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# UNILAG JOURNAL OF BUSINESS



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## **An Application of Aaker's Methodology to the Measurement of Customer Perception of Brand Personality of Lagos State as a Tourist Destination.**

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### **Abstract**

*Anthropomorphism is the belief that brands can possess human characteristics, which raises a tendency to assign human traits to inanimate objects. It is on this premise that Brand Personality takes its roots. Brand Personality has been defined as 'the set of human characteristics associated with a brand'. Several studies in the measurement and influence of Brand Personality abound, however there has been a dearth of studies in the Nigerian literature. The objectives of this study were to develop a scale to measure customer perception of Brand Personality using Aaker's methodology, and to apply such scale to measure perception of Brand Personality of Lagos State as a tourist destination. The population of the study was consumers of 8 tourist destinations selected via a preliminary study, while a purposively selected sample of 908 respondents completed self-administered questionnaires developed using Aaker's methodology for measuring Brand Personality. The result was analyzed using Exploratory Factor Analysis resulting in a four-factor model with items loading above 0.50. The scale was adjudged to be stable after carrying out Confirmatory Factor Analysis with all relevant statistics within recommended levels. The findings showed three factors with strong similarity to two of Aaker's Brand Personality Dimensions (Ruggedness and Excitement) and unveiled two more Factors – 'Insightfulness' and 'Bizarreness'. It was concluded that Aaker's methodology is suitable for developing scales to measure consumer perception of Brand Personality in the tourism industry.*

**Keywords:** Brand Personality, Tourism, Confirmatory Factor Analysis, Lagos State, Nigeria.

An Application of Aaker's Methodology to the Measurement of Customer Perception of Brand Personality of Lagos State as a Tourist Destination

### **1.0 Introduction**

Branding concepts are used to predict or shape consumer thinking and attitude towards a product or services. Several previous studies (e.g., Aaker, 1997; Ogilvy, 1983; Plummer, 1985) exists to support the belief that inanimate objects



such as commercial brands can become associated with human characteristics. This phenomenon is known as Brand Personality (Aaker, 1997; Sung & Tinkham, 2005). In psychology, personality traits are most commonly associated with living creatures, however, customers can also imbue brands with human personality traits (Levy, 1985), sometimes even giving unique human names to the brands they own.

Brand personality traits differ from implicit human personality traits in terms of how they are created (Aaker, 1997). Human personality traits are inferred from genetic and environmental factors (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1985), sex differences (Budaev, 1999; Costa & McCare, 1992), culture (Markus & Kitayama, 1998), and ethnicity (Griffiths, 1991). In contrast, a brand's personality can be created and shaped by any direct and indirect brand contact that the customer experiences with the brand (Plummer, 1985; Shank & Langmeyer, 1994).

Aaker (1997) demonstrated how brands can be differentially associated with personality traits in customers' minds by identifying five dimensions of brand personality: (i) sincerity, (ii) excitement, (iii) competence, (iv) sophistication, and (v) ruggedness and arguing that they appeared to best explain how American customers perceive brands across symbolic and utilitarian product and service categories. Further studies, (Aaker, Benet-Martinez, & Garolera, 2001) have examined how the symbolic and expressive attributes associated with commercial brands are structured and how this structure varies across various countries with seemingly different cultures and discovered that although the utilitarian attributes of commercial brands tend to exhibit limited variability in meaning or importance across cultures, the symbolic or value-expressive functions (the brand personality) associated with a brand tend to vary to some degree because of the variation of individuals' needs and self-views and socialization. Brand Personality is viewed more as the symbolic (or self expressive) rather than the utilitarian use of a brand (Keller, 1993). Furthermore, this symbolic meaning (often called brand personality) can represent the values and beliefs of a culture (Aaker et al, 2001). By comparing brand personality structures across cultures, values and needs of these cultures may be identified that are relevant to the way brands are perceived. Cultures that are quite different in their values and needs are more likely to exhibit culture-specific differences in brand personality (Hosany, Ekinci & Uysal, 2006, Aaker et al, 2001). Brand Personality has been measured empirically using both quantitative and qualitative research designs (Avis, 2012) with quantitative methods being mostly dominated by Aaker's (1997) methodology (Freling, Crosno & Henard, 2010), and so far only two qualitative methods being found (Avis, 2012). This study in its measurement of Brand Personality within the Nigerian context will adopt the widely used Aaker's (1997) methodology in scale development and measurement.



