

Personality Attributes as Predictors of Nigeria Customer Satisfaction towards Automobiles

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ABSTRACT : *This study examined personality attributes as predictors of customers' satisfaction towards automobile. The study made use of two hundred 235 participants in which 110 of the participant were selected from University of Ibadan and the remaining 125 subject were selected from Ekiti State University. The participants are individuals owing and using functional cars. The instrument used in this study was a self-developed customer's satisfaction questionnaire and the Big 5- personality inventory developed by Rammstedt and John (2007). It is a 10-item short version of the Big Five Inventory. The independent-test was employed in analyzing hypothesis one and one way ANOVA was used to analyze hypothesis two and three. The result revealed that some level of personality dimension have significant effect on consumer satisfaction towards automobile: customers high in agreeableness and customers low in neuroticism are those found to be more satisfied. There was no significant influence of type of cars and age of car owners on consumer satisfaction towards automobile. Findings were discussed in the light of the hypothesis tested and recommendations were made to pave way for further research.*

KEY WORDS: *Personality, consumer Behaviour, Satisfaction,*

I. INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is major consumers of automobile. Statistics from the National Automobile Council reveals that Nigerians spend about #600 billion (about \$3.83 billion) annually on the importation of vehicles. For instance, about 50,000 new vehicles and 150,000 used vehicles were imported into the country in year 2012 (NAC, 2013). There has been a surge in car importation into the country since 1999, the News Agency of Nigeria said port figures shows that new vehicle imports increased to 47,267 units between January and November of 2012 as compared to 32,634 units of the same period in 2011. These figures do not include automobiles that are locally manufactured or assembled. Considering the huge investment in automobiles by Nigerians, the question that comes to mind is whether the consumers actually get value for their purchases i.e., are the Nigeria consumers satisfied with their automobiles. Consumer satisfaction is generally reiterated to be a good positive feeling that one get when a product meets one's expectations. It is a highly personal assessment that is greatly influence by customer expectations. It is a judgment that a product or service feature, or the product or service itself, provides (or is providing) a pleasurable level of consumption related fulfilment, including levels of under- or over fulfilment (Oliver, 1997). Manifestation of product satisfaction and services vary from person to person due to differences in individual characteristics. Your report about how satisfied you are is based on your evaluation of the product and services. Satisfaction is also described as an act of fulfillment, gratification, confident acceptance of something as satisfactory, dependable true etc. However, people buy products for their own reasons and use and not for the marketer's or producers reasons. The state of satisfaction depends on a number of both psychological and physical variables which correlate with satisfaction behaviors such as return and recommend rate.

Fournier (1998) posited that consumers (customer) build an individual relationship with products/brand they purchase in much the same way that people initiate a relationship with other people. Customers usually have a perception of who they are and what will enhance them: in order words they value and build a relationship with the products and service that suit and promote a positive and pleasant self image. However, Blackston (1991) suggested that consumer-brand relationship is a combination of cognitive, emotional, behavioral processes that occur between consumer/customer and brands (product producers). Sirgy (1982) therefore explained that consumers (customers) who perceive a product in age to be consistent with their actual self – concept (self worth) are most likely to be satisfied when using the product. If the product evaluation suits or complement the customers perceived self concept, the customers would be satisfied but if otherwise happened, then dissatisfaction results. Greaff (1996) analyzed that consumers give more positive evaluation of brands if it correlate with their own self - image. It is however believed that most customers give attention to products, models that they perceive at a glance could be suiting to them or their relative.

