



## BRAND PERSONALITY AS A DETERMINANT OF CONSUMER LOYALTY OF MOBILE PHONES AND CARS IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

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**Abstract:** Brands that have highly loyal consumers are in the function of the identity and image of their personality. The primary drivers of loyalty to such brands are the intangible characteristics of brands that have a certain symbolic meaning for consumers. In that sense, brands are in the function of articulating consumers as personalities and achieving an appropriate image. To achieve this, brands are often considered individuals who, like consumers who buy them regularly, have similar characteristics. If the characteristics of brands and the characteristics of consumers are more harmonized, consumers will be more loyal. Starting from the above, the aim of the author is to investigate the influence of brand personality dimensions on consumer loyalty to two groups of products: mobile phones and cars. The research was conducted on the territory of the Republic of Serbia. The results of the research are essential for brand management because they represent guidelines for undertaking certain activities in building brands with a leading position in the market.

**Keywords:** brand personality, consumer loyalty, emotional attachment, mobile phones, cars, Republic of Serbia.

**JEL classification:** D12, M30, M31

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## 1. Introduction

The brand is a significant competitive tool that companies use to identify and differentiate products in the market. The existence of many brands in the market that meet the identical needs of consumers hinders the efforts of companies to build a high threshold of differentiation of their brands. It is also the biggest barrier to achieving consumer loyalty. That is why companies strive to create a strong emotional connection between consumers and the brand through psychological differentiation. Such a relationship leads to an essential consumer loyalty that ensures stable financial performance of the company in the long run (Gobe, 2006; Eliot, 2007; Park, 2010; Nguyen et al., 2016). The emotional connection between the consumer and the brand is difficult to imitate by competitors, which allows the company to create brand capital, i.e. above-average return on investment in the brand (Colucci et al., 2008; Madden et al., 2006).

The company's efforts to create emotional attachment to consumers have resulted in a change in the conventional approach to brand management. Brand management, which is in the function of creating high consumer loyalty, views the brand as a human being, ie a being who owns his personality, just as consumers who buy them have their own personality (Aaker, 1997; Van Rekom et al., 2006; Jin Su, & Tong, 2015). Thus, for example, companies in the field of cosmetics industry base their brand positioning on harmonizing the brand image and the image of the personality of their target consumers. In that sense, in order to buy a brand, it should enable consumers to achieve their ideal personal image, that is, ideal visions of oneself or the attainment of one's "ideal self." Such management profiles brands so that consumers perceive them as a way of expressing themselves in the outside world. This is how the concept of brand personality was created, according to which the brand has the characteristics of people and which consumers perceive as: exciting, stable, gentle, courageous, rational, serious, etc.

Starting from the previous, the aim of the paper is to point out the importance of brand personality and explore the relationship between the dimensions of brand personality and consumer loyalty to two groups of products: mobile phones and cars. The reasons are as follows. Mobile phones and cars are durable consumer goods, and the purchase decision process is complex and time-consuming. In the process of purchase, consumers are constantly engaged in the construction of their identity, therefore the symbolic characteristics of the product are often the primary reasons for their purchase. Because of all this, the engagement of consumers in the process of their purchase can be extensive, especially in gathering information about possible alternatives in the purchase, their evaluation and making the final decision about the purchase. That is why it is very important to make the right decision in choosing such products, because consumers perceive them as a reflection of modern life and a free individual. That is, these product categories are status symbols and reflect part of the consumer's personality. Because of that

relationship between brand personality dimensions and consumer loyalty in the mobile phone and car market was a matter research of many foreign authors (Ahmed & Moosavi, 2013; Akin, 2017; Khani et al., 2013; Kim, 1998; Ha & Janda, 2012; Tonković-Pražić, 2021; Letukytė & Urbonavičius, 2022; Širola & Gallopeni, 2020; Biloš & Turkalj, 2022). Unlike foreign practice, examples of such research are very rare in the Republic of Serbia. The relationship between these variables was investigated in the market of mobile operators (Starčević, 2013) and city brand personality (Dejanović et al., 2018). The results in this paper will make the comparison with the results of existing research and formulate recommendations necessary for modern brand management possible.

