



# **Consumption Symbols as Carriers of Culture: A Study of Japanese, Spanish, and North American Brand Personality Dimensions**

Jennifer Lynn Aaker, Verónica Benet-Martínez, and Jordi Garolera

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# Consumption Symbols as Carriers of Culture: A Study of Japanese, Spanish, and North American Brand Personality Dimensions

*Jennifer Lynn Aaker, Verónica Benet-Martínez, and Jordi Garolera*

Although previous research suggests that cultural differences are significant enough that companies should adapt product marketing to each local culture, some managers argue that cultural differences among consumers are receding and that the globalization of brands and marketing communications is an increasingly viable strategy. The current research attempts to address this issue; the results show that important differences exist in the way in which consumers across distinct cultural contexts view brands, lending support for the argument of localization.

## **Study and Findings**

Four studies examined how symbolic and expressive attributes associated with commercial brands are structured, and how this structure varies across Japan, Spain, and the U.S. In each study, consumers were asked to rate the extent to which a battery of personality traits described a specific brand. To increase generalizability, the study relied on multiple sets of brands representing a variety of product categories and services. A set of exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses yielded five key “personality dimensions” in each of the countries.

Studies 1 and 2 revealed a set of brand personality dimensions common to both Japan and the United States (sincerity, excitement, competence, and sophistication), but important culture-specific Japanese (peacefulness) and American (ruggedness) dimensions as well. Studies 3 and 4 found dimensions common to both Spain and the United States (sincerity, excitement, and sophistication), plus culture-specific Spanish (passion) and American (competence and ruggedness) dimensions.

These results suggest that a brand can have a common meaning across cultures which may guide a global marketing strategy. At the same time, the brand’s culture-specific meaning can be used to strengthen the relationship between a brand and the consumers in a particular culture.

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# Introduction

*The Marlboro Man is an egoistic ideal; at home in his universe, master of his destiny. Thus, the Marlboro Man has come to symbolize individualism and independence.*

— Vacker 1992

Traditional research in both cultural and cross-cultural psychology has focused on culture-based effects by identifying the influence of culture on the individual (culture-affects-psyche; see Cooper and Denner [1998]). However, the reverse relationship also exists; individuals influence culture (psyche-affects-culture) through the creation of institutions, symbols, and practices that carry and validate particular cultural meaning systems (DiMaggio 1997; Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, and Norasakkunkit 1997; Shore 1996). In this research, we rely on a bidirectional conceptualization of culture to examine how cultural meaning is represented in the minds of individuals. We argue that, similar to cultural icons (e.g., Hong, Morris, Chiu, and Benet-Martínez 2000), reasons (e.g., Briley, Morris, and Simonson 2000), and public messages (e.g., Kim and Markus 1999), consumption symbols such as commercial brands (e.g., Marlboro cigarettes) can serve as carriers of culture; that is, the meaning embedded in brands can serve to represent and institutionalize the values and beliefs of a culture.

To test this premise, we raise the following question: To what degree are the symbolic and expressive attributes that people perceive in socially-constructed entities, such as commercial brands, organized similarly or differently across cultures? More specifically, to what degree do basic dimensions of brand personality, defined as a set of humanlike attributes associated with a particular brand (Aaker 1997), carry universal or specific cultural meaning? Insight into this question will shed more light on the degree to which culture and psyche are mutually constituted and how culture-specific and universal human needs are carried through the creation, perception, and use of nonhuman symbolic objects such as brands. Further, from a more applied perspective, the role that culture may play in people's perception of consumer goods needs to be examined against the assumption that market globalization makes all of us psychologically more similar (Hermans and Kempen 1998).





# Conceptual Background

## **Dynamic Role of Culture and the Meaning of Commercial Brands**

Much of the research in cross-cultural psychology has conceptualized culture as a broad, domain-general, and stable set of value tendencies (e.g., individualism-collectivism, power distance; Hofstede [1980]). In this light, the portrayal of culture is of an abstract, encompassing structure, one that is often indexed by nationality and examined in light of its influence on individuals' behavior. Another perspective is that culture is more fragmented and dynamic, a set of subjective contexts and situations that are constructed and experienced by the individual (Cross and Markus 1999; Hong et al. 2000). Two key issues within this perspective are that: (a) culture is best conceptualized in terms of the meaning derived from and added to everyday experience, and (b) individuals and culture are inseparable and mutually constitute each other. In light of these views, the study of how cultural meaning and individual psychological tendencies influence each other becomes critical (Shweder and Sullivan 1990). In the present research, we suggest that one way to study the mutual constitution of individual and culture is by examining the structural properties of nonhuman, symbolic objects such as commercial brands.

## **Commercial Brands: Carriers of Cultural Meaning**

Referred to as “consumption symbols” or cultural icons (McCracken 1986), commercial brands have significance that goes beyond their physical properties, utilitarian character, and commercial value. This significance rests largely in their ability to carry and communicate cultural meaning (Douglas and Isherwood 1978; Richins 1994). Culture-specific meaning typically resides in the more abstract qualities of the commercial brand that provide primarily symbolic or value-expressive functions to the individual (Shavitt 1990), what is commonly known as “brand personality” attributes. That is, in contrast to the utilitarian attributes associated with commercial brands (e.g., Levi's jeans are durable), which tend to demonstrate limited variability in meaning or importance across cultures (Aaker and Maheswaran 1997), the symbolic and expressive functions provided by a brand (e.g., Levi's allows for the expression of independence, strength, and masculinity; Solomon [1986]) tend to vary to a larger degree due to the fact that individuals vary in their needs and self-views (Fiske, Kitayama, Markus, and Nisbett 1998; Han and Shavitt 1994; Kim and Markus 1999).

The process by which material objects come to possess meaning has been studied in detail by anthropologists (e.g., Douglas and Isherwood 1978; Levi-Strauss 1966; Solomon 1986). One institution that has received attention in the context of commercial brands is advertising, which works as a method of meaning transfer by bringing the consumer good and a representation of culture together within the frame of an advertisement (McCracken 1986). The mechanics of this method begin with the advertising agency charged with the promotion of the commercial brand. Based on marketing research in which individuals are asked what character-

istics of the commercial brand are important to them and what needs are served by the commercial brand, advertisers determine what characteristics of the brand will be communicated in the advertisement (Lannon 1993; Plummer 1985). In this light, individual needs serve to influence the creation of brand meaning. At the same time, however, the communication of these cultural icons in advertisements influences reality and ultimately individuals' attitudes and behavior (Belk and Pollay 1985; Kim and Markus 1999; Shore 1996). Thus, the bidirectional relationship between culture and individual is captured both in the process of creating the commercial brands and the process by which brands are communicated to and used by individuals.

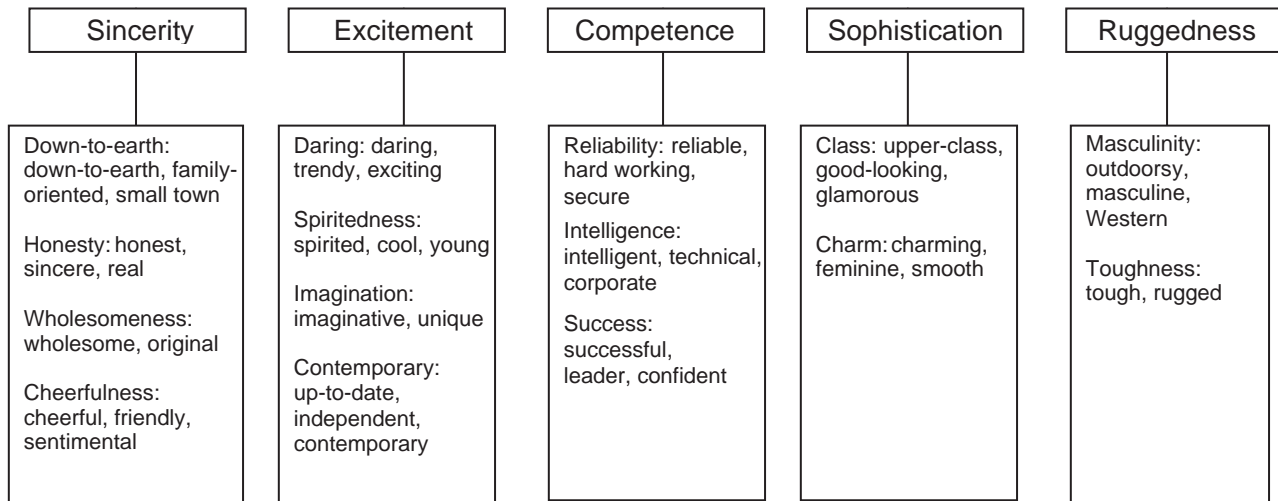
Note that the above processes of cultural meaning creation and redefinition occur over time and involve many different fragments of society (e.g., consumers, companies, technology, political and cultural institutions). Given this complexity, it is difficult to design specific studies to explicitly model these mechanisms and their directionality that are not decontextualized or over-ambitious. Accordingly, in the present research, we focus instead on providing insight into a slice of this phenomenon by examining some of its perceptual and structural elements—how individuals organize the symbolic and expressive attributes associated with commercial brands and how this organization may vary across cultures.

To serve as a basis for the current research, we draw on work that has explored the meaning of commercial brands by examining how brand personality attributes are structured in the minds of individuals in the United States (Aaker 1997). In this research, the process of meaning identification involved a set of studies in which individuals were asked to rate a representative set of commercial brands on a battery of personality attributes. Results of exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses showed that American individuals perceive brand perceptual space in terms of five personality dimensions (see Figure 1). These dimensions include sincerity, represented by attributes such as down-to-earth, real, sincere, and honest; excitement, typified by attributes such as daring, exciting, imaginative, and contemporary; competence, represented by attributes such as intelligent, reliable, secure, and confident; sophistication, represented by attributes such as glamorous, upper class, good-looking, and charming; and ruggedness, typified by attributes such as tough, outdoorsy, masculine, and Western.

Note that at least three of the above dimensions (sincerity, excitement, and competence) resemble personality dimensions that are also present in human personality models such as Big Five.<sup>1</sup> Specifically, sincerity is defined by attributes related to warmth and honesty that are also present in agreeableness; excitement captures the energy and activity elements of extraversion, and competence denotes dependability and achievement similar to conscientiousness. The links between sophistication and ruggedness and the Big Five are less clear, however. Compared to sincerity, excitement, and competence (which seem to capture relatively basic tendencies that may apply to both humans and brands), sophistication and ruggedness capture more aspirational images associated with wealth and status (e.g., Lexus automobiles, Monet jewelry) or American individualism (e.g., Levi's jeans, Harley-

Davidson motorcycles) that may be more specific to carriers of culture such as commercial brands.

