

## **Analytical study of the big five traits theory for apparel consumers segmentation**

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### **Abstract:**

The research is summarized in studying the theory of the big five personality traits and its position between other psychological theories, dividing apparel consumers into segments with common needs and interests and one response in most cases to marketing activities, where the apparel consumers' psychology, identity and personal styles differ, which affect their purchasing preferences as well as their way of making a purchase decision and their position in the fashion cycle.

### **The Big Five personality traits**

The big Five Traits Model are five factors that describe personality, they are used to understand the relationship between personality and different behaviors. It is assumed that these five factors are the main pillars of all personality traits.

The emergence of the theory of the five factors goes back to Fisk, who extracted five factors of personality by analyzing Cattell's sixteen list, then Tupes and Christal also shortened Cattell's factors and also reached five factors, and the five factors model is associated with many names, including Galton, Norman and Digman, Costa, Macree, Goldbareg and many others who talked about the five factors in the period from 1884 AD to the present day, all of them arrived at the five-factor model of personality, even if the names of some factors differ for each other (Kazim, 2002).

### **The big five personality factors are:**

**Neuroticism:** the personality traits that focus on incompatibility, emotional and behavioral traits such as anxiety and depression. (Jaber, 1986)

**Extraversion:** the personality traits that focus on the quantity and strength of interpersonal relationships and interactions, social conservatism and control (Kazim, 2000).

**Openness to experience:** the personality traits that focus on non-authoritarian values and openness to the feelings of others. (Abdel-Aal, 2000). This factor includes persistent pursuit, going for new experiences, intelligence, creativity, openness to others' feelings, curiosity, imagination, and flexibility levels.

**Agreeableness:** the personality traits that focus on the quality of interpersonal relationships, such as sympathy (Kadhim, 2002), and those with high scores are characterized by adaptation, as they put the needs of society and the group ahead of their personal needs.

**Conscientiousness:** the personality traits that focus on self-control, commitment to duties (Kadhim, 2002), and it is a factor of behavioral meaning and individual and social significances. The researcher Al-Sa'ati sees reliance on the theory of the big five traits of personality analysis more than other theories, especially Freud's theory, because it is one of the simplest theories that are easy for even the average person to understand and deal with. Addressing it (Al-Sa'ati, 2012),

Abu Hashem (2007) has Arabized the list of the five major factors of personality prepared by Goldberg (Goldberg, 1992). The reliability and validity of the scale were calculated on a sample of 160 male and female students at Zagazig University, of whom 77 were males and 83 were females. The stability was calculated by the Alpha Cronbach method, and the values of the alpha coefficient ranged from (75.0) to (84.0).

The Psychology of Fashion™ (TPOF Team, 2020), a fashion shopping platform from leading global retailers based on consumer personality ,powered by personality science and artificial intelligence, endorsed the Big Five model in determining consumer personality through a test on the style of clothing for each type of consumer.

#### **Classification of clothing shoppers using the five factor theory:) Teng Wong et al. ,2014)**

In a study by Teng Wang et al. of a sample of 600 shoppers for clothes in a mall in Malaysia, researchers categorized the shoppers into:

**1. Enthusiastic, confident shoppers:** 38% of clothing shoppers in this category score high in all traits except nervousness and agreeableness, they are the highest category in terms of their perception of their personality, they like to make purchases, they are confident in their choices, and they are the target group for buying clothing products new to the market and get promotions.

**2. Moderate, pragmatic shoppers:** The largest percentage is 54%, and they got average rates in the personality traits scale, except for agreeableness, with lower rates. This category is characterized by its practical nature and reasonable considerations in shopping reasons and purchases. Marketers can reach this category by improving the quality of the product with the continued presence of offers and discounts on the prices.

**3. Apathetic shoppers:** The smallest category is 8%, and they have low rates in almost all the personality traits scale, except high rates of neuroticism. These shoppers do not have any purchasing activity except in cases of necessity. The psychological analysis of this category confirms their satisfaction with buying from a certain brand or store, they are considered loyal shoppers, and marketing managers design or segment the brand identity to suit the consumer's personality.

