

# Perception of Logo and Brand Personalities

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**Abstract:** This research focuses on the respondents' point of view to the brand and logo personalities. The Japanese version of Brand Personality Scale was used to measure the brand and logo personalities across five core dimensions: Excitement, Competence, Peacefulness, Sincerity and Sophistication. The research gave some insights into how company logos corresponded to the brand images. In addition, the Brand Personality Scale as a method of evaluation of the current status of brand and logo personalities was examined in case studies of Japanese companies. The result of these case studies showed that respondents perceived brand personality and logo personality in different way. The final investigation of all respondents' answers indicated which personality factors have represented the significant differences in perception of brands and logos. These findings can provide a better understanding of personality factors that need more attention before a company decides to change its logo. The initial understanding of brand personalities and relationship with logos could help designers to extend the options of creativity and increase the possibilities for a logo to convey a variety of memorable messages, strong emotions and rich personalities.

**Key words:** *Logo Design, Logo Personality, Brand Personality Scale*

## 1. Introduction

Brand personality is defined as “a set of human characteristics associated with a brand” (Aaker, D.A. 1997) [1]. The same words, which are used to describe a person, can be used to describe the personality of a brand. Aaker J. L. (1997) developed a theoretical framework of the brand personality dimensions and a reliable, valid and generalizable scale to measure these dimensions [2]. Brand Personality Scale (hereinafter BPS) is used to measure and structure brand personality, and this scale consist of five key dimensions, each divided into a set of factors.

Aaker et al. (2001) conducted four studies to examine how the symbolic and expressive attributes associated with commercial brands are structured, and how this structure varies across three cultures: the United States, Japan and Spain [3]. Authors from studies identified that four brand personality dimensions: Sincerity, Excitement, Competence, and Sophistication share similar meaning in Japan and the United States, as well as relatively culture-specific Japanese (Peacefulness) and American (Ruggedness) dimensions. Since 1997, the BPS proposed by Aaker, become widespread in use. Most of the research papers on brand personality were based on Aaker's scale [4]. In terms of logo evaluation, the BPS was used in research conducted by Borgenstål and Wehlén in 2002 [5]. Researchers stated that branding theories are applicable on logos based on the studies of Aaker (1996) where author concluded that the logo could capture much of its brand's identity, and that identity is closely connected to personality.

There are at least two points of view to the rebranding and logo change, which are the brand owner’s view and the respondents’ point of view. The research presented in this paper focuses on the respondents’ point of view to the brand and logo personalities. To be able to get the picture of how respondents perceive brand and logo personalities, the Aaker’s BPS is applied for this research. This research is expected to confirm the idea that the BPS, as a method, can be used to evaluate logo personality.

## 2. Purpose

The interest of this research is to gain better understanding on how respondents evaluate the brand and logo personalities by applying the BPS. The task is to find which BPS dimension of brand personality correspond to the logo personality. It can be a benefit for the company if all five BPS dimensions of both personalities correspond to each other.

## 3. Method

After reviewing the reports about the best global brands, Toyota and Honda as leading companies in the Japan’s Best Global Brands 2011 ranking were selected as samples for case studies [6]. The previous studies about logo shape indicated a trend toward increased use of rounded shapes for logos [7]. Therefore the purely graphic symbols of Toyota and Honda without letters were selected for this research. Toyota and Honda logos together with brand personalities were evaluated by using the Japanese version of BPS (Figure 1).