**Figure 1. American Brand Personality Dimensions**



In the current research, we examine the extent to which Aaker's (1997) structure of personality attributes associated with commercial brands differs across cultural contexts; that is, how much do sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness connote culture-specific versus more universal meaning? In addressing this question, we hope to provide insight into the degree to which cultural meaning, as influenced by individuals within a cultural context, is conveyed and consequently communicated to individuals both within and across cultural contexts (Bond 1994b).

### Values and Cultural Products

One literature that may contribute insight on this question is that on values. Schwartz (1994), for example, proposes a taxonomy of seven distinct types of cultural-level values organized around the dichotomy conservatism versus autonomy, which relates to social conservatism versus openness to change and the dichotomy hierarchy/mastery versus egalitarian commitment/harmony, which relates to self-enhancement versus self-transcendence (Schwartz 1992). The seven value types—conservatism, intellectual autonomy, affective autonomy, hierarchy, mastery, egalitarian commitment, and harmony—were identified through a psychometrically rigorous procedure involving more than 60 cultural groups (Schwartz 1994; Schwartz and Bilsky 1990; Schwartz and Sagiv 1995). Note that although these dimensions capture universal needs, cultures vary considerably in their standing along these dimensions (see Table 7.3 in Schwartz 1994). These differences in the locations of cultures along the above seven value dimensions reflect differences in the degree to which each value type is embraced by a particular culture. To illustrate, valuing the social aspects of mastery (self-assertion and getting ahead of other

people) seems particularly important in the United States. In contrast, more collectivistic societies such as Asian and Latin cultures stand out as placing particular emphasis on harmony needs (keeping balance and peace with nature and people).

There is some variation within collectivist cultures, however, in their value discrepancies with the United States. Southern Mediterranean cultures such as Spain, Greece, and France, for instance, have particularly high scores compared to both the United States and Asian cultures on affective autonomy (valuing novelty, creativity, and having an exciting life) and egalitarian commitment (voluntary commitment to promoting the welfare of others). Note that one particularly useful aspect of Schwartz's value taxonomy is that country differences such as those we just described can be used to interpret cultural differences in norms, attitudes, behavioral patterns, and important macro socioeconomic variables (e.g., Gouvenia and Ross 2000; Schwartz 1994, 1999; Schwartz and Ross 1995).

The attributes that structure the meaning of commercial brands in the United States (Aaker 1997) seem to align themselves with several of Schwartz's cultural value types for which the United States has moderate to high scores. For instance, a close inspection of the attributes that define sincerity (e.g., family-oriented, real, small-town), suggests that this dimension may capture brand perceptions associated with conservatism needs (emphasis on family security and safety, being stable, and polite). Terms defining excitement (e.g., unique, exciting, young), on the other hand, suggest a link with affective autonomy needs (valuing novelty and creativity, having an exciting life). Competence (e.g., reliable, successful, intelligent) appears to be related to mastery needs (emphasis on being capable and successful, demonstrating competence), and sophistication (e.g., upper-class, glamorous, smooth) to hierarchy needs (value of social status and prestige, having wealth). Finally, ruggedness (e.g., masculine, tough, western) appears to be less directly related to a specific value orientation, although some of the attributes may encompass elements from mastery (being independent, daring) and low egalitarian commitment (detachment from others). This dimension is reflected in popular American movies ("The Quiet Man," "Stagecoach," and "High Noon"; Kim and Markus 1999) as well as popular American commercial brands (Harley-Davidson, Marlboro, Levi's; Solomon 1986), and appears to represent institutionalized American values such as strength, masculinity, and ruggedness.

One way to assess the particular cultural significance of ruggedness relative to the other four dimensions and Aaker's (1997) findings in general is to compare the American dimensions against those uncovered in other cultures. By doing so, the possible culture-specific psychological values and needs served by commercial brands in the United States and other cultures can be more clearly ascertained. In the present research, we specifically address two potential hypotheses. Both are based on the premise that commercial brands are symbols that can carry cultural meaning (McCracken 1986; Richins 1994); however, they differ in their predictions of the degree of cross-cultural similarity in the perceptual representation of the brands. The first possibility is that the perceptual structure may remain largely robust across cultural contexts. That is, because the basic kinds of values held by individuals as well as the organization of these values, that is, their intercorrelation

pattern, tend to be similar across cultural contexts (Schwartz 1992, 1994), the meaning conveyed in commercial brands may also be largely universal. Thus, the number and nature of the basic dimensions that organize brand personality perception should be similar across cultures if the kinds of values people have (and may seek to fulfill through commercial brands) are also universal. Dimensions very similar to those uncovered by Aaker (1997) in the United States should therefore also emerge when the structure of brand personality perception is examined in other cultures.

An alternative possibility, however, is that different cultures have somewhat unique organizations of the brand representational space that are reflective of cultural differences in value emphasis. In other words, it is possible that the structure of brand meaning perception is mainly associated with the importance of the value that brands provide for consumers in a given culture. If indeed brand meaning is created to reflect the needs and values held by individuals within a culture (McCracken 1986), there may be some cross-cultural variance in the meaning connoted in commercial brands and the organization of this meaning (e.g., number and nature of the basic dimensions). For instance, as discussed earlier, Schwartz (1994) shows that harmony is a value that is endorsed by East Asian cultures to a greater degree than Western cultures such as the United States. Indeed, keeping balance or maintaining harmony is respected as one of the highest virtues by Confucius (Kim and Markus 1999). Further, the interdependent goal of harmoniously fitting in with others, with its emphasis on fulfilling various social roles and maintaining connections with others, plays a larger role in determining overall life satisfaction in East Asian relative to North American cultures (Kwan, Bond, and Singelis 1997; Oishi, Diener, Lucas, and Suh 1999). These findings suggest that, to the degree that a particular value type such as harmony varies in its importance across cultural contexts, we may observe evidence of culture-specific meaning that relates to this particular value in cultures that embrace allocentric beliefs and harmony-oriented values (Fiske et al. 1998; Schwartz 1994).

In sum, although the research reviewed above does not allow us to predict a specific perceptual structure of commercial brands, it does suggest that there may be some cultural variance in how they are represented in the minds of consumers. Cultural variation in values and needs may influence commercial brand perception in two interrelated ways—by influencing the content of marketing communications that are used to create and develop commercial brands and, at the same time, by influencing the kinds of attributes individuals focus on when perceiving brands (Belk and Pollay 1985). It is through these processes that cultural differences in the structure of brand personality perception may arise. The current research relies on a combined emic-etic approach to determine the degree to which individuals across cultures share a similar perceptual representation of commercial brands.



# Methodological Overview

## Choice of Countries

Many cross-cultural researchers have argued that multiple cultural groups are needed in order to disentangle the influences of the various cultural dimensions that may underlie the observed differences (Bond 1994a). The present research focuses on two countries: Japan, an East Asian culture and Spain, a Latin culture. These two countries were chosen for several reasons. First, relative to members of Anglo-American cultures, individuals from East Asian and Latin cultures tend to be less idiocentric and more allocentric (i.e., higher in desire for interdependence and harmony; Marín and Triandis 1985; Oishi et al. 1999, Schwartz 1994; Wierzbicka 1991, but see Matsumoto 1999; Takano and Osaka 1999). These value differences may relate to variation in brand personality perception.

Second, although individuals in Japanese and Spanish cultures both score relatively high on allocentrism, they differ in other dimensions. Perhaps most notably, individuals in Latin cultures, relative to those in East Asian cultures, place special value on several socio-emotional behaviors related to affective autonomy needs, namely, sensation seeking (McVeagh 1990), emotional intensity (Benet-Martínez 1999), and *simpatía* (Triandis, Marín, Lisansky, and Betancourt 1984; for more details, see Marín and Marín 1991; Marín and Triandis 1985). Therefore, the selection of Japan and Spain provides a context that allows for potential replication, given that both cultures share an endorsement of allocentric values, but also an extension whereby the values unique to Mediterranean cultures such as Spain may be identified.

Finally, from a methodological standpoint, Japan and Spain are in similar stages of industrial and economic development and spend approximately the same percentage of the GNP on advertising as compared to the United States (1.0 percent for Japan, 1.5 percent for Spain, 1.1 percent for the United States). Thus, several variables that could account for cultural differences in communication styles and possibly bias the results of this research will be kept relatively constant.

## The Combined Emic-Etic Approach

An important issue in cross-cultural research is the distinction between emic (indigenous) and imposed-etic (imported) approaches to data collection (Berry 1969). Emic approaches explore a particular psychological construct from within the cultural system, whereas imposed-etic approaches study behavior from outside the cultural system. With the emic approach, instruments and theories indigenous to the target culture are developed by relying on a systematic process that generates a set of culture-specific attributes and stimuli. Imposed-etic approach instruments, in contrast, are either imported in their original form or translated into the local language (Enriquez 1979).

The question of whether imported (i.e., translated) measurement tools overlook important domains of the local culture is the foundation of a classic debate in cross-cultural psychology, the emic-etic issue (Berry, Poortinga, Segall, and Dasen 1992). On the one hand, an imposed-etic strategy is useful in that it makes cross-cultural comparisons feasible given that quantitative judgments of similarity require stimuli that are equivalent, but its use may distort the meaning of constructs in some cultures or overlook their culture-specific (emic) aspects. On the other hand, an emic strategy is well suited to identify culture-specific qualities of a construct; i.e., it is ecologically valid. However, its use makes cross-cultural comparisons difficult. Given the opposing advantages and disadvantages of the emic and etic approaches, one solution to the emic-etic debate has been to pool both approaches into what is known as a combined emic-etic approach (Hui and Triandis 1985). This approach, compared to emic or imposed-etic approaches, provides a more complete and unbiased picture of the degree of cross-cultural overlap and specificity between constructs (for examples, see Benet-Martínez and Waller 1997; Church and Katigbak 1988; Yang and Bond 1990).

In our study, the application of a combined emic-etic approach involves the following steps: First, indigenous attributes relevant to the target concept (e.g., commercial brands) are isolated in the new cultures and their underlying dimensional structure identified (Japan in Study 1; Spain in Study 3). Next, using an independent set of participants, this set of emic-based attributes is combined with attributes identified in the United States, and the overlap between the emic and imposed-etic dimensions underlying these two sets of attributes is measured (Aaker 1997; studies 2 and 4). This approach does not bias the results in favor of universality, an outcome that is often associated with the imposed-etic approach (McCrae and Costa 1997). Further, it is more consistent with the perspective of culture adopted in this research, where cultural knowledge is a “lens” that colors people’s perception of objects and messages in the environment (McCracken 1986). By allowing for cultural variations in the form or meaning of personality attributes to be represented (Church and Katigbak 1988), the emic-derived set of attributes is more likely to reflect the culture-specific lens through which people see.



