

# **Brand Management Measurement in Mexican Small Firms: Empirical Evidence**

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## **Abstract**

Brand management is a construct that has been recently analyzed and discussed in the marketing literature, where most empirical studies have made an emphasis on big transnational enterprises and only a few studies have focused on the analysis and discussion of brand management in small firms, even when this sector is the biggest one in any country as it represents around 90% of all the enterprises in the planet, they employ around 50% of all the labor force and they are main driving force of development of the economy of countries. That is why the main objective of this empirical research is the analysis and discussion of brand management in small enterprises from a country of emerging economy, as it is the case of Mexico, by using a sample of 300 small firms and applying a structural equations models that can allow more deeply the existing relation among the dimensions of brand management. The results obtained show that the four dimensions of brand management (*values, norms, artifacts* and *behaviors*) are closely related among them and they are excellent indicators for the measurement of brand management in small firms.

**JEL classification numbers:** M31.

**Keywords:** Brand management, Brands, measurements, Small firms.

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## 1. Introduction

Brand management is a relatively new topic in the current literature of marketing and it has produced more interest among researchers and scholars, since the last decade of the twentieth century (Krake, 2005). It was not until the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century that important theories, were developed as well as theoretical and empirical contributions that were essential (Krake, 2005). However, most of the published investigations that analyze brand management have focused basically, in big international corporates and only a few of them have made emphasis in small firms (Dressler & Paunovic, 2021), even when this important sector represents slightly over 95% of all the enterprises in the world (Storey, 1994), and they have a higher contribution to the growth and development of the economy and society in general (Thurik *et al.*, 2003).

Similarly, the marketing literature has acknowledged the strategic importance of brand management (Laukkanen *et al.*, 2015; Hodge *et al.*, 2018; Dressler & Paunovic, 2021). Moreover, it is possible to identify in the literature two approaches trends regarding brand management. The first one emphasizes the development of a theoretical basis that guides management to make decisions (Park *et al.*, 1986; Aaker, 1991; Macrae, 1996; Keller, 1998), whereas the second one focuses on different key elements of the process of brand management (de Chernatony & Dall'Olmo-Riley, 1998; Berthon *et al.*, 1999; Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000). Both tendencies suggest that enterprises, including small ones, which implement brand management activities in their products or services can have more probabilities to obtain better results (Jeong *et al.*, 2017; Scorrano *et al.*, 2019).

Accordingly, the marketing literature acknowledges that the type of brand management, the operations and functions are totally different from small enterprises and big national and international corporate groups (Cohn & Lindberg, 1972; Knight, 2000). That is why brand management must be analyzed differently if they are small firms or big organizations (Berthon *et al.*, 2008), since managers, who are most of the times also the owners of small companies, are often directly responsible of managing and dealing with different functions of the enterprise such as payments to banks, advertising, staff hiring and the sales of their products or services (Berthon *et al.*, 2008).

Furthermore, hiring specialists such as advertising firms or employment agencies is seldom done by small firms (Culkin & Smith, 2000). This is generally a consequence of the different restriction of resources that this type of organizations face; that is why managers of small businesses adopt a survival mindset (Berthon *et al.*, 2008). In other words, they do not carry out a strategic plan of brand management activities or about all the organization as a whole (Gilmore *et al.*, 1999; Orser *et al.*, 2000; Huang *et al.*, 2002). Consequently, the style of brand management of the owners of small firms can be considered as unique and personal in each one of the small enterprises (Gilmore *et al.*, 1999; Culkin & Smith, 2000). However, in marketing literature there is a prevailing debate about the importance of brand management in companies (e.g., Giachetti & Dagnino, 2014), which is why

more empirical evidence of its effectiveness in small companies is needed (Zhao *et al.*, 2020), which can currently be considered inconclusive. Thus, the objective of this study is the analysis of the importance of brand management in small firms. Therefore, the main contribution of this research paper is the analysis and discussion of brand management in small firms in a country with an emerging economy, as it is the case of Mexico, just as it is recommended by Park *et al.* (2013), Veljkovic and Kalicanin (2016) as well as Dunes and Pras (2017).

## 2. Preliminary Notes

Brand management arose in the first two decades of the twenty-first century as an essential construct and it is being used more by several researchers, scholars and professionals, not only from the field of marketing (de Chernatony, 2009), but also from other market sectors related with the organization as well as enterprises of every size (Krake, 2005; Berthon *et al.*, 2008). As a result of this, it is possible to establish that the brand management of products or services from small firms, is usually considered as an essential business and financial strategy that allows company to participate actively in the different sectors of the market (Kapferer, 2008), which generates not only a higher level of financial performance (Beverland *et al.*, 2015; Hsu *et al.*, 2016), but also as a higher level of competitiveness (Giachetti & Dagnino, 2014; Jeong *et al.*, 2017).

