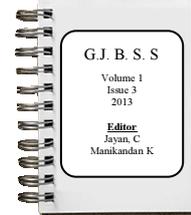




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Personality and Consumer Brand Switching

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Abstract

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Maintaining a brand in marketplace requires brand recognition which has brand franchise attached to it. Reflection of one's personality on to a brand increases the individuals brand loyal behaviour thus switching to the same brand. The extent to which an individual is brand loyal the more the life that brand has in its market place. This is where the relevance of the study, to find the influence of personality on brand switching comes in line. Results indicate that significant relation exist between personality and consumer brand switching. People with activation dimension are least bound to brand switching and try another brand only if they find a better one. They stick to the present brand as they feels it is the best as they are chosen out of individual preferences.

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“What” products and services do we buy “why” do we buy, “how” do we buy, from “where” do we buy, “how” often do we buy, etc are the issues which are dealt with in the discipline of consumer behavior. Consumer behavior can be defined as those acts of individuals {consumers} directly involved in obtaining, using, and disposing of economic goods and services, including the decision processes that precede and determine these acts. Just by human nature, consumers can be spontaneous, unpredictable, and selfish.

In the world we live today, businesses and top marketing executives must understand what differentiates their companies or their products from others and must understand the needs of the consumers in their markets. If they are able to understand their product and consumer's need, then it's very easy for them to develop a strategic plan and create a market niche and develop their customer's base with very good customer relation. The field of consumer behavior as such was evolved from the marketing concept in late 1950s and flourished in mid 1980s. This is supported by the finding that studying of consumers will help firms and organizations improve their marketing strategy by understanding issues such as how consumer's think, feel, reason, and select between different alternatives (e.g., brands, products); how consumer is influenced by his/her environment (e.g., culture, family, signs, media); the behavior of consumers while shopping or making other marketing decisions; limitations in consumer knowledge or information processing abilities influence decisions and marketing outcomes; how consumer motivation, personality and decision strategies differ between products that differ in their level of importance or interest that they entail for the consumer; and how marketers can adapt and improve their marketing campaigns and marketing strategies to more effectively reach the consumer. In addition to this, knowledge of consumer behavior has benefit in the area dealing with the impact of government laws and regulations on consumers, called public policy. It also helps people to increase their personal value.

Role of Personality and Motivation in Consumer Behavior

The term motivation and personality may seem familiar for people, but its significance to consumer behavior is less known, yet increasingly essential in identifying, determining, and understanding insight regarding consumption patterns and preferences.



Personality is defined by Sheth (1999) as “a person’s consistent ways of responding to the environment in which he or she lives”. Personality, he states, is created through the combination of external influences or the social environment and genetic or biological traits of the individual. The combination of social with the individual results to the creation or development of customer personality; consumer personality may be product-or service-oriented, or both. Product oriented consumers tend to “seek relationship” with the seller, producer of the service or manufacturer of the product.

Eastern Perspectives on Personality

Attempts to forge a systematic understanding of human behavior were not originated with contemporary Western psychology. In comparison to Eastern religion, which is the richest source of such formulated psychologies, the formal psychology is merely a recent revision. Quite separate from the vagaries of cosmology and the dogma of beliefs, most major Asian religion have at the core a psychology a little known to the masses of adherent to the faith out of quite familiar to the appropriate “professional” be they Yogis, Monks or Priests.

Conceptual Framework of IAS

According to Mathew (1997), ancient Indian thought, particularly Sankhya-yoga, speaks of three qualities in all nature. Inertia (Tamas), Activation (Rajas) and Stability (Satva). An individual mind who can be described and differentiated from mind or other people in terms of the extent to which it has these three components.

Stability generally involves maximum capacity with minimum of desires, dependence of involvement in the matter of sex or any other activity of work. Inertia involves minimum capacity with wishful thinking. Activation is medium capacity with maximum desire, egoistic effort of indulgence (Mathew, 1997). According to Sankhya concept, the sum of the three qualities is always a constant; differences are in terms of the relative strength of the three components.

The three components of personality are mutually exclusive. Interest in being alone is different from inability to mix with others. Similarly effective action is not the same as impulsivity. Modern concept of introversion involves a mixture of inertia and stability and the concept of extroversion include activation and stability.

Inertia: Root fear (death or survival anxiety, existential insecurity) at this level of type of personality as accompanied by defensive non awareness or inhibition. Inertia is introverted instability or proneness to develop introverted type of maladjustment under stress.

This is characterized by lethargy, laziness, fear, inhibition, anxiety, shallowness of emotions, low initiative, low self confidence, low self concept etc. People having a large degree of inertia, lack energy, they are slow, late, not venturing, shy, withdrawn, and weak willed, suggestible, submissive, masochistic, intropunitive and so on.

They are unable to refuse, assert or argue individually, but are collectivistic and show hysteric collective aggression. They show kind conformity and inability to mix with strangers. They do not have strong emotional ties. They believe in fate and luck (usually external locus of control) and are superstitious. They have least awareness and show poor mental control and they have simple sensuous values only. Mentality characterized by high inertia is most susceptible to dissociation, as the vibrations are not well integrated by the unities overall awareness process.

Activation: This is characterized by restless over activity, controlled energy, high drive and inability to remain alone or silent. Activation is extraverted instability on proneness to develop extroverted type of maladjustment under stress.



Persons having high activation are compulsive mixers, impatient, hasty, risk taking, rash, adventurous, analytical etc. They recognize, admire and encourage excellence in others and allow others to keep the benefits and earnings as rightful effort.

They have high degree of practical intelligence. They value power, are autocratic, need rigid external moral control, have conflicts and so on. They believe in self efforts and freedom of will (usually internal locus of control).

Stability: Stability is characterized by high self awareness, sensitivity, freedom, flexibility, and control. Stability is stress tolerance and freedom from maladjustment tendencies.

Person having a high degree of stability can be fast or slow, can work or rest as they choose or as situation demands. They can be very sociable or be alone with equal ease. They can assert if they want to do. They are wise, mature and intuitive. They are creative, self actualizing, holistic, balanced, even tempered and dispassionate.

They are capable of the deepest (at all the same time detached) emotion and their predominant emotion is altruistic love or compassion. They are relaxed, peaceful, self-sufficient, democratic, fair, unselfish, tolerant, altruistic, transcending, and broadminded. They have a natural moral sense based on mature love. Their autonomy operates within their awareness of inherent morality. They believe in the value of self-effort, which result from will, which in turn is regarded as part of the pre-dominated chain of events in nature. They are impulsive. The two sub-types are artistic and philosophical.

The pure 'S' type person has a very well integrated personality. He may be able to function differently in different situations, but with full control, awareness and memory. From the holistic point view, cognitive (intellectual), affective (emotional) and volitional (will) capacities are mutually dependent and a state person has all these potentialities though the actual skills (ex-mechanical ability or musical talent) he has depend on specific ancestral experiences as well as practical training. Usually high stability person find more satisfaction in actualizing their artistic or philosophical potentialities than in exercising practical skills in dealing with material things.

Brands

Brands were born with the 19th century advent of packaged goods. Industrialization moved the production of many household items, to centralized factories. These factories needed to sell their products nationwide, to a customer base that was only familiar with goods .They had to convince public that their product was just as trustworthy and this lead to the practice we now know as branding.

A brand is a name or trademark connected with a product or producer. Brands have become increasingly important components of culture and the economy now being described as "culture accessories and personal philosophies". People engaged in branding seek to develop or align the expectations behind the brand experience creating the impression that a brand associated with a product or service has certain qualities or characteristics that make it special or unique. A brand, is therefore one of the most valuable elements in an advertising theme, as it demonstrates what the brand owner is able to offer in the marketplace.

Maintaining a brand in marketplace requires brand recognition which has brand franchise attached to it. Attitude towards a brand from its experience leads to brands loyalty. Reflection of one's personality on to a brand increases the individuals brand loyal behavior thus switching to the same brand. The extent to which an individual is brand loyal the more the life that brand has in its market place. Brand loyalty is measured in terms of brand preference in which a consumer will choose a particular brand in presence of competing brands, but will accept substitutes if that brand is not available.



Brand Preferences

People begin to develop preferences at a very early age. Within any product category, most consumers have a group of brands that comprise their preference set. These are the four or five up market brands the consumer will consider when making a purchase. When building preferences, the goal is to first get on the consumers preferences sets, and then to move up the sets hierarchy to consumer preference is a battle that is never really won. Definitions of brand preferences are as follows:

- Selection demand for a company's brand rather than a product; the degree to which consumers prefer one brand over another.
- The percentage of people who claim that a particular brand is their first choice.

In every product category, consumers have more choices, more information and higher expectations than ever before. To move consumers from trail to preference, brands need to deliver on their value proposition, as well as dislodge someone else from the consumer's existing preference set.

Preference is a scale and brands move up and down even off that scale with and without a vigilant brand management strategy. Pricing, promotional deals and product availability all have tremendous impact on the position of our brand in the consumer's preference set. If all things are equal, the best defense is to make us more relevant to consumers than the competition. The brands potential can only be fulfilled by continuously reinforcing its perceived quality, up market identity and relevance to the consumer. The same branding activities that drive awareness also drive preferences. And, while awareness alone will not sustain preferences, it improves the brands potential for building and maintaining preference.

With a great story and large enough investments, awareness can be attained rather quickly. It takes time, however, and constant revaluation to build brand preferences. Aristotle professed, "We are what we repeatedly do excellence then is not an act, but a habit". Attaining and sustaining preferences is an important step on the road to gaining brand loyalty. The ability to generate more revenue, gain greater market share and beat off the competition is the reward given by consumer toward particular brand.

Although existing literatures on brand preferences mostly exclude personality variables from the model, a number of marketing scholars acknowledge the significance of consumer personality in brand preferences and choice. McEnally and DeChernatony (1999) argue that "incorporation of personal characteristics into the brand makes it more appealing to consumers who are more likely to affiliate with brands possessing desirable personalities". Phau and Lau (2001) note that "a consumer who prefers a certain brand will perceive that its personality is congruent with his/her preferred personality and will project their preferred personality on to the brand". Recent research by Tsu-Wee (2004) also supported both arguments, indicating that personality congruence has significant impact upon brand preferences. In this study the investigators approach brand preferences in terms of brand switching behaviour and its reason are explored. Also the relevance of personality on brand switching is explored.

Selling products and services through persuasive advertising messages, however, are the products of advertising research. More specifically, consumer research more tries to identify not only the socio-demographic but also psychographic profile of consumers, understanding how people can be persuaded to buy a consumer's products or services. Consumer research looks into motivations and personalities of an individual in terms of consuming or buying a particular product or services, later turning this information into strategies geared at gaining a particular segment of the market that the company targets or centers on. Given the current psychological and sociocultural impacts the use of cosmetics and cosmetic product are not surprising. Advertising and technology create impossible image people in society are then hold

to as standards of beauty. Advertising companies have long known the effects of cosmetics use on members of society. Through their ads they can nudge society into directions of beauty. Advertising companies are not in a position of as much control as they are talked up to be, they can't just come up with new product they want and sell it. The ultimate decision is up to the customer to purchase or not. This is where the relevance of the study, to find the influence of personality on consumer preference comes in line. In Indian context such studies are rarely conducted, especially in Kerala it is the first attempt. Results definitely provide theoretical contribution to the field.

Objective

1. To find out whether there exist any relationship among personality and consumer brand switching.

Hypotheses

1. Significant relationship exists among personality and cause for selecting the brand.
2. Significant relationship exists among personality and reason for sticking to the brand.
3. Significant relationship exists among personality, brand switching and the reason for brand switching.