## 2.0 Statement of the Problem

Tourism has been defined by Cook, Yale and Marqua (2006) as the temporary movement of people to destinations outside their normal places of work and residence, the activities undertaken during their stay in those destinations and facilities created to cater their needs. Tourism contributes significantly to the economy of many countries in the world today and has been considered by Akukwe and Odum (2014) as a major export industry capable of earning significant amounts of foreign exchange. This supports the assertion of Poirier and Dieke (2000) that tourism is second only to oil as the world's leading export commodity as it accounts for global earning of more than \$300 billion dollars or nearly 25% of total world gross national product (GNP) within the last decade. In Africa, Graham-Douglas (2008) identified major tourist destinations as Zimbabwe and Kenya who have about 80% of the tourists coming into their countries primarily to view their wildlife parks. The United Nations World Tourism Organisation, UNWTO (2011) reported international tourist arrivals reaching a record of 982million people, which it identified as an increase of 4.6% in 2010. Okonkwo and Odum (2010) identified some of the benefits of Tourism as employment, conservation of natural resources and infrastructural development, which has increased the focus of many developing countries on tourism development. They however noted that Nigeria has failed to fully exploit its many natural and man-made tourist resources. However it appears, according to Ngoka (2014) that Nigeria's tourism policy seeks to develop a viable tourism industry that would diversify the economy away from the oil sector, while ensuring sustainability of the environment. This study provides insights as to how customers of the tourism industry perceive the industry and also highlights some of the factors that can be manipulated in order to shape this perception, which will be valuable in two major ways. One, it would provide information which will help in developing policies for managing such destinations as products in order to fully develop the sector; two, it would provide a guide for developing communication that will influence customer perception and present the tourist destination in a favourable light.

## 3.0 Objectives of the study

1. This is meant to: develop a scale to measure Brand Personality of Lagos State as a tourist destination using Aaker's (1997) Methodology.
2. Measure consumer perception of the Brand Personality of Lagos State as a tourist destination.

The objectives set resulted in the following research questions:

- RQ1 What is the scale to measure Brand Personality of Lagos State as a tourist destination using Aaker's (1997) Methodology?
- RQ2 What is consumer perception of the Brand Personality of Lagos State as a tourist destination?



#### **4.0. Significance of the Study**

This study contributes to the literature on Brand Personality especially from the point of view of a developing country in three main ways. First, it developed a scale that can be used in the measurement of Brand Personality within the Nigerian cultural context which can be tested for stability in further research. Secondly, it measured customer perception of the Brand Personality of the Lagos State as a tourist destination which provides insightful knowledge that can be used by marketers of tourist destinations in Lagos State in shaping their marketing communication. Thirdly, to the best of the authors' knowledge, this represents the first attempt to measure Brand Personality within the Nigerian context.

#### **5.0 Theoretical Framework**

##### **Aaker's (1997) Brand Personality Theory**

Brand personality has been studied extensively over the past 20 years since Aaker's (1997) seminal work on Dimensions of Brand personality. Several studies exist with widely varying subjects such as studies on Products (Pantinsohier, Decrop & Brée, 2005; Mathur, Jain & Maheswaran, 2012) studies on sports (Carlson, Donovan & Cumisky, 2009) studies on print as well as audio-visual media (Chan-Olmstead & Cha, 2007, 2008; Valette-Florence & De Barnier, 2013) and studies on Tourism (Hosany, Ekinci & Uyal, 2006; De Moya & Jain, 2013; Ekinci, Sirakaya-Turk & Preciado, 2013; Kumar & Nayak, 2014; Hultman, Skarmeas, Oghazi & Beheshti, 2015). However, the more important studies that have formed a basis for this study are the studies on the different cultures found in varying locations. Some of these studies include Geuens, Weijters & De Wulf's (2009) study which employed Aaker's (1997) methodology within the Belgian context in order to see if Aaker's (1997) Brand Personality Scale (BPS) was valid for Belgium. They used a framework of the Brand Identity Theory and Norman's Big Five (Human) Personality Traits Theory as a framework and collected data from 1,235 respondents employing a 40 item questionnaire developed using Aaker's (1997) method. Their findings showed a five-factor structure similar to Aaker's (1997) scale which they however claimed was cross-culturally equivalent. They further tested their scale in the U.S. and across 9 European countries and findings suggest a good model fit.

Glinska and Kilon (2014) also carried out a study to identify desirable traits of Polish City Brand Personality using Aaker's (1997) Brand Personality Dimensions to group, through correspondence analysis, the open ended responses from 200 heads of department of municipal promotion in Polish cities with a population of between 10,000 and 20,000. Their findings supported Usakli and Baloglu (2011) and showed that all dimensions except ruggedness were well represented. They however noticed some adjectives/traits not represented



among Aaker's Dimensions and these were compiled to form three new dimensions within the Polish context.

The foregoing suggests that Aaker's (1997) Dimensions of Brand Personality while considered as being reasonably stable (Avis, 2012) may differ from culture to culture when measured using the same methodology Aaker utilized. It is on this basis that this researcher undertakes this research as an in- depth search of three databases (EBSCO Host, Jstor and Science Direct) which are available to the researcher as at the time of the study do not reveal any previous research carried out within the Nigerian context. Even though literature search revealed that only two (ie. Opoku, Abratt & Pitt, 2006; Pitt, Opoku, Hultman, Abratt, & Spyropoulou, 2007) carried out within the African Context in general.

### **Empirical Review of Scale Development and Brand Personality**

Avis (2012) identified both qualitative and quantitative methods of measuring Brand Personality and concluded that Aaker's (1997) methodology appeared to be the most dominant and stable method of all existing methods. This is supported by several other researchers such as Usakli and Baloglu (2011); Geuens, Weijters & De Wulf (2009); Muniz (2012) who have developed scales of their own using Aaker's Methodology.

In their taxonomy of Brand Personality research, Ivens and Valta (2012) identified various groups of selected research built on Aaker's Methodology. These groups varied in the manner in which Brand personality featured in the research. They identified research on cross- country similarities and differences in customer perception of Brand Personality. Moreover, they linked the brand personality construct to various different outcome variables. This suggests that the Brand Personality construct can be measured in various ways and for varying reasons according to Ivens and Valta (2012). Their findings also provide a basis for the development of a scale within the Nigerian context for a Nigerian tourist destination. This research therefore, attempts to bridge the obvious lacunae of knowledge in the perception of Brand Personality in the Nigerian customer market.

### **6.0 Method**

The study employed a Quantitative Research design, which is supported by Geuens, Weijters and De Wulf (2009). It further used a cross-sectional survey method to gather data.

#### ***Population and Sampling***

The population for this study was consumers of selected tourist destinations in Lagos State. The study employed a blend of non-probabilistic purposive and volunteer sampling techniques to select a sample size of 908 respondents, which was adjudged by the researcher to be adequate as corroborated by Aaker (1997), Muniz (2012) and Usakli and Baloglu (2011) who used such techniques in the measurement of Brand Personality. This study further used the mean of samples



sizes of the above named studies to arrive at a suitable sample size. Tourist destinations were selected using a preliminary study where 500 conveniently selected respondents were asked to mention their most frequently visited tourist destination. All destinations with a frequency of at least 50 mentions were selected.

### ***Instrumentation, Reliability and Validity***

The data was collected using a self-administered survey questionnaire, which was distributed to respondents. The questionnaire was developed in line with Aaker's (1997) methodology where 100 respondents were asked to describe any tourist destination in Lagos State using five traits. This resulted in a total of 500 repetitions and synonyms. The purification procedure was carried out to reduce these by eliminating Aaker's Brand Personality Scale in order to remove any synonyms from Aaker's Scale as the traits developed were considered to exist within the Nigerian context. Left over traits were added to Aaker's (1997) Brand Personality Scale. Two Senior Lecturers in the Marketing field as well as two Experienced Marketing Practitioners then carried out content validity in order to eliminate traits not considered to describe destinations. The resulting scale (See Appendix 1) is adjudged to be a Brand Personality Scale to be used for the measurement of Brand Personality of Tourist Destinations within the Nigerian context. It is expected that it can be replicated in other states of the country. A 7-point Likert scale (1 = 'does not describe it', 2 = 'slightly describes it', 3 = 'moderately describes it', 4 = 'undecided', 5 = 'highly describes it', 6 = 'very highly describes it' and 7 = 'extremely describes it') was used to collect responses about the generated traits; this is in line with Aaker (1997). Reliability of the scale was carried out using Chronbach's Alpha as supported by Aaker (1997) and Muniz (2012).

