

## Personality and Consumer Behaviour: A Review

Philip Thomas Udo-Imeh<sup>1\*</sup> Nsobiari Festus Awara<sup>2</sup> Eyo Emmanuel Essien<sup>2</sup>

1. Department of Management Technology, Modibbo Adama University of *Technology*, P.M.B. 2076, Yola, Nigeria
2. Department of Marketing, University of Calabar, Calabar, Nigeria

### Abstract

The trust of this paper was to show the relevance of the development of the theories of personality to an understanding of consumer behaviour. The development and limitations of the psychodynamic theory, trait theory, behavioural theory, humanistic theory and the socio-cognitive theory were analyzed. The paper looked at the relevance of these theories to buying behaviour of consumers and examined some empirical studies that have established linkage between personality and consumer behaviour and some that failed to. The paper concludes that the theories are relevant to an understanding of the complex behaviour of consumers, information which have been successfully applied in development of marketing strategies. The paper also conclude that the low correlation between personality and consumer behaviour recorded by some researchers is due mainly to their failure to approach their studies outside the context of psychology from where the concept of personality was borrowed and also the problem of definition of the constructs.

**Keywords:** personality, consumer behaviour, psychodynamic, traits, behavioural, humanistic, socio-cognitive,

### 1. Introduction

The search, purchase, usage and disposal of goods and services by consumers are influenced by myriad of environmental, cultural, personal and psychological factors. One psychological factors documented in the literature to impact on the buying behaviour of consumer is personality (Nakanishi, 1972; Agbonifoh, Ogwo, Nnolim, & Nkamnebe, 2007; DeJong, 2008; Gangajali, 2009; Lee, 2009; Tsao & Chang, 2010; Solomon, 2011). A simple definition of personality is “consistent ways of responding to the environment in which (a person) lives” (Smith, 2001:66). To understand the sources, nature and development of this consistent behaviour patterns and how the knowledge might be useful in human relationship, scholars and researchers in the field of psychology have developed a number of theories. Significant among these are the psychodynamic theory, the trait theory, the behavioural theory, the humanistic theory and the socio-cognitive theory (Myers, 1995; Burger, 2000; Franzoi, 2002; McLeod, 2014). Approaching the subject of personality in six different ways is indicative of its complexity. The psychodynamic theory posits that the interaction of instinctual drives and unconscious forces within individuals are largely responsible for the differences in personality. The trait theorists argue that there is “a continuum of various personality characteristics” (Burger, 2000: 5). Where a person lies on this continuum determines his or her personality. Those that favour the behavioural approach see personality as the outcome of the interaction of personal and environmental factors (McLeod, 2007a). The humanistic approach focuses on the positive aspects of human existence and identifies self determination and need for self actualization as the primary causes of differences in personality (Myers, 1995). The socio-cognitive approach theorizes that the differences in personality are due to the different ways individual process information.

Though originally a subject area in psychology with focus on the treatment of behavioural disorder, personality has increasingly find relevance in marketing (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010; Solomon, 2011). The inability of popular variables like demography, culture, and social class to adequately explain certain aspects of the buying behaviour of consumers (Evans & Berman; 1995; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010; Krishnan, 2011; Solomon, 2011), made marketing scholars and researchers to borrow thoughts on human behaviour from personality psychologists. Personality goes beyond the questions of ‘who buy?’ and ‘what they buy?’ to answering ‘how they buy?’ and ‘why they buy?’ This information has been applied in the development of marketing strategies and meeting the needs and wants of consumers in target markets (Blackwell, Miniard & Engel, 2007; Schiffman & Kanuk; Solomon, 2011)).

Most studies on consumer behaviour with focus on personality often have scanty literature. The emphasis has been on quantitative analysis of data to arrive at empirical results. The neglect of the theoretical dimension has made such works shallow in aspects like the development of the theories of personality, criticism of the various theories, an analysis of the conflicting linkage between personality and consumer behaviour and explanations for the conflict. It was on the need to address these problems that this work was conceived. The objectives of this study are to study the development of the major theories of personality and their criticism, review some researchers that relate personality with consumer behaviour, and to provide explanations why some of those researches failed to establish positive relationship between the two constructs.