Method

Participants

The Participants for this study consists of consumers belonging to different districts of Kerala. These participants were selected randomly from the general population. They are potential consumers, that is, they have the power for purchasing. The total number of participants was 394.

Instruments

1. IAS Rating Scale: The scale is a revision of two personality inventories, the Mathew SRT inventory developed in 1972 and Mathew Temperament Scale developed in 1976. The IAS rating scale measures three broad behavioral tendencies (personality components) namely Inertia, Activation and Stability.
2. Consumer Behavior Survey: A survey questionnaire developed by Ramshitha and Manikandan (2012) for the purpose of finding whether the subject had preferences for certain brands of cosmetics. The instrument was named as Consumer Behavior Survey. This instrument was constructed on the basis of some selected consumer preferences with respect to cosmetic usage. The instrument consisted of items beginning with whether the participants likes and uses cosmetics and then enquiring the reason if they do or do not. They were further asked about brand switching and the reasons behind their behavior, whether they try another brand or not were identified.
3. Personal Information Schedule: To know the personal information a schedule was also used. In this the respondent's age, sex, profession, marital status and religion were gathered.

Procedure

The essential data were collected from all over Kerala, including participants from all districts of Kerala State. The participants were contacted in person and had a discussion about the purpose of the study as well as importance of the information required for this investigation.

The investigator introduced to the participants and explained the various aspects of the study and solicited their kind cooperation for the same. Then the instruments, IAS Rating Scale

and Consumer Behavior Survey along with Personal Information Schedule were given to the participants. In the IAS Rating scale the participants were told to rate each scale which has three alternatives. They were told to be as objective as possible. Instructions are clearly written in the instrument. Clarifications were done as and when needed. After filling the instruments were collected back. The collected answer sheets were checked for comprehensiveness and the data sets were collected according to the principles of survey research method. The scores of different variables under study and other demographic variables of each subjects collected through background information schedule were organized in a systematic order. Then the data were fed into spreadsheet for verification and for further statistical analysis.

Results and Discussion

In any type of investigation analysis and interpretation is the key aspect and it is the way to test the hypothesis formulated by the investigator. The different methods of statistics were used to find out the relationship between personality and consumer brand switching, and the results of these statistical analyses were discussed. In order to reach at the major objective it is essential to find out the relationship between personality and cause for selecting a brand, reason for sticking to a particular brand.

Table 1

Personality and cause for selecting a brand

Codes of Variables*	Personality			Total
	Inertia	Activation	Stability	
0	34	23	82	139
	24.5%	16.5%	59.0%	100.0%
	51.5%	13.7%	51.3%	35.3%
1		2	4	6
		33.3%	66.7%	100.0%
		1.2%	2.5%	1.5%
1,2	1	2		3
	33.3%	66.7%		100.0%
	1.5%	1.2%		0.8%
2	24	97	63	184
	13.0%	52.7%	34.2%	100.0%
	36.4%	57.7%	39.4%	46.7%
2,1		1		1
		100.0%		100.0%
		0.6%		0.3%
2,3	1	2	2	5
	20.0%	40.0%	40.0%	100.0%
	1.5%	1.2%	1.3%	1.3%
3	6	41	9	56
	10.9%	72.7%	16.4%	100.0%
	91.1%	23.8%	5.6%	14.3%
Total	66	168	160	394
	16.8%	42.6%	40.6%	100.0%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

*Note: 0=No response, 1=Social pressure, 2=Individual preference, 3=Advertisements

To determine the reason behind the selection of a particular brand and to understand the personality dimension of consumers who select the brands accordingly cross tabulation was done. It is observed from the table 1 that a high percentage; about 52.70% of the responses are given as due to the individual preference of the subject and next to it is the advertisements influence on consumers. This result are shown by individuals of activation dimension which is reflected in their personality trait where they are described to be having internal locus of control, analytical, efficient in planning practically, passionate, ego-involved and most importantly adventurous and risk taking behavior. They believe in their decisions and try out different options available to them. While looking into the choices made by people with inertia personality traits it is found that 91.1% of responses belong to the cause stating that they have chosen a brand due to social pressure. This result goes in hand with the fact that an individual with inertia personality trait is submissive and suggestible under social pressure. While analyzing the responses made by people with activation characteristics it is found that 57.7% of them select a particular brand out of individual preference which stands in line with the fact that activation dimension people are those who believe in their own self efforts.