### ***Data Analysis***

The data was analysed using Exploratory Factor Analysis. This is in line with Aaker's (1997) methodology. Confirmatory Factor Analysis was used to validate findings, as supported by Geuens, Weijters and De Wulf, (2009).

### ***Results and Discussion***

#### ***Demographic Description of Respondents.***

The data collected showed that 421 respondents totaling about 46.4% of total respondents were male while female respondents numbered 487 or 53.6%. About 54.3% of respondents were aged between 18 and 25 while about 44.4% of the respondents were aged between 26 and 45 with only 12 respondents aged over 45 years old. About 63.8% of respondents were single while 764 of respondents were Christian with the remaining being Muslims. Not surprisingly, a larger number of the respondents were from the South-West socio-cultural region totaling about 53.5% closely followed by the South-East region which were about 12.8%. All the other regions were also represented with the North-East accounting for the lowest distribution with only 12 respondents. More than 85%



of respondents were found to be earning less than 90,000 Naira monthly with only 61 people earning above 150,000 Naira.

### ***Exploratory Factor Analysis***

The Exploratory Factor Analysis was carried out using Principal Component Extraction with a VARIMAX Rotation and latent root criterion (eigenvalues >1) (Usakli & Baloglu, 2011), on SPSS 20 Software. All loadings less than 0.5 were suppressed as recommended by Hair, Anderson, Tatham and Black (2005), due to the fact that factor loadings greater than .50 are considered necessary for practical significance. Some traits not loading up to 0.50 were dropped. Table 1 presents the factor loadings.

The results showed a 4-factor model (See Figure 2), which explained about 63% of the Total Variance, which is within accepted levels (Aaker, 1997; Muniz, 2012). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy was sufficient (0.961) suggesting that the Principal Component Analysis was appropriate to use on the data (Usakli & Baloglu, 2011). The Bartlett's Test of Sphericity ( $p$  value < 0.01, Chi Square = 18368.35,  $df$  = 435) suggested that there existed enough correlations between the variables to run a factor analysis and that there was a good model fit (Aaker, 1997).

### ***Brand Personality Factors for Lagos State as a Tourist Destination***

Bearing in mind that many of Aaker's original traits were substituted for synonyms that appeared to have greater relevance within the Nigerian context, the 4-Factor model generated will be compared in terms of meaning conveyed by each factor rather than an actual trait-to-trait comparison.



Rotated Component Matrix <sup>a</sup>				
	Component			
	1	2	3	4
Fun	.848			
Lively	.843			
Interesting	.840			
Exciting	.833			
Wonderful	.740			
Memorable	.730			
Awesome	.722			
Beautiful	.698			
Mind-Blowing	.698			
Cool	.698			
Natural	.674			
Glamorous	.662			
Unique	.617			
Insightful	.590			
Wholesome	.573			
Friendly	.571			
Heartwarming	.564			
Colourful	.536			
Trendy	.528			
Quiet		.779		
Secure		.692		
Peaceful		.645		
Upper-class		.513		
Well-Decorated		.501		
Tough			.790	
Rugged			.763	
Masculine			.626	
Feminine			.624	
Historical				.795
Ancient				.760

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 7 iterations.

Source: Field Survey, 2017



The 4-factor model had two factors that show significant similarity to two of Aaker's (1997) Dimensions. For instance, Aaker's *Excitement* Dimension appeared to be well similar in meaning with one of the Factors generated in the 4- Factor model. This factor has subsequently been named accordingly as *Excitement*. Another similar factor was the *Ruggedness* Dimension, which loaded many original traits. Two entirely new factors however emerged with all their traits loading highly (0.500 – 0.795).

