

EMPLOYER BRAND PERSONALITY: THE SCALE AND RESULTS OF MEASUREMENT

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Purpose: The aim of the article is to demonstrate the employer brand personality scale (previously validated under Polish conditions) and to estimate (using this scale) whether the employer brand personalities can be considered expressive.

Design/methodology/approach: The literature review and survey were used. Research was carried out among 576 people. The paper fits into the topic of employer brand personality that has been investigated for years.

Findings: It was established that the Polish-language employer brand personality scale is a two-dimensional construct. Using a validated employer brand personality scale, it was also learnt that although employers can be 'rather' characterised as solid, it is difficult to determine whether they are stylish. Therefore, the study showed that the employer brand personalities (of the organisations represented by the respondents) are difficult to categorise as strong or expressive.

Research limitations/implications: The study does not meet the condition of statistical representativeness. Limitations are also related to the research technique and measurement scales used. Future research may focus on the relationship between employer brand and human personality. The impact of employer brand personality on employee loyalty is also worth analysing.

Practical implications: The developed employer brand personality construct (in Polish) can be used in practice. We encourage employers to measure employer brand personality. This is important because the strong employer brand personality can help the organisation to become an employer of choice, that is, an employer that has no problems with attracting and retaining talented employees.

Originality/value: Research conducted is pioneering in Poland. Until now, no work has been done in Poland to design and validate the employer brand personality scale; no one identified the employer brand personality on the basis of a previously validated (culturally adapted) scale either. The recommendations contained in the paper can be an inspiration for researchers and managers who are interested in investigating and strengthening the employer brand personality.

Keywords: employer brand personality, dimensions, facets, measurement.

Category of the paper: Research paper.

1. Introduction

The term ‘personality’ is associated with mainstream psychology and the applicators that power researchers such as Freud, Jung, Guilford, and Eysneck. However, as a result of one of the trends in science, which is anthropomorphisation, personality is also of interest to representatives of management sciences, who relate the category of personality not only to a person (as an internal or external customer) but also to an organisation as a system, a city, or a brand. In studies on brand personality, research often focusses on the product brand. But given that, over the past decades, brand management has been evolving toward the creation of a company/corporate brand (Urbanek, 2012), considerations of brand personality are moving from the product/service level to the organisational level. And as many institutions act as employers, the employer brand personality also becomes the subject of scientific research. This is evidenced by regularly published texts on employer brand personality, including the studies conducted by Livens (Livens, Highhouse, 2003; Lievens, 2007) or Davies (Davies et al., 2004; Davies, 2008; Davies et al., 2010). The situation is different in the Polish-language literature, where it is very difficult to find studies on employer brand personality. Confirmation can be the result of searching for the phrase ‘employer brand personality’ (written in Polish) with the help of the Google search engine. According to the search results (7 March 2023), there were only four text elements that corresponded to the query on the Internet. These were: an article published more than ten years ago devoted to the role of respecting employees’ interests in building a strong employer brand (Wojtaszczyk, 2011), and published on the domain dbc.wroc.pl; the website gojtowska.com established by a consultant in the field of employer brand management; the website RocketSpace.pl, which advertises itself as the job portal of the future, where texts on human resource management are published; translation of ‘brand personality’ in Polish (glosbe.com). The results of this simple search lead to the conclusion that there is a research gap related to the employer brand personality in our country. To fill this gap, we dedicate this text to the employer brand personality.

The aim of our article is to demonstrate the employer brand personality scale (previously validated in Poland) and to estimate (using this scale) whether the employer brand personalities (represented by the respondents) can be considered expressive, that is, conducive to creating relationship with candidates and employees. Introducing the topic (in the theoretical background section) we first focused on the role of personality in management science. Then the idea of brand personality and approaches to measuring brand personality were presented, and controversies related to the identification of brand personality were indicated. This part of the paper is based on a literature review. The analysed texts were searched in the Scopus and Web of Science databases; Google Scholar and ResearchGate resources were also used. The empirical part of the article begins with a description of the methodology of the research carried out. Our research was carried out using the CAWI (Computer Assisted Web

Interview) technique and 576 people participated in the research. Conclusions indicate that although employers (represented by respondents) can be 'rather' characterised as solid, it is difficult to state whether their personalities are stylish. The results of our study proved that it is difficult to categorise the employer brand personalities as strong or expressive. The empirical research we carried out does not meet the condition of statistical representativeness. Although this did not weaken the outcomes of the previous validation of the employer brand personality construct, the research results presented in this paper cannot be generalised. Nevertheless (in our opinion), the content presented in the article meets the criterion of scientific novelty and is a step towards addressing the research gap related to the identification of employer brand personality under Polish conditions.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. The concept of personality in management science