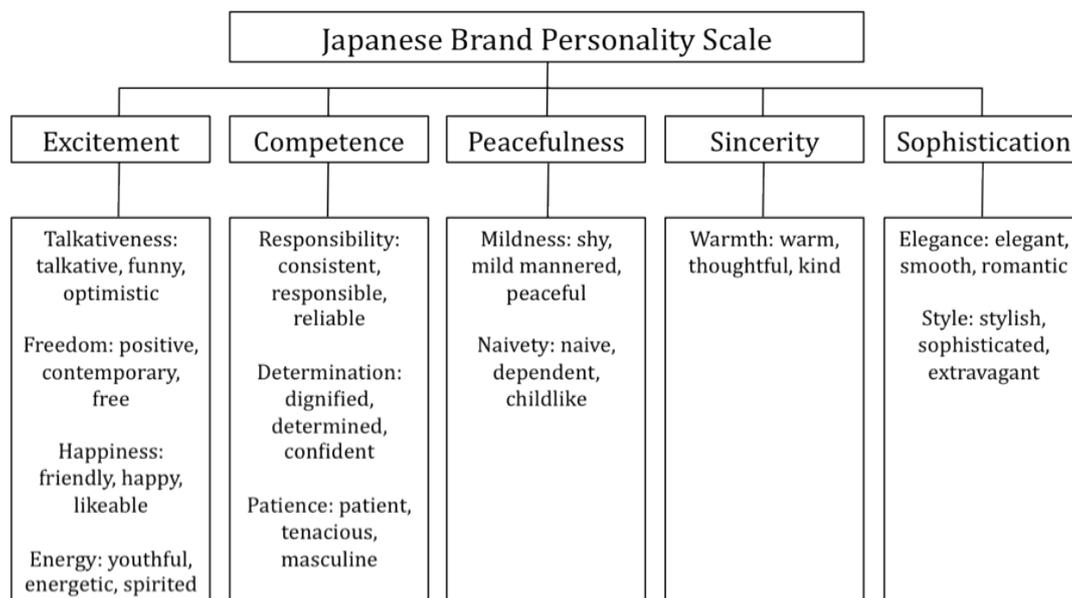


Figure 1. Japanese Brand Personality Scale

For this research questionnaire was based on 5 key dimensions and their 12 facets of the Japanese version of BPS (Aaker 2001) [3]. The original Japanese facets from Aaker’s Japanese BPS were selected for the questionnaire. Those facets are: Funny, Free, Happy, Energetic, Responsible, Determined, Patient, Mild mannered, Naïve, Warm, Elegant and Stylish. Due to the vague meaning in describing logo personality, the Talkative adjective was exchanged to Funny adjective. Both facets are from the Excitement dimension of the Japanese BPS.

The Semantic Differential Method’s scale with two opposite words (Disagree - Agree) and from 1 to 5 equidistance levels among them was used to evaluate each facet. Two questionnaires were used to collect data

about brand and logo personalities of Toyota. Another pair of questionnaires was used to collect data about the brand and logo personalities of Honda. Totally four questionnaires were distributed in printed version or by email to 100 respondents.

#### 4. Results

All results of perceived brand and logo personalities of the case study companies are based on mean values of all respondents' answers. The mean values higher than 3.30 and lower than 2.50 are selected for consideration and deeper analysis. Mean values higher than 3.30 are highlighted in bold numbers. Mean values lower than 2.50 are highlighted in bold numbers and emphasized with underline.

##### 4.1. Case study of Toyota

Table 1 shows the mean values and standard deviation values of BPS dimension's facets of Toyota case study.

Table 1. Mean values and STDEV of BPS dimensions' facets of Toyota brand and logo personalities

Dimension	Facet	Toyota brand			
		Mean values	STDEV	Mean values	STDEV
Excitement	Funny	<b><u>2.13</u></b>	1.09	2.77	1.10
	Free	<b><u>2.49</u></b>	1.13	2.91	1.07
	Happy	2.61	1.20	2.82	1.00
	Energetic	2.87	1.17	3.16	1.13
Competence	Responsible	<b>3.94</b>	0.94	<b>3.60</b>	0.99
	Determined	<b>3.63</b>	1.07	<b>3.68</b>	0.91
	Patient	<b>3.51</b>	1.10	<b>3.46</b>	1.00
Peacefulness	Mild mannered	2.76	1.03	3.08	1.05
	Naïve	<b><u>2.33</u></b>	1.19	<b><u>2.35</u></b>	1.09
Sincerity	Warm	2.62	1.14	2.65	1.05
Sophistication	Elegant	3.07	1.10	<b>3.36</b>	1.13
	Stylish	2.80	1.13	<b>3.36</b>	1.19

The analysis of five BPS personality dimensions and their twelve facets indicates that the most preferred Toyota brand personality facets are: Responsible 3.94, Determined 3.63 and Patient 3.51. The least preferred brand personality facets are: Funny 2.13, Free 2.49 and Naïve 2.33. The most preferred Toyota logo personality facets are: Responsible 3.60, Determined 3.68, Patient 3.46, Elegant 3.36 and Stylish 3.36. The least preferred Toyota logo personality facet is Naïve 2.35.

The mean values of BPS dimension are calculated according to mean values of facets. Table 2 shows the mean values of different BPS dimensions of Toyota case study.

Table 2. Mean values of BPS dimensions of Toyota brand and logo personalities

Dimension	Toyota brand	Toyota logo
Excitement	2.53	2.92
Competence	<b>3.69</b>	<b>3.58</b>
Peacefulness	2.55	2.72
Sincerity	2.62	2.65
Sophistication	2.94	<b>3.36</b>

The most preferred Toyota brand personality dimension is Competence. There is no least preferred dimension. This implies that Toyota brand is perceived as competent. The most preferred Toyota logo personality dimensions are Competence and Sophistication. There is no least preferred dimension. This implies that Toyota logo is perceived as competent and sophisticated.

#### 4.2 Case study of Honda

Table 3 shows the mean values and standard deviation values of BPS dimension's facets of Honda case study case study.