Likewise, theoretical and empirical studies that are published nowadays have discussed and analyzed brand management, specifically from a perspective of a philosophical paradigm regarding the field of marketing (Louro & Cunha, 2001). That is why brand management is currently considered as one of the least defined paradoxical concepts, in the field of marketing (de Chernatony, 2009). As a result, researchers and academics have attempted to prove that brand management, can be perceived as a reflective and subjective phenomenon of a specific organization or industry sector (Berthon *et al.*, 2008; Gabbott & Jevons, 2009), despite the fact that the brand is generally considered in marketing literature as a highly complex concept (Veloutsou & Guzmán, 2017; Veloutsou & Degado-Ballester, 2019).

Similarly, the current marketing literature has acknowledged the differences between the brand management implemented by small firms and the one from big enterprises (Mowle & Merrilees, 2005; Berthon *et al.*, 2008; Spence & Essoussi, 2010). For this reason, the main role of brand management in the growth and development of small firms is particularly important considering the marketing activities carried out by small firms (Simpson *et al.*, 2006; Opoku *et al.*, 2007; Berthon *et al.*, 2008; Ojasalo *et al.*, 2008; O'Dwyer *et al.*, 2009). There are few papers that have considered the limitation of resources that small organizations, have since this type of companies can have strong brands as well as a good brand management of their products or services (Abimbola & Kocak, 2007).

Regarding the aspect mentioned previously, there are more managers from small firms that are understanding, that a good reputation of the company as a whole is extremely important not only to legitimize its relation with their main stakeholders,

but also to improve brand management (von Wallpach *et al.*, 2017; Gromark, 2020). However, there are few small firms that have achieved a good reputation for their organization since it is too complicated to implement, not only brand management activities but also to build up their reputation (Berthon *et al.*, 2008). That is why different researchers and scholars have mentioned that it is necessary to pay careful attention to the marketing activities developed by small firms (Gilmore *et al.*, 1999; Conant & White, 1999; Carson & Gilmore, 2000), because through them it is possible to attain efficiency in brand management.

But, what is brand management? There are different definitions about brand management in the marketing literature (Veloutsou & Degado-Ballester, 2019). Thus, the most widely adopted definition in the literature is the one made by the Academy of Marketing, which defines it as “*a name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller from those of competitors, which is too limited*” (Veloutsou & Degado-Ballester, 2019: 256), since today brand management also refers to people (Jones & Bonevac, 2013), as a unique identity, image, reputation and characteristic (Black & Veloutsou, 2017), in addition to other characteristics of people (Urde, 2016).

However, the definition of brand management in small firms in the marketing literature depends on the marketing practices implemented by such enterprises and it is extremely dependent on the industry norms in which they are established (Mitchell *et al.*, 2013). Therefore, managers of small firms will have to observe, adapt and adopt the behaviors and habits of their main competitors in the sector where they participate (Hsu *et al.*, 2016), even when in the services sector there is little theoretical and empirical evidence about the importance that this definition has (Wong & Merrilees, 2005; Berthon *et al.*, 2008), or for the industries that are led by one or some specific products (Ojasalo *et al.*, 2008; Spence & Essoussi, 2010).

In this regard, the marketing approach in the definition of brand management in small enterprises has a significant influence in both the industry norms where they are established and the creativity of managers from small firms (Abimbola, 2001). This clearly indicates that brand management has a dynamic approach (Mitchell *et al.*, 2013). Consequently, it is possible brand management in small firms as “*the interaction of the processes of creation, coordination and monitoring of the different marketing activities that take place between the organization and their commercial associates*” (Schultz & Barnes, 1999: 35), which can help to close the gap completely between image, identity and reputation of the brand in small businesses (de Chernatony, 1999).

Additionally, there is in the marketing literature a series of dimensions for the measurement of brand management of enterprises, which usually stand out for the existing paradigms of the brand (Mitchell *et al.*, 2013). Thus, for example, according to the product set apart by the decisions of brand marketing regarding the development process of products (Katsanis, 1999), whereas the value given to the brand is created with the perception that different consumers have about the management of the unique attributes that products have (Shah, 2015; Shah *et al.*, 2017). This is why the dimension of brand management aligns perfectly with the

resources and activities of small firms (Aaker, 1991), as well as with their stakeholders which creates a consistent identity of the brand of products of small firms (von Wallpach *et al.*, 2017; Hodge *et al.*, 2018).

