

COMPARING THE DEVELOPED AND VALIDATED BRAND PERSONALITY SCALES FOR PROFESSIONAL SPORT TEAMS: A LITERATURE REVIEW AND EMPIRICAL FINDINGS.

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Abstract-

Many big companies invested in sport sponsorship, hoping for strong visibility in the market around the world. Sport marketers always find it difficult to decide which sport team to sponsor. To solve this problem, marketers can use brand personality scales to see which sport team has a similar personality to that of their company. Therefore, marketers must consider sport team personality before finalising sponsorship deals. The aim of this paper is to compare the developed and validated brand personality scales specifically for professional sport teams. These scales were developed and assessed by following four steps: step 1 – identifying traits; step 2 – reducing the list of traits; step 3 – analysing the brand personality dimensions; and step 4 – determining the reliability and validity of the developed scale. Four scales were found to be suitable to measure brand personality for professional sport teams. These scales were developed by Braunstein and Ross (2010) with six brand personality dimensions; Tsiotsou (2012) with five brand personality dimensions; Kang (2013) with five brand personality dimensions; and Schade et al, (2014) with four brand personality dimensions. This paper will assist marketers to choose a suitable scale to measure the brand personality of a sport team as a brand. These scales will be useful to all sport organisations to see how the entire team is perceived by fans, and thus help them to attract more sponsorship deals. Furthermore, the team will be able to establish better marketing strategies that will set them apart from other competing teams. For companies, these scales could be used to assess and evaluate sponsorship correlations between the company and the sport team.

Keywords: *Brand; Brand personality; Sport brand personality; Validity and reliability.*

JEL Classification: *M31 Marketing*

1. INTRODUCTION

Any professional sport team is a brand that needs to be managed. Managing a professional sport team poses challenges to sport marketers, as they don't have enough information on how to position a sport team ahead of its competitors. To solve this dilemma, sport team marketers need to use the developed brand personality scales to see how the sport team brand is perceived by fans. There are many developed sport brand personality scales to measure perceptions of sport teams. Therefore, this study examined the differences among the developed brand personality trait scales for professional sport teams, as recommended by Muller (2017). This was done by analysing a four-step process of brand personality scale development.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 BRANDING

'Branding' refers to activities involved in distinguishing a product or service from its competitors. A well-distinguished product or service becomes a brand. The American Marketing Association (AMA) (2019) defined a brand as "*a name, term, sign, symbol or design or a combination of these*". A sport team provides a service to fans in the form of entertainment. Clearly, from the AMA definition, a sport team is regarded as a brand. Big sport teams incorporate such brand elements – for example, Real Madrid Football Club (*name or term*) and the crown on top of the circle containing 'MFC', the abbreviation of the team's name (*symbol, design, or logo*) (Sevege, 2019). Such a team is popular worldwide and is easily recognised through its brand, which could be its name or a combination of all the brand elements. Furthermore, proper brand management might be contributing to the popularity of the sport team. Gladden and Funk (2002) highlight that sport managers view their sport teams as brands to be managed. Proper team management may increase competition among other teams. Competitiveness and successfulness attract more customers to any organisation. The competitiveness of a sport team reflects the fans' perceptions of a team's ability to defeat its competitors and achieve its goals (Karjaluoto et al., 2016). Such perceptions are among consumers' perceptions of the brand, popularly known as 'brand personality'. Brand personalities are often portrayed within the advertising campaigns of a specific brand (Braunstein & Ross, 2010).

2.2 BRAND PERSONALITY

Aaker (1997) defined a 'brand personality trait' as a set of human characteristics assigned to a brand. This definition has been much criticised as being rather loose. However, most researchers agree with, and apply, Aaker's brand personality definition (Ningrum et al., 2020; Eisend & Stokburger-Sauer, 2013; Herbst & Merz, 2011; Abimbola et al., 2007). According to Carlson and Donovan (2013), consumers often assign various unique personalities to brands. For example, Apple is perceived as *cool*, while BMW is perceived as *sophisticated* and *charming* (Carlson et al., 2009). These perceptions have a major influence on brand positioning. Carlson and Donovan (2013) emphasised that brand personality is a strategic tool that processes the communication message between the brand and consumers. According to Akin (2011), the brand becomes differentiated from competing brands that have the same features by giving it the advantage of a unique brand personality. Even sport teams can be assigned human personality traits. Braunstein and Ross (2010) highlighted that sport marketers have begun to query and analyse this concept of brand personality in their own field.

