Patterns, Personalities, and Complex Relationships in the Effects of Self on Mundane Everyday Consumption: These Are 495 of My Most and Least Favorite Things

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ABSTRACT - This paper explores the elusive relationship between Self and Mundane Everyday Consumption (M.E.C.). It suggests that early attempts to show that "Self -> M.E.C." failed because concepts of "Self," "M.E.C.," and "->" were too simplistic. Accordingly, the paper extends our concept of M.E.C. to embrace enduring patterns of consumption preferences toward products (versus brands), objects (such as performing artists), or activities (manifested by allocations of time). It expands our view of Self to include such aspects of personality as visualizing-verbalizing tendency, romanticism-classicism, and intrinsic-extrinsic motivation. And it elaborates our view of the relationships involved (->) to represent complex mediating and moderating effects wherein personality influences the links in a causal chain from product features to purchase intentions in general and shapes the intervening role played by social impressions in particular.

INTRODUCTION

A Deep Conviction

Deep in the bones of every introspectively alert consumer researcher lies the buried conviction - implicit, inarticulate, or even inaccessible to consciousness - that one's Self somehow causes, influences, or shapes one's Mundane Everyday Consumption. Colloquially, most of us believe that "you are what you eat." In other words, at some level, we tend to feel that the "self" is or at least determines what a person "consumes."

An Elusive Butterfly

Yet, for decades, this seemingly apodictic intuition has proven amazingly resistant to empirical verification. Like an elusive butterfly, it has evaded efforts to catch it on the wing. In the earliest attempt that I can recall, Evans (1959) tried to show that Personality (measured by the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule or EPPS) explained Car Ownership (Ford versus Chevy) but found instead that the prediction was very weak and that simple-minded demographic, socioeconomic, or other "objective" variables worked just as well or better. This outcome set off a train of controversy that eventually culminated in the conventional wisdom - voiced by Kassarjian (1971) - that personality variables work poorly in explaining buyer behavior.

We might view the early unsuccessful formulations in light of the following simplified representation:
In the context of understanding the phenomenon of product complementarity, several authors have explored the nature of the other goods and services jointly consumed with a product (Bass, Pessemier, and Tierny, 1969), and how the relationship investigated is a simple correlation (r or R), the model explains only the tiniest variance in the dependent variable. [Here, to avoid confusion, I should emphasize that my formulation views “self” as represented by “personality,” whereas others have sometimes regarded “self” as represented by “consumption” (Greeno, Sommers, and Kernan, 1973).]

**Explanations**

Subsequent thinking has suggested at least three reasons why the models just described did not work very well:

1. The personality variables were not specific to the buyer behavior of interest [hence, the development of psychographic measures like those advocated by Wells (1975)];
2. Brand ownership was less relevant than more enduring commitments such as long-run brand loyalty or habitual product usage [hence, the move toward investigating clusters of consumption via “patterns of complementarity” by Bass, Pessemier, and Tierny (1969) or “behavioral life-styles” by Alpert and Gatty (1969); hence, also, the focus on product usage as opposed to brand choice recommended by Holbrook and Howard (1977) and emphasized by Holbrook and Hirschman (1982)];
3. The correlational relationships tested were too simplistic [hence, the development of more complex models of buyer behavior, beginning with Howard (1963) and blossoming from there toward the present state of the art].

**Extensions, Expansions, and Elaborations**

I want to continue these latter streams of thought concerning “Self -> M.E.C.” by proposing some further extensions, expansions, and elaborations. Specifically, I want to suggest that - in seeking relationships between the Self and Mundane Everyday Consumption ([Self -> M.E.C.]) -

1. M.E.C. may best be regarded as patterns of consumption preferences at the level of products (e.g., toothpaste, soap), objects (e.g., Miles Davis, Paul Simon), or activities (e.g., tennis, swimming) rather than at the level of buying specific brands (e.g., Crest vs. Colgate; CBS vs. Warner; Prince vs. Head) [here, I adopt a focus on potentially self-revealing product clusters comparable to that proposed as early as the emphasis on role-related activity patterns suggested by Kernan and Sommers (1967) and the measurement application via self-related Q-sorts of products conducted by Greeno, Sommers, and Kernan (1973)];
2. The Self may fruitfully be viewed in terms of certain important consumption-related aspects of personality for which measurement indices can be developed, as in the cases of visualizing-verbalizing tendency (the VV Index), romanticism-classicism (the RC Index), and intrinsic-extrinsic motivation (the IE Index) [here, I draw primarily on my own work with an important reminder that others have done extensive research on other aspects of personality such as masculinity-femininity, self-monitoring, self-esteem, innovation proneness, sensation seeking, etc.];
3. The relationships of interest may need complications to include various sorts of mediating and moderating effects [where personality influences the roles of intervening variables along a chain of links from product design to purchase intentions (Anand and Holbrook 1990; Heath 1990) and where this chain involves various aspects of social interaction of special interest to this particular ACR session (Kernan and Sommers 1967; Schultz-Kleine and Kleine 1991)].

