

## **Brand Personality in Chile: a combined emic-etic approach**

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### Abstract

The purpose of our study is to extend previous work on brand personality (Aaker 1997). While following Aaker's recommended methodology, we did so in the context of an emerging market economy such as Chile, and using a combined emic-etic research approach. Then, we investigated the cross-cultural applicability of the construct and we also look into the applicability of the measurement instrument developed by Aaker (1997). After several validation studies, six brand personality dimensions were found instead of the original North American based study, with Tradition being the new Chilean dimension. This is consistent with previous

work finding nation-specific dimensions in Japan, Spain, and France (i.e. Aaker, Benet-Martinez, Garolera, 2001; Koebel and Landwein, 1999). Insights for the understanding and management of brand images in international contexts, complementing parallel work done in other developed nations are derived.

Keywords: Brand; brand personality; cross cultural; Chile

### Resumen

El propósito de este estudio es extender el trabajo existente en el área de personalidad de marca iniciado por Aaker (1997). Se sigue el método sugerido por Aaker, pero en el contexto de una economía de Mercado emergente como Chile, y usando un enfoque combinado emico-etico de investigación. Por ende se investiga la aplicabilidad cross-cultural del constructo personalidad de marca, y del instrumento desarrollado por Aaker en el contexto norteamericano. Después de varios estudios de validación, se encontraron 6 dimensiones de la personalidad de marca, en comparación a los 5 originales en el instrumento de EE.UU., 5 de ellos con bastantes grados de similitud y una sexta dimension denominada Tradición, como particular a la realidad Chilena. Estos resultados son consistentes con estudios previos que han encontrado dimensiones específicas a naciones (culturas) en Japón, España, y Francia (i.e. Aaker, Benet-Martinez, Garolera, 2001; Koebel and Landwein, 1999). Se presentarn implicancias para el entendimiento y gestión de las marcas, en contextos internacionales, y para estudios futuros.

Palabras clave: Marca, personalidad de marca, *cross-cultural*, medición, Chile.

## 1. Introduction

Branding is unquestionably a key a topic in marketing research and management. It is not surprising then, that branding research has recently also increased both in quantitative and qualitative terms. In particular, research in areas such as: brand building, brand extensions, and brand assessment and valuation, has been salient in

the recent literature (e.g. Shocker, Srivastava and Ruekert 1994; Ailawadi 2001; Ahluwalia and Gurghan-Canli 2000; Janizewski 2000; Yoo, Donthu and Lee 2000; Low and Fullerton 1994).

In this study we focus on the brand personality construct, a research stream that we consider particularly important in branding research. This research stream is reloaded by Jennifer Aaker's (1997) classical article. In that study, Aaker (1997) proposes a multidimensional structure for understanding and measuring brand personality. The five dimensions identified by Aaker to understand the personality of brands were: sophistication, excitement, roughness, competence, and sincerity. Several articles have replicated Aaker studies (e.g. Koebel and Landwein 1999; Ferrandi, Valette-Florence, and Fine-Falcy 2000; Aaker, Benet-Martinez, and Garolera 2001; Sung and Tinkham 2005), questioned Aaker's conceptualization of brand personality (e.g. Azoulay and Kapferer 2003), and applied it to different settings or to examine further relationships (e.g. Venable, Rose, Bush and Gilbert, 2005), thus generating an interesting amount of work. Other researchers have taken Aaker's scale and have applied directly in a foreign setting, like Rojas-Méndez, Erenchun-Podlech and Silva-Olave's article on the brand personality of Ford in Chile (2004). More recently Maehle and Supphellen (2011) explore the sources of brand personality, finding that company level attributes and consumer-based sources are keys to sincerity and competence dimensions, sophistication and ruggedness are formed by symbolic sources, and excitement is created by a combination of company level, consumer-based and symbolic sources. Complementing existing research Freling, Crosno and Henard (2011) focus on the appeal of brand personality to consumers, suggesting that brand personality acts through its appeal to consumers. Brand personalities not appealing to consumers will not make an effect on consumers and consumers' decisions.

