

**THE INFLUENCE OF PERSUASIVE ADVERTISING ON THE
PERCEPTION OF BRAND PERSONALITY**

**Miss MERABET Amina Abou bakr beelkaid university, Algeria
Mr BENHABIB Abderezzak, Abou bakr beelkaid university, Algeria**

**Miss MERABET Amina
PhD Student
Abu bakr beelkaid university,
BP:226 Tlemcen Algeria
Phone: (213) 6 64 78 05 55
Fax: (213) 43 20 41 89
Email: amina.merabet@free.fr**

**Mr BENHABIB Abderezzak
Professor
Abu bakr beelkaid university,
BP:226 Tlemcen Algeria
Phone: (213) 7 71 13 92 72
Fax: (213) 43 20 41 89
Email: abenhabib1@yahoo.fr**

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Miss MERABET Amina Abou bekr belkaid university, Algeria

Mr BENHABIB Abderezzak, Abou bekr belkaid university, Algeria

BRAND PERSONALITY: ANTECEDENT AND CONSEQUENCES

ABSTRACT

The understanding of branding advertising processing and buying decision making is necessary for the definition of consumer oriented branding strategy. Thus, the main purpose of this paper is to study the impact of persuasive advertising on the perception of brand personality. We try to determine the level of alteration features of brand personality as well as attitudes toward brands and purchase intention in the case of either two types of processing that relate to central and peripheral persuasive advertising and we will emphasize the moderating role of product involvement.

Thus after a short review of literature, we will present the results of an empirical study conducted among a sample of 400 persons. The results validate the hypothesis that persuasive advertising has a significant impact on the personality traits formation of the brand. However, it shows a variation of influence depending on the treatment of persuasive advertising and product type.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, several areas related to branding have been studied, in particular the concept of brand personality. Today it is unthinkable to launch a new product in the market without giving it a name and personality. The brand personality defined by Aaker (1997) as the set of human characteristics associated with a brand is a basic factor of differentiation (Ambroise, 2005) and helps firms to achieve enduring sustainable competitive advantage (Biel, 1993). It reflects the image perceived by the consumer of the brand (Plummer, 1984). That means that creating a unique and desirable personality has become an important objective in the context of brand management (Siguaw et al., 1999). Nevertheless, the brand personality may presents two sides, "the input" corresponding to what we want the consumers think and feel towards the brand and, the "output" which corresponds to the real feelings of the consumers towards the brand. A gap between these two sides can have important repercussions on the evaluation of the brand, so it is important to control the sources that contribute to the formation of brand personality traits (Plummer, 1984).

The attribution of brand personality traits can be formed through diverse origin. But communication is still the main source (Plummer, 1985). Consequently, this study attempts to clarify how brand personality traits are formed when treatment of persuasive advertising changes and what are the consequences on brand attitude and purchase intention when applied within an Algerian context.

Thus, our objectives are threefold :

First, we try to determine the relationship between persuasive advertising and Brand Personality (BP);

Second, we test causal relationship between BP and its consequences: Attitude toward brand (Ab) and Purchase Intention (PI);

Third we determine causal relationship between Ab and PI.

So, This paper is structured within two parts. The first part, presents a short review of literature on brand personality concept and the role of persuasive advertising. The second part, describes the experimental protocol, presents the methodology, the findings and suggests areas for further research.

I- LITERATURE REVIEW

BRAND PERSONALITY CONCEPT

The human personality is the basis of studies on brand personality. Personality is a psychological notion, often defined as a stable and individualized unity of a set of behaviors (Huteau, 1985). It is a set of traits (Anderson & Rubin, 1986) or a structure of features (Ambroise et al., 2003). In recent years, brands have become more and more customized (Plummer, 1985; Berry, 1988) and the brand like individuals can also develop a personality that is widely assumed to be similar in their characteristics Aaker, J. L et al. (2001). So, The measurement scales developed in human personality psychology especially scales based on trait approach, have been transferred to the brands. And if we refer to the theories of animism, anthropomorphism of objects is necessary for people to facilitate interactions with the nonmaterial world (Fournier, 1998). So consumers easily assign personality qualities to inanimate objects like brands, in thinking about brands as if they are human characters (Blackston, 1993) and can develop strong relationships with brand (Fournier, 1998).

