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By Kolade Ajilore & Margaret Solo-Anaeto

Babcock University, Nigeria

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Smartphone Brand Personality as a Predictor of Brand Value among Undergraduates of Babcock University

Kolade Ajilore [α] & Margaret Solo-Anaeto [σ]

Abstract- This study investigated the value of brand personality among undergraduate users of smartphones. The descriptive survey method was adopted using structured questionnaire to collect data from 200 undergraduates of Babcock University, Nigeria. Aaker (1997) brand personality model was modified and used as basis to find out the brand personality ascribed to smartphone brands. Of the three most used smartphone brands among the undergraduates, Samsung is perceived to have an exciting, rugged and sophisticated brand personality, Apple have an exciting, competent and sophisticated personality while Blackberry a personality of ruggedness and competence. The principle of self-congruity theory was upheld as the undergraduates' self-personality closely matched the brand-personality of their smartphones brands. A moderate level of brand community building was established among the undergraduates. It is concluded that brand personality of smartphones have remarkable influence on consumers' perception of brand value and brand managers should place emphasis on self-congruity and brand community building as these enhances brand value.

Keywords: brand, brand personality, brand value, smartphone, brand community, self-congruity, self-personality, congruence, undergraduates, babcock university.

I. Introduction

Consumers buy products/brands for satisfaction; to meet certain personal needs. They seek three benefits from products/brands, namely, functional benefit, the augmented benefit and the psychological benefit. Analysing the benefits brands offer to customers, Ambler (1997) notes that functional benefits are intrinsic to the brand and its component products while psychological benefits are in the mind of the consumer. Consumers buy and use brand not only to satisfy functional needs but also to satisfy psychological needs. Ahmad and Thyagaraj (2015) assert that people buy or consume products not only for their functional value but also to enhance their self-concept through the symbolic meaning embedded in these products. The psychological benefits are the intangible elements that a brand offers the consumer which include acceptance within a group, increased self-worth or esteem, sophistication, happiness, risk reduction, sense of independence. In this way, brands serve as means of social communication and identification for consumers; expressing their individual nature and characteristics. In the words of Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) "in the past, people were identified by what they did, nowadays, we identify ourselves by what we consume, and the product constellations we surround ourselves with."

Zuhroh, Hadiwidjoyo, Rofiaty and Djumahir (2014) declared that a strong brand is built based on psychological values for the customers. In modern day branding, marketers and brand managers use brand personality to differentiate their offering from competitors and offer psychological benefits. Brand personality is about attributing human traits or characters on to a brand in order for consumers to form mental or emotional connection with the brand. Brand personality delivers psychological gains to the consumers and make for ease of association with the brand (Muya, 2011; Schmitt, 2012; Klipfel, Barclay and Bockorny, 2014).

A brand's personality is the way a brand expresses and represents itself. According to Monger (2012), brand personality associations create a composite image of a brand that is not very different from the image that we have of other people: they make us think of a brand as if it were a person. Just as a person will have certain characteristics that define his or her personality, so will a brand.

Smartphones have become major gadgets in this 21st century and it has revolutionised the mode of communication. It seem to have become an indispensable tool such that people are dependent and attached to their phones. One of the reasons for this could be because the smartphone has incorporated many other devices (such as digital camera, music and video player, calendar, calculator, game console) in itself to function as a single entity (Yufang, Bin and Qiaoyi, 2014).

The smartphone market in Nigeria is growing with over 10 brands such as Samsung, i-Phone, Tecno, Gionee, Huawei, Infinix, Sony, LG, HTC, Nokia Lumia, BlackBerry, and Itel. An online research conducted by Ayeni (2015) found that Samsung is the most popular android smartphone in Nigeria, followed by Infinix and then Tecno. Describing the usage of smartphones in Nigeria, Arinze (2014) notes that the number of

Author α σ: Department of Mass Communication, Babcock University, Ilisan-Remo, Ogun State. e-mail: soloanaeto.margaret@gmail.com

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smartphone users is projected to increase from 5.6 million to 35 million between 2013 and 2017.Young people form a major part of this figure drawing from the statement of Smith (2015) that smartphone ownership is especially high among young people. The multipurpose functions and operations of smartphone is the attraction for young people. It provides them easy access to news, information and entertainment producing feeling of happiness, connectedness and productivity.

Hence, this study is about ascertaining empirically how brand personality come to bear as an indicator of smartphone brand value among undergraduates of Babcock University (BU), Nigeria.

a) Statement of the Problem

Smartphones, which come in different designs and with different functions, are the rave of the moment, especially among young people. Authors (Clifford, 2014; Neilson, 2014) acknowledge that gender usage of smartphones differs. Males, who generally tend to be more technology savvy, use their smartphones for GPS and news gathering and overall to enhance their personality. Females on the other hand, use smartphones more for social networking, pictures taking and games. Putting this in perspective, in an academic environment where conservative Christian values of modest general appearance and behaviour is proselyted, students still buy and use smartphones which conveys extravagance and opulence. It is on this premise that this study seeks to ascertain the value(s) brand personality offer to undergraduate smartphone users.