Despite the importance of these findings for marketing research and practice, most of these investigations occur in the developed world. The purpose of our study is to extend Aaker's

work, to the developing world, and to test if a similar multidimensional structure may be at work in a different context (see for ex. Espinoza *et al.* 2009; Sunde and Brodie 1993). Previous and parallel work conducted in other developed nations (e.g. Koebel and Landwein 1999; Aaker, Benet-Martinez, Garolera 2001) suggests that brand personality might be culture-driven. The study follows Aaker's recommended methodology, in the context of an emerging market economy such as Chile. The paper not only investigates the cross-cultural validity of the brand personality construct, but also looks into the applicability of the measurement instrument developed by Aaker (1997). Two lines of inquiry guide the paper: 1) Do people in emerging markets think of the personality of brands such as "Coca-Cola", or "Cheerios", or "Amazon" or "El Sitio" in terms of the same dimensions such as proposed by Aaker in the U.S.?; and, if that is the case, 2) can we use the same instrument to measure brand personality in other country markets as we can in the US?. A combined emic-etic approach is used to address these questions.

## **2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

Summarizing much of the brand equity literature, Keller (1993, 1998) identified two major drivers of brand equity: brand image and brand awareness. Both are elements of what Keller calls brand knowledge, or, the cognitive structure associated to a brand in consumers' minds. One of the key components of brand image, according to Keller (1993) is the personality of the brand.

Brand personality can be defined as the set of human characteristics associated to a brand. As an example, "Absolut" vodka may be described as being "hip", "young adult drink", or "cool"; while "Stolichnaya" vodka may be characterized as being "conservative" and an "adult drink" (Aaker 1997). Brand personality is then an important element of brand image, as it can be

a major differentiating factor -particularly for products that are “commoditized”. In the case of the Chilean market, for example, one of the better known pasta brands in Chile, “Lucchetti”, is perceived to be more “feminine” and associated to “mom”; whereas “Carozzi”, the primary competitor, is perceived as more “traditional”.

Brands and their associated personalities derive part of their differentiating power from their relative relevance in shaping customers’ self-images and concepts. Most individuals make purchase decisions based not just on immediate consumption needs, but often, also on more permanent or longer term criteria, such as helping build a self image. The management of brand personalities then, is important in the positioning efforts for products, and for extending the use of brands to global settings where cultural differences may play an important role. Although, evidence might be found regarding the presence of global brand images and personalities (such as the Wrangler cowboy), this might be a misleading “guess” for brand managers who might be looking at their brands from a culturally biased perspective, assuming that brands and their personalities are understood in terms of the same dimensions in different cultures.

Assuming that the brand personality construct does exist in different cultures (as the human personality construct), an additional significant problem marketing managers face when attempting to use these theoretical concepts on brand image, is the lack of validated measurement instruments that give them ways to easily assess the images or personalities of their brands, or enable them to monitor brands on a regular basis (Park and Srinivasan 1994).

### **3. Brand Personality Operationalization and Measurement**

In a recent study, Aaker (1997) studied the dimensionality of brand personality in an impressive study in the US. She found that brand personality includes five dimensions: Sincerity, Excitement,

Competence, Sophistication, and Ruggedness. Azoulay and Kapferer (2003), have questioned the validity of the instrument, indicating that it actually mixes different concepts, which may be considered and measured separately. Although understanding some of the theoretical arguments, Aaker's approach, has some practical appeals. It actually provides a tool that can be used by brand managers to assess brand health and for defining brand strategies, and it is a concept that is understood, that complements other brand assessment exercises that companies may perform for their brands. The main goal of our work was to validate the dimensionality of the brand personality construct developed by Aaker in a different cultural setting -as is the case of Chile.

#### **4. Combined Emic-Etic Methodology**

Significant work in comparative research methods has addressed the so called "emic-etic" distinction -as stated by Berry (1969). Emics refer to concepts that operate only in one society or culture (culture-specific), while etics refer to concepts that are culture-free and that operate in different societies. In marketing research, the etic approach has a very widespread use. This approach studies phenomena from outside the system, and may involve more than one culture, and it uses criteria external to the system to describe or understand phenomena. Fundamentally, this approach states the existence of universal or "culture-free" aspects of the world, which can be found in every culture or country.

An etic approach implies that the researcher takes a concept and its respective operationalization developed in one culture (generally the researcher's home culture), and applies them in the foreign country (Berry 1969, 1989, Church and Katigbak, 1988). Two strong assumptions are made: 1) the concepts and measures are valid ones to study the phenomena under consideration in the new country or culture being studied, and 2) they represent a valid basis

for comparing both countries or cultures. As indicated by Berry (1989), the only adaptation in the original instrument or measure, is its translation --in this case through a back-translation procedure.