Table 3. Mean values and STDEV of brand dimensions' facets of Honda brand and logo personalities

Dimension	Facet	Honda brand			
		Mean values	STDEV	Mean values	STDEV
Excitement	Funny	<b>2.08</b>	1.24	<b>1.97</b>	1.08
	Free	2.62	1.32	<b>2.24</b>	0.91
	Happy	<b>2.36</b>	1.08	<b>2.36</b>	1.18
	Energetic	3.02	1.36	<b>3.37</b>	1.26
Competence	Responsible	<b>3.85</b>	1.02	<b>4.09</b>	0.84
	Determined	<b>3.87</b>	1.03	<b>4.38</b>	0.87
	Patient	<b>3.49</b>	1.19	<b>3.79</b>	1.04
Peacefulness	Mild mannered	<b>2.49</b>	1.04	2.55	1.18
	Naïve	<b>2.32</b>	1.21	<b>1.97</b>	1.04
Sincerity	Warm	<b>2.49</b>	1.05	<b>2.17</b>	1.12
Sophistication	Elegant	2.99	1.12	<b>3.90</b>	0.85
	Stylish	2.89	1.19	<b>3.68</b>	1.03

The analysis of five BPS personality dimensions and their twelve facets indicates that the most preferred Honda brand personality facets are: Responsible 3.85, Determined 3.87 and Patient 3.49. The least preferred brand personality facets are: Funny 2.08, Happy 2.36, Mild mannered 2.49, Naïve 2.32 and Warm 2.49. The most preferred Honda logo personality facets are: Energetic 3.37, Responsible 4.09, Determined 4.38, Patient 3.79, Elegant 3.90 and Stylish 3.68. The least preferred Honda logo personality facets are: Funny 1.97, Free 2.24, Happy 2.36, Naïve 1.97 and Warm 2.17.

The mean values of BPS dimension are calculated according to mean values of facets. Table 4 shows the mean values of different BPS dimensions of Honda.

Table 4. Mean values of BPS dimensions of Honda brand and logo personalities

Dimension	Honda brand	Honda logo
Excitement	2.52	<b>2.49</b>
Competence	<b>3.74</b>	<b>4.09</b>
Peacefulness	<b>2.41</b>	<b>2.26</b>
Sincerity	<b>2.49</b>	<b>2.17</b>
Sophistication	2.94	<b>3.79</b>

The most preferred Honda brand personality dimension is Competence. It is interesting to note that the same BPS personality dimensions were perceived as most preferred in the Toyota case study. But, unlike the Toyota case study, the Honda case study has the least preferred BPS dimensions. The least preferred Honda brand personality dimensions are: Peacefulness and Sincerity. This implies that Honda brand is perceived as competent, but not as peaceful and sincere. The most preferred Honda logo personality dimensions are: Competence and Sophistication. The least preferred Honda brand personality dimensions are: Excitement, Peacefulness and Sincerity. This implies that Honda logo is perceived as competent and sophisticated, but not as excited, peaceful and sincere.

### 4.3 Student t-test

Student t-test was performed to determine if the mean values of the answers about logo and brand personalities are significantly different in each case study. The results of t-tests are displayed in Table 5.

Table 5. Results of Student t-test of Toyota case study and of Honda case study

No.	Facet	Toyota logo and brand p-value	Honda logo and brand p-value
1	Funny	< <b>0.0001</b>	0.503
2	Free	<b>0.008</b>	<b>0.019</b>
3	Happy	0.179	1.000
4	Energetic	0.075	0.060
5	Responsible	<b>0.014</b>	0.071
6	Determined	0.722	<b>0.000</b>
7	Patient	0.736	0.059
8	Mild mannered	<b>0.031</b>	0.703
9	Naïve	0.901	<b>0.029</b>
10	Warm	0.847	<b>0.038</b>
11	Elegant	0.068	< <b>0.0001</b>
12	Stylish	<b>0.001</b>	< <b>0.0001</b>

In case study of Toyota logo and brand the null hypotheses H0 were rejected for the following facets of BPS dimensions: Funny, Free, Responsible, Mild mannered and Stylish. In case study of Honda brand and logo the computed p-value of Free, Determined, Naïve, Warm, Elegant and Stylish were lower than the significance level alpha=0.05 and the null hypotheses H0 were rejected.

### 5. Conclusions

The respondents' perceptions about brand and logo personalities were investigated based on the Japanese version of BPS. The results of research gave some insights into how BPS dimensions of logo personalities corresponded to the BPS dimensions of brand personalities. The mean values of BPS dimensions showed that Toyota brand is perceived as competent, Toyota logo is perceived as competent and sophisticated. Based on these results its possible to conclude that Toyota logo personality corresponded to the Toyota brand personality just in the Competence dimension. The most preferred Honda brand and logo personality dimensions are similar to Toyota case study: Honda brand is perceived as competent; Honda logo is perceived as competent and sophisticated.

The results of Student t-test revealed that the mean values of answers about Toyota brand and Toyota logo

were significantly different in 5 of 12 BPS facets. The results of Student t-test revealed that the mean values of answers about Honda brand and Honda logo were significantly different in 6 of 12 BPS facets. Therefore if Toyota company decides to start the rebranding campaigns and change their logo, Funny, Free, Responsible, Mild mannered and Stylish facets from the BPS need more attention and consideration. And if Honda company decides to start the rebranding campaigns and change their logo, they need to pay more attention at the following facets: Free, Determined, Naïve, Warm, Elegant and Stylish.

Furthermore, this research supported the idea that Aaker's BPS is also applicable to the logo personality. Findings from this research can provide a better understanding of personality factors that need more attention before companies decide to start the rebranding campaigns and change their logos. The initial understanding of brand personalities and relationship with logos could help designers to extend the options of creativity and increase the possibilities for a logo to convey a variety of memorable messages, strong emotions and rich personalities.

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