2.3 SPORT BRAND PERSONALITY

Brand personality in sport is revealed by unique characteristics associated with sport teams and sport products (Braustein & Rose, 2010). The brand personality of a sport team refers to the image combining the administration, personnel, players, coaches, and fans of a professional sport team (Tsiotsou, 2012). Professional sport teams have the common objective of winning competitions. Therefore, professional sport teams are expected to be competitive, resulting in success. For example, a sport team such as Real Madrid has won champions' league titles more than any other team in Europe. Such an achievement influences fans to perceive the team as strong, competitive, and successful. Thus brands that possess a desirable personality will provide a greater opportunity for the consumer to develop a strong relationship with it (Carlson & Donovan, 2013). Similarly, a team that is viewed as meaningful and consistent by fans offers an opportunity to create a closer relationship with the team (Karjaluo et al., 2016). Furthermore, a sport team with a good relationship with its fans can enjoy competitive advantage, such as a higher level of team identification and the ability to attract sponsorship deals.

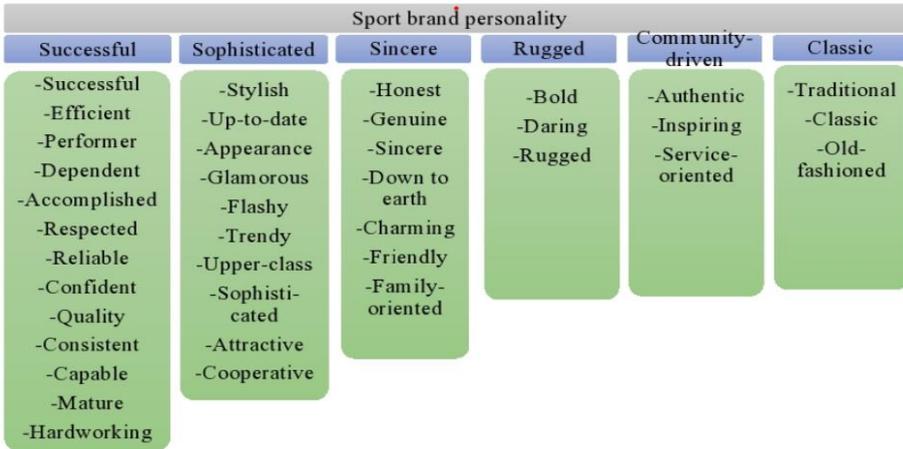
Lin (2010) emphasised that consumers prefer to select brands that mirror their own personalities. In other words, sport fans would tend to identify a sport team that is perceived as the same as their own personalities. Fans will thus be expressing their own personal identities and projecting their own unique personalities (Arora & Stoner, 2009). The same fans display a high degree of loyalty to the sport team

through regular participation in the team's events and other activities, and through purchases of the team's related merchandise and licensed products (Karjaluoto et al., 2016). Such behaviour by the fans could increase the brand equity of a sport team, as it will be generating additional income. The last benefit of sport team brand personality is the attracting of sponsorship deals. For example, Manchester United enjoys the most lucrative sponsorship deals in the history of soccer (Do Kim et al., 2012). Brand personality can assist sport marketers to identify a sport team with a similar brand personality for sponsorship reasons (Tsiotsou, 2012). A critical aspect of competition in the world of sport is the sponsorship deals made with sport teams by companies seeking positive associations for their brands (Smith et al., 2006). In the same way, companies prefer to sponsor teams that show similar brand personalities to their own (Masterman, 2009). Companies such as Adidas and Nike are actively involved in sponsorship deals with sport organisations, revealing brand personalities that are relevant to their brands and that suit their customers (Do Kim et al., 2012). Agreeing on the importance of brand personality as a tool for marketing, marketers and sport brand managers need a sport brand personality scale in order to measure their brands' personality (Kang et al., 2016).

2.4 MEASUREMENT OF BRAND PERSONALITY

The first scale of brand personality for a professional sport team was developed by Braunstein and Ross (2010) in the USA. The final scale comprises six dimensions and 40 items (shown in Figure 1). The six dimensions are: successful, community-driven, classic, sophisticated, sincere, and rugged.

Figure-1: BRAUSTEIN AND ROSS BRAND PERSONALITY



Source: (Braunstein & Ross, 2010)

The second scale to measure the brand personality of a professional sport team was developed in 2012 by Tsiotsou (2012), who conducted a study of brand personality in Greece. The final scale had 19 items, and consisted of the five dimensions shown in Figure 2: competitiveness; prestige; morality; authenticity; and credibility.

Figure-2: TSIOTSOU'S BRAND PERSONALITY



Source: (Tsiotsou, 2012).

The third scale of sport brand personality was developed by Kang (2013) in the United States in 2013. The final sport brand personality scale (shown in Figure 3) consists of 29 items and five dimensions: agreeableness; emotionality/ extraversion; openness; conscientiousness; and honesty.

Figure-3: KANG BRAND PERSONALITY



Source: (Kang, 2013).

The last scale was developed by Schade et al. (2014), who selected eight football teams and one basketball team. The final scale (shown in Figure 4) has 12 items and four dimensions of brand personality: extraversion; rebellious; open-mindedness; and conscientiousness.

Figure-4: SCHADE BRAND PERSONALITY



Source: (Schade et al., 2014).

3. METHODOLOGY

The researchers mentioned above all followed a similar method to develop the brand personality scales. This method consists of four steps: generating a list of traits; reducing the generated traits to a manageable number; assessing the brand personality dimensions; and testing the reliability and validity of the developed scales (Muller, 2017). Furthermore, the development of brand personality scales

employed both qualitative (generating traits and reducing traits to a manageable number) and quantitative (assessing dimensions, reliability, and validity) methods (Das et al., 2012).

3.1 Generating a list of traits

Das et al. (2012) suggested that researchers should use a qualitative approach in the early stages, such as individual interviews or focus groups. However, Braunstein and Ross (2010) generated traits from other existing brand personality scales (Braunstein & Zhang, 2007; Tenser, 2004; Musante et al., 1999; Aaker, 1997), which yielded 84 traits. Researchers also analysed the official websites of various professional sport teams. Their rule was to select traits describing a team. Schade et al. (2014) obtained 86 traits, and Tsiotsou (2012) obtained 80 traits by analysing the websites of different professional sport teams. Schade et al. (2014) decided to add more traits by conducting individual interviews via telephone. Kang (2013) generated traits through a literature review of previous research (Lee & Cho, 2012; Tsiotsou, 2012; Braunstein & Ross 2010; Heere, 2010; Geuens et al., 2009; Norman, 1967; Aaker, 1997; Allport & Odbert, 1936) and produced 105 traits.

3.2 Reducing generated traits to a manageable number

The generated traits were reduced by using surveys and consulting marketers and research experts, or a combination of surveys and experts, in all of the studies (Schade et al., 2014; Kang, 2013; Tsiotsou, 2012) except for the study of Braunstein & Ross (2010). Tsiotsou (2012) reduced the 80 traits to 48 by consulting experts through 'rule A' and 'rule B'. The rule A procedure for a trait to remain in the list was that it had to be mentioned by at least 50% of the websites analysed during step 1 (trait generation); while, for rule B, for a trait to stay in the list it had to describe both the team and the fans. Kang (2013) reduced the list of 105 traits by consulting experts. In this step, a panel of experts were asked to assess the relevance of each trait (highly relevant; mostly relevant; low relevance; no relevance) and finally the process, yielding 36 traits. Schade et al. (2014) had a list of 105 traits to reduce to a manageable number. The experts were asked to indicate which of the 105 items were more appropriate as personality traits. The trait was deleted if 40% of the experts found that the trait inappropriately described personality, and 21 traits were deleted (Schade et al., 2014). The experts were then presented with the remaining list of 84 traits and asked to specify which traits were appropriate for measuring the brand personality of a professional sport team. A six-point Likert-type scale was employed, and any trait with a mean less than 4 was rejected (Schade et al., 2014). Consequently 58 brand personality traits were removed, leaving 26.

3.3 Assess brand personality dimensions

A number of different traits grouped together is called a *dimension*. All the researchers grouped the traits into relevant dimensions. These dimensions were carefully assessed by employing exploratory factor analysis (EFA) (Kang, 2013; Schade et al., 2014; Tsiotsou, 2012; Braunstein & Ross 2010), as summarised in Table 1.

3.4 Test reliability and validity of the developed scales

Most of the researchers employed exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to assess the reliability and validity of the developed scales. Several model fit indices were also used. All of these procedures are discussed in more detail in the next section.

Table 1: Summary of brand personality studies in assessing brand personality dimensions for professional sport teams.

| Researchers | Factor method | Method to determine number of factors to retain | Rotational method |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Brausntain & Ross (2010) | Common factor analysis | Eigenvalues>1 Scree plot | Varimax |
| Tsiotsou (2012) | Principal component analysis | Eigenvalues>1 | Oblique |
| Kang (2013) | Principal component analysis | Eigenvalues>1 Scree plot | Oblique |
| Schade et al. (2014) | Principal component analysis | Eigenvalues>1 | Varimax |

Source: (Braunstein & Ross, 2010; Tsiotsou, 2012; Kang, 2013; Schade et al., 2014).

4. RESULTS

All of the researchers developed their scales by following four steps: identifying traits, reducing the list of traits, analysing the dimensions, and determining the reliability and validity of the scale (Muller, 2017). The comparison of Brand personality scale for a professional sport team is thus based on step three and step four as the main findings.

4.1 The results of brand personality dimensions (Step 3)

Braunstein and Ross (2010) extracted six factors by retaining items with factor loadings above 0.5, and allowing factor loadings above 0.35. Tsotsou (2012) extracted five factors explaining 66% of the total variance from the data set. Items that loaded less than 0.5 were rejected, resulting in a final five-factor model of 23 traits. Kang (2013) extracted five factors explaining 63.65 percent of the total variance. Items with factor loadings below 0.3 were rejected, producing a final five-factor model of 29 traits. Schade et al. (2014) extracted five factors explaining 74.4 percent of the total variance. Items with factor loadings below 0.52 were rejected, producing a final five-factor model of 26 traits. A satisfactory level test for a number factor to retain should be 60% of variance explained (Malhotra, 2010). Furthermore, the minimum acceptable factor loadings range between 0.3 and 0.4, while 0.5 is considered more practically significant (Hair et al., 2014). All factor loadings and factors extracted successfully met and exceeded the recommended criteria, except in the case of Braunstein and Ross (2010), where there was no indication of factor extraction. While, other researchers (Tsotsou, 2012; Kang, 2013; Schade et al., 2014) produced a satisfactory level of 60% total variance, as recommended by Malhotra (2010).

4.2 Model fit indices (step 4)

After using EFA to assess the brand personality dimensions, the CFA of structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed by all the researchers to assess the reliability and validity of the developed scales (Kang, 2013; Schade 2013; Tsotsou, 2012; Braustein & Ross, 2010). These researchers used several model fit indices, such as chi-square (X^2), the goodness-of-fit index (GFI), the adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), the comparative fit index (CFI), the normed fit index (NFI), the root mean square residual (RMSR), the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), the centrality index (CI), the comparative fit index (CFI), and the Tucker Lewis index (TLI), as summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of model fit indices of different sport brand personality trait scales

| Name of author(s) | Types of model used per developed scales |
|--------------------------|--|
| Braunstein & Ross (2010) | RMSEA, TLI, and CFI |
| Tsotsou (2012) | RMSEA, GFI; NF, CFI, RMR, and the chi-square |
| Kang (2013) | CFI, RMSEA, CI, and the chi-square |
| Schade et al. (2014) | GFI, AGFI, SRMR, RMR, RMSEA, NFI, TLI, and CFI |

Sources: (Kang, 2013; Schade et al., 2014; Tsotsou, 2012; Braustein & Ross, 2010).

The developed scales had to meet the recommended criteria of the goodness of fit indices to ensure reliability and validity. All of the recommended values are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Recommended values for goodness-of-fit indices

| | Measure | Description | Recommended value |
|--|----------------|---|-------------------|
| Absolute fit indices (goodness-of-fit) | GFI | Goodness-of-fit | ≥ 0.90 |
| | AGFI | Adjusted goodness-of-fit | ≥ 0.90 |
| Absolute fit indices (badness-of-fit) | X ² | Chi-square | $p \geq 0.05$ |
| | RMSR | Root mean square residual | ≤ 0.08 |
| | SRMR | Standardised root mean residual | ≤ 0.08 |
| | RMSEA | Root mean square error of approximation | ≤ 0.08 |
| | | | |
| Incremental fit indices (goodness-of-fit) | NFI | Normed fit index | ≥ 0.90 |
| | NNFI | | ≥ 0.90 |
| | CFI | Comparative fit index | |
| | TLI | Tucker Lewis index | ≥ 0.90 |
| | RNI | Relative non-centrality index | ≥ 0.90 |
| Parsimony fit indices (goodness-of-fit) | PGFI | Parsimony goodness-of-fit | ≥ 0.90 |
| | PNFI | Parsimony normed fit index | ≥ 0.90 |

Source: Malhotra (2010).

The model fit indices of Braunstein and Ross (2010) were above the acceptable levels for RMSEA (0.071), TLI (0.95), and CFI (0.96). Tsotsou's (2012) scale met the acceptable values of the model fit indices for RMSEA (0.06), GFI (0.91), NFI (0.90), CFI (0.94), RMR (0.04), and the chi-square (304.4). Schade et al. (2014) scale met the acceptable values of the model fit indices for GFI (0.94), AGFI (0.93), RFI (0.94), SRMR (0.05), RMR (0.05), RMSEA (0.06), NFI (0.95), TLI (0.95), and CFI (0.96). All of these model fit indices were above acceptable levels (Malhotra, 2010). However, Kang (2013) obtained unacceptable model fit index levels: CFI (0.861), RMSEA (0.082), CI (0.074-0.091) and chi-square (748.408/367). The

researcher decided to revise the model, and the model fit indices were then above acceptable levels: CFI (0.911), RMSEA (0.067), CI (0.058-0,076), and chi-square (592.866(350)).

4.3 Reliability

After model fit, all of the researchers assessed internal consistency using both Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values. Braunstein & Ross (2010) employed Cronbach's alpha only, and four constructs met acceptable values (successful: 0.93; sophistication: 0.83; sincerity: 0.86, and classic: 0.80), while the other two constructs (community driven: 0.68 and rugged: 0.65) indicated poor levels (Zikmund & Babin, 2013). By contrast, Malhotra (2010) emphasised that 0.6 should be acceptable for Cronbach's alpha, and therefore their scale should be considered as reliable.

Tsiotsou (2012) used both Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values. All constructs were above the recommended value for Cronbach's alpha (Malhotra, 2010) competitiveness (0.88); prestige (0.87); morality (0.78); authenticity (0.76); and credibility (0.80), which all indicated a good reliability (Zikmund & Babin, 2013). Scores for composite reliability were: competitiveness (0.89); prestige (0.88); morality (0.78); authenticity (0.75); and credibility (0.80). All of these values were above the recommended value of 0.7 (Malhotra, 2010). This scale shows good reliability results. Kang (2013) used composite reliability to measure construct reliability, with these scores: agreeableness (0.86); emotionality/extraversion (0.85); openness (0.90); conscientiousness (0.86); and honesty (0.89). All five constructs thus met the recommended value of more than 0.70 (Malhotra, 2010). Schade et al. (2014) employed Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability to assess internal reliability. All values exceeded the threshold value of 0.6 (Malhotra, 2010), ranging between 0.74 and 0.89 – above the recommended value of 0.70 (Malhotra, 2010). Therefore, the study produced good reliability results, exceeding 0.70 (Zikmund & Babin, 2013).