Despite its popularity, many cross-cultural research methodologists have expressed their criticisms to the etic orientation (Hui and Triandis 1983; Berry 1989; Wind and Douglas 1982; and Church and Katigbak 1988). In general, the argument is that in the contact with the other culture, a researcher should be able to obtain better knowledge and generate better comparisons if he/she did some emic research, and combined it with the etic approach. Researchers can improve the quality of their cross-cultural studies if they involve themselves in the foreign country or culture under study.

The combined emic-etic approach, (see for example Hui and Triandis 1985) involves three stages of inquiry. First, the researcher identifies an etic construct which appears to have universal status (e.g. Brand Personality). Second, the researcher develops and validates emic ways of measuring this construct. Third, the emically defined etic construct can be used in making cross-cultural comparisons. In fact, an operationalization of the construct is developed by sampling from the (emic) contents of this construct in both countries or cultures. It is assumed that some overlap between this contents sets exist. Thus, the final measurement instrument includes items representing the intersection of contents (the core etic), and also the unique contents of the construct in the different countries or cultures (specific emics). This approach implicitly assumes that at least some constructs are universal, but that manifestations or indicators of them (such as behaviors or judgements) can differ across cultures. A combined emic-etic approach is also argued for by several marketing researchers questioning the generalizability of certain scale items (Austin, Sigauw and Mattila 2003) or directly assessing brand personality with "emerging" scales adapted to their contexts (Koebel and Landwein 1999; Aaker, Benet-Martinez, Garolera 2001).

## 5. Method

In accordance with Aaker's original methodology (1997) and following a combined emic-etic research approach, the study in Chile involved the following phases:

Phase 1. A pilot study with 60 subjects (55% women, 45% men) was conducted in order to identify brands with a higher recall in a variety of product categories. Subjects were asked to simply state the 10 brands that they could think of first. Brands in the jeans, sporting attire, beer, sodas, electronics, and food categories, were among the ones that had a higher recall. The purpose of doing this, was to eventually choose brands that were relevant to the subjects.

Phase 2. Based on the pre-selected list of brands obtained in phase 1, a subset of 36 brands were selected representing 9 product categories: soft-drinks, cars, sporting attire, cosmetics, computers, electronics, perfumes, and jeans. Twenty-five subjects from both genders assessed these brands, in terms of whether they were perceived as more symbolic or more functional. The purpose of this selection, was to obtain as balanced a list of final brands as possible, for inclusion in the final survey study. The highest scoring brands from each product category, in both symbolic and functional attributes, were then selected. (The brands chosen were: Fanta, Coca-Cola, Toyota, BMW, Bata, Nike, Princeton, Revlon, Packard Bell, Apple, Aiwa, Phillips, Fensa, Trotter, Carolina Herrera, Chanel#5, Wrangler, Benetton).

Phase 3. The 18 brands selected in the previous phase were used for another pretest, where 23 different subjects representing different genders, age ranges and place of residence, were asked to generate personality characteristics that they thought were descriptive of these brands. By means of this procedure, 112 brand -personality characteristics were identified.

Phase 4. The 112 brand personality descriptors identified in Phase 3 were combined with 229 characteristics obtained from previous human personality studies (e.g. McRae and Costa 1989, Norman 1963). After eliminating duplicate and synonymous characteristics, a final list of 239 personality characteristics was obtained. These 239 characteristics were evaluated by a different sample of 28 subjects (quota sample, same characteristics as the one in Phase 3). The subjects were asked to rate if the different characteristics were descriptive of a brand's personality using the following scale (1 = Not descriptive at all / 7 = Extremely descriptive). As a way to clarify the brand personality concept, subjects were given three examples in a questionnaire booklet (e.g. Wrangler: young, classic, comfortable, American, rude, masculine).

After obtaining average scores from the evaluation scales for each of the brand characteristics, 70 characteristics with higher average scores (from 5 to 6.1 in a 7-point scale) were chosen.

