The Relationship between Brand Equity and Brand Personality-A Case Study of Popmart Blind Box

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ABSTRACT

Blind boxes have recently seen rising popularity, with POPMART blind box products standing out among various brands. This study seeks to examine whether there is a relationship between brand equity and brand personality, particularly in the context of POPMART brand. Utilizing a quantitative research approach, the researchers conducted a questionnaire survey on 238 blind box consumers aged 18-25 through cross-sectional sampling. The data collected were analyzed using the Smart-PLS tool (PLS-SEM). The results indicate a strong relationship between the four dimensions of BAV theory associated with brand personality, as assessed by Khan's brand equity tool: differentiation ($r = 0.836$), esteem ($r = 0.779$), knowledge ($r = 0.737$), relevance ($r = 0.887$). Large coefficient determination ($R=0.813$) indicates a high goodness fit for the model. In conclusion, there is a strong relationship between all four dimensions of Khan's brand equity BAV and Brand personality.

Keywords: POPMART, blind box, brand equity, brand personality, consumer

INTRODUCTION

In recent times, blind box items have gained significant popularity not only in China but also in several other nations like the US, Italy, Australia, Malaysia, etc. It is estimated the total market value for Blind box is 16.1 billion dollars in 2023 (YH Research, 2024). In contrast to toys intended for children, blind box toys are a type of style toy often referred to as art toy. Their target market is larger. Consumers purchase blind boxes, however they don't always purchase the same brand. There are other blind box brands available, including POPMART, 52TOYS, TOPTOY, 1983, SONEYANGLE, and others. Nonetheless, in the Chinese market, POPMART has consistently remained the favored brand of blind box (Qi et al., 2021).

Figure 1. Example of the appearance and contents of a blind box

The appeal of the POPMART blind box brand comes from its innovative design, high-quality production processes, collaborations with well-known brands and artists, and positive interactions with consumers. These factors together shape POPMART's brand personality (Cai, 2020). Meanwhile, POPMART's brand equity makes it the preferred blind box brand for many consumers and maintains its industry leadership (Jingchen et al., 2023). According to Yao and Wang (2023), POPMART is a newcomer in the industry and finding the relationship between brand equity and brand personality is crucial for the POPMART brand. Based on the above background, the researchers of this paper poses the research question: Is there a relationship between the brand equity and brand personality of POPMART blind boxes brand? Therefore, this study set the research objective: to determine whether there is a relationship between brand equity and brand personality.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES AND RESEARCH MODEL

Most of the previous studies have shown that there is a relationship between brand personality and brand equity (Emami et al. 2023; Maria et al. 2014; Kanwal et al. 2022; Valette-Florence et al. 2011), and studies have also noted that brand personality has a positive impact on brand equity (Su & Tong, 2015; Luffarelli et al, 2019). Therefore alternative hypotheses will be utilized. The BAV (Brand Asset Valuator) brand equity model is widely used to analyze brand equity (Bechter et al., 2016; Jenkins, 2021). According to Khan (2009), the model measures the equity value of a brand by evaluating its four different dimensions (differentiation, relevance, esteem and knowledge). Previous studies have not provided insight into the link between the four dimensions of brand equity theory and brand personality. Therefore, this study aims to explore the relationship between Khan's (2009) four brand equity dimensions and brand personality.

Figure 2. Research Framework

Therefore, the study proposes the following alternative hypotheses:

H1: There is a relationship between Differentiation dimension and Brand personality.
H2: There is a relationship between Relevance dimension and Brand personality.
H3: There is a relationship between Esteem dimension and Brand personality.
H4: There is a relationship between Knowledge dimension and Brand personality.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a quantitative approach, conducting a cross-sectional survey of 238 blind box users aged 18-25 in the Changping District of Beijing, China. Data analysis was conducted through Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS SEM) using Smart PLS version 3.
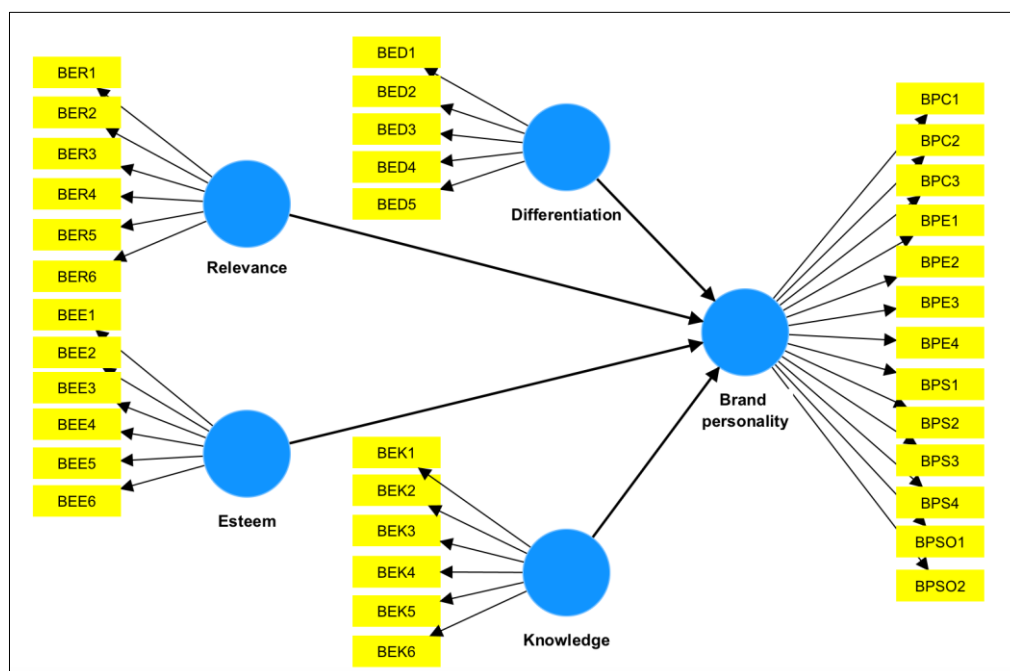
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Figure 3. Research Model

