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## **On Congruence between Brand and Human Personalities**

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### **Abstract**

**Purpose** - The purpose of the current research paper is to uncover the relations between brand and human personality by identifying brand preferences of consumers with different personality types.

**Design/methodology/approach** – Based on the existing literature, we suggest fifteen propositions linking Ekelund's (Ekelund, 1997; Ekelund and Langvik, 2008) DI types as parsimonious proxies of human personality and brand personality dimensions as suggested by Aaker (1997). Proposition were tested through statistical analysis of survey data collected in two stages.

**Findings** – We found that consumers prefer brands with personalities that match their own. For example, consumers with Blue DI type exhibit clear aversion of the excitement dimension of brand personality, whereas consumers with Red DI type exhibit clear preference for the sincerity dimension of brand personality. No clear findings emerged concerning the Green DI type, mostly likely linked to the individualistic, non-conformist and innovative orientations of such individuals. In addition data revealed a possible hierarchy of brand personality dimensions' influence.

**Practical implications** - Findings provide guidelines for better tailoring of promotional materials based on target customer groups, as well as the ability of evaluating underperforming brands in terms of a brand-human personality mismatch.

**Originality/value** – The paper fills out a gap in the literature about the congruence between brand and human personalities, and demonstrates how brand personality dimensions impacts brand preference among different consumer types.

**Keywords:** Brand personality, Human personality, Brand preferences

**Paper type:** Research paper

# **On Congruence between Brand and Human Personalities**

## **1. Introduction**

Brand personality, or a brand's human-like characteristics, is an important tool in differentiating a brand from its competitors. Various studies showed that consumers find it natural to build relationships with brands (e.g. Dolich, 1969; Hamm and Cundiff, 1969; Shank and Langmeyer, 1994; Vitz and Johnston, 1965) and imbue them with different personality characteristics such as "honest", "cheerful", "charming", or "tough" (Aaker, 1997; Malhotra, 1981; Plummer, 1984). Moreover, support was found for the positive effect of well-established brand personality on perceived quality (Ramaseshan and Hsiu-Yuan, 2007), brand preference, and loyalty (Siguaw and Mattila, 1999).

However, it is not only important to create a strong brand personality but also to create a personality which fits typical users of the brand. Consumers tend to select those brands that have a brand personality that is congruent with their own self-concept (Belk, 1988; Sirgy, 1982). Therefore, the dilemma faced by brand managers is how to create brand personality which is consistent with personality of their target users.

Nevertheless, the primary focus of previous studies has been either on the effects of brand personality or on measurement issues (e.g. Okazaki, 2006; Supphellen and Grønhaug, 2003; Venable et al., 2003). Fewer studies explore the relationship between self-image and brand preference/product image (e.g. Dolich, 1969; Hamm and Cundiff, 1969; Shank and Langmeyer, 1994; Vitz and Johnston, 1965). Moreover, to our knowledge there has been no research identifying what kind of brand personality is preferable for different types of consumers. In the current paper we address this gap and

attempt to discover the link between brand personality and human personality by identifying brand preferences of consumers with different personality types.

## **2. Brand Personality**

Brand personality represents one of the primary components of brand image together with physical elements or attributes and the functional characteristics or benefits of using a brand. Although Martineau (1957) is one of the earliest researchers who discusses the product personality concept, Aaker (1997) offers the most well-known definition of brand personality, as the set of human characteristics associated with a brand. Aaker also develops a measurement scale of brand personality consisting of five dimensions (Sincerity, Excitement, Competence, Sophistication, and Ruggedness), and 42 traits. Thus far, this scale, or parts of it, has been used in numerous studies of consumer behavior (e.g. Okazaki, 2006; Supphellen and Grønhaug, 2003; Venable et al., 2003).

In contrast with “product-related attributes”, which tend to serve a utilitarian function for consumers, brand personality tends to serve a symbolic or self-expressive function (Keller, 1993). Knowingly or unknowingly, consumers regard their possessions as part of themselves (Belk, 1988). Put simply, people acquire or reinforce their sense of self—their identities—in part through the goods they buy and what these material goods symbolize both to themselves and to others with whom they come in contact (Johar and Sirgy, 1991). Brands encapsulate social meaning (such as masculinity, or intelligence, or sophistication), so by acquiring specific brands we also acquire for ourselves the meanings that they symbolize. Many individuals define their self-worth in terms of material possessions and their symbolic associations, all of which

embodying their perceived “social value”. And as part of this self-defining process, consumers select those brands that have a brand personality that is congruent with their own self-concept.

### **3. Human Personality Typologies, Inventories and Proxies**

Although the term personality is frequently used and has dominated a substantial amount of philosophical and psychological explorations through the years, there is little common agreement among theorists about the appropriate use of the term (Engler, 1995). One working definition suggested by Carver & Scheier (2004) views personality as a dynamic organization, inside the person, of psychophysical systems that create the person’s characteristic patterns of behaviour, thoughts and feelings. By using such definition they strive to overcome various definitional challenges stressing that personality has organization, it’s active, it’s a psychological concept tied to a physical body, it’s a causal force determining how the person relates to the world, it shows up in patterns, and it is displayed in many forms including behaviours, thoughts, and feelings.

Personality type theories originate in the classic psychology literature (in the works of: Cattell, 1943; Jung, 1921/1971) and have since seen a proliferation of typologies specifically used for various managerial applications, with the most famous of which including the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Briggs and McCaulley, 1985; Hammer, 1996), the Belbin Team Inventory (Belbin, 1981/1999; Belbin, 2000), the Adizes Management Styles ( Adizes, 1976; Adizes, 2004), and the Margerison-McCann Team Management Profile (Margerison and McCann, 1990/1996), to name a few (see Table 1 for details). However, most of these typologies are fixated with team roles, leadership and management styles, career planning, communications styles, as well as

conflict and diversity management. Therefore, for the purpose of this paper, we focus on the Diversity Icebreaker scale (Ekelund, 1997; Ekelund and Langvik, 2008), which was originally developed specifically for classification of different market segments of consumers requiring different market communications strategies.

**Table 1: Common Managerial Typologies based on Psychological Personality**

**Traits**

Author	Typology	Characteristics
Adizes (1976, 2004)	Producer	impatient, active and always busy
	Administrator	precise, accurate and following rules
	Entrepreneur	visionary, creative and risk taking
	Integrator	harmonizer, peacemaker, and team player
Belbin (1981/1999, 2000)	Plant	the creative, unorthodox and generator of ideas
	Resource investigator	the externally focused networker
	Coordinator	the confident, stable, mature and one seeing big picture
	Shaper	the ambitious, performance-oriented challenge undertaker
	Monitor evaluator	the analytical, fair and logical observer
	Teamworker	the diplomatic, non-aligned peacemaker and teamplayer
	Implementer	the efficient, self-disciplined loyal doer
	Completer finisher	the accurate, detail-oriented perfectionist
Margerison-McCann (1990/1996)	Specialist	the able and skilled knowledge source
	Reporter-advisor	supportive, tolerant, knowledgeable, and flexible
	Creator-innovator	imaginative, creative, future and research oriented
	Explorer-promoter	outgoing, influential, variety and excitement oriented
	Assessor-developer	analytical, objective experimenter
	Thruster-organizer	results-oriented implementer
	Concluder-producer	efficiency and effectiveness oriented practitioner
	Controller-inspector	detailed oriented, standard and procedure inspector
Upholder-maintainer	conservative, loyal, and purpose-oriented	

Ekelund attempted to create a more parsimonious proxy typology of personality styles, which can be used both for team role analysis, and as guidelines for effective

marketing communications. Through the years this work resulted in the Diversity Icebreaker scale (Ekelund and Langvik 2006, 2008; Ekelund *et al.*, 2007; Langvik 2006). Thus far, the scale has went through three major formative stages of reliability testing, which ended up with internal reliability scores ranging between .75 and .82. Under this conceptualization, three main dimensions emerged which may be more dominant in one person versus another, labelled simply as 'blue', 'red', and 'green'. People with 'blue' orientation were identified as task-oriented, structured and logical successful executers; people with 'red' orientation were characterized as integrators with a relational focus, personal involvement and social perspectives; and people with 'green' orientation were identified as those with a focus on change, vision and ideas. Further validation studies are ongoing, while especially focusing on the analysis of relations with established measures of personality traits, including Langvik's (2006) study of relations with the 'Big Five' personality traits model and Rothausen-Vange and Ekelund's (2008) study of relations with the MBTI scale.

