

Relationship between Brand Personality of Architecture Office and Customer Purchase Intention: The Mediating Role of Brand Equity

Pouriya Shambayati^{ID*}, Paria Shahrazi^{ID}

Department of Architecture, Gorgan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Gorgan, Iran.

*Corresponding Author Email: Poriyashambayati@gmail.com

Abstract: Background and Aim: In this research, it has been tried to investigate the effect of the brand personality of architecture offices on the purchase intention of customers, taking into account the mediating role of the brand equity.

Methods: The present study utilized a descriptive-correlation approach, employing structural equation modeling. It involved 268 customers (110) from various architecture offices in Tehran, aged between 29 and 48 years (with an average age of 38.46 ± 5.07 years), who voluntarily took part. The research took place in Tehran, Iran, in 2023. Participants were chosen using a convenience sampling technique. Standard questionnaires were used for data collection. Pearson correlation test and the structural equation modeling were used for data analysis.

Results: Results revealed that brand personality significantly affected purchase intention ($T=3.587$). Moreover, brand personality significantly affected brand equity ($T=6.947$). Furthermore, purchase intention affected brand equity ($T=4.112$). Finally, brand equity has significantly mediated the relationship between brand personality and purchase intention ($P<0.001$). Results of model fit indicated that the research model has good fit.

Conclusion: According to the results of this study, it is advised that marketers concentrate on boosting and improving the aspects and elements that shape the brand personality. Furthermore, more attention should be given to brand equity.

Keywords: Brand Personality, Architecture, Customer, Purchase, Brand Equity

Introduction

Organizations and businesses have recognized the importance of focusing on brand personality, unique brand value, and customers' purchasing intentions. It is crucial for companies to thrive in the age of globalization and secure a significant market share and competitive edge, particularly in a competitive economy,

by prioritizing brand personality. Recently, many companies have come to realize that their product and service brands are among their most valuable assets (Bandura, 1997; Baniasadi, et al. 2018; Chaharbaghi, et al. 2022; Chris, et al. 2010; Conner & Davidson, 2003; Zaborova et al. 2023). A more comprehensive understanding of concepts such as brand satisfaction and its formative structures will enhance the knowledge of those involved in this field and lead to improved design and planning in sales and branding activities (American Psychological Association, 2014; Sadeghipor et al. 2021; Vasconcelos et al. 2013). Brand personality encompasses the emotional aspect of the brand and creates emotional attributes in the consumer's mind. Consumers are drawn to products or brands not only for their quality or usefulness, but also for the symbolic meanings associated with them. Conversely, in light of the competitive nature of the business landscape, the task of attracting and retaining loyal customers has emerged as a paramount challenge for organizations. In such circumstances, the significance of brand loyalty and brand satisfaction cannot be overstated (Afsanepurak et al. 2012; Sadeghipor & Aghdam, 2021a, 2021b; Taso et al. 2014). A suitable and appealing brand personality, which highlights emotional and symbolic elements, instills a sense of peace and trust in the consumer's psyche, thereby enhancing loyalty and satisfaction levels. This can serve as the foundation for brand differentiation and ultimately impact the consumer's purchase intention. Purchase intention refers to an individual's desire and decision to purchase goods or services, which may translate into actual purchase behavior (Hosseini, et al. 2022; Khosravi, et al. 2023). The stronger the purchase intention, the higher the consumer's willingness to purchase and invest in the product or service. Researchers have identified behavioral intention as the mental likelihood of engaging in a specific behavior, with intention being the primary predictor of behavior (Abdoshahi & Ghorbani 2022; Ohler et al. 2010; Ramachandra et al. 2013; Taghva et al. 2020). When a consumer harbors a desire to make a purchase, this inclination manifests in behaviors that ultimately lead to the actual purchase. Consumers not only deliberate on which brands to select, but also on the quantity of the product to purchase. Brand equity, a crucial concept in marketing, remains incompletely defined, with various methodologies proposed for its measurement. The unique value of a brand, which contributes to a competitive edge, is among the most significant intangible assets of a company, representing the "added value" that the brand imparts to a product (Letvak et al. 2012; Masten, 2001).

The brand's unique value encompasses a combination of assets and liabilities linked to the brand's name and logo, which contribute to or detract from the overall value generated by a company's product or service for its customers. This specific value of the brand is shaped by various factors. The brand's value is determined by the total assets and liabilities that impact the value of the company's offerings. The distinct value of the brand name refers to the favorable impact that brand recognition has on consumer perception of the product or service (Hazrati et al. 2022; Herrick & Ainsworth, 2003; Seyyedrezaei et al. 2021).

