehle, N. and Supphellen, M. (2008). Sources of brand personality: a survey of ten brands”. In Angela Y. Lee and Dilip Soman, Duluth, MN, *Advances in consumer research*, vol, 35 (eds.). *Association for Consumer Research*, 915-916.
- Mengxia, Z. (2007). Impact of brand personality on PALI: a comparative research between two different brands. *International Management Review, Marietta*, 3(3), 36-46.
- Oh, H. C. (1995). An empirical study of the relationship between restaurant image and customer loyalty. *Dissertation Abstract International*. (UMI No. 9538608).
- Oliver, R. L. (1999). Whence consumer loyalty? *Journal of Marketing*, 63, 33-44.
- Park, W. C., Jaworski, B. J., and MacInnis, D. J. (1986). Strategic brand concept image management. *Journal of Marketing*, 50(4), 135–145.
- Park, S. H. & Kim, Y. M. (2000). Conceptualizing and measuring the attitudinal loyalty construct in recreational sports context. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 14, 197-207.
- Park, S. H (1996). Relationship between involvement and attitudinal loyalty construct in adult fitness program. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 4, 233-251.

- Plummer, J. T. (2000). How personality makes a difference. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 40, 79–83.
- Pritchard, M. P. (1992). Development of the psychological commitment instrument (PCI) for measuring travel service loyalty. PhD Dissertation, University of Oregon.
- Roy, S.K., Butaney, G., and Bhutaney, B. (2009). Examining the effects of the Customer loyalty states on the word of mouth. Pacific Asia Conference on Information Systems (PACIS) Proceedings 2009.
- Ross, S. (2006). A conceptual framework for understanding spectator-based brand equity. *Journal of Sport Management*, 20, 22-38.
- Solomon, M. R. (2009). Consumer behavior: buying, having, and being, pearson. Upper Saddle River, NJ. Prentice Hall.
- Sporting Goods intelligence, Inc (SGI). (2012). Global retail chains grow 10.2% in US\$ in 2011: News and analysis of the international market. <http://www.sginews.com>. Vol. 29, No. 37. Accessed on 28 September 2012.
- Tong, X., and Su, J. (2014). Exploring the personality of sportswear brands. *Sports, Business and Management: An International Journal*, 4(2), 178-192.
- Tong, X., and Hawley, J. M. (2009). Measuring customer-based brand equity: empirical evidence from the sportswear market in China. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 15(4), 262-271.
- Wieden, D. (1992). A sense of cool: Nike's theory of advertising. *Harvard Business Review*, 97.
- Yee, W. F., and Sidek, Y. (2008). Influence of Brand Loyalty on Consumer Sportswear. *International Journal of Economics and Management*. 2(2), 221 – 236.

Appendix A Exploratory Factor Analysis of Brand Loyalty

Items (Brand Loyalty)	Anti-Image Correlation	Communalities Extraction	Factor Loading			
			F1	F2	F3	F4
Cognitive Loyalty						
1. I believe that the overall quality of this brand is very good.	.915	.629	.712	.199	.106	.267
2. I believe the overall price offered by this brand is very good.	.781	.690	.759	.333	-.026	-.059
3. I believe the overall brand performance offered by this brand is very good.	.766	.704	.550	.580	.251	.037
4. I believe the overall service quality of this brand is very good.	.787	.800	.804	-.073	.350	.156
Affective Loyalty						
1. I like this brand much more than other comparable brands.	.796	.586	.406	.618	-.173	.089
2. Using this brand gives me pleasurable experience.	.811	.823	.069	.735	.491	.192
3. Using this brand is very important to me.	.755	.767	-.042	.640	.550	.230
4. Using this brand is very exciting.	.773	.621	.065	.768	.138	.092
5. Using this brand is very interesting.	.759	.609	.134	.717	.103	.259
Conative Loyalty						
1. I intend to expand my use of this brand.	.807	.882	.131	.150	.877	.273
2. I intend to remain a customer of this brand rather than look for a new brand.	.811	.850	.197	.204	.848	.225
3. I will continue to buy this brand even though I find better prices on competitors' brands.	.804	.784	.599	.059	.620	.193
Action Loyalty						
1. I purchase more from this brand than other comparable brands.	.809	.799	.443	.178	.180	.734
2. I spend more money on this brand than on other comparable brands.	.819	.856	.065	.349	.379	.766
3. I will recommend this brand to friends and relatives.	.780	.874	.013	.272	.427	.786
4. I will keep on buying this brand.	.777	.789	.634	-.023	.008	.621
Eigen Value						
% of Variance			7.197	2.074	1.704	1.088
Total Variance Explained	75.392		44.979	12.964	10.651	6.798
Measure of Sampling Adequacy	.797					
• Approx. Chi-Square	13193.561					
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity						
• df	120					
• Significant Level	.00					