However, it is not difficult for consumers to attribute a personality to brands. Koebel and Ladwein (1999) noted that " as every individual has a personality, the brand may be seen from the specific trait which define it identity." (Fournier, 1998; J. Aaker, 1997).

DEFINITION

From the 80s and even into the 90s, this concept has undergone extensive development work mainly with Aaker (1997) who defines it as " the set of human characteristics associated with a brand " Viot (2006) indicates that from this definition, the brand personality has become a jumble concept. Azoulay and Kapferer (2003) conceptualize brand personality as " the set of traits of human personality which are pertinent and applicable to brands" . Ambroise(2003) find this definition too large because there are some brand-specific traits (eg: sophistication) that are not relevant persons and also because it can present some personality traits which rather correspond to social judgments (provincial, or aristocratic). Thus, she defines it as being "the set of traits of human personality associated to a brand".

ADVERTISING AS AN ANTECEDENT OF BRAND PERSONALITY

Studies of brands demonstrated that perceptions of brand personality traits have a more diverse origin. They can be formed directly through the people who represent it-such as the typical user of a brand, the company's employees, and the brand's endorsers (McCracken

1989), or indirectly through the entire marketing mix of the brand – “its price (high or low, odd or even), retail store location (imagery associations), product formulation (ingredients, benefits), product form (solid/liquid, etc.), packaging details (color, size, material, shape), symbol used in all phases of the brand communication, sales promotion, and media advertising” (p. 93). But communication is still the main source (Plummer, 1985) and advertising is considered to be the most effective communication tool (Brassington & Pettitt, 2000). Indeed advertising practitioners have been the first ones who used the term ‘brand personality (Plummer 1985).

The most common form for the transfer of personality traits is the use of popular people. Yet, basically all advertising influences the brand personality, not only when an endorser is used (Rajagopal).

In our study we focus on the role of persuasive advertising.

CONCEPTUAL MODEL

This research tackles the analysis of some antecedent and consequences of BP. Several authors have attempted to explain the effectiveness of persuasive advertising from the early theories of persuasion (Strong, 1925; Lavidge and Steiner, 1961; McGuire, 1972, 1976) based on the hierarchy of effects to the more recent Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM, Petty & Cacioppo, 1981, 1986), and other extension works (Chaiken, 1980; Batra & Ray, 1986; Mackenzie, et al., 1986; Muehling et al., 1990).

We will base our analysis on the ELM model (Elaboration Likelihood Model) of Petty and Cacioppo (1983, 1986), which has proved its effectiveness during the last 20 years and still has the advantage of being used as a framework for many empirical studies and applications.

Regarding the consequences of BP, different variables have been taken into account: The attitude toward the brand (Supphellen and Helgeson 2003; Ambroise et al., 2005; Ben Sliman et al., 2005 ...); Attachment to the brand (Sung et al. 2005, Ambroise 2006, Gouteron, 2006; ...); Commitment to the brand (Ambroise et al., 2005, Ben Sliman et al., 2005; ...); the brand trust (Gouteron, 2006; Krohmer, 2007; ...); and purchase intentions (Ambroise, 2006; Morschett et al., 2007; ...). In our model we take into consideration only the Ab and PI.

HYPOTHESES

The model ELM assumes that there is a psychological continuum based on the ability and motivation of persons that may have an impact on the content of the persuasive message that will determine the use of a specific route to persuasion. If subjects are motivated, they focus all their attention and cognitive resources to a central processing and the resulting attitude will become stable and able to predict future behavior; however, on the contrary, when they are unmotivated or their cognitive resources are disrupted, processing device considers the attitude as less stable and less predictive. If advertising captures attention, processing occurs along one or both routes: central and peripheral (Petty and Cacioppo, 1981, 1986). Following the authors like (Batra et al., 1993; Plummer, 1985; Ambroise et al., 2007; ...) who consider that advertising is an antecedent of BP and basing our analysis on the ELM model, we formulate the following hypothesis:

H1: A change in the treatment of persuasive advertising (peripheral or central) modifies:

H1.1: The perception of the BP.