## **6. Chilean Study**

The final study involved the application of a questionnaire to a sample of 173 subjects of both genders and different socioeconomic groups. The questionnaire included 91 characteristics of brand personality, 70 of them chosen from the Phase 4 – Pretest, and 21 characteristics chosen from the original Aaker study (those with relative high average scores in Pretest 3, but not higher than the cut-off point of 5). In order to have an adequate representation of different types of brands, 37 brands were included in the study. These 37 brands were derived from the results of phases 1 and 2, and complemented with well-known Chilean brands, to provide an equivalent match to the original brands in the US study.

As in the original Aaker paper, the 37 brands were divided in four groups of 9 each, having “Levi's”, as a control brand which

was included in each of the four groups. Each person in the sample was asked to rate (using a seven-point scale: 1 = Very Descriptive, 7 = Not descriptive at all) how descriptive each of the 91 characteristics were for each of the 9 brands included in his/her booklet. All the brands selected (shown in Table 1) met the following criteria:

- They represented symbolic, functional and hybrid goods or services
- They represented similar product categories to the ones in the original Aaker study.

**Table 1**  
*Brand Groupings used in Chilean Study*

BRANDS GROUP 1	BRANDS GROUP 2	BRANDS GROUP 3	BRANDS GROUP 4
Pepsodent toothpaste	Kodak films	Torre notebooks	Hellmann's mayonnaise
Avon cosmetics	Costa chocolates	Village cards	Mattel toys
Lider hypermarkets	Pepsi-Cola soda	Lee jeans	Benetton fashion wear
Porsche cars	Chanel #5 perfume	Charlie perfume	Nike athletic shoes
Reebok athletic shoes	MasterCard credit Card	Sedal shampoo	AFP Provida pension fund
Fensa home appliances	Sony TVs	Entel telecommunications	Revlon cosmetics
Diet Coca Cola soda	Nintendo games	Casio electronics	McDonald's restaurants
La Red broadcasting	Telefonica telecommunications	Lucchetti dry pasta	Banco de A. Edwards bank
IBM computers	Mercedes Benz Cars	Honda cars	Zolben analgesics
Levi's Jeans	Levi's Jeans	Levi's jeans	Levi's jeans

## 7. Data Analysis and Results

The individual ratings' of brand personality characteristics for each brand were correlated. This 91 x 91 correlation matrix was analyzed using principal components analysis with the VARIMAX rotation procedure, and 12 components with eigenvalues higher than 1 were identified. Applying the scree plot procedure, a 6-factor solution was selected as a representative factorial structure. Further criteria that supported the adequacy of this solution included: a) the conceptual meaningfulness of all six components, b) the amount of variance explained by all components (78.7%), and c) the stability of the 6-factor solution in for four sub-samples: men, women, older subjects, and younger subjects. Given previous and parallel studies have found a 5-factor solution (Aaker 1997, Aaker *et al.* 2001) we decided to investigate a 5-factor solution further, but the amount of total variance explained dropped significantly and non-redundant brand personality descriptors were lost in the process. Therefore, a six-factor solution was finally chosen. Factor labels were assigned in an iterative multi-step process. First, alternative plausible labels were generated by one researcher on the basis of the factor loadings of the different brand personality traits, giving higher weight to items with higher loadings. Second, final brand personality components' labels, were assigned after considering the input from the facet identification phase. These labels needed to provide a genuine and comprehensive representation, of the different facets included in each of the brand personality dimensions identified.

These 6 dimensions were 1) Sophistication (25.3%) represented by characteristics such as exclusive, classy or glamorous, 2) Competence (15.3%) described by characteristics such as intelligent, hard-worker, technological or serious, 3) Ruggedness (11.6%) defined by attributes like resistant, rugged, and risk-taker, 4) Excitement (10.6%) including characteristics like original, happy, funny or sentimental, 5) Traditional (9.1%)

represented by characteristics like classic, traditional or trustworthy, and 6) Sincerity (6.8%) described by personality traits such as delicate, femenin or sincere. The percentages indicated in parenthesis represent the proportion of variance explained by each component. It is worth noting that these dimensions are highly similar as the ones in the original study by Aaker, with the exception of the “Traditional” dimension -which is novel to this Chilean study.

*A. Brand Personality Instrument: Facets and Characteristics*

The next step in the study was to reduce the number of total personality characteristics, in order to develop a Brand Personality Instrument that could be more easily applied for measurement purposes. Aaker's (1997) methodology was again used, performing principal component analysis within each dimension (eigenvalue > 1 as the extraction criteria).