b) Research Questions

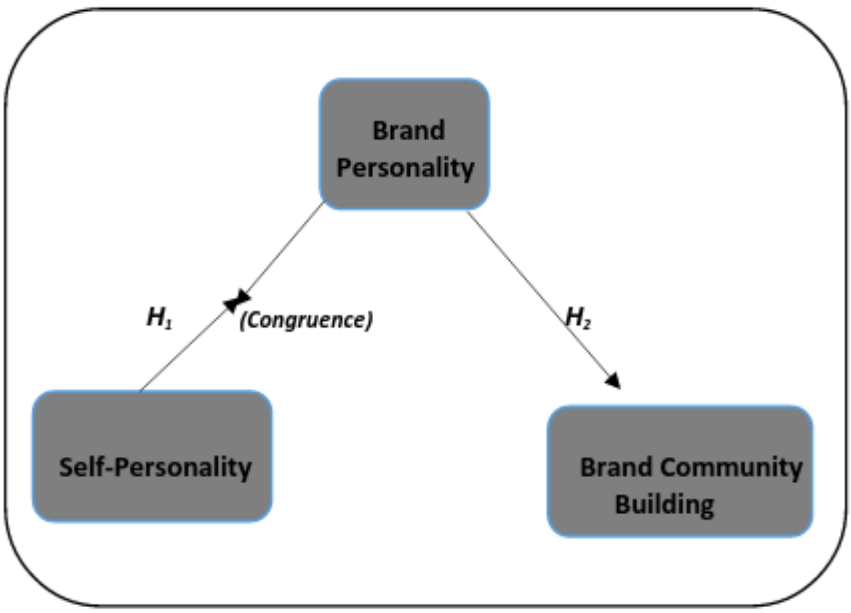
The questions underlying this study are:

1. What personality do BU undergraduates perceive of the brands of smartphone they use?
2. What is the level of brand personality and self-personality congruence among BU undergraduates smartphones users?
3. What is the level of brand community building among BU undergraduates smartphone users?

c) Hypotheses

H_1: There is significant relationship between self-personality/image of BU undergraduate smartphone users and smartphone brand personality.

H_2: Smartphone brand personalities significantly influence brand community building among BU undergraduates.



Source: The Researcher

Figure 1 : Conceptual Model of Smartphone Brand Personality as a Predictor of Brand Value

The conceptual model (Figure 1) of smartphone brand personality presupposes that consumers seek congruence in self-personality with that of the brand personality of their smartphone. It is also proposed that the brand personality of smartphones will influence the building of brand community by users.

II. Literature Review

a) Brand and Brand Personality

A brand can be described as a bundle of satisfaction for consumers. It refers to all the things about a product that makes it different from other offerings in the same product category.

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Roustasekehravani, Hamid, Haghkhah and Pooladireishahri (2014) posits that:

> Brand can be known as promise of bundles of attributes, which a person buys and leads to satisfaction. Those attributes, which create a brand, might be illusory or real, emotional or rational, invisible and tangible.

Brands are known as valuable and create long term relationship with customers. Studies demonstrate that customers that have strong relationship with a certain brand would spread no negative information about that specific brand and have positive attitude for brand. Another importance is that brands build personal bond (with its consumers) which makes a brand able to build loyalty (Zuhroh, Hadiwidjoyo, Rofiaty and Djumahir, 2014).

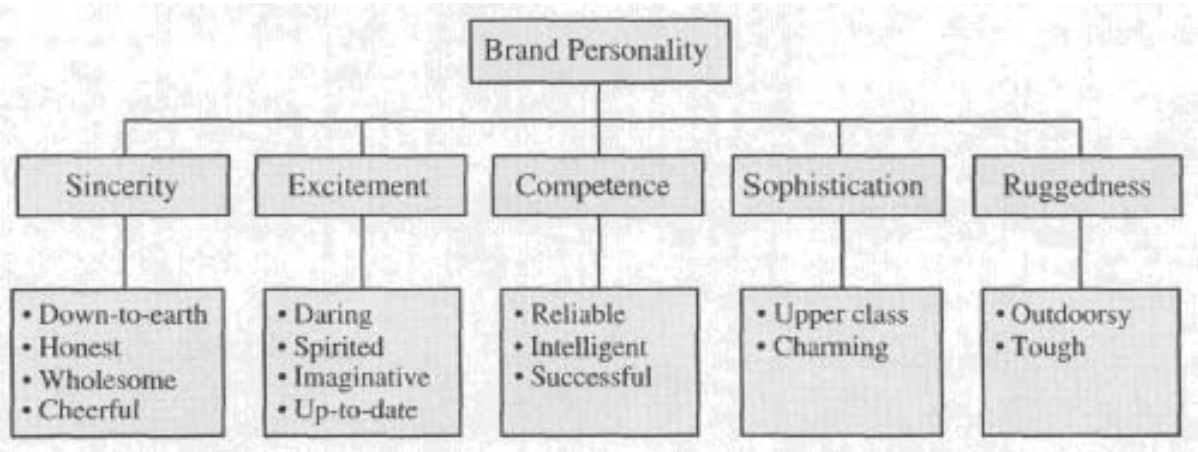
Brand personality refers to the appealing and attractive human trait(s)that is associated with a brand. It is an added value to a brand that strengthens the connection between the consumer and the brand. According to Roustasekehravani, Hamid, Haghkhah and Pooladireishahri (2014), brand personality contributes to better recognition of, creating and keeping relationships among customers and brands.