H1.2: The Attitude toward the brand (Ab).

H1.3: The purchase intention (PI).

Several authors (Supphellen and Helgeson, 2003; Ambroise et al., 2005,...) confirmed the existence of a causal relationship between BP and Ab. Other studies (Ambroise, 2006; Morschett et al., 2007; ...) have confirmed that BP has also a strong influence on IP. In this case, we draw a second hypothesis that considers that:

H 2: BP influences:

H2.1: The attitude of consumers towards the brand.

H2.2: Purchase intention

The involvement has been widely used as a moderator variable in research on advertising effects (Petty and cacciapo, 1986; Debevec Kathleen and Iyer Easwar, 1986;...). As such, we set a third hypothesis:

H3: product involvement moderates the relationship between:

H3. 1: Persuasive advertising and the perception of the BP,

H3.2: Persuasive advertising and Ab,

H3.3: persuasive advertising and PI.

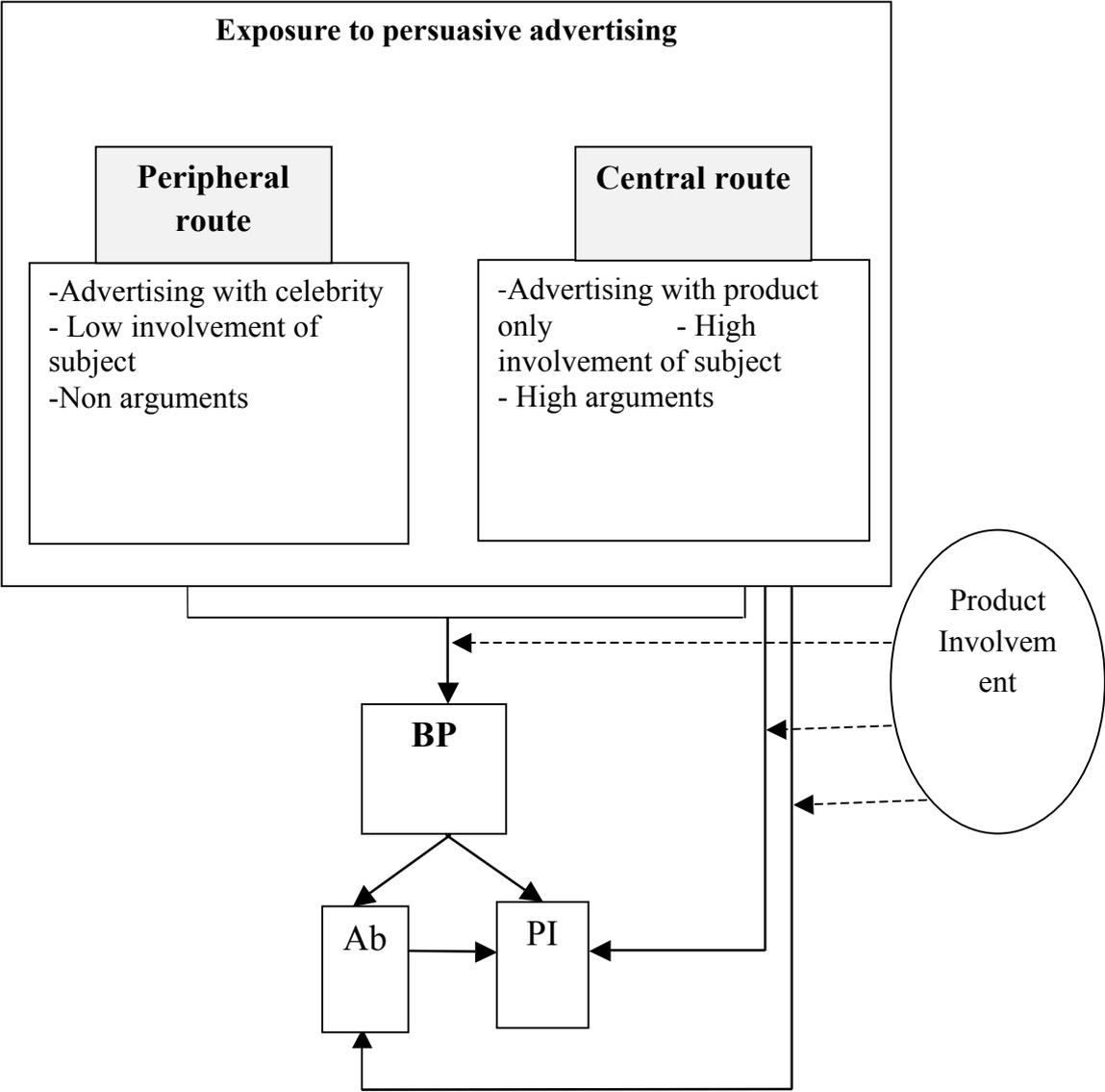
On the basis of the seminal work of Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), which assumes that in general, attitudes would lead to intentions which, subsequently, would lead to actual behavior, many researchers have been interested in the link between consumer attitudes and intentions