This allowed for several personality facets to be identified in each dimension. Then, the inter-correlations of characteristics within each facet were analyzed, in order to select the 2 or 3 characteristics that better represent each facet. In particular, the characteristic with the higher item to total score correlation, was selected as the nucleus of each facet; and those characteristics with the highest correlations with the facet's nucleus, were chosen as part of the facet.

As a result of this analysis, the final dimensional structure of brand personality showed: 6 dimensions, 15 facets and 36 characteristics, which are presented in Table 2 (grouped by facet, and with each facet shown underlined). Aaker's original results are provided for comparison on Table 3.

**Table 2**  
*Brand Personality Dimensions and Facets of Chilean Study*

SOPHISTICATION	COMPETENCE	RUGGEDNES S	EXCITEMENT	TRADITION	SINCERITY
<u>Upper Class</u> exclusive classy distinguished	<u>Intelligent</u> technologic intelligent	<u>Tough</u> rugged resistant masculine	<u>Imaginative</u> original imaginative	<u>Traditional</u> traditional classic	<u>Feminine</u> delicate feminine
<u>Charming</u> glamorous good looking marvelous	<u>Reliable</u> hard worker serious honest	<u>Risk taker</u> cool risk taker	<u>Tender</u> sentimental tender	<u>Practical</u> trustworthy confident	<u>Sincere</u> sincere spiritual
	<u>Nice</u> fresh nice exquisite	<u>Daring</u> daring Liberal	<u>Spirited</u> happy funny childish		

Notes:1)The brand personality characteristics in this table are the authors' translations of the original Spanish words. 2) Dimensions and Facets in bold, are the same as those in the original US study.

**Table 3**  
*Brand Personality Dimensions and the facets  
in the US (Aaker 1997)*

SINCERITY	EXCITEMENT	COMPETENCE	SOPHISTICATION	RUGGEDNESS
<u>Down to Earth</u> down-to-earth family oriented small town	<u>Daring</u> daring trendy exciting	<u>Intelligent</u> intelligent technical corporate	<u>Upper Class</u> upper class glamorous good-looking	<u>Tough</u> rugged tough
<u>Honest</u> ( <u>Sincere</u> ) honest sincere real	<u>Imaginative</u> original imaginative	<u>Reliable</u> reliable hard working secure	<u>Charming</u> charming feminine smooth	<u>Outdoorsy</u> outdoorsy masculine Western
<u>Wholesome</u> wholesome original	<u>Up-to date</u> up-to-date independent contemporary	<u>Successful</u> successful leader confident		
<u>Cheerful</u> cheerful sentimental friendly	<u>Spirited</u> spirited cool young			

### *B. Validation Study: Generalizability of Findings*

To test the generalizability of our results across brands and subjects, we conducted one additional study with a different sample (N = 160, 50% women, representing different socioeconomic groups) and a new set of brands. This validation study was conducted in the Gran Concepcion Area which is the third most populated area in Chile, and has been suggested by marketers and sociologists as a market representative of the whole Chilean population. In this study we included an even number of service and product categories. Using a different sampling frame and brands, though with only 2 groups of six brands each, substantial similarities in the dimensional structure of brand personality were found. Again, after replicating our procedure, results showed a 6-dimensional structure with a Traditional dimension added to the 5 original dimensions from Aaker's work (Details of this study are not included here for space reasons).

## **8. Study Conclusions and Limitations**

We may look at the results in three levels. First, in terms of brand personality dimensions, there is great similarity in the structure between both cultures, with 5 shared dimensions in the US and Chilean data, and an additional dimension appearing in the Chilean study. Second, in terms of the brand personality dimensions' facets, while we do see similarities, they are less obvious than at the dimension level, and interesting differences can be observed between Tables 2 and 3. Finally, in terms of the specific brand personality characteristics, we observe the least amount of similarities between both sets of data. While these differences may represent consequences of the procedures used, they may also be a function of semantic differences, or language usage. Certainly, this is an issue that needs to be further studied. Nonetheless, these same differences, in essence, illustrate the richness of the research

method, in that even with the same dimension, researchers can identify different sets of specific brand personality characteristics in the different markets being investigated. These characteristics may then be used in a variety of managerial applications such as advertising appeals, positioning anchors, product / differentiation arguments, or even brand image elements. Our final results are shown below in Table 4.

