

Studying the Relationship between Brand Personality and Customer Loyalty: A Case Study of Samsung Mobile Phone

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Abstract

In the current competitive business environment, all companies look for strategies and tools to stabilize in this competition and bring about their growth and enhancement. Organizations have to align themselves as fast as possible with such permanent changes in order to maintain their survival. Brand Personality is one of the helpful tools that organizations employ to retain their current customers, attract new ones, and achieve competitive advantage. Brand personality is also a potential marketing strategy to increase customers' loyalty towards a brand. Many customers choose products with a brand that is suitable to their personality. This is true about mobile phone customers, as well. The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between Brand Personality and Customer Loyalty. To this end, variables such as sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness were tested as dimensions of brand personality and formed of the research hypotheses. The statistical population included all customers of Samsung Mobile Phone and a random sampling method was used. The required data related to theoretical principles were collected using a historical study such as books and academic journals and the data required to analyze and test the hypotheses were collected through a researcher self-made questionnaire. The obtained results revealed that there is a significant relationship among brand personality dimensions and customer loyalty.

Keywords: brand personality, customer loyalty, Samsung mobile phone

1. Introduction

Brand is a sign for every product that can protect loyalty of customers of that product against the competitors. Products can become popular via a strong brand and they can be increasingly interesting for customers. Many companies are making a brand with a special personality. They believe that brands have personality like human beings. Brand personality creates a long-term relationship between the customer and the brand on the one hand and distinguishes it from other existing brands on the other hand (Kumar, Lemon, & Parasuraman, 2006). Brand personality is a potential marketing strategy to increase customers' loyalty towards a specific brand. Many customers are interested in a brand due to the similarity between their own personality and the brand. Brand personality is effective on sales volume and customer loyalty improvement (Lin & Huang, 2012; Vallete et al., 2011).

Today, development of information and communication technology is increasing rapidly and many tools are rapidly appearing for making relations among people easier. One of the tools which make easy relationships possible is the mobile phone. In recent years, many companies have produced mobile phones and each company tries to show its product is more attractive to create brand image and brand personality, because brand is a very important factor in attracting customers. Given the large portion of Samsung market in the mobile phone industry in Iran, this brand has been selected for the present study. Loyalty of Samsung mobile phone customers will be discussed in this study.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Brand Personality

Brand personality is a group of human characteristics which are reminded by a brand (Aaker, 1997). BMW is often perceived by consumers as more “high class,” Coke and Pepsi as more “fun and young”. Kotler et al. (2009) defined brand personality as a combination of human characteristics that may be attributed to a special brand. Given these two definitions, brand personality is affected by the interaction between two factors. One is the characteristics that the company tries to attach to its brand as personality and the other is customers’ perceptions about a brand personality. These two are not essentially the same. Brand personality is described from three sources: relationship between the brand and consumers, brand’s mental image and product characteristics such as price, distribution channels, and the like (Lin, 2010).

Brand personality has provided a strategic tool for executive marketing managers through which the relationship between the brand and consumers will be reinforced (Achouri & Bouslama, 2010), because consumers often intend to choose a brand that is closer to them in terms of personality and shows their own personality (Park & John, 2011). Thus, strong emotional linkages will be created among the customers and the brand that will finally lead to the customer’s commitment and loyalty to that brand (Arora & Stoner, 2009). A brand which does not have a clear and strong identity is like a ship which has lost its path (Aaker et al., 2004).

McCrae’s (2002) “five-factor model of personality” divides personality characteristics of humans into five classes including extraversion, congruence, conscientiousness, experience, and neuroticism. Aaker (1997) published an article entitled “brand dimensions”, which provided a modern movement in theoretical framework and modern methods regarding the concept of brand personality. In this article, he explored brand dimensions as 114 characteristics to explain 37 different brands and proposed the “big five characteristics” model about brand personality via classification of these characteristics. It includes 42 features and five dimensions:

- *Sincerity*: it indicates health, honesty, and courtesy of a brand.
- *Excitement*: it contains morale and brevity of a brand.
- *Competence*: reliability and success of a brand are formed in the framework of this scale.
- *Sophistication*: it includes high level of a brand such as magnificence of a brand.
- *Ruggedness*: it indicates the strength of a brand.

