



# Pilot proposal to establish brand personality; The case of brands in the sports sector

## *Propuesta piloto para establecer la personalidad de marcas; caso marcas del sector deportivo*

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### Abstract

The methodologies to measure brand personality are diverse, they are criticized for not associating cultural factors, lack of negative traits or they are not generalizable, for this reason a pilot model based on consumer perception with desirable traits applied to three sports brands is proposed. The method was executed in two phases, the qualitative one to identify desirable traits and another quantitative one with which 24 traits were measured in a sample of 327 people. The results of the AFC determined a personality model with three dimensions that are not the same with respect to the traits that group what generates a model for each one, in this way the perceptive differences have been established supported in their symbolic meaning and the contracting with some models reflect little coincidence, this has both theoretical and practical implications for the advancement in the development of measurement methods in brand management.

*JEL Code:* M30, M31, M37

*Keywords:* brand; personality traits; brand image; sports brands; branding

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## Resumen

Las metodologías para medir la personalidad de marca son diversas, tiene críticas por no asociar factores culturales, carencia de rasgos negativos o no son generalizables, por ello se propone un modelo piloto basado en la percepción del consumidor con rasgos deseables, aplicado a tres marcas deportivas. El método se ejecutó en dos fases el cualitativo para identificar rasgos deseables y otra cuantitativa con la que se midieron 24 rasgos en una muestra de 327 personas. Los resultados del AFC determinaron un modelo de personalidad con tres dimensiones que no son iguales respecto a los rasgos que agrupan lo que genera un modelo para cada una, de esta manera se han establecido las diferencias perceptivas soportado en su significado simbólico y la contratación con algunos modelos reflejan poca coincidencia, esto tiene implicaciones tanto teóricas como prácticas para el avance para desarrollo de métodos de medición en la gestión de las marcas.

*Código JEL:* M30, M31, M37

*Palabras clave:* marca; rasgos de personalidad; imagen de marca; marcas deportivas; gestión de la marca

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## Introduction

A brand is the result of a set of perceptions in the consumer's mind (Fournier, 1998) built to reinforce its identity with consumers, who associate emotions to give the brand human characteristics and personality traits (Pirela et al., 2004) through contact with it (Ouwensloot & Tudorica, 2001). It represents a symbolic function (Keller, 1993; Roy et al., 2016; Becheur et al., 2017) to differentiate itself from its competitors and is part of its positioning and image (Plummer, 1985) and brand equity (Keller, 1993) that affects purchase intention (Guido et al., 2010; Bairrada et al., 2019; Mao et al., 2020). For these reasons, the term 'brand' has gained a great deal of attention since the 1950s when Martineau (1958) used the term 'establishment personality' to refer to non-material aspects when describing the character of a store.

Brand personality has effects on love for the brand and its perception of quality (Bairrada et al., 2019), with strong relationships with preferred brands. Those brands that develop personality make consumers passionate about acquiring them (Campos, 2012). Researching brand personality traits is complex due to the dynamics of the environments and how easily influenced consumers, (Escobar-Farfán et al., 2016), who require constant validation of the models in different sectors or industries, can be.

Brand personality in sports, initially proposed by Heere (2010), is a topic that has gained interest (Braunstein & Ross, 2010; Schade et al., 2014) and is in a developing stage (Walsh et al., 2013). It has been applied to various sectors such as basketball (Smith et al., 2006; Ross, 2008; Carlson et al., 2009), NFL (Kang et al., 2016), soccer (Čáslavová & Petráčková, 2011; Schade et al., 2014; Asadollahi et al., 2015), cycling (Čáslavová & Petráčková, 2011), the Olympics (Čáslavová & Petráčková, 2011), in specific athletes (Vincent et al., 2007; Keaton et al., 2015; Mitsis & Leckie, 2016; Görgüt & Özbal, 2018),

sporting events (Parent & Séguin, 2008; Čáslavovová & Petráčková, 2011; Walsh et al., 2013), sponsors (Braunstein & Ross, 2010), and sports apparel and footwear (Do Kim et al., 2009).

Although the Aaker (1997) scale is considered the original scale for the personality trait in brands (Braunstein & Ross, 2010; Walsh et al., 2013), it is considered to have been the least successful for application in the context of sports brands (Tsiotsou, 2012) considering that different brand categories require brand personality models to conceptualize distinctive characteristics (Do Kim et al., 2009), as is the case for soccer sports clubs (Schade et al., 2014).

Given the particular characteristics of brands in the sports domain compared to other product categories (Table 1), the diversity of designed and tested methods, the approaches both in human traits (Kang et al., 2016) and specific to brands (Aaker, 1997) in the determination of brand personality traits, and especially the inclusion of cultural or linguistic aspects (Azoulay & Kapferer, 2003, Ahmad & Thyagaraj, 2014), the non-existence of a completely accepted model or method for the determination of brand personality is evident (Escobar-Farfán et al., 2016).