# Study 1: Identification of Indigenous Japanese Brand Personality Dimensions

The objective of Study 1 was to determine how Japanese individuals perceive the perceptual space of commercial brands as defined by personality attributes. We first generate a set of culture-specific attributes and stimuli, and then identify the perceptual representation of brands.

## Method

*Stimuli Selection.* Two criteria guided the selection of commercial brands to serve as stimuli. First, to enhance the representativeness of the sample of stimuli, we selected commercial brands in product categories that serve both symbolic and utilitarian functions. Therefore, we randomly selected 24 product categories that were shown to vary on these two functional dimensions (Ratchford 1987, appendix). Six of the categories were highly symbolic or value-expressive (e.g., apparel, alcohol, fragrances), 6 were utilitarian (e.g., laundry detergent, medication, toothpaste), and 12 scored relatively high on both symbolic and utilitarian dimensions (e.g., automobiles, beverages, toys). Second, to enhance familiarity of the sample of stimuli, well-known commercial brands were selected. Thus, a pretest was conducted in which Japanese participants ( $n = 46$ , 50 percent female, mean age = 30.2), who were graduate business students enrolled in a full-time MBA program, were invited to participate in a study on brands and were paid \$7 for their participation. The participants were asked, “What is the first brand that comes to mind when you think of this product category?” The most frequently listed brands in each of the 24 categories were identified.

Although the relatively large number of brands allows for greater variance in brand personality types, it also increases the chance of participant fatigue. Thus, to minimize potential fatigue, the 24 brands were randomly grouped into six sets of four brands. Each group was composed of one symbolic brand, one utilitarian brand, and two symbolic/utilitarian brands, such that each brand group contained a similar profile of brands. For example, Group 1 contained Suntory Old whiskey, Denter T toothpaste, Pocari Sweat beverage, and Mercedes Benz automobiles. In this way, the brand groups’ profile was similar to that of the total sample of brands (see Table 1a). Finally, one well-known brand (Coca-Cola) was used as a control and included in each of the groups in Study 1 to assess the variation of perceptions of personality attributes for a given brand across groups. Thus, the result was a set of 25 brands that were meaningful to the target culture.

**Table 1a. Sample of Japanese Brands**

<u>Brand Group 1</u>	<u>Brand Group 2</u>	<u>Brand Group 3</u>	<u>Brand Group 4</u>	<u>Brand Group 5</u>	<u>Brand Group 6</u>
Suntory Old whiskey	Levi's jeans	Mizuno sports apparel	Chanel fragrance	Mercedes automobile	Prince hotel
Waratte litomo TV program	Basukurin bath salt	NEC PC	Yomiuri Shimbun newspaper	Pokky snacks	McDonald's restaurant
Kuroneko Yamato delivery services	Nintendo toys	Kleenex tissue	Dai-ichi Kangyo bank	Gold Blend coffee	Sasa Nishiki rice
Denter T toothpaste	Attack detergent	Benza Ace cold medication	NTT telecommunications	Nissei Life insurance	Seirogan medication
Coca-Cola soft drinks	Coca-Cola soft drinks	Coca-Cola soft drinks	Coca-Cola soft drinks	Coca-Cola soft drinks	Coca-Cola soft drinks

*Personality Attribute Selection.* The selection of brand-related attributes followed a three-step process similar to that used in Aaker (1997). First, to ensure familiarity and relevance of the attributes, a free-association task was conducted in which Japanese participants ( $n = 50$ , 40 percent female, mean age = 28.2) were asked to write down all the personality attributes that first come to mind when thinking about well-known brands in 10 product categories (3 symbolic, 3 utilitarian, and 4 symbolic/utilitarian), a process that yielded 138 attributes. Second, to maximize the content representation of personality attributes, 71 additional attributes were compiled from three sources that rely on brand personality research in Japan (Japanese advertising agency, client company, and research supplier) and 44 more that were representative of the Big Five personality dimensions (e.g., John, Donahue, and Kentle 1991), as in Aaker (1997). Finally, from the total set of 253 personality attributes, three groups of attributes were eliminated because they were redundant ( $n = 61$ ; e.g., reliable arose from the free-association task as well as from John Donahue, and Kentle 1991), ambiguous ( $n = 25$ ; e.g., slight, unfocused, rigid), or relatively irrelevant to the construct of interest ( $n = 67$ ; e.g., artistically sensitive, fickle, hypochondriacal).<sup>2</sup> Thus, the result of this stage was the identification of 100 attributes.

*Participants.* To enhance generalizability, a sample ( $n = 1,495$ ) that represented the Japanese population with respect to five demographic dimensions was used (gender, age, marital status, education level, and occupation; Japan Statistics Bureau and Statistics Center [1996]). To illustrate, 51 percent of the sample was female, 14 percent of the sample was 20-30 years of age, 56 percent of the sample was married, 46 percent of the sample had a college or graduate school education, and 13 percent of the sample was professional or technical workers.<sup>3</sup> The participants

in each of the brand groups were selected to have the same profile as the total sample ( $n$  ranged from 243 to 253 in each of the six brand groups), and belonged to a Japanese national mail panel.

*Procedure.* Participants, who were paid 500 yen, were asked to participate in a study about people's impressions regarding particular brands (names of commodity goods or services). To communicate the brand personality construct and enhance the imaginability of the task (Lannon 1993; Plummer 1985), participants were asked to think of the brand as a person. Specifically, they were told, "If I asked you to give me your impression of a particular person, you might answer with a set of personality attributes. Now, let's think about brands in the same way. For example, you may be asked to rate the extent to which a set of attributes describes Porsche. Please ask yourself, 'If Porsche was a person, how would you describe him/her?', and then circle a number between 'not at all descriptive' (1) to 'extremely descriptive' (5) for the subsequent set of attributes." Then, participants were asked to rate the extent to which the 100 personality attributes describe a specific brand. Participants repeated the rating task for the four additional brands in the particular brand group. Thus, six subsamples of participants rated five brands (Coca-Cola being common in each group), a task that took approximately 50-60 minutes. To illustrate, Group 1 contained Suntory Old whiskey, Kuroneko Yamato delivery services, Denter T toothpaste and Coca-Cola soft drinks. To control for primacy and recency effects, the order in which the attributes were presented for each brand was counterbalanced as was the order in which the brands were presented in the questionnaire.

## Results and Discussion

First, to assess the variation of perceptions of personality attributes for a given brand, we examined the mean ratings of Coca-Cola across the groups. No significant differences were found, suggesting high levels of agreement of the human characteristics associated with a particular brand. Second, to examine the systematic individual differences in perceptions of brands in general, the correlation matrix for the brand personality traits ( $n = 100$ ) across individuals' ratings of each brand was subjected to a principal component analysis followed by varimax rotation. The first ten eigenvalues from the 100 x 100 inter-item Pearson correlation matrix were 28.2, 9.5, 5.7, 3.7, 2.9, 1.3, 1.1, .8, .7, and .6. The moderate break after the fifth latent root suggested that a solution with five components was plausible. The adequacy of this solution was supported by the following criteria: (a) shape of the scree plot, (b) stability of the solutions in separate principal components analysis with distinct subsamples (e.g., males versus females, older versus younger individuals), (c) meaningfulness of the dimensions (at least nine traits loaded on each of the first five factors, whereas only one trait loaded on the sixth component), (d) amount of variance explained by the five components relative to dimensions six through nine (under 2 percent each). The five-component solution is reported in Table 2.<sup>4</sup> Labels for all the dimensions were selected based on the attributes emphasized within each component. To provide English translations, a six-person back-translation team translated each of the personality attributes. First, a three-person translation team (one native Japanese speaker, one native English speaker,

and one bilingual speaker) discussed the linguistic meaning of each attribute before final translation into English. Then, the three-person back-translation team followed the same process, translating the attributes back into Japanese to ensure accuracy (Brislin 1970). Intercoder agreement was high (94 percent). That is, for 94 of the 100 traits, the Japanese trait was back-translated as the same word as the original. When discrepancies existed, all six coders discussed them until consensus was formed.

A close look at Table 2 reveals that all but one of the Japanese brand personality dimensions are highly isomorphic to the American dimensions reported in Aaker (1997): Dimension I clearly represents excitement and is primarily defined by attributes such as funny, contemporary, young, and energetic. Interestingly, several of these terms are also markers of excitement in the American brand personality structure. Dimension II (competence) is defined by attributes such as responsible, reliable, confident, and tenacious—consistent with the markers of competence in the U.S. Dimension III (peacefulness), on the other hand, is defined by a unique blend of attributes (e.g., shy, peaceful, naïve, dependent) reflective of an allocentric and harmony-fostering orientation (Schwartz 1994). Dimension V (sincerity) includes warm, thoughtful, and kind, markers that are in line with those found in the U.S. for sincerity. Finally, Dimension IV (sophistication) is defined by terms such as elegant, smooth, stylish, and sophisticated—markers that are consistent with those found in the U.S. for sophistication.