'Personality' is a term used primarily by psychologists. Due to centuries of research traditions and a variety of trends in analysing the personality phenomena, there is no universally accepted definition of human personality today. Therefore, research on personality continues to attempt to describe the mechanisms of their functioning and determine the features that distinguish individuals or groups (Buksik, 2000). The beginnings of the study of personality traits go back to the first half of the twentieth century. The Allport theory of personality is considered classic, based on which personality consists of central / cardinal and secondary traits (John, Pervin, 2002). Trait theory has been (and still is) developed by many researchers. Costa and McCrae (1994) are the authors of the so-called the Big Five concept, which is currently one of the most popular trait theories (Cieciuch, Łaguna, 2014). Under the idea of the Big Five (in great simplification), human personality can be described by five dimensions/cardinal traits, and each of them consists of more specific and numerous patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, called secondary traits or facets (Strus, Cieciuch, 2014). The dimensions of human personality, according to the Big Five, are: neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. Neuroticism means that a person is susceptible to experiencing negative emotions and is expressed by excessive enthusiasm and greater anxiety. Extraversion reflects the individual's involvement in interpersonal contacts. Openness to experience reflects the degree of curiosity about the external and the inner world. Agreeableness determines the attitude (positive or negative) towards others. A high level of agreeability means trust, willingness to cooperation, and being helpful. Conscientiousness is usually accompanied by attention, punctuality, reliability, discipline, diligence, and diligence.

However, personality is not only analysed by psychologists. As a result of anthropomorphisation (Bogdanienko, 2017; Łukaszewicz, 2018), personality is also of interest to representatives of management science. Management experts, as interdisciplinary researchers, are obviously interested in human personality (employee, job candidate, client). Nevertheless, since the 1970s, scientists have also explored organisational/corporate personality (Markham, 1972; King, 1973). Moreover, the brand personality concept has been developed since the end of the last century. And the research concerns not only the product or service brand, the idea of personality is transferred to other types of brand, such as the employer brand as well (Slaughter et al., 2004; Davies et al., 2004).

2.2. The brand personality

The consequence of the assumption that a brand has a personality is to describe it in terms of personality traits attributed to a person. Brand personality is therefore a set of characteristics of human personality that can be associated with a brand and that are important for it (Azoulay, Kapferer, 2003). The importance of brand personality is expressed in the fact that a strong/expressive brand personality helps to build the consumer's emotional relation with a given product or service, and influences the level of trust the brand (Sung, Kim, 2010), which in turn promotes loyal attitudes and behaviours of consumers. Plumer (2000) argues that, in an era where the quality of products and services is comparable, the brand personality is what distinguishes a particular brand from its competitors. Therefore, the brand personality should be treated as one of the key determinants of consumer choices and, thus, a substance of brand value. For this reason, today brand personality is considered a tool to strengthen the brand equity. Consequently, the brand personality is a strategic asset for brand differentiation and the creation of brand-consumer relationships (Guèvremont, Grohmann, 2013).

Although there is agreement that personality is one of the sources of brand strength, there is no full agreement on the 'location' of personality in the brand construct. Some researchers (e.g. Upshaw, 1995; Kapferer, 2008) believe that personality is a component of brand identity. Others scientists (e.g. Kotler, 1994; Kall et al., 2006; Keller, 2008) treat personality as one of the dimensions of brand image. However, taking into account that brand identity (as a result of broadly understood communication processes) is offered to consumers, in whose minds a brand image (interpretation of the brand) is created, it seems reasonable to recognise brand personality not by collecting opinions among owners (who are the main creators of brand identity), but among clients.

2.3. The brand personality identification

Interest in identifying brand personality (through research among consumers) began with the publication by Aaker (1997) of the results of pioneering research on the measurement of brand personality. Aaker, inspired by the concept of the Big Five, developed the first personality scale for brands. The scale includes forty two items (specific features). Each item is assigned

to one of the fifteen secondary traits that make up the five dimensions of the brand personality (Figure 1). Three of the mentioned basic dimensions can be related to the human personality traits described by the Big Five: sincerity is associated with agreeableness and conscientiousness, excitement is expressed in similar aspects to extroversion, and competence is represented by aspects that can be found in the facets of conscientiousness and extraversion (Geuens et al., 2009).