Certain terms Aaker implemented in the model do not apply to all cultures and countries, which can generate confusion in different areas (Escobar-Farfán et al., 2016). Considering that brand personality attributions are partly culture-specific (Bosnjak et al., 2007), this supports the need for a general model (Geuens et al., 2009). Nevertheless, it is not yet possible to achieve this general model considering that there are multiple approaches assumed in brand personality and applications in specific sectors such as higher education institution brands (Harris, 2009), sports brands (Tong & Su, 2014; Kim et al., 2018), non-profit organization brands (Delgado, 2014), socially responsible brands (Mayorga & Añaños, 2018; Gordillo & Carrasco 2020), brand personality differences between users or non-users of social networks (Walsh et al., 2013), website content analysis (Tsiotsou, 2012), or methods such as Heere's (2010), which first determines the brand personality traits attributed by marketing managers and the subsequent contrasts with user perceptions.

To advance toward the development of a method to establish a brand personality model that overcomes specific cultural and brand management characteristics in a given territory, the purpose of this study is to establish brand personality in the category of sports brands in Bogotá by applying a pilot method based on the traits that consumers consider representative of the category and to compare the presence of these traits in Aaker's scale (1997). The choice of this sector was because brands in this category are concerned with identity building and invest in brand building and brand recall. Consumer preference is led by Adidas and Nike (Pérez et al., 2018).

## *Background*

Aaker (1997) determined five dimensions associated with brand personality: sincerity, enthusiasm, competence, sophistication, and robustness. Therefore, the author created a measurement scale to identify reliability, validity, and generalization. For Avis (2012), referenced in Aaker, the above lacks negative factors and can generate confusion regarding the adjustment of the domains and the selection of descriptors. Nonetheless, research has focused on replicating Aaker's scale (1997) to recognize its contributions and weaknesses against its use and application in different environments to analyze other sociocultural spaces (Azoulay & Kapferer, 2003).

Since the introduction of the Aaker method (1997), it has been used in different territories, regardless of culture and brand management at the local level (Sung & Tinkham, 2005). Nonetheless, given that the use of language and vocabulary varies (Avis, 2012), it is not considered a universal method (Escobar-Farfán et al., 2016) since consumption involves symbolic social practices through which products are appropriated and the object of diverse uses (Ortega, 2009). This assumes that markets are culturally and linguistically too diverse to use a universal brand personality trait model and that citizens from two countries evaluate brand personality dimensions differently (Karlsson & Ero, 2018).

Therefore, the Aaker scale is not appropriate (Pereira et al., 2014) for all industries because some features do not apply to a particular product, and in other cultural contexts, specific dimensions emerge, such as the "culture of peace" dimension in Japan (Aaker et al., 2001). In addition, brands are managed locally, adapting to the environment where they compete, so the model may have adaptations, as is the case for sports brands (Tong & Su, 2014). Alternatives to this model focus on the relation between brand and human personality (Okazaki, 2006).

Although several applications of the Aaker model (1997) have been made in the sports sector (Austin et al., 2003; Smith et al., 2006; Ross, 2008; Čáslavová & Petráčková, 2011), said scale is not generalizable (Austin et al., 2003). Therefore, it is common to find that adaptations, selection of facets, choice of traits to be used, or incorporation into new scales are being made (Carlson et al., 2009; Braunstein & Ross, 2010; Tsiotsou, 2012).

Given the interest in brand personality in the sports sector, with continuous validations and advances, several approaches to brand personality models are supported by human personality traits (Kang et al., 2016). Other authors, from literature review and trait reduction, propose new scales for sports brands (Parent & Séguin, 2008; Braunstein & Ross, 2010; Tsiotsou, 2012; Carlson et al., 2009) or determine methods from the generation of personality trait adjective lists using qualitative approaches and quantitative assessment (Bosnjak et al., 2007; Geuens et al., 2009; Do Kim et al., 2009; Heere, 2010; Walsh et al., 2013; Schade et al., 2014). In addition to product, event, and team brands, in some cases,

athletes are assumed to be also a brand (Mitsis & Leckie, 2016) by establishing the applicability of a personality trait scale at an individual level.

The above has nurtured research with several personality trait scales for the sports environment for teams, sponsors, athletes, events, shoes, clothing, and products. Because of this, new dimensions have also been developed, such as competitiveness, prestige, morality, authenticity, credibility, and influence model (Tsiotsou, 2012) or extroversion, rebelliousness, open-mindedness, and scrupulousness (Schade et al. 2014).

Table 1 presents some authors who have worked on brand personality in the sports sector. There are variables related to sincerity, emotion, competence, sophistication, hardness, tradition, rudeness, and authenticity (Asadollahi et al., 2015). For Bosnjak et al. (2007), the variables relate more to excitement, boredom, scrupulousness, excitement, and superficiality. Braunstein et al. (2010) also raised the following: success, sophistication, sincerity, robustness, and new variables such as classic and the drive for community appear in their analysis. The same authors in a 2009 study recognized the variables prestige and distinctiveness. For Čáslavová and Petráčková (2011), the variables from the World Cup, Tour de France, and Summer Olympic Games branding studies always found in all three scenarios were sincerity, emotion, and sophistication.