Building on the above presentations of brand personality and human personality proxies' conceptualizations, in the next section, we delve into points of congruence between the two, and based on which suggest an integrative analytical framework for testing these relations.

## **5. Propositions: Congruence between Human and Brand Personality**

According to Levy (1959), the products a consumer buys have personal and social meaning and they reinforce the way the consumer thinks about himself. Brands act as social signals with congruity between brand and user self-image, which is regarded as a key motivational factor in consumer choice (Belk, 1988; Sirgy, 1982).

A number of studies prove that there is congruity between brand image/personality and human personality. For example, Vitz and Johnson (1965) found a relationship between smokers' perceptions of cigarette image and the masculinity or femininity of the smoker. Dolich (1969) also investigated the relationship between self-image and brand preference and found that favoured brands were consistent to self-concept and reinforced it. Moreover, Hamm and Cundiff (1969) found a relationship between ideal self-image and product image. And others, such as Belk (1988) suggested that possessions are not just objects we own but the extensions of self-concept.

Building on the notion that consumer brand choices are to a large extent self-confirmatory actions (Belk, 1988; Sirgy, 1982), we propose the following links between Ekelund's (Ekelund, 1997; Ekelund and Langvik, 2008; Langvik, 2006) DI types as parsimonious proxies of human personality and brand personality dimensions as suggested by Aaker (1997).

The Sincerity brand personality dimension is captured by facets including traits of being down-to-earth, honest, wholesome and cheerful. Such traits may be indicative of strong social and people orientations, cooperative tendencies and harmony seeking, all of which characterize the Red personality and communicational strategy as captured in the DI scale. A brand scoring high on Sincerity is therefore expected to strike a cord with the emotionally driven social harmonizers of the Red DI type. At the same time, although unimpressed by honesty and cheerfulness, those scoring high on the Blue dimension of the DI scale may find wholesome and down-to-earth brands to be corresponding well with their pragmatic and realistic approaches. Green DI types, on the other hand, may exhibit strong aversion towards anything that would bind them to the ground, as their ambition and creativity will seek outlet in the non-traditional and the peculiar.

Hence, we suggest the following propositions:

**P1:** *The higher an individual scores on the Red dimension of the DI scale, the stronger the preferences exhibited by the same individual for brands scoring high on the Sincerity dimension of brand personality.*

**P2:** *The higher an individual scores on the Blue dimension of the DI scale, the stronger the preferences exhibited by the same individual for brands scoring high on the Sincerity dimension of brand personality.*

**P3:** *The higher an individual scores on the Green dimension of the DI scale, the weaker the preferences exhibited by the same individual for brands scoring high on the Sincerity dimension of brand personality.*

The Competence brand personality dimension is captured by facets including traits of being reliable, intelligent and successful. Such traits may be indicative of tendency towards task-orientation, being structured and logical, all of which characterize the Blue personality and communicational strategy captured in the DI scale. A brand scoring high on Competence is therefore expected to answer the needs of balancing reliability with success as embedded in the Blue DI type. At the same time, Red DI types, although rarely regarding themselves as successful hard-working and intelligent leaders, may exhibit positive attitudes towards brands that project this image as something to look up to rather than identify with. Finally, Green DI types find stimulation in combinations of intelligence and success, feeding right into their basic beliefs about being able to change and improve reality through the use of intellect in a reliable way.

