

## **Module - 6**

# **CONSUMER BEHAVIOR**

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**MODULE 6.3:**  
**PERSONALITY, SELF CONCEPT AND SELF IMAGE (2 hours)**

**MODULE 6.3: PERSONALITY, SELF CONCEPT AND SELF IMAGE**  
**( 2 hours)**

- 6.3.1 Definition and Meaning of Consumer Personality**
- 6.3.2 Consumer Personality and its Nature**
- 6.3.3 Personality traits and Personality types**
- 6.3.4 Theories of Personality I and II**
- 6.3.5 Meaning of Self concept and Self image**
- 6.3.6 Consumer Personality, Self-Concept and Self-Image and  
Implications for Marketers**

## LESSON – 22

# CONSUMER PERSONALITY, TRAITS AND TYPES, THEORIES OF PERSONALITY I

### Instructional Objectives:

After completion of this lesson, the student shall know about:

#### 6.3.1 Definition and Meaning of Consumer Personality

#### 6.3.2 Consumer Personality and its Nature

#### 6.3.3 Personality traits and Personality types

#### 6.3.4 Theories of Personality I

### 6.3.1 DEFINITION AND MEANING OF CONSUMER PERSONALITY:

The sum total of an individual defines his personality. Just as an individual has a personality, similarly products also have a personality of their own. A study of personality as a subject area in consumer behavior assumes importance as consumers generally decide on product/brand choices on the basis of their personality. A person's decision with regard to the brand as well as the timing and place of purchase, the amount purchased, its usage and disposal, are all based on his personality. Consumers generally buy those products/brands, whose personality matches their own, or they buy such products/brands that help them fight their inferiority. Thus, the study of consumer personality, personality traits and types as well as general and consumption specific personality traits is important, and holds relevance for a marketer in the design, development and implementation of his marketing strategies.

Personality is defined as a sum total of outer physiological as well as the inner psychological characteristics that determine and reflect how a person reacts to his environment. It exhibits itself through a unique psychological makeup that activates behavior on the part of an individual in response to forces in his or her environment. However, the emphasis is on the inner characteristics, i.e., the qualities, attributes, traits, and mannerisms that differentiate one individual from another individual, and make him

unique in his own way. It is noteworthy that as individuals we possess such traits, and people who share a particular trait(s) are said to belong to a personality type. Specific to environment here, is the social environment, which posits the social dimension of a person's psychological makeup. A person's personal make up is to a large extent influenced by his social environment, viz., the family, friends, social class, sub culture, culture, nationality and the environment in which he grows up. As Schiffman has put it consumer personality refers to the "unique dynamic organization of characteristics of a particular person, physical and psychological, which influence behavior and responses to the social and physical environment." It is a consistent repeated pattern of behavior.

The term personality has been defined variedly, so has been the evolution; while some researchers have stressed the influence that heredity has on the make-up of personality, others have also included experiences in early childhood; still others have laid emphasis on as well as environmental influences across different periods in a person's life cycle, and illustrated how personality continues to develop over lifetime. The approach towards the study has also been debatable. While some look at personality as a unified whole, others focus on specific personality traits.

Consumer personality is defined as the characteristics that determine and reflect how consumers make choices with regard to buying patterns and consumption behavior. Consumer purchase patterns are always influenced by their personality traits. Just as we consumers, have different personality make ups, the decision choices with regard to purchase of products/brands also differs, especially with the assumption that consumer prefer such product/brand choices that match their personality traits. Such personality traits could be general as well as consumption specific.

### **6.3.2 CONSUMER PERSONALITY AND ITS NATURE:**

Consumer personality can be better explained by understanding the nature and characteristics of personality:

1. Researchers offer varied opinions as to the evolution of personality; while some argue it is inborn and based on heredity, others illustrate the role of childhood experiences as well as experiences over life span, environmental influences as well as sudden events that mould and change one's personality.

2. Every person is unique in oneself, and thus personality reflects individual differences. All individuals have internal characteristics or traits. There also exist consistent and measurable differences between individuals. The inner characteristics that constitute the personality make up are unique in themselves, having arisen from heredity, childhood experiences, events and incidents across lifetime and as well as impact by the environment; thus, no two people are alike and each one of us exhibits a unique personal make-up. Yet, while we are different, we may be similar to each other on a trait (s), and could constitute a personality type (s). This could have implications for a marketer who could treat each personality type as a separate segment, position his offering accordingly and design the 4Ps.