Ghorbani et al. (2020a, 2020b) have conceptualized brand equity as a collection of advantages and disadvantages associated with a brand, whether in the form of reputation or symbol, that contribute to or diminish the value delivered by the company's products or services to its customers. They have identified these brand-specific advantages and disadvantages as the core components of brand value, which should be closely tied to the brand's name or symbol. Brand-specific value is described as the additional value generated by a brand through increased profit margins or market share in the product market. This added value is shaped by the behaviors and perceptions of customers and other distribution channel members, providing the brand with enduring, distinctive, and competitive advantages over rivals (Davidson, 2003; Ellis et al. 2013; Faircloth, 2017; Seyedi Asl et al. 2016, 2021). Previous research has shown that certain dimensions of brand personality, such as honesty, excitement, competence, perfection, and expertise, as well as brand strength, were not thoroughly examined in relation to variables like purchase intention and brand equity, which are the focal points of this study (Dana et al. 2021, 2023). In this research, it has been tried to investigate the effect of the brand personality of architecture offices on the purchase intention of customers, taking into account the mediating role of the brand equity.

Methods

The present study utilized a descriptive-correlation approach, employing structural equation modeling. It involved 268 customers (110) from various architecture offices in Tehran, aged between 29 and 48 years (with

an average age of 38.46±5.07 years), who voluntarily took part. The research took place in Tehran, Iran, in 2023. Participants were chosen using a convenience sampling technique.

Aaker brand personality questionnaire (Moradi et al. 2020): The brand personality standard questionnaire was developed by Aaker in 1997. It comprises 42 items and 15 subscales, including pragmatic (3 questions), honest (3 questions), good-natured (2 questions), cheerful (3 questions), bold (3 questions), spirited (3 questions), imaginative (2 questions), new (3 questions), reliable (3 questions), smart (3 questions), successful (3 questions), classy (3 questions), lovely (3 questions), outgoing (3 questions), and stubborn (2 questions). This questionnaire is utilized to assess brand personality dimensions. In this study, Cronbach’s alpha was calculated for this scale to be 0.90.

The purchase intention of customers is assessed using the questionnaire developed by Sharma (2014). This questionnaire comprises 19 five-choice questions and is scored using a five-point Likert scale, with options ranging from 1=very low to 5=very high. A score of 1 indicates the lowest level of purchase intention, while a score of 5 indicates the highest level. The questionnaire is composed of five subscales, each defined by a set number of questions. The reliability and validity of this questionnaire were determined using Cronbach's alpha coefficient and confirmatory factor analysis. The questionnaire demonstrated high reliability, as evidenced by a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of 0.95.

Questionnaire of brand equity of Aaker (Afsanepurak et al. 2012): The Aaker brand equity survey consists of 8 questions that cover five dimensions including perceived quality, brand awareness, and brand loyalty. Respondents were asked to rate their agreement on a five-point Likert scale ranging from completely disagree to completely agree. In this study, Cronbach’s alpha was calculated for this scale to be 0.96.

We utilized SPSS-26 and Lisrel software to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics such as means and standard deviations were employed to characterize the variables. Pearson correlation test was conducted to assess the relationships between the variables. The structural equation method was applied to investigate the impact of the brand personality of architecture offices on the purchase intention of customers, taking into account the mediating role of the brand equity. The significance level was set at $P < 0.05$.

Results

Descriptive data are presented in Table 1. Descriptive results show that in general the level of brand personality, purchase intention and brand equity are higher than the average. The results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests revealed that all variables were normally distributed (all $P > 0.05$). Results of Independent t tests showed that there were no significant differences between men and women in all variables of the study.

Table 1. Descriptive data

	brand personality	purchase intention	brand equity
Mean	33.69	41.57	14.08
SD	3.48	5.67	2.19

Bivariate relationships between brand personality, purchase intention and brand equity are demonstrated in Table 2. Results revealed significant direct relationship between brand personality and purchase intention ($P < 0.001$). Moreover, brand personality was directly and significantly associated with brand equity ($P < 0.001$). Finally, brand equity was directly and significantly associated with purchase intention ($P < 0.001$).

Table 2. Results of bivariate relationships between variables

	1	2	3
1. brand personality	-		
2. purchase intention	r=0.349 P<0.001	-	
3. brand equity	r=0.608 P<0.001	r=0.419 P<0.001	-

Table 3 and Figure 1 show the results of structural equation modelling. Results revealed that brand personality significantly affected purchase intention ($T=3.587$). Moreover, brand personality significantly affected brand

equity (T=6.947). Furthermore, purchase intention affected brand equity (T=4.112). Finally, brand equity has significantly mediated the relationship between brand personality and purchase intention (P<0.001). Results of model fit are presented in Table 4 and indicated that the research model has good fit.