**A comparison between the theory of the big five traits and the theory of self-concept to identify apparel shoppers and purchasing behavior according to the researchers' vision:**

Comparisons	The Big Five Theory	Self-concept theory
Factors influencing purchasing behavior	The main personality traits are neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness	Self-confidence, independence of choices, and fear of being judged by others. Being affected by different social contexts and the desire to build multiple identities (mother-wife-working woman).
The stability of factors affecting purchasing decisions	It is fixed according to the personal differences of individuals throughout their lives and is suitable for the variables of consumers' segmentation.	Variable and multi-dimensional according to the change in the social environment and the change in concepts, interests and different social roles.
Purchasing Motives	Rational, emotional, social and psychological motives according to personality traits.	Desire to improve self-concept and self-image, social identity, belonging, goals, values, and search for meaning through the purchase and use of clothing products.
Dress behavior	An expression of personality traits to fulfill desires and psychological needs.	Depends on the individual's awareness of himself and the extent of self-control on the external appearance to reach the desired image and trying to convince others of specific qualities and characteristics, which creates controls and determinants of behavior to create a certain impression
Usability to measure consumption	Measurable, one-dimensional, and stable factors that fit the variables of consumers segmentation.	It can be used to measure fashion consumption and the extent to which the self-image matches the clothing product in different situations according to the four dimensions of the self.

Use in marketing strategy	<p>They differ according to the personal characteristics of consumers who are divided into categories:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 1. A category with high awareness of fashion and high self-confidence that appears in their distinctive and unique clothing choices, they are looking for attention that gives them strength and influence. It is possible to apply collections from limited editions clothing due to their marketing strategies.</li> <li>2. A target group with high awareness of fashion, but they do not buy from high end brands and don't want to improve their social appearance, they have high self-confidence. Marketers of these brands should provide clothing products that satisfy their taste and fit with the new fashion.</li> <li>3. A category that consumes high quantities of high-end brand, they have low level of self-confidence, which drives them to consume to improve their self-image, marketers should provide promotional messages that improve self and social image and support a sense of safety, also emphasize better integration within the social context.</li> <li>4. A category that targets the quality of the product and the amount of comfort in use with the right price, the marketing strategy for them should depends on trust and honesty.</li> </ol>	<p>Marketing messages for fashion products that define the identity and the role that the consumer wants to enhance in different situations in a way that improve his self-concept and self-image.</p>
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Table (1)

A comparison between the Big Five Theory and the Self-Concept Theory to identify apparel shoppers and purchasing behaviors

The theory of the big five traits is characterized by its stability when measured over the life time of consumers, but it must be taken into consideration what was indicated by (Stryker and Burke, 2000) that different situations carry different expectations, and a change in the natural behavior (Swann and Bosson, 2012) as identity is changing, so a new event may cause a strong change in concepts, interests and the basic identity (Either and Deaux, 1994).

### **Fashion cycle and consumers' segmentation:**

One of the important applications of studying the personality patterns of apparel shoppers using the theory of the Big Five traits is knowing their positions in the fashion cycle and exploiting their potential to market a new product or spread it more widely in the specified market, and also knowing the best way to reach each category of them, opinion leaders and early adopters are the most important consumers, in terms of numbers, during the introduction and adoption phases, then the majority appear early and late in acceptance and matching, the lags are mainly present during the regression phase, the early adoption phases mainly involve the opinion leaders who are eager to be the first to own the latest fashion wear by acquiring prior knowledge about new trends, they influence other fashion shoppers, their power and influence stem from early adoption of new fashion and their ability to share information about what is trendy for the season. (Le Bon, 2015)

(Chan and Misra ,1990) suggest an explanation that opinion leaders need to be overtly unique. Uniqueness is a condition in which people feel distinguished from others and choose to act differently (Maslach et al., 1985).

(Flynn et al., 1996) argue that followers seek an opinion that satisfies a need beyond a simple desire to improve product selection and reduce perceived risk, for example, (Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955) state that the desire to join a group or enhance a relationship with the group is a catalyst for seeking advice on products.