Customer satisfaction is believed to have a direct influence on customer loyalty (Oliver, 1997) and repurchase behaviors (Reinartz & Kumar, 2002). Heskett et al; (1997) suggested that customer loyalty should increase rapidly after customer satisfaction passes a certain threshold. Consistent with this “threshold” argument, it has been found that “delighted” customers have a much higher probability of retention than those who are merely “satisfied” (Oliver 1997). Consumers purchases product that reflects their personality (Sarker, Bose, Polit and Haque 2013). The type of house, cloth, furniture, appliances, automobiles, jewelry that people buy may reflect their personality. Personality encompasses a person’s relatively stable feelings thoughts and behavioural patterns, it entails those internal stable factors that make people systematic and predictable different from one another (Furham and Heaven 1999) Pastorino and Doyle – Portillo (2006) defined personality as the unique collection of attitude, emotions, thoughts, habits, impulses and behaviour that defines how a person typically behaves across situations. Furthermore, it could be viewed as the sum of biologically based and learnt behaviour which forms the person’s unique responses to environment stimuli (Ryckman 1982). Some research studies have been conducted to examine the role of personality and consumer satisfaction. For example, Kamran (2011) conducted a study titled “personality influenced on customer satisfaction on services” using two services (credit cards services, [v = 220] and mobile phone [n = 588]). Consistent support was found for the effect of personality traits on customer satisfaction pattern among mobile phone and credit card uses. The personality factor agreeableness emerged as a single predictor for customer satisfaction for both services. Work done by Ogundele & Shegel (2003) on the influence of personality traits, educational status on the customers’ satisfaction among oceanic bank customers in Ibadan shows that extroverted customers were observed to be satisfied than introverted customers.

In another study on consumers feelings, attitude and behavior towards automobiles conducted by Mooradian and Oliver (1997). They established that extraversion and neuroticism are found to correlate strongly with customer’s satisfaction and post purchase behavior. High scores on neuroticism represent individual differences in the tendency to experience distress, nervous tension, depression, guilt, low self-esteem, poor control of impulses and somatic complaints. Extraversion is distinguished by venturesomeness, affiliation, positive affectivity, energy, ascendance and ambition. Matzler, Faullant, Renzl, and Leiter (2005) supported the link between personality traits, consumption based emotions and self-satisfaction. They used sub-scales from the NEO-FFI questionnaire, capturing extraversion and neuroticism. Results showed that extraversion was directly related to positive consumption emotions and neuroticism predicted negative consumption-based emotions. They not only confirm previous findings that emotions play a crucial role in satisfaction, but also reveal their dependence on customers’ individual predisposition. They suggest that a direct relationship between personality and self-satisfaction does exist, mediated by the system of emotions.

In another study, Matzler, Bidmon and Grabner-Krauter (2006) found a positive relationship between openness and extroversion, and the perceived hedonistic value of a product. Additionally they stressed that extroversion is positively related to positive affective responses and that a positive indirect relationship exists between extroversion and brand affect. Park and Lee (2005), in their research titled “congruency between brand personality and self image and the mediating roles of satisfaction and consumers brand relationship on brand loyalty” stated that the congruency between brand personality and self image increases not only consumer satisfaction but also the consumer – brand personality, they show a preference for different brands. The car image is one of many features intended to attract young adult which actually does (87 percent of the sample was 20 – 49 years old, which is the population sample in the study). The conclusion attest that consumer prefer products and brands with the brand personality that matches his/her own self – image. Plummer (1985) also conducted a study and asserted that one component of brand image is his personality or character of the brand itself. He summarized his research demonstrating that brands can be characterized by personality descriptions such as youthful, colorful and gentle. Greaff (1996) analyse the influence of congruency between brand – image and self image and brand evaluation relation to promotion message. “He suggested that under the promotion message that reminds consumers of their own self image. In one of his other study that employed bear product brands he established that positive brand attitude and purchase intension increase as the congruence between self image and brand image increase (Greaff 1997)”.

Studies such as Sirgy et al, (1997) have explained that consumer behaviour is grossly influenced by personality. He found out that consumers often have a preference for and chose products and brands that have higher versus lower levels of congruity with their personality. It is believed that two basic driving forces can be seen at work in the self concept aspects of self congruity. Individuals are either trying to preserve self concept via self consistency motivation or enhance self concept via self-esteem motivation (Hong & Zinkhan 1995). From the review of empirical studies, it can be observed that only very few studies have been conducted on the role of personality in consumer automobile satisfaction and the few were not conducted in Africa less of

Nigeria. This necessitates the need to investigate the role of personality as predictors of consumer satisfaction among automobile users in Nigeria.

II. RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS:

There will be a significant effect of the personality dimensions on consumer satisfaction towards automobiles.

There will be a significant influence of type of cars used by customers on customer's satisfaction.

There will be a significant influence age on customer's satisfaction towards automobile.

III. METHODS

Design

The research design utilized for this study is a cross-sectional survey method which helped to gather data concerning the variable of interest from a representative subset of the population. The independent variable is personality dimensions which is categorized into 5: extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, openness to experience and neuroticism: and the dependent variable is customer's satisfaction.

Settings:

This study was carried out in two universities: Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti and in the University of Ibadan, Ibadan. This setting was chosen based on the fact that there is easy accessibility to the participants of interest. The participants are individuals owning and using a functioning car.

Participants:

A total of 235 participants were selected as a representative sample for gathering data out of which 110 of the participant were selected from University of Ibadan and the remaining 125 subject were selected from Ekiti State University. They comprises of people who presently owned and using cars. Their age range is between 18 to 70 years. The participants include 118 males and 82 females to make a total of 200, meaning 59% males and 41% females. 28.5% are between the ages of 18-30, 43% are between the ages of 30-40, 23% are between the ages of 40-50, 4% are between the ages of 50-60 and 1.5% is between the ages of 60 and above. In the occupation status, 30% are self employed, 56% are civil servants and 14% are private workers. 6% have NECO, 11.5% have either NCE or OND, 55.5% have either a Bsc or an HND, 20.5% have masters and 6.5% have a PhD. 33% use a BMW, 23.5% use a Honda, 18.5% use a Nissan, 4.5% use a Mercedes Benz, 1.5% use a Volvo, 1% use a Chevrolet, 1% use a Kia, 1.5% use a Peugeot and 22.5% use a Volkswagen.

Measures

Consumer automobile satisfaction was measured using the Customer's Automobile Satisfaction Questionnaire developed by the researchers for the purpose of this study. It investigates customer's preferences about their cars. It consists of 15 items, measuring satisfaction level of customers. It is a 5- point scale response categorized into the following; very satisfied (5), satisfied (4), undifferentiated (3), dissatisfied (2), and strongly dissatisfied (1). A pre-test study conducted indicated a reliability coefficient of 0.74, which indicate it consistency in it measurement of customer's satisfaction. The scoring procedure of this scale indicated that the higher the score the higher the level of satisfaction Personality was measured using the big-five personality inventory (BFI- 10) which consist 10 items only. It was developed by Rammstedt and John (2007). The 10 items short version personality inventory measures five (5) dimension of personality which is: Openness to experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism. It is a 5-point rating scale, ranging from disagree strongly to agree strongly. Extraversion was assessed with items 1R, 6 (R denotes reverse- section). Agreeableness: 2, 7R. Conscientiousness: 3R, 8. Openness to experience: 5R, 10 and Neuroticism: 4R, 9. 10 items short version Big five was constructed and comparison was made in USA and Germane. The first US sample (US-1) consisted of 726 students (68% females; mean ageD21 Years) at a large public university, whereas the second (US-2) consisted of 726 students at a Private university (56% females; mean ageD18). The first German sample (G-1) consisted of 457 students (56% females; mean ageD25) and the second (G-2) of 376 students (66% Females; mean ageD24). A third US sample (US-3), originally collected by Gosling, Kwan, and John (2003a), consisted of dog owners (ND75) who rated themselves on the BFI and were rated by a friend, thus providing peer rating data to examine external validity. Test-retest Correlations for the BFI-10 scales in the two retest samples mean stability coefficients were .72 in US-1, .78 in G-1, and .75 overall, suggesting that the BFI-10 scales achieved respectable levels of stability over 6-8 weeks in both cultures. The reliability reported were; extraversion traits = .79. Agreeableness = .69. Conscientiousness = .70. Neuroticism = .76. and Openness to experience = .65. The scoring procedure of this scale indicated that the higher the score above the global means score on each subscale, the higher such individual's traits on that particular personality factor vice-versa.