3. An individual's personality remains consistent over time and is enduring in nature. As such it cannot be changed easily, quickly and frequently. This consistency and stability manifest itself even in buying and consumption patterns and marketers need to learn how to overcome them. For example, i) the marketer needs to match his product/brand personality with the consumer's personality; it can never work the other way round; ii) the marketer would have to design his 4Ps keeping in mind the target segment's personality type, be it pricing or promotion or even selling. However, while people exhibit consistency and stability in their patterns of behavior, it could vary because of psychological, socio cultural and environmental factors; same hold true for consumer behavior and consumption pattern may vary because of such pressures. For example, a person may agree to buy a brand that does not match his persona because of social pressures.

4. Personality can change under certain circumstances and over life span, like for example in reaction to abrupt events/incidents/situations as also due to gradual maturing with age.

### **6.3.3 PERSONALITY TRAITS AND PERSONALITY TYPES:**

We need to differentiate between a “personality trait” and a “personality type”. As mentioned in the above section, as individuals, each one of us is unique with a wide array of qualities, attributes, traits and characteristics. However, each one of us shares with each other a quality or a few trait (s). When we share a trait (s) with another (others), we are said to be similar on that trait and thus we together with the other person (s), is said to fall in a personality type.

In other words, a personality trait is a person's inclination to behave in a particular way while interacting with the external environment to achieve goals; this would be specific to an area of a person's life. Many personality traits put together, comprise the personal make-up of a person and culminate into his personality.

On the other hand, a group of people who share personality traits are said to fall into a personality class; they are expected to react to the environment in a similar manner as they are similar to each other on the basis of certain trait (s).

For example, stubbornness may be a trait; dogmatism would become a personality type.

### **6.3.4 THEORIES OF PERSONALITY I:**

The study of personality has been a matter of discussion; contributions are varied and debatable. Major contribution to the topic of study was made by the father of psychology, Sigmund Freud. Other contributions came from psychologists like Carl Jung, the Neo-Freudians (like Adler, Sullivan and Homey) and the Trait theorists. Theories on personality can be categorized as i) individual theories; ii) social learning theories. However, we would elaborate upon these without any such classification, as it is rightly believed that it is the combination of both individual characteristics/traits (genetics) as well as social learning (social environment) that impacts personality. This lesson deals with The Freudian theory, the Jungian theory and the Neo-Freudian Theory. The Trait theory is explained in the next lesson.

#### **6.3.4.1 Freudian theory:**

Sigmund Freud, the father of psychology, became famous with its psychoanalytic theory of personality. In fact the theory is regarded as the cornerstone of modern psychology. Sigmund based his theory on certain assumptions:

- unconscious needs or drives lie at the heart of human motivation and personality.
- the socialization process that takes place within people in a social set up has a huge impact on individual behavior.

Freud explained much of how the psyche or the mind operates, and proposed that the human psyche is composed of parts within our awareness and beyond our awareness. He said that all behavior within an individual cannot be explained, much lies in the sub-conscious. Freud viewed personality as “an iceberg”; just as majority of the iceberg remains within water and only the tip of the iceberg is above water, similarly, much of our personality exists below our level of awareness, as the unconscious and just as a part of it lies above, as the conscious. Even though an individual is not aware of the contents and processes of the unconscious, much of our behavior is attributed to it.

Based on the level of awareness, the human mind comprises three parts, viz., conscious, preconscious and the unconscious or the sub-conscious; The conscious mind is what one is aware of at any particular moment of time and reflects ones present thoughts, feelings, perceptions, fantasies, etc; it restricts itself to the current thinking processes and comprises a very large part of our current awareness. The preconscious mind or the "available memory," is what can be retrieved and made conscious, and brought to mind instantly or quickly; it is what we are aware of but not paying attention to at a point of time; it is something that can be brought into the conscious mind. The larger part of the human mind consists of the unconscious, which is all that stays at the subconscious level, and comprises the unaware, better known as our drives or instincts, feelings and memories and emotions related to trauma; this part in content and process is out of direct reach of the conscious mind, and thinks independently; an individual has no access to because it is unknown and hidden. This unconscious part is the source of all our drives and motives; yet we are often deny or refuse to accept and often resist them from becoming conscious. This is because they form the unaware part and are in a disguised form. It is because of this unconscious part that we are largely unable to

control many aspects of our behavior, especially those acts which we would prefer to avoid. According to Freud, much of human behavior is driven directly from the subconscious mind; and so it is important that the unconscious material needs to be brought into the conscious state so that it can be examined in a rational manner.

Apart from these, Freud spoke of the Id, Ego and Super ego. The Id contains consists of primitive drives that lack the real perception of reality. It operates on the pleasure principle, with the objective of seeking pleasure and avoidance of pain, and doing what one wants to do. The processes that come into play are primary processes like hunger, thirst etc. The Ego is aware of reality and operates via the reality principle, where it recognizes what is real and understands that behavior has consequences. The processes that come into play are secondary processes, like learning and memory, perception etc. It also includes the impact that socialization has to play in the life of an individual; it recognizes the existence of social rules that are necessary in order to live and socialize with other people, and thus, plans to satisfy ones' needs within the social values and rules. The Super ego comprises the value system and the morals, which emanate from what an individual learns in childhood from his parents. It is contained in the conscious part of our memory. It believes in doing what the society says. While the Ego and Super Ego are partly conscious and partly unconscious, the Id is the unconscious. Further, the Super ego acts as a counterbalance to the Id; the former seeks to restrict the pleasure-seeking demands of the latter, and it is left for the Ego to balance the demands of the Id and Super ego with the constraints of reality; it controls the higher mental processes such as logical reasoning to solve the Id-Super ego dilemma.

According to Freud, personality is based on the dynamic and continuous interplay between the Id, Ego and Super Ego. The Id demands immediate gratification of needs and desires (pleasure principle) regardless of constraints in the external environment; the Ego acts to realistically meet the desires of the Id (reality principle); the Super Ego (conscience) blends morals and societal rules upon the ego, so that the desires are met both realistically and morally. Thus, Freud also pointed out the impact of socialization on members of a society, especially with reference to how this socialization impacts individual behavior. According to him, there exists a state of tension within an individual; this tension arises out if there is a mismatch between an individual's needs



and desires vis-à-vis the norms set up by the society and the socialization process; the manner in which an individual sorts out the dilemma shapes his personality.

**An Assessment of the Theory:** The Freudian theory is the first comprehensive theory that was proposed on the subject of personality. He described several components that underlie how personality emanates, thus leading to a better understanding of the subject. Other theories have emerged out of this pioneering work. Yet it has been criticized. It is pointed out that his theory lacks reliability and validity; one, it does not lend itself to empirical testing, primarily because the hypotheses are not testable; two, Freud based his theory on the case study approach, and it would be inappropriate to make generalizations based on the case study approach; three, he concentrated only on the impact that childhood experiences have on personality, and ignored other experiences across life span.

### Implications for marketers:

The Freudian theory holds relevance for a marketer. First, consumer reactions in the marketplace with respect to purchase decisions and post purchase behavior are a reflection on individual personality. Just as people have personalities, similarly product/brands also have personalities. Consumers tend to relate "personality-like" traits to different products and brands. Consumers match their personality styles with the product/brands they buy. Thus, marketers should segment markets and position their brands accordingly. For example, there are variants of the same motorbike; some plain and sleek, some trendy and some powerful, each of which are meant for separate segments. Thus, marketers could take a clue and segment consumers on the basis of the personality traits that determine their behavior.

Based on the dominant personality system, the three elements, Id, Ego, and Super Ego can also be used to segment markets. The dominance of either of these would lead to a different personality make up, and variation in decision making styles and consumption patterns; For example, where the Id is dominant, the person would be pleasure seeking, often irrational; his priorities and consumption patterns would be very different to another consumer who exhibits dominance of Ego (rationality) and Super Ego (rationality plus social norms).

Second, the study of personality also holds good when we speak of colors, as personality factors are associated with and reflective of specific colors. Like, green denotes freshness, nature;

red denotes passion, anger; black denotes power, sophistication; white denotes purity, chastity and cleanliness; gold and silver denote regality and wealth. Marketers keep such associations in mind while designing the product, its packaging as well as the advertisement. For example, mouthwash is white, herbal soaps are green, motorcycles are generally black and red etc.

Third, with a majority of human drives being unconscious, consumers themselves are often unaware of the true reasons for buying a particular product or brand. Many a times, a consumer fails to provide an answer as to why he bought a red shirt and not a yellow one.

Fourth, much of the processes that come into play while purchase decisions and consumption patterns is unexplainable; behavior is many a times instant and spontaneous much against market forecast. For example, Hrithik Roshan movies made by Rakesh Roshan and team like Koi Mil Gaya, Krish etc. have been huge hits, but Kites made under the same banner was quite a disaster, much against marketer expectations.