The structure of the work consists of several parts. The first part of the paper is devoted to the evaluation of the theoretical basis so far on the concept of brand personality and consumer loyalty and the definition of hypotheses. In the second part of the paper, the methodology of the research and the description of the sample are given. The third part of the paper refers to the results of the conducted empirical study and the discussion of the results. In the final part, the paper is dedicated to the elaboration of the research results with special reference to the guidelines for future research frameworks.

## **2. Literature review**

### ***2.1. The concept of "brand personality"***

The concept of the brand "personality" has become the backbone of the modern brand management. Viewing the brand as a person with certain characteristics provides a greater degree of differentiation from competing brands and a clearer position of the brand in the "mental" map of consumers (Aaker, 1997). Plummer (2000) suggests that brand personality may be key to understanding consumer choice of a brand. Numerous researches have shown that consumers enable brands that they continuously buy and are loyal to express themselves as a person. Brands enable them to achieve not only the existing personal image but also the desired, i.e. ideal personal image. In this way, a strong emotional connection between the consumer and the brand is achieved. Such brands have a strong brand identity and reputation and are invaluable for building brand capital (Van Rekom et al., 2006). A consumer who feels such a connection with a brand makes a purchase routinely, without much thought, according to established criteria and automatism. Consumers of such brands remind believers because their loyalty does not come from rational thinking (Đukić, 2008).

Empirical research on the influence of brand personality on consumer loyalty is predominantly based on a standardized scale, i.e. measures the brand personality that allows comparison of the obtained research results. The scale was developed at the end of the last century by Jenifer Aaker (brand personality scale - BPS). The

starting point for its formulation is the understanding that the brand personality is "a set of characteristics of people associated with the brand" (Aaker, 1997, p. 347). In that sense, the brand personality has direct and indirect characteristics. Direct characteristics include "a set of characteristics of a brand that are consistent with the characteristics of a typical consumer of that brand" (Aaker, 1997). On the other hand, indirect characteristics are related to the physical characteristics of the product that is marked with a certain brand, such as: quality, functionality, name, mark, etc. (Nguyen et al., 2016). To examine how the relationship between brand and consumer personality traits can trigger consumer preferences and loyalty, Aaker (1997) formed a five-dimensional brand personality scale. These are the following dimensions:

1. Honesty: quality, comfortable, durable, original, friendly brand.
2. Excitement: for special occasions, different, unique, special brand style.
3. Competence: modern, leading, reliable, loyal brand.
4. Sophistication: glamorous, upper class, charming brand.
5. Ruggedness: easy to maintain, sense of femininity / masculinity, good design.

Consumers experience the so-called honest brands as quality, friendly, original, durable, comfortable. Similarly, consumers perceive exciting brands as bold, adventurous, for special occasions and special style. Consumers perceive competence as reliable, modern and leading brands. A brand that is considered sophisticated is considered charming and associated with greater value and thus corresponds to higher social strata and meets the needs of a higher order from Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Sophisticated brands have upper-class characteristics, are glamorous and charming, while strong brands are considered to be simple, well-designed and give a sense of masculinity / femininity.

## ***2.2. Consumer loyalty***

Consumer loyalty is a key goal and measure of the business success of a market-oriented company. Loyal consumers enable high profits because they generate repeat purchases, continue shopping even though the brand price increases, they are cheaper to serve, they generate repeat purchases and they are important for attracting new consumers. However, consumer loyalty is not just a simple repurchase of the same brand. In addition to repeating their purchase of the same brand, loyal consumers are resistant to competitive pressures, understand brands as part of themselves and their personality, promote the brand and defend them from public criticism. Consumer loyalty is created by delivering added value and creating satisfaction in every consumer-brand interaction.

High consumer loyalty means motivating consumers to buy a brand in the future (Ahmed & Moosavi, 2013; Noorlitaria et al., 2020). According to Duffy (2003), loyalty is the feeling a consumer has about a brand, which ultimately generates positive and measurable financial results. Sincere brand loyalty exists

when customers have a high relative attitude towards the brand which is then shown through repurchase behavior.

In order to ensure loyalty of attitude and loyalty of behavior, it is necessary for the consumer to be "enthusiastic" about the brand, and only to satisfy the identified needs. Generating consumer enthusiasm means that the company creates a brand with superior physical performance, but also by possessing intangible characteristics that correspond to the characteristics of target consumers. The image of the brand coincides with the image that the target consumers have of themselves and that they want to have.