Procedure

The researcher produced a total of 260 copies of the questionnaire and administered them to the selected representative subjects. The questionnaires given to respondents were retrieved as soon as respondents gave their responses. Some returned the questionnaire few days later after they had given their responses. A total of 244 questionnaires were retrieved out of which 235 were properly filled and consider good for analysis. The whole the process of administration took a week to complete.

Data Analysis:

Data were examined using the independent t-test ANOVA in other to find significant differences. The result of the statistics is presented in the next chapter.

IV. RESULTS

Hypotheses one which states that there will be a significant influence of the various personality dimensions on customer’s satisfaction towards automobile was tested using the independent t-test. The result is presented in the table below.

Table 4.1: Summary of a t-test table showing the effect of the various personality dimensions on customer’s satisfaction towards automobile.

Variable	N	\bar{X}	SD	SE	df	T	P	
Introversion	Extroverts	95	62.96	8.98	.92	233	.39	<.05
	Introverts	105	63.45	8.41	.82			
Agreeableness	High	93	64.55	8.51	.88	233	2.04	>.05
	Low	107	62.06	8.67	.84			
Openness to Experience	High	112	62.89	8.49	.80	233	.59	<.05
	Low	88	63.63	8.92	.95			
Neuroticism	High	89	61.73	8.09	.87	233	2.14	>.05
	Low	113	64.35	8.95	.84			
conscientiousness	High	108	63.57	7.68	.74	233	.63	<.05
	Low	92	62.79	9.72	1.07			

The above table shows that there is no significant difference between extroverts and Introverts on consumer satisfaction towards automobile $t(198) = .39, P>.05$, Also there is significant influence of openness to experience on consumer satisfaction towards automobile, which means there is no difference between customers high and low in openness to experience on customer’s satisfaction, $t(198) = .59, P>.05$ and there is no significant difference between customers high and low in conscientiousness on consumer’s satisfaction towards automobile $t(198) = .63, P>.05$, but the result shows that there is a significant effect of agreeableness on consumer satisfaction. It shows that those that are high in agreeableness have higher customer’s satisfaction than those that are low in agreeableness, $t(198) = 2.04, P<.05$. The table also reveal a significant effect of neuroticism on consumer satisfaction, those that score low in neuroticism are more satisfied with their automobile than those that score high $t(198) = 2.14, P<.05$. The above table shows that hypothesis one which states that there will be a significant influence of the various personality dimensions on customer’s satisfaction towards automobile was partially supported. Hypothesis two which states that there types of car used by customers will significantly influence consumer satisfaction was tested using the one way analysis of variance. The result is presented in the table below

Table 4.2: An ANOVA summary table showing the influence of car brand on consumer satisfaction toward automobile.

Brand of Car	N	\bar{X}	SD	Group effect	P
	66	63.67	8.24	F(9,190)=.09	>.05
agen	25	64.84	7.90		
	6	62.67	6.38		
	47	61.59	9.32		
	37	64.08	7.69		
es-Benz	9	60.67	15.43		
	3	58.67	9.29		
et	2	69.00	1.41		
	2	56.00	1.41		
t	3	68.67	1.52		

This table above shows that there is no significant influence of car brands on consumer satisfaction. It implies that hypothesis two is therefore rejected, $F(9,190) = .09, P > .05$.

Hypothesis three which state that there will be a significant influence of consumer age on consumer satisfaction towards automobile was tested using the one way analysis of variance. The result is presented in the table below.

Table 4.3. An ANOVA summary table showing the influence of consumer age on consumer satisfaction toward automobile.

This table above shows that there is no significant influence of consumer age on consumer satisfaction towards

Age	N	\bar{X}	SD	Group effect	P
	55	63.14	8.49	F (4,195)= 1.72	>.05
	86	63.94	7.69		
	46	61.02	9.55		
	9	64.56	13.11		
	4	70.75	2.63		

automobile. It implies that hypothesis three is therefore rejected $F(4,195) = 1.72, P > .05$.