In his studies on dimensions of brand personality, Aaker (1997) concluded that people want to choose and use a brand in which different dimensions of brand personality are demonstrated depending on different environmental conditions. Also, he found that making long-term relationships between customers and the brand is related to brand sincerity and is more effective on choosing the brand and people’s attitudes about them. Recent studies of this researcher indicate the direct effect of brand personality characteristics on customers’ relationship with the organization (Aaker et al., 2004).

2.2 Brand Loyalty

Customer loyalty can be interpreted as customer’s commitment to repurchase the products and services offered by a company or a special brand and suggesting those services or products to one’s friends or colleagues (Chi, Huery, & Ya, 2009). It contains relatively biased behavioral reactions in purchasing that is a function of people’s spirit and this behavior causes a person to have a special interest in the brand and that name is created in his/her mind in the process of decision-making and assessment of brands (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Therefore, brand loyalty can be defined as a consumer’s attachment to a specific brand that is affected highly by brand personality and brand preference (Hee & Myung, 2012). The most important advantages of brand loyalty are positive word of mouth, sales and gaining more revenues, decreased sensitivity of customers towards marketing attempts of competitors, and creating a positive mental image. Similarly, loyal customers are the company’s assets and the major index of brand equity. They will have less sensitivity towards price changes than non-loyal customers (Shahin, Zehir, & Kitap, 2011).

Brand loyalty includes two behavioral and attitudinal dimensions (Uncles, Dowling, & Hammond, 2003). Attitudinal loyalty is created when there is a strong attitudinal commitment to a brand, while behavioral loyalty includes repurchasing given partial commitment of a consumer to a brand. Many researchers emphasize that attitudinal loyalty and behavioral loyalty should be measured simultaneously to recognize consumer loyalty to a brand (Kuenzel & Halliday, 2008; Chiou & Droge, 2006). Also, Chaudhuri and Holbrook believe that loyalty can be measured via a combination of behavioral (repurchasing, monopoly purchasing) and attitudinal (commitment, mass propaganda, intention to purchase) dimensions.

Long-Yi Lin (2010) found that competence and sophistication brand personality have a significantly positive influence on affective loyalty and action loyalty. Agreeableness and openness personality trait have a significantly positive influence on affective loyalty and action loyalty. Achouri and Bouslama (2010) found that the existence of a link between the brand personality and the consumers self-image provides marketing executives with the opportunity to have a strategic tool which enables them to improve or strengthen mapping of their brands. Farhat and Mostafa Khan (2011) found that customer loyalty might be strengthened or retained by keeping in consideration various other factors through communicating a good brand relationship by involving the concept of brand personality. Jafarnejad et al. (2012) found that brand personality has a significant impact on customer loyalty to the Mellat Bank brand in the Tehran Province.

3. Research Hypotheses

3.1 Main Hypothesis

There is a significant relationship between brand personality and loyalty in Samsung mobile phone customers.

3.2 Secondary Hypotheses

- There is a significant relationship between sincerity and loyalty in Samsung mobile phone customers.
- There is a significant relationship between excitement and loyalty in Samsung mobile phone customers.
- There is a significant relationship between competence and loyalty in Samsung mobile phone customers.
- There is a significant relationship between sophistication and loyalty in Samsung mobile phone customers.
- There is a significant relationship between ruggedness and loyalty in Samsung mobile phone customers.

4. Research Methodology

The present study explores the relationship between brand personality and customers' brand loyalty in the Samsung mobile phone sector and its results can be used in the intended population. This study is applicable from an objective aspect and descriptive-field from methodological aspect. It is correlational in terms of the analysis method employed for testing the hypotheses and is cross-sectional in terms of time. A historical study and the Internet were used to collect theoretical principles of the study. The hypotheses and relations among the variables were evaluated by means of a questionnaire. The employed questionnaire was of closed type with the Likert measurement scale. The primary data (the data that should be created by the researcher) were collected through a field study (questionnaire) in order to test the research hypotheses. Also, secondary data (the data that has been created before and is available in the existing resources) were collected by means of a historical study including books, journals, and the internet and were used to compile theoretical principles. The statistical population included customers of Samsung mobile phone in Isfahan province. The simple random sampling method was used for sampling. The sample size was estimated equal to 170 persons based on the sample required by structural equation modeling that should be five times the number of questions in the questionnaire. One-hundred fifty questionnaires were completed and analyzed.