Personalities that consumers perceive from brand include young, exciting, adventurous, tough, sophisticated, intelligent, competent, reliable, traditional and others. Klipfel, Barclay and Bockorny (2014) assert that these personality are formed through communication of any kind between the brand and the consumer. There is usually nothing intrinsic to a brand that makes it, for example, young, exciting, or traditional; instead these qualities are formed through the direct or indirect contact a consumer has with a brand, including the product-user image.

Brand personality impacts consumers' relationship to a brand as well as strength of the relationship. Attributes of the brand, such as appearance, price, quality, may change but the brand personality is the aspect of the brand that is consistent. Brand personality can lead to brand preference which ultimately may lead to loyalty, which is needed to ward off competition.

b) Aaker (1997) Dimensions of Brand Personality

Jennifer L Aaker in 1997 reported the first systematic study on the brand personality. She constructed a five-dimensional framework for describing and measuring the personality of a given brand. The five dimensions of personality outlined are sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness. She further identified 15 personality traits that best describe the five dimensions to include reliable, honest, daring, tough, outdoorsy, charming, successful, wholesome. This is presented in Figure 1.



Source: Aaker, J. L. (1997). Journal of Marketing Research. Vol XXXIV 347-356

Figure 2 : Aaker (1997) Five Dimensions of Brand Personality

c) Self Personality/Image/Concept

Self-personality/image/concept are used interchangeably to refer to the totality of an individual's thoughts and feelings with reference to himself. Self-image is what a person believes and feels about him/herself which is either positive or negative. Self image is composed of two parts: What a person thinks about himself and what he feels (Downing, 2008, McLeod, 2008). Most of an individual's self image comes in early years of childhood from having close intimate relationships with people that love us and in whom we trust. But the self-image is shaped as the individual grows, experience life and engage in interactions with others.

Self concept or image has four components – actual self-image, ideal self-image, social self-image, and ideal social self-image. The actual self-image is an individual's view of himself. It is an answer to the question- who am I? The ideal self-image mirrors how the individual would like to be seen. It answers the

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question: what will you like to be? The social self-image, on the other hand, refers to the beliefs one has about how he or she is viewed by others, and ideal social self-image denotes the image one aspires others to have of him or herself (Klipfel, Barclay and Bockorny, 2014)

Consumers' self-personality/image/concept affect their perception and consumption of brands. Consumers sometimes used brands to express and enhance their self-personality. Escalas and Bettman, (2003) describe this relationship thus:

> Consumers construct themselves and present themselves to others through their brand choices based on the congruency between brand image and self-image. As a result of this process, the set of brand associations is linked to the consumer's mental representation of self. Thus, the meaning and value of a brand is not just its ability to express the self but its role in helping consumers create and build their self-identities by forming connections to brands.

d) Brand Personality and Self- Personality Congruence

Brand Personality and Self-personality congruence describes the consistency or similarity in the way consumers perceive themselves and the way they perceive brands. Consumers purchase and use brands that are congruent with their self-personality. As Park and Lee (2005) mentioned, consumers use products/brands as a symbol and they prefer brands with images or personalities that are congruent with their self-image or brand personality. Kim, Lee, and Ulgado (2005) proved that brand personality/self-concept congruity kindles such emotions as love, pride, and joy, and ultimately fosters a long-term consumer-brand relationship.

Identifying the reason consumers seek out congruity between product-user image and self-concept, Klipfel, Barclay and Bockorny (2014) posit that it is fulfilment of certain needs: self-esteem, self-consistency, and social approval.@ The self-esteem motive denotes the tendency for individuals to enhance self-concept by being discriminatory in choosing experiences, and the self-consistency motive explains the tendency for behaviour consistent with actual self-image. Social consistency needs are met by congruence between product-user image and the social self-image.

III. Brand Community

Brand community is a concept that explains relationship among consumers of similar brands. The term, brand community, coined by Albert Muniz and Thomas O'Guinn in 2001 is defined as, "a specialized, non-geographically bound community, based on a structured set of social relations among admirers of a brand" (Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001).

Simply put, brand community is a grouping of brand users based on their love and association with a particular brand. When consumers buy and use a brand, they form a community whether consciously or subconsciously. Their voluntary membership is created because the brand possess values or traits they identify with.

The pulling factor for the brand community is the brand used; its personality, value and representations.

Brand community serve as forum where users of similar brand meet, discuss the brands, share experiences about the brand and get in touch with one another. It gives consumers the added value of family; a sense of belonging and acceptance. Members of a brand community share three characteristics: consciousness of a kind, shared ritual and tradition, sense moral responsibility (Kalman, 2009; Dale, 2007).