V. DISCUSSION:

In this research, we investigated three major questions: first, does the various personality dimensions influence customer's satisfaction towards automobile? Second, does customer satisfaction differs across car type? And third, what role does age plays in consumer satisfaction towards automobile. The result reveals that only two of the five personality dimensions actually influence customer satisfaction towards automobile. There was no observable differences between introverts and extroverts on their satisfaction. This means that both introverts and extroverts are satisfied similarly by their cars after evaluation and comparison of prior beliefs, expectation and performance. This may be as a result of the proper enquiry made by introvert and extrovert customers about the particular car that will appropriately satisfy their needs and expectation. There is a possibility that introverts and extroverts don't even purchase the same type of cars based on personality differences. The cheerful, enjoying, outgoing characteristics of an extrovert traits and also the moody trait of an introverts might have been an important factor in purchase decision rather than in satisfaction. The outcome of this research is at variance with some other researches such as Mooradian and Oliver (1997) that established that extraversion is one of the variable found to correlate strongly with customer's satisfaction and post purchase behavior. It was asserted that the sociability and outgoing characteristics of an extrovert mostly contribute to their satisfactory level since what they were motivated to purchase satisfies their expectation to a relative degree. Matzler, Faullant, Renzl, and Leiter (2005) also conducted a research supporting the link between personality traits, consumption based emotions and self-satisfaction. They used sub-scales from the NEO-FFI questionnaire, capturing extraversion and neuroticism. Results showed that extraversion was directly related to positive consumption emotions and neuroticism predicted negative consumption-based emotions. Also, Matzler, Bidmon, and Grabner-Krauter (2006) found a positive relationship between openness and extraversion, and the perceived hedonistic (pleasure) value of a product. Additionally they stressed that extraversion is positively related to positive affective responses and that a positive indirect relationship exists between extraversion and brand affect. The result reveals that those high in agreeableness are more satisfied. This implies that significant differences ensure between customers high in agreeableness and customers low in agreeableness which is as a result of differences in agreeableness traits. Customers high in agreeableness are known to strive to maintain good social relations and are by nature courteous, good-natured, cheerful, affable, kind, trusting and tolerant (Costa & McCrae, 1985) while customers with low agreeableness traits are known to be distant, unfriendly and uncooperative. They however do not show positive characteristics. Even though the customer bought what they wanted and assume would satisfy their need and expectations there is still an observable difference between both agreeableness traits which can be attributed most likely to the verse differences between those high and low in agreeableness. Customers with high agreeableness traits are more satisfied because of the pleasant, tolerant and good-nurtured characteristics in them while the unsatisfactory discovery of those low in agreeableness may be as a result of their intolerance nature.

In support of this findings is the work of Kamran Siddiqui's (2011) on "personality influenced on customer satisfaction on services" using two services credit cards services and mobile phone. Consistent support was found for the effect of personality traits on customer satisfaction pattern among mobile phone and credit card uses. The personality factor agreeableness emerged as a single predictor for customer satisfaction for both services. Customers relatively high in agreeableness appear to establish a customer- brand relationship or brand image and customers self-image relationship due to their trusting, kind, and tolerant nature. Also, Sirgy et al, (1997) in his stereotype of a typical user of brand. He found out that consumers often have a preference for and chose products and brands that have higher versus lower levels of congruity. It is believed that two basic driving forces can be seen at work in the self concept aspects of self congruity. Individuals are either trying to preserve self concept via self consistency motivation or enhance self concept via self-esteem motivation (Hong & Zinkhan 1995). This shows that agreeableness traits predict customers' satisfaction towards products and services. There is no significant difference between consumers that are high or low in openness to experience on customer's satisfaction toward automobile. It implies that no significant difference is found between customers high and low in openness to experience on customer's satisfaction toward their car. In other words, both are similarly satisfied which could be due to the congruency of the product they both purchased and believe will suit and satisfy their personality (self-image) and expectation.