of future behavior (e.g., Oliver, 1980; Alwitt and Berger, 1996). According to their work, we will check these links and therefore formulate the following hypothesis:

H4: There is a causal link between consumer attitudes toward a brand and their intentions for future behavior toward that brand.

The above hypotheses can be illustrated in our research framework shown in Figure 1

Figure 1: The conceptual model



II- METHODS

To test our hypotheses, an experiment was necessary in this study.

1- Product Categories and Brands

Two product categories were selected: Car and soft drink. Both products seem to differ on the level of involvement.

Regarding the choice of brands within the category, we selected for cars, Peugeot brand and Coca Cola for soft drinks on the basis of a spontaneous recognition test.

2- Advertising and Celebrities

Our experiment requires the use of celebrities with a strong reputation. So, on the basis of a recognition test (spontaneous and aided) the choice ends up with the actor Kivan Tutlang for cars and the singer Nancy Ajram for soft drinks.

Four print advertising were made in Photoshop software (see appendix I), these vary depending on the presence of arguments and the presence versus the absence of celebrity.

3- Involvement of Subjects toward Advertisements

In our experiment we have adopted two scenarii based on the literature (Petty and Cappacio, 1983; Johar, 1995;...) that deal involvement toward ads (high vs. low involvement)

4- Experimental Design

We therefore adopted an experimental design drawn upon a factorial 2X2 which contains four different experimental conditions in which subjects were randomly assigned to these conditions (see table 1).

Table 1: Experimental design

	Strong arguments + high implication of subject (<i>scenarii 1</i>)	Non arguments + low implication of subject (<i>scenarii 2</i>)
Car (Peugeot)	Ad with single product (<i>100 persons</i>)	Ad with celebrity (Kivank Tutlang) (<i>100 persons</i>)
Soft Drink (Coca Cola)	Ad with single product (<i>100 persons</i>)	Ad with celebrity (Nanci Ajram) (<i>100 persons</i>)

5- Presentation and description of the sample

The sample consists of 400 individuals representative of Tlemcen city (Algeria). To construct our sample, we used quota sampling on the basis of two main criteria: age and gender.

6- Data Analysis

Scales used:

- To measure BP, we used the BPI (Brand Personality Inventory) of Aaker (1997). Various studies have shown that the perception of BP varies according to different cultural backgrounds (Koëbel & Ladwein, 1999; Czellar, 1999; D'Astous et al., 2002) (see table 2).