Numerous studies have focused on establishing the relationship between brand personality and brand loyalty in different industries. They show that the probability that the consumer will choose a brand that better suits his personal characteristics is much higher than a brand that does not meet this condition. Also, research shows that consumer loyalty to the brand affects consumer intention to make purchases (Noorlitaria et al., 2020). A study of brand personality by Kim et al (2001) shows that the dimensions of attractiveness, uniqueness and convenience have a significant impact on brand loyalty. Ha and Janda research (2012) indicates that perceived quality is an important mediator between brand personality and loyalty in the automotive industry in China. According to the research by Lin (2010), it can be concluded that consumers with a higher degree of pleasure and openness will develop loyalty to toy and video game products. Research on consumer loyalty in the Republic of Serbia shows that pharmacist expertise and perceived risk related to the use of over-the-counter products affects consumer loyalty (Šapić, et al., 2019).

In accordance with the previous, in the empirical research we started from the following hypotheses:

H1: Brand personality dimension Honesty has a positive effect on brand loyalty

H1a: Brand personality dimension Honesty has a positive effect on mobile phone brand loyalty

H1b: Brand personality dimension Honesty has a positive effect on car brand loyalty

H2: Brand personality dimension Excitement has a positive effect on brand loyalty

H2a: Brand personality dimension Excitement has a positive effect on mobile phone brand loyalty

H2b: Brand personality dimension Excitement has a positive effect on car brand loyalty

H3: Brand personality dimension Competence has a positive effect on brand loyalty

H3a: Brand personality dimension Competence has a positive effect on mobile phone brand loyalty

H3b: Brand personality dimension Competence has a positive effect on car brand loyalty

H4: Brand personality dimension Sophistication has a positive effect on brand loyalty

H4a: Brand personality dimension Sophistication has a positive effect on mobile phone brand loyalty

H4b: Brand personality dimension Sophistication has a positive effect on car brand loyalty

H5: Brand personality dimension Ruggedness has a positive effect on brand loyalty

H5a: Brand personality dimension Ruggedness has a positive effect on mobile phone brand loyalty

H5b: Brand personality dimension Ruggedness has a positive effect on car brand loyalty

### 3. Research methodology

*Research method.* In order to test the defined hypotheses, an empirical research based on the method of testing via the Internet (google forms) was realized. In the description of the google forms, it was explained to the respondents that based on their knowledge of the mobile phone and car market, they imagine their "favorite" brand, i.e. the brand that they prefer to buy compared to other brands. Aaker's questionnaire was used as a tool for gathering information (Aaker, 1997). It is a questionnaire with 5 dimensions: honesty, excitement, competence, sophistication, firmness/strength. Respondents showed the degree of agreement with the statements in the questionnaire by using the five-point Likert scale (number 1 – I strongly disagree, number 5 – I strongly agree), which is one of the most commonly used methods for making valid conclusions in this type of research. Brand loyalty was measured on a four-item scale developed by Aaker (1996) and Ratchford (1987) and modified by Kim (1998) namely: 1. *Whenever possible i choose my favorite brand, the price difference between individual brands affects my intention to buy my favorite brand*; 2. *I want to pay a higher price when buying my favorite brand and without thinkin*; 3. *I buy my favorite brand because* and 4. *I think it is the best choice for me*. The number of distributed questionnaires was 288, and all of them were completed and processed.

*Research context.* The research was conducted on the territory of the Republic of Serbia through an online survey. The number of 288 respondents participated in the research, and all survey questionnaires were completed and processed.

Respondents first answered demographic and economic questions (gender, age, level of education, employment status, monthly income), and then assessed the claims related to certain dimensions of brand personality and consumer loyalty to the brand on a five-point Likert scale.

*Sample characteristics.* In the sample structure, males participated with 35.42%, while females were more and made up 64.58% of respondents. The age structure of the sample included 7.64% of respondents up to 20 years of age, 71.18% of respondents belonging to the age group of 21 to 36 years, 21.18% of respondents belonging to the age group of 37 to 51 years. Regarding the level of education, the structure of respondents was as follows: 20.83% were respondents with secondary education, 32.29% with higher education, and 46.88% of respondents with faculty education. Regarding the average monthly income, the largest number of respondents in the sample has an average monthly income of up to 20,000 dinars (participation of 44.2% in the sample), followed by respondents with monthly income in the group from 38,001 to 56,000 dinars with a share of 25.0%. The smallest number of respondents has an average monthly income of 20,001 to 38,000 dinars, only 10.6%. Also, the largest share of respondents is employed, 73.96%, followed by students with 14.93% and the unemployed with 11.11%.