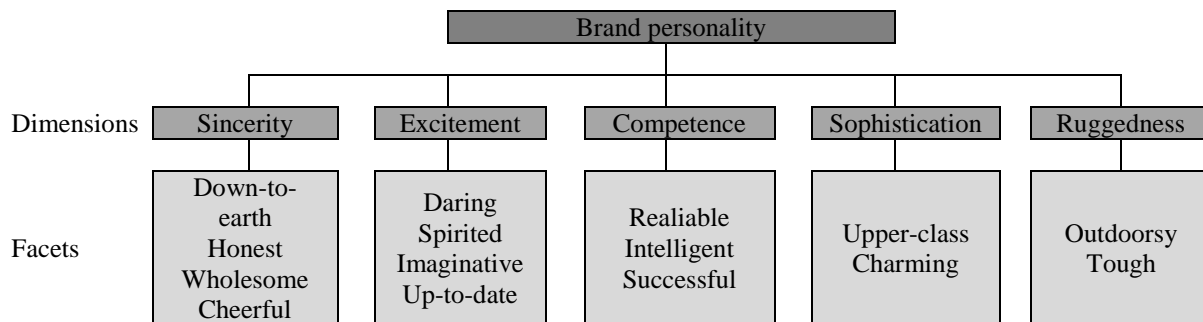


Figure 1. The Aaker brand personality model.

Source: Aaker, 1997.

The Aaker scale was modified by the author herself (Aaker, 2000; Aaker et al., 2001) and by other researchers (e.g., Sung, Tinkham, 2005; Muniz, Marchetti, 2012). The reason for the changes introduced was criticism of the original concept. The objections included the fact that Aaker used not only personality traits to describe the brand personality, but also personal characteristics such as gender or age (Azoulay, Kapferer, 2003).

Based on empirical research, it was also established that while the Aaker scale (or its lexically modified version) can be used to identify the product brand personality, the specificity of the organisation brand, city brand, or employer brand may require the use of slightly different dimensions and facets (Chun, 2005; Rojas-Méndez et al., 2013). Therefore researchers develop their own scales to measure the personality of a specific type of brand. Ranjbar (et al., 2010), referring to selected product brands, discussed that in the case of different brands, the scales for measuring brand personality may have a different number of dimensions. For example, the Nivea brand personality scale is four-dimensional (sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication), and in the case of the Samand brand, the scale has only three cardinal traits (sincerity, competence, ruggedness). Ariff (et al., 2012) proved that in the case of laptop brands, the brand personality scale has six dimensions, with four dimensions coming from the Aaker scale (sincerity, excitement, competence, ruggedness), and two additional dimensions (diligent, modern) were discovered by the authors. Davies (et al., 2018), based on the analysis of twenty-one studies published between 1997 and 2016, identified sixteen different dimensions used to measure the personality of various types of brands, with the most commonly used solution being to supplement the Aaker scale with additional central and secondary traits.

Researchers have also noticed that the perception of personality (including brand personality) is strongly culturally conditioned. Therefore, Aaker's dimensions of brand personality are not transferable between different cultures (Anandkumar, George, 2011). This observation corresponded to the accusation that Aaker did not take into account the psycholexical approach, according to which (in the simplest sense) differences in the perception of a particular feature are caused by how it is encoded in the national language (De Raad, 2000; Gorbaniuk, Włodarska, 2015). Then, followers of lexical analyses raised the need to be empirically proved whether individual dimensions of brand personality can be considered universal or can be used only in a selected culture or cultures.

The need to adapt the brand personality scale to the specificity of a particular culture and language led to the creation of its Polish-language version. Theoretical and content validation was carried out by Gorbaniuk (et al., 2010). The content validation was related to cultural adaptation, or more precisely, linguistic adaptation. Thanks to the independent translation of the Aaker scale by two judges and the reconciliation of discrepancies, it was possible to adapt the questionnaire for use in Poland. On the other hand, theoretical validation served to limit the number of cardinal and secondary traits. Consequently, the Gorbaniuk brand personality scale consists of four dimensions represented by thirty-six adjectival facets (Figure 2).

As Calderón-Fajardo (et al., 2023) has stated, it can be concluded that brand personality research has undergone remarkable developments, with important repercussion on brand management theory and practice since the 1990s.