Table 2: Example of adaptation of BPI Aaker's in different cultures

Country	AUTHORS	Product category	RESULTS
Algeria	Merabet & Benhabib (2010)	Various products	Dynamism Competence Sophistication masculinity realism
France	Koëbel & Ladwein (1999)	Various products	Domination, competence, conscientious, masculinity, expansiveness, seduction
Switzerland	Czellar (1999)	Parfum	Excitation Proficiency Sophistication Rudeness Sincerity
Spain	Aaker, Benet-Martinez & Garolera (2001)	Various products	Three identical dimensions: sincerity, dynamism and sophistication Two specific dimensions: passion and peace
Canada	D'Astous, Hadj Said & Lévesque (2002)	4 big shop	Refinement Solidity Authenticity Enthusiasm Grumpiness
Japan	Aaker, Benet-Martinez & Garolera (2001)	Various products	Four identical dimensions: sincerity, dynamism, competence, sophistication One specific dimension: peace
Australia	Aaron C. T. Smith, Brian R. Graetz and Hans M. Westerbeek (2006)	sporting organisation	Five equal size One specific dimension: Innovation

The meaning embedded in commercial brands has both culturally specific and culturally common elements (Aaker et al., 2000). That led us to adapt the BPI to the Algerian cultural context. We have obtained five dimension (Dynamism, Realism, Competence, Sophistication, masculinity) and 20 items (a complete list of all items is included in the table 3).

Table 3: BPI Aaker's adapted to Algerian context

Dynamism	Realism	Competence	Sophistication	masculinity
Contemporary Cool Up to date	Real Sincere Honest Cheerful	Leader Corporate Successful Secure Hard-working Reliable	Good looking Smooth Glamorous Feminine Upper class	Tough rugged

- The scale of Grossbart et al. (1986) is used to measure Ab with three items.

- To measure product involvement, we selected Strazzieri scale (1994) that consists of six items aggregated into three components.

All these constructs are assessed on a five points Likert scale.

- PI is measured by the probability scale of Juster (1966) evaluated on a scale of 11 points.

Testing measurement models: At first and in accordance with the Churchill procedure, we conduct principal components analysis with varimax rotation to test the different structures of constructs used in this research excluding purchase intention scale as it consists of a single item. To determine the number of factors to retain, we consider the most usual rule of Kaiser (are selected as factors corresponding to eigen values above the unit.) Only items with communality greater than 0.5 and the absolute value of their correlation to an axis are greater than 0.6 were retained. Then, the Cronbach's alpha is used to assess the reliability of these constructs. The estimated coefficients can be described as acceptable as they are all above 0.70 (Peterson, 1994). From involvement scale, two items are removed. In a second step, we conduct a confirmatory factor analysis with a bootstrap procedure. The validity of each scale is checked by means of absolute, incremental and parsimony indices. In general, all adjustment indices are considered good and acceptable (see appendix).

FINDINGS

1-Effect of Persuasive Advertising on BP, Ab and PI:

The first hypothesis is tested using MANOVA. As Table 4 shows, the results obtained postulate that:

- A change in the treatment of persuasive advertising (peripheral or central) affects four dimensions of Coca Cola personality (Dynamism: $F=15,87$, $p=0,001$; Realism: $F=7,66$, $p=0,006$; Competence: $F=11,12$, $p=0,001$ and Masculinity: $F=29,74$, $p=0,00$) and two dimensions of Peugeot personality (Dynamism: $F=16,45$, $p=0,00$; and Realism: $F= 43,6$, $p=0,00$) (see Figure 2 and 3).

- Regarding the other variables, for Coca Cola the change of treatment of the ad doesn't influence the Ab and PI.

For Peugeot, the treatment of ad affects Ab ($F= 7,66$, $p=0,006$) and PI ($F=8,64$, $p=0,003$).