Table 2 KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.961
Approx. Chi-Square		18368.347
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	df	435
	Sig.	.000

Source: Field Survey, 2017

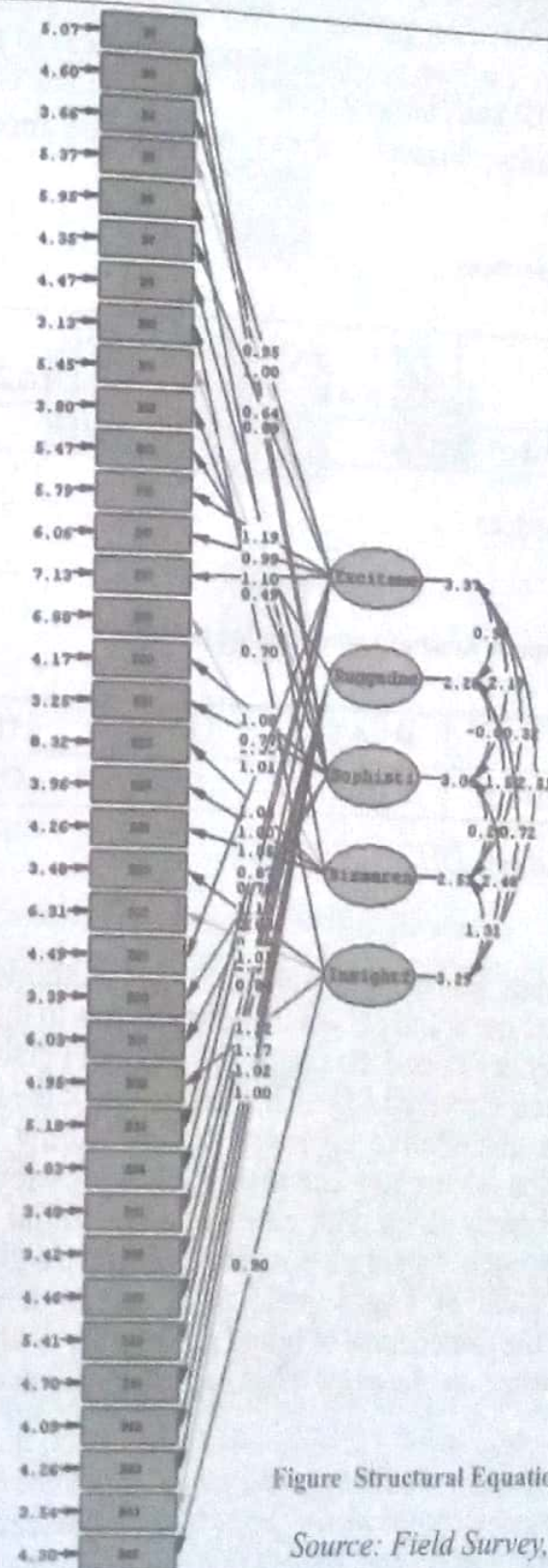
These two factors have been named *Serenity* and *Historic* due to the meanings they appear to connote. All these traits appear to fit rather well with a brand for tourist destination such as one in the tourism industry in which our study belongs. This also lends credence to the claim of a good model fit. Table 3 presents the various factors along with the traits that loaded under them. The reliability test carried out using Cronbach's Alpha showed high reliability (0.951) of the scale (Aaker, 1997).

Table 3: Brand Personality of Lagos State as a Tourist Destination

Brand Personality of Lagos State as a Tourist Destination			
Excitement	Serenity	Sophistication	Historic
Fun	Quiet	Tough	Historical
Lively	Secure	Rugged	Ancient
Interesting	Peaceful	Masculine	
Exciting	Upper-class	Feminine	
Wonderful	Well-Decorated		
Memorable			
Awesome			
Beautiful			
Mind-Blowing			
Cool			
Natural			
Glamorous			
Unique			
Insightful			
Wholesome			
Friendly			
Heartwarming			
Colourful			
Trendy			



The researchers further carried out an ANOVA test using the F-Statistic, which was also found to be significant ( $p < 0.01$ ) which corroborates the goodness of model fit. Individual item reliability also tested highly as the corrected item-total correlation showed high correlations all above 0.50. The findings of these test suggests that the scale is reliable and also suggests good validity.