Reliability and Validity

Table 1 *Results for Cronbach's Alpha and Average Variance Extracted (AVE)*

	Cronbach's alpha	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Brand personality	0.960	0.647
Differentiation	0.930	0.724
Esteem	0.938	0.717
Knowledge	0.932	0.694
Relevance	0.908	0.625

The findings showed that all Cronbach's Alpha (CA) values exceeded 0.80. As per Cronbach (1951), the range is from 0 (entirely unreliable) to 1 (fully reliable), with a recommended threshold for confirmatory studies being CA > 0.800. It can be assumed that all constructs are fully consistent with

internal consistency reliability. This study used AVE data to validate convergent validity. Fornell and Larcker (1981) aimed to quantify the proportion of variance the latent variable (LV) captures from its indicators relative to the variance from measurement error. Suggested threshold: AVE > 0.50. It can be assumed that all constructs are fully consistent with consistent validity.

Correlation

In this study, Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to test the hypotheses and the Alternative hypothesis was chosen for this study. Therefore hypothesis testing was conducted with the aim of confirming whether the Alternative hypothesis is acceptable or not. The researchers opted to employ the logarithmic value or "r" interpretation as recommended by Schober et al. (2018) to gauge the strength of relationships between the independent variables and dependent variable.

Table 2 *Correlation Results*

	Brand personality	Brand equity **Differentiation**	Brand equity **Esteem**	Brand equity **Knowledge**	Brand equity **Relevance**
Brand personality	1.000				
Brand equity **Differentiation**	**0.836**	1.000			
Brand equity **Esteem**	**0.779**	0.686	1.000		
Brand equity **Knowledge**	**0.737**	0.720	0.668	1.000	
Brand equity **Relevance**	**0.887**	0.867	0.904	0.741	1.000

According to Schober et al. (2018), r-value of 0.70-0.89 represents strong correlation. The above table shows that i) Differentiation and Brand personality have an r-value of 0.836 within the 95% confidence interval for a strong correlation. ii) Relevance and Brand personality have an r of 0.887 at 95% confidence interval for strong correlation. iii) Esteem and Brand personality have an r-value of 0.779 at 95% confidence interval for a strong correlation. iv) Knowledge and Brand personality have an r-value of 0.737 at 95% confidence interval for a strong correlation.

R-square

Table 3 *R-square Results*

	R-square	R-square adjusted
Brand personality	**0.813**	0.810

The coefficient of determination of R2 for willingness to purchase is 0.813, which according to Cohen (1989) represents large coefficient determination. In essence, brand equity accounts for 81.3% (a value of 0.813) of the variance in the pair of brand equity, while the remaining 18.7% is attributed to variables not considered in this research. This implies that the brand equity variable and the corresponding indicator can be utilized to clarify the percentage change in the Brand personality variable and the corresponding indicator.

DISCUSSION

Therefore, according to this model, all hypotheses are accepted and can be explained as follows: i) There is a strong relationship between brand equity Differentiation dimension and Brand personality. ii) There is a strong relationship between brand equity Relevance dimension from Brand personality. iii) There is a strong relationship between brand equity Esteem dimension and Brand personality. iv) There is a strong relationship between the brand equity Knowledge dimension and Brand personality. In conclusion, there is a strong relationship between all four dimensions of Khan's brand equity BAV and Brand personality. We are living in the digital age. The emergence of the Internet, smartphones, and other technological innovations marks this era (Gao, & Chen, 2022). POPMART promotions can be seen on various social media platforms and video sites, and this type of promotion allows young people to quickly identify with the brand. Identity and comfort are sought in virtual communities, and self-identity is established through imaginative and ostentatious consumption (J.W. Hu, 2020). A distinct and favorable brand personality positively affects consumer satisfaction and loyalty and leads to positive consumer behavior (Luffarelli et al., 2019, 2023). Customer satisfaction, loyalty and positive consumer behavior contribute to brand equity (Emami et al., 2023).

CONCLUSION

The study reveals pronounced correlations between various dimensions of Khan's BAV brand equity and Brand personality. Specifically, there are strong relationships between the Differentiation, Relevance, Esteem, and Knowledge dimensions and Brand personality. In essence, all these four dimensions collectively have a compelling influence on Brand personality.

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