#### **6.3.4.2 Jungian theory:**

Carl Jung, a contemporary of Freud proposed the famous Jungian Theory. He elaborated on personality types, and his contribution has great relevance to the study of consumer behavior.

Carl Jung's proposed a typology based upon four bipolar dimensions, where each pole represents an opposite preference and thus illustrates four dichotomies, viz, Extraversion – Introversion, Sensing – Intuition, Thinking – Feeling, and Judging – Perceiving. The permutations of these 4 pairs help identify sixteen different personality types. The sixteen personality types are defined in terms of acronyms of the combination of the 4 dimensions they represent. The various types are Extraverted Sensing (ESFP, ESTP), Introverted Sensing (ISTJ, ISFJ), Extraverted Intuition (ENFP, ENTP), Introverted Intuition (INFJ, INTJ), Extraverted Thinking (ESTJ, ENTJ), Introverted Thinking (ISTP, INTP), Extraverted Feeling (ESFJ, ENFJ) and Introverted Feeling (INFP, ISFP).

The personality types proposed by Carl Jung were developed and incorporated into a scale that came to be famously known and applied as the MBTI or the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. Essentially a personality inventory, it has been used extensively in social sciences to measure the following pairs of psychological construct/dimensions: sensing-intuiting, thinking-feeling, extroversion-introversion, and judging-perceiving. Each of the four pairs is illustrative of two different personality characteristics.

While the scale has been applied successfully in studies on consumer behavior and market research, recent research has tended to focus on two mental bipolar dimensions or dichotomies, viz., sensing-intuiting (S-N) and thinking-feeling (T-F). The two dimensions, sensing (S) and intuiting (N) measure how a person receives, gathers and processes information; the people who fall under the S category prefer to gather information through their senses directly; the people who fall under the N category rely upon their understanding of things, based on their perception of the world. Thus we can perceive information through our senses, or our intuition. The other two dimensions, thinking (T) and feeling (F) refer to how individuals take decisions; the people who fall under the T category make decisions based on an unbiased reasoning and logic; the people who fall under the F category base their decisions on feeling and emotions. Thus we can make decisions based on objective logic, or subjective feelings. According to Jung, we all use the S,N,T and F; however each one of us varies in their usage and frequency. The combination of our "preferences" defines our personality type. The same descriptions of the sensing-intuiting (S-N) and thinking-feeling (T-F) personality types may be applied to consumer behavior; the S and N determine how a consumer gathers and processes information about products, while the T and F determine how he makes a purchase decision.

By cross-tabulating the two pairs of psychological dimensions, we can derive four different personality types, viz. Sensing-Thinking (S-T), Sensing-Feeling (S-F), Intuiting-Thinking (N-T) and Intuiting-Feeling (N-F). Each of these reflects variedly in purchase decisions and consumption processes. The marketer could benefit immensely by gaining insights as to the varying types so as to design his marketing strategy to be able to serve consumers effectively and efficiently. Let us describe the four personality types with an example. There are four women, each one with a different personality type, S-T, S-F, N-T and N-F. They desire to buy some gold jewellery (See Table 1).

**An Assessment of the Theory:** Carl Jung was the first psychologist to speak of personality types. His typology based upon four bipolar dimensions have been widely applied in research in social sciences; it has also been successfully used in studies on consumer behavior as well. He believed that our behavior is shaped by past generations' experience.

### **Implications for a marketer:**

The theory has relevance for a marketer. After gaining an insight into the various personality types, a marketer could design his marketing strategy so to be able to serve consumers with the varying personality types in a better manner, leaving them more satisfied.

**Table 1: Psychological construct/dimensions with characteristics and Example**

	<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Example</b>
<b>Sensing- Thinking (S-T)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Extensive search for information</li> <li>-Rational and logical in decision making</li> <li>-Economic orientation; Price-sensitive</li> <li>-Propelled by materialism; reflects personal motives</li> <li>-Risk avoider</li> <li>-Empirical</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The lady would collect facts about the reputed dealers and the prevailing gold prices.</li> <li>-She would evaluate and make comparisons with respect to carat, purity, design and making charges.</li> <li>-After careful thought and deliberation, she would take a decision on her own regarding what to buy and from where.</li> <li>-The decision choice would be based on genuinity and economics.</li> </ul>
<b>Sensing- Feeling (S-F)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Searches for information, but likes to consider others' opinions</li> <li>-Basis decision on personal values</li> <li>-Propelled by materialism; reflects status</li> <li>-Risk taker but likes to share with others</li> <li>-Empirical</li> <li>-Low on rationality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The lady would collect facts about gold prices, carat, purity, dealers etc.</li> <li>-She would evaluate and make comparisons with respect to carat, purity, design and making charges.</li> <li>-She would like to take opinion of others, especially on the appeal and design. She would like to seek advice from the dealer himself, or her friends/relatives and people from her social class.</li> <li>-She would take a decision regarding what to buy and from where based on opinions of others.</li> <li>-The decision choice would be based on genuinity and opinion of others.</li> </ul>
<b>Intuiting- Thinking (N-T)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Imagines wide range of options; Weighs pros and cons</li> <li>-Basis decisions on intuition and imagination; Yet, uses logic while making decisions</li> <li>-Risk taker; Speculative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The lady would weigh the various options that she is aware of.</li> <li>-Such options would relate to carat, purity, design and making charges, as well as gold prices and available dealers.</li> <li>-She would be speculative and take a decision on her own regarding what to buy and from where.</li> <li>-The decision choice would be based on intuition, imagination and hunch. She would be a risk taker.</li> </ul>
<b>Intuiting- Feeling (N-F)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Imagines wide range of options</li> <li>-Basis decisions on intuition and imagination; Yet, uses other peoples' opinions</li> <li>-Highly "people oriented" or "other directed"</li> <li>-Least price sensitive</li> <li>-Risk seeker; Novelty seeking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The lady would weigh the various options that she is aware of.</li> <li>-Such options would relate to carat, purity, design and making charges, as well as gold prices and available dealers.</li> <li>-She would be speculative and take a decision on her own regarding what to buy and from where.</li> <li>-She would look for peoples' opinions</li> <li>-She would be least price sensitive</li> <li>-The decision choice would be based on intuition, imagination and hunch, but with hearsay from others</li> <li>-She would be a risk taker and novelty seeker, often switching dealers and brands.</li> </ul>

#### **6.3.4.3 Neo-Freudian theory:**

There were a group of psychologists who believed that social interaction and resultant relationships formed the basis for the growth and development of personality. Here, they disagreed with their contemporary, Freud who believed that personality was i) biological and rooted in genetics, and ii) was groomed as a result of early childhood experiences. This group of researchers who laid emphasis on the process of socialization came to be known as the Neo-Freudians. Noteworthy among them are Alfred Adler, Harry Stack Sullivan and Karen Homey.

**a) Alfred Adler:** Adler, who is regarded as the father of individual psychology, was a disciple of Freud. He later broke away from the Freudian philosophy due to disagreement over the importance that Freud gave to the “unconscious”. Adler was the first psychologist to speak of the term ‘inferiority complex’, something that arose out of a sense of inferiority or inadequacy. He believed that:

- people are goal oriented, with an urge for personal growth, and “the will to power”; they have within them a "self perfecting" drive; this drive is the single "drive" or motivating force behind all behavior and experience
- individuals seek to overcome feelings of anxiety and feelings of inferiority; the basic drive in human beings is to strive from an initial state of inadequacy, or what he termed "inferiority", toward "superiority", or self-actualization. People compensate (strive to overcome) for inferiorities by making necessary adjustments.
- people strive for goals that can be referred to as style of life;
- social drives, especially family, friends and culture have an impact on behavior and feelings; right from birth across a life span, people involve themselves in social relationships;
- the primal social influences in an individual can be modified in a manner such that that each one of us develops personal styles in dealing with our life and achieving goals.

According to Adler’s theory individuals’ buy to overcome feelings of inferiority.

**b) Herbert Harry Stack Sullivan:** Sullivan, a psychiatrist extended Freud's theory of psychoanalysis, and concluded that failures in interpersonal relationships were largely responsible for mental illnesses and disorders. He referred to such causes as "interactional", which needed to be assessed to cure any kind of psychoses. According to him, social relationships were extremely important for human beings and loneliness was the most painful of human experiences. He developed a theory of psychiatry based on interpersonal relationships where social forces are largely responsible for mental illnesses.

Sullivan referred to his approach an interpersonal theory of psychiatry, to focus on "what goes on between people", sharp in contrast to Freud, who focused on "what goes on inside people". He believed that social relationships are primary, which actually lead to personality. In fact personality manifests itself in such social relationships.

He proposed that human beings are driven towards two sources of motivation viz., the pursuit of satisfactions and the pursuit of security. With respect to satisfaction, human beings seek satisfaction of mainly bodily needs, with the goal to reduce tension. With respect to security, human beings seek to reduce the insecurity that arises from social and cultural needs. Personality manifest and strives for avoidance and reduction of anxiety.