Hence, we suggest the following propositions:

**P4:** *The higher an individual scores on the Red dimension of the DI scale, the stronger the preferences exhibited by the same individual for brands scoring high on the Competence dimension of brand personality.*

**P5:** *The higher an individual scores on the Blue dimension of the DI scale, the stronger the preferences exhibited by the same individual for brands scoring high on the Competence dimension of brand personality.*

**P6:** *The higher an individual scores on the Green dimension of the DI scale, the stronger the preferences exhibited by the same individual for brands scoring high on the Competence dimension of brand personality.*

The Excitement brand personality dimension is captured by facets including traits of being daring, spirited, imaginative, and up-to-date. Such traits may be indicative of tendency towards change and visionary orientations, strong intuition, creative imagination and inherent enthusiasm, all of which characterize the independent Green type and communicational strategy captured in the DI scale. A brand scoring high on Excitement is therefore expected to light the sparks of creativity, imagination and enthusiasm driving the Green DI type. At the same time, being trendy, spirited and up-to-date is highly valued by Red DI types who seek social acceptance. Being highly concerned with what others may say, the Red DI type gets quickly excited by new opportunities to approve his or her worth to society, even when those are constantly short-lived and contemporary. On the other hand, being trendy, daring, contemporary and imaginative goes contrary to the long term responsibilities of the Blue DI type. Constantly seeking stability, Blue DI types may develop a strong aversion towards exciting brands, which bring chaos and drama to their otherwise perfectly planned, regulated and reliable life.

Hence, we suggest the following propositions:

**P7:** *The higher an individual scores on the Red dimension of the DI scale, the stronger the preferences exhibited by the same individual for brands scoring high on the Excitement dimension of brand personality.*

**P8:** *The higher an individual scores on the Blue dimension of the DI scale, the weaker the preferences exhibited by the same individual for brands scoring high on the Excitement dimension of brand personality.*

**P9:** *The higher an individual scores on the Green dimension of the DI scale, the stronger the preferences exhibited by the same individual for brands scoring high on the Excitement dimension of brand personality.*

The Sophistication brand personality dimension is captured by facets including traits of being charming and romantic, and at the same time upper class and glamorous. On the one hand, such traits may be indicative of tendencies towards strong emotional involvement and sensitivity to people, all of which characterize the Red personality and communicational strategy captured in the DI scale. But on the other hand, such traits may also be indicative of a trend-setting and unique character that can be associated with the free spirited Green DI type. A brand scoring high on Sophistication is therefore expected to combine emotional weight with mystique, and relationship orientation with uniqueness. And by that forming a common ground where both Red and Green DI types feel comfortable. At the same time, Blue DI types may remain unimpressed, as they fail to find utility or credibility behind anything that is glitz and glamour. A dissonance is created for Blue DI types, who seek the reasons and logic behind the grand celebrations and festive facades, and when failing to find they may develop negative opinions about the whole thing as being a preposterous and pointless shenanigan.

Hence, we suggest the following propositions:

**P10:** *The higher an individual scores on the Red dimension of the DI scale, the stronger the preferences exhibited by the same individual for brands scoring high on the Sophistication dimension of brand personality.*

**P11:** *The higher an individual scores on the Blue dimension of the DI scale, the weaker the preferences exhibited by the same individual for brands scoring high on the Sophistication dimension of brand personality.*

**P12:** *The higher an individual scores on the Green dimension of the DI scale, the stronger the preferences exhibited by the same individual for brands scoring high on the Sophistication dimension of brand personality.*

The Ruggedness brand personality dimension is captured by facets including traits of being outdoorsy and tough. Such traits may be indicative of a reliable, strict and structured individual, all of which characterize the Blue DI type. A brand scoring high on Ruggedness is therefore expected to communicate well to those seeking stability, reliability and certainty. On the other hand, clear cut and harsh approaches are avoided by the Red DI type, who seeks soft diplomacy and harmonization. Reds require flexibility and anything stiff and strict contradicts their endless efforts of cosy and inclusive dynamism, hence they may be expected to avoid rugged brands. In a similar manner, Green DI types may reject things rugged, not for their diplomatic and social cohesion efforts, but for their need of imaginative flexibility, out of the box thinking, creativity and uniqueness, all of which are severely restricted by anything rugged and tough.