Both opinion leaders and opinion seekers (followers) are more attentive to social cues than non-leaders and non-seekers, while fashion opinion leaders are also more likely to need to express their need to stand out than non-leaders (Bertrandias and Goldsmith, 2006).

### **Attributes of fashion leaders using the big five traits theory:**

We define the opinion leader as the person who exerts a great influence on a group of others who seek information and accept advice from him/her, because he is aware of the latest fashion trends and owns the latest fashion clothes or accessories. The opinion leader reveals to others what is modern by adopting a new design, but once it is imitated, he abandons this design and searches for what is newer, seeks to maintain leadership and does not want to be confused with quantitative consumers, opinion leaders represent a source of information, they seem assertive, their confidence helps them to lead, they can influence others to make the same choices in fashion clothing and accessories.

Individuals with the dominant extraversion trait have high levels of social engagement and assertiveness, with a tendency to be talkative, excitable, and social (Hatzithomas et al., 2019; Mulyanegara and Tsarenko, 2009, in the field of psychology, consumers with high levels of

extraversion tend to have more positive behaviors (Soto, 2018) they love bright colors, eye-catching designs, large prints, and big accessories.

The trait of openness is used to describe individuals with high intellectual curiosity, intelligence, aesthetic sensitivity, and active imagination, they tend to accept alternatives, have creative abstract thinking and create unique ideas, they are open to experimentation, value new knowledge, as they are more willing to try new things (Ozguven and Mucan, 2013; Solino and Farizo, 2014; Tommasel et al., 2015). Their cognitive ability gives them flexibility by adopting and learning processes and engaging openly with their friends (Stephen Parker et al., 2004).

### **Attributes of Fashion Followers Using the Big Five Traits Theory:**

In contrast, fashion followers include the early and late majority as they depend on the choices of others to make their decisions. They are usually influenced by their peers in their social environment, and follow for their approval. These others are their sources of information; By purchasing clothes of the same look, they conform and join the group. Peer recognition is critically important to followers in the buying decision process, followers appear obedient and responsive to other people's ideas, they are sensitive to other people's judgments, followers have important role in the adoption and dissemination of fashion, because they represent the majority of the market for fashion companies, the success of the company is achieved through the adoption of the product and its wider dissemination in the process of adoption of fashion.

Agreeableness refers to preference of interpersonal relationships and the social self over the self-image (Hatzithomas et al., 2019; Ojedokun, 2018).

High values in agreeableness tend to be humble and never see themselves as being better than anyone else, they tend to dress nicely as long as others approve it, they like soft shades, pastel colors, and pretty embellishments. People with low agreeableness ratings tend to adopt more aggressive looks, such as black leather, over-the-knee boots, or bulky shoes and ripped jeans, they distrust others and may use this subconscious, shield-like gaze to create a defense mechanism that prevents people from hurting them. (TPOF Team,2020)

Low-extroversion rating consumers are usually classic and conservative.

Neurotic people wear more aggressive clothing that provides the emotional protection they need. They prefer black over color, plain over print. "Directional" fashion, a term used in the industry to describe clothing that the average person finds strange. Wearing these more aggressive designs works on keeping others at a distance from highly neurotic people (TPOF Team, 2020).

Conscientious consumers love the traditional colors and clean, elegant designs, but the dressing style of consumers who are lower in this factor is rebellious with the use of thrilling clothing pieces such as military boots or leather jackets.

### **Segmentation of apparel shoppers and the proposed marketing plans for them, according to the researchers' point of view:**

1. **The unique:** high-awareness of fashion and high self-confidence appear in their distinctive and unique clothing choices, people with high fashion awareness consider their clothes as an extension of their personal identity and therefore they have a higher willingness to shopping behaviors and spending money on apparels(Wan et al., 2001), they are firm and can influence others to make the same choices in fashion clothing and accessories, they seek attention that

gives them power and influence over others, they have high rates of extraversion and openness and low rates of agreeableness and neuroticism, they are opinion leaders in the fashion cycle, it is possible to provide them with clothing collections from limited editions, encouraging them to provide information for other shoppers, and emphasizing how to enhance their uniqueness by endorsing a brand, may increase the effectiveness of their marketing strategy.