Explaining the rise of brand communities, Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) indicate that breakdown of traditional forms of community, coupled with the increase of individualization and symbolic consumption, inevitably leads to the emergence of new forms of community that are vital to our current increasingly materialistic capitalist society: brand communities.

According to Roberts (2013) brand community benefit marketers in that it gives them a lens through which they can view their product and see how best to communicate its promise of benefit. It clarifies the points of interest, core values, and values that attract community members and keep them in the fold.

Marketers strengthen brand communities, mainly through expediting on customer experiences and capitalizing on the consumer-brand and consumer-consumer relationships. Physical events like rallies, trainings, product testing, and consumer research as well as online and social media tools are strategies to build and nurture brand community. Social media tools especially enhance brand community building. Brands have Facebook pages, Instagram accounts, and Blogs that serve as meeting points for the brand users.

Kalman (2009) asserts that there are two major implications of the power of brand communities, which are:

1. As visible consumers of a brand, brand community members can become its best promoter. Brand community members propel the brand message (and their enthusiasm for it) into the market and also act as the conduit for feedback from the market. Through surveys, focus groups, and analytics (of content interests), brand community members can become the source of valuable customer research.
2. A brand community represents a cohesive group and so marketers can develop membership-oriented programs that deepen customer relationships and involvement with the brand. The brand marketer can community membership with

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integrated communications programs that include magazines, Web sites and blogs, email news, e-books, live events, and social media to amplify the brand's promotional campaigns while lowering costs. For third-party marketers, brand communities represent a new way to find active buyers. By viewing brand communities as a true demographic indicator (analogous to gender, age, or income), third-party marketers can participate in the brand owner's communications programs to reach active buyers at costs below traditional media.

IV. Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on two theories - symbolic interactionism theory and self-congruity theory.

a) Symbolic Interactionism Theory

The thrust of this theory is that individuals act towards things based on the meaning these things/objects have for them, and these meanings are derived from social interaction and modified through interpretation. The theory was presented by Herbert Blumer in 1969 with three propositions:

1. Humans act towards things on the basis of the meaning they ascribe to those things.
2. The meaning of such things is derived from or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with others in society;
3. These meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things he or she encounters (West and Turner, 2010)

From the theory, things in the physical world are symbolic; that is individuals attach meaning(s) to them and these meanings are the basis of relating with other people in society.

The concept of brand personality draws strength from this theory in that brands carry symbolic meanings and consumers draw on them to satisfy their psychological needs. Consumers draw meanings for brands (including brand personality) from marketer's positioning efforts or through interactional experience. The meanings brands convey (in this case, personality) make the product more realistic to consumers and easier for them to bond with the brand. The implication of this theory for this study is that marketers need to uncover the personalities young people perceive of smartphone brands and how this influences their behaviour towards the brand.

b) Self-Congruity Theory

Self-congruity explains the extent to which brand personality and self-personality of a consumer are compatible. It refers to the match between a product's value-expressive attributes (brand personality) and the consumer's self-concept. The self-congruity theory is based on the assumption that consumers prefer brands they associate with a set of personality traits congruent with their own (Sirgy and Johar, 1999; Kim, Lee, and Ulgado, 2005; Boksberger, Dolnicar, Laesser, and Randle, 2011; Klipfel, Barclay and Bockorny, 2014).Consumers typically express themselves through brand which is based on their self-image and self-concept.

The self-congruity theory postulates that the more similar the two concepts (self-personality and brand personality), the higher the preference for that brand, because its symbolic characteristics reinforce and validate the individual's self-perception.

Explaining the theory further, Sirgy (1992) in Zuhroh, Hadiwidjoyo, Rofiaty and Djumahir, (2014) stated that an individual chooses to purchase product or service which has congruent image with his image; in other words, there is a congruity between individual's self-concept perception on brand/product and individual's perception on himself.

The theory comes to bear on this study as it gives credence to the fact that the way individuals perceive themselves relate to the kinds of brands they purchase and use. One of the objectives of this study is to find out the extent of self-congruity among smartphone users of Babcock University. It is the light of this that Klipfel, Barclay and Bockarny (2014) espoused that with deep psychological knowledge of target consumers, marketers can develop a congruence model for their specific target market that can more accurately position their products in a way that appeals to their customers as well as choose the product image attributes (self, ideal, social, or ideal social) that create the greatest level of congruity.

c) Empirical Review on Brand Personality and Self-Congruity

A study on self congruity, carried out by Boksberger, Dolnicar, Laesser, and Randle (2011) to find out the extent of self-congruity theory is applicable in the tourism industry in Switzerland. They sought to find out the relationship between how travellers perceive themselves and the way they perceive travel destinations they have been to. The participants who were Swiss travellers were asked to describe the personality of the destinations travelled as well as their self-personality. The congruity was then calculated using the absolute difference between self-personality and destination personality. The findings indicated that more than half of all trips (53 per cent) can be considered as self-congruent, i.e. people travelled to destinations that fit the description of their self-personality. However, the attempt to identify factors that explain when self-congruity holds and when it does not, was not really successful. The conclusion of the study was that there is evidence for the existence of self-congruity in tourism.