On the other hand, Geuens et al. (2007) recognized activity, responsibility aggressiveness, simplicity, and emotion as variables (Görgüt & Özbal, 2018). In their study, they recognized competitiveness, prestige, morality, authenticity, credibility, and influence as role model as variables. Meanwhile, Kang et al. (2016) added the variables of kindness, extroversion, emotion, openness, responsibility, and honesty. Ross (2008) recognized sincerity, sophistication, emotion, and robustness. Two studies by Schade et al. (2014) identified extroversion, open-mindedness, and conscientiousness/awareness variables. Finally, Keaton et al. (2015) recognized variables associated more with family, geography, popularity, recreation, casual viewing, and athletic performance.

Table 1  
 Dimensions and traits used for brand personality in the sports sector

Authors	Title of Article	Dimensions	Traits
Asadollahi et al. (2015)	Developing A Scale Sport Brand Personality in Iranian Sport Teams	Sincerity	genuine, authentic, and reliable
		Emotion	evokes positive emotions and enthusiasm
		Competence	successful, competitive, and dominant
		Sophistication	elegant, refined, and high-quality
		Hardness	courageous, resilient, and determined
		Tradition	Iranian history, cultural values, and roots

		Rudeness	daring, aggressive, or defiant image
		Authenticity	authentic and true to its Iranian identity
Bosnjak et al. (2007)	Dimensions of Brand Personality Attributions: A Person-Centric Approach in the German Cultural Context	Excitement	Exciting, adventurous, daring, animated
		Boredom	Narrow-minded, bourgeois, dull, old-fashioned
		Scrupulousness	Competent, orderly, reliable, diligent
		Exciting	Warm, cordial, sentimental, caring
		Superficial	Egotistical, arrogant, hypocritical, materialistic
Braunstein y Ross (2010)	Brand Personality in Sport: Dimension Analysis and General Scale Development	Success	Successful, efficient, high-performing, reliable, superior, accomplished, respected, trustworthy, self-confident, quality, consistent, capable, mature, hard-working
		Sophistication	Elegant, up-to-date, appearance, glamorous, eye-catching, fashionable, high-class, sophisticated, attractive, corporate
		Sincerity	Honest, genuine, sincere, authentic, charming, friendly, family-oriented
		Robustness	Bold, daring, robust
		Community-driven	Authentic, inspiring, service-oriented
Braunstein y Ross (2009)	Consumer-brand relationships in sport: brand personality and identification	Classic	Traditional, classic, antique
		Prestige	Healthy, successful
		Distinctive	Successful, imaginative, challenging
Čáslavová y Petráčková (2011)	The brand personality of large sports events	World Cup brand personality	
		Sincerity	Publicly accessible, original, and joyful
		Emotion	Independent
		Sophistication	Attractive
		Tour de France brand personality	
Sincerity	Practical-deliberate, sincere, adequate, and healthy		
Emotion	Fashionable, calm, youthful, and imaginative		
Competence	Hard-working, successful.		
Sophistication	Charming, feminine, and elegant		
Resistance	Masculine, resistant		
Summer Olympic Games brand personality			
Sincerity	Warm-hearted, appropriate		

		Emotion Competence Sophistication Rudeness	Youth, fashion Security Glamorous, attractive, charming Resistance, eye-catching
Geuens et al. (2007)	A new measure of brand personality	Activity Responsibility Aggressiveness Simplicity Emotionality	
Heere (2010)	A new approach to measure perceived brand personality associations among consumers		Competitiveness Professional Exciting Dynamic Proud Passionate Relaxed Warm Attractive Accessible
İlyas et al. (2018)	Adaptation of Sport Brand Personality Scale to Turkish	Competitiveness Prestige Morality Authenticity Credibility Influence as a role model	Ambitious, triumphant, dynamic Multitudinous, glorious, brilliant, honorific Principles, culture, ethics Traditional, intransigent, radical Wealthy, influential
Kang et al. (2016)	Five dimensions of brand personality traits in sport	Kindness Extroversion/emotionality Openness Responsibility Honesty	Polite, considerate, generous, civil, friendly Adventurous, intrepid, enthusiastic, daring, dynamic Innovative, imaginative, creative, original, thoughtful Disciplined, persistent, easy to lead, hard-working Respectful, integrity, fair, ethical, honest, reliable
Keaton (2015)	A Comparison of College Football and NASCAR Consumer Profiles: Identity Formation and	Family Geography Popularity Recreation Casual viewing	Identity background Identity background Media influence, identity background Entertainment, spectator motif Entertainment, spectator motif

	Spectatorship Motivation	Athletic performance	Identity background, spectator motif
Ross (2008)	Assessing the use of the brand personality scale in team sport	Sincerity	Simple, family-oriented, small-town, honest, sincere, authentic, healthy, healthy, original, joyful, sentimental, friendly
		Sophistication	High-class, glamorous, attractive, charming, feminine, elegant
		Emotion	Bold, fashionable, exciting, energetic, cool, young, imaginative, unique, up-to-date, independent, contemporary
		Robustness	Nature-loving, masculine, western, resistant, robust
Schade et al. (2014)	Sport club brand personality scale (SCBPS): A new brand personality scale for sport clubs	Extroverted	Traditional, faithful, sociable, family-oriented, humorous, joyful
		Rebellious	Rebellious, bold, alternative
		Open Minded	Open-minded, tolerant, sophisticated, socially responsible
		Consciousness/awareness	Hard-working, hard-fighting, diligent, resilient
Tsiotsou (2012)	Developing a scale for measuring the personality of sport teams	Competitiveness	Proud, ambitious, dynamic, successful, victorious, triumphant
		Prestige	Multitudinous, glorious, excellent, strong, honorary
		Morality	Cultural principles/cultured, ethical
		Authenticity	Traditional, intransigent, radical
		Credibility	Wealthy, influential
Walsh et al. (2013)	Differences in Event Brand Personality Between Social Media Users and Non-Users		Exciting
			Passionate
			Entertaining
			Intense
			Competitive
			Fan-friendly
			Expert (skilled)
	Elite		
		Accelerated	