In support of the above claim however, Greaff (1996) in his analyzes of the influence of congruency between brand – image and self-image and brand evaluation relation to promotion message, suggested that under the promotion message that reminds consumers of their own self-image, consumers give more positive evaluations of brands congruent with their own self-image. Also, Park and Lee (2005), in their research titled "congruency between brand personality and self-image and the mediating roles of satisfaction and consumers brand relationship on brand loyalty" stated that the congruency between brand personality and self-image increases not only consumer satisfaction but also the consumer – brand personality. They show a preference for different brands. This confirms the fact that customers developed preferences for product that they believed would satisfy their expectations. Both customers high and low in openness to experience purchased what they wanted and gets similar feeling of satisfaction as stated by expectancy theory that individual's actions, decisions ,reactions, expectation are based on the expected outcome or desired reward. Therefore, they were motivated to purchase the car they purchased based on expected reward, they however have a prior understanding of the features of the product or brand they want purchase. In relation to this is Plummer's (1985) study who conducted a study and asserted that one component of brand image is his personality or character of the brand itself. He summarized his research demonstrating that brands can be characterized by personality descriptions such as youthful, colorful and gentle. The features and brand characteristics are attributes that contribute to expectations and motivates customers to purchase the product. Therefore the customers were similarly satisfied with the product and their expectations on self-image were also met.

Neuroticism was found to significantly influence consumer satisfaction with automobiles. Consumers that are low in neuroticism are found to be more satisfied than consumers that are high in neuroticism. Low neurotics are stable, calm, contented, and unemotional while an individual high in neuroticism is tensed, anxious, and nervous. We would acknowledge that the significant differences observed in the result can be attributed to the differences in traits and may rather than differences in the perceived performance of the product by the customers. The work of Mooradian and Oliver (1997) on consumers feeling, attitude and behavior towards automobile found out that neuroticism is among the personality dimension that correlate strangely with customers satisfaction and post purchase behaviour. Finally on the personality dimensions, there was no significant difference observed between both customers high and low in conscientiousness on customer satisfaction. However, both customers are similarly satisfied with their car. This proves that the product, their cars suit or meets their expectations similarly as expected it would by them. Conscientious customer traits are organized, systematic and punctual. Similarly, satisfaction could be due to the fact that irrespective of their personality influences, they had their preferences and aimed for it and are however satisfied because the product satisfies their expectation. This findings is somehow surprising because the personality characteristic differences between the high and low conscientious should have make a significant difference in their satisfaction.

Hypothesis two which state that types of car will significantly influence customers' satisfaction towards automobile was found not significant. This means that no significant differences were found in the various types of car on satisfaction of customers. Customers believe and a form of expectation of the kind or type of car that will satisfy and suit their needs, therefore inquire and purchase the exert product that is expected would satisfy and suit their need and self esteem or concept. However, significant differenced was not observed because the type of car purchased by customers meets it customers expectations as believed it will. In support of the above explanation, work done by Joanna and Robert (2007) measuring customer's satisfaction and loyalty in the automotive industry it was concluded that the compact cars owners, mid-size owners and full size and large

cars owners are customers that were motivated based on their needs and expectations. Therefore are satisfied with the car they use since it meets their needs and satisfies their expectations. Hypothesis three which state that there will be a significant influence of age on customer satisfaction towards automobile was found not significant thereby rejected. No observable difference in age was found to predict customer satisfaction towards automobile. This however means each of the customers of varying age group know what they want, purchased and are similarly satisfied by the car they use. Each went ahead to purchase what they expect will be of value to them and they were not disappointed. Also it was found in the work done by Joanna and Robert (2007) measuring customer's satisfaction and loyalty in the automotive industry that the youngest and oldest customers are most often driving compact cars as they are comfortable size for their two person household and observed it is also because of their age. They probably felt what they needed was a small car that will fulfill their purpose (ease of movement) only. Although considering the nature of the youth and their constant eagerness for change, one would have expected the elderly people to be more satisfied with their cars than the younger generation.

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