Conducting a study on Brand Personality, Self-Congruity and the Consumer-Brand Relationship, Kim, Lee, and Ulgado (2005) examined the processes by

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which the consumer-brand fit determines consumer-brand relationship. Using a sample of 450 college students and residents of metropolitan areas in China, they were asked describe their self-personality and also give personality to any brand of their choice in different product categories - cell phones, digital camera, clothing, cosmetics, jewellery, food/beverage, stationaries and restaurant. The results of this study show that congruity between brand personality and consumer self-concept kindles such emotions as love, pride, and joy, and ultimately fosters a long-term consumer-brand relationship through brand attachment or self-esteem-building process.

V. Research Methodology

The population of this study was all 400 level undergraduate students of Babcock University, which is given as 1500 students (BU Registry). Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) formula was used to determine a sample size of 200 students drawn from various schools and departments in the university. The study purposively sampled the 400 level students based on their probable wide experience with smartphones as well as their relative maturity and ability to give better judgment of their self-personality.

The instrument used was a questionnaire measuring the constructs with a Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree = 5 to Strongly Disagree (SD) =1 and its reliability was ascertained with the *Cronbach Alpha Tes*t at 0.825. In assessing perception of brand personality, the Aaker Brand Personality Model (1997) which identified Sincerity, Excitement, Sophistication, Competence, and Ruggedness as the five dimensions of a brand personality was adopted and modified. In the modified instrument, only two personality traits under each dimension was tested. The scale thus had: conservative and responsible to measure Sincerity, Fashionable and Innovative for Excitement; Social Class/Status and Sexy/Feminine to measure Sophistication; Intelligent and Confidence for Competence, and Masculine and Tough to measure Ruggedness. The researcher developed items in the instrument to measure congruence of brand personality and self-personality and brand community. 220 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the population sample by the researcher with the help of two research assistants.

The Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) version 21 was used to analyse data obtained. Cross tabulation, frequency table and bar charts were used to present the data and for the test of research hypotheses, T-test, Pearson product moment correlation and linear regression were employed.

VI. Results and Discussion of Findings

Out of the 220 copies of questionnaire administered, 200 were returned useful thus yielding a 90% return rate. Gender distribution of respondents reveal that females were the major participants in the study. The result show 135 (68%) of the respondents as female while male accounted for 65 (32.5%) of the respondents.

Research Question One: What personalities do Babcock Undergraduates perceive of Smartphone brands?

Table 1 : Smartphone Brands used by Babcock University Undergraduates

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Samsung	51	25.5
Apple (i-Phone)	37	18.5
Tecno	11	5.5
Gionee	4	2.0
Huawei	9	4.5
Infinix	13	6.5
Sony	11	5.5
LG	11	5.5
HTC	9	4.5
Nokia Lumia	10	5.0
Blackberry	22	11.0
Itel	5	2.5
Lenovo	2	1.0
Others	5	2.5
Total	200	100.0%

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Table 1 reveals the three popular smartphone brands among Babcock University undergraduates to be Samsung (used by 25.5% of the respondents), followed by Apple (used by 18.5% of the respondents) and Blackberry (used by 11% of the respondents). This corroborates the findings of Ayeni (2015) that Samsung is the most popular smartphone brand in Nigeria. It goes to say from this study that among university undergraduates, Samsung is the preferred smartphone brand.