**Table 2. Japanese Brand Personality Dimensions**

Abbreviated English Translation	Varimax-Rotated Principal Factors					Original Japanese Terms
	Ex	Co	Pe	Si	So	
Fun	<b>76</b>	13	-06	-03	14	のりがいい
Humorous	<b>72</b>	09	14	06	09	ひょうきんな
Talkative	<b>72</b>	09	15	06	08	話好きな
Optimistic	<b>72</b>	09	14	02	02	楽観的な
Free	<b>71</b>	12	-08	05	15	自由な
Funny	<b>70</b>	-04	28	-07	01	ユーモアがある
Chatty	<b>69</b>	-00	18	00	07	おしゃべりな
Energetic	<b>69</b>	20	-18	21	-01	元気な
Youthful	<b>68</b>	04	-16	07	27	若々しい
Laid-back	<b>67</b>	06	11	09	-04	こだわらない
Spirited	<b>67</b>	19	-15	17	05	快活な
Cheerful	<b>67</b>	06	-20	28	16	明るい
Friendly	<b>66</b>	06	09	36	-02	人なつっこい
Active	<b>66</b>	29	-27	08	07	活動的な
Easygoing	<b>63</b>	05	17	-15	07	のんきな
Positive	<b>61</b>	<b>43</b>	-16	06	14	積極的な
Happy	<b>61</b>	08	15	33	10	ほがらかな
Curious	<b>61</b>	30	-02	-05	17	好奇心の強い
Generous	<b>60</b>	25	15	14	12	気前のよい
Unrefined	<b>60</b>	03	27	-23	-14	素朴な
Approachable	<b>61</b>	10	17	28	-07	親しみやすい
Likable	<b>59</b>	10	12	31	11	愛想の良い
Open-minded	<b>58</b>	17	14	25	09	おおらかな
Careless	<b>54</b>	-07	38	-12	-10	おっちょこちょいな
Sociable	<b>54</b>	27	-05	13	31	好感のもてる
Bold	<b>53</b>	<b>44</b>	00	-17	13	度胸がある
Emotional	<b>52</b>	29	25	18	29	感情豊かな
Good-natured	<b>52</b>	05	39	26	06	気立てのいい
Contemporary	<b>50</b>	22	-23	03	28	現代的な
Relaxed	<b>50</b>	20	14	07	-04	気楽な
Enthusiastic	<b>48</b>	<b>43</b>	-05	19	14	意欲的な
Frank	<b>48</b>	35	05	35	01	きさくな
Open-hearted	<b>48</b>	17	-05	22	19	打ち解けた
Hopeful	<b>47</b>	<b>44</b>	-09	27	11	前向きな
Fresh	<b>44</b>	19	-08	27	36	新鮮な
Refreshing	<b>43</b>	22	29	34	04	さわやかな
Nice	<b>40</b>	10	-11	31	31	よい
Cooperative	<b>40</b>	31	14	38	11	協調性のある

Note. N = 1,495 Japanese. All loadings multiplied by 100; loadings  $|\geq .40|$  or larger are set in bold. Ex = Excitement, Co = Competence, Pe = Peacefulness, Si = Sincerity, So = Sophistication.

**Table 2. Japanese Brand Personality Dimensions (continued)**

Abbreviated English Translation	Varimax-Rotated Principal Factors					Original Japanese Terms
	Ex	Co	Pe	Si	So	
Easygoing	<b>40</b>	35	19	09	-03	マイペースな
Ordinary	38	00	08	32	-31	庶民的な
Reliable	13	<b>71</b>	04	26	15	しっかりした
Determined	22	<b>71</b>	09	15	08	意志の強い
Dignified	29	<b>68</b>	-06	07	19	堂々とした
Patient	11	<b>66</b>	23	17	01	忍耐強い
Tenacious	18	<b>65</b>	18	17	-02	粘り強い
Responsible	02	<b>64</b>	15	38	12	責任感のある
Respectable	09	<b>64</b>	11	18	34	立派な
Confident	30	<b>63</b>	-10	07	22	自信に満ちた
Strong	36	<b>63</b>	00	00	04	強い
Sharp	28	<b>63</b>	02	-08	23	鋭い
Consistent	02	<b>59</b>	20	<b>41</b>	09	一貫した
Courageous	39	<b>58</b>	04	-05	09	大胆な
Tough	07	<b>56</b>	25	-13	-01	たくましい
Neat	-06	<b>56</b>	13	39	31	きちんとした
Prudent	-03	<b>56</b>	27	28	22	慎重な
Level-headed	-06	<b>55</b>	25	16	29	冷静な
Diligent	01	<b>55</b>	21	<b>52</b>	06	まじめな
Assertive	19	<b>55</b>	00	09	25	がんこな
Masculine	27	<b>54</b>	-01	-20	-07	男性的な
Clear	<b>43</b>	<b>52</b>	-12	06	10	はっきりした
Precise	-02	<b>51</b>	30	36	24	几帳面な
Stable	11	<b>50</b>	12	<b>41</b>	05	安定した
Self-composed	-17	<b>49</b>	28	37	26	落ち着いた
Dependable	-04	<b>46</b>	38	34	-09	頼れる
Rational	25	<b>43</b>	06	11	-05	合理的な
Tolerant	38	<b>42</b>	22	26	13	寛大な
Realistic	35	37	-04	17	-02	現実的な
Mild-mannered	00	04	<b>74</b>	20	15	おっとりした
Timid	-03	09	<b>73</b>	10	12	恥ずかしがりやの
Shy	09	07	<b>67</b>	12	13	内気な
Reserved	-05	12	<b>66</b>	21	10	ひかえめな
Peaceful	-13	18	<b>64</b>	31	19	平和な
Modest	-18	32	<b>55</b>	20	-09	地道な
Clumsy	17	14	<b>55</b>	-16	-14	不器用な
Dependent	08	17	<b>51</b>	-07	12	寂しがり屋な
Childlike	30	04	<b>50</b>	07	-03	子供っぽい

Note.  $N = 1,495$  Japanese. All loadings multiplied by 100; loadings  $|\geq .40|$  or larger are set in bold. Ex = Excitement, Co = Competence, Pe = Peacefulness, Si = Sincerity, So = Sophistication.

**Table 2. Japanese Brand Personality Dimensions (continued)**

Abbreviated English Translation	Varimax-Rotated Principal Factors					Original Japanese Terms
	Ex	Co	Pe	Si	So	
Calm	12	18	<b>49</b>	<b>43</b>	21	おだやかな
Naïve	20	16	<b>42</b>	33	-12	ナイーブな
Cute	32	-12	<b>41</b>	31	37	かわいい
Feminine	11	-12	39	34	38	女性的な
Kind	19	20	32	<b>55</b>	30	優しい
Family oriented	18	10	30	<b>54</b>	-02	家庭的な
Thoughtful	21	31	32	<b>53</b>	-02	気が利く
Sincere	09	<b>49</b>	21	<b>53</b>	18	誠実な
Clean	17	29	05	<b>51</b>	35	清潔な
True	<b>47</b>	22	12	<b>49</b>	09	率直な
Warm	39	16	26	<b>49</b>	12	暖かい
Honest	39	39	10	<b>47</b>	04	正直な
Healthy	37	19	-07	<b>46</b>	08	健康的な
Considerate	35	33	17	<b>40</b>	21	思慮深い
Stylish	29	11	-01	10	<b>68</b>	おしゃれな
Elegant	-10	31	19	26	<b>65</b>	上品な
Romantic	18	05	31	16	<b>63</b>	ロマンチックな
Smooth	-12	38	16	08	<b>60</b>	素敵な
Extravagant	39	15	02	-01	<b>58</b>	贅沢な
Sexy	18	05	36	-02	<b>55</b>	色っぽい
Delicate	-05	29	25	27	<b>51</b>	繊細な
Stunning, cool	<b>44</b>	29	-12	-04	<b>50</b>	かつこいい
Sophisticated	39	19	-20	00	<b>47</b>	洗練された
Poised	12	39	03	-02	<b>41</b>	平静な

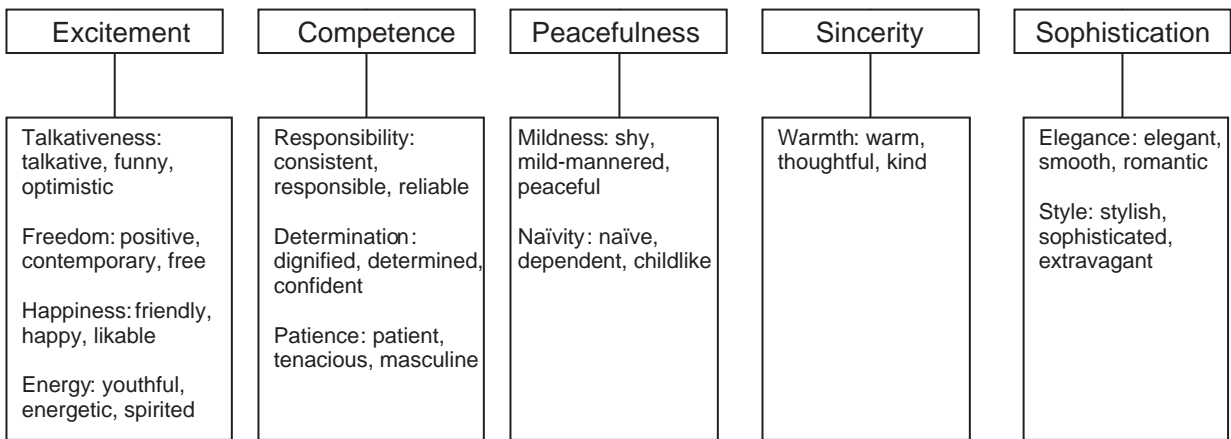
Note.  $N = 1,495$  Japanese. All loadings multiplied by 100; loadings  $|\geq .40|$  or larger are set in bold. Ex = Excitement, Co = Competence, Pe = Peacefulness, Si = Sincerity, So = Sophistication.

*Identification of Facets and Markers.* Because the full set of 100 attributes may be too lengthy to manipulate and measure in subsequent research, a more limited set of attributes that reliably captures each dimension was desired. To achieve this, we first identified the different facets subsumed by each component via separate principal component analyses of the attributes within each brand personality dimension (see also, Costa and McCrae 1992). Adopting this process, Aaker (1997) found a distinct set of facets that provided a structure to justify which attributes to select to represent each dimension as well as texture to understand the dimensions in greater detail. To illustrate, the American sincerity dimension consists of four facets—down-to-earth, honesty, wholesomeness, and cheerfulness (see Figure 1).

The separate principal component analyses of terms within each dimension yielded a total of 12 facets—four for Dimension I, three for Dimension II, two for

Dimension III, one for Dimension IV, and two for Dimension V. Within each facet, we then selected the three attributes with the highest item-to-total correlation. Each of the resulting 36 markers (three attributes for each of the 12 facets) had high item-to-total correlations within its corresponding three-item facet and dimension (range from .80 to .94). Cronbach's alphas calculated for each of the five dimensions using the 36-item scale indicated high levels of internal reliability, ranging from .80 (Dimension III) to .90 (Dimension I). The final set of 36 Japanese brand personality markers and their corresponding facets and dimensions are depicted in Figure 2.

**Figure 2. Study 1: Japanese Brand Personality Dimensions**



To further ensure high levels of reliability, a small sample of Japanese participants ( $n = 60$ , 50 percent female, mean age = 31.3) was asked to complete the same questionnaire approximately 8 weeks after completing the original questionnaire. A total of 15 participants each rated four groups of five brands (groups 1-4) over the two time periods. Test-retest correlations for the five dimensions defined by the 36 final markers were high, ranging from .81 (Dimension III) to .88 (Dimensions IV).