Table 4: Effect of persuasive advertising on brand personality, attitude toward brand and purchase intention

	Coca Cola		Peugeot	
	F	Sign	F	Sign
Ab	2,69	,102	7,66	,006
PI	,81	,366	8,64	,003
Dynamism	15,87	,000	16,45	,000
Realism	18,83	,000	43,60	,000
Sophistication	2,59	,108	2,05	,153
Competence	11,12	,001	,44	,504
Masculinity	29,74	,000	,39	,528

Figure 2: Effect of Persuasive Advertising on Coca Cola Brand Personality

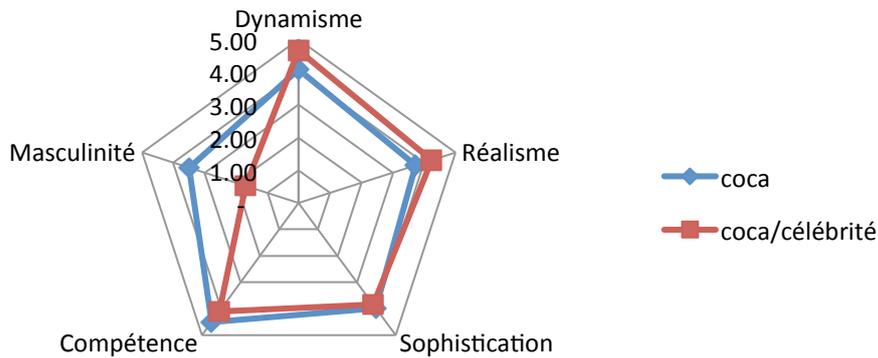
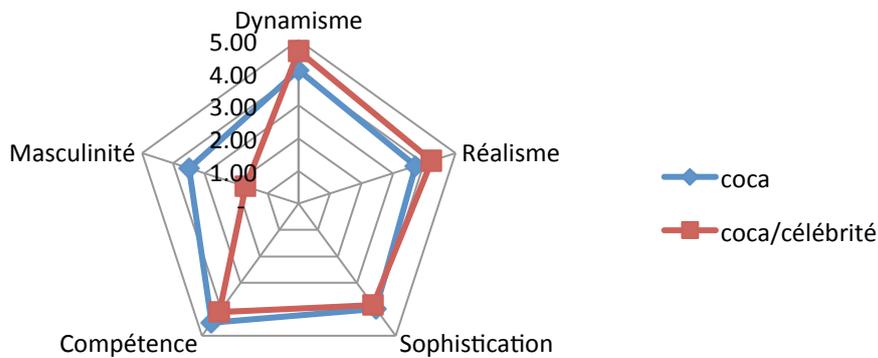


Figure 3 : Effect of Persuasive Advertising on Peugeot Brand Personality



2- Moderator Role of product involvement

This hypothesis is tested using ANOVA test. The effect of the moderator is shown through the effect of the interaction between the moderator and the independent variable on one side and the dependent variable on the other side.

According to Baron and Kenny (1986) results in table 2 indicate that involvement moderates the relationship between the ad and dynamism dimension ($F=3,65$, $p=0,04$) and realism dimension ($F=4,68$, $p=0,003$). For the other variables (Ab, IP, competency and masculinity dimensions) involvement is not considered as a moderator. We can say that the discrepancy

between the results obtained from both types of product is not only due to the involvement, but may be due to the other elements of the ad (eg: attraction of celebrity, color effect, ..)

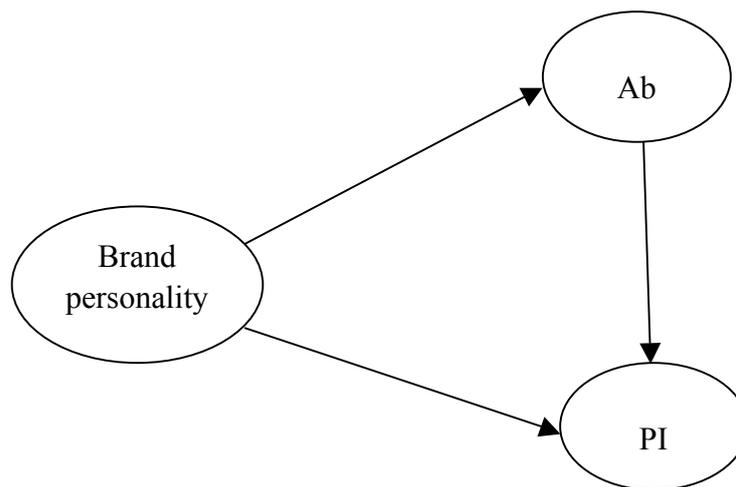
Table 5: Moderator Role of product involvement