*Analyses and procedures.* Data analysis was performed using the SPSS 17.0 program using multiple regression and correlation analysis. If the obtained p-value is less than 0.05, there is a statistically significant effect of brand personality on brand loyalty. Otherwise, if the p-value is greater than 0.05, certain dimensions of the brand personality do not affect the loyalty of consumers to the brand.

#### 4. Research results

In order to determine the homogeneity/heterogeneity of the respondents' attitudes, in the initial step of the analysis we calculated the values of the arithmetic mean and standard deviation for each dimension, and the following table shows the results of reliability analysis. The results are shown in Table 1.

By interpreting the values of descriptive statistics (arithmetic means and standard deviations), it can be observed that based on the values of these indicators, respondents generally believe that all the variables examined in the paper (Honesty, Excitement, Competence, Sophistication, Ruggedness, Loyalty) influence their behavior when in terms of loyalty to mobile phone and car brands. Based on the results of the arithmetic mean, it can be concluded that there are no significant deviations, that is, the arithmetic mean for all variants is over 4.00. Observing the value of the standard deviation, it can be concluded that the respondents have the most homogeneous attitudes towards the variable Honesty in the mobile phone market (standard deviation .522), while the greatest heterogeneity of attitudes can

be seen in the case of loyalty in the car market (standard deviation 0.953). When the Cronbach's coefficient is greater than 0.7 it shows high reliability, below 0.35 is low reliability, while 0.5 is considered the minimum acceptable level of reliability. With the help of the Cronbach's alpha coefficient, the consistency of the dimensions was checked, i.e. it was determined whether the statements within the given dimensions were reliable. Specifically, in our paper, all claims show a coefficient greater than 0.7, which indicates high reliability and continued further analysis.

**Table 1: Values of the descriptive statistics and Cronbach's Alpha for brand personality variables and loyalty**

Dimensions	Mean	SD	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
<b>Mobile phones</b>				
Honesty	4.71	.522	0.865	5
Excitement	4.44	.949	0.941	4
Competence	4.66	.644	0.871	4
Sophistication	4.44	.927	0.929	3
Ruggedness	4.50	.656	0.718	4
Loyalty	4.51	.674	0.769	4
<b>Cars</b>				
Honesty	4.74	.595	0.895	5
Excitement	4.44	.949	0.952	4
Competence	4.66	.664	0.917	4
Sophistication	4.57	.828	0.919	3
Ruggedness	4.58	.730	0.814	4
Loyalty	4.30	.953	0.876	4

*Source:* Authors' research

To test all hypotheses, we used multiple regression analysis. Before multiple regression analysis, correlation analysis was applied. The Pearson correlation coefficient was used for confirming two-dimensional correlation between variables and correlation coefficient of variables. Namely, a small correlation exists when  $r = 0.10$  to  $0.29$ , medium  $r = 0.30$  to  $0.49$ , and strong  $r = 0.50$  to  $1.00$  (Cohen, 1988, pp. 79-81). Based on the data shown in Table 2 and according to the author Cohen, we can conclude that there is a strong correlation between the dimensions of the car brand personality and that all variables are statistically significant, because the obtained  $p$  value is less than  $0.05$ .



**Table 2: Correlation analysis between car brand personality dimensions**

		Honesty	Excitement	Competence	Cophistication	Ruggedness
Honesty	Pearson Correlation	1	.622**	.858**	.802**	.723**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	288	288	288	288	288
Excitement	Pearson Correlation	.622**	1	.648**	.771**	.667**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	288	288	288	288	288
Competence	Pearson Correlation	.858**	.648**	1	.855**	.728**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	288	288	288	288	288
Sophistication	Pearson Correlation	.802**	.771**	.855**	1	.772**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	288	288	288	288	288
Ruggedness	Pearson Correlation	.723**	.667**	.728**	.772**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	288	288	288	288	288

\*\* Correlation is significant on the level 0,01

\*\* Correlation is significant on the level 0,05

*Source:* Authors' research

Table 3 shows the correlation analysis between mobile phones brand personality variables. Namely, there is a strong correlation between the personality dimensions of the mobile phones brand and that all variables are statistically significant, because the obtained p-value is less than 0.05. According to the results of the correlation analysis, the results of the regression analysis can be further accessed.