In sum, the results of Study 1 suggest that the brand personality space for Japanese individuals is organized in terms of five dimensions representing excitement, competence, peacefulness, sophistication, and sincerity. Although four of these dimensions appear to have overlapping meaning with those identified in the United States, using North American stimuli (Aaker 1997), a fifth dimension (peacefulness) appears to be relatively indigenous to Japan. In Study 2, we empirically test this premise by directly comparing Japanese and North American brand representational structures.



# Study 2: Overlap Between Japanese and American Brand Personality Dimensions

Study 2 was conducted with the primary objective of assessing the conceptual overlap between the Japanese brand personality dimensions identified in Study 1 and American brand dimensions (Aaker 1997). A secondary objective was to test the robustness of the five Japanese brand dimensions on a different sample of Japanese participants. To accomplish both objectives, an independent sample of Japanese individuals rated a subset of brands using the Japanese attributes (English-translated) identified in Study 1, as well as the attributes that represent the American dimensions.

## Method

*Participants.* To gain confidence that the results found in Study 1 were driven by culture-based perceptions of brands rather than linguistic differences (Enriquez 1979), the questionnaire was administered entirely in English rather than Japanese. Therefore, a slightly different profile of participants was used, one in which the participants were preselected to be bilingual. The sample of 114 Japanese participants was recruited from two sources—(1) Japanese students enrolled at a graduate business program at a large Japanese university ( $n = 56$ ), and (2) Japanese exchange students at a large U.S. western university, affiliated with the Center for East Asian Studies ( $n = 58$ ). The latter sample had lived in the United States an average of 1.8 years ( $SD = 2.04$ ). Participants were paid 500 yen (or \$5) for their completion of the study. Participants who scored less than 4.0 when rating their written English knowledge (“1” = extremely limited, “5” = extremely good) were eliminated ( $n = 15$ ), as were those who were not born in Japan ( $n = 9$ ), leaving a total of 90 Japanese individuals (50 percent female, mean age = 31.9).<sup>5</sup> To minimize the problems that often arise from the cultural differences in the meaning and use of personality attributes, all Japanese words were given to participants in personal attribute form (listed in “Kanojo/Kare-wa . . . da,” which corresponds to “It is . . .”).

*Procedure.* The cover story and structure of Study 2 was identical to that of Study 1 with two exceptions. First, participants rated each of the brands on 70 attributes, 42 markers of the five American brand personality dimensions, and the 36 markers of the Japanese dimensions identified in Study 1 (minus 8 overlapping attributes: confident, contemporary, friendly, masculine, reliable, smooth, spirited, and young). Second, only 10 brands were used; these brands were randomly selected from those used in Study 1 (Levi’s jeans, Mercedes automobiles, Chanel fragrance, Coca-Cola soft drinks, Mizuno sports apparel, McDonald’s restaurants, Sony Walkman, Nintendo toys, Attack detergent, and Kleenex tissue). The order in

which the attributes were presented was counterbalanced, as was the order in which the brands were presented in the questionnaire.

## Results and Discussion

What is the overall degree of content overlap or specificity between the indigenous Japanese brand personality dimensions and the imported American dimensions? To address this question, we first examined the correlations among the indigenous and imported components. Scale scores representing each participant's rating of each brand on every imported and indigenous dimension were computed. The validity correlations between the conceptually-related dimensions were as follows: sincerity (Japan) and sincerity (U.S.) = .63; excitement (Japan) and excitement (U.S.) = .75; competence (Japan) and competence (U.S.) = .80; sophistication (Japan) and sophistication (U.S.) = .81. The size of these convergence correlations (mean = .75) contrasted markedly with the average off-diagonal discriminant correlations (mean = .29), suggesting both convergent and discriminant validity.

The correlation patterns for the culture-specific ruggedness (U.S.) and peacefulness (Japan) dimensions were as follows: The highest correlation between ruggedness (U.S.) and any Japanese personality dimension was .39 (with Japanese competence), and the highest correlation between peacefulness (Japan) and any American dimension was .41 (with U.S. sincerity). Using Fisher's Z transformations, a statistical comparison of these two off-diagonal correlations with the validity correlations revealed that the two correlations, although sizable, are significantly smaller, suggesting that ruggedness and peacefulness are constructs that mainly capture culture-specific meaning.

A question to bear in mind when evaluating the convergent and discriminant correlations reported above is the extent to which they reflect shared measurement error, shared meaningful (i.e., conceptual) variance, or both. One way to address this issue is to explore the latent structure of the variance shared by the indigenous Japanese and imported American scales via confirmatory joint factor analysis (CFA).<sup>6</sup> Relying on this methodology, we investigated the fit for a model with six latent components. Four of these six dimensions represented brand personality constructs common to Japan and the United States (i.e., competence, sophistication, excitement, and sincerity), and the other two represented culture-specific brand personality constructs (i.e., ruggedness and peacefulness).<sup>7</sup> This model yielded adequate fit indices:  $\chi^2 (20, n = 900) = 163, p < .001$ ; CFI = .91, GFI = .92. Next, we compared the fit of our hypothesized six-component model against a more conservative four-component model that did not include culture-specific dimensions and instead represented American ruggedness and Japanese peacefulness as variations of competence and sincerity respectively (as suggested by the off-diagonal correlations for ruggedness and peacefulness reported above). This four-component model yielded unsatisfactory fit indices,  $\chi^2 (26, n = 900) = 325, p < .001$ ; CFI = .71, GFI = .79, and a significant decrease in overall fit,  $\Delta\chi^2 (6) = 626$ . These results support the idea that two culture-specific and four common latent dimensions may best represent unique and shared variance underlying the Japanese and American scales. This result is interesting in that a distinct sample was used in this study, one that purportedly had more exposure to the United States culture

than the sample used in Study 1. Future research is needed to explore the degree to which representations of brands are stable over time and given exposure to new cultures.

In sum, the convergent-discriminant validity patterns derived from the correlational and confirmatory factor analyses suggest that there is considerable overlap between the dimensions organizing the American brand perceptual space and those representing the Japanese brand perceptual space. Specifically, moderate to high convergence was found between the Japanese and American dimensions representing sincerity, excitement, competence, and sophistication. Two other dimensions, however, appeared to be more culture-specific—the Japanese dimensions of peacefulness and the American dimension of ruggedness. In other words, although Japanese perceptions of brands include meaning associations related to peacefulness, Americans perceive brands to carry meaning relating to ruggedness. These differences are in accordance with research suggesting that attributes and behaviors related to assertiveness are not as likely to be endorsed and nurtured in East Asian cultures (Church and Katigbak 1988); rather, such associations are often devalued and discouraged (Wierzbicka 1991). The presence of the peacefulness dimension, on the other hand, may reflect the visibility that obedience, maintaining harmony, and interdependence has in Asian cultures (Triandis 1989). Indeed, *wa* (loosely translated into “harmony” or “peace”) is “undoubtedly the single most popular component in mottos and names of companies across Japan” (Wierzbicka 1991; p. 354), whereas “rugged individualism” is a common theme found among many popular American brands (Solomon 1986; Vacker 1992).

The patterns of cultural overlap and differences obtained in Study 2 are consistent with theorizing in the consumer behavior literature (McCracken 1986) suggesting that the creation and nurturance of certain meaning associations in brands (e.g., excitement) is often culturally-general, although other brand meaning associations may prove highly specific (e.g., ruggedness). In Study 3, we examine the robustness of this finding by replicating the process adopted in studies 1 and 2 in a new cultural context—Spain.



# Study 3: Identification of Indigenous Spanish Brand Personality Dimensions

The objective of Study 3 was to test the generalizability of the dimensional structure uncovered in Study 1 in a different cultural context. Specifically, we are interested in the following questions: To what degree will the perceptual space of brand personality in Spain also be organized around five dimensions? More importantly, given the Spanish culture's emphasis on interdependence values and allocentric beliefs, should a dimension similar to the peacefulness construct uncovered in Japan also be expected? Finally, what is the likelihood that culture-specific Spanish brand personality constructs will emerge given Spain's unique cultural idiosyncrasies (Crow 1985; McVeagh 1990)? To address these questions, two studies that relied on emic and combined emic-etic methodology similar to that used in studies 1 and 2 were conducted.

## **Method**

*Stimuli Selection.* A set of 25 well-known global brands was selected based on the identical criteria and process used in Study 1. The only difference was the specific brands in the set. For example, one group of brands contained Ray-Ban sunglasses (symbolic), Ariel detergent (utilitarian), NH and Melia hotel (symbolic/utilitarian), Volkswagen automobiles (symbolic/utilitarian), and Coca-Cola (constant across all brand groups). See Table 1b.

**Table 1b. Sample of Spanish Brands**

<u>Brand Group 1</u>	<u>Brand Group 2</u>	<u>Brand Group 3</u>	<u>Brand Group 4</u>	<u>Brand Group 5</u>	<u>Brand Group 6</u>
Ray-Ban sunglasses	Rolex watches	Marlboro cigarettes	Armani suits	Chanel fragrance	Joyería Tous jewelry
Volkswagen automobiles	La Vanguardia	Sony CD player	Seat Ibiza automobiles	Mont Blanc pens	Don Simón wine
NH and Melia hotel	Bang Olufsen home stereo	UNICEF	Nintendo video games	Port Aventura amusement parks	Kodak film
Sugas candy	Ariel detergent	Frigo ice cream	Matutano snacks	La Caixa bank	Duracell batteries
Coca-Cola soft drinks	Coca-Cola soft drinks	Coca-Cola soft drinks	Coca-Cola soft drinks	Coca-Cola soft drinks	Coca-Cola soft drinks

*Personality Attribute Selection.* Personality attribute selection was also guided by the criteria used in Study 1. A free-association task was conducted in which Spanish participants who were economics or business undergraduate and graduate students ( $n = 36$ , 55 percent female, mean age = 25.1) were asked to list the personality attributes that first come to mind when thinking about the most salient brand in 10 randomly selected product categories identified in stimuli selection process (and based on the same overall profile as in Study 1), yielding 128 attributes. Next was the addition of 64 attributes compiled from three sources that rely on brand personality research in Spain (Spanish advertising agency, client company, and research supplier), 44 markers that were representative of the Big Five personality markers (John, Donahue, and Kentle 1991), and 30 personality descriptors representative of Benet-Martínez's (1999) indigenous Spanish personality constructs. Finally, from the total set of 266 personality attributes, three groups of attributes were eliminated because they were redundant ( $n = 79$ ), ambiguous ( $n = 16$ ), or relatively irrelevant to the construct of interest ( $n = 94$ ).<sup>8</sup> Thus, the result of this stage was the identification of 77 attributes.