A standard questionnaire containing 34 questions was used to measure the variables that contained 4 demographic questions, 18 questions about dimensions of brand personality from Aaker's five-dimensional scale (questions 1-4 were related to the sincerity dimension, questions 5-7 were related to the competence dimension, questions 8-12 were related to the excitement dimension, questions 13-16 were related to the sophistication dimension and questions 17-18 were related to the ruggedness dimension) and 12 questions were related to brand loyalty from Chaudhuri & Holbrook's scale (questions 19-30).

5. Data Analysis

Content validity was employed to confirm validity of the questionnaire (opinions of the professors and experts in the field of marketing and consumer behavior). Reliability of the questionnaire was determined via Cronbach's alpha coefficient. This method is used to calculate internal consistency of the measurement tool which measures different features. It was confirmed given the obtained values (Table 1).

Table 1. Cronbach's α

Variable	Cronbach's α
Sincerity	0/82
Competence	0/72
Excitement	0/78
Sophistication	0/75
Ruggedness	0/90
Loyalty	0/93

5.1 Normality Test

If data normality is confirmed in this study, parametric tests as well as the maximum likelihood method in structural equation modeling can be used (Table 2).

Table 2. Result of normal test

Variable	mean	Standard Deviation	Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistic	Significance level
Personality	1/62	0/47	0/45	0/056
Loyalty	1/72	0/77	1/05	0/21

Given that significance level of the test is more than 0.05, the claim that the questions in the questionnaire are normal is accepted and parametric tests as well as the maximum likelihood method in structural equation modeling can be used.

5.2 Mean Test

In order to analyze the status of components, one-sample t-test was used. The maximum and minimum scores in the questionnaire based on the Likert scale were equal to 5 and 1, respectively. The numerical value equal to 3 was considered that scores higher than it showed desirability of the status.

Given the significance level and mean that is less than the average level, one-sample t-test shows that the status of all components is not weak and undesirable (Table 3).

Table 3. Mean of factor and T statistic

Variable	Mean	T statistic	Significance level
Sincerity	2/99	-22/95	0/000
Competence	2/75	-33/23	0/000
Excitement	2/77	-39/38	0/000
Sophistication	2/71	-30/28	0/000
Ruggedness	2/75	-20/03	0/000
Loyalty	2/89	-26/36	0/000

5.3 Results of Testing the Hypotheses

Structural equation modeling was used to test the hypotheses. For this reason, confirmatory factor analysis was done on the constructs. The results of model shown in Figure 1 are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. The results of confirmatory factor analysis

CFI	NFI	IFI	TLI	GFI	RMR	CMIN/DF	Variable
0/91	0/94	0/92	0/90	0/91	0/03	2/16	Brand Personality
0/93	0/90	0/93	0/91	0/90	0/02	2/81	Loyalty