**Table 3: Correlation analysis between mobile phones brand personality dimensions**

		Honesty	Excitement	Competence	Sophistication	Ruggedness
Honesty	Pearson Correlation	1	.800**	.812**	.749**	.712**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	288	288	288	288	288
Excitement	Pearson Correlation	.800**	1	.875**	.875**	.832**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	288	288	288	288	288
Competence	Pearson Correlation	.812**	.875**	1	.883**	.777**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	288	288	288	288	288
Sophistication	Pearson Correlation	.749**	.875**	.883**	1	.851**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	288	288	288	288	288
Ruggedness	Pearson Correlation	.712**	.832**	.777**	.851**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	288	288	288	288	288

\*\* Correlation is significant on the level 0,01

\*\* Correlation is significant on the level 0,05

*Source:* Authors' research

Further in the paper, a regression model is presented, first for mobile phones, and then for cars.

Based on the data from Table 4 ANOVA, we can see that the value of Pearson's coefficient (R) is taken, R shows the correlation coefficient, while R square represents the coefficient of determination, Adjust R square indicates the participation of unexplained variables in the sample. Based on the ANOVA table and the coefficient of determination, we confirm that the sample is representative.

In the ANOVA table, the p-value is less than 0.001, which indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the dimensions of the brand personality.

**Table 4: ANOVA - mobile phones**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	50.639	5	10.128	34.871	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	85.388	294	.290		
Total	136.027	299			

*Source:* Authors' research

Furthermore, based on Table 5 - Coefficients, we can point out the importance of certain dimensions of the brand personality, i.e. to determine which dimensions affect and are statistically significant for loyalty. Namely, if we look at the Beta column under the standardized coefficient, we see that the highest number in the beta version at excitability is 0.407, followed by a hardness of 0.375. The dimensions excitement and ruggedness are statistically significant since they have p-values that are statistically significant. Accordingly, we can conclude that the dimensions of the brand personality of excitement and ruggedness affect the brand loyalty of mobile phones.

**Table 5: Coefficients<sup>a</sup> -mobile phones**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.305	.370		6.228	.000
Honesty	-.203	.108	-.157	-1.869	.063
Excitement	.289	.083	.407	3.472	.001
Competence	.131	.124	.125	1.057	.291
Sophistication	-.105	.089	-.145	-1.182	.238
Ruggedness	.386	.097	.375	3.976	.000

*Source:* Authors' research

In accordance with the results, we can conclude that the hypotheses H2a: Brand personality dimension Excitement has a positive effect on mobile phone brand loyalty and H5a: Brand personality dimension Ruggedness has a positive

effect on mobile phone brand loyalty were confirmed, while H1a: Brand personality dimension Honesty has a positive effect on mobile phone brand loyalty, H3a: Brand personality dimension Competence has a positive effect on mobile phone brand loyalty and H4a: Brand personality dimension Sophistication has a positive effect on mobile phone brand loyalty were rejected because the influence of honesty, competence and sophistication on consumer loyalty to mobile phones was not determined.

When we talk about the car market in the Republic of Serbia, the situation is similar to that of mobile phones. Namely, based on the ANOVA table and the coefficient of determination, we confirm that the sample is representative. In Table 6 - ANOVA p value is less than 0.001, which indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the dimensions of the brand personality. In particular, which dimensions of the brand have a significant impact on brand loyalty can be seen based on the results from Table 7 - Coefficients.

**Table 6: ANOVA – cars**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	102.390	5	20.478	1863.512	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	3.231	294	.011		
Total	105.621	299			

Source: Authors' research

**Table 7: Coefficients<sup>a</sup> -cars**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.078	.051		1.536	.126
Honesty	.864	.019	.866	44.67	.000
Excitement	.037	.010	.059	3.592	.000
Competence	.012	.022	.013	.540	.589
Sophistication	.046	.018	.065	2.629	.009
Ruggedness	.024	.014	.029	1.724	.086

Source: Authors' research

Table 7, i.e. Coefficients, helps us to understand which of the five independent variables is the most important in explaining the variance of consumer loyalty. If we look at the Beta column under the standardized coefficient, we see that the highest number in the beta version is honesty, 0.866, followed by sophistication with 0.065 and excitement with 0.059, which are statistically significant with a p value below 0.05.