Source: created by the authors

## Method

Based on a descriptive, cross-sectional, non-experimental study with a mixed approach, this study sought to identify brand personality traits in a category of sports brands. The work of Bosnjak et al. (2007) and

Geuens et al. (2009), which combine qualitative and quantitative approaches, was used as a reference. Consequently, this research required a first qualitative and then a quantitative phase.

The target group of the study was men and women over 18 years of age related to the use of sports and casual clothing in Bogota. As a qualitative technique, a group session was used so that participants could describe the desirable personality traits in the category and the brands in the category as if they were a person. Five sessions were held in groups of 8 people, and the previous results generated a list of the traits that the subjects expected to represent the brands in the category.

In contrast to Bonjak et al. (2007), a survey was designed with four sections in the second phase. In the first section, categorical data were collected to characterize the sample. In the second, third, and fourth sections, the sample was assessed with 24 personality traits as a result of the qualitative exercise using a Likert scale (5= Total agreement, 1= Total disagreement). A single category was selected, corresponding to sports shoes, choosing the brands Adidas, Nike, and Reebok due to their recognition in the market. They originate from three different countries and cultures, in addition to their popularity and desirability in the generations that are part of the study. A non-probabilistic sample design by convenience was used based on the knowledge of the selected brands and the regular use of sports shoes of one of the brands, obtaining a participation of 327 surveys.

The qualitative data analysis of the group sessions was done with Atlas ti software. SPSS v26 software was used for the descriptive statistical analysis, and AMOS 24 was used for the confirmatory factor analysis of each brand.

## Results

The population that answered the questionnaire was composed of men (55%) and women (44.6%)—one person did not indicate their biological gender (0.3%)—between 18 to 25 years of age (33%) and 26 to 40 years of age (67%). They had an intermediate (25.7%), technical (42.8%), and professional or higher (31.4%) level of education, and a monthly monetary income of less than 242<sup>1</sup> USD (40.4%), between 242 and 484 USD (41.9%), between 484 and 726 USD (11.65%), and above 796 USD (6.1%).

An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed for each brand to determine the dimensionality of the model, and it was determined that variables with loadings below 0.7 would not be included in the model. 14 variables were eliminated for Nike, 8 for Reebok, and 7 for Adidas. With these results, the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was developed, which generated 3 factors for each brand

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<sup>1</sup>These dollar amounts are equivalent in Colombian pesos to the legal minimum monthly wage in effect for 2023.

(Nike:  $X_2=151.14$ ,  $gl=61$ ,  $p<0.0001$ ; Reebok:  $X_2=318.14$ ,  $gl=111$ ,  $p<0.000$ ; Adidas:  $X_2=446$ ,  $gl=137$ ,  $p<0.0001$ ). A difference is denoted in the results of the Nike brand compared to the other brands, as a similarity is observed between the variables of Adidas and Reebok (Table 2).

Table 2  
 Confirmatory factor analysis

Factor	Trait	Variable	Factor loading (Nike)	Factor loading (Reebok)	Factor loading (Adidas)
F1	Optimistic	V2	0.782	0.82	0.861
	Imaginative	V3	0.782	0.822	0.86
	Friendly	V4	0.752	0.82	
	Smart	V5	0.787	0.843	0.857
	Extroverted	V7	0.73	0.771	0.838
	Sociable	V8	0.728		0.839
	Creative	V10	0.847	0.759	0.848
	Energetic	V19		0.764	0.835
	Dreamy	V20			0.841
	Unique	V21		0.822	0.779
	Original	V22		0.79	0.833
	Competitive	V23		0.772	0.796
	Persevering	V24		0.83	0.826
F2	Egocentric	V11		0.749	0.78
	Hateful	V12	0.79	0.857	0.781
	Envious	V18		0.77	
	Patient	V13			0.768
F3	Humble	V14		0.757	0.774
	Empathetic	V15		0.952	0.864
	Unique	V21	0.816		
	Original	V22	0.92		

Source: created by the authors

Table 3 shows the validity results. In the case of convergent validity, the criteria proposed by Hu and Bentler (1999) were followed, where Cronbach's Alpha obtained optimal results above 0.8 in all the factors, except in factor 2 of the Nike brand, since it contained only one variable. Additionally, the composite reliability index (CRI) generated values above 0.7 in all cases, and the average variance extracted (AVE) obtained results above 0.5 except in the second factor of the Nike brand. On the other hand, the discriminant validity was performed based on the values of the square root of the AVE, obtaining values higher than the correlations between the factors for each brand (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 3  
 Convergent and discriminant validity