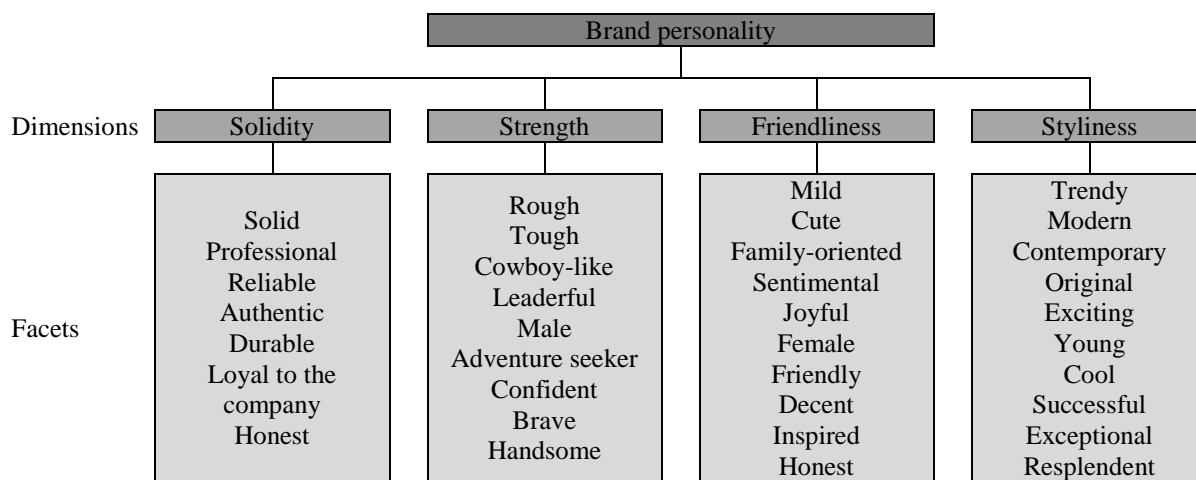


Figure 2. The Gorbaniuk brand personality model

Source: Gorbaniuk et al., 2010.

2.4. The employer brand personality

Despite doubts about the Aaker brand personality model, the idea of measuring the brand personality is used in practice to determine the personality of a product or service brand, but also the personality of an employer brand. Lievens and Highhouse (2003) carried out the first research aimed at identifying employer brand personality. With the help of the Aker scale

(lightly modified), they described employer brand personality with following four dimensions: innovativeness, competence, prestige, and excitement. Davies (et al., 2004) developed the 'corporate character scale' with seven dimensions: agreeableness, enterprise, chic, competence, ruthlessness, informality, and machismo. Slaughter (et al., 2004) identified a list of organisational personality traits with five broad dimensions: boy scout (e.g., honest, attentive to people, family-oriented), innovativeness (e.g., original, creative, unique), dominance (e.g., big, successful, popular), thrift (e.g., simple, low-budget, undersized), and style (e.g., trendy, up-to-date, stylish). One of the newer studies on employer brand personality (Schätzle et al., 2022), pertaining to the healthcare sector, show that the employer brand personality can be operationalised as a higher-order construct with the dimensions of status, warmth, competence, and trustworthiness. Other analyses of employer brand personality can be found in the texts: Davies et al., 2004; Lievens, 2007; Davies, 2008; Davies et al., 2010; Rampl, Kenning, 2014. It should be noted that most of the above-mentioned studies are based on modified (compared to Aaker's construct) brand personality scales and they contain the results of validation of the constructs used in the research.

One of the reasons for carrying out research on employer brand personality is the development of the employer branding. Like all other types of brand, the employer brand has its own personality. Almost twenty years ago, Lievens (2007), in the study conducted in the Belgian Army, proved that the personality of the employer brand plays a significant role in assessing the employer's attractiveness, which not only helps to attract candidates, but also retains those who are already employed in the company. Managing the employer brand personality is also important for other reasons (Grębosz-Krawczyk, 2020). First, as a result of brand personification, the defensive reactions of potential members of the organisation before deciding to accept a job offer are weakened. Second, the bond between an internal client and a brand with a unique personality is stronger. Third, a properly developed brand personality helps build relationships with the brand, create trust in the brand, and develop loyal behaviour toward it. In the context of job choice behaviour, an employer brand that exhibits personality traits that match a job seeker's actual or ideal personality increases affinity for the employer, because it satisfies underlying self-esteem and self-consistency needs (Slaughter et al., 2004). In contrast, some researchers point out that a lack of self-congruence makes the employer less attractive (Turban et al., 2001; Kissel, Büttgen, 2015). In the case of the employer-candidate relationship, matching a person's personality to the employer brand personality can be conducive to attracting candidates to the company and efficiently implementing selection and adaptation procedures. In turn, in the case of the employer-employee relationship, the compatibility of the employer and employee personality not only helps retain the employee in the company but also increases the level of their commitment and motivation.