Table 2 : Cross Tabulation of Brands of Smartphone and Brand Personality

	Social Class		Sexy/ Feminine		Conservative		Responsible		Trendy Innovative		Flashy In Design		Masculine		Tough		Intelligent		Confidence	
	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low
Samsung	26.4%	23.1%	26.1%	24.7%	24.5%	27.9%	26.4%	23.1%	28.7%	17.9%	26.4%	24.5%	28.2%	24.0%	26.3%	25.4%	23.6%	28.6%	22.1%	29.2%
I-phone	21.6%	9.6%	22.6%	12.9%	20.9%	13.1%	18.9%	17.3%	22.4%	8.9%	30.2%	5.3%	15.5%	20.2%	13.8%	21.2%	18.7%	18.2%	25.0%	11.5%
Tecno	4.7%	7.7%	5.2%	5.9%	5.8%	4.9%	16.1%	3.8%	4.9%	7.1%	5.7%	5.3%	5.6%	5.4%	5.0%	5.9%	5.7%	5.2%	3.8	7.3%
Gionee	2.0%	1.9%	2.6%	1.2%	2.2%	1.6%	2.0%	1.9%	2.8%	0.0%	0.9%	3.2%	1.4%	2.3%	2.5%	1.7%	1.6%	2.6%	1.9%	2.1%
Huawei	4.7%	3.8%	4.3%	4.7%	3.6%	6.6%	4.1%	5.8%	4.9%	3.6%	0.9%	8.5%	5.6%	3.9%	5.05	4.2%	4.1%	5.2%	4.8%	4.2%
Infinix	6.1%	7.7%	3.5%	10.6%	7.2%	4.9%	6.8%	5.8%	4.9%	10.7%	4.7%	8.5%	5.6%	7.0%	6.3%	6.8%	6.5%	6.5%	4.8%	8.3%
Sony	4.7%	7.7%	5.2%	5.9%	5.8%	4.9%	6.8%	1.9%	4.2%	8.9%	4.7%	6.4%	5.6%	5.4%	7.5	4.2%	4.9%	6.5%	5.8%	5.2%
LG	6.1%	3.8%	7.0%	3.5%	6.5%	3.3%	4.7%	7.7%	5.6%	5.4%	5.7%	5.3%	8.5%	3.9%	6.3%	5.1%	7.3%	2.6%	6.7%	4.2%
HTC	4.1%	5.8%	4.3%	4.7%	5.0%	3.3%	4.7%	3.8%	3.5%	7.1%	4.7%	4.3%	2.8%	5.4%	5.0%	4.2%	4.1%	5.2%	3.8%	5.2%
Nokia Lumia	4.1%	7.7%	5.2%	4.7%	5.8%	3.3%	3.4%	9.6%	2.8%	10.7%	1.9%	8.5%	7.0%	3.9%	5.0%	5.1%	6.5%	2.6%	2.9%	7.3%
Blackberry	10.1%	13.5%	8.7%	14.1%	8.5%	16.4%	10.1%	13.5%	9.8%	14.3%	7.5%	14.9%	7.0%	13.2%	12.5%	9.3%	11.4%	10.4%	11.5%	10.4%
Itel	2.0%	3.8%	2.6%	2.4%	2.2%	3.3%	2.7%	1.9%	2.8%	1.8%	1.9%	3.2%	2.8%	2.3%	0.0%	4.2%	2.4%	2.6%	1.0%	4.2%
Lenovo	0.7%	1.9%	0.9%	1.2%	0.0%	3.3%	1.4%	0.0%	0.7%	1.8%	1.9%	3.2%	0.0%	1.6%	1.3%	0.8%	0.8%	1.3%	1.9%	0.0%
Others	2.7%	1.9%	1.7%	3.5%	2.2%	3.3%	2.0%	3.8%	2.1%	1.8%	0.9%	1.1%	4.2%	1.6%	3.8%	1.7%	2.4%	2.6%	3.8%	1.0%

Table 2 shows smartphone brands and the personalities perceived by young people. From the cross tabulation of smartphone brands and personality traits, Samsung is seen as innovative and trendy (28.7% of its users), masculine (28.7%) and conveying high social status/class. Samsung users do not see it as a phone one with a down to earth personality (27.9%). Putting this finding on the Aaker five dimension of brand personality model, Samsung is perceived as first as an one with an exciting personality, then as rugged and as sophisticated personality.

For i-phone users, the brand is perceived as been fashionable (30.2% of its users), exuding confidence (25.0%) and as feminine/sexy (22.6%). Fitting this on the Aaker scale it means i-phone has more of an exciting personality, followed by competent and sophisticated. 21% of its users note that i-phone does not have a rugged personality. This is true as users complain that the phone breaks easily.

For the third most popular smartphone brand among BU undergraduates, Blackberry, its users see it as tough (12.5%), exuding confidence (11.5%) and intelligent (11.4%). On the Aaker scale, Blackberry exudes a rugged and competent personality. Its users do not see the brand as conveying high social class, being feminine/sexy or innovative.

Of note is that users of Tecno, Infinix, Nokia Lumia and Itel do not see their brands as conveying high class/status or exuding confidence. This rings true as these phones are sold fairly cheap compared to the top three smartphone brands. However, the users described these brands as responsible and intelligent.

On the Aaker scale, *Tecno* is seen as having a sincere, exciting and competent personality. *Infinix* is seen to be sincere and competent; *Sony* is seen as rugged, sincere and competent; *Nokia Lumia* is seen as rugged and competent; *LG* is seen as rugged, competent and sophisticated; *HTC* is seen as sincere, rugged and exciting; *Huawei* is seen as rugged, exciting and competent; *Gionee* is seen as exciting, sophisticated and rugged and*Itel* is seen as rugged, sincere and sophisticated.

These findings make meaning of the symbolic interactionism theory of Blumer (1969) which submits that people ascribe meanings to things/objects and these meanings come to play in interaction with other people. Young people perceive different personality (meanings) of their smartphone brand and by using the brands in their social interaction, they express and share the meaning.

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Research Question Two: How congruent is self-personality/image and brand personality of BU undergraduate Smartphone users?

