

# Brand Personality : Antecedents And Consequences

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## 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. In the present study, the researchers have tried to determine the level of alteration features of brand personality as well as the attitudes toward brands and purchase intention in the case of either two types of processing that relates to central and peripheral persuasive advertising, and have tried to emphasize the moderating role of product involvement. 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.

Keywords: Brand Personality , Persuasive Advertising , Brand Attitude , Purchase Intention, Product Involvement

## 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 a 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, brand personality may present two sides, "the input" corresponding to what we want the consumers to 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 a diverse origin. However, communication is still the main source (Plummer, 1985). Consequently, this study attempts to clarify how brand personality traits are formed through the treatment of persuasive advertising changes and what are the consequences on brand attitude and purchase intention when applied within the Algerian context.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- 1) To attempt to determine the relationship between persuasive advertising and Brand Personality (BP);
- 2) To test the causal relationship between BP and its consequences: Attitude towards brand (Ab) and Purchase Intention (PI);
- 3) To determine the causal relationship between Ab and PI.

## 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 structure of traits (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 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 non - material world (Fournier, 1998). So consumers easily assign personality qualities to inanimate objects like brands, in thinking about

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brands as if they are human characters (Blackston, 1993) and can develop strong relationships with the 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 defines its identity.

❖ **Definition** : From the 80s and even into the 90s, this concept has undergone extensive development work, mainly with Aaker (1997), who defined it as “the set of human characteristics associated with a brand”. Viot (2006) indicated that from this definition, the brand personality has become a jumble concept. Azoulay and Kapferer (2003) conceptualized brand personality as “the set of traits of human personality which are pertinent and applicable to brands”. Ambroise (2003) found this definition too large because there are some brand-specific traits (eg: Sophistication) that are not relevant to persons, and also because it can present some personality traits, which rather corresponds to social judgments (Provincial, or Aristocratic). Thus, she defined it as being “the set of traits of human personality associated with 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.” 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. However, “basically all advertising influences the brand personality, not only when an endorser is used.” (Rajagopal, 2004).

In the present study, the researchers 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).

The researchers base their analysis on the ELM model (Elaboration Likelihood Model) of Petty and Cacioppo (1983, 1986), which has proven 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 towards the brand (Supphellen and Helgeson, 2003; Ambroise et al., 2005); Attachment to the brand (Ambroise, 2006; Gouteron, 2006); Commitment to the brand (Ambroise et al., 2005); the brand trust (Gouteron, 2006;Krohmer, 2007); and purchase intentions (Ambroise, 2006; Morschett et al., 2007). For their model, the researchers 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 would be able to predict future behavior; however, on the contrary, when they are unmotivated or their cognitive resources are disrupted, the 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 Caccioppo, 1981, 1986). Following the authors like Batra et al. (1993) ; Plummer (1985); Ambroise et al. (2007) who considered that advertising is an antecedent of BP, and basing their analysis on the ELM model, the researchers formulated the following hypotheses:

- ❖ **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 also has a strong influence on IP. In this case, the researchers draw a second hypothesis that considers that:

- ❖ **H2: BP influences:**
  - H2.1: The attitude of consumers towards the brand;**
  - H2.2: Purchase intention.**

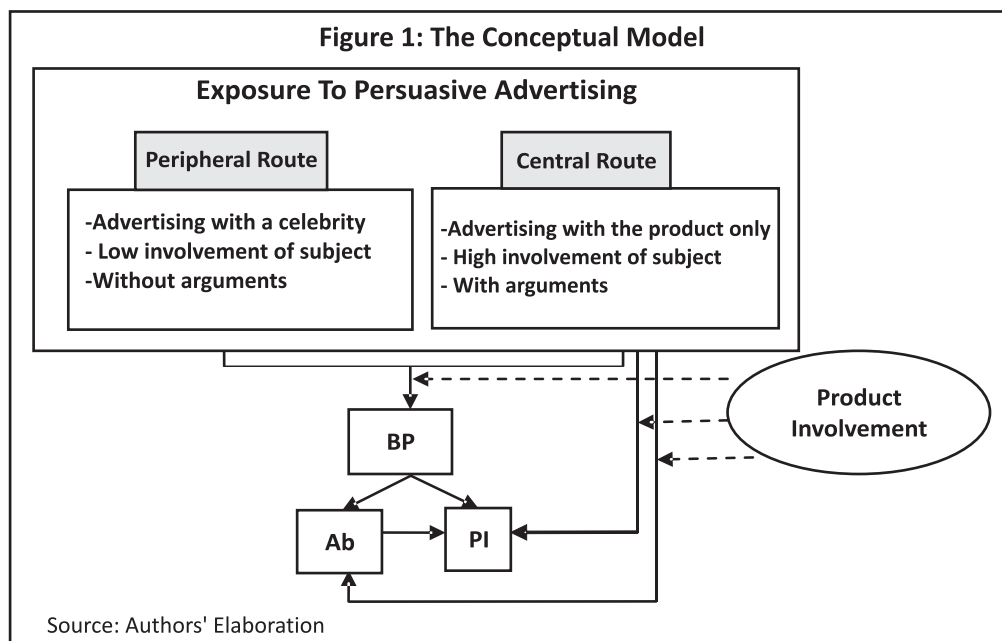
The involvement has been widely used as a moderator variable in research on advertising effects (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986; Debevec Kathleen and Iyer Easwar, 1986). As such, the researchers set a third hypothesis:

- ❖ **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). According to their work, the researchers will check these links and, therefore, formulate the following hypothesis:

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

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



## METHODS

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

**1) Product Categories And Brands :** Two product categories were selected: a Car and a Soft Drink. Both products seem to differ on the level of involvement. Regarding the choice of brands within the category, the researchers selected the Peugeot brand for the Car and the Coca - Cola brand for the Soft Drink on the basis of a spontaneous recognition test.

**2) Advertising and Celebrities :** The experiment required the use of celebrities with a strong reputation. So, on the basis of a recognition test (spontaneous and aided), the choice ended up with the actor Kivan Tutlang for cars and the singer Nancy Ajram for soft drinks. Four print advertisements were made in Photoshop software (see Appendix I), which varied depending on the presence of arguments and the presence versus the absence of celebrity.

	With arguments +	Without arguments +
	high implication of subject (scenarii1)	low implication of subject (scenarii2)
Car (Peugeot)	Ad with single product (100 persons)	Ad with celebrity (Kivank Tutlang) (100 persons)
Soft Drink (Coca- Cola)	Ad with single product (100 persons)	Ad with celebrity (Nanci Ajram) (100 persons)
Source: Authors' elaboration		

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, HadjSaid & 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 organization	Five equal size one specific dimension: Innovation
Source: Authors' elaboration			

**3) Involvement of Subjects Toward Advertisements :** In their experiment, the researchers adopted two scenarios based on the literature (Petty and Cacioppo, 1983; Johar, 1995) that dealt with the involvement toward ads (high vs. low involvement).

**4) Experimental Design :** The researchers, 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).

**5) Presentation And Description Of The Sample :** The survey was conducted over three months, from January - March 2010. The sample consisted of 400 individuals within the age group of 15 - 65 years living in the city of Tlemcen (Algeria). To construct the sample, the researchers used quota sampling on the basis of two main criteria: age and gender to ensure their representativeness from Tlemcen city.

## ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

❖ **Scales Used:** To measure BP, the researchers 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).

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

<b>Dynamism</b>	<b>Realism</b>	<b>Competence</b>	<b>Sophistication</b>	<b>Masculinity</b>
Contemporary	Real	Leader	Good looking	
Cool	Sincere	Corporate	Smooth	Tough
Up to date	Honest	Successful	Glamorous	Rugged
	Cheerful	Secure	Feminine	
		Hard-working	Upper class	
		Reliable		

Source: Authors' elaboration

The scale of Grossbart et al. (1986) was used to measure Ab with three items. To measure product involvement, the researchers selected Strazzieri scale (1994) that consists of six items aggregated into three components. All these constructs were assessed on a five points Likert scale. PI was 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, the researchers conducted the Principal Component 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, the researchers considered the most usual rule of Kaiser (selected the 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 greater than 0.6 were retained. Then, the Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the reliability of these constructs. The estimated coefficients can be described as acceptable as they all are above 0.70 (Peterson, 1994). From the involvement scale, two items were removed. In a second step, the researchers conducted a confirmatory factor analysis with a bootstrap procedure. The validity of each scale was checked by means of absolute, incremental and parsimony indices. In general, all adjustment indices were considered good and acceptable (see Appendix II).