*Participants and Procedure.* To enhance generalizability, a sample ( $n = 692$ ) was selected that represented the Spanish population with respect to five demographic dimensions generalizability—gender (62 percent female), age (mean = 31.5), marital status (35 percent married), education level (30 percent of the sample had a college or graduate school education), and occupation (48 percent of the sample were professional or technical workers). The participants in each of the six brand groups were selected to have the same profile as the total sample ( $n$  ranged from 108 to 131 in each of the six brand groups). Participants belonged to a Spanish national mail panel and were entered into a drawing for a set of electronic prod-

ucts (five televisions and two VCRs). The identical procedure used in Study 1, including counterbalancing, was followed in Study 3.

## Results and Discussion

As in Study 1, no significant differences were found in the mean ratings of Coca-Cola across the groups. To identify the individual differences in perceptions of brand personality dimensions, the correlations among the personality traits ( $n = 77$ ) across individuals' ratings of each brand were factor analyzed using principal component analysis and varimax rotation. Replicating results from Study 1, a five-component solution proved to be the most adequate to organize the covariance among the 77 Spanish brand personality descriptors. The choice of solution, like in Study 1, was based on the following criteria—(a) scree plot (the first 10 components were: 21.2, 6.8, 4.1, 3.2, 2.0, 1.3, 1.0, .9, .8, .6), indicating a moderate break after the fifth latent root, (b) stability of the solution in separate principal components analysis with distinct subsamples, (c) meaningfulness of the dimensions (at least seven traits loaded on each of the first five factors; only one trait loaded on the sixth component (“ruggedness”), and (d) levels of variance explained (dimensions six through nine explained under 1.2 percent each). The five-component solution is reported in Table 3. Labels for the five dimensions were selected based on the content of the dimensions.

As can be seen in Table 3, Dimension I (excitement) includes markers such as outgoing, daring, young, and unique, several of which are terms that also serve as markers of excitement in the American and Japanese brand personality sets. Representative markers of Dimension II (sincerity) include considerate, thoughtful, real, and sincere, which are consistent with the markers of sincerity in the U.S as well as Japan. Dimension III (sophistication) is depicted by good-looking, glamorous, upper-class, and stylish markers, which are consistent with those found in the U.S. for sophistication. However, interestingly, another facet of sophistication included confident, successful, and leader (markers of competence in the American model), which appear to be unique to Spain. Dimension IV (peacefulness) includes markers such as affectionate, peaceful, naïve, and dependent, which are consistent with the markers representing peacefulness in the Japanese cultural context. Finally, Dimension V (passion) includes fervent, passionate, spiritual, and bohemian as representative markers, consistent with the culture-specific findings highlighted in Benet-Martinez and Waller (1997).<sup>9</sup>

**Table 3. Spanish Brand Personality Dimensions**

Abbreviated English Translation	Varimax-Rotated Principal Factors					Original Spanish (Castilian) Terms
	Ex	Si	So	Pe	Pa	
Happy	<b>80</b>	06	-03	10	16	alegre
Fun	<b>78</b>	02	-05	12	20	divertida
Spirited	<b>75</b>	05	12	13	07	animosa
Outgoing	<b>75</b>	13	-02	16	19	extrovertida
Sharp, shrewd	<b>73</b>	10	02	01	19	avispada
Young	<b>72</b>	-06	14	05	05	joven
Energetic	<b>68</b>	07	26	11	04	llena de vida y energía
Daring	<b>67</b>	-09	26	04	24	atrevida
Cool	<b>67</b>	00	18	12	10	fresca
Active	<b>67</b>	21	07	-06	16	activa
Spirited	<b>65</b>	24	14	04	12	viva
Imaginative	<b>60</b>	17	19	05	22	creativa
Popular	<b>58</b>	10	11	05	-15	popular
Original	<b>57</b>	15	24	05	24	original
Contemporary	<b>55</b>	08	<b>41</b>	-04	03	contemporánea
Unique	<b>53</b>	07	39	10	13	única
Playful	<b>53</b>	02	04	11	<b>44</b>	picara
Familiar	<b>52</b>	35	-08	19	-11	familiar
Independent	<b>47</b>	17	38	-03	17	independiente
Free	<b>46</b>	-01	15	24	12	libre
Likable	<b>41</b>	18	41	34	11	simpática
Fiesty	37	06	24	14	13	peleona
Considerate	-01	<b>76</b>	19	09	14	considerada
Thoughtful	-06	<b>72</b>	17	14	19	atenta
Well-mannered	00	<b>72</b>	20	15	10	correcta
Orderly	-01	<b>71</b>	24	11	11	ordenada
Moderate	-06	<b>70</b>	19	14	13	moderada
Balanced	01	<b>67</b>	27	06	11	equilibrada
Down-to-earth	16	<b>65</b>	16	14	00	realista
Trustworthy	10	<b>64</b>	17	27	01	honrada
Sincere	31	<b>57</b>	11	28	03	sincera
Real	33	<b>55</b>	12	11	00	real
Logical	11	<b>51</b>	32	25	-01	lógica
Rational	13	<b>49</b>	41	17	00	racional
Hardworking	29	<b>46</b>	39	11	-01	trabajadora
Practical	28	<b>42</b>	27	15	-10	práctica
Flexible	28	<b>42</b>	13	29	06	flexible
Good looking	-06	16	<b>67</b>	22	21	elegante
Glamorous	05	10	<b>60</b>	24	29	glamorosa

Note.  $N = 692$  Spaniards. All loadings multiplied by 100; loadings  $|\geq .40|$  or larger are set in bold. Ex = Excitement, Si = Sincerity, So = Sophistication, Pe = Peacefulness, Pa = Passion.



**Table 3. Spanish Brand Personality Dimensions (continued)**

Abbreviated English Translation	Varimax-Rotated Principal Factors					Original Spanish (Castilian) Terms
	Ex	Si	So	Pe	Pa	
Upper-class	02	23	<b>59</b>	07	15	de clase superior
Strong	19	19	<b>59</b>	-02	12	fuerte
Secure	34	37	<b>55</b>	-05	00	segura
Tough	09	18	<b>54</b>	08	13	dura
Leader	35	22	<b>53</b>	-10	05	dirigente
Confident	39	32	<b>51</b>	-04	07	segura de si misma
Persistent	38	22	<b>49</b>	02	00	persistente
Successful	39	24	<b>47</b>	06	08	exitosa
Stylish	27	36	<b>46</b>	17	00	moderna
Reliable	26	<b>42</b>	<b>46</b>	07	-08	fiable
Reflective	34	33	<b>42</b>	18	11	pensativa
Feminine	01	07	<b>41</b>	38	21	femenina
Western	13	18	<b>40</b>	-01	03	occidental
Masculine	-01	08	36	19	19	masculina
Naïve	12	05	03	<b>64</b>	07	ingenua
Mild-mannered	07	27	19	<b>61</b>	-01	apacible
Good-natured	22	39	-06	<b>60</b>	14	buenaza
Shy	-05	07	01	<b>59</b>	12	tímida
Peaceful	08	34	19	<b>59</b>	-06	pacífica
Affectionate	30	36	-02	<b>58</b>	19	cariñosa
Sweet	29	26	04	<b>56</b>	18	dulce
Docile	05	36	-00	<b>54</b>	18	dócil
Calm	10	16	27	<b>48</b>	06	tranquila
Childlike	33	-06	-14	<b>47</b>	00	infantil
Gentle	27	39	01	<b>46</b>	11	amable
Dependent	01	09	08	<b>41</b>	12	dependiente
Rugged	-03	-03	10	31	28	áspera
Normal	07	29	06	30	-06	normal
Fervent	34	06	12	11	<b>68</b>	fervorosa
Passionate	37	07	16	11	<b>65</b>	apasionada
Impulsive	<b>47</b>	03	09	03	<b>62</b>	impulsiva
Temperamental	36	13	18	00	<b>61</b>	temperamental
Emotional	<b>41</b>	14	07	13	<b>56</b>	emocional
Intense	39	15	19	01	<b>55</b>	intensa
Mystical	-06	13	10	<b>43</b>	<b>52</b>	mística
Spiritual	-05	16	09	<b>44</b>	<b>51</b>	espiritual
Bohemian	10	04	12	32	<b>51</b>	bohemia
Extravagant	25	-07	18	17	<b>42</b>	extravagante

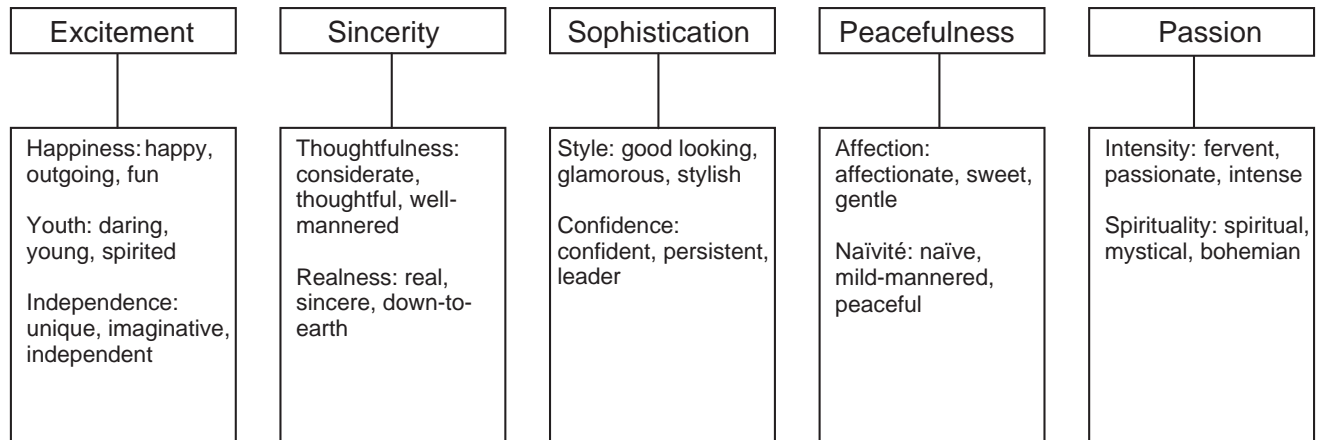
Note.  $N = 692$  Spaniards. All loadings multiplied by 100; loadings  $|\geq .40|$  or larger are set in bold. Ex = Excitement, Si = Sincerity, So = Sophistication, Pe = Peacefulness, Pa = Passion.