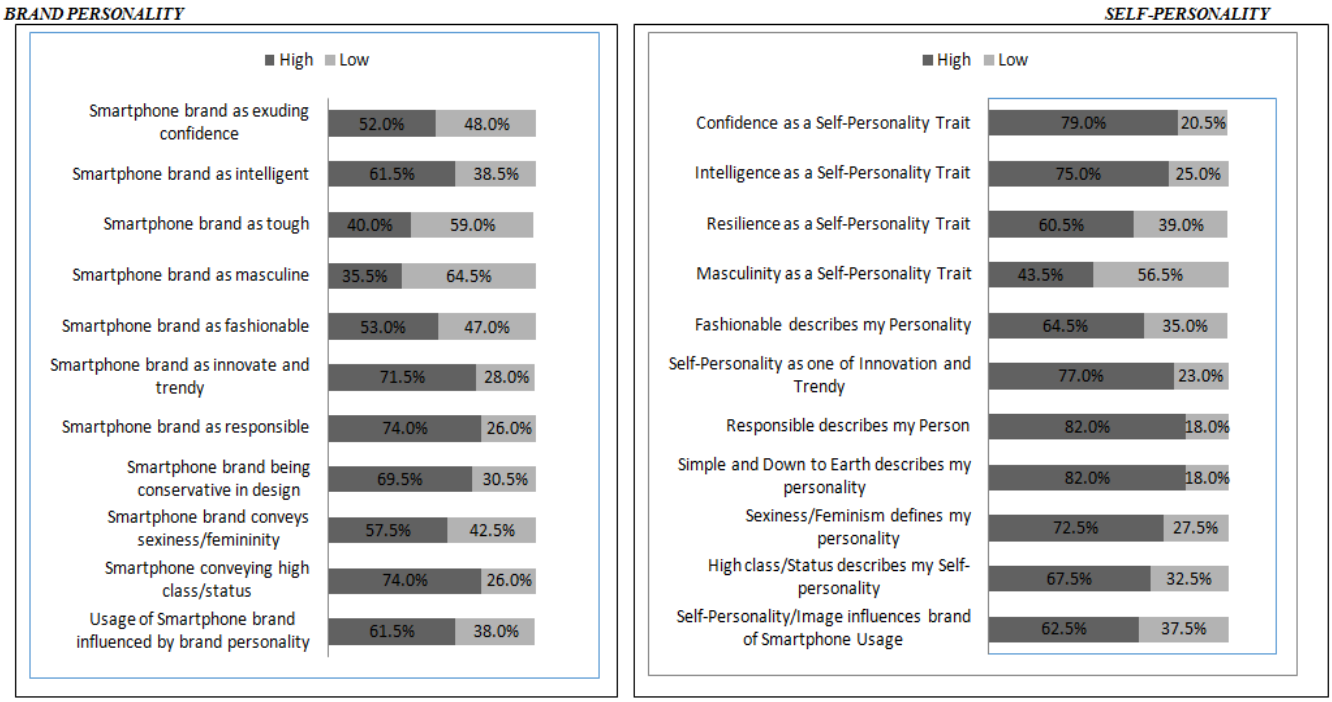


Figure 3 : Level of Congruence in Brand Personality and Self-Personality of Smartphone Users

Research question 2 sought to find out areas of similarity in brand-personality and self-personality of Babcock university smartphone users. Findings reveal that two personality traits were congruent in self-personality of the respondents and smartphone brand personality.

The personality trait of being innovative and trendy was highly consistent in smartphone brand personality and self-personality of BU undergraduates (71.5% ; 77%). That is, students who see themselves as innovative and trendy also use smartphone brands that project innovativeness and up to date.

The second point of congruence in brand personality and self-personality/image was belonging to a high class/ status. 67.5 % of respondents described themselves as belonging to of high status/class and 74% described their smartphone personality as one that depicts high status/class.

In sum, majority of the respondents (62.5%) affirm that their self personality comes to play in the brand of smartphones they use. While, 61.5% of the respondents stated that the personality of a smartphone brand influences their usage or not. This is corroborated by Park and Lee (2005) and Hawkins et al. (2001) in Roustasekehravani, Hamid, Haghkhah and Pooladireishahri, (2014) that consumers buy a product which has matched personalities to their own personalities.

The assertions of the self congruity theory is evident here as the self-personality given by Babcock University smartphone users matched the brand personality of their smartphone brands.

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Research Question Three: What is the level of Brand Community building among BU undergraduates?