Thus, Sullivan focused on how human beings try to form and maintain social relationships with each other, especially if such relationships are significant and rewarding. He also spoke about anxiety in human beings. He elaborated on how personality is impacted as people put in efforts to reduce tensions, particularly anxiety. He said that human beings develop particular personality traits to reduce anxiety.

**c) Karen Homey:** Karen Homey, a prominent female personality theorist of her time, added on to Freud's work by emphasizing the role of social factors. Her approach came to be known as the psychosocial analysis. Her work focused on the emotional relationship that exists between parent and child early in the child's life. Like other Neo-Freudists, Homey also spoke on anxiety. While focusing on child parent relationships, she also researched on how people strive to overcome feelings of anxiety. According to her, people experience anxiety and tend to act as neurotics; the irrational defenses against anxiety become a permanent part of personality and that affect human behavior; based on

their approach towards overcoming feelings of anxiety, people could be classified into three groups viz., compliant, aggressive, and detached (CAD).

- **Compliant:** Some people who experience a great deal of anxiety and helplessness move toward other people in order to gain help and acceptance; they seek social support, approval and acceptance and so they move towards others. Such people are regarded as complainers. They want to be loved, admired, wanted and appreciated.

- **Aggressive:** Some people try to overcome their insecurities and anxieties by forcing their power over others, dominating them, or even excelling over them. This makes them feel secured; the objective is to 'get them before they get me.' Such people are aggressive; they move against others, in other words they want to excel over others. They want to be successful and powerful and have a desire for personal admiration and achievement. In the process, they could be demanding, selfish, rude and cruel.

- **Detached:** There are some people who want to move away from others; They are asocial and indifferent towards others. They believe that if they do not involve with others, they would escape being hurt from them. Such people are referred to as detached; they seek freedom from obligations, and desire total independence, leaving them lonely and empty. They like to create their own style.

Based on the three types, a personality test has been developed which is referred to as the CAD scale. The scale has been widely used in studies related to consumer behavior. In fact, the three types have ramifications for marketers; the three personality groups are illustrative of personality types that are varied, and would react differently to the marketing mix. According to Homey's theory, different types of people buy different types of products/services. They could be treated as three distinct segments, and the marketing mix designed accordingly. For example, the compliant consumers who would like to be in company of other people would be more likely to use a toothpaste with a mouth freshener (Close-Up); an aggressive consumer who would like to excel over others would like to drink health drinks (Boost, Secret of my Energy); and detached consumers who seek total independence and like to create their own style would like to go for meditation and rejuvenation camps (Vipassana).



**An Assessment of the Theory:** The Neo-Freudian theories draw themselves from various contributors and are an expanse in content and processes in so far as the subject matter of personality is concerned. However, while the Neo-Freudians speak of human tendencies to strive for perfection, fight anxiety and inadequacies, and of social relationships, they tend to ignore the biological traits and the genetics involved.

### **Implications for a marketer:**

The Neo-Freudian theories emphasize the role that socialization has to play. Marketers could draw in heavily in so far as the impact that opinion leaders, as well as interpersonal communication and word of mouth could have on consumer decision processes and consumption processes. This would also include the impact that family, friends, social class, culture and sub-culture. Marketers have also tended to use Neo-Freudian theories while segmenting markets and positioning their products, eg. Personality types have been used to segment markets and position products as per the segment.

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## **FAQS (FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS):**

**Ques 1      Define Personality. Differentiate between a personality trait and personality types.**

**Ans 1**      Personality is defined as a sum total of outer physiological as well as the inner psychological characteristics that determine and reflect how a person reacts to his environment. It exhibits itself through a unique psychological makeup that activates behavior on the part of an individual in response to forces in his or her environment. However, the emphasis is on the inner characteristics, i.e., the qualities, attributes, traits, and mannerisms that differentiate one individual from another individual, and make him unique in his own way. It is noteworthy that as individuals we possess such traits, and people who share a particular trait(s) are said to belong to a personality type. The term personality has been defined variedly, so has been the evolution; while some researchers have stressed the influence that heredity has on the make-up of personality, others have also included experiences in early childhood; still others have laid emphasis on as well as environmental influences across different periods in a person's life cycle, and illustrated how personality continues to develop over lifetime. The approach towards the study has also been debatable. While some look at personality as a unified whole, others focus on specific personality traits.