**Table 4**  
*Brand Personality Dimensions by Brand*  
*(Average Factor Scores)*

PRODUCT	BRAND	DIMENSIONS					
		SOPHISTI- CATION	COMPE- TENCE	EXCI- TEMENT	RUGGED NESS	SINCE- RITY	TRADI- TION
Cars	PORSCHE cars	2.08	.38	.05	1.92	.40	-.08
	MERCEDES BENZ cars	2.48	.17	-.71	-.25	-1.46	1.43
	HONDA cars	1.30	.23	-.25	.92	-.05	.64
Foodstuffs	COSTA chocolates	-.32	-2.08	.72	-1.35	-1.18	.90
	HELLMANN'S mayonnaise	-.67	-.90	-.50	-.76	-.70	-.07
	LUCCHETTI dry pasta	-1.06	-1.19	-.40	-.70	.29	1.26
Beverages	Light COKE soda	-.21	-.89	-.22	.81	.93	-.65
	PEPSI soda	-.89	-1.40	.06	.27	-1.16	-1.68
Cosmetics	AVON cosmetics	-.09	-.43	-.50	-.69	1.09	-.53
	REVLON cosmetics	1.54	-.38	-.29	-.54	.89	-1.27
	CHANEL#5 perfume	2.45	-1.40	-.47	-1.24	1.31	-.57
	CHARLIE perfume	.38	-1.36	-.22	.02	1.54	-1.32
Health care	SEDAL shampoo	-.43	-1.08	-.89	-.59	.65	.32
Hygiene	PEPSODENT						
Products	toothpaste	-.96	-1.05	-.50	-.32	-.06	1.16
	ZOLBEN analgesic	-1.26	-.41	-.89	-1.15	-.69	.86

*(Continue)*

<b>Clothes and shoes</b>	<b>LEE jeans</b>	-.60	-.61	-.24	1.80	.18	.51
	<b>LEVI'S jeans</b>	-.28	-.82	-.46	2.85	.12	.82
	<b>BENETTON fashion wear</b>	1.37	-.17	.25	.20	-.66	-.92
	<b>NIKE athletic shoes</b>	.03	-.03	.17	1.49	-.66	.17
	<b>REEBOK athletic shoes</b>	.02	-.51	-.17	1.50	-.71	.42
	<b>Electronics and Appliances</b>	<b>CASIO electronics</b>	-.22	1.26	-.02	.29	-.15
	<b>SONY electronics</b>	.39	1.10	.15	-.70	-.40	.56
	<b>KODAK film</b>	-.53	.90	.58	.00	.88	.38
	<b>IBM computers</b>	.28	2.22	-.33	-.25	-.61	.56
	<b>NINTENDO games</b>	-.61	.20	1.94	.27	-2.00	-1.96
	<b>FENSA home appliances</b>	-.71	.71	-.80	-.27	.83	1.09
	<b>MATTEL toys</b>	.08	.11	2.77	-.73	-.81	.65
<b>Paper products</b>	<b>VILLAGE greeting cards</b>	.34	.25	3.22	-1.04	2.58	1.15
	<b>TORRE notebooks</b>	-.44	.15	.97	.84	-.22	1.20
<b>SERVICES</b>							
<b>Telecommunications</b>	<b>Telefónica telecommunications</b>	-.48	1.65	-.60	-.48	.22	-.65
	<b>ENTEL telecommunications</b>	-.24	1.57	-.22	.28	.59	.00
	<b>LA RED broadcasting</b>	-1.26	.56	.59	.64	1.03	-2.36
	<b>Financial Services</b>	<b>MASTER CARD credit card</b>	.44	.63	-1.25	-.98	-1.26
	<b>PROVIDA pension fund</b>	-1.08	.81	-1.30	-.77	.07	-.52
	<b>BANCO DE A. EDWARDS bank</b>	.62	.90	-.93	-1.00	-.52	-.30

Our original research questions were: 1) do people in overseas markets think of the personality of brands in terms of the same dimensions such as proposed by Aaker ? and, 2) if that is the case, can we use the same instrument to measure brand personality in other country markets as we can in the US?

Our study results are, in general, quite consistent with the original study by Jennifer Aaker. A major difference, is the appearance of a sixth dimension of brand personality: "Tradition". As suggested in the branding and advertising literature, brands are associated with "utilitarian" attributes or benefits (e.g. McDonald's can help diminish my hunger) but also they can convey meaning and serve as a mean of self-expression (e.g. I am, or would like to be, the Marlboro man). Prior research in advertising, anthropology and sociology, has suggested that advertising and other "commercial artifacts" can in fact, communicate values and cultural beliefs (McCracken 1986, Levi-Strauss 1986). This occurs because advertisers can identify what consumers would like to be, or need, and then use advertising to deliver those meanings. In other words, advertising will be only a reflection of what a society is and wants to be. As suggested by Aaker and Maheswaran (1997), symbolic functions provided by a brand tend to vary to a larger degree compared to utilitarian perceptions across cultures. Thus, the presence of a sixth brand personality dimension might well indicate that as consumers, Chileans embrace the need of expressing traditionalism or are more conservative than their American counterparts .

Yet another explanation of this difference, could be due to methodological considerations. Given we validated the entire research procedure and not just the final questionnaire proposed by Aaker, the final list of brand personality characteristics in this study was different from the original one, but with significant overlapping. (see Tables 2 and 3). We also utilized a smaller relative size in the Chilean sample, there were differences in the brands used, and in the wording of the specific characteristics. It can be noted that to reduce the sample size problem, we performed an additional validation study with different sample and brands, and again found a stable 6-dimension structure of brand personality.

Therefore, a first general conclusion, is that the brand personality structure tested by Aaker does exist as a construct in a

South American culture. This is important, because it validates research performed by other authors who have taken an etic perspective, a priori assuming the existence of the construct in Chile and other developing nations (see for example Rojas-Méndez, Erenchun-Podlech and Silva-Olave 2004). However, the structure of the construct is not exactly the same. This is consistent with previous studies not taking a simple-etic research approach, like Aaker, Benet-Martinez and Garolera (2001) and Koebel and Landwein (1999). They found that a five plus-minus one dimensions' structure is appropriate for the brand personality construct, but that culture-specific dimensions may arise in certain countries (i.e. "Passion" in Spain, "Tradition" in Chile or "Seduction" in France). We consider this to be a relevant contribution of our findings, and also consistent with Aaker and Keller's (1990) and Aaker (1997) call for replication studies. In this sense, as to our second research question though, the same instrument can not be used in an identical manner as done in the US. Rather, the measurement development procedure needs to be replicated in its entirety, so as to obtain a culturally-tailored instrument that captures the brand personality structure. Recent findings by Aaker, Benet Martinez and Garolera (2002) provide similar indications, suggesting that a unique or standard instrument for measuring brand personality might be challenging. This also supports theories in cross cultural psychology and methodology indicating the presence of core etic dimensions and peripheral emic dimensions in theoretical constructs.

Additionally, while certainly one more alternative, we suggest that this method for identifying dimensions might even represent an advantage over free-association and other qualitative techniques for assessing brand personality and brand image. The use of a survey based approach that can be readily used for monitoring brand personalities among countries, or over periods of time during which specific marketing efforts have been carried out, and across

segments which might be of important for brand and marketing managers, is, in and of itself, an appealing proposition.

#### *A. Implications for Management Practice*

The study cross-culturally validates a methodology for assessing brand personalities, which allows for straightforward comparisons among products of both different, and the same category. We believe this to be particularly relevant for many aspects of brand management. As an example of the method's use, we highlight below some of the brand-specific results of our study, and contrast them with the American original results. Although these results should be interpreted with caution given the small size of the sample, they are useful for illustration purposes. In Table 5, we report the most representative brands for each personality dimension.

We see for example, that Mercedes Benz' personality structure appears as very sophisticated and traditional, while also being not very exciting, or sincere, or rugged. Village -a Chilean brand of greeting cards- on the other hand, appears as a very exciting and relatively sincere brand, but not very competent or sophisticated. The descriptive nature of the brand's personality profile, is thus the first element of value. This type of knowledge can assist brand managers in their positioning efforts, identification of appropriate advertising appeals, differentiation strategies, and in the overall management of the brand over time.