Brand	Factor	Alpha	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	F1	F2	F3
Nike	F1	0.914	0.917	0.582	0.472	0.922	0.763		
	F2	----	0.728	0.474	0.052	0.75	0.228**	0.689	
	F3	0.857	0.86	0.756	0.472	0.882	0.687***	0.101	0.869
Reebok	F1	0.951	0.952	0.623	0.521	0.955	0.789		
	F2	0.832	0.836	0.63	0.114	0.846	0.337***	0.794	
	F3	0.838	0.849	0.74	0.521	0.917	0.722***	0.316***	0.86
Adidas	F1	0.965	0.964	0.674	0.505	0.967	0.821		
	F2	0.767	0.845	0.645	0.505	0.854	0.711***	0.803	
	F3	0.847	0.778	0.541	0.145	0.792	0.381***	0.352***	0.736

\*\*\*=p<0.001

Source: created by the authors

### *Comparison of means of brand personality dimensions*

The similarities and differences between each dimension make it possible to compare each brand based on the comparison of the personality traits that comprise it and the mean values obtained in each trait.

In Dimension 1 (Figure 1 and Table 4), Nike groups the traits of optimistic, imaginative, friendly, smart, extroverted, sociable, and creative. Compared to the other two brands, Nike stands out for the traits of intelligence ( $\bar{x}$ =3.7) and creativity ( $\bar{x}$ =3.68). Reebok groups the traits optimistic, imaginative, friendly, smart, extroverted, creative, energetic, unique, original, competitive, and persevering, noting that Reebok stands out as friendly ( $\bar{x}$ =3.49) compared to its competitor brands. Adidas groups the traits optimistic, imaginative, smart, extroverted, sociable, creative, energetic, dreamy, unique, original, competitive, and persevering. The brand stands out for the traits optimistic ( $\bar{x}$ =3.7), imaginative ( $\bar{x}$ =3.75), extroverted ( $\bar{x}$ =3.63), sociable ( $\bar{x}$ =3.6), creative ( $\bar{x}$ =3.68), energetic ( $\bar{x}$ =3.63), dreamy ( $\bar{x}$ =3.69), unique ( $\bar{x}$ =3.54), original ( $\bar{x}$ =3.64), competitive ( $\bar{x}$ =3.8), and persevering ( $\bar{x}$ =3.71).

The grouping of the traits in the identified dimensions makes it possible to establish comparisons between the brands based on the traits shared in each dimension. In Dimension 1, the three brands observed share traits such as optimistic, imaginative, smart, extroverted, and creative, highlighting that Adidas obtains higher means in 4 traits compared to competing brands. Nike scores higher means on 1 trait, and Reebok does not stand out in any shared trait in Dimension 1 over the competitor brands.

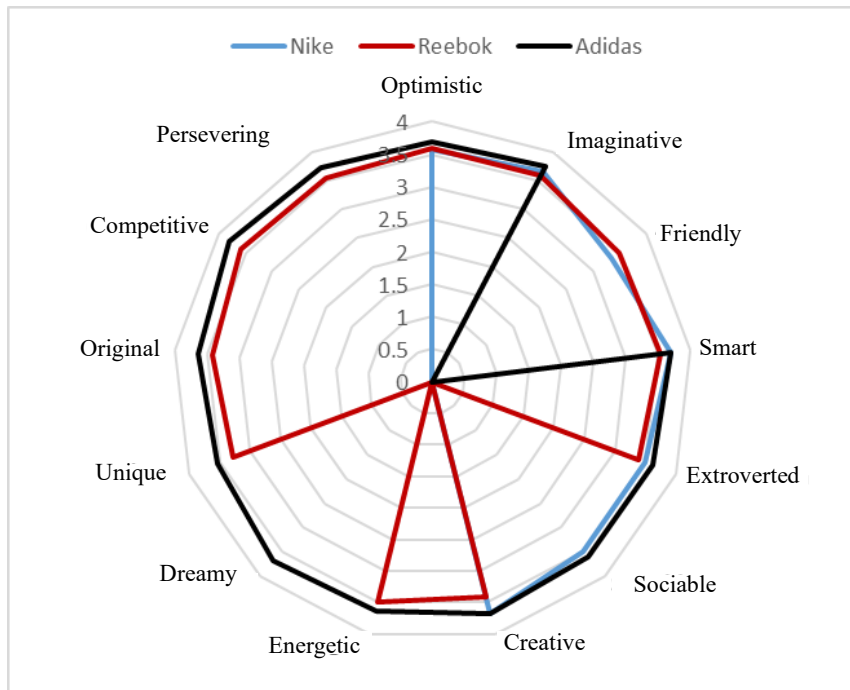


Figure 1. Comparison of means in brand personality traits for Dimension 1  
 Source: created by the authors