## 2. Definition of personality

Personality has been variously defined. The difficulty encountered in defining this concept was acknowledged by Gangajail (2009: 97) who asserts that “personality is something which is difficult to explain in one sentence. It is very vast and dynamic...” This problem dates back to the 1930s when Gordon Allport - pioneering personality researcher – wrote a whole chapter of a book on “Defining personality” (Azouley and Kapferer (2004: 5). Nine decades later, there is still no consensual definition of personality among personality researchers and scholars. Blythe (2008: 73) defines personality as “...the collection of individual characteristics that make a person unique, and which control an individual’s responses and relationship with the external environment”. Kotler and Keller (2009: 197) define it as “...a set of distinguishing human psychological traits that lead to relatively consistent and enduring responses to environmental stimuli...” Like Blythe (2008), some authors feature responsiveness to the environment in their definitions. These include Smith (2001: 66) who simply defines personality as “...consistent ways of responding to the environment in which (a person) lives,” Solomon (2011: 240) who sees it as “...a person’s unique psychological makeup and how it consistently influences the way a person respond to her environment,” and Schiffman and Kanuk (2010: 136) which defines it as “...the inner psychological characteristics that both determine and reflect how a person responds to his or her environment.” Just as the word ‘environment’ is common in the different definitions of personality by these three authors, ‘consistency’ was a recurring theme in the definitions of the construct by other authors. In this category include, Smith (2001), Kotler and Keller (2009), and Berkowitz, Kerin, Hartley and Rudelus (1994: 147), who define it as “...a person’s consistent responses to recurring situations,” and also Assael (2002: 124) who defined it as “...as those characteristics that reflect consistent, enduring patterns of behavior.” However, Blackwell, Miniard and Engel (2007: 271) by defining personality as, “... an individual’s unique psychological makeup, which consistently influences how the person responds to his or her environment,” marry the environmental and consistency emphases of these two sets of authors.

The controversy with regard to the definition of personality was a theme in the 2007 symposium of the ‘Association for Research in Personality’ (Mayer, 2007). The contention among attendees at symposium was there is no basic conflict among the definitions of personality. The problem is the “failure of personality psychologists to use and assert those definitions” Mayer, 2007: 1). In supporting his argument, Mayer (2007) compared definitions of personality from four different textbooks on personality. Although the definitions of personality from these textbooks were worded differently, its central idea remains the same. These definitions, Meyer (2007: 1) observes, share in common the view that: “(a) personality is a psychological system; (b) composed of a group of parts; (c) that interact; (d) and develop; and, (e) that impact a person’s behavioral expression...” The contradictory views of personality by some participants at the symposium he concluded were due to the difference in their fields and orientations. Such fields include – but not limited to – social psychology and personality psychology.

Despite the variance in definitions by authors and researchers, there are two themes that run through most of these definitions: consistency and environment. One can therefore argue that the concept of personality is real in practical life and on theoretical base and though defined differently by different authorities, the various definitions mean one and the same thing. Against this background the researcher operationally defines personality as traits that make an individual unique and which controls the individual interaction with the external environment.

## 3. Theories on personality

Personality psychologists have proposed some theoretical units with which to explain the sources and development of consistency in behaviour patterns and intrapersonal processes. The theories are varied and each was developed by a number of psychologists in a “quest to understand what makes each of us who we are” (Burger, 2000: 5) and why people behave the way they do. Lee (2009: 3) states that these theories were developed “to explain the structure, process and development of human behavior”. The major theories on personality can be grouped into six major theories: The psychodynamic theory, the traits theory, the behavioural theory, the biological theory, the humanistic theory, and, the socio-cognitive theory.

### 3.1 The psychodynamic theory

The psychodynamic theory is a theory in psychology founded on the idea that human personality developed primarily as a result of the interaction of instinctual drives and unconscious forces within the individual. The theory basically assumes that human behaviour is unconsciously driven, different parts of the unconscious mind are in perpetual conflict, and our behaviours are traceable to our childhood experiences (McLeod, 2014).

Psychodynamic theory include the pioneering work of Sigmund Freud (psychoanalytic theory) and those of his followers (Neo-Freudian theories)

### 3.1.1 Psychoanalytic theory

Freud postulates that instinctual drives and early childhood influences are the factors that account for personality development (McLeod, 2014). Freud theory is founded on a tripartite structure of id, ego and superego (Kassarjian, 1971; Franzoi, 2002; Agbonifoh, et al., 2007; Blackwell, Miniard & Engel, 2007; Blythe, 2008; Bruner, 2009; Solomon, 2011; McLeod, 2014). The id is the underlying drive of all psychic energy (Kassarjian, 1971; Williams, 1981; Agbonifoh, et al., 2007; Blythe, 2008; Cherry, 2013a). It is the element of personality that is present from birth and is unconscious (Cherry, 2013a). The id operates on the pleasure principles; it contains the libido which demands immediate gratification of instinctual and biological desires such as sex and aggression regardless of the consequences (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010). The superego is the moral and ethical dimension of the human psychic. "It defines what is morally right and influences the individual to strive for perfection rather than pleasure or reality and, in this sense, serves as an ethical constraint on behaviour" (Williams, 1981: 135). The primitivism of the id and the morality of the superego are balanced by the conscious ego. The ego considers the cost and benefits of an action in terms of reality before deciding to act upon or abandon impulses.

### 3.1.2 Neo-Freudian theory

This was the collective theory developed by "...thinkers who agreed with the basis of Freud's psychoanalytic theory, but changed and adapted the theory to incorporate their own beliefs, ideas and theories" (Cherry (2013b: para. 1). The Neo-Freudian consented to Freud, tripartite structure of personality; "the importance of the unconscious; the shaping of personality in childhood; and the dynamics of anxiety and the defense mechanism" (Myers (1995: 467). They dissented on Freud's beliefs that sexual drive is primary motivator and that personality is shaped wholly early during childhood experiences. They were rather of the view that social interactions are basic to formation and development of personality and that the conscious mind plays significant role in coping with the environment. Notable neo-Freudians include: Alfred Adler, Harry Sullivan and Karen Horney.

Alfred Adler developed the school of individual psychology. Adler's work was much on individual's efforts at overcoming feeling of inferiority by striving for superiority (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010) He theorized that when encouraged and appreciated, individual responds in a connected and cooperative way; when discouraged, individual acts in an unhealthy way by competing, withdrawing, or giving up. Harry Sullivan researched on Freud mechanism of anxiety and unconscious with a view to improving meaningful interpersonal relations. He was of the view that personality can only be understood by observing people's behavior in interpersonal situation (Burger, 2000). He argued that personality "can never be isolated from the complex of interpersonal relations in which the person lives and has his being" (Sullivan, 1953: 10). Karen Horney was celebrated for her work on "neurotic personality". Karen defines neurosis as a maladaptive and counterproductive way of dealing with relationships. Their ways of securing these relationships include projection of their own insecurity and neediness which eventually drives others away." Horney identified three basic personality patterns of dealing with the world: compliance, aggressive, and detachment (Solomon, 2011). Agbonifoh, et al., (2007: 154) elaborate on Horney's typology of neurotic personality:

- i. A compliant person seeks to be loved, appreciated, and needed and avoids antagonizing others. He moves towards people
- ii. An aggressive individual moves against others and desires to excel, win admiration, achieve recognition and to exploit people and situations fully since he see the world as encouraging the 'survival of the fittest'.
- iii. A detached person desires independence, privacy, self-sufficiency and wishes not to share or to be bothered in the experiences of others. He moves away from others.

Criticism: The criticism leveled against Freudian theory include: (1) Hypotheses generated are not scientifically testable; (2) The theory based the development of personality only on the first five years of life and ignore the impact of later life experiences; (3) The theory heavy emphasizes on instinctive basis for personality; (4) It was directed mainly on the treatment of psychological disorders. The neo-Freudian theories have been criticized on the following grounds: (1) Like Freud's theory they are not scientifically testable or measured; (2) Each of the theories accounted for only a small aspect of personality.

## 3.2 Trait theory

Trait theory suggests that personality is made up of a set of quantitative measurable characteristics or units known as traits. Traits are pre-dispositional attribute and are relatively stable (McLeod, 2014). Franzoi (2002:

397) defines trait as “a relatively stable tendency to behave in a particular way across a variety of situations,” while, DeJong (2008: 20) described it as “...an underlying dimension along which people differ from one another.” Every personality has a unique combination of traits and given its stability, people with a given combination of traits can be expected to behave consistently across situations and over time. The quantitative orientation of the trait theory separated it from psychoanalytical and Neo-Freudian theories which were mainly qualitative in nature. The development of trait theory is attributed to the pioneering works of psychologists such as, Gordon Allport, Henry Odbert Raymond Cattell and Hans Eysenck (Myers, 1995; Burger, 2000; Franzoi, 2002). Allport and Odbert in what has come to be known as the “Lexical Hypothesis”, extracted from an unabridged English dictionary, 18,000 words that described people’s characteristics and then grouped words with similar meanings to arrived at a final list of about 200 clusters of related words (Allport, in Franzoi, 2002). Allport’s approach to trait personality was influenced by Gestalt psychology which contends that “the whole is different from the sum of its part” (Franzoi, 2002: 397). Allport asserts that traits are ‘building block’ or ‘atom’ of personality. Thus instead of defining people as being principally materialistic or aggressive as the Freudian or Neo-Freudian would do, trait theorist contend that people differ with regards to the extent they possess materialistic or aggressive traits (Franzoi, 2002).

Cattell (1945) used factor analysis to reduce Allport’s list to 16 personality traits. Cattell (1945) was more concerned with using traits as a conceptual tool for predicting human behavior and not merely to explain behavior or describe physical realities. Eysenck (1947) developed a model of personality based on three traits: “introversion/extroversion, neuroticism/emotional stability, and psychoticism” (Franzoi, 2002: 398). Many researchers, however, viewed Cattell’s (1945) theory complex and Eysenck’s (1947) limiting in scope. The presence of ‘a bewildering array of personality scales’ and, the absence of a common taxonomy for which human behaviour could be described, challenged personality psychologists to find the ‘best representation of the structure of personality traits (Ferrandi, Falcy, Kreziak & Valette-Florence, 2000). This was achieved in the early 1980s with the development of the ‘Big Five’ personality framework which consists of agreeableness (good –natured, compassionate and cooperative), extraversion (sociable, talkative and assertive), conscientiousness (achievement-oriented, organized and dutiful), openness to experience (imaginative, artistically sensitive, and intelligent), and neuroticism (anxiety, depression, and nervous) (Costa & McCrae, 1985; McCrae & John, 1992).

Criticism: (1) Trait approach focused only on description of traits and does not account for its development; (2) The trait theory has ‘bewildering array of personality scales’ (John & Srivistava, 1999) and lacks a common taxonomy. The ‘big five’ framework has been criticized by some personality psychology researchers who have opted for different scales.

### 3.3 Behavioural theories

Behavioural theory contends that an individual’s personality is the outcome of the interaction between individual factors and environment influences. It rejects the claim that inner mental states of humans are the bases for personality and instead concerned itself primarily with observable and measurable external events. To the behaviourists, a person’s mind is ‘tabula rasa’ (a blank slate) at birth. Personality is “acquired through either classical or operant conditioning and shaped by reinforcement in the form of rewards and punishment” (Burger, 2000; 380). Unlike the psychodynamic theory and the traits theory, the behavioural theory has a strong foundation in empirical research (Burger, 2000). Notable behaviourists include John Watson and Frederick Skinner (Burger, 2000; Franzoi, 2002; McLeod, 2007a). Watson was of the view that conditioning principles account for human personalities. He rejected the Freudian concept and argued instead that the study of personality should be based only on behaviour that can be observed, recorded and measured. Skinner proposed that “our differences in our learning experiences are the main reason behind our individual differences in our behavior.

Criticism: (1) The approach is too deterministic and assumes that human do not have nor exercise freewill; (2) It failed to take into account the influence of unconscious mind on personality focusing instead on external observable behavior (Burger, 2000; McLeod, 2007a).

### 3.4 Humanistic theories

The humanistic approach to personality holds that people are basically good, are largely responsible for their actions and have an innate need for personal development and fulfillment in life (Myers, 1995; Burger, 2000). It takes a subjective and holistic view of human existence and pays particular attention to issues of creativity, freewill, and human potentials. According to (Burger, 2000: 5), humanistic theory “identified personal responsibility and feelings of self-acceptances the key causes of differences in personality.” This theory rejected

both the deterministic perspectives of the psychodynamic theory and the behavioural theory which it considered dehumanistic (McLeod, 2007b). Bonin (2012) likened humanistic theories to existentialism in the sense that one's choice of behavior is determined by one and not by fate. Humanistic personality researchers deemphasized scientific approach to the study of human personality and instead focused on qualitative research methods which are better adaptable to the subjective, conscious experiences of the individuals. Two renowned figures in humanism were Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers. Rogers' theory of self-concept suggests that every individual is made up of a tripartite of self – real self, perceived self and ideal self – and these are related. Individuals inherently drive for growth of self-concept which can lead to self actualization. Maslow paradigm consisted of a pyramid of need arranged hierarchically from the lower needs to the higher needs. Individuals are motivated to satisfy the lower levels of needs first before being motivated to satisfy the higher levels of needs.

Criticism: (1) Its emphasis on freewill which is in conflict with the deterministic law of science makes it unfit for scientific investigation or measurement; (2) Many key concepts in this theory such as “self-actualization”, “fully functioning”, and “peak experience” are vaguely defined (Burger, 2000).

### 3.5 Socio-Cognitive theories

This approach fuses the cognitive approach to personality with the social learning perspective and has consequently been referred to by some scholars as ‘socio-cognitive theory’ (Myers, 1995; Sincero, 2012). Social learning theory is an extension and a modification of the behavioural theory. The cognitive model to “personality explains differences in personality as differences in the way people process information” (Burger, 2000: 452). Two foremost contributors to this theory are Albert Bandura and Julian Rotter (Franzoi, 2002). Bandura's “social learning theory”, postulates that “people learn social behavior primarily through observation and cognitive processing of information, rather than through direct experience” (Franzoi, 2002: 405). In Bandura's view, personality is influenced by four cognitive variables. Bandura agrees with the behaviorists that environment determines people's behavior, but added that people's behavior also determines the environment. It is the contention of the theorist that interaction of cognition, actions, and environment shape human personality (Franzoi, 2002). Rotter, introduced the concept of ‘locus of control’ which deals with “the degree to which we believe that outcomes in our lives depend on our actions (internal locus of control) versus the actions of uncontrollable environmental forces (external locus of control)” (Bandura, in Franzoi, 2002: 406).

Criticism: It is subjective and vague for scientific study

## 4 Nature of personality

In studying personality some researchers and scholars have been able to extract its nature or features. These include the followings:

- i. Personality is integrated: This implies that all the factors that constitute personality interact with one another to produce an integrated whole (Blythe, 2008);
- ii. Personality is unique and reflects individual differences: No two persons are exactly alike. This is due to the fact that “...the inner characteristics that constitute an individual personality are unique combination of factors...” (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010: 136). People no doubt share personal characteristics, but as Blythe (2008) argue, the possible combination of traits are so huge that each person is different.
- iii. Personality is self-serving: Personality is purposed to meet individual's need as defined by the person's traits (Blythe (2008);
- iv. Personality is consistent: An individual's basic personality once established, will tend to be both consistent and enduring (Franzoi, 2002; Blythe, 2008; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010; Gharibpoor & Amiri, 2012) especially during adulthood. Franzoi (2002) describes consistency as one important quality of personality. Franzoi (2002: 381) explains that consistency manifest itself “...when we see them (people) responding in the same way in a variety of situations over an extended period of time”. Blythe (2008) and Schiffman and Kanuk (2010) agree that this feature enable marketers to segment market and offer standardized offerings to each market segment;
- v. Personality is multiply expressed: There are many ways of expressing personality beside behaviour. Our feelings, thoughts and social interaction are reflective of our personalities.
- vi. Personality can change: Franzoi (2002) posits that personality changes due to culture and evolutionary processes. These cultural and evolutionary processes can among other things mean major life events like, marriage, child birth, the death of a parent, a change of profession and/or job (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010), natural disaster, or relocation to a new environment entirely different culture.

## 5 Linkage between personality and consumer behaviour

The theories of personality have been applied in the study of consumer with varying degree of successes. The psychoanalytic theory, neo-Freudian theory and the trait theory have been more relevant to consumer behavior analysts (Blackwell, Miniard & Engel, 2007; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010). Some scholars and researchers have found these theories useful in explaining and predicting the buying behaviour of consumers and such information have been applied in product development, market segmentation and marketing communication. Others have, however, found personality an insignificant variable in the predicting the behaviour of consumers and consequently questioned the place of personality in consumer behaviour. Acknowledging the contrasting linkage between these two constructs, Agbonifoh, et al., (2007: 154) noted, "...some studies have found relationship between personality and product use while others have not."

Tsao and Chang's (2010) study established a positive relationship between hedonic buying motive and three of the big five traits: openness to experience, extraversion, and neuroticism. The researchers found that consumers who scored high on these traits seek fantasies, feelings, excitement, fun and enjoyment shopping online. Hedonic buying motive have been with impulsive buying (unplanned and spontaneous purchases based on emotion of pleasure and excitement with little regard for the consequences) which find relevance in both psychodynamic theory and trait theory. Tsao and Chang's (2010) findings collaborate earlier studies by Hirschman and Holbrook (1982), Strahilevitz and Myers (1998) and Kim and Shim (2002). In the development and launch of new products, knowledge of personality is critical. Traits such as innovativeness, dogmatism, need for uniqueness, variety-seeking" enable marketers to identify consumers' innovators – "those who are open to new ideas and be among the first to try new " market offerings (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010: 141). Lahiri and Gupta (2005) work indicates that consumer innovativeness is a critical success factor in brand extension strategy. The need for uniqueness has been linked to consumer purchase of unconventional products and brand in Simonson and Nowlis's (2000) research work. Cognitive theory has found application in marketing communication. Consumers' need for product-related information is different (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010; Solomon, 2011). Such information are employed in the development of advertising for different consumer segment. Personality has been useful in the study of consumer ethnocentrism. Consumers' response to foreign-made-products depends on their levels of ethnocentrism or preference for one's own ethnic group. Consumer ethnocentrism scale, known as CETSCALE (Shimp & Sharma, 1987) helps international marketers gauge the level of acceptance of products, services and promotional appeals to foreign consumers. A psychodynamic theory has been useful in motivational research which has help to unearth deeper meanings of products and services to consumers (Solomon, 2011). This has help in the development of successful products, services and promotional messages particularly those with sensual undertones.

The marketers have imbued brands with personality traits thereby uniquely connecting consumers to various brands. By personifying brands with human personality traits, marketers are able to significantly and profitably influence consumers' responses, tastes, preferences and loyalties (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010; Solomon, 2011). Many empirical studies such as those by Ko, Kim and Zhang (2008) and Lee (2009) reveal that consumers are inclined to buy brands that reflect their own personalities. Marketers often relate the images of the product and services with those of consumer. Schiffman and Kaanuk (2010: 167) concisely stated, "consumers frequently attempt to preserve, enhance, alter, or extend their self-images by purchasing products or services or shopping at stores they perceive as consistent with their relevant self-image(s) and by avoiding products and stores they perceive are not." Many other studies (Dholakia, 1978; Mowen, 2000; Mulyanegara, Tsarenko & Anderson, 2009) have found significant relationship between personality and consumer behavior..

Other researchers were, however, unable to established significant relationship between personality and buying behaviour. The study by Evans (1959) on choice of automobile brands and those undertaken by Procter & Gamble, General Motors and some researchers show that personality is a relatively less significant variable in predicting buyers' behaviour (Wilson & Gilligan, 1997). Crosby and Grossbart (1984) also reported low correlation between measures of personality traits and discrete instances of consumer behaviour in many past research works. A review of many past studies linking personality with consumer behaviour, carried out by Kassarian (1971) found low correlations. Another review across numerous studies conducted by Kassarin and Sheffet (in Arnould, Price & Zinkhan, 2002: 255) revealed that "personality traits only explain about 10 percent of the variation in consumers' purchase, product preference..." Bearden, Ingram and Lafurge (1995) also described as 'disappointing' the use of general personality tool to explain purchase behaviour.

The failure of some researcher to establish a relationship between personality and consumer behaviour has been attributed to some factors. A key problem is that much of the knowledge on personality is "borrowed from the field of psychology" (Kassarian, 1971; Nakanishi, 1972; Solomon, 2011). The field it borrowed from is based

on medical model or clinical psychology (Williams, 1981; Crosby & Grossbart, 1984). As a result, much of the personality tests are not easily adaptable to the study of consumer behaviour (Williams, 1981). "Personality dimensions measured by these tests, such as extroversion or introversion, may be useful to an understanding of specific behaviors, but are not necessarily relevant to an understanding of everyday purchasing behavior" (Williams, 1981: 133). Given this limitation, Kassarian and Sheffet (in Crosby & Grossbart, 1984) advocate for the development and validation of personality variables that are relevant to consumer model. Also, how the personality construct are defined and how behaviour is specified influenced the relationship between personality and consumer behaviour. Dholakia (1978:113) observed that "different results have been noticed when behaviour has meant brand choice, product type choice, or brand loyalty."

Solomon (2011) decried a rather common practice among personality researchers and marketers where consumers are presented with a large personality inventory without first considering how to relate these measures to consumer behaviour. The temptation here is to capitalize on any interesting outcome and draw conclusion based on it. Another problem associated with personality test is that personality being an interdependent construct should be studied in whole. But common practice is to study few traits in isolation. This "gives an incomplete view of whole person" (Marketing News, in Blythe, 2008: 79). Personality is consistent pattern of actions across situation and time. Yet it is supposed to be used in understanding individuals' behaviour. This is a paradox which makes strong correlation between the two constructs hardly obtainable. In view of this limitation, Arnould, Price and Zinkhan (2002) suggest that personality should be combined with other variable to improve the prediction of consumer behaviour, Nakanishi (1972) advocates abandoning past conceptualizations that view personality as having direct impact on product brand and store choice and instead proposed approach a dynamic concept of personality that would take cognizance of situational variables. This method new paradigm is called 'person, situation and behaviour' (Crosby & Grossbart, 1984). Many scholars and authors in consumer behaviour believe that personality exists and influences consumer behaviour. They blame the lack of correlation between these two constructs in most studies to the problem of measurement and definition.

## 6. Conclusion

Six major theories have been developed to explained personality. The psychodynamic theory and the trait theory have been particularly relevant to an understanding of consumer behaviour. Personality does influence consumer buying behaviour as attest by the finding of many empirical studies. This information has been successfully applied in the development of products and services, segmenting market, positioning products and developing marketing communication. Studies which have failed to established correlation between personality and buyers' behaviour. The failure to adapt personality test to consumer model instead of relying on clinical approach, the problem of definition of constructs, and methodological differences are key explanations for the inability of some studies to establish correlation between personality and consumer behaviour.

## References

- Agbonifoh, B.A., Ogwo, O.E., Nnolim, D.A., & Nkamnebe, A.D. (2007). *Marketing in Nigeria: concepts, principles & decisions (2<sup>nd</sup>ed.)*. Aba, Nigeria: Afritowers.
- Arnould, E., Price, L., & Zinkhan, G. (2002). *Consumer*. New York, N.Y: McGraw Hill
- Assael, H. (2002). *Marketing for the University of Hartford*, Mason, OH: South-Western College
- Azoulay, A., & Kapferer, J.N. (2004). Do brand personality scale really measure brand personality? *Journal of Brand Management* 11(2), 143-155
- Bearden, W.O., Ingram, T.N., & Lafurge, R. (1995). *Marketing: Principles & procedures*. Chicago, IL: Richard D. Irwin
- Berkowitz, E.N., Kerin, R.A., Hartley, S.W., & Rudelus, W. (1994). *Marketing (4<sup>th</sup>ed.)*. Burr Ridge: Richard Irwin
- Blackwell, R.D, Miniard, P.W., & Engel, J.F. (2007). *Consumer behavior (10<sup>th</sup>ed.)*. Kundi Haryana, India: Thomas South-Western
- Blythe, D. (2008). *Consumer behavior*. London, United Kingdom: Thompson
- Bonin, A. (2012). Comparison of humanistic and trait theories. [Online] Available: <http://www.examiner.com/articles>
- Bray, J. (2008). Consumer behavior theory: Approaches and models. Retrieved from <http://eprints.bournemouth.ac.uk/>
- Burger, J.M. (2000). *Personality (5<sup>th</sup> ed.)*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thompson
- Cattell, R.B. (1945). The description of personality: Principles and findings in a factor analysis: *American Journal of Psychology*, 58, 59-90

- Cherry, K. (2013a). The id, ego, and superego: The structural model of personality. [Online] Available: <http://www.psychology.about.com>
- Cherry, K. (2013b). Who were the Neo-Freudians? [Online] Available: <http://www.psychology.about.com>
- Costa, P.T., & McCrae, R.R. (1985). The NEO personality inventory, Psychology Assessment Resources, Odessa, Florida, USA
- Costa, P.T. & McCrae, R.R. (1989). The structure of interpersonal traits: Wiggin's circumplex and the five factor model: *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 56, 586-598. doi: [apa.org/journals.PSP/56/4/586](https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.56.4.586)
- Costa, P.T. & McCrae, R.R. (1992). *NEO personality inventory professional manual*. Odessa, FL: Psychological Assessment Resources.
- Crossby, L.A. & Grossbart, S.L. (1984). A blueprint for consumer research on personality. *Advance in Consumer Research*, 11, 447-452.
- DeJong, J.G. (2008). The impact of (dis)similarities in personality traits on conflict attributes in buyer-seller relationships. *Master's thesis, Open University of the Netherland, Faculty of Management sciences*. From <http://www.dspace.ou.nl/bitstream/1820/1459>
- Dholakia, R.R. (1978). Personality trait theory and consumer behaviour. *Vikalpa*, 3(2), 111-118
- Evans, J.R. & Berman, B. (1995). *Principles of marketing*. Englewood Cliff, NJ: Prentice Hall
- Ferrandi, J., Falcy, S.F., Kreziak, D., & Valette-Florence, P. (2000). Aaker's brand personality scale: A replication and a double methodological validation in French setting. [Online] Available: <http://www.cerog.org/lalondeCB>
- Franzoi, S. (2002). *Psychology: A journey of discovery*. Cincinnati, OH: Atomic Dog
- Gangajali, H. (2009). Impact of personality on consumer behavior. Retrieved from <http://www.boddunan.com/education/23-business-management/15779-1>
- Gharibpoor, M., & Amiri, F. (2012). The relationship between personality traits and virtual-web based service brand personality: SEM method in Goggle context. *Journal of Basic and Applied Scientific Research*. 2(5), 4469-4476
- Hirschman, E.C. & Holbrook, M.B. (1982). Hedonic consumption: Emerging concepts, methods and propositions. *Journal of marketing*, 46(2), 92-101.
- John, O., & Srivastava, S. (1999). The Big Five trait taxonomy: History, measurement, and theoretical perspectives. In L. Pervin & O.P. John (eds.), *Handbook of personality: Theory and research* (2<sup>nd</sup>). New York, NY: Guilford.
- Kassarjian, H.H. (1971). Personality and consumer behavior: A review. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 8, 244-247
- Kim, Y.M., Shim, K.Y. (2002). Influence of internet shopping, mail characteristics and users traits on purchase intent. *Irish Marketing Review*, 15(2), 25-34 (2).
- Ko, E.J., Kim, K.H. & Zhang, H. (2008). A cross-cultural study of antecedents of purchase intention for sport shoes in Korea and China. *Journal of Global Academy of Marketing Science*, 18(1), 157-177
- Kotler, P. & Keller, K.L. (2009). *Marketing management (13<sup>th</sup>ed.)*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education
- Krishnan, J. (2011). Lifestyle: A tool for understanding buyer behavior. *International Journal of Economics and Management*, 5(1), 283-298
- Lahiri, I. & Gupta, A. (2005). Brand extensions in consumer non-durables, durables and services: A comparative study. *South Asian Journal of Management*, 12(4), 34-
- Lee, J.W. (2009). Relationship between consumer personality and brand personality a self-concept: From the case of Korean automobile brands. *Academy of Marketing Studies Journal*. 13(1),
- Mayer, J.D. (2007). Asserting the definition of personality. *The Online Newsletter for Personality Science*, (1), Spring.
- Myers, D.G. (1995). *Psychology* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York, N.Y: Worth Publishers
- McCrae, R.R. & John, O.P. (1992). An introduction to the Five-Factor model and its applications. *Journal of Personality*. 60(2), 175-215. doi: [10.1111/J.146-6494.1992](https://doi.org/10.1111/J.146-6494.1992)
- McLeod, S. A. (2007a). Behaviorist Approach. [Online] Available: <http://www.simplypsychology.org/behaviorism.html>
- McLeod, S.A. (2007b). Humanism. [Online] Available: <http://www.simplypsychology.org/humanistic.html>
- McLeod, S. A. (2014). Theories of personality. [Online] Available: <http://www.simplypsychology.org/personality.theories.html>
- Mowen, J.C. (2000). *The 3M model of motivation and personality: Theory and empirical applications to consumer behavior*. Boston, M.A: Kluwer

- Mulyanegara, R.C., Tsarenko, Y., & Anderson, A. (2007). The Big Five and brand personality: Investigating the impact of consumer personality on preferences toward particular brand personality. *Journal of Brand Management*, 16, 234-247. doi: 10.1057/palgrave.bm.2550093
- Myers, D.G. (1995). *Psychology* (4<sup>th</sup>ed.). New York, NY: Worth
- Nakanishi, M. (1972). Personality and consumer behavior: Extensions. *Proceedings of the Third annual Conference of the Association for Consumer Research*, eds. 61-66.
- Schiffman, L.G., & Kanuk, L.L. (2010). *Consumer behavior* (10<sup>th</sup>ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education
- Shimp, T.A. & Sharma, S. (1987). Consumer Ethnocentrism: Construction and validation of the CETSCALE. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 24, 280-289.
- Simonson, I. & Nowlis, S.M. (2000). The role of explanations and need for uniqueness in consumer decision making: unconventional choices based on reasons. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 27, 49-68.
- Sincero, S.M. (2012). Social Cognitive theory of personality. [Online] Available:  
<https://explorable.com/Social-Cognitive-theories-of-personality>
- Smith, D.K. (2001). *Marketing toolkit for Nigeria*. Ibadan, Nigeria: Spectrum Books
- Solomon, M.R. (2011). *Consumer behavior: buying, having, and being* (9<sup>th</sup>ed.). Upper Saddle River, N.J: Pearson
- Strahilevitz, M. & Myers, J.G. (1988). Donations to charity as purchase incentives: How well they work may depend on what you are trying to sell. *J. Cons. Res.*, 24: 434
- Sullivan, H.S. (1953). *The interpersonal theory of psychiatry*, New York: Norton
- Tsao, W., & Chang, H. (2010). Exploring the impact of personality traits on online shopping behavior. *African Journal of Business Management*, 4(9), 1800-1812.
- Williams, K.C. (1981). *Behavioral aspects of marketing*. Oxford, United Kingdom: Butterworth-Heinemann
- Wilson, R.M.S., & Gilligan, C. (1997). *Strategic marketing management: Planning, implementation and control* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Oxford, England: Elsevier Butterwort Heinemann

The IISTE is a pioneer in the Open-Access hosting service and academic event management. The aim of the firm is Accelerating Global Knowledge Sharing.

More information about the firm can be found on the homepage:

<http://www.iiste.org>

### CALL FOR JOURNAL PAPERS

There are more than 30 peer-reviewed academic journals hosted under the hosting platform.

**Prospective authors of journals can find the submission instruction on the following page:** <http://www.iiste.org/journals/> All the journals articles are available online to the readers all over the world without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself. Paper version of the journals is also available upon request of readers and authors.

### MORE RESOURCES

Book publication information: <http://www.iiste.org/book/>

Academic conference: <http://www.iiste.org/conference/upcoming-conferences-call-for-paper/>

### IISTE Knowledge Sharing Partners

EBSCO, Index Copernicus, Ulrich's Periodicals Directory, JournalTOCS, PKP Open Archives Harvester, Bielefeld Academic Search Engine, Elektronische Zeitschriftenbibliothek EZB, Open J-Gate, OCLC WorldCat, Universe Digital Library, NewJour, Google Scholar