Just as an individual has a personality, similarly products also have a personality of their own. As Schiffman has put it consumer personality refers to the “unique dynamic organization of characteristics of a particular person, physical and psychological, which influence behavior and responses to the social and physical environment.”

As individuals, each one of us is unique with a wide array of qualities, attributes, traits and characteristics. However, each one of us shares with each other a quality or a few trait (s). When we share a trait (s) with another (others), we are said to be similar on that trait and thus we together with the other person (s), is said to fall in a personality type.

In other words, a personality trait is a person's inclination to behave in a particular way while interacting with the external environment to achieve goals; this would be specific to an area of a person's life. Many personality traits put together, comprise the

personal make-up of a person and culminate into his personality. On the other hand, a group of people who share personality traits are said to fall into a personality class; they are expected to react to the environment in a similar manner as they are similar to each other on the basis of certain trait (s).

For example, stubbornness may be a trait; dogmatism and or even innovativeness would become a personality type.

**Ques 2        Explain the Freudian Theory of Personality? How does it relate to consumer behavior?**

**Ans 2**                Sigmund Freud, the father of psychology, became famous with its psychoanalytic theory of personality. The Freudian theory is the first comprehensive theory that was proposed on the subject of personality. He described several components that underlie how personality emanates, thus leading to a better understanding of the subject. In fact the theory is regarded as the cornerstone of modern psychology. Sigmund based his theory on certain assumptions:

- unconscious needs or drives lie at the heart of human motivation and personality.
- the socialization process that takes place within people in a social set up has a huge impact on individual behavior.

Freud explained much of how the psyche or the mind operates, and proposed that the human psyche is composed of parts within our awareness and beyond our awareness. He said that all behavior within an individual cannot be explained, much lies in the sub-conscious. Freud viewed personality as “an iceberg”; just as majority of the iceberg remains within water and only the tip of the iceberg is above water, similarly, much of our personality exists below our level of awareness, as the unconscious and just as a part of it lies above, as the conscious. Even though an individual is not aware of the contents and processes of the unconscious, much of our behavior is attributed to it.

Based on the level of awareness, the human mind comprises three parts, viz., conscious, preconscious and the unconscious or the sub-conscious; The conscious mind is what one is aware of at any particular moment of time and reflects ones present thoughts, feelings, perceptions, fantasies, etc; it restricts itself to the current thinking processes and comprises a very large part of our current awareness. The preconscious

mind or the "available memory," is what can be retrieved and made conscious, and brought to mind instantly or quickly; it is what we are aware of but not paying attention to at a point of time; it is something that can be brought into the conscious mind. The larger part of the human mind consists of the unconscious, which is all that stays at the subconscious level, and comprises the unaware, better known as our drives or instincts, feelings and memories and emotions related to trauma; this part in content and process is out of direct reach of the conscious mind, and thinks independently; an individual has no access to because it is unknown and hidden. This unconscious part is the source of all our drives and motives; yet we are often deny or refuse to accept and often resist them from becoming conscious. According to Freud, much of human behavior is driven directly from the subconscious mind; and so it is important that the unconscious material needs to be brought into the conscious state so that it can be examined in a rational manner.

Apart from these, Freud spoke of the Id, Ego and Super ego. The Id contains consists of primitive drives that lack the real perception of reality. It operates on the pleasure principle, with the objective of seeking pleasure and avoidance of pain, and doing what one wants to do. The processes that come into play are primary processes like hunger, thirst etc. The Ego is aware of reality and operates via the reality principle, where it recognizes what is real and understands that behavior has consequences. The processes that come into play are secondary processes, like learning and memory, perception etc. It also includes the impact that socialization has to play in the life of an individual; it recognizes the existence of social rules that are necessary in order to live and socialize with other people, and thus, plans to satisfy ones' needs within the social values and rules. The Super ego comprises the value system and the morals, which emanate from what an individual learns in childhood from his parents. It is contained in the conscious part of our memory. It believes in doing what the society says. While the Ego and Super Ego are partly conscious and partly unconscious, the Id is the unconscious. Further, the Super ego acts as a counterbalance to the Id; the former seeks to restrict the pleasure-seeking demands of the latter, and it is left for the Ego to balance the demands of the Id and Super ego with the constraints of reality; it controls the higher mental processes such as logical reasoning to solve the Id-Super ego dilemma.