On other hand, according to the adaptive perspective, brand management dimensions are strongly associated with the perception of consumers (Dressler & Paunovic, 2021), through the adaptation of the positioning of the brand in the market in which small firms participate (Tuominen, 2007). Accordingly, the dimensions of brand management of the relational paradigm are practically based in the preservation of the virtues of the brand, which are usually constantly negotiated among small firms and their consumers during the offer of products or services (Heding *et al.*, 2008). Something similar happens with the dimensions of the emotional paradigm, which focus completely in the evolution of the existing closeness between small enterprises and their consumers (Thompson *et al.*, 2006), or between the organizations and their consumers as well as among the same groups of consumers (Veloutsou & Degado-Ballester, 2019).

Regarding small retail enterprises, the dimensions of brand management have commonly focused on the change caused by the price (Grover & Srinivasan, 1992), in the division of the brand of the products (Lockshin *et al.*, 1997), in the innovation of products (Black & Veloutsou, 2017), and the adjustment of the positioning brand strategy (Shah 2017a, b). Similarly, the literature identifies the management of environmental components as clear dimensions of brand management (Mazursky & Jacoby, 1986; Davies, 1992), but according to Ailawadi and Keller (2004), the brand components (such as access, price, promotion, brand diversity, categories of the brand, interferences and service), can be considered as dimensions of brand management, because they facilitate the design of the environment as well as the marketing communication (Burt & Davies, 2010).

Moreover, other researchers, scholars and professionals in the field of marketing have considered, that the dimensions of brand management must focus on the messages and perception that managers and/or owners have regarding brand identity (Spence & Essoussi, 2010). Thus, these essential activities of marketing usually depend to a large extent on both the marketing practices carried out by small firms in the short term and the resources available that managers and/or owners have (Carson & Gilmore, 2000), as well as the marketing practices that their main competitors carry out (Simpson *et al.*, 2006).

In this regard, the dimensions of brand management will strengthen if the mouth to mouth marketing spreads out, which is why mouth to mouth marketing is an essential element to create a strong acknowledgement in brand management of small firms (Keller, 1998; Abimbola, 2001; Goldberg *et al.*, 2003; Krake, 2005; Mowle & Merrilees, 2005; Wong & Merrilees, 2005; Yeh *et al.*, 2006; Ojasalo *et al.*, 2008; Berthon *et al.*, 2008; Spence & Essoussi, 2010; Bresciani & Eppler, 2010; Coca-Stefaniak *et al.*, 2010; Horan *et al.*, 2011). Therefore, it is possible to establish that the brand management of small enterprises is a lot more efficient and effective than mouth to mouth marketing for both the practices and the activities developed by small firms (Wong & Merrilees, 2005).

Nonetheless, despite the presence of different approaches in the construction of the dimensions of brand management, in which some investigations have emphasized the development of a sound theoretical framework (Hankinson, 2001a; Birdsong & Evans, 2004; Wong & Merrilees, 2005), others have focused on developing an empirical measurement (Hankinson, 2001b; Ewing & Napoli, 2005), but there are few researches that have considered brand management as only one construct because some scholars, researchers and professionals in the area of marketing, ignore the internal structure of brand management (Baumgarth, 2010). That is why it is very important to develop new models for the measurement of brand management through different dimensions.

Within this view, Baumgarth (2010) proposed a new model in which brand management can be measured without difficulties through four dimensions: *values*, *norms*, *artifacts* and *behaviors*. This model has as starting point the literature of market orientation (Narver & Slater, 1990; Kohli & Jaworski, 1990; Kohli *et al.*, 1993; Avlonitis & Gounaris, 1999; Homburg & Pflesser, 2000). This new model is mostly integrated by two perspectives of market orientation, by transforming the results of the theory to the context of brand management (Baumgarth, 2010), and by describing “*behavioral*” perspective as a phenomenon in terms of a concrete behavior of enterprises (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990), whereas the “*cultural*” perspective is considered from the point of view of the organization processes (Narver & Slater, 1990).