In Poland, no research on the personality of the employer brand has been carried out. The only studies of this type that have been found are the studies by Wojtaszczyk (2012). However, these analyses are not comparable to those indicated above. Firstly, because the

personality of the employer brand (treated by Wojtaszczyk as one of the elements of the brand image) was not related to the Aaker concept. Secondly, because the employer brand personality was described using only five items: learning or studying, modern, independent, kind and friendly to people, one with which you cannot get bored with. Thirdly, because the measurement tool had not been validated.

3. Method and participants

The lack of studies related to the employer brand personality under Polish conditions was the main motivation that prompted us to do empirical research. In our research, the CAWI technique was used. The study was carried out asynchronously. The tool was a questionnaire designed with the Webankieta wizard. In the first part of the questionnaire, respondents were informed about: the purpose of the study, the structure of the form, the method of answering, the time necessary to complete the questionnaire, the voluntary nature of participation in the study, the anonymity of the study, the use of the results, the researchers (including e-mail addresses for possible contact). Each participant received the following instructions: 'Imagine your current employer as a person. This sounds unusual, but we suggest you think about the features you associate with your employer. For example, when you think about the Tchibo brand, you can think of such human-specific features as friendly, energetic, elegant, reliable, etc. It is similar to employers, each of them (whether recognised or not) has its own brand, which can also be described using human traits. We are curious what traits you attribute to your current employer. There are thirty-six of these characteristics below. Indicate which of them describes your employer. Answer each of the features listed. In the substantive part of the questionnaire, we used the Polish version of the brand personality construct (Gorbaniuk et al., 2010) (Figure 2). Two modifications were introduced: the statement 'loyal to the company' was changed to 'loyal to employee', the phrase 'family-oriented' was reformulated into 'employee's family-oriented'. The employer brand personality construct was presented in the questionnaire as a closed, multiple-choice matrix question. Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale, but in the questionnaire scales included only descriptive categories. When assigning values to the answers, the principle was followed that the assigned values should increase according to the nature and direction of the defined characteristic. In results analyses the following values were assigned to the answer: 'I disagree' - 1, 'I rather disagree' - 2, 'neither yes nor no' - 3, 'I rather agree' - 4, 'I agree' - 5.

The study involved people who were doing (at the time of the study) hired work. Potential respondents were reached through email and social media. In both cases, potential respondents received an active link to the survey questionnaire. Some study participants (of their own will), according to the snowball sampling technique, passed information about the study on to other

people. No gratification was offered to the volunteer participants. Despite this, the percentage of completed forms (in relation to views) was high and amounted to 44%. Due to the actions taken, 576 people were encouraged to participate in the study (58% of them were women). The largest group of respondents were people aged 21 to 25 years (52%). The young age of the research participants was reflected in their work experience. During the study, 46% of the respondents had been active in the labour market for not less than one year but not more than five years; 45% declared that they had been employed in their current job for 1 to 5 years. Most of the respondents (84%) did not hold managerial positions. More than three-fourths (76%) of the respondents worked in the private sector. The participants represented local, national or international organisations (Table 1).

Table 1.
Characteristics of the research participants

Gender	Female				Male			
	58							
Age (in years)	Less than 21	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	More than 50
	6	52	10	10	8	6	5	5
Total work experience (in years)	Less than a year	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	More than 25	
	11	46	14	11	6	7	5	
Work experience at the current place of employment (in years)	Less than a year	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	More than 25	
	34	45	11	6	2	1	2	
Current position	Managerial				Nonmanagerial			
	16				84			
Sector	Private				Public			
	76				24			
Scale of company's operation	Local			National		International		
	23			32		45		

Note. Data in %.

Source: own work.

First, the modified Gorbaniuk brand personality scale (for the purposes of employer brand research) was validated¹. The following analyses were used to validate the employer brand personality construct: reliability and position, convergence validity, discriminant validity, and the possibility of common method error. The descriptive statistics (mean, median, dominant, standard deviation, skewness, kurtosis) were used to assess the significance of primary and secondary employer brand personality traits. Analysing the mean values, it was assumed that: for $1 \leq M \leq 1.50$ – dimension/facet does not characterise the employer brand personality; for $1.51 < M \leq 2.50$ – the trait rather does not characterise employers;

¹ The validation procedure and its results are described in detail in another paper. Due to the fact that validation is not the purpose of this article, only the most important findings related to the assessment of the scale used are presented in this article.