**2. Anxious extroverts:** They are aware of fashion and consuming high amounts of high-end clothing brands, they are among the first followers in the fashion cycle, they have high levels of agreeableness, openness and neuroticism. According to the self- congruency theory, presenting a successful social image representing the brand attracts the attention of this category of shoppers (Casidy, 2012a), they have a low level of self-confidence, which drives them to consume to improve their self-image (John and Srivastava, 1999). The high rate of neuroticism among anxious shoppers, provide promotional messages that emphasize improving social image and support a sense of safety is needed, and emphasize better integration into the social context.

**3. Positives:** They are fashion conscious but do not rely on brands when buying clothes to improve their social appearance. They buy from unknown or lower-level brands. They have low rates of neuroticism and good rates of extraversion, openness and conscientiousness, low rates of neuroticism make them more confident (Horsburgh et al., 2009), they are considered from followers in the fashion cycle, so the marketers of these brands should be interested in providing a clothing product that satisfies their taste with suitable price and fits with the new fashion lines.

**4. Traditionalists:** They have average rates on the personality traits scale, except for approval in lower percentages. Traditional shoppers care about the utilitarian features of clothes such as price, quality, and comfort. They have high levels of conscientiousness and average levels of openness, extroversion and neuroticism. They are considered among the late followers and lagers in the fashion cycle, so marketing for this category aims to provide quality clothing product with an appropriate price (Casidy, 2012b). The marketing strategy depends on trust and honesty.

**5 Apathetic:** They have the lowest levels in nearly all personality factor traits except for the neurotic trait, which has the highest rating. They are humble and constantly worry. This segment of shoppers is not interested in shopping activities and shop only out of necessity, they withdraw from the fashion cycle or considered to be lagers, adding psychological comfort to their marketing experience may lead to psychological loyalty of shoppers and re-shopping from the same brand or store.

As The Psychology of Fashion™ magazine (TPOF Team, 2020) states, a personality is the all five traits, composed together to form a complex symbol, and looking at the five traits together is more accurate than looking at just one. High degrees of neuroticism, openness and extroversion make a person emotional and irritable, which affects his choices in choosing warm colors, for example, with strong directional lines in the design form, at first sight we may consider him/her as a fashion leader, but after deep analysis we could feel his low self-confidence, which contradicts the qualities of a fashion leader.

**Results:**

- Researchers believe that the theory of the five big traits is more objective according to the researchers' point of view.
- High measures of extraversion and openness and low measures of agreeableness are essential traits in opinion leaders.
- High measures of agreement with high measures of extroversion and openness are essential characteristics of early fashion followers.
- Those with high neurotic values may be among the first followers, or they may adopt a distinctive appearance of their own, such as innovators, according to their personal and social identity.
- People with high conscientious values are usually late in the fashion cycle as indicated by the concept of self-monitoring, where the behaviors of low self-monitoring stems from personal beliefs and attitudes (Cramer and Gruman, 2002).
- People with low conscientious values, and high values in openness and extroversion are likely to be among the first followers, especially to fashion fades.
- Those with low values of openness and extroversion are expected to be lagers in the fashion cycle.
- Those with low values of approval tend to reject and rebel against current fashion, they are more likely to withdraw completely from the fashion cycle.
- Local and international fashion marketers must take into consideration the extent of the influence on clothing consumers. Arab societies are mostly affected by collective cultures with motives of social approval, unlike other societies that depend on stimulating individual cultures with motives of self-respect (Kim and Hyun, 2013).
- For apparel marketers, knowing that opinion leaders are expressing uniqueness and pay attention to social cues, can make important contributions to the development of marketing strategy. Opinion leaders should be encouraged to disseminate positive verbal information, and strategies that enhance their social powers in determining what others think, and emphasize how to enhance their uniqueness by endorsing a brand, may increase the effectiveness of the strategy.
- When it comes to followers, messages should encourage them to seek out opinion leaders for advice on brands. Promotional messages should not emphasize uniqueness, but rather emphasize better integration within the social context (Bertrandias and Goldsmith, 2006).

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