In what follows, I shall suggest some specific examples drawn from my own work to illustrate each of these three points. However, again, I remind the reader that many others have explored similar themes on related topics. Some of this apposite research is discussed by the other participants in the present ACR session. Other examples appear in the references mentioned earlier.

**Using Versus Choosing**

Holbrook, Lehmann, and O'Shaughnessy (1986) pursued the focus on product usage (as opposed to brand choice) earlier suggested by Holbrook and Hirschman (1982). Toward this end, they examined “patterns of relationships among product categories themselves” (p. 50) in connection with questions concerning the “psychological connections among product categories” (p. 50).

Specifically, the authors studied 53 products in categories ranging from consumer nondurables (coffee, cereal) to durable goods (bicycle, camera) to services (plumber, car repair). For each category, 41 British housewives considered why they made their most recent purchase and indicated the salience of eight different types of reasons (habitual, picking, intrinsic, economic, technical, social, legalistic, and adaptive) on a five-point numerical scale from “not considered at all” (1) to “sole basis for selecting” (5). Mean ratings were correlated across products; the correlations were converted to distance measures; and these distances were submitted to metric multidimensional scaling to obtain a product space in two dimensions with a correlation between input and output interpoint distances of 0.91.

The vertical dimension of this spatial representation appeared to discriminate between products used for their utilitarian properties (headache remedies, car repairs) versus those used for aesthetic or social reasons (hats, dress shirts). The horizontal axis posed more difficulties of interpretation but seemed to reflect the difference between repetitive commitments (pet food, gas, coffee) and more unique purchasing situations (calculator, bicycle, car). [Unfortunately, space does not permit the inclusion of this or the other visual representations discussed in the present review. For further details, please see the original sources cited.]

This representation goes part way toward the focus on patterns of product consumption mentioned earlier in that it positions products nearer together or farther apart according to the sorts of reasons that determine their acquisition and usage. However, in line with the purposes of the present inquiry, a more interesting question concerns the ways that products cluster together in a preference space to reveal patterns of product complementarity.

**Patterns of Complementarity in a Preference Space**

In connection with the phenomenon of product complementarity, several authors have suggested that the meaning or value of a consumption item may depend on the nature of the other goods and services jointly consumed with it (Bass, Pessemier, and Tierny 1969). Such "item
Three examples at hand concern the patterning of preferences among various objects from the world of entertainment in general and jazz performance in particular. Thus, Holbrook (1982) asked 180 respondents to rate their perceived likelihood of buying new recordings by each of 180 jazz artists on a 9-point numerical scale from "not at all likely to buy" (1) to "extremely likely to buy" (9). Using a reduced set of 73 musicians (those with above-average purchase intentions), an MDS analysis of the correlations among artists across respondents produced a two-dimensional solution with a correlational fit between input and output distances of 0.75. Here, the horizontal axis appeared to represent commercialism, differentiating between those musicians with the closest ties to the purist jazz tradition (Gil Evans, Roland Hanna, Max Roach, Thelonious Monk) and those who have made the largest concessions to popular taste (George Benson, Grover Washington, Ramsey Lewis, Herbie Mann). Meanwhile, the vertical axis seemed to represent contemporaneity, with the more modern players at the bottom (Wayne Shorter, Joe Zawinul, Keith Jarrett, Weather Report) and those with more mainstream styles at the top (Count Basie, The Jones-Lewis Big Band, Zoot Sims, Oscar Peterson). One reasonable inference from such a preference space is that the neighboring musicians tend to cluster together in listeners' patterns of consumption. Some would own record collections featuring Shorter and Zawinul (both members of Weather Report); others would prefer listening to Sims and Peterson (both under contract with Pablo at the time of the study).

Closely comparable results appeared in research reported by Holbrook and Holloway (1984) wherein 327 respondents gave preference ratings for 59 jazz musicians on a 9-point numerical scale from "not at all enjoyable" (1) to "extremely enjoyable" (9). Multidimensionally scaled correlations produced a two-dimensional preference space with a correlational fit between input and output distances of 0.79. Again, the horizontal axis appeared to represent commerciality (e.g., Clifford Brown and Lester Young among the purists versus Grover Washington and Bob James among the sell-outs). And, again, the vertical axis could be interpreted as a continuum of contemporaneity from the more modern (Marion Brown, Sun Ra) to the more mainstream (Ray Charles, Louis Armstrong). Further, this representation of patterns of preference suggests that certain artists tend to group together in the consumption styles of different consumers. Someone who listens to Hampton Hawes, Jim Hall, Bill Evans, Lee Konitz, and Art Pepper probably does not devote much time or attention to Donald Byrd, Freddie Hubbard, Herbie Hancock, or Al Jarreau (and vice versa).