$2.51 < M \leq 3.50$ means that the respondents were unable to determine whether a specific feature is characteristic of the employers' personality; $3.51 < M \leq 4.50$ means that the feature rather characterises the employer; $4.51 < M \leq 5$ - according to the respondents, the particular trait characterises the organisation as an employer. It was also checked whether there were significant differences in the respondents' statements due to demographic variables.

4. Results

The Gorbaniuk (2010) scale used in the study, although it takes into account linguistic conditions, was created on the basis of data on ten selected product brands. Due to the limitations indicated above related to the 'transfer' of the product brand personality scale to other types of brands, we decided to check whether the scale can be used to recognise the personality of the employer brand. Consequently, construct validation was performed. In the validation process, we omitted the stage of cultural adaptation and focused on theoretical validation, i.e., checking the reliability and validity of the scale. Based on the validation results, it was determined that: it is necessary to remove seven facets from the construct (reliable, durable, rough, cowboylike, tough, female, young); the strength dimension does not meet the criteria of convergent validity; the requirement of discriminant validity is met only when the scale consists of a maximum of two dimensions, which are solidity and styliness². Therefore, to measure the employer brand personality (under Polish conditions), it is best to use a two-dimensional scale consisting of fourteen facets (Figure 3).

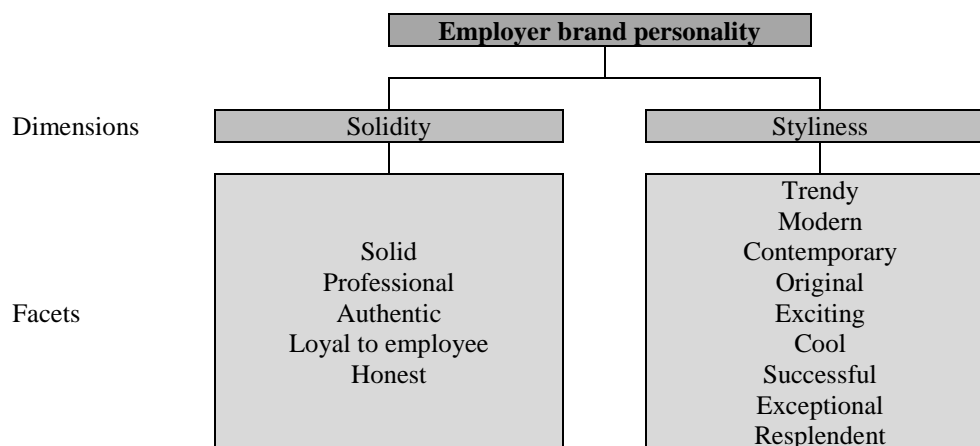


Figure 3. The employer brand personality construct.

Source: own work.

² Each of the four dimensions can, of course, be used separately.

In Polish, ‘solidity’ is a characteristic attributed to a person who can be trusted and who performs tasks carefully and responsibly. A solid item is strong, durable, and solid. With regard to the mean values of the facets assigned to the subscale of solidity (Table 2), it should be noted that the highest rated aspect of the employer brand personality (of our respondents’ employers) is professionalism ($M = 3.97$). In turn, the trait that can be least related to the respondents’ current employers of the respondents is loyalty to the members of the organisation (3.51). The answer chosen most frequently for all items on the solidity subscale was ‘I rather agree’ ($Do = 4$); the central value was also 4. It should be added that almost one-fifth of the participants had a problem in determining whether their employers were solid - on average, 18% of the respondents chose the answer ‘neither yes nor no’. In the case of styliness, the results are slightly different. First, most of the respondents found it difficult to determine whether a given personality trait could be attributed to their employers. Our participants had the greatest problems with the adjectives ‘exceptional’ and ‘resplendent’ - in both cases, the relatively highest percentages of respondents (41% and 37%, respectively) chose the option ‘neither yes nor no’. The highest rated trait on the styliness subscale was ‘successful’ (Table 2). It is worth to emphasise that this feature has the highest mean value ($M = 4.10$) among the 14 facets analysed of employer brand personality. The styliness subscale also includes the lowest rated feature, which is ‘resplendent’ ($M = 2.70$). For five of the secondary traits of the styliness subscale (cool, trendy, modern, successful, contemporary), $Mdn = 4$; for the remaining four aspects $Do = 3$. The middle values in the series of individual secondary employer brand personality traits are as follows: $Mdn = 3$ (for exciting, trendy, resplendent, exceptional), $Mdn = 4$ (for cool, modern, successful, contemporary).