According to the above results, we can conclude that the dimensions honesty, excitement and sophistication have a significant impact on consumer loyalty to the car brand, because they are statistically significant, ie the dimension honesty and excitement with a p-value of 0.000 and the dimension sophistication with a p value of 0.009.

This indicates the fact that the hypotheses H1b: Brand personality dimension Honesty has a positive effect on car brand loyalty, H2b: Brand personality dimension Excitement has a positive effect on car brand loyalty and H4b: Brand personality dimension Sophistication has a positive effect on car brand loyalty were confirmed, while H3b: Brand personality dimension Competence has a positive effect on car brand loyalty and H5b: Brand personality dimension Ruggedness has a positive effect on car brand loyalty were rejected because the influence of competence and ruggedness on consumer loyalty to cars has not been determined.

## 5. Discussion

Empirical research in this paper is aimed at identifying key variables that affect consumer loyalty in the market of mobile phones and cars in the Republic of Serbia. Namely, it starts from the analysis of the reliability of all dimensions of the brand personality and brand loyalty, as well as the correlation analysis between the dimensions as an important prerequisite for further analysis and drawing conclusions. Then, the connection between the concept of brand personality and consumer loyalty to the brand in the mobile phones and cars markets were established and further guidelines were established to improve business in the mentioned markets.

The aim of the first hypothesis was to examine the impact of the Honesty Dimension on brand loyalty in the mobile phone and car market. The results of the research show that no positive relationship was established in the mobile phone market, while a statistically significant positive relationship was established in the car market. Accordingly, the first hypothesis is partially confirmed. This shows us that there is room for improvement in the car market, in the sense that consumers still do not see cars as quality, comfortable, durable and original. The results agree with the research in Lithuania by Letukytė and Urbonavičius (2022) and show that the dimension of Honesty has a positive effect on emotional loyalty. The results of

studies show that Honesty is effective on Samsung brand customer loyalty (Teimouri, et al., 2016). Research by Ha and Jan (2012) indicates that perceived quality is an important mediator between brand personality and loyalty in the automotive industry in China.

The positive relationship between the Excitement and brand loyalty dimension, both in the mobile phone and car market, is the result of another hypothesis that has been fully confirmed. This means that consumers see mobile phones and cars as something special, different, unique and with a special style. According to the research results of Chung and Park (2017) Excitement is a dimension that positively affects towards all analyzed categories of mobile phones (Samsung, Apple, Nokia and Sony). Such results are compatible with the results of the author's study Teimouri et al. (2016) which show that Excitement is effective on Samsung brand customer loyalty. The results are also consistent in the car market and show that the personality dimension of the Excitement brand has a positive effect on consumer loyalty (Akin, 2017).

The third hypothesis is aimed at examining the relationship between the Competence and Brand Loyalty dimension and the mobile phone and car market. The results of the research indicate that no statistically significant connection was found on the market of mobile phones and cars. This further indicates the possibility of improving marketing activities in the mobile phone and car market. The guidelines on which the business of companies should be based, through marketing strategy, are reflected in the creation of a modern, leading, reliable and loyal brand in order to create consumer loyalty to them. According to the research results of Chung and Park (2017) Competence is a dimension that positively affects towards all analyzed categories of mobile phones (Samsung, Apple, Nokia and Sony). Another study indicates that Competence is effective on Samsung brand customer loyalty (Teimouri et al., 2016). The results are also consistent in the car market and show that the personality dimension of the Competence brand has a positive effect on consumer loyalty (Akin, 2017).

Then, the fourth hypothesis examines the relationship between the dimension Sophistication and brand loyalty in the mobile phone and car market. The results of the research show that no statistically significant value has been established on the mobile phone market, while it has been established on the car market. According to the allegations, there is room for improving the marketing strategy in the car market in the form of activities that will be aimed at highlighting the glamor of the brand in the car market, all in order to meet the needs of consumers and loyalty to them. Research on brand personality and consumer mobile phone loyalty by Chung and Park (2017) indicates that dimension of brand personality Sophistication have a positive related to consumer brand loyalty in the mobile phone category (Samsung, Apple, Nokia and Sony). Study results show that, consumers showed a positive effect between the dimensions of Sophistication and loyalty towards the Samsung brand (Ajilore, Solo-Anaeto, 2016; Teimouri, et al., 2016).