*Identification of Markers and Facets.* To identify a smaller set of personality attributes representative of each of the Spanish five dimensions, a facet analysis identical to that adopted in Study 1 was conducted. Second, five facet analyses identical to those in Study 1 were conducted. This analysis yielded a total of 11 facets—three for Dimension I, two for Dimension II, two for Dimension III, two for Dimension IV, and two for Dimension V. To maintain high levels of reliability, three attributes with the highest item-to-total correlation were selected from each facet, leaving 33 attributes (three attributes for each of the 11 facets). Each attribute had high item-to-total correlations on the facets and dimensions (range from .70 to .84), thereby ensuring high internal consistency. Further, Cronbach's alphas that were calculated for each of the five dimensions using the 33-attribute scale ranged from .80 (Dimension III) to .91 (Dimension I), suggesting high levels of internal reliability. For the items in each dimension, see Figure 3.

Finally, as in Study 1, an independent set of Spanish participants ( $n = 58$ , 60 percent female, mean age = 21.3) was asked to complete the same questionnaire approximately seven weeks after completing the original questionnaire. Four versions of the questionnaire were used ( $n = 14$ -15 in each cell). The average Pearson correlation of the five dimensions as measured at Time 1 and Time 2 was .80 (ranging from .77 to .83).

In sum, the results of Study 3 suggest that five dimensions representing excitement, sincerity, peacefulness, sophistication, and passion organize brand personality attributes in Spain. Three findings appear particularly noteworthy. The first was the emergence of several components that convey meaning similar in nature to those previously found in the United States (i.e., excitement, sincerity) and Japan (i.e., excitement, sincerity, peacefulness). Second, one dimension that appears to carry culture-specific meaning emerged, passion. Third, there was a blending of competence associations into the sophistication dimension in Spain. Study 4 was conducted to determine the degree to which these findings are robust across stimuli and participants, and to examine explicitly the degree of overlap between these indigenous dimensions and those found in the United States.

**Figure 3. Spanish Brand Personality Dimensions**





# Study 4: Overlap Between Spanish and American Brand Personality Dimensions

In Study 4, we compare the Spanish and North American brand representational structures by assessing their conceptual overlap at the dimension level via correlational and confirmatory joint factor analysis.

## Method

*Participants.* As in Study 2, a sample of 101 Spanish individuals was recruited from two sources—(1) Spanish students enrolled at a graduate program in Spain ( $n = 42$ ) and (2) Spanish individuals living in the United States, affiliated with the Association Española de Silicon Valley ( $n = 59$ ). The average time that the latter sample lived in the U.S. was 2.8 years ( $SD = 2.66$ ). Participants were paid approximately \$5 for their participation. Like in Study 2, participants who scored less than 4.0 on written English knowledge were eliminated ( $n = 12$ ), as were any participants not born in Spain ( $n = 3$ ), thereby leaving 87 Spanish individuals (39 percent female, mean age = 25.3).

*Procedure.* A total of 10 brands from the overall set used in Study 3 were randomly selected (Rolex watches, Chanel fragrance, Marlboro cigarettes, Armani suits, Coca-Cola soft drinks, Nintendo toys, UNICEF, Sony CD player, Kodak film). Participants rated each of these 10 brands on 65 attributes (33 markers of the Spanish dimensions and 42 markers of the American dimensions), minus the 10 overlapping attributes (daring, young, spirited, unique, real, sincere, down-to-earth, good-looking, upper-class, tough, leader). The final set of Spanish markers was back translated through the process outlined in Study 1. Inter-rater agreement was 89 percent; discrepancies were resolved through discussion. For the purposes of assessing the convergent validity, we also included the three markers of peacefulness (Japan) that did not appear in the peacefulness (Spain) dimension (childlike, shy, dependent). Finally, attribute and brand order were counterbalanced.

## Results and Discussion

First, we assessed the conceptual overlap between the indigenous Spanish and imported American brand personality dimensions (plus the Japanese peacefulness dimension) by examining the patterns of intercorrelations among all the scales representing these constructs. Correlations between corresponding dimensions were as follows: sincerity (Spain) and sincerity (U.S.) = .85; excitement (Spain) and excitement (U.S.) = .87, sophistication (Spain) and sophistication (U.S.) = .83. The correlation between the Spanish and Japanese peacefulness dimensions was .78. These validity correlations (mean = .83) contrasted with the off-diagonal correlations (mean = .32), suggesting moderate-to-high levels of convergent and discriminant validity. A close

examination of the off-diagonal correlations revealed that their relatively large absolute mean value was mostly driven by the presence of a large (.79) correlation between sophistication (Spain) and competence (U.S.). This result supports our previous comment that sophistication in Spain appears to comprise a unique mixture of sophistication and competence attributes (i.e., competence in Spain appears to be a facet of sophistication instead of defining a separate dimension).

The correlation patterns for the culture-specific passion (Spain) and ruggedness (U.S.) dimensions were as follows: The highest correlation between ruggedness (U.S.) and any Spanish personality dimension was only .42 (with Spanish sophistication), and the highest correlation between passion (Spain) and any American dimension was .51 (with American sophistication). Comparisons using Fisher's Z transformations revealed that these two off-diagonal correlations are significantly smaller than the four validity pair-wise correlations.

As in Study 2, we also examined the latent structure of the Spanish and American scales (plus the Japanese peacefulness scale) via confirmatory joint factor analyses. We first examined a model that specified seven latent dimensions: three dimensions representing brand personality constructs common to the United States and Spain (i.e., sophistication, excitement, and sincerity), one dimension representing the one brand personality construct common to Spain and Japan (peacefulness), and two dimensions representing Spain- and U.S.-specific brand personality constructs (passion and ruggedness, respectively). This seven-component model fitted the data adequately,  $\chi^2(23, n = 870) = 111, p < .001$ ; CFI = .92, GFI = .91. We also tested a more conservative four-component model in which dimensions not shared by the United States and Spain would load as follows—ruggedness and competence on sophistication, passion on sophistication, and peacefulness on sincerity (reflecting the patterns of off-diagonal correlations discussed above). This four-component model yielded unsatisfactory fit indices,  $\chi^2(43, n = 870) = 392, p < .001$ ; CFI = .55, GFI = .74, and a significant decrease in overall fit,  $\Delta\chi^2(20) = 281$ . These results corroborate that four culture-specific and three common dimensions are needed to capture the major sources of variance underlying the Spanish and American data.

# General Discussion

The overarching goal of our studies is to gain insight into how cultural meaning is represented in individuals' perceptions of symbolic objects such as commercial icons. Findings from studies 1 and 2 identified a set of brand personality dimensions that share similar meaning in Japan and the United States (sincerity, excitement, competence, and sophistication), as well as relatively culture-specific Japanese (peacefulness) and American (ruggedness) dimensions. Studies 3 and 4 extended this set of findings to Spain. Results from these studies also revealed brand personality dimensions that shared similar meaning in both Spain and the United States (sincerity, excitement, and sophistication), plus nonshared Spanish (passion) and American (competence and ruggedness) dimensions. Consistent with the premise that individuals in Japanese and Spanish cultures are more likely to embrace harmony-oriented value types than individuals in the United States (Schwartz 1994), peacefulness emerged in Spain as it did in Japan.

These results are consistent with the proposition that consumption symbols such as commercial brands may carry relatively culturally-common meaning; however, important culture-specific meaning also exists. Consider, for example, the meaning of the Japanese and Spanish peacefulness dimensions. Considerable research has demonstrated that members of East Asian and Latin cultures tend to place greater weight on cooperation and harmony relative to members of North American cultures, who give more value to mastering the social environment through self-assertion and independence (Hsu 1983; Marín and Marín 1991; Triandis et al. 1984). The emergence of peacefulness in Japan and Spain is consistent with these countries' significantly higher scores relative to the U.S. on harmony values (see Table 7.3, Schwartz 1994). The consequences of this cultural variance in value endorsement range from preferences in persuasion appeals that convey harmony (e.g., Kim and Markus 1999) to subjective assessments of one's happiness that covary with perceptions of harmony in one's relationships (e.g., Kwan, Bond, and Singelis 1997) to preference for conflict resolution strategies that involve mutual coordination of feelings (e.g., Gabrielidis, Stephan, Ybarra, Pearson, and Villareal 1997; Markus and Lin 1999). In contrast, individuals in the U.S. value self-assertion and personal achievement, as demonstrated in both preferences toward persuasive appeal (Han and Shavitt 1994) and correlates of life satisfaction (Oishi et al. 1999). Our results indicate that another potential consequence of cultural variations in the emphasis placed on cooperation and harmony relative to individualism and self-assertion involves the emergence of unique configurations in the meaning embedded in commercial brands. For example, the culture-specific status of ruggedness, with its associations with institutionalized American values such as strength, masculinity, and toughness (Solomon 1986), seems to align well with the findings on value endorsement, whereby the United States has relatively higher scores on mastery and lower scores on egalitarian commitment as compared to Japan and Spain (Schwartz 1994).

Further, consider the emergence of the passion dimension in Spain, which is supported by recent findings from cultural studies suggesting links between Latin cultures' characteristic higher levels of felt and communicated emotions (Basabe, Paez, Valencia, Rime, Pennebaker, Diener, and Gonzalez 2000; Zummuner and Fisher 1995) and several sociocultural and psychological factors such as honor- and Catholic-related values (Rodriguez, Manstead, and Fischer 2000; Zubieta, Fernandez, Vergara, Martínez, and Candia 1998), differences in temperament development (Axia, Prior, and Carelli 1992) and personality (Benet-Martínez 1999). Portrayals of Spaniards and Latin individuals as "intense and passionate" abound not only in the social sciences, but also in the popular media. Spain is frequently advertised to the visitor as a land of intense and pleasurable experiences; a country that not only celebrates gastronomy, art, socializing, and risk-taking, but also performs them intensely (e.g., <[www.cyberspain.com/passion](http://www.cyberspain.com/passion)>; see also McVeagh 1990). Novelists (Hemingway 1926), travel journalists (Gibson 2000), film experts (Pally 1991), and sociologists (Crow 1985; Hooper 1987; Shubert 1990) call attention to the centrality of passion in Spanish culture. Further, supporting our premise that cultural values penetrate the creation and perception of commercial symbols, we found several Spanish companies that engage in branding efforts and marketing campaigns in which the construct of "passion" is central (e.g., Osborne Group 2000).