Hence, we suggest the following propositions:

**P13:** *The higher an individual scores on the Red dimension of the DI scale, the weaker the preferences exhibited by the same individual for brands scoring high on the Ruggedness dimension of brand personality.*

**P14:** *The higher an individual scores on the Blue dimension of the DI scale, the stronger the preferences exhibited by the same individual for brands scoring high on the Ruggedness dimension of brand personality.*

**P15:** *The higher an individual scores on the Green dimension of the DI scale, the weaker the preferences exhibited by the same individual for brands scoring high on the Ruggedness dimension of brand personality.*

## **6. Methodology and Results**

A survey was conducted to test the propositions presented above. Data collection took place in two stages. In the first stage data was collected in order to classify brands as either scoring high or low relative to a mean score for each of Aaker's (1997) five brand personality dimensions, creating a relative ranking of brand scores on each dimension. And at the second stage a survey was used for collecting data on DI types' scores and their relationships to brand preferences. Both data collection rounds referred to the same brands, as will be described in detail below.

### **6.1. Stage 1: Measuring brand personality**

The first data collection round was conducted in order to measure brand personality of the brands which we planned to use in the main survey. Three sets of five retailer chains' brands representing different product categories were selected for the survey, namely – supermarkets (Kiwi, Rema1000, Lidl, Meny, and Coop), clothes shops (VIC,

H&M, Cubus, Match, and Blåkläder), and furniture shops (IKEA, Møbelringen, Skeidar, Fagmøbler, and Bohus).

Fifty six economics and business students from two Norwegian universities participated in the first data collection stage. Respondents were asked to evaluate how well brand personality characteristics describe each of the above mentioned brands using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from “not characterizing the brand at all” to “characterizing the brand to a large degree”. Aaker’s (1997) scale of brand personality was used as a basis. The respondents also indicated their age and gender.

SPSS statistical analysis software was used for data analysis. Brand personality scores were computed for each brand on each dimension: Sincerity, Excitement, Competence, Sophistication, and Ruggedness. Then we computed the mean brand personality score for each dimension in each product category. After that we used T tests in order to compare each brand’s personality scores on every dimension with the mean score on this dimension in a particular product category. For example, we compared Kiwi supermarket’s Sincerity score with the mean Sincerity score for supermarkets. Here it is important to note that while the data collection was conducted the Lidl supermarket chain withdrew from the Norwegian market. Therefore, Lidl supermarket scores were excluded from the data analysis.

As a result, for every brand personality dimension we could divide brands in each product category into three groups: brands with a score which is significantly higher than the mean score on this dimension in a respective product category ( $p \leq 0.05$ ), brands with a score which is not significantly different from the mean score on this dimension in a respective product category ( $p \leq 0.05$ ), and brands with a score which is significantly lower than the mean score on this dimension in a respective product category ( $p \leq 0.05$ ). Such classification was made as a preparation for testing the

proposition with results from the main survey data. Please see Table 2-6 for more details.

**Table 2: Sincerity**

	Brands with a score which is significantly higher than the mean score	Brands with a score which is not significantly different from the mean score	Brands with a score which is significantly lower than the mean score
Clothes	H&M Cubus	Blåkläder VIC	Match
Furniture	Bohus IKEA	Skeidar	Møbelringen Fagmøbler
Supermarkets	Kiwi	COOP Meny	REMA 1000

**Table 3: Excitement**

	Brands with a score which is significantly higher than the mean score	Brands with a score which is not significantly different from the mean score	Brands with a score which is significantly lower than the mean score
Clothes	H&M	Match VIC	Cubus Blåkläder
Furniture	IKEA		Bohus Skeidar Møbelringen Fagmøbler
Supermarkets	Meny	Kiwi	COOP REMA 1000