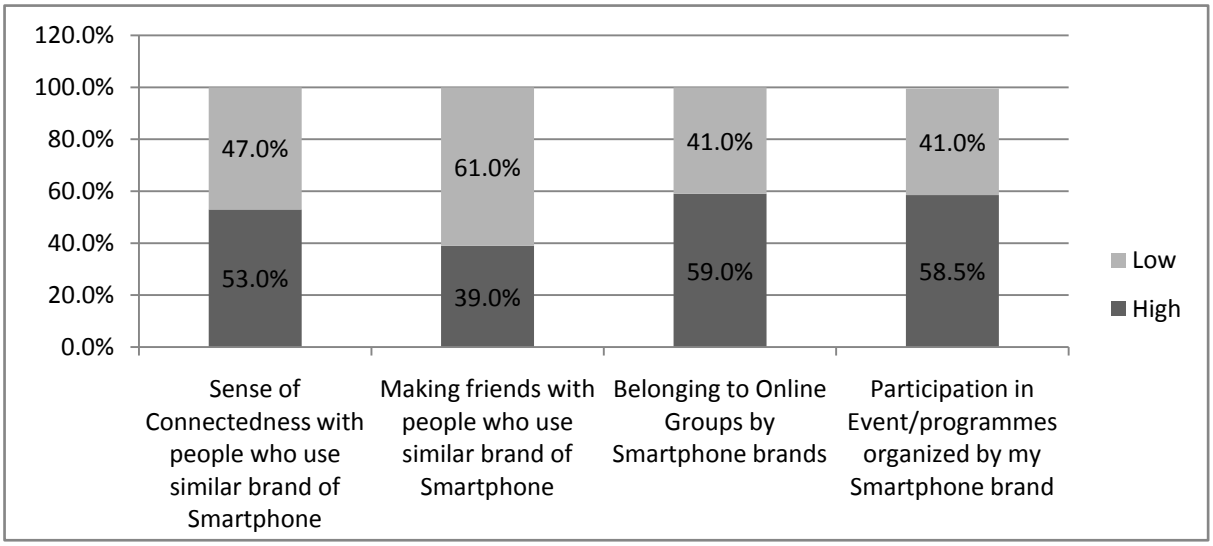


Figure 4 : Level of Brand Community Building among BU undergraduates

Figure 4 reveals that brand community building is evident among BU undergraduate smartphone users and it is of a moderate level. This strengthens the assertion of Dale (2007) and Kalman (2009) that consumers' love and shared sense of value for a brand leads to community building on different levels. From the study, brand community building among the undergraduates is actualized by feeling a sense of connectedness with other people who use similar brand of smartphone (53 % of the respondents attested to this); belonging to online groups created by their smartphone brands (59% of the respondents agreed); and participating in events organized by their smartphone brand (58.5% of the respondents were affirmative).

Figure 4 shows that belonging to online groups of smartphone brands is indicated as the major means of engaging in brand community by BU smartphone users. This actually sheds light on the nature of respondents who are young people. They are technology savvy and are heavy users of online and social media platforms.

VII. Test of Hypotheses

a) Decision Rule

The pre-set level of significance for this study is 0.05. The hypothesis assumes that there is a relationship or effect exists between the variables under consideration. If the P-value (that is, the significance or the probability value) exceeds the pre-set level of significance (which is 0.05), the hypothesis will be rejected; but if the P-value is less than or equal to 0.05, then the hypothesis will be accepted.

Hypothesis One: There is a significant relationship in the between self-personality of BU undergraduate smartphone users and smartphone brand personality.

Table 4 : Correlation Analysis between Self-Personality/Image and Brand Personality of Smartphones

		Smartphone Brand Personality	Self-Personality/Image
Smartphone Brand Personality	Pearson Correlation	1	0.309**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	196	194
Self-Personality/Image	Pearson Correlation	0.309**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	194	198

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

Table 4 indicates that there is a moderately positive significant relationship between Self-Personality/Image of BU undergraduate smartphone users and Smartphone brand Personality ($\beta = 0.309$, $p<0.05$). This suggests that an upward change in Self-Personality/Image of users will lead to a proportional increase in smartphone Brand Personality. The implication of this is that users see the reflection of their

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personalities in their smartphones brands, which suggests that marketers should undertake extensive customer analysis before designing their smartphone brands in order to capture self personality of consumers in their major markets and reflect this in their positioning efforts. Therefore, the hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis Two: Smartphone brand personality significantly influence brand community building among BU undergraduates.

Table 5 : Linear Regression Analysis of the Influence of Smartphone Brand Personality on the Brand Community Building

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.761	0.443		6.238	0.000
	Smartphone Brand Personality	0.147	0.030	0.327	4.811	0.000
a.	*Dependent Variable:* ***Brand Community***					
b.	*R Squared =* ***0.107***					

From Table 5, smartphone brand personality has a significant influence on brand community building ($p<0.05$). The model in Table 3 further shows that Smartphone brand personality has a moderately positive significant influence on brand community building ($\beta = 0.327$); which suggests that an increase in brand personality leads to a proportional increase in brand community building; vice versa. Furthermore, the linear regression model could predict 10.7% of variation of influence on brand community building which means that 89.3% of factors that could predict brand community building have not been considered in the context of this study. The implication of this analysis is that smartphone brand managers should project personalities unto their products so that it could serve as bonding agent among smartphone users which ultimately enhances brand loyalty. Consequently, the hypothesis is accepted.

VIII. Conclusions and Recommendations

Marketers strive for long term customer relationship and brand loyalty, and this study has revealed that brand personality can contribute to this through reinforcing consumers' self personality (i.e. creating self-congruity) and brand community building.

For young people, the personality of being trendy and innovativeness as well as being of a high social class/status matter to them. This conclusion is drawn from the findings of this study, as it was only these two personality traits that self-congruity was evident. What this means is that marketers should always reflect these personality traits in their smartphone brand as it is a pulling factor for young people.

Brand managers and marketers should undertake extensive customer analysis before developing personalities for their smartphone brands in order to capture self-personality of consumers in their major markets and reflect this in their positioning efforts.

This study confirmed that brand personality serves as a bonding agent among consumer, leading to brand community building among users. Marketers should therefore take seriously the concept of brand community building and maximize it to the advantage of their brands.

It is suggested that further studies be carried out to identify other factors that can enhance brand community building among other categories of smartphone users and in other product categories.

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