Among the secondary traits, there are no factors that do not characterise the personality of employers - none of the mean values calculated for specified facets of the employer brand personality is lower than or equal to 2.50. Respondents did not indicate that any of the secondary traits definitely characterised the organisations they worked for (there were no facets with a mean value greater than 4.50). Taking into account all the analysed aspects of employer brand personality, employers represented by our participants can be described primarily as successful, professional, honest, solid, and modern (Table 2).

Table 2.

The employer brand personality facets: The descriptive statistics

Dimensions	Facets	Mean <i>M</i>	Median <i>Mdn</i>	Dominant <i>Do</i>	Standard deviation <i>SD</i>
Solidity	Solid	3.85	4	4	1.06
	Professional	3.97	4	4	1.07
	Authentic	3.70	4	4	1.08
	Loyal to employee	3.51	4	4	1.22
	Honest	3.88	4	4	1.09

Cont. table 2.

Styliness	Trendy	3.35	3	4	1.23
	Modern	3.72	4	4	1.16
	Contemporary	3.80	4	4	1.17
	Original	3.33	3	3	1.21
	Exciting	2.87	3	3	1.16
	Cool	3.53	4	4	1.15
	Successful	4.10	4	4	0.95
	Exceptional	3.08	3	3	1.21
	Resplendent	2.70	3	3	1.12

Source: own work.

Considering the statistics for the central traits of the employer brand personality (Table 3), it should be noted that, according to the respondents, the organisations that employ our participants are ‘rather’ solid as employers ($M = 3.78$). However (under the adopted ranges of mean values), the respondents were unable to decide whether their employers were stylish ($M = 3.39$). The medians and mode values for both dimensions are 4. The standard deviation for each dimension is greater than 1 (on a scale of 1-5), which confirms that the respondents found it difficult to estimate whether their employers were characterised by solidity or styliness. Moreover, the skewness of both scales is less than zero. The variables have left-skewed distributions, which means that a large number of respondents rate the employer brand personality traits higher than the mean values. Furthermore, in the case of solidity, the kurtosis is higher than zero, i.e. the variables have leptokurtic distributions. For this dimension of employer brand personality, the probability of encountering extreme answers, i.e. ‘I disagree’ or ‘I agree’, increases.

Table 3.

The employer brand personality dimensions: The descriptive statistics

Dimensions	Mean <i>M</i>	Median <i>Mdn</i>	Dominant <i>Do</i>	Standard deviation <i>SD</i>	Skewness	Kurtosis
Solidity	3.78	4	4	1.12	-0.84	0.05
Styliness	3.39	4	4	1.23	-0.44	-0.70

Source: own work.

Gender, age, and work experience (in general and at the current place of employment) do not differentiate the responses of the respondents. There was a significant correlation (at the 0.05 level) between the styliness assessment and the position of the respondent and the company scale of operation ($r = 0.107$ and $r = 0.091$, respectively). This means that the assessment of the styliness rises with higher positions in the organisation and with the scale of company operation.

5. Discussion

Our research fits into the discussion of measuring employer brand personality. We confirmed previous reports that even a culturally adapted product brand personality scale cannot be used to measure employer brand personality without prior modification. The employer brand personality scales developed by Lievens and Highhouse (2003) or Schätzle (et al., 2022) had four dimensions, the Slaughter (et al., 2004) scale was five-dimensional, and the Davies (et al., 2004) scale had even seven central traits. Our Polish-language employer brand personality scale, which is a bit of a surprise, but as confirmed by the reliability and validity measures, is much simpler because it only has two dimensions (reliability and strength). However, due to our analyses, we managed to specify the employer brand personality construct and adapt it to the Polish culture. Furthermore, using the validated employer brand personality scale, we found that although respondents' employers are 'rather' solid, it is difficult to clearly state whether their personalities are characterised by styliness. Taking into account secondary traits, most of the employers represented by the respondents were 'successful'. In turn, the adjective that the respondents used the least often to describe their employers was 'resplendent'. The results of the study indicate that the personalities of the employers represented by the respondents are difficult to categorise as strong or expressive. Therefore, it can be concluded that organisations that employ our respondents cannot use employer brand personality to build a competitive advantage or do not recognise the role of employer brand personality in management practices.