4.4 Validity

After assessing reliability, the researchers assessed the construct validity of the developed scales. Construct validity can be assessed by applying convergent, discriminant, and/or nomological validity. All of the researchers assessed convergent and discriminant validity (Kang, 2013; Schade et al., 2014; Tsiotsou, 2012; Braunstein & Ross, 2010). Convergent validity can be measured using average variance extracted (AVE). The recommended valued of AVE should be 0.5 (Malhotra, 2010; Hair et al., 2014). In the study of Braunstein and Ross (2010),

only two out of the six dimensions met the recommended criteria for AVE scores (success: 0.50 and classic: 0.57). The study of Tsiotsou (2012) met the recommended values with competitiveness (0.57); prestige (0.60); morality (0.55); authenticity (0.50); and credibility (0.68), thus indicating good convergent validity. In the study of Kang (2013), all the AVE values were greater than 0.5 for all of the factors: agreeableness (0.52); openness (0.63); conscientiousness (0.61); and honesty (0.59); the exception was emotionality/ extraversion (0.43). The AVE values were not revealed in the study of Schade et al. (2014).

Discriminant validity was also assessed. There are two options available to measure discriminant validity. The first option highlights that the AVE for each factor should be greater than the squared correlation between that construct and the other constructs in the model (Gounaris & Dimitriadis, 2003; Fornell & Larcker, 1981). In the other option, the square root of the AVE of each latent factor should be higher than the highest correlation of with any other latent factor to indicate discriminant validity (Malhotra, 2010). Three studies (Kang, 2013; Tsiotsou, 2012; Braunstein & Ross, 2010) assessed discriminant validity by looking at AVE values greater than the squared correlation between the constructs. Braunstein and Ross (2010) revealed that there were problems with discriminant validity in their study. The major problem was that the community-driven factor correlated very high with the other factors of success, sincerity, and classic. In the study of Tsiotsou (2012), all AVE values were larger than the squared correlation for all the factors, suggesting strong discriminant validity. Similarly, Kang's (2013) analysis produced evidence of discriminant validity. Schade et al. (2014) assessed discriminant validity by comparing all the square roots of the AVEs with the correlation coefficients of the factors. All the square roots of the AVEs were greater than all the correlation coefficients, thus presenting good discriminant validity.

5. CONCLUSION

Researchers should use at least two methods to assess reliability and validity, such as done by Tsiotsou (2012), in order to produce good, valid, and reliable scales. All of these scales met the criteria of reliability using Cronbach's alphas (α) and composite reliability (CR). The next phase would be to test convergent validity and discriminant validity. In the study of Braunstein and Ross (2010), all AVEs met the recommended criteria of 0.5, thus indicating convergent validity. However, these researchers experienced problems with the discriminant validity of their developed scale: their results for discriminant validity were not satisfactory, as other factors had higher correlations denoting a lack of discriminant validity. Furthermore, the

factor loadings for two items (attractive and rugged) were below the recommended criteria. Other studies (Tsotsou, 2012; Kang, 2013; Schade et al., 2014) successfully met the criteria for both convergent and discriminant validity without any problems. Therefore, all three scales are strongly recommended for measuring the brand personality of any professional sport. While the scale of Braunstein and Ross (2010) can be used, there should be some adjustments to it to avoid poor results. These could include reducing items in the scale, especially those loading below the threshold for factor loadings. This scale should be further validated in other countries to check its discriminant validity. The scales reviewed in this article would be useful to all sport organisations to see how an entire team is perceived by its fans. Furthermore, the team would be able to develop unique marketing strategies to set it apart from its competitors. Companies could use the scales to assess and evaluate the effectiveness of the 'match' between themselves as sponsors and sport teams as sponsees before finalising sponsorship deals.

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