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A study on the effects of service quality on brand personality: Evidence from Hotel industry

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C H R O N I C L E

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A B S T R A C T

Quality has always been one of the most important topics in the competitiveness of organizations' service activities and it influences on brands, significantly. This paper presents an empirical investigation to study the effects of service quality on brand personality in hotel industry. The study uses two questionnaires, one for measuring brand personality by using Aaker's questionnaire (Aaker, 1997) [Aaker, J. L. (1997). Dimensions of brand personality. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 34(3), 347-356.] and the other one for measuring service quality. The study chooses a hotel chain in city of Mashad, Iran named Sadr Hotel and examines the effects of five-brand personality on service quality by choosing a sample of 384 customers. Using structural equation modeling, the study has determined that all five factors could influence on service quality of the case study, positively.

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1. Introduction

Brand personality has been one of the most popular topics for several decades and most advertising practitioners as well as several marketing academics have accepted it. For Years, many have argued that brand personality could be an important topic of study because it may give us insight to differentiate brands, develop the emotional characteristics of a brand and augment the personal concept of a brand for the consumer. Nevertheless, despite the fact that brand personality has attracted considerable academic attention, it has been also criticized on a number of its components (Aaker & Fournier, 1995). For one, at the conceptual level, there is some confusion over the precise definition of brand personality and how it is distinguished from brand image. Aaker et al. (2001) argued that the meaning embedded in consumption symbols, such as commercial brands, could serve to represent and institutionalize the assets. They conducted four studies to investigate how symbolic and expressive attributes associated with commercial brands were structured and how this structure varied across 3 cultures depending on a combined technique. They discussed the meaning of the

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brand personality dimensions in the context of cross-cultural research on values and affect, globalization issues, and cultural frame shifting. Arasli et al. (2005) presented an empirical investigation to measure the service quality perceptions of Greek Cypriot bank customers. They also tested the relationship between service quality, customer satisfaction and positive word of mouth (WOM), in the light of changing bank market dynamics due to EU accession. Using SERVQUAL technique, the study has disclosed that bank customers did not receive their expectations where the largest gap was achieved in the responsiveness-empathy dimension. In their survey, reliability items maintained the highest impact on customer satisfaction, which in turn kept a statistically significant effect on the positive WOM.

Bosnjak et al. (2007) identified and operationalized indigenous German brand personality attributions from a person-centric perspective. The study entailed an exploration of those positive as well as negative human personality dimensions applicable to brands and identified four dimensions of brand personality including Drive, Conscientiousness, Emotion, and Superficiality. Hussey and Duncombe (1999) described the development of a set of implicit characteristics for two animation sets to which respondents would respond similarly and with consistency to identify the brand image and consequently to detect the motivations behind brand choice. Parasuraman et al. (2005) conceptualized, constructed, refined, and examined a multiple-item scale (E-S-QUAL) for measuring the service quality distributed by Web sites on which customers shop online. In their survey, a two-stage empirical data collection disclosed that two various scales were essential for capturing electronic service quality. Personality also influences on building a brand. Plummer (1985) discussed how personality could make a difference on building a brand. Karoubi (2014) Aaker's five-dimension model for measuring brand personality of a state-owned airline company and a private one. The results of the data analysis indicated that Mahan Airline was superior to Iran Air in all the five dimensions.

2. The proposed study

This paper presents an empirical investigation to study the effects of service quality on brand personality in hotel industry. The study uses two questionnaires, one for measuring brand personality by using Aaker's questionnaire (Aaker, 1997) and the other one is adopted from Parasuraman's work (Parasuraman et al., 1985, 2005). The study has accomplished among regular customers of a hotel in city of Mashad, Iran. The sample size is calculated as follows,

$$N = Z_{\alpha/2}^2 \frac{p \times q}{e^2}, \tag{1}$$

where N is the sample size, $p = 1 - q$ represents the probability, $z_{\alpha/2}$ is CDF of normal distribution and finally ε is the error term. For our study we assume $p = 0.5, z_{\alpha/2} = 1.96$ and e=0.05, the number of sample size is calculated as N=384. Fig. 1 demonstrates the summary of the proposed study.

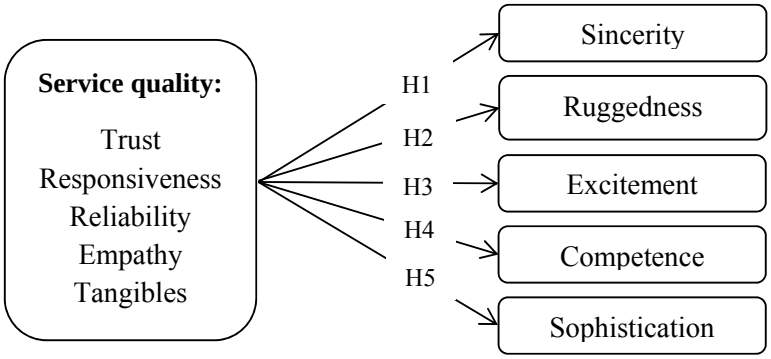

Fig. 1. The proposed study

Based on the structure of Fig. 1, the following five hypotheses are proposed.

1. Quality of services influences positively on brand sincerity.
2. Quality of services influences positively on brand ruggedness.
3. Quality of services influences positively on brand excitement.
4. Quality of services influences positively on competence.
5. Quality of services influences positively on sophistication.

The study uses structural equation modeling to examine different hypotheses of the survey. Table 1 shows some basic statistics associated with the proposed study.

Table 1
The results of statistical observations

Criterion	The results	Desirable value
Chi-Square/df	2.87	< 3.0
Goodness of fit index (GFI)	0.902	>0.90
Root Mean Square Estimated (RMSEA)	0.0063	< 0.1
Certified Factor Index (CFI)	0.911	>0.90
Normalized Factor index (NFI)	0.905	>0.90
NNFI	0.960	>0.90

As we can see from the results of Table 1, all statistical observations were well above the acceptable limit and we therefore can examine the hypotheses based on the results of SEM implementation.

3. The results

In this section, we present details of our findings on testing various hypotheses based on SEM implementation shown in Table 2 and the results of our findings confirms all hypotheses of the survey.

Table 2
The summary of standard coefficients

Hypothesis	β	t-value	Sig.	Result
First	0.168	5.92	0.000	Confirmed
Second	0.149	7.83	0.000	Confirmed
Third	0.247	6.92	0.000	Confirmed
Fourth	0.361	8.77	0.000	Confirmed
Fifth	0.152	8.85	0.000	Confirmed

4. Conclusion

We have presented an empirical investigation to study the effects of service quality on brand personality in hotel industry. Using structural equation modeling, the study has determine a positive and meaningful relationships between five factors including Sincerity, Excitement, Competence, Sophistication, as well as Ruggedness and service quality. The results of our investigation are consistent with Karoubi (2014), Matzler et al. (2006), Venable et al. (2005) and Muhammadian et al. (2009).

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