**Table 4: Competence**

	Brands with a score which is significantly higher than the mean score	Brands with a score which is not significantly different from the mean score	Brands with a score which is significantly lower than the mean score
Clothes	H&M	Blåkläder Match VIC	Cubus
Furniture	IKEA	Bohus Skeidar Møbelringen	Fagmøbler
Supermarkets	Meny	Kiwi COOP	REMA 1000

**Table 5: Sophistication**

	Brands with a score which is significantly higher than the mean score	Brands with a score which is not significantly different from the mean score	Brands with a score which is significantly lower than the mean score
Clothes	Match VIC	H&M	Cubus Blåkläder
Furniture	Skeidar	Bohus IKEA Møbelringen	Fagmøbler
Supermarkets	Meny		Kiwi COOP REMA 1000

**Table 6: Ruggedness**

	Brands with a score which is significantly higher than the mean score	Brands with a score which is not significantly different from the mean score	Brands with a score which is significantly lower than the mean score
Clothes	Blåkläder		Match H&M Cubus VIC
Furniture	IKEA	Bohus Skeidar Møbelringen Fagmøbler	
Supermarkets		Meny Kiwi COOP REMA 1000	

## 6.2. Survey: Analyzing relationships between DI types and brand preferences

The second round of data collection formed the main survey. In the main survey we wanted to collect data that will allow us to analyze correlations between DI types and brand preferences, and how well they fit with the propositions presented earlier. One hundred and forty economics and business students from a Norwegian university participated in the survey. The gender distribution was 75 females and 65 males. The average age of the respondents was 21.88 years.

First, we asked respondents to fill out DI forms. The DI form is a self-scoring questionnaire based on the DI scale used here as a well established proxy for measuring dimensions of human personality (Ekelund and Langvik, 2006; Ekelund et al., 2007; Langvik, 2006). After filling the DI form respondents provided a ranking of their

preferences for the fifteen brands which were evaluated separately in the first round of data collection. First, they ranked their preferences for five supermarket brands. Then they ranked their preferences for five clothes shops, and finally they ranked their preferences for five furniture shops.

SPSS statistical analysis software was used for data analysis. DI scores were computed for each respondent on each dimension: Blue, Red, and Green. After that the mean DI scores for each dimension were calculated. Then we computed the distance from the mean for each respondent on each DI dimension. This indicates to what extent a respondent is more or less "green", "red" or "blue" than the average. Finally, we checked for correlations between the distance from the mean on each DI dimension and ranked preferences for different brands (see Table 7). The correlation coefficients are given in the parentheses.

**Table 7: Correlations between DI types and brand preferences**

		<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>
<b>Blue DI</b>	<i>Clothes</i>	Blåkläder (0.279)** Match (0.026) VIC (0.081)	H&M (-0.268)** Cubus (-0.136)
	<i>Furniture shops</i>	Fagmøbler (0.254)** Møbelringen (0.177)*	Bohus (-0.141) IKEA (-0.244)** Skeidar (-0.060)
	<i>Supermarkets</i>	Coop (0.074)	Kiwi (-0.021) Meny (-0.207)* Rema1000 (-0.007)
<b>Red DI</b>	<i>Clothes</i>	Cubus (0.260)** H&M (0.264)**	Blåkläder (-0.206)* Match (-0.177)* VIC (-0.145)
	<i>Furniture shops</i>	Bohus (0.204)* IKEA (0.182)*	Fagmøbler (-0.268)** Møbleringen (-0.073) Skeidar (-0.015)
	<i>Supermarkets</i>	Meny (0.124) Rema1000 (0.075)	Coop (-0.015) Kiwi (-0.020)
<i>Continues on the next page</i>			

		<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>
<b>Green DI</b>	<i>Clothes</i>	VIC (0.087) Match (0.192)*	Blåkläder (-0.073) Cubus (-0.166)* H&M (-0.014)
	<i>Furniture shops</i>	IKEA (0.061) Skeidar (0.091)	Bohus (-0.091) Fagmøbler (-0.360) Møbleringen (-0.118)
	<i>Supermarkets</i>	Kiwi (0.050) Meny (0.090)	Coop (-0.069) Rema1000 (-0.087)

\* Significant at  $p \leq 0.05$  level. \*\* Significant at  $p \leq 0.01$  level.