Table 4  
 Mean of personality traits according to each dimension found

Trait	Nike mean	AG+ SAG Nike*	Reebok mean*	AG+ SAG Reebok*	Adidas mean	AG+ SAG Adidas*
Ambitious	3.51	55.3	3.37	48.4	3.79	65.8
Friendly	3.34	46.8	3.49	51.9	3.55	54.8
Competitive	3.93	72.2	3.59	62.1	3.8	67.9
Creative	3.68	64.8	3.42	53.2	3.68	64.5
Energetic	3.61	58.7	3.5	54.4	3.63	58.7
Extroverted	3.5	52.6	3.39	47.7	3.63	59.9
Imaginative	3.66	61.8	3.45	55.1	3.75	66.4
Inclusive	3.39	49.9	3.36	45.9	3.52	53.2
Smart	3.7	65.4	3.53	56.3	3.69	62.1
Optimistic	3.57	59.6	3.59	62.3	3.7	63.3
Persevering	3.71	62.4	3.55	57.2	3.71	62.4
Sociable	3.5	55.3	3.44	52.3	3.6	58.7
Dreamy	3.69	63	3.55	55.4	3.69	63.6
Judgmental	3.01	30.3	3.04	30.6	3.17	37
Empathetic	3.1	34.5	3.25	41	3.27	40.7
Honest	3.22	37.9	3.38	45.2	3.39	47.4
Humble	2.7	19.9	3.08	33.4	2.98	30.4

Patient	3.02	26.6	3.2	33.7	3.16	33.4
Responsible	3.43	49.1	3.42	49.9	3.49	50.8
Egocentric	3.25	41.6	2.91	24.4	3.23	38.6
Envious	2.68	14.4	2.82	20.5	2.83	23.2
Hateful	2.72	17.4	2.77	18.6	2.89	24.1
Unique	3.35	45.3	3.28	45.3	3.54	53.5
Original	3.51	54.4	3.42	53.5	3.64	61.5

Unique and original personality traits are not present in all three brands.

\* Sum of percentages of agree (AG) and strongly agree (SAG) responses

Source: created by the authors

In Dimension 2 (Figure 2 and Table 4), Nike groups the trait hateful ( $\bar{x}=2.72$ ) with the lowest mean value against competing brands. Reebok groups the traits egocentric ( $\bar{x}=2.91$ ), hateful ( $\bar{x}=2.77$ ), and envious ( $\bar{x}=2.82$ ), noting that Reebok does not stand out in any trait compared to the other two brands. Adidas groups the traits egocentric ( $\bar{x}=3.23$ ) and hateful ( $\bar{x}=2.89$ ). Comparing the three brands, Adidas stands out for being hateful ( $\bar{x}=2.89$ ). It is highlighted that in Dimension 2, the three brands share only the trait “hateful.”

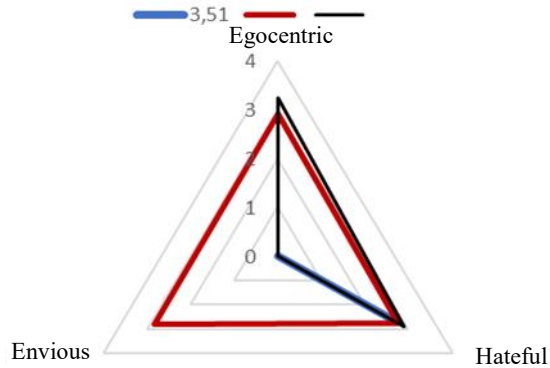


Figure 2. Comparison of means in brand personality traits for Dimension 2  
 Source: created by the authors

In Dimension 3 (Figure 3 and Table 4), Nike groups the traits unique ( $\bar{x}=3.35$ ) and original ( $\bar{x}=3.51$ ). Reebok groups the traits humble ( $\bar{x}=3.08$ ) and empathetic ( $\bar{x}=3.25$ ), and Adidas groups the traits patient ( $\bar{x}=3.16$ ), empathetic ( $\bar{x}=3.27$ ), and humble ( $\bar{x}=2.98$ ). In this dimension, no overlapping traits were found among the three brands.

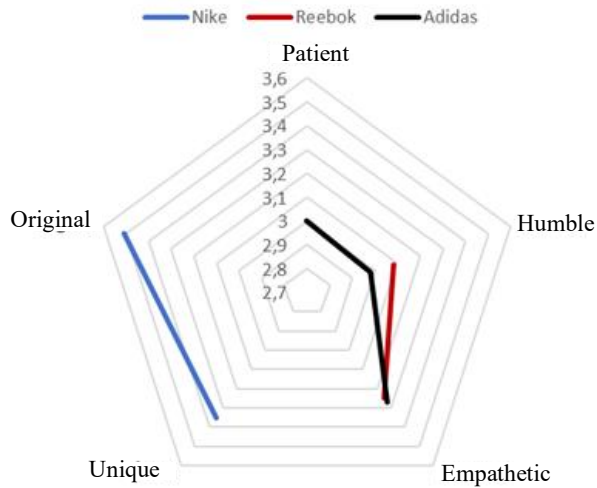


Figure 3. Comparison of means in brand personality traits for Dimension 3  
 Source: created by the authors

Table 4 shows the comparison of the variables included in the pilot model with the scales of Aaker (1997), Tsiotsou (2012), Shade et al. (2014), and Kang et al. (2016).