Table 2

Personality and Brand switching

Personality	Brand switching	
	Yes	No
Inertia	5	29
	14.71%	85.29%
	7.35%	14.43%
Activation	43	109
	28.29%	71.71%
	63.24%	54.23%
Stability	20	63
	24.10%	75.90%
	29.41%	31.34%

Table 3

Personality and the reason for brand switching

Personality	Not satisfied with product	Found a better one	Others
Inertia	1	2	2
	20.00%	40.00%	40.00%
	11.11%	5.71%	14.29%
Activation	8	24	6
	21.05%	63.16%	15.79%
	88.89%	68.57%	42.86%
Stability	—	9	6
		60.00%	40.00%
		25.71%	42.86%

Cross tabulations were conducted to find out whether the consumers try out another brand and if so the personality dimension to which those who do so belong to. Individuals with activation dimension stands out in their score with 71.71% of them not trying another brand and this results is strongly supported by them saying the reason to stick to the present as

they consider the brand they choose as the best. The results of why do they try another brand gave another interesting result as people with activation dimension try only if they make sure that they have come across a better brand than the one they are presently using. People with activation characteristics are those who stand rigid in their decisions, they believe in themselves and their choices but at the same time they are ready to change them once they are fully convinced that they have better choices in front of them.

Table 4

Reason for sticking to present brand

Category	Frequency	Percent
0	142	36
1	99	25.1
1,2	1	0.3
1,2,7	1	0.3
1,3	2	0.5
1,4	2	0.5
1,5	5	1.3
1,7	3	0.8
2	17	4.3
2,3	1	0.3
2,5	1	0.3
3	19	4.8
3,4	1	0.3
3,5	3	0.8
4	3	0.8
5	38	9.6
5,4	1	0.3
5,7	4	1
6	13	3.3
6,7	1	0.3
7	36	9.1
7,5	1	0.3
Total	394	100

Note:1=It is the best, 2=Impressed by their advertisements, 3=Acceptance in the society, 4=symbol of status, 5=Gives feeling of esteem and satisfaction, 6=its utilized by majority, 7=Used to the same brand

The frequency was calculated for finding what made consumers to stick to their present brand. Results clearly indicate that majority choose for the option it is the best thing. This 25.00% was supported by others who have chosen the same reason along with other options such as it gives a feeling of esteem and satisfaction; it gives acceptance in the society. Next highest chosen reason is that using their preferred brand gives a feeling of self esteem and satisfaction.

To find out association between people with which personality dimensions reason for sticking to their brand alike cross tabulation was conducted. Even though most of responses were that because it is the best brand it was people with activation dimension who showed a considerable higher value. The next highest frequency was for the reason that using them gives a feeling of self esteem and satisfaction this was also given by activation people. Thus indicating that people with activation dimension attach their personality to products once they are satisfied with them.

Conclusion

The major objective of the present study is to find out whether there exist any relationship among personality and consumer brand switching. The researcher further investigated the relationship between personality and the cause for selecting a particular brand, cause for sticking to brand also the relationship between personality, brand switching and the reason for brand switching were explored.

People with activation dimension are least bound to brand switching and try another brand only if they find a better one. They stick to the present brand as they feel it is the best as they are chosen out of individual preferences. People with inertia personality traits are those who are selecting a brand out of social pressure and it is evident in them being submissive and suggestible.

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