### Scale Validation

Scale Validation was carried out using Structural Equation Modeling for Confirmatory Factor Analysis on LIREL 8.9. Tables 4 and 5 present the Goodness of Fit statistics.

Findings suggest a good fit. RMSEA score was  $<0.6$  as suggested by Hu & Bentler (1998, 1999). NNFI (TLI) also met Hu & Bentler (1998, 1999) and Muniz (2012) suggestion of  $>0.95$ . CFI was also considered to satisfy Marsh, Hau, and Wen (2004)'s suggestion of  $<0.95$ . The Chi Square Statistic was low and  $\chi^2/df$  ratio was less than 5, which support goodness of fit according to Sung and Tinkham (2005) and Hair *et al* (2005). Thus it can be concluded that there is discriminant validity. Figure 1 above presents the model generated using LISREL 8.9.

Table 4 Baseline Comparisons

Model	NFI Delta1	RFI rho1	IFI Delta2	TLI rho2	CFI
Default model	.93	.93	.96	.96	.96

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 5 Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)

Model	RMSEA	LO 90	HI 90	PCLOSE
Default model	.058	.054	.061	.000

Source: Field Survey, 2017

### Conclusion

The aim of this study was to apply Aaker's (1997) methodology to develop a scale that could evaluate the brand personality dimensions in the Nigerian context. This study successfully developed the Lagos State Brand Personality Scale for Tourist Destinations which answered *RQ1*. The perception of the utility of this scale as an instrument for a quantitative approach for measuring this construct is quite apparent as it helps researchers and marketing professionals in the management and auditing of brands along with current and potential clients. It employed a confirmatory approach, making it possible to achieve a glimpse of the perception that customers have of Lagos State as a tourist destination, enabling the identification of the dimensions of brand personality within the Nigerian context which were labelled as *Serenity, Historic, Ruggedness and Excitement*. This answers *Rq2*.



Findings of this study makes it possible to compare the Nigerian dimensions to those found in other contexts, which underlines the proposition that customer symbols such as brands can carry different and some times varying meanings between cultures thus reconfirming culturally significant meanings of a given culture (Aaker *et al.*, 2001). The findings support that of authors studying across various cultures (Glińska & Kilon, 2014; Hosany, Ekinci & Uysal, 2006; Sung and Tinkham, 2005). Figure 2 presents a graphical representation of the 4-Factor model.

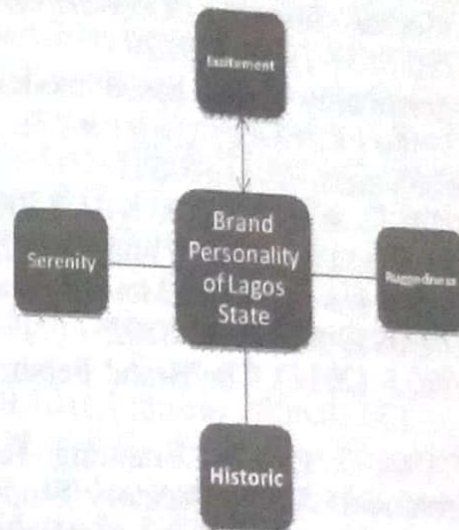


Figure : 4-Factor Model of Brand Personality of Lagos State as a Tourist Destination

Source: Researcher, 2017

### ***Delimitations and Recommendations for Further Research***

This study was constrained to only one state within the Nigerian Federation due to the need to assess a state that had residents from varied cultural extraction in order to be able to compare perception along cultural lines (data not presented here) in order to see if such a perception could exhibit cultural inferences that would indicate a dimensional shift from Aaker's (1997) dimensions. Future research can focus on more states within the country to get a more generalized view of Brand Personality perceptions of the country as a whole. It also concentrated on only one product category in accordance with Glińska & Kilon (2014) while researchers such as Aaker (1997) and Muniz (2012) measured Brand Personality across various product categories. Thus, future research can include other product categories within the Nigerian context.

A purely quantitative approach was adopted in this study, which is in line with Aaker (1997), Aaker *et al* (2001) and Muniz (2012). However, other researchers such as Pitt *et al* (2007) were able to employ a qualitative approach to measuring Brand Personality perceptions of customers. Thus, future research in Nigeria can approach the measurement of Brand Personality perceptions using a qualitative or mixed design.



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