The empirical research conducted has limitations. The most important of these is that the study is not representative. The sample was not randomly selected, the number of participants did not meet the minimum sample size requirements, and researching volunteers' opinions generates problems (Hewson et al., 2003). Consequently, our results cannot be extended to the entire population of employed people (in Poland). In addition, the research was of nomothetic nature, which means that the explanation is not complete and does not allow conclusions about the role of the employer brand personality (compared to other factors) in organisational management. It should also be added that the use of Aaker's concept may be questionable, as her scale involves imposing adjectives on the respondent to describe brand personality. Consequently, the brand personality becomes the result of the researcher's intentions and does not reflect the client's imaginaries (Karpińska-Krakowiak, 2018). And finally, which may be particularly glaring from a branding point of view, the study did not take into account specific employer brands (referred to by name), but collected (from the researchers' perspective) information about anonymous employer brands. The justification for this is that the research did not aim to evaluate individual employer brands; we conducted cross-sectional studies aimed at characterising and analysing variables (at a given time). The weaknesses of our research also relate to the data collection technique used, i.e., the use of

the Internet as a means of communication with respondents. The use of a five-point measurement scale can also be questionable, as it implies indicating a central response and thus increases the probability of a central tendency error. Furthermore, which may (but does not have to) be related to the oddness of the scale, a large part of the respondents' indications are the so-called contentless answers. Therefore, it is necessary to consider whether in future research (despite good validation results) we should simplify the construct by removing the items that generate content-free responses to the greatest extent (Wierzbiński et al., 2014) or reformulate the questions.

The limitations indicated motivate us to carry out further studies on employer brand personality identification. Future research appears to be important because the phenomenon of employer brand personality is not adequately explored in Poland. As many current research focusses on the relationship between brand personality and human personality (Kumar, 2018), it is worth cooperating with psychologists and expanding the analyses to include aspects related to the personality of candidates or employees. It is also worth taking a more critical look at the scale we used and (perhaps) engaging experts to take up the challenge and try to develop a completely original employer brand personality construct. This seems important because, as Kumar (2018) emphasises, the popularity of the Aaker model has resulted in blind faith of some scholars to adopt it in their studies without modification. It should be noted that the results of preliminary correlation analyses for the two-dimensional concept of employer brand personality are promising. Secondary traits of employer brand personality are not highly correlated with each other (all correlations are significant at the 0.01 level), which may be a good predictor of using the construct to build structural models. In the future, we plan to attempt to create a model of the impact of employer brand personality on loyalty to the employer.

6. Summary

The theory of brand personality has been present in management science for years. However, it still raises controversies. Some researchers still question the possibility of transferring human personality traits to the brand (e.g., Heere, 2010; Huang et al., 2012; Kang et al., 2016). Others point out that there is a certain set of consumer goods to which it is extremely difficult to attribute human characteristics. For example, examining the brand personality of toilet paper, batteries, tires, or cooking oil would be a semantic abuse, as it is difficult to imagine building deep consumer relations with these products (Karpińska-Krakowiak, 2018). Still others emphasise that only chosen human personality characteristics can be used to identify a brand personality (Ambroise, Valette-Florence, 2010; Bishnoi, Kumar, 2016). Despite these controversies, we decided to attempt to measure employer brand

personality, and the measurement was preceded by the validation of the construct (the Polish-language employer brand personality scale). Validation results showed that, under Polish conditions, to assess the employer brand personality, it is best to use a two-dimensional scale consisting of fourteen facets. Such a construct, including the solidity and styliness subscales, meets the reliability and validity requirements.

The research we conducted is pioneering in Poland. So far, no empirical studies have been carried out on the design and evaluation of the personality construct of the employer brand in our country, and no one identified the employer brand personality on the basis of a previously validated (culturally adapted) scale either. We are convinced that employer brand personality is worth exploring, and there is a need to improve the employer brand personality measurement tools. It is particularly important in a country like Poland, where the labour market is an employee's market and where employers have complained for years about recruitment and retention problems of talented employees. The shortage of labour markets forces employers to use new methods of recruitment, selection, and solutions to prevent excessive turnover (Wosiak, 2021; Amsolik, Chomątek, 2022; Korjonen-Kuusipuro, Wojciechowski, 2022). If only an employer brand personality that is expressive and fits the personality of the candidate/employee, can help to attract applicants and to prevent excessive fluctuations, it is worth to consciously strengthen this personality. Such an approach will benefit not only the organisation but also candidates/employees who, thanks to identification with the employer brand, will feel comfortable at work (or during job interviews), which may result in them recommending the company (and the products or services it offers) to others. Perhaps, in the near future, it will turn out that the employer brand personality is the main source of the employer brand strength and a critical factor that determines whether the organisation is called an employer of choice. As authors of this article, we hope that our research results presented in this study will inspire and engage domestic employers to consciously create employer brand personalities.

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