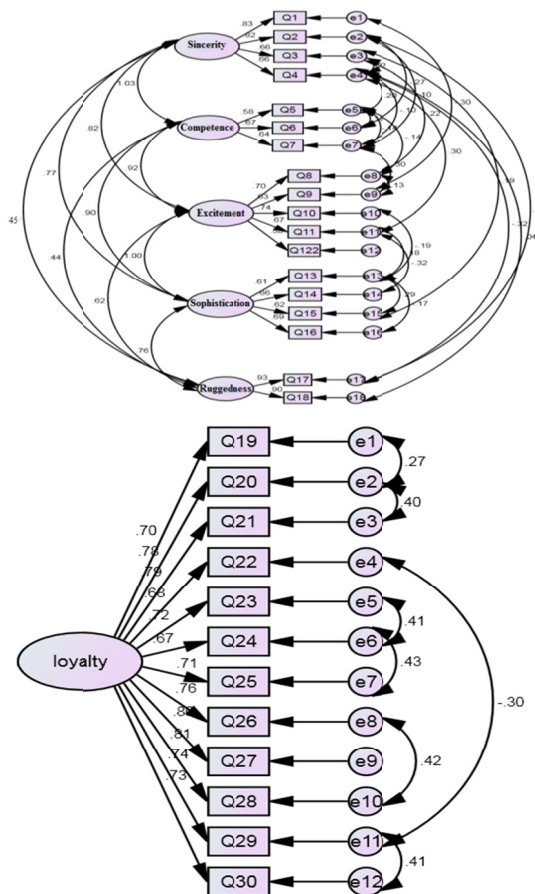


Figure 1. Brand personality and loyalty model

The fit indices are in an acceptable range for all measurement models. These indices show suitable goodness of the model by data and the collected data support the model well. Factorial loads are all more than 0.3 at the significance level 0.000.

5.4 Testing the Hypotheses

Having explored and confirmed the measurement models in the first step, structural equation modeling was analyzed in the second step to test the hypotheses. This will be mentioned separately for each hypothesis.

Testing subordinate hypothesis 1: There is a significant relationship between sincerity and loyalty in Samsung mobile phone customers.

Results related to testing subordinate hypothesis 1 are represented as shown in Table 5 and Figure 2.

Table 5. Testing subordinate hypothesis 1

TLI	IFI	CFI	NFI	GFI	RMSEA	RMR	CMIN/df	
0/91	0/93	0/93	0/91	0/90	0/03	0/028	2/25	Secondary models 1
0/90<	0/90<	0/90<	0/90<	0/90<	0/08>	0/08>	1> 5<	Reception area

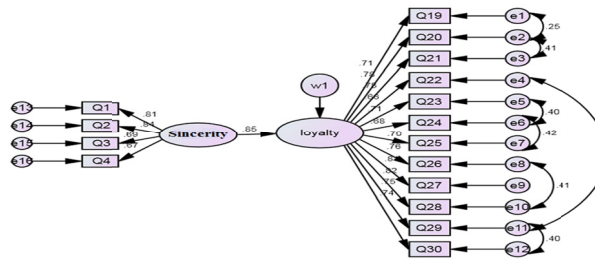


Figure 2. Relationship between sincerity and loyalty in Samsung mobile phone customers

Testing hypothesis 2: There is a significant relationship between excitement and loyalty in Samsung mobile phone customers.

Results related to testing subordinate hypothesis 2 are represented as depicted in Table 6 and Figure 3.

Table 6. Testing subordinate hypothesis 2

TLI	IFI	CFI	NFI	GFI	RMSEA	RMR	CMIN/df	
0/90	0/93	0/93	0/90	0/91	0/06	0/028	2/34	Secondary models 2
0/90<	0/90<	0/90<	0/90<	0/90<	0/08>	0/08>	1> و 5<	Reception area

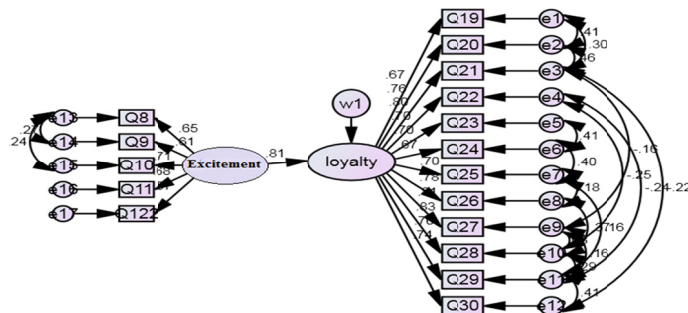


Figure 3. Relationship between excitement and loyalty in Samsung mobile phone customers

Testing hypothesis 3: There is a significant relationship between competence and loyalty in Samsung mobile phone customers.

Results related to testing subordinate hypothesis 3 are represented as shown in Table 7 and Figure 4.