The fifth hypothesis examines the relationship between the Ruggedness dimension and brand loyalty in the mobile phone and car market. Given that a positive relationship has been established between the mentioned dimensions in the mobile phone market, while not in the car market, we can conclude that marketing activities should be aimed at emphasizing good design or use of the brand, in terms of promoting easy and simple maintenance. In the author's research, Ajilore and Solo-Anaeto (2016) and Teimouri, et al. (2016), consumers showed a positive effect between the dimensions of Ruggedness and loyalty towards the Samsung brand. Research in Lithuania by Letukytė and Urbonavičius (2022) shows how brand personality traits and their congruence with consumer personality traits influence emotional loyalty. Namely, the results show that Samsung mobile phones are perceived by consumers through the Ruggedness dimension.

## 6. Conclusion

Brand differentiation is achieved increasingly by considering the brand as a personality. It is considered that just as the consumer who buys them has his own personality, so the brand should be observed in an identical way. A well-established brand personality improves brand choice and use, as well as strong emotional connections to build trust in the brand. Also, consumer habits have changed and consumers do not always have information about products or services. Therefore, companies are increasingly basing their operations on a holistic approach, that is, on meeting the psychological needs of consumers. In this sense, marketers use a new approach in business, which is the development of brand personality based on the brand concept.

Realized research in Republic of Serbia has shown that there is no influence of all dimensions of brand personality on consumer loyalty to the brand. Namely, the dimensions Excitement and Ruggedness have a positive effect on consumer loyalty in the mobile phone market, while the dimensions Honesty, Excitement and Sophistication have a positive effect on consumer loyalty in the car market. Based on the results obtained, we can conclude that the dimension of Excitement affects loyalty in both markets, i.e. that consumers when choosing a brand strive for a brand that is different, for special occasions, unique and has special style and thus achieve the ideal for themselves. On the other hand, the Competence dimension did not show a statistically significant relationship in the mobile phone and car market. Given that these are markets related to technology and innovation, it is necessary to constantly work on creating a modern, leading and reliable brand in order to achieve consumer loyalty. In line with the results obtained, companies that want to be leaders in the mobile phone and car market in Republic of Serbia need to maintain and increase the impact of the brand personality dimension (in the mobile phone market - Honesty, Competence and Sophistication and car market - Competence and Ruggedness) through brand building methods.

The research presented in this paper has certain limitations, and the most important are the sample size and the inclusion of additional factors in the analysis. Namely, the analysis should include factors such as: consumer awareness of the brand, trust they have in the brand, consumer satisfaction because these are important predictors of consumer loyalty and give an integrated picture of what all affects the relationship between brand personality and consumer loyalty.

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## LIČNOST BRENDA KAO DETERMINANTA LOJALNOSTI POTROŠAČA MOBILNIH TELEFONA I AUTOMOBILA U REPUBLICI SRBIJI

**Rezime:** Brendovi koji imaju visoko lojalne potrošače u funkciji su identiteta i imidža njihove ličnosti. Primarni pokretači lojalnosti takvim brendovima su neopipljive karakteristike brendova koje imaju određeno simbolično značenje za potrošače. U tom smislu, brendovi su u funkciji artikulisanja potrošača kao ličnosti i postizanja odgovora imidža. Da bi se to postiglo brendovi se često smatraju ličnostima koji, kao i potrošači koji ih redovno kupuju, imaju slične karakteristike. Ukoliko su karakteristike brendova i karakteristike potrošača usaglašenije, to će potrošači biti lojalniji. Polazeći od navedenog, cilj autora u radu je da istraže uticaj dimenzija ličnosti brenda na lojalnost potrošača prema dve grupe proizvoda: mobilnim telefonima i automobilima. Istraživanje je sprovedeno na teritoriji Republike Srbije. Rezultati istraživanja su od suštinskog značaja za brend menadžment jer predstavljaju smernice za preduzimanje određenih aktivnosti u izgradnji brendova sa liderskom pozicijom na tržištu.

**Ključne reči:** ličnost brenda, lojalnost potrošača, emocionalna privrženost, mobilni telefoni, automobili, Republika Srbija.

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