In contrast to peacefulness, ruggedness, and passion, the sincerity, excitement, and sophistication dimensions appear to be more similarly construed across cultures. This suggests that, in addition to potential cultural variance in consumer needs, commercial brands may reflect more universally held individual needs. However, despite the cross-cultural stability of the above dimensions, the results of the cross-cultural correlations in studies 2 and 4 indicate that the correspondence is not unitary. To illustrate, excitement is associated with being young, contemporary, spirited, and daring across cultural contexts. However, it also conveys imaginativeness, uniqueness, and independence in North America and Spain. In contrast, in Japan, it contains a "talkativeness" facet (e.g., talkative, funny, and optimistic). This idiosyncratic meaning is consistent with the relativist argument that constructs shift in meaning when examined in different cultural contexts (Shweder 1990). This implication is particularly important in the context of sophistication, where there is considerable overlap in certain attributes across the cultures (e.g., glamorous, good-looking, stylish, smooth). However, unique to Spain was a secondary facet that contains attributes more closely associated with competence in Japan and the United States. This finding indicates that sophistication takes on a different meaning in Spain than it does in North America or Japan. In other words, the interpretation of the meaning of a commercial brand must take into consideration the particular cultural lens through which the brand is being seen. This result highlights the notion that absolute equivalents and universals may not be as useful as understanding and investigating the idea of partial equivalents and partial universals (Wierzbicka 1991). In other words, the dimensions that emerged in these four studies appear to simply vary in the degree to which they contain universal meaning relative to culture-specific meaning.



Our findings also have implications for the understanding of human personality. As discussed earlier, our culture-specific brand personality dimensions (ruggedness, passion, and peacefulness) can be related to particular patterns of human personality traits, emotions, and value orientations characteristic of American, Spanish, and Japanese cultures respectively. These links between brand and human personality differences are to be expected if one acknowledges the inseparability of culture and psyche (Markus and Lin 1999) and the largely socially-constructed nature of personality (Hampson 1988). Namely, culture can be seen as a network of shared meaning that influences how social perception is organized, from the way commercial symbols are seen to the way in which human personality is described and even experienced. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that our work shows that, as with human personality, brand personality appears to be consistently organized around five dimensions. The robustness of a five-dimensional structure across these two kinds of personality perception suggests that, functionally, social perception may be influenced by cognitive-economy processes similar to those affecting memory (Miller 1956), where information is best organized and retrieved around seven “chunks” of information (plus or minus two).



# Caveats and Future Research

The contributions of this research involve a substantive focus on identifying and examining the culturally-similar and culture-specific meaning carried and conveyed in consumption symbols, as well as the methodological emphasis on a combined emic-etic to compare this approach. However, despite these contributions, there are limitations that reveal areas for future research. First, from a methodological perspective, this research relied on a limited number of attributes and commercial brands to create the perceptual space of brands. Further, the sample used in studies 2 and 4 are limited in that they rely on students, who tend to be less representative of the general population. Future research is needed to determine the degree to which the results found in the current research are generalizable across contexts, brands, and samples of individuals. Such research may also examine the relationship between the product categories and attribute ratings in order to gain insight on the degree to which specific categories may influence the ratings on attributes and thus the final component structure. In addition, the degree to which there was variance in the types of attributes used to describe brands within or across countries may be assessed. For example, to what degree is the same attribute used to describe all brands, or do different attributes describe different brands? Based on the results of the free-association task, there appears to be some variation in the attributes used to describe the brands. However, this varied across attributes. For example, in Japan, attributes such as “reliable,” “warm,” and “stylish” traits seemed to describe many brands, whereas traits such as “naïve” and “talkative” were more likely to describe specific brands. Future research is needed to explore the degree to which there are “meta” attributes that are commonly used to describe brands across product categories, and which attributes tend to be specific to a brand within a particular product category.

The current research took a single picture of individuals’ perceptions of the meaning of commercial brands at a static point in time. Therefore, although the conceptualization of culture put forth in this research is dynamic, the nature of this dynamism was not explored. Future research is needed to determine the degree to which exposure to the constructs represented by the indigenous dimensions, and market globalization efforts more broadly, makes all of us psychologically more similar (Hermans and Kempen 1998). Shore (1996), for example, comments that as Coke and Pepsi quickly make their way to the recently liberated South Africa, “a global mass culture with Western commodities at its heart was created” (pg. 9). To what degree do these Western commodities subsequently shape the new culture in which they are distributed? The answer may depend not only on the meaning of those Western brands (e.g., Coca-Cola), but also on the nature of the interaction between the brand and individuals in the culture (e.g., South Africa). If meaning construction is an ongoing process, one that involves active interaction with people (Kim and Markus 1999; Shweder 1990; Shore 1996), the distribution of these Western commodities may not in fact lead to psychologically more similar individuals. Rather, it may lead to individuals who are exposed to multiple cultural

models, and a commercial brand whose meaning is jointly created by advertisers and individuals in the culture.

Finally, the current work is a first step toward understanding the link between culture and psyche in the context of commercial symbols; however, it remains exploratory in nature. Future research is needed to elucidate the specific mechanisms by which commercial symbols are imbued with meaning, as well as how that meaning characterizes perceptions of human attributes and values (Roccas, Sagiv, Schwartz, and Knafo 2000). In this way, the more dynamic nature of culture may be taken into consideration, and the movement of meaning from culture to the individual may be explored more directly. Conducting longitudinal research is one way to address this question; another is to examine the process of frame-shifting. Recent research on biculturalism has shown that individuals have the ability to “frame shift,” that is, to view things from different cultural vantage points (Hong et al. 2000). In this light, the culture-as-a-lens metaphor (McCracken 1986) is extended to one in which multiple glasses with different color lenses can be put on and taken off. Given this perspective, the question arises, To what degree does a particular perceptual representation of brands in consumers’ minds lead to different evaluations of brands? That is, what happens when a consumer holds a Japanese perception of the structural space of brands? What are the consequences of holding such a mental representation, particularly as it compares to when one holds the American (or Spanish) mental representation of brands? To address these questions, a set of priming experiments that manipulate the salience of one cultural frame over another may be conducted. For example, in Japan, kanji is perceived as a relatively traditional Japanese writing system, whereas katakana is perceived as more modern or westernized. Therefore, one might examine the degree to which brand names or personality attributes written in kanji (katakana) may evoke a Japanese (American) perceptual structure, thereby leading to potentially different sets of consequences. In this way, the more dynamic nature of culture may be taken into consideration, and the movement of meaning from culture to the individual may be explored more directly.

In conclusion, the work presented here shows that the study of consumption symbols, such as commercial brands, is a useful approach to the understanding of how cultural beliefs and values are represented and institutionalized. In accordance with an ethno-psychological perspective (Wierzbicka 1991), our results indicate that the meaning embedded in commercial brands has both culturally-specific and -common elements. Above all, our studies underscore the mobile quality of culture and the bidirectional relationship between the individual and culture.

# Notes

1. Although the conceptualization of brand and human personality may be similar, the two constructs vary in their antecedents as well as the distinct roles that they serve. In the case of individuals, personality traits are inferred from observable and stated attitudes and behavior as well as physical characteristics (Park 1986). In this light, people develop their own personalities, thereby reflecting a relatively basic process of personality development (McCrae et al., 2000). In contrast, brands are inanimate objects imbued with personality trait associations through marketing communications, thereby reflecting a more impressionable process of personality development. For example, marketers rely on user imagery (defined as the set of human characteristics associated with the user of the brand), celebrity endorsers (e.g., Michael Jordan), symbols, logos, and slogans (e.g., AT&T's "Reach Out and Touch Someone"), and personification (e.g., the Pillsbury Doughboy) to develop the personality associations of a brand (Plummer 1985).
2. To identify the relatively irrelevant attributes, Japanese participants ( $n = 140$ , 55 percent female, mean age = 35.3) rated how descriptive the 167 attributes (253 minus the redundant and ambiguous attributes) were of the most salient brand in 10 product categories that spanned the symbolic-utilitarian framework. To isolate the most relevant attributes for this set of stimuli, the cutoff for the final list of attributes was a scale rating of 4 (very descriptive), thereby leaving 100 attributes for Study 1. Of those 100 attributes, 68 percent were indigenous (plus 15 percent from the Big Five and 17 percent from Aaker [1997]).
3. The participants were representative of the geographic regions in Japan (e.g., 30 percent of the participants were from the Kanto region), although no one from the islands outside of Honshu participated.
4. One limitation of a disaggregated analysis (i.e., making each individual's ratings of each brand the unit of analysis) relative to an aggregated analysis (in which brands are the unit of analysis after averaging across individuals' ratings of each particular brand) is that the correlations among attributes are likely also to reflect individual differences in scale use. To assess the impact of this methodological issue, we also examined factor solutions obtained from aggregated data ( $n = 25$  brands). Interestingly, these factor structures were similar to those obtained with the disaggregated data (see Leung and Bond 1989 and Schwartz 1994 for a discussion of why structures obtained from aggregated and disaggregated data tend to be closely related. We also examined structures obtained using an oblique rotation (Promax), which proved nearly identical to the orthogonal solution (varimax).
5. By relying on a different sample than in Study 1, Study 2 provides more support for the robustness of the findings. However, it also suffers from the limitation of small sample size.

6. In Study 2, facets were used as indicators of the latent factors (which were allowed to correlate). The same was the case in Study 4.
7. Many different indices are available to assess the degree to which a hypothesized model is consistent with observed data. The chi-square statistic is the most widely used but is highly dependent on sample size, so it can be significant even for models that fit the data well (Bentler 1990). Another index is the comparative fit index (CFI; Bentler 1990), which ranges from 0 to 1 and is relatively independent from sample size. The rule of thumb is that a CFI of .90 or greater indicates that the specified model fits the data well.
8. To identify the relatively irrelevant attributes, Spanish participants ( $n = 75$ , 46 percent female, mean age = 34) rated how descriptive the 171 attributes (266 minus the redundant and ambiguous attributes) were of the most salient brand in 10 product categories that spanned the symbolic-utilitarian framework. To isolate the most relevant attributes for this set of stimuli, the cutoff for the final list of attributes was a scale rating of 4 (very descriptive), thereby leaving 77 attributes for Study 3. Of those 77 attributes, 67 percent were indigenous (plus 7 percent from the Big Five and 26 percent from Aaker [1997]).
9. As in Study 1, two additional analyses were run to gain insight into the robustness of the results. We examined the structure obtained using the disaggregated data and an oblique rather than an orthogonal rotation, and as well as the factor solutions obtained from aggregated data ( $n = 25$  brands). The results provided structures that were similar to those reported above.

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