Likewise, this new model proposes a causal relation between the values norms, artifacts and behaviors as a structure, which is consistent with the current theory in the literature of organizational behavior (Katz & Kahn, 1978), the management change (Gagliardi, 1986), the attitude theory (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) and the market orientation theory (Homburg & Pflesser, 2000). In the case of the values, these are considered in the literature as key factors of companies, and one of the basic principles of brand management at the level of the administration (Hankinson, 2002). Therefore, the values are an essential part in the internal brand management of enterprises; particularly in small firms (Tosti & Stotz, 2001; Vallester & de Chernatony, 2006), and they also represent the basis for the development of brand management. According to this information, it is possible to establish the first research hypothesis:

### **H1: The values have a positive effect in brand management**

Regarding the norms, they can be considered as the rules that guide the adoption and implementation of the strategy of brand, but only if such norms are understood and accepted by all the staff so they can be put in practice and they will have to be consistent with all the current values in the organization (Homburg & Pflesser, 2000). The role played by the norms are necessary not only to increase significantly the rewards of the brand in the employees of small firms, but also to provide support in the acceptance of the working rules and behavior among all departments or functional areas of the enterprises (Baumgarth, 2010). This is why it is possible to

establish a connection between the norms and brand management (Ulrich, 1990). Considering this information, it is possible to establish the second research hypothesis:

### **H2: The norms have a positive effect in brand management**

Regarding the artifacts, they have a close link with both the norms and the behavior of brand management, because of their basic function of communication (Baumgarth, 2010). For this reason, it is possible to establish that the behavior of brand management motivates and stimulates all the staff of small firms, and provides a guide that will be needed for the daily behavior of all employees and workers of the organization. Thus, considering the information mentioned above, it is possible to establish the third research hypothesis:

### **H3: The artifacts have a positive effect in brand management**

Finally, regarding the behavior, it is considered in the marketing literature as a substantial element in brand management, since it links the constructs of brand management with business performance (Hankinson, 2001b; Napoli, 2006). Therefore, only one concrete behavior will have a direct, positive and significant effect in the brand management of small firms, because even when the internal culture of the organization is considered as an important precedent of the strength of brands, the positive effects of the market depend mostly of the concrete actions carried out by workers and employees, that is, the behavior of the staff (Baumgarth, 2010). Thus, according to the information presented previously, it is possible to establish the fourth and final research hypothesis:

### **H4: The behavior has a positive effect in brand management**

In order to answer adequately the research hypotheses established in this empirical investigation about small enterprises in Aguascalientes State (Mexico), it was considered relevant to use the business directory of the Sistema de Información Empresarial Mexicano (System of Mexican Business Information), which had 1,427 registered enterprises, each one containing from 5 to 250 workers at the end of January, 2018. Moreover, an instrument of data collection (e.g., a survey) to retrieve information was designed to be answered specifically by managers and/or owners of the enterprises. It was carried out as a personal interview with a sample of 300 small firms selected through a random sampling, with a maximum error of  $\pm 5\%$  and a level of reliability of 95%. The interviews took place between February and April of 2019.

Accordingly, a scale developed by Baumgarth (2010) was used for the measurement of brand management in small firms. The researcher considered that brand management can be measured through four dimensions: *Value*, which was measured through a five-item scale; *Norms*, which were measured through a six-item scale; *Artifacts*, which were measured through a four-item scale; and *Behaviors*, which were measured through a four-item scale. All the items of the four

dimensions used were measured through a Likert-type scale of five positions from “1 = completely disagree” to “5 = completely agree” as limits.

Likewise, a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was carried out to evaluate the reliability and validity of the scale of brand management by using the method of maximum likelihood with the software EQS 6.2 (Bentler, 2005; Brown, 2006; Byrne, 2006). Thus, the reliability was measured with Cronbach’s alpha as well as the Composite Reliability Index (CRI) (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). The results obtained are shown in Table 1 and they indicate that the theoretical model analyzed has a good adjustment of data ( $S-BX^2 = 955.782$ ;  $df = 146$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ;  $NFI = 0.882$ ;  $NNFI = 0.886$ ;  $CFI = 0.900$ ;  $RMSEA = 0.079$ ). Likewise, the values of Cronbach’s alpha and the CRI are higher than 0.7, which indicates presence of the reliability on brand management scale (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994; Hair et al., 1995).

Thus, the results obtained from the FCA indicate that all the items of the factors related are significant ( $p < 0.01$ ). The value of all the standardized factorial loads is higher than 0.6 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988), and the Extracted Variance Index (EVI) of each pair of constructs of the theoretical model has a value over 0.5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). These values indicate that the theoretical model has a good adjustment of data and provide evidence of the presence of convergent validity.