In a third study of jazz preferences, Holbrook and Dixon (1985) used essentially the same technique one more time with preference ratings of 50 jazz musicians collected from a sample of 220 respondents on a 7-point numerical scale from "do not enjoy at all" (1) to "enjoy very much" (7). Multidimensionally scaled correlations produced a two-dimensional preference space with a fit of 0.66. Again, one dimension appeared to represent commerciality - namely, the vertical axis with purists at the top (Jaco Pastorius, Wayne Shorter, Keith Jarrett) and sell-outs at the bottom (George Benson, Grover Washington, Ramsey Lewis). However, because all artists came from the set of currently active modern performers, the horizontal axis appeared to capture a distinction somewhat different from that observed earlier - namely, a continuum of familiarity based on a contrast between the better known jazz stars (Billy Cobham, George Duke, Herbie Hancock, Hubert Laws, Ramsey Lewis) as opposed to the more obscure artists (Cedar Walton, The Heath Brothers, Helen Humes, Benny Golson, Woody Shaw).

Patterns of Time Allocation

A phenomenon closely related to patterns of preferences among objects concerns patterns of time allocation among various sorts of activities. In this connection, Holbrook (1980) used multidimensionally scaled correlations to reanalyze some data on leisure activities originally reported by Duncan (1978). Specifically, Holbrook used summed cross-products from Duncan's factor-pattern coefficients to approximate the original correlations among the 25 leisure activities loaded highest on Duncan's five factors. MDS produced a two-dimensional space with a correlational fit between input and output distances of 0.77. Here, the horizontal axis appeared to represent a contrast between solitary activities (gardening, walking, reading) and those of a social nature (movies, volleyball, dancing). Meanwhile, the vertical dimension seemed to indicate a distinction between indoor activities (shopping, sitting, stereo) and those performed outdoors (hunting, fishing, camping). Moreover, the activities appeared to form meaningful patterns or clusters in the MDS space. For example, certain "woodsmen" tended to engage in fishing, hunting, and camping, whereas other "socializers" tended to pursue dating, dancing, and movies.

Holbrook and Lehmann (1981) undertook a comparable approach to assessing patterns of leisure activities. Following Bass, Pessemier, and Tigert (1969), they investigated complementarity among activities in the allocation of discretionary time by analyzing data from a Market Facts panel of 3,288 respondents who had indicated their participation rates in 88 time-consuming activities. An MDS analysis of distances based on partial correlations among the activities produced a two-dimensional solution with a fit of 0.54. Again, one dimension seemed to represent the distinction between indoor activities (crossword, book, dinner) and those performed outdoors (swim, camp, hike). By contrast with the earlier findings, however, the solitary-social dimension was replaced by an axis that appeared to differentiate between essentially low-brow activities (cards, drinking, TV sports, bowling) and more high-brow pursuits (library, museum, classical concert, lecture). Further, activities high in a priori complementarity tended to occupy neighboring positions in the spatial representation. For example, camping, boating, hunting, swimming, and skiing clustered in one corner of the space, as did club, church, project, and volunteer in the opposite corner.

Limitations

The preceding analyses shed light on the patterns wherein products, objects, or activities group together into complementary clusters based on their tendencies to be thought about, preferred, or performed together or in similar ways by the same people. Hence, the various MDS spaces described in this section address the first of the concerns raised earlier - namely, that pertaining to the patterns that occur in mundane everyday consumption. However, questions remain concerning how these patterns are related, if at all, to underlying personality variables or to other aspects of the self.

(2) THE SELF AS PERSONALITY

Premonitions

Premonitions concerning the sort of approach that I would advocate appeared in the aforementioned paper by Holbrook and Holloway (1984) in which vectors were positioned in the MDS space for jazz musicians to indicate the differences in relative preferences between members of various demographic segments (e.g., Blacks vs. whites) and socioeconomic categories (e.g., less- vs. better-educated). The method used here regresses segment-specific relative preferences against the spatial coordinates of objects on the axes that underlie the preference space and plots a vector that passes through a point given by the coefficients of the axes in the regression equation (Carroll 1972). Thus, those objects whose perpendicular projections lie farther toward the positive end of this vector tend to be preferred relatively more strongly by members of the relevant consumer group. For example, the cluster of relative preferences for such jazz musicians as Hawes, Hall, Evans, Konitz, and Pepper (described earlier) is closely associated with being white (R = 0.65) and better-educated (R = 0.73). From here, it is only a short step to inquiring whether similar patterns of relative preferences appear for respondents differing in various psychographic aspects of their personality.
the flow combined to determine general liking (R = 0.88). Thus, these results support a
impression of others (Unger and Kernan 1983) contributed positively to desired flexibility as part of one's
furniture combinations by 227
model proposes that personality variables
esthetic, social, and
Intrinsic-Extrinsic Motivation, Self-Monitoring, Social Impression, and
enjoyment of playful consumption experiences (video games).
Specifically, for visual
(VV) Index). The results showed significant VV X game interactions in
developed by Mehrabian and Russell (1974). The
Visualizing-Verbalizing Tendencies and Emotional Responses to Video Games
fun). As tested
measured by a four-item index of affect) as well as on various
Romanticism-Classicism and Music Preferences
warmth) on preferences toward various vacation opportunities.
Further, