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Consumer Personality and Increase in Sales Volume

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Abstract

The concept of consumer personality is an important area of research for consideration because it brings to the fore, the thoughts and motives why customers make certain choice in their purchase decisions. Sales personnel have increasingly found it difficult to understand factors consumers put into consideration in their purchase decisions, hence, it is expedient to investigate this, because if salespeople are not able to connect with certain elite clientele due to personality conflicts, the resources invested in them will likely yield an undesirable return. Some studies found that consumer personality is an important factor to increase sales volume of firms. As a result of this, firms are able to attain set objectives in areas of profit maximization, employee welfare, social welfare of the community and efficiency in day to day operations. The main objective of this study is to find out how consumer personality result to increase in sales of blackberry brands in Nigeria. This study adopts a quantitative approach to data collection through a structured questionnaire design. The sample population used were 100 students randomly selected among the entire population in Covenant University. The data collected were subjected to the Statistical Product for Social Scientist (SPSS Version 16). Descriptive and Regression Analysis was carried out and Pearson's Product Correlation used to test the hypothesis. The result of the hypothesis shows that consumer personality is an attributing factor to increase in sales volume. This study finds that consumer personality has a positive impact on sales volume of blackberry brand. This study recommends that policy

designers in the manufacturing and service sector could consider personality of consumers when determining their marketing mix elements.

Keywords: Consumer Personality, Marketing Mix, Sales Volume, Purchase Decisions, Covenant University.

1.0 Background of the Study

Walsh et al. (2004) described personality as dynamic and organized set of characteristics possessed by individuals that uniquely influences his cognitions, motivations, and behaviours in various situations. The word "personality" originates from the Latin word *persona*, which means mask. The components of personality can be divided into three major parts; they include the Id, the Ego and the Superego. Jain (2011) added that consumer personality simply refers to the totality of thoughts, emotions, intentions and behaviour that a consumer exhibits consistently while adapting to a product or service. Ajagbe et al. (2011) defined sales effectiveness as an assessment of the results generated by the investment in certain types of sales strategies and procedures. The idea is to determine if the returns generated by the sales effort are equitable in relation to the investment in time, money and other resources to achieve those sales. The goal is to use this determination of sales effectiveness as a means of deciding if the current sales approach is working sufficiently well to sustain the company, or if changes in strategies or even the structure of the sales force is in order (Kalu, 2005; Jain, 2011; Ajagbe et al., 2013). Sales effectiveness is the ability of a company's sales professionals to "win" at each stage of the customer's buying process, and ultimately earn the business on the right terms and in the right timeframe. Kalu (2005) opine that the consideration of consumer's personality has been an attributing factor to daily increase in sales volume of both manufacturing and service firms in Nigeria. Researchers in describing sales volume, consider consumer personality as an important variable in purchase decisions (Aaker, 1990; Chen, 2001; Ajagbe et al., 2015b). Previous related research has shown that some sales personnel do not take into cognisance the personality of their target customers. When a salesperson is not able to connect with customers due to personality conflicts, the outcome will be that such personnel will not achieve his sales target (Goldsmith et al., 2003; Clark and Goldsmith, 2005). For this reason, many companies screen potential salespeople carefully and engage them in a training program before allowing them to represent the company. It has been observed that consumers have a habit of selecting presentable brands or product that would have a positive effect to their self-image and the way they would be perceived in the society (Chamorro-Premuzic et al., 2004). The personality of the consumer determines the brands he will prefer. In addition, the income, social status or class and so on is are important considerations in making purchase decisions.

Chen (2001) argued that the price of a product could also decrease the sales of a particular brand. A market harbouring many sellers of similar or competitive brands will not be the appropriate place to attach a high price to products because the consumers will go for the cheapest product with satisfactory quality standard (Aaker, 1990; Allport and Odbert, 1936). Consumer personality entails the perception of consumers to environmental factors or how the consumer behaviour is affected by social factors and also coupled with genetic factors. Albanese (1993) grouped consumer personality into some variables such as; the consumer's self-esteem, celebrity endorsement, and so on.

Bandura (1982) put forward that a value is a belief that some condition is preferable to its opposite. Zakanishi (1972) argued that consumers set of values play a very important role in consumption activities. They buy several products and services because they believe these products will help to achieve a value-oriented goal. The difference in consumer values most times explain why a major marketing effort that attracted a large market share in one region might not be a success in another region. Examples of the core consumer values are freedom, achievement, materialism, youthfulness and so on.

Although various theories of personality exist in empirical literature, Kalu (2005) believes that the first step is to understand exactly what the concept is all about. Personality refers to a set of consistent responses to environmental stimuli (Kalu, 2005; Jain, 2011). Personality has been conceived as those activities, interests, and opinions which comprise general lifestyles, where lifestyle can be defined as the pattern in which people live and spend time and money. When researchers make use of the concept, the mean the word "person". Hence, a consumer personality defines their person rather than just a biological conglomeration of organs. Although personality tends to be consistent and enduring, it may change abruptly in response to major life events over time. Aaker (1990) opined that personality is the distinctive and enduring patterns of thoughts, emotions, and behaviours that characterize each individual's adaptation to his situations in life. An individual's consistent self-representations form the basis for what we understand as personality (Chamerro-Premuzic and Furnham, 2004; Chamerro-Premuzic et al., 2004). Personality is also the sum total of all factors which make an individual human being both individual and human; the thinking, feeling and behaving that all human beings have in common, and the particular characteristic pattern of these elements that make every human being unique, stresses the important role of unconscious processes that may be hidden from the individual but are at least partly perceptible to other people. Clark and Goldsmith (2005) argued that personality when viewed carefully is made up of different components more like characteristics and with an in-depth knowledge of these characteristics, the study of consumer personality is made easier. Some of the fundamental characteristics of personality include: consistency, psychological and physiological, behaviours and actions and multiple expressions. Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) listed the big five factors of personality can be attributed to Lewis Goldberg and they are; openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism.

Steyn et al. (2010) described consumer personality as the totality of a consumer's attitude, interests, behavioural patterns, emotional responses, social roles and other individual traits that endure over a long period of time. In addition to this, consumer personality type is a classification system through which a consumer is categorized based on attitude or behavioural tendencies. The researchers argued further that it is basically who the consumer really is or wants to be seen as. The variable, self-esteem simply connotes how 'highly' the consumer wants to see himself. Aaker and Keller (1990) suggested that the self-esteem could be high or low and can be affected by social influences, environmental influences and so on. Personality constructs can be very useful predictors of consumer behaviour if they are developed appropriately for specific consumer behaviour purposes, and if they include other important

influences such as social, external factors, demographics, and overall market conditions (Aaker and Keller, 1990; Aaker, 1990; Cacioppo and Petty, 1982). Basically, the prices of the different grades of the goods or services that consumers intend to purchase have been found to be influenced by their personality. This is because such consumers want to be associated with a particular group or class of people in the society.

Chen (2001) highlighted that a sales-oriented company is therefore an organisation where their efforts are focused on the sales function. The sales-oriented company is not focused on the needs of the customer but on the seller's need which is most times directed towards making profit. The concept under sales are the quality of the product, the corporate brand otherwise known as the brand name, sales promotion and the pricing. Bandura (1982) in his earlier study considered the manners to focus on the consumer personality which could help to increase sales volume of a product. He suggested that the sales force should make sure they target the right consumer, that is, consumers that would make an impact in the decisions of the public therefore encouraging them to buy the product. The author also added that Mavens who are knowledgeable persons and deeply rooted in the use of a product should be the main target alongside innovators and opinion leaders. A number of studies have endeavoured to identify some of the motivational and psychological characteristics of the market Mavens (Nakanishi, 1972; Clark and Goldsmith, 2005; Walsh et al, 2004). Among them are those identified by Walsh et al (2004), which the researchers termed as the unique motivational factors for Mavens. They found that market Mavens were motivated to share their information with other consumers for a number of reasons, such reasons include; an obligation to share information; a strong desire to help others; and an intrinsic pleasure in sharing information with others.

Personality traits are the enduring patterns of perceiving, relating to, and thinking about the environment and oneself that are exhibited in a wide range of social contexts (Dick and Basu, 1994; Goldsmith et al., 2003). The trait approach to personality is one of the major theoretical areas in the study of personality. Allport and Odberg (1936) reported that one English-language dictionary alone contained more than 4,000 words describing different personality traits. These traits were grouped into three levels: Cardinal traits which dominate an individual's whole life often to the point that the person becomes known specifically for these traits (Cacioppo and Petty, 1982). Central traits describes the general characteristics that form the basic foundations of personality (Dick and Basu, 1994). Whereas secondary traits are the traits that are sometimes related to attitudes or preferences and often appear only in certain situations. Jain (2011) described the "Big Five" theory as a five-factor model of personality that represents five core traits that interact to form human personality. He argued that these have been explained in the conceptual framework of personality; extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness. While most agree that people can be described based upon their personality traits, theorists continue to debate the number of basic traits that make up human personality. While trait theory has objectivity that some personality theories lack, it also has weaknesses (Clark and Goldsmith, 2005; Kalu, 2005; Walsh et al., 2004). Some of the most common criticisms of trait theory centre on the fact that traits are often poor predictors of behaviour.

However, Zajonc and Markus (1982) reported that the new four personality orientations traits attempt to identify distinctive consumer approaches towards processing information and

viewing the world from different perspectives. The new model hypothesises that there are four broad but different approaches regarding consumer's behaviour and postulates that each orientation has a different valence and intensity of preferences. The theoretical model put forward by the author are of the existence of two distinctive preferences. That is of cognitive and affective with regards to a wide range of behaviours and actual decision making, has been extended and adapted to form the feeling and thinking orientations of the new personality orientations model (Nakanishi, 1972; Dick and Basu, 1994; Clark and Goldsmith, 2005). The labels of the four personality orientations in the new model are thinking/logical, imaginative, physical/sensing, and feeling/emotion/action. Chen (2001) described the theory postulated by Maslow who viewed an individual's motivation in terms of needs hierarchy and he suggested that the general priority of need fulfilment in the order of: psychological needs, safety needs, social needs (love/belonging), self-esteem, and self-actualization. The earlier model was modified by stating that man is a wanting creature and rarely reaches a state of complete satisfaction (Nakanishi, 1972; Kalu, 2005; Jain, 2011). As an individual moves up this hierarchy, the satisfaction of these needs increases their importance rather than reduce it. Figure 1 below indicate the conceptual framework of this research. In this framework, consumer personality is the independent variable which has a relationship with increase in sales volume which is the dependent variable and the trait theory is the moderating, mediating or rather intervening variable of the research.
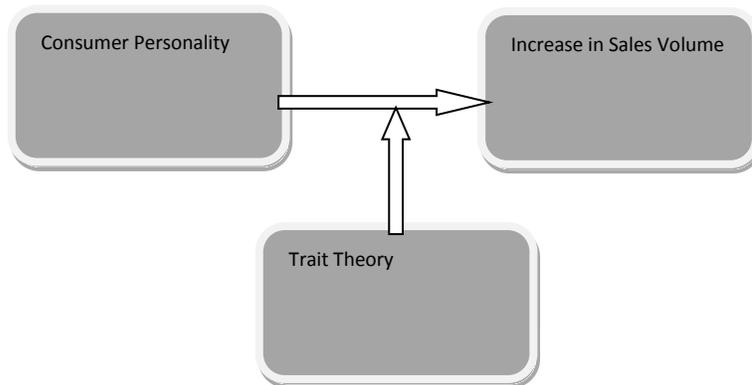

Figure1: Research Conceptual Framework

2.0 Research Approach

This study used a quantitative research approach for data collection. Both secondary and primary sources of data collection was used to gather information (Ajagbe et al., 2015a). The primary source of data was collected through survey method with the use of structured questionnaires. The data was collected from a Telecommunication company and their most popular product the "Blackberry Smart Phones" and users of such brand of smart phones. Secondary data was gathered from journals, conference articles, internet sources, textbooks and unpublished works. A simple random sampling procedure was used in drawing the required sample size for the study. This procedure was chosen so as to guarantee randomness and representativeness by giving respondents an equal chance of been chosen (Asika, 1991; Ojo,

2005). The blackberry users in the youth market were used as the case study for this study because it was observed to be patronised by certain group of students in the elite class. The sample size was determined through the use of the avwokemi formula (Ojo, 2005; Oyeku and Ayodele, 2010; Ajagbe et al., 2015a; Creswell, 2012). The data in this sampling frame was obtained through convenience sampling. Asikia (1991) recommended that the face validity and content validity are the appropriate validity testing instruments to use to ensure the objectives of this kind of research is achieved. With regards to the reliability of the research instrument, the test retest reliability and the split half reliability instruments was used based on the suggestion of Yin (2003). The case study focussed on blackberry users in Covenant University, since this group of people are those who are willing to take risk and fall under the innovators group as well as the knowledgeable experts (Mavens) in the use of the blackberry products.

3.0 Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

3.1 Test of Hypothesis
In the hypothesis testing, two formulas were used and they are;
Regression Analysis
$$y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_i + u_i$$
And the other;
Correlation Analysis
$$r = \frac{n \sum xy - \sum x \sum y}{\sqrt{[n \sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2][n \sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2]}} = \frac{S_{xy}}{\sqrt{S_{xx} S_{yy}}}$$

3.1.1 Test of Hypothesis 1
Table 1: ANOVA (b)

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	43.489	1	43.489	47.238	.000(a)
	Residual	90.221	98	.921		
	Total	133.710	99			

a. Predictors: (Constant), the quality level of a blackberry drives to seek and buy
b. Dependent Variable: quality of blackberry determines my preference

The ANOVA table 1 above shows the assessment of the statistical significance of the result. This tests the null hypothesis to determine if the null hypothesis is to be rejected or not. The model in table 1 above indicates that the result is statistically significant (sig=0.000). Therefore the null hypothesis should be rejected. Result of regression analysis confirmed that product quality has an effect on consumer motive, hence, accept the alternative hypothesis and reject the null hypothesis. For the analysis of the first objective which was aimed to determine the effect of product quality on consumer motive. The result shows that majority of the respondents agreed that the quality of blackberry phones determines their preference. This also indicate that majority of the respondents agreed that the quality of blackberry determines consumer purchase. The result of the data analysis shows that quality of a product has effect on

consumer's motive. This is consistent with the findings of Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) who reported that perceived quality is affected by previous experience of a product and this influences brand preference and result to constant patronage.

3.1.2 Test of Hypothesis 2
Table 2: Correlations

		experience with a blackberry enables trust	positive increase in experience increases loyalty to the seller
experience with a blackberry enables trust	Pearson Correlation	1	.449(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
positive increase in experience increases loyalty to the seller	Pearson Correlation	.449(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
r=0.449, N=100, p<0.01

Table 2 above shows the result of Pearson's product moment correlation between consumer experience and corporate brand. The r value of consumer experience and corporate brand is 0.449**. The result indicates that there is a strong positive relationship between consumer experience and corporate brand at 0.01 level of significance. The statistical implication of this data is that, corporate brand is improved as a result of a positive consumer experience. Result of correlation analysis to test the second hypothesis revealed a relationship between consumer experience and corporate brand. Hence, the null hypothesis should be rejected while the alternative hypothesis be accepted. In another words, the result of the analysis of the second objective which was aimed to investigate the relationship between consumer experience and corporate brand concludes there is a relationship between consumer experience and coporate brand image. Aaker (1991) found that frequent use and increase in consumer purchase experience is directly proportional to his brand loyalty which is a sort of confirmation that he will not leave the brand over competitors. In view of this, consumer loyalty increases sales volume.

3.1.3 Test of Hypothesis 3

Table 3: ANOVA (b)

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	10.568	1	10.568	15.674	.000(a)
	Residual	66.072	98	.674		
	Total	76.640	99			

a. Predictors: (Constant), sales promotion facilitates identification with a brand of prestige
b. Dependent Variable: sales promotion re-affirms personal value

The ANOVA table 3 above shows the assessment of the statistical significance of the result. This tests the null hypothesis to determine if the null hypothesis is to be rejected or not. The model in this table is statistically significant (sig=0.000). The null hypothesis should therefore be rejected. Result of regression analysis used to test the third hypothesis revealed that sales promotion plays a positive role on consumer self-esteem, hence, the null hypothesis is rejected while alternative hypothesis is accepted. The third objective was aimed to examine the role of sales promotion on the consumer self-esteem. However, the result of data analysis shows that sales promotion plays a positive role on self esteem of a consumer. The self-esteem of a consumer can be associated with the sales promotion employed by the organisation for their product. The use of celebrities or mavens on the advertisement of a product creates a positive impact on the brand perspective. Bandura (1982) in his earlier study considered the manners to focus on the consumer personality which could help to increase sales volume of a product. He suggested that the sales force should make sure they target the right consumer, that is, consumers that would make an impact in the decisions of the public therefore encouraging them to buy the product. The author also added that Mavens who are knowledgeable persons and deeply rooted in the use of a product should be the main target alongside innovators and opinion leaders. A number of studies have endeavoured to identify some of the motivational and psychological characteristics of the market Mavens (Nakanishi, 1972; Clark and Goldsmith, 2005; Walsh et al, 2004). Among them are those identified by Walsh et al (2004), which the researchers termed as the unique motivational factors for Mavens. They found that market Mavens were motivated to share their information with other consumers for a number of reasons, such reasons include; an obligation to share information; a strong desire to help others; and an intrinsic pleasure in sharing information with others.

3.1.4 Test of Hypothesis 4

Table 4: ANOVA (b)

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	15.389	1	15.389	21.569	.000(a)
	Residual	69.921	98	.713		
	Total	85.310	99			

a. Predictors: (Constant), price facilitates consumer's inclination toward blackberries

a. Dependent Variable: price helps in the formation of consumer attitude towards blackberries

The ANOVA table 4 above shows the assessment of the statistical significance of the result. This tests the null hypothesis to determine if the null hypothesis is to be rejected or not. The model in this table is statistically significant (sig=0.000). Therefore the null hypothesis should be rejected. The analysis conducted for the fourth hypothesis was carried out using the regression analysis and the results showed that the price of the product has an effect on consumer attitude. Due to this, the alternative hypothesis was accepted while the null hypothesis was rejected. The analysis of the fourth objective was aimed to determine if product price can influence consumer attitude. Data analysis revealed that the price of a product has an effect on consumer's attitude. Clark and Goldsmith (2005) reported that in some cases consumer preference is influenced by price of the product. Some consumers attach status symbol, class affiliation, social respect and achievement, emotional benefits and achievement to the use of certain brands.

4.0 Research Conclusion

The main objective of this study was to investigate the consumer personality as an attributing factor to increase in sales volume. The case study brand is the blackberry mobile phones which is widely perceived as a status symbol brand anywhere in the world. The study reported an increase growth of this brand across all strata of consumers. Another major findings reported in this study is that the personality of the consumer has a huge influence on the sales volume of the brand under investigation. And this increase is determined by the quality of the product, the price affixed to a product, the sales promotion technique used or the promotion technique in general and the coporate brand. In addition, self-esteem of the consumer was also found to have an effect on their buying decision, hence, consumer motives, experience with the price, attitude towards a product could also influence the sales volume. The authors found that if a positive attitude is shown towards a product, the loyalty to that brand is increased and therefore increase in the purchase of the product will more likely occur. This study provides great potential for companies and consumers towards the adoption of a product. Consumer personality should be reviewed by the organisations in order to know or device more ways by which they could reach out to the consumers. Since in the testing of variables the price suggests high quality which can create consumer loyalty, organisations should set their pricing objectives in conderation of the consumer's motive and personality. In production process of a brand, the manufacturing teeam should ensure that the quality of the product is high and meets the expectations of the consumer and this as an effect on the consumer attitude. The marketing

department and the media sector of the company should set clear goals and plans on the branding of the product and the advertisement to be used to make the product known or introduced to the market. Organisations should develop customer service departments in order to be able to have easy access to the consumer so as to know what product matches their personality for increament in the sales volume.

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