**Table 1: Internal consistency and convergent validity of the theoretical model**

Variable	Indicator	Factorial Loading	Robust t-Value	Cronbach’s Alpha	CRI	EVI
Values	VM1	0.968***	1.000 <sup>a</sup>	0.978	0.979	0.902
	VM2	0.971***	78.203			
	VM3	0.959***	46.257			
	VM4	0.940***	36.681			
	VM5	0.908***	29.418			
Norms	NM1	0.881***	1.000 <sup>a</sup>	0.928	0.929	0.686
	NM2	0.855***	32.971			
	NM3	0.867***	23.291			
	NM4	0.836***	20.274			
	NM5	0.776***	19.078			
	NM6	0.745***	17.433			
Artifacts	AM1	0.965***	1.000 <sup>a</sup>	0.984	0.985	0.944
	AM2	0.974***	74.568			
	AM3	0.979***	51.317			
	AM4	0.968***	43.885			
Behaviors	CM1	0.953***	1.000 <sup>a</sup>	0.942	0.943	0.807
	CM2	0.930***	37.216			
	CM3	0.891***	29.922			
	CM4	0.812***	22.386			
$S-BX^2$ (df =146)=955.782; $p < 0.000$ ; $NFI = 0.884$ ; $NNFI = 0.886$ ; $CFI = 0.900$ ; $RMSEA = 0.079$						
<sup>a</sup> = Constrained parameters to such value in the identification process *** = $p < 0.01$						



Additionally, the discriminant validity of the theoretical model of brand management was measured through two tests, which are shown in Table 2. The first one is the *reliability interval test* proposed by Anderson and Gerbing (1988), which establishes that with an interval of 95% of reliability none of the individual latent elements of the matrix of correlation must have a value of 1. Secondly, the *extracted variance test*, proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981), establishes that the extracted variance between each pair of constructs is lower than their corresponding EVI. Therefore, based on the results obtained from both tests, it can be concluded that that both tests provide enough evidence of the presence of discriminant validity.

**Table 2: Discriminant validity of the theoretical model**

Variables	Values	Norms	Artifacts	Behaviors
Values	<b>0.902</b>	0.537	0.317	0.316
Norms	0.557 – 0.909	<b>0.686</b>	0.315	0.329
Artifacts	0.353 – 0.773	0.389 – 0.733	<b>0.944</b>	0.537
Behaviors	0.370 – 0.754	0.414 – 0.734	0.557 – 0.909	<b>0.807</b>

The diagonal represents the Extracted Variance Index (EVI), whereas above the diagonal the variance is presented (squared correlation). Below diagonal, the estimated correlation of factors is presented with 95% confidence interval.

### 3. Main Results

In order to answer the four research hypotheses established in this empirical investigation, a structural equations model was applied with software EQS 6.2 (Bentler, 2005; Byrne, 2006; Brown, 2006), in which the nomological validity of the theoretical model of brand management was examined through the Chi-square test, which compared the results obtained between the theoretical model and the measurement model. Such results indicate that the differences between both models are not significant which can offer an explanation of the relations observed among the latent constructs (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Hatcher, 1994). Table 3 shows the results in a more detailed way the implementation of the model of structural equations.

**Table 3: Results of the structural equation model of second order**

Hypothesis	Structural Relationship	Standardized Coefficient	Robust t-Value
<b>H1:</b> The higher level of values, higher level of brand management.	Values → Brand M.	0.387***	4.704
<b>H2:</b> The higher level of norms, higher level of brand management.	Norms → Brand M.	0.449***	5.882
<b>H3:</b> The higher level of artifacts, higher level of brand management.	Artifacts → Brand M.	0.838***	8.827
<b>H4:</b> The higher level of behaviors, higher level of brand management.	Behaviors → Brand M.	0.970***	9.761
<i>S-BX</i> <sup>2</sup> (df=141)=842.118; <i>p</i> < 0.000; NFI = 0.895; NNFI = 0.898; CFI = 0.913; RMSEA = 0.079 *** = <i>P</i> < 0.01			

Table 3 shows the results obtained from the implementation of the structural equation model. Regarding the hypothesis **H<sub>1</sub>** ( $\beta = 0.387$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), the results indicate that the values have positive significant effects in brand management. Regarding the hypothesis **H<sub>2</sub>** ( $\beta = 0.449$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), the results show that the norms have positive significant effects in brand management. Regarding the hypothesis **H<sub>3</sub>** ( $\beta = 0.838$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), the results indicate that the artifacts have positive significant effects in brand management. Finally, regarding the hypothesis **H<sub>4</sub>** ( $\beta = 0.970$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), the results show that the behavior has positive significant effects in brand management. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that the values, norms, artifacts, and behavior are good indicators of the measurement of brand management.