Table 4: Effect Of Persuasive Advertising On Brand Personality, Attitude Towards 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

Source: Primary Data

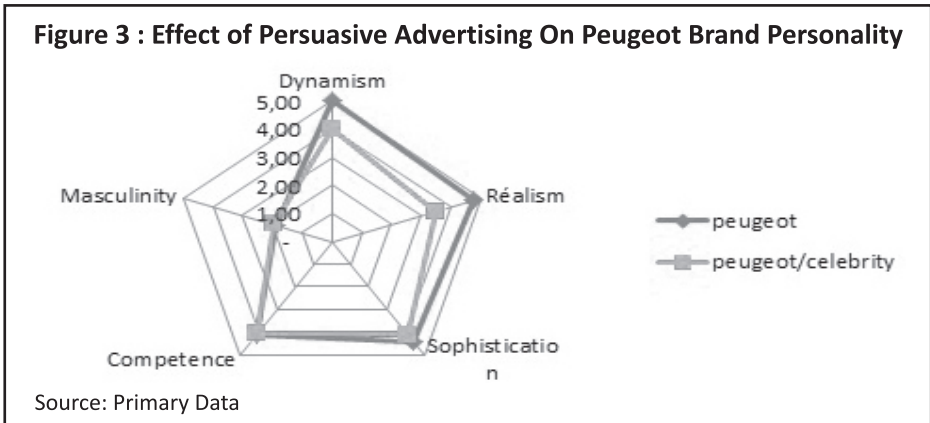
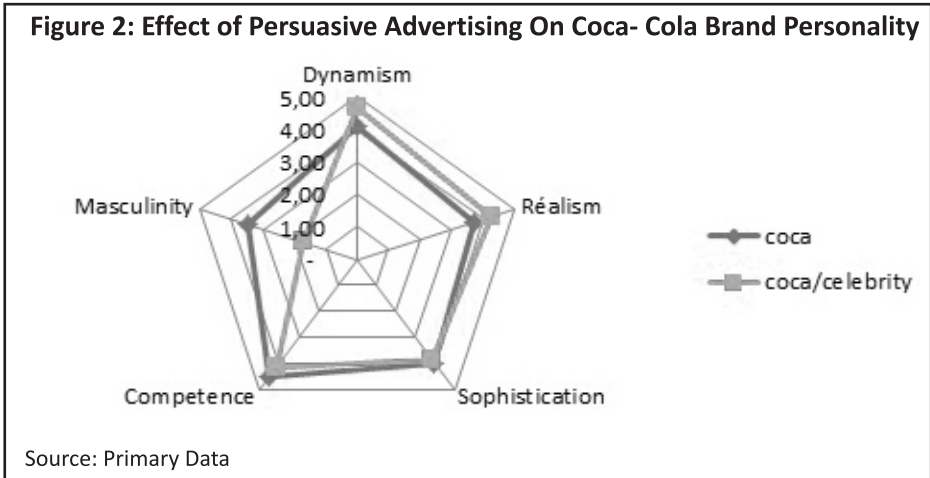
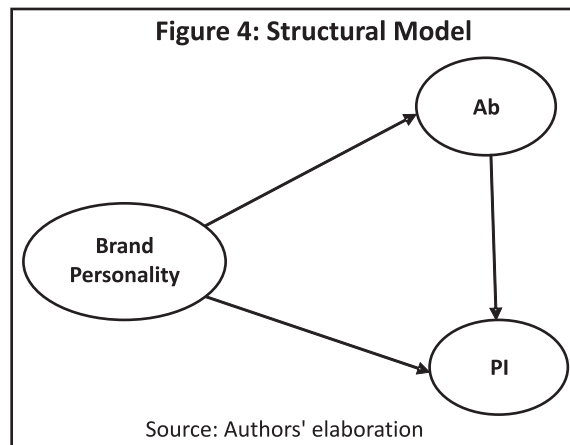


Table 5: Moderator Role Of Product Involvement												
	Ab		IP		Brand Personality							
	F	sig	F	sig	Dynamism		Realism		Competence		Masculinity	
Interaction Effect	F	sig	F	sig	F	sig	F	sig	F	sig	F	sig
Ad * involvement	0.729	0.394	1.185	0.277	3.659	0.049	4.683	0.031	0.455	0.500	1.221	0.270

Source: Primary Data



## FINDINGS

**1) Effect of Persuasive Advertising On BP, Ab And PI:** The first hypothesis is tested using MANOVA. As depicted in the Table 4, 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 Figures 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 ( $F = 8,64$ ,  $p = 0,003$ ).

**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) (Table 5), the results indicate that the 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 (e.g.: attraction of celebrity, color effect ).

**3) Influence of BP On Ab And PI :** The Analysis of Moment Structures was used for an empirical testing of the hypotheses three and four. The researchers analyzed four causal models as shown in the Figure 4 using the Maximum Likelihood Estimation (MLE). For each of these models, the researchers computed measures of global fit. They obtained significant chi square statistics and indices for each model (see Table 6).