Regarding Aaker (1997), similarities are observed in 8 of 42 traits, among which are amicable and friendly, empathetic and close, energetic and strenuous, honest and sincere, imaginative, smart, original, and unique, but at the same time. Compared to Tsiotsou (2012), similarities are observed in 9 out of 20 traits, such as ambitious, triumphant, successful, victorious, intransigent, radical, strong, dynamic, and authentic. Concerning Shade et al. (2014), similarities are observed in 6 of 17 traits contained in this scale, such as fighter, resilient, bold, tolerant, socially responsible, and sociable. Finally, concerning Kang et al. (2016), similarities are observed in 10 of 25 personality traits: friendly, persistent, creative, dynamic, intrepid, sincere, imaginative, original, disciplined, and innovative.

Table 4  
 Similarities, equivalences, and differences between the brand personality models in the study

Proposed Pilot Model	Equivalence with Aaker (1997)	Equivalence with Tsiotsou (2012)	Equivalence with Shade et al. (2014)	Equivalence with Kang et al. (2016)
Ambitious	-	Ambitious	-	-
Friendly	Amicable	-	-	Amicable
Competitive	-	Triumphant/Successful/Victorious	Fighter	Persistent
Creative	-	-	-	Creative
Judgmental	-	Intransigent/Radical	-	-
Egocentric	-	-	-	-

Empathetic	Close	-	-	-
Energetic	Strenuous	Strong/Dynamic	Resilient	Dynamic
Envious	-	-	-	-
Extroverted	-	-	Bold	Intrepid
Honest	Sincere	-	-	Sincere
Humble	-	-	-	-
Imaginative	Imaginative	-	-	Imaginative
Inclusive	-	-	-	-
Smart	Smart	-	-	-
Hateful	-	-	-	-
Optimistic	-	-	-	-
Original	Original	Authenticity	-	Original
Patient	-	-	Tolerant	-
Persevering	-	-	-	Disciplined
Responsible	-	-	Socially responsible	-
Sociable	-	-	Sociable	-
Dreamy	-	-	-	-
Unique	Unique	-	-	Innovative
Traits without equivalence	Practical, family-oriented, real, credible, healthy, pleasant, fashionable, young, independent, contemporary, technical, business-like, self-confident, high-class, charming, feminine, delicate, open (free), masculine. Glamorous, successful, self-confident, lively, hard-working, attractive, up-to-date, leader, daring, lively, sentimental, reliable, exciting (excitement), strong/resilient.	Proud, multitudinous, glorious, excellent, honorary, principled, cultural/cultured, ethical, traditional, wealthy, influential	Traditional, true, family-oriented, humorous, cheerful, rebellious, alternative, open-minded, sophisticated, hard-working, diligent	Polite, considerate, generous, civil, adventurous, enthusiastic, daring, thoughtful, easy to lead, hard-working, respectful, integrity, fair, ethical, reliable

Source: created by the authors

## Discussion

The Aaker model is the most influential (Vicencio-Ríos et al., 2020) and, simultaneously, the most widely used (Bosnjak et al., 2007; Vicencio-Ríos et al., 2020). It has been applied in various economic sectors (Denegri et al., 2009; Kaplan et al., 2010; Gómez et al., 2014), where it is common to find new dimensions from Aaker (Kaplan et al., 2010; Araya-Castillo & Etchebarne, 2015). Nevertheless, critics have explored a variety of methods.

The various approaches and applications propose different traits, various dimensions, or a disparity of methods that demonstrate that the study of brand personality has not exhausted its object of study. Neither has a generalizable or widely accepted method been reached, such that some applications of Aaker's model go through a choice of the "right" traits to use according to the category of study (Hosany et al., 2006) or in alternatives for the sports sector (Tsiotsou, 2012; Shade et al., 2014; Kang et al., 2016).

The application of the proposed brand personality pilot generated a model for each of the study brands, an effect also observed in the pet food category (Cristancho et al., 2022). This is how the dimensions are constituted with different traits, and this grouping of variables determines the denominative particularities of each brand (Table 5) of the sports shoes category. In the case of Nike, the dimensions are witty (Kang et al., 2016) and friendly (Kang et al., 2016), and hateful and original (Tsiotsou, 2012; Asadollahi et al., 2015). For Reebok, the three dimensions correspond to competitive (Tsiotsou, 2012; Asadollahi et al., 2015; İlyas et al., 2018) and smart, pedantic, and empathetic. Finally, Adidas has three dimensions named as competitive (Tsiotsou, 2012; Asadollahi et al., 2015; İlyas et al., 2018) and witty (Kang et al., 2016), arrogant, and empathetic.

Table 5  
 Dimensions identified with the pilot model of brand personality in sports shoes

Brand	Dimensions	Variables
Nike	Witty and friendly	Optimistic, imaginative, friendly, smart, extroverted, sociable, creative
	Hateful	Hateful
	Original	Original, unique
Reebok	Competitive and smart	Optimistic, imaginative, smart, extroverted, sociable, creative, energetic, dreamy, unique, original, competitive, persevering
	Petulant	Egocentric, hateful, envious

	Empathetic	Humble, empathetic
Adidas	Competitive and witty	Optimistic, imaginative, smart, extroverted, sociable, creative, energetic, dreamy, unique, original, competitive, persevering
	Arrogant	Egocentric, hateful
	Empathetic	Patient, humble, empathetic

Source: created by the authors

The present research proposes a methodology that relies on consumers' perception of the brands in the category rather than on the prior determination of traits in pre-existing methods. The results of this pilot model provide new brand personality variables in the context of sports shoe brand personality. Nonetheless, the models present differences in the personality traits contained in each model. The proposed model contains twenty-four traits, but only one trait is present in the study scale and the contrast scales. These differences may be attributed to the methods being developed in dissimilar times, cultural contexts, and competitive environments.