	Ab		IP		<i>Brand personality</i>							
	<i>F</i>	<i>sig</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>sig</i>	dynamism		realism		competence		Masculinity	
Interaction Effect	<i>F</i>	<i>sig</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>sig</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>sig</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>sig</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>sig</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>sig</i>
Ad * involvement	0.729	0.394	1.185	0.277	3.659	0.049	4.683	0.031	0.455	0.500	1.221	0.270

3- Influence of BP on Ab and PI

The Analysis of Moment Structures was used for an empirical testing of hypotheses three and four. We analyzed four causal models as shown in Figure 4 using the Maximum Likelihood Estimation (MLE).

Figure 4: Structural model



For each of these models we computed measures of global fit. We obtained significant chi square statistics and indices for each model (see table 2).

Table 2: Adjustment indices of global structural model

	Normed Chi-square	Validity indices of model
Coca Cola	4,1	RMSEA = 0,022 GFI =0,893 AGFI = 0,900 CFI= 0,910
Coca cola/Celebrity	3,39	RMSEA = 0,041 GFI =0,985 AGFI = 0,909 CFI= 0,929
Peugeot	3,42	RMSEA = 0,025 GFI =0,932 AGFI = 0,916 CFI= 0,939
Peugeot/Celebrity	2,56	RMSEA = 0,031 GFI =0,913 AGFI = 0,962 CFI= 0,925

The results show that:

- For Coca Cola, when treatment of the advertising message is central, the Ab is positively affected only by realism dimension ($\lambda=0,42$, $t \geq 1,96$ and $p < 0,05$).

However, for the other conditions Ab is positively correlated with the competence dimension ($\lambda=0,40$) and negatively with masculinity dimension ($\lambda=-0,32$). Regarding Peugeot, the two dimensions of BP (Dynamism ($\lambda=0,34$) and Realism ($\lambda=0,51$)) have a positive effect on the Ab only when product is presented alone on ads.

- The BP does not affect PI when product is presented in the ads alone for both brands. But, in the other conditions, purchase intention is positively influenced by realism dimension ($\lambda=0,59$) for Peugeot. For Coca Cola dynamism dimension has positive effect ($\lambda=0,38$) and masculinity dimension has negative effect ($\lambda=-0,27$).

4-Influence of attitude towards the brand purchase intention

The results indicate that in all types of treatment of the message Ab influence purchase intention of Coca Cola ($\lambda > 0,30$ $t \geq 1,96$ and $p < 0,05$). Conversely, the relationship (Ab-PI) is not significant in the case of Peugeot.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this research is to contribute modestly to a better understanding of the formation of BP traits through persuasive advertising in an Algerian cultural context. The reported empirical analyses suggest that persuasive advertising has different impact on BP depending on route to persuasion (central or peripheral), while the product involvement can moderate this relationship. The results of the hypothesis test show also that there exists a causality relationship between BP and attitudes toward brand and purchase intention. These results confirm many prior studies (Aaker, 1997; Ambroise, 2005; ..).

This study is one of the earliest studies in Algeria on BP. The major contribution of this research is to validate the empirical relationships between BP and its antecedents and

consequences. It allows to show the importance of treatment of ads on attribution of traits of BP. Moreover, the study of two parallel routes of persuasion (peripheral and central) can enrich the knowledge on the influence of these variables as far as research on brand communication is concerned.

This research has also validated a number of scales, particularly, the Aaker's BPI that has been tested in the Algerian context.

Furthermore this research has several managerial implications. Understanding the formation process of BP traits allows brand manager's on one hand to adapt their brand communication strategy on the image they want to transfer to consumers, and on the other hand, help them better differentiate their brands relatively to competition.

Future research may take into consideration moderator variables in the relationship between persuasive advertising and BP such as familiarity.

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Appendix I

NOUVELLE PEUGEOT 407

Provoquez le plaisir

Force vive ou pure dynamique ?