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 the 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 the product is presented alone on ads.

❖ The BP does not affect PI, when a product is presented in the ads alone for both brands. But, in the other conditions, Purchase Intention is positively influenced by the Realism dimension ( $\lambda = 0,59$ ) for Peugeot. For Coca - Cola, dynamism dimension has a positive effect ( $\lambda = 0,38$ ) and Masculinity dimension has a 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 influences 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.

Table 6: Adjustment Indices Of Global Structural Model		
	Normal Chi-square	Validity indices of the 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
Source: Primary Data		

## CONCLUSION AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

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 a different impact on BP depending on route to persuasion (central or peripheral), while the product involvement can moderate this relationship. The results of the hypotheses test show also that there exists a causality relationship between BP and attitudes towards 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 showing 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 managers on one hand to adapt their brand communication strategy on the image they want to project for the 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

Force vivante 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, têteaux et genoux conducteur) • Aide au stationnement arrière • Air conditionné automatique bi-zone • 4 Décodeurs de code garfage • 4 Têtes couleur multibande • ESP, ABS, ASR, REP et AFU • Filtre de coffre • James alliage 18" • Ondes radio de bord • Pare-brise et vitres latérales feuilletées • Projecteurs antibrouillard • Projecteurs au Xénon bi-fonction • Radio CD MP3 RSP Sound • Régulateur Limiteur de vitesse • 3 Rétroviseurs réchauffables électrochromes • Vitres, essieux, carter avant, soufflet et panneau garnis de cuir •



NOUVELLE PEUGEOT 407



Provoquez le plaisir

Coca-Cola



Prends la vie côté Coca-Cola

Depuis 1886, notre recette mythologique, mélange unique d'ingrédients de caféine, d'eau pétillante avec une touche caramélisée donne ce goût original et rafraichissant.

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

Qualité et goût garantis par The Coca-Cola company.



كوكاكولا لاغير

Coca-Cola

Source: <http://www.casafree.com/modules/xgal/displayimage.php?pid=3769>

## APPENDIX II

COCA - COLA						
	ACP		Cronbach Alpha	AFC		Rhô of Jöreskog
	Eigen values	% explain variance		Normed Chi-square	Validity indices of model	
<b>Brand Personality</b>	5,25* 1,22**	79,01* 76,5**	0,98* 0,96**	4* 3**	RMSEA = 0,036*; 0,044** GFI = 0,993*; 0,992** AGFI = 0,919*; 0,985** CFI = 0,912*; 0,998**	0,835* 0,870**
<b>Attitude Towards Brand</b>	0,24* 1,79**	74,66* 78,21**	0,92* 0,91**	3,1* 2,5**	RMSEA = 0,042*; 0,031** GFI = 0,997*; 0,907** AGFI = 0,922*; 0,951** CFI = 0,998*; 0,901**	0,951* 0,920**
<b>Product Involvement</b>	3,54* 4,9**	81,05* 77,12**	0,89* 0,90**	3,5* 4,5**	RMSEA = 0,02*; 0,02** GFI = 0,96*; 0,897** AGFI = 0,892*; 0,902** CFI = 0,900*; 0,901**	0,951* 9,40**
* Values Coca - Cola						
** Values Coca -Cola/ Celebrity						
PEUGEOT						
	ACP		Cronbach Alpha	AFC		Jöreskog Rhô
	Eigen values	% explain variance		Normed Chi-square	Validity indices of model	
<b>Brand Personality</b>	1,077* 1,077**	69,13* 68,13**	0,95* 0,96**	2,9* 4,8**	RMSEA = 0,075*; 0,052** GFI = 0,948*; 0,990** AGFI = 0,961*; 0,969** CFI = 0,993*; 0,984**	0,829* 0,931**
<b>Attitude towards brand</b>	2,116* 2,116**	70,52* 70,55**	0,88* 0,91**	2* 4,6**	RMSEA = 0,027*; 0,074** GFI = 0,986*; 0,900** AGFI = 0,987*; 0,905** CFI = 0,982*; 0,901**	0,729* 0,902**
<b>Product Involvement</b>	4,2* 4,9**	79,9* 79,80**	0,89* 0,93**	3* 2,5**	RMSEA = 0,042*; 0,038** GFI = 0,932*; 0,905** AGFI = 0,930*; 0,935** CFI = 0,908*; 0,926**	0,932* 0,928**
* Values Peugeot						
** Values Peugeot/ Celebrity						
Source: Primary Data						