Table 3. Results of structural equation modelling

Path	β	T-value
1 brand personality => purchase intention	0.328	3.587
2 brand personality => brand equity	0.659	6.947
3 brand equity => purchase intention	0.402	4.112
4 brand personality => brand equity => purchase intention	Z	P-value
	5.228	P<0.001

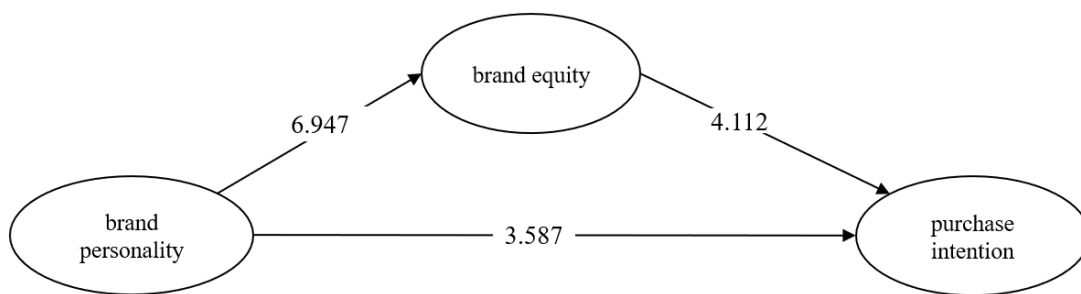


Figure 1. Structural equation modelling in the form of T-values

Table 4. Results of model fit

Index	Optimal Range	Obtained Value	Conclusion
RMSEA	< 0.08	0.06	Good fit
X ² / df	< 3	2.82	Good fit
RMR	Closer to 0	0.02	Good fit
NFI	> 0.9	0.95	Good fit
CFI	> 0.9	0.95	Good fit

Discussion

In this research, it has been tried to investigate the effect of the brand personality of architecture offices on the purchase intention of customers, taking into account the mediating role of the brand equity. Results revealed that brand personality significantly affected purchase intention. Moreover, brand personality significantly affected brand equity. Furthermore, purchase intention affected brand equity. Finally, brand equity has significantly mediated the relationship between brand personality and purchase intention. A business's brand is its symbol and identity, communicating with customers and creating recognition. A strong brand is essential for businesses of all sizes to succeed in marketing and selling their products and services. A brand not only identifies and distinguishes a business, but also brings it fame, credibility, and helps to build customer relationships. Brand personality is what evokes a unique response from customers towards a brand's offerings or goals (Taso et al. 2014; Dana et al. 2021, 2023). Character is what gives something authenticity or the lack thereof. Personality is what sets apart things that are easily forgotten from those that leave a lasting impression. Purchase intention is the likelihood that a person will make a purchase. Behaviorally, the customer has the intention to gather information, make a transaction, and has the necessary funds, but intention does not always translate to actual behavior. This theory highlights the importance of intangible assets to a company. The value of a brand can account for over 14% of a company's overall value. One of the key areas of study is the brand value, and this study aims to identify the unique value of a brand as much as possible (Hazrati et al. 2022; Herrick & Ainsworth, 2003; Seyyedrezaei et al. 2021).

It is imperative for all employees of home appliance brand companies to uphold a high level of honesty when interacting with customers. They should provide detailed explanations of sales conditions and product

specifications to ensure customers make informed decisions when purchasing home appliances. Furthermore, it is essential for the staff of these companies to exhibit good speech and behavior, as positive manners often play a significant role in attracting customers. To enhance brand equity, companies should focus on developing their realization and development department (Letvak et al. 2012; Masten, 2001). By prioritizing product quality and efficiency, businesses can maximize customer satisfaction and minimize interest in competitors' products. Additionally, fostering emotional connections with customers can lead to long-term brand loyalty, ultimately achieving the goal of most marketing initiatives (Bandura, 1997; Baniyasi, et al. 2018; Chaharbaghi, et al. 2022; Chris, et al. 2010; Conner & Davidson, 2003; Zaborova et al. 2023).

Thus, companies may endeavor to develop high-quality products, as customers who are genuinely interested in the product demonstrate greater loyalty compared to those who focus solely on the price (Seyyedrezaei et al. 2021). According to the third hypothesis, the positive impact of brand competence on brand equity implies that reliability, intelligence, and success contribute to a product's competence. Therefore, it is recommended that managers of home appliance brand companies prioritize the intelligence and successful image of their products (Taso et al. 2014). As for the fourth hypothesis, the positive effect of brand excellence and expertise on the brand's special value suggests that home appliance brands should enhance their brand personality through special services, exclusive quality, value presentation, and social prestige, in order to gain a competitive advantage and establish a powerful position among other top brands (Ghorbani et al. 2020a, 2020b).

Brands can enhance customer perception of quality by providing durable products. Additionally, products should be aesthetically pleasing to capture customer attention and convey a sense of strength and resilience compared to competitors. This can be achieved by gathering customer feedback through different communication channels and tailoring product designs to meet customer preferences. By utilizing market research to align products with customer tastes and preferences, brand managers can cultivate customer loyalty and drive purchase intent.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it has been established that brand personality significantly impacts purchase intention. Additionally, it is crucial to emphasize that brand personality's influence on purchase intention is reinforced by brand equity. Based on the findings of this research, it is recommended that marketers focus on enhancing and enhancing the factors and components that define the brand personality. Moreover, greater emphasis should be placed on brand equity.

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