## 7. Discussion

Results are presented in table 8 below. For confirming/disconfirming propositions we only included the situations where the correlation between DI type and brand preferences was found statistically significant, and brand score was significantly higher or lower than the mean score on the dimension. Overall, based on the results, we can conclude that seven of our propositions were supported, two propositions were rejected and six propositions were partially supported.

Sector-wise, we found only one statistically significant correlation between DI type and preference for supermarkets. Therefore, we chose to present separately the results for the two other sectors (furniture shops and clothes shops). Based on our results, we can argue that the strength of correlation between consumer personality types and brand preferences may be industry dependent. Clothes and furniture brands are more visible and consumers tend to express their identities through clothes they wear and furniture they own. Supermarket brands are connected to our everyday basic needs and people may choose them more for price, accessibility and convenience considerations rather than brand personality.

In addition to the specific confirmation or disconfirmation of each proposition, the findings surface a potential hierarchy of influences, where certain brand dimensions

may be more dominant than others in establishing preference choices by each consumer type. Our data reveals such opportunity in the rejection of propositions 2, 5, and 14. In these cases excitement seems to override the influence of brand sincerity, competence and ruggedness in the brand choices exhibited by Blue DI types, indicating an aversion of excitement before appreciation of sincerity, competence and ruggedness.

Similar evidence may also be found in the partial confirmation of propositions 4 and 7, where sincerity seems to represent brand choices better than competence or excitement for Red DI types. In proposition 4 as long as sincerity and competence predict the same brand preference, both propositions are confirmed, however when the two contradict each other – the relationship to the sincerity dimension remains valid, while the relationship to the competence dimension is broken. And therefore, without being sincere, competence in itself will not be enough for preferring a brand by Red DI types. In a similar manner, in proposition 7 as long as sincerity and excitement predict the same brand preference, propositions are confirmed, however, when the two contradict – the relationship to the sincerity dimension prevails while the relationship to the excitement dimension is broken. And therefore, without being sincere, excitement in itself will not be enough for choosing a brand by Red DI types.

Moreover, weaker evidence for the suggestion that Red types are influenced by preference to highly sincere brands before all else is also evident in the partial support of proposition 13.

**Table 8: Propositions**

Propositions	Supported/ Part. supported/ Rejected	Clothes		Furniture		Supermarkets		Total 3 Sectors		Total 2 Sectors*	
		Expected Relationship	Opposite Relationship	Expected Relationship	Opposite Relationship	Expected Relationship	Opposite Relationship	Expected Relationship	Opposite Relationship	Expected Relationship	Opposite Relationship
P1	Supported	3/3 brands		3/3 brands				6/6 brands		6/6 brands	
P2	Rejected		1/1 brands		3/3 brands				4/4 brands		4/4 brands
P3	Supported	2/2 brands						2/2 brands		2/2 brands	
P4	Partially supported	1/2 brands	1/2 brands	2/2 brands				3/4 brands	1/4 brands	3/4 brands	1/4 brands
P5	Rejected		1/1 brands		2/2 brands		1/1 brands		4/4 brands		3/3 brands
P6	Supported	1/1 brands						1/1 brands		1/1 brands	
P7	Partially supported	2/3 brands	1/3 brands	2/3 brands	1/3 brands			4/6 brands	2/6 brands	4/6 brands	2/6 brands
P8	Supported	2/2 brands		3/3 brands		1/1 brands		6/6 brands		6/6 brands	
P9	Supported	1/1 brands						1/1 brands		1/1 brands	
P10	Partially supported	1/3 brands	2/3 brands	1/1 brands				2/4 brands	2/4 brands	2/4 brands	2/4 brands
P11	Supported	1/1 brands		1/1 brands		1/1 brands		3/3 brands		2/2 brands	
P12	Supported	2/2 brands						2/2 brands		2/2 brands	
P13	Partially supported	3/4 brands	1/4 brands					3/4 brands	1/4 brands	3/4 brands	1/4 brands
P14	Partially supported	2/2 brands			1/1 brands			2/3 brands	1/3 brands	2/3 brands	1/3 brands
P15	Partially supported	1/1 brands	1/1 brands					1/1 brands	1/1 brands	1/1 brands	1/1 brands

