

# Cultural Differences in Trait Inferences of Brand Personality

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## **Abstract**

This study examines cultural differences in the extent to which people infer traits for brands. Based on the recent findings regarding cultural variations in trait inferences, we hypothesized that Westerners who have stronger tendency to infer traits from social behavior can more associate brands with human traits than East Asians. To test our hypothesis, we developed a bi-cultural brand personality scale and compared brand personality perception in two cultures, particularly the U.S. and Japan. The findings showed that Japanese have a tendency to characterize brands either Rugged or Peaceful, whereas Americans described each brand differently and all five dimensions of Sincerity, Sophistication, Ruggedness, Excitement, and Peacefulness were notable. Ruggedness reflects a highly culture-specific meaning of the U.S. and Peacefulness reflects the same for Japan. Japanese may be forming impressions about the brands by drawing inferences about the context of brands (i.e., local versus foreign brand) than the brand's personality traits.

**Keywords:** *brand personality; trait inferences; culture*

**Track:** Consumer Behaviour