Nouvelle peugeot 407 incarne l'esprit peugeot:

- * Esthétisme.
- * dynamisme.
- * valeur sûre.
- * innovation.

Un design expressif.
Fabriqué selon les normes les plus rigoureuses pour vous *assurer l'excellence*
Confort garanti: Liberté de mouvement et d'esprit
Sa priorité votre sécurité à vous et à vos passagers
Un large éventail de possibilité d'habillage

Peugeot 407 : * 7 Airbags (frontaux, latéraux avant, rideaux et genoux conducteur) * Aide au stationnement arrière * Air conditionné automatique bizona * DéTECTEURS de sous-gonflage * Ecran couleur multifonctions * ESP, ASR, ABS, REF et AFU * Fils de coffre * Jantes alliage 18" * Ordinateur de bord * Pare-brise et vitres latérales feuilletées * Projecteurs antibrouillard * Projecteurs au Xénon bi-fonction * Radio CD MP3 WIP Sound * Régulateur / Limiteur de vitesse * Rétroviseurs rabattables électriquement * volant, accoudoir central avant, soufflet et pommeau garnie de cuir *

PEUGEOT
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كوكاكولا لاغير!

Coca-Cola

Coca-Cola

Coca-Cola

Depuis 1886, notre recette authentique, mélange unique d'ingrédients, de caféine, d'eau gazeuse avec une touche caramélisée donne ce goût original et rafraîchissant.

Coca-Cola contient du sucre, source d'énergie. Approprié dans le cadre d'une vie active.

Qualité et goût garantis par The Coca-Cola Company.

Prends la vie côté Coca-Cola

APPENDIX II

<i>Coca cola</i>						
	ACP		Cronbach Alpha	AFC		Rhô of Jöreskog
	Eigen values	% explain variance		Normed Chi-square	Validity indices of model	
<i>Brand personality</i>	5,25*	79,01*	0,98*	4*	RMSEA = 0,036*; 0,044**	0,835*
	1,22**	76,5**	0,96**	3**	GFI =0,993*; 0,992** AGFI = 0,919*; 0,985** CFI= 0,912*; 0,998**	0,870**
Attitude toward brand	0,24*	74,66*	0,92*	3,1*	RMSEA = 0,042*; 0,031**	0,951*
	1,79**	78,21**	0,91**	2,5**	GFI =0,997*; 0,907** AGFI = 0,922*; 0,951** CFI= 0,998*; 0,901**	0,920**
Product Involvement	3,54*	81,05*	0,89*	3,5*	RMSEA = 0,02*; 0,02**	0,951*
	4,9**	77,12**	0,90**	4,5**	GFI =0, 96*; 0,897** AGFI = 0,892*; 0,902** CFI= 0,900*; 0,901**	0,940**

* Values Coca Cola

** Values Coca Cola/ Celebrity

<i>Peugeot</i>						
	ACP		Cronbach Alpha	AFC		Jöreskog Rhô
	Eigen values	% explain variance		Normed Chi-square	Validity indices of model	
<i>Brand personality</i>	1,077*	69,13*	0,95*	2,9*	RMSEA = 0,075*; 0,052**	0,829*
	1,077**	68,13**	0,96**	4,8**	GFI =0,948*; 0,990** AGFI = 0,961*; 0,969** CFI= 0,993*; 0,984**	0,931**
Attitude toward brand	2,116*	70,52*	0,88*	2*	RMSEA = 0,027*; 0,074**	0,729*
	2,116**	70,55**	0,91**	4,6**	GFI =0,986*; 0,900** AGFI = 0,987*; 0,905** CFI= 0,982*; 0,901**	0,902**
Product Involvement	4,2*	79,9*	0,89*	3*	RMSEA = 0,042*; 0,038**	0,932*
	4,9**	79,80**	0,93**	2,5**	GFI =0,932*; 0,905** AGFI = 0,930*; 0,935** CFI= 0,908*; 0,926**	0,928**

* Values Peugeot

**Values Peugeot/ Celebrity