Table 7. Testing subordinate hypothesis 3

TLI	IFI	CFI	NFI	GFI	RMSEA	RMR	CMIN/df	
0/90	0/91	0/90	0/90	0/92	0/05	0/026	2/58	Secondary models 3
0/90<	0/90<	0/90<	0/90<	0/90<	0/08>	0/08>	1> و 5<	Reception area

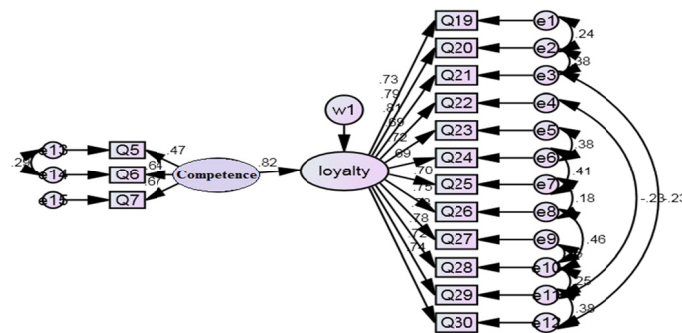


Figure 4. Significant relationship between competence and loyalty in Samsung mobile phone customers

Testing hypothesis 4: There is a significant relationship between sophistication and loyalty in Samsung mobile phone customers.

Results related to testing subordinate hypothesis 4 are represented (Table 8 and Figure 5).

Table 8. Testing subordinate hypothesis 4

TLI	IFI	CFI	NFI	GFI	RMSEA	RMR	CMIN/df	
0/92	0/95	0/95	0/90	0/93	0/07	0/02	1/94	Secondary models 4
0/90<	0/90<	0/90<	0/90<	0/90<	0/08>	0/08>	1> و 5<	Reception area

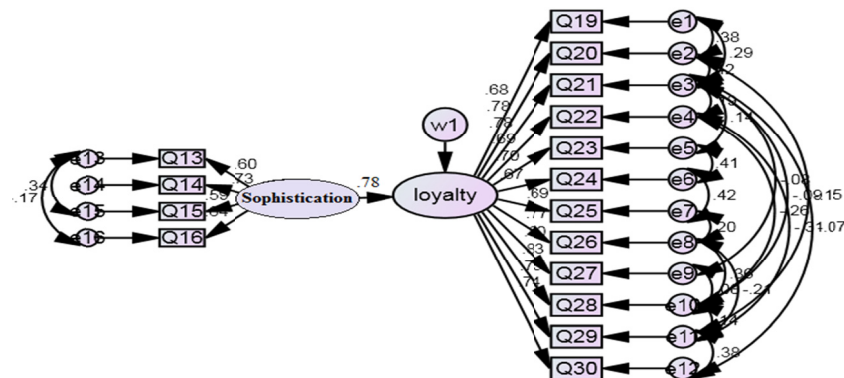


Figure 5. Relationship between sophistication and loyalty in Samsung mobile phone customers

Testing hypothesis 5: There is a significant relationship between ruggedness and loyalty in Samsung mobile phone customers.

Results related to testing subordinate hypothesis 5 are represented (Table 9, Figure 6).

Table 9. Testing subordinate hypothesis 5

TLI	IFI	CFI	NFI	GFI	RMSEA	RMR	CMIN/df	
0/96	0/98	0/97	0/94	0/92	0/06	0/026	1/55	Secondary models 5
0/90<	0/90<	0/90<	0/90<	0/90<	0/08>	0/08>	1> و 5<	Reception area

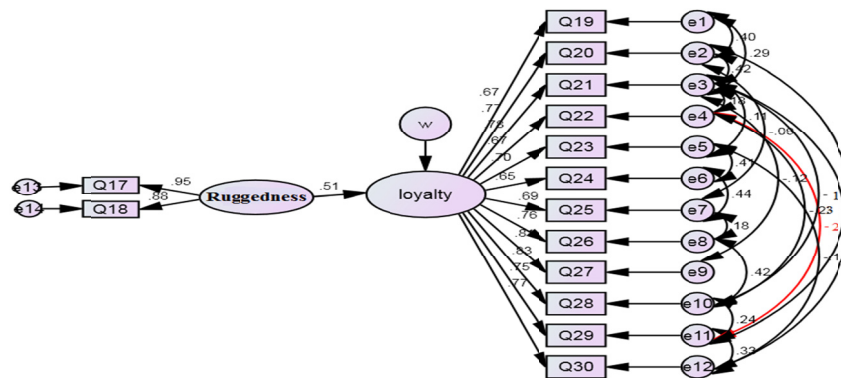


Figure 6. Relationship between ruggedness and loyalty in Samsung mobile phone customers

Testing the main hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between brand personality and loyalty in Samsung mobile phone customers.