In the sports shoes sector, divergence is observed between the pilot model applied and the Aaker (1997), Tsiotsou (2012), Shade et al. (2014), and Kang et al. (2016) models about the personality traits used in the scales and the factors or dimensions resulting from such research.

The three dimensions group personality traits differently in each brand concerning the pilot model, being distributed unequally. This determines that the dimensions are not equal among the brands receiving specific denominations in each case, although it is evident that the traits included in Dimension 1 are quite similar among the brands studied. This implies that the proposed model can individually determine the brand personality of each competitor and that it can comparatively expose the perceptual differences of the brands in a specific market. This comparative aspect in the sports category is relevant from the methodological perspective used in brand personality assessment (Čáslavová & Petráčková, 2011). Therefore, the pilot model facilitates the definition of commonalities, differences, and advantages of a brand against others in the market on the same basis of comparison of consumer perception based on its symbolic meaning (Hernani, 2008).

The branding of sports brands encompasses, among other aspects, factors associated with their personality (Reis et al., 2021), but these personality traits are perceived differently across countries. Pérez et al. (2018), using Aaker's (1997) model adapted to the Spanish culture, explained that Nike is perceived as an exciting, calm, sophisticated, and passionate brand, and Adidas as a sincere, sophisticated, passionate, and calm brand, in contrast to the results presented here. Kammerer et al. (2021), using a

model adapted from Aaker (1997, cited by Kammerer, 2021), Tong and Zu (2014, cited by Kammerer, 2021) and Mustamil et al. (2014, cited by Kammerer, 2021), indicate that in German-speaking countries Nike is perceived as having competitive traits, just like the results obtained here. The same author finds that for Adidas they are related to an attractive character, being an active brand. Karlsson and Ero (2018), based on the Aaker (1997) model, state that UK men perceive Adidas as more competitive than Swedish men.

## **Conclusions**

This study identified 3 dimensions resulting from the CFA in each analyzed brand. The three dimensions are different regarding the personality traits they group, with differences being found between each of the dimensions in each brand, which generates a model for each. Thus, perceptual differences have been established based on their symbolic meaning. For factor 1, 7 of the traits tested are added for the Nike brand, 11 of the traits measured for Reebok, and 12 traits in the case of Adidas. In factor 2, Nike, Reebok, and Adidas group 1, 3, and 2 traits, respectively. Finally, for factor 3, 2 traits were obtained for Nike, 2 traits for Reebok, and 3 for Adidas.

The personality traits grouped into latent variables help determine three recognizable dimensions, where Nike is represented by the dimensions witty and friendly, hateful, and original; Reebok is defined in three dimensions as competitive and smart, petulant, and empathetic; and Adidas competitive and witty, arrogant, and empathetic. The traits were loosely grouped due to the initial exploratory factor analysis and subsequent confirmatory factor analysis. This qualitative and quantitative process allows consumers to express the personality traits they feel should be represented in a product or service category. This brings benefits such as overcoming cultural and linguistic barriers and enabling the expression of traits considered negative, which are not necessarily unfavorable for brands.

There are more differences than coincidences between the personality traits contained in the contrasted models and the traits identified for the brands in the sports shoe category of this research. Aaker's model relies on simplifying personality traits, thus limiting it to the use of specific traits but not all the traits that a particular brand can develop. These limitations and differences can be extended to cultural and language aspects not yet determined that generate different perceptions of the concepts that each trait can develop in different environments and territories.

The results provide an alternative methodology to the one widely used. Nevertheless, it is necessary to recognize that the traits used in the pilot model are partially present in the contrasted models, reflecting a great difference between methods and contexts where the measurement of brand personality scales has been implemented. The above implies further progress in the research by comparing the results

between methods. It is recommended that this comparison can be established in different territories and languages so that the ability to represent brand perceptions can be assessed and the contributions each provides to brand management theory can be determined.

For future research, it is suggested to continue the investigation by replicating the methodology to make comparisons regarding the cultural impact on the symbolic perception of a population regarding brands, the competitive environment, and linguistics. These aspects not associated in Aaker's scale are relevant factors in brand management. In this aspect, it is also relevant to address the relation between personality traits, brand awareness, and participation.

This research does not measure the effect of market share and brand awareness. Therefore, it is suggested to advance in the research to verify the association between these two aspects since in the Colombian market Adidas is the leading brand in footwear in general with 6.9%, followed by Nike with 3.9% (El Heraldó, 2021). For the sports shoes market, Adidas has a share of 23.3%, Nike has 12.1%, and Reebok is only among the top ten brands in the category (El Heraldó, n.d.). It is therefore noteworthy that in this same order, Adidas stands out in 13 traits, Nike in four traits, and Reebok in three traits because, in the global market, Nike exceeds Adidas' sales by 50%.

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