**Table 5**  
*Most representative brands for each brand personality dimension, contrasting Chilean and US (Aaker 1997) study*

<b>a) Chilean Study</b>					
SOPHISTICATION	COMPETENCE	RUGGEDNESS	EXCITEMENT	TRADITION	SINCERITY
Mercedes Benz cars Chanel#5 perfume Porsche cars	IBM computers CTC- Telefonica telecommu- nications Entel telecommu- nications Sony electronics	Levi's jeans Porsche cars Reebok athletic shoes Nike athletic shoes	Village cards Mattel toys Nintendo games	Mercedes Benz cars Lucchetti dry pasta Torre notebooks Pepsodent toothpaste	Charlie perfume Chanel#5 perfume La Red broadcasting Avon cosmetics
<b>b) US Study (Aaker 1997)</b>					
SOPHISTICATION	COMPETENCE	RUGGEDNESS	EXCITEMENT		SINCERITY
Guess jeans	The Wall Street Journal	Nike athletic shoes	MTV Channel		Hallmark cards

A second application of this method, is that it allows for easy comparisons of competing brands. In Table 6 we see, for example, two telecommunications companies that were assessed using this method. Both Entel and Telefónica-CTC (telecommunication companies) show similar ratings for Competence, which is an important association in the mind of consumers for this market. However, the results show important differences among the two brands in terms of the subjects' evaluations of two "softer" personality dimensions: Sincerity and Ruggedness. Entel is seen as a more "sincere" brand, while Telefónica-CTC is perceived as "rugged", probably associated with its Spanish ownership and influence. Here again, we suggest that the relative ease of this type of comparison is a potentially powerful tool in developing

competitive strategies for both domestic and international marketing efforts. From direct comparisons with competing products or services in the same marketplace, to (dis)similarities of how a specific brand is perceived by different segments of a market, or even by different country-markets altogether, the information that can be obtained with this approach should facilitate managerial decision-making in all the marketing areas mentioned above. Obviously, should one be interested in specific product categories, similar comparisons to the above can be performed for all products present in the selection of brands shown originally in Table 4, highlighting athletic shoes and cars, as shown in Table 6.

**Table 6**  
*Average Factor Scores for Personality Dimensions  
by Brand for three product categories*

DIMENSION	SOPHISTICATION	COMPETENCE	EXCITEMENT	RUGGEDNESS	SINCERITY	TRADITION
<b>CTC-TELEFONICA</b>	-.47881	1.64835	-.60266	-.48331	.21881	-.64736
<b>ENTEL</b>	-.23961	1.57445	-.22414	.28324	.59275	.00469
<b>REEBOK</b>	.01675	-.50891	-.16775	1.49679	-.71409	.41787
<b>NIKE</b>	.03484	-.03237	.17371	1.48978	-.66265	.16504
<b>MERCEDES BENZ</b>	2.47803	.17046	-.71356	-.25361	-1.46338	1.42656
<b>HONDA</b>	1.30119	.23134	-.24766	.91644	-.05181	.64382
<b>PORSCHE</b>	2.07889	.38056	.05058	1.91822	.39999	-.07788

As we state at the outset, this work provides one more step in assisting us to better understand the nature of branding and thus assists in a variety of managerial brand management applications. We suggest that our results support further investigation of this topic. Among the issues that would appear to merit further research, one could consider extending this work to other significantly different cultures and assessing whether the brand personality dimensions and the proposed methodology hold up to scrutiny;

looking at the role of intervening variables such as familiarity with the brand or product category, and how they affect the brand personality dimensions and methodology's usefulness; and comparing and contrasting significantly different age and other demographic cohorts, to gauge the applicability of brand personality dimensions across not just cultures but also across segments in different marketplaces. Following this line of thought further investigation of brand personality dimensions in Brazil, in the Central American countries, and México, may be interesting contrasts for this concept that seems to have emic and etic components as shown by this and other studies.

Additionally, future research may investigate the antecedents and consequences of brand personality. For example, brand personality may be affected by country of origin and ethnocentrism or by particular marketing strategies (see for ex. Venkatramani, Sengupta, and Aaker 2005; Diamantopoulos, Smith and Grime 2005). Brand personality may influence brand preference by alignment with the individual self-perception or by a process of influence and adjustment of the ideal self (Pham and Muthkrishnan 2002). Also, brand personality may be an influencer of brand purchase if a right match with "category stereotypes" is achieved, or when brand personality not just meets the standard, but is perceived as better in the right personality dimension. A related topic that needs to be investigated in Latin America is brand personality in the contexts of retailers. Chebat and colleagues have considered the concept of store personality. Is store personality affected by the personality of brands a store carries? This and other relationships could be a fruitful avenue of relevant research.

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