In order to test this hypothesis, total fit indices of the model are represented as shown in Table 10 and Figure 7.

Table 10. Testing main hypothesis

TLI	IFI	CFI	NFI	GFI	RMSEA	RMR	CMIN/df	
0/92	0/94	0/94	0/90	0/90	0/07	0/023	2/09	Main models
0/90<	0/90<	0/90<	0/90<	0/90<	0/08>	0/08>	1> 5<	Reception area

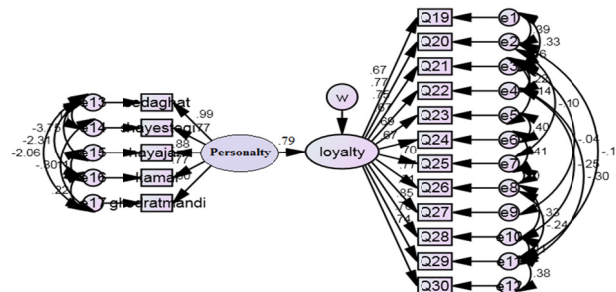


Figure 7. Relationship between brand personality and loyalty in Samsung mobile phone customers.

Amos output results in model estimation show that path the analysis model is a suitable model. The normalized chi-square is between 1 and 5. RMSEA is less than 0.08 and suitable. Also, GFI and four indexes of NFI, CFI, TLI and IFI are close to each other and more than 90 percent. Finally, RMR is close to zero. Values of fit indices are acceptable and the indices show suitable goodness of the model by data. Moreover, the collected data support the model well. The hypotheses as well as regression coefficients and values of partial indexes related to each hypothesis are presented in Table 11.

Table 11. Results of testing the hypotheses

Result of Test	correlation coefficient	Critical value	significant value	The sample size	Hypotheses	
Confirmed	0/79	5/89	0/000	150	Loyalty	← Personality
Confirmed	0/85	7/07	0/000	150	Loyalty	← Sincerity
Confirmed	0/81	5/37	0/000	150	Loyalty	← Competence
Confirmed	0/81	6/27	0/000	150	Loyalty	← Excitement
Confirmed	0/77	5/69	0/000	150	Loyalty	← Sophistication
Confirmed	0/50	5/41	0/000	150	Loyalty	← Ruggedness

6. Conclusion and Suggestions

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between brand personality and brand loyalty in the field of Samsung mobile phone in Isfahan province. Moreover, it was intended to offer some methods to the Samsung Company and also retailers of these phones in order to enhance loyalty to the Samsung brand.

The results of studies show that mobile phone brand personality is effective on customer loyalty. Therefore, Samsung has to maintain its brand personality to continue its survival in the mobile phone market, which offers strong competitors of different types every day. Also, considering the quality standard of mobile phone, it has to provide customer satisfaction as a key element to maintain and improve customer loyalty. Similarly, sincere brand personality is proportional to any customer who has an extrovert and congruent personality. Accordingly, Samsung Company should highlight its sincere personality and create value for customers by creating too much congruence of customer personality and brand personality that finally leads to customer loyalty.

Hence, it is suggested that Samsung Company stimulate its customers' loyalty by considering the personality of its different customer groups via providing a distinct brand personality. To this end, major customers should be recognized, their different personalities should be explored through questionnaire, interview, and qualitative research methods, and a determination should be made as to which brand personality they prefer. The intended personality that is involved exactly in customers' attitudes and beliefs should be designed at the phase of new product development. Sales and profits can be maximized by producing mobile phones according to special needs and personalities of customers.

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