According to Freud, personality is based on the dynamic and continuous interplay between the Id, Ego and Super Ego. The Id demands immediate gratification of needs and desires (pleasure principle) regardless of constraints in the external environment; the Ego acts to realistically meet the desires of the Id (reality principle); the Super Ego (conscience) blends morals and societal rules upon the ego, so that the desires are met both realistically and morally. Thus, Freud also pointed out the impact of socialization on members of a society, especially with reference to how this socialization impacts individual behavior. According to him, there exists a state of tension within an individual; this tension arises out if there is a mismatch between an individual's needs and desires vis-à-vis the norms set up by the society and the socialization process; the manner in which an individual sorts out the dilemma shapes his personality.

### **Implications for marketers:**

The Freudian theory holds relevance for a marketer. First, consumer reactions in the marketplace with respect to purchase decisions and post purchase behavior are a reflection on individual personality. Just as people have personalities, similarly product/brands also have personalities. Consumers tend to relate "personality-like" traits to different products and brands. Consumers match their personality styles with the product/brands they buy. Thus, marketers should segment markets and position their brands accordingly. For example, there are variants of the same motorbike; some plain and sleek, some trendy and some powerful, each of which are meant for separate segments. Thus, marketers could take a clue and segment consumers on the basis of the personality traits that determine their behavior.

Based on the dominant personality system, the three elements, Id, Ego, and Super Ego can also be used to segment markets. The dominance of either of these would lead to a different personality make up, and variation in decision making styles and consumption patterns; For example, where the Id is dominant, the person would be pleasure seeking, often irrational; his priorities and consumption patterns would be very different to another consumer who exhibits dominance of Ego (rationality) and Super Ego (rationality plus social norms).

Second, the study of personality also holds good when we speak of colors, as personality factors are associated with and reflective of specific colors. Like, green denotes freshness, nature; red denotes passion, anger; black denotes power, sophistication; white denotes purity, chastity and cleanliness; gold and silver denote regality and wealth. Marketers keep such associations in mind while designing the product, its packaging as well as the advertisement. For example, mouthwash is white, herbal soaps are green, motorcycles are generally black and red etc.

Third, with a majority of human drives being unconscious, consumers themselves are often unaware of the true reasons for buying a particular product or brand. Many a times, a consumer fails to provide an answer as to why he bought a red shirt and not a yellow one.

Fourth, much of the processes that come into play while purchase decisions and consumption patterns is unexplainable; behavior is many a times instant and spontaneous much against market forecast. For example, Hrithik Roshan movies made by Rakesh Roshan and team like Koi Mil Gaya, Krish etc. have been huge hits, but Kites made under the same banner was quite a disaster, much against marketer expectations.

## **SELF EVALUATION TESTS/QUIZZES:**

### **Section A True/false:**

1. An individual's personality remains consistent over time and is enduring in nature.

### **Section B Fill up the blanks:**

1. The personality types proposed by Carl Jung were developed and incorporated into a scale that came to be famously known and applied as the \_\_\_\_\_.
2. This group of researchers who laid emphasis on the process of socialization and its impact on personality came to be known as the\_\_\_\_\_.

**Section C Multiple choice questions:**

1. Which of the following about the Freudian Theory is true ?
  - a) unconscious needs or drives lie at the heart of human motivation and personality.
  - b) the socialization process has a huge impact on individual behavior and personality.
  - c) personality traits determine ones' personal make-up.
  - d) None of the above.
  
2. "A majority of human drives being unconscious, consumers themselves are often unaware of the true reasons for buying a particular product or brand". This statement finds its roots in the works of \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a) Carl Jung
  - b) Sigmund Freud
  - c) Honey
  - d) None of the above.
  
3. Which of the following pairs is wrong?
  - a) "Inferiority complex", is something that arose out of a sense of inferiority or inadequacy: Adler
  - b) Id, ego, superego: Homey
  - c) Social relationships were extremely important for human beings; referred to such causes as "interactional": Sullivan
  - d) All of above

**Section D Short answers:**

1. Carl Jung's proposed a typology based upon four bipolar dimensions, where each pole represents an opposite preference and thus illustrates four dichotomies. Name them.
2. Name any two Neo-Freudians.
3. Homey classified people into three groups. Mention the groups.

## KEY

### Section A True/false:

1. True

### Section B Fill up the blanks:

1. Myers-Briggs Type Indicator
2. Neo-Freudians

### Section C Multiple choice questions:

1. c
2. b
3. b

### Section D Short Answers:

1. Extraversion-Introversion, Sensing-Intuition, Thinking-Feeling, and Judging-Perceiving.
  2. Alfred Adler, Harry Stack Sullivan and Karen Horney.
  3. Compliant, Aggressive and Detached (CAD)
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