\*exclude supermarkets

## **8. Conclusion**

In the current paper we discuss the possible correlation between consumer's personality and brand personality. The previous research on this topic has been very limited. However, it is a highly relevant issue for both marketing researchers and practitioners, in the sense of being valuable to know whether a consumer's personality influences his/her choice of brands. Once gaining insights into this question, one may adjust brands and their image as portrayed in marketing communications to the target market's characteristics, enhancing both brand preferences and customers' satisfaction.

In line with the limited literature available about the congruence between human and brand personality (e.g. Dolich, 1969; Hamm and Cundiff, 1969; Shank and Langmeyer, 1994; Vitz and Johnston, 1965), we expect that consumers with different personality types would prefer brands with personalities that match their own. In the current study we have tested 15 propositions concerning a match between brand personality dimensions and the DI types, as a proxy of human personality types, in an effort towards providing a systematic approach for the analysis of human-brand personality match.

Our findings show that Blue DI types exhibit clear aversion to the excitement dimension, possibly overriding positive influences of the competence, sincerity and ruggedness dimensions. Moreover, Blue DI types' aversion towards the sophistication dimension is also evident. These findings correspond well with Blue DI types' need for structure, order and logic, which they also seek in the brands they purchase. Here sophistication and excitement send the opposite signal and immediately trigger a negative response.

Moreover, Red DI types exhibit clear preference for sincere brands, possibly overriding positive influences of competence and excitement, and the negative influence of ruggedness. Moreover, it seems that the sophistication dimension is operating in different directions on Red DI types. These findings correspond well with Red DI types' need for warmth, relationships and emotion. Here sincerity is the relational anchor which frames Red types' view of all else that follows.

In the case of Green DI types, little evidence exists. Confirmed relations are based on two significant correlations, and therefore pose a challenge for analysis. Improving results here may be achieved through enlarging the dataset with more individuals with significantly different Green dimension scores. If such effort will not result in more significant relations, then the very nature of the Green types may serve as an explanation, in the sense that Greens are individualistic, creative and prefer unique non-traditional or unexpected patterns of behavior and choices. Therefore, clear choice patterns are more difficult to observe, because having many complex and even contradictory opinions is part of being "Green".

In addition data revealed a possible hierarchy of brand personality dimensions' influence. In the case of Blue types the aversion of excitement, and in the case of Red types the preference for sincerity, both seem to emerge as the dominant preferential frame setters, following which other influences and cues enter into effect.

From a practitioner's point of view, these findings may be especially valuable for marketers when designing their marketing promotion and advertising efforts. Broad definition of target audiences in terms of DI types can help tailor the messages surrounding brands in ways that will allow congruence between brand personalities and consumer personalities. Marketing messages aimed for Blue types of customers should avoid any hint of excitement or sophistication, while messages for Red types of

customers should stress sincerity before all other cues. And as our study showed, the greater the intensity of personal expression and involvement in the consumption of goods (as in clothing and furniture versus supermarkets) the more important the congruence between brand and human personality becomes.

Finally, such an ambitious research naturally involves a number of potential limitations, which may also serve as an invitation for further research. First, the usage of different scales than the ones we are using may provide different valuable insights. In addition, data collection from a student population within one country may be limited, and should be duplicated in other settings in the future, both within national settings and across them. The advantage of extending this study across cultures may be enshrined in the possible identification of a moderating effect of culture. In this context, one can argue that personality characteristics transcend culture; however, at the same time, one should also recognize that culture may serve as a critical carrier of manifestations of personality traits as well as the symbolic prism through which they are evaluated and interpreted. All of these offer a rich platform for further research.

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