#### 4. Discussion

The results obtained in this empirical research also have a series of implications. One of the first implications is that small enterprises in Mexico, as well as other countries in Latin America, do not usually have a patent registration of the commercial brand of their products or services, which can reduce the efforts of managers and/or owners of small firms regarding the efficiency of brand management, because their main competitors may create a copy of such products or services at any moment and restrict the sales of those products or services. That is why managers and/or owners of small firms have to find a way, first of all, to have a patent registration of their products or services so they can avoid copies and obtain better results from the efforts of brand management.

A second implication derived from these results is that managers and/or owners of

small firms, must not consider brand management only as another business strategy that the organization has but rather as another kind of business strategy that takes place every day which will demand from managers, first of all, that they are convinced of the different advantages that a strong management offers to all the staff of the enterprise. If they are not sure about its virtues, it will be difficult to convince their employees and workers to combine forces, to create a high level of brand management of the products or services manufactured by the organization, otherwise it could allow in a high level that all the company staff to commit in becoming the main advocates of brand management of the organization.

A third implication of the results obtained is that managers and/or owners of small enterprises, will have to understand perfectly the importance of the brand management of their products or services, and have a clear idea of the different activities that will have to be implemented into the organization, because this will require from them to have formal and informal training adequately in the use and administration of information regarding brand management. Similarly, this will also demand the development and implementation of the necessary training programs so their employees and workers, have clear not only the importance of brand management activities of the products or services for all the organization, as a whole but also that they will have to be the main advocates of the brand of such products or services.

Finally, a fourth implication of the results obtained is that managers and/or owners of small enterprises, will have to create an organizational environment not only to enable the adoption and implementation of all the activities related to the brand management of products or services, but also that all the staff feel free to express their ideas and possible solutions to detected problems as well as to facilitate the transfer among the staff of knowledge and skills. If managers and/or owners of small firms do not have the ability to create the organizational environment needed for an efficient and effective brand management, then their level of growth and development will be in risk as well as the very survival of the enterprise.

Accordingly, this empirical research has some limitations that are necessary to establish at this point. The first one is about the sample used as only small firms that had between 5 and 250 workers were considered. That is why future investigations will have to consider small enterprises with less than five workers in order to confirm the results obtained. The second limitation is that the questionnaire applied to collect the data only considered small firms in the state of Aguascalientes (Mexico), so further researches will need to apply the same questionnaire to other small enterprises established in other states in order to verify the results obtained.

A third limitation is the scale used for the measurement of brand management of small enterprises, as it was used a scale of only 4 dimensions or factors and 19 items. Following investigations might ponder the use of a different scale for the measurement of brand management, and confirm the results obtained in this empirical investigation. A fourth limitation is that only qualitative variables were considered for the measurement of brand management, so in future investigations it will be necessary to consider quantitative scales or hard data, to have the

opportunity to prove or disprove the presence of significant differences in the results obtained.

A fifth limitation is that the instrument applied to collect data only considered managers and/or owners of the small firms that were selected. This created the assumption that these managers have a deep understanding about brand management activities. Future research papers will need to apply the same questionnaire to all the staff of the organization in order to confirm. Finally, the last limitation is that several small enterprises considered that the information requested was confidential so the results obtained do not necessarily reflect the reality of brand management activities carried out by small firms.

## 5. Conclusions

The results obtained in this empirical research allow us to conclude in two main aspects. Firstly, it is possible to measure the brand management of small firms without difficulties through four dimensions: *values, norms, artifacts* and *behaviors*. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that the qualitative value that consumers give to the brand of products or services created by small enterprises, is essential as this value is usually and closely related to the norms that rule the behavior of employees and workers of the organization, who are the main driving force of brand management of the business and they are obviously supported, by a communication program or artifacts of marketing activity. All this creates a better efficiency and effectiveness of brand management in small firms.

Secondly, considering that the adoption and implementation of brand management in small enterprises depends on the fulfillment of changes or adjustments in the organization activities, then it is possible to conclude that managers and/or owners of small firms have to carry out the necessary adjustments inside the company, so all the activities implied by brand management can be developed without difficulties in all the organization. For this, it will be necessary that these activities can be implemented in both the departments and the functional areas of the organization. This will allow small enterprises not only to have more opportunities to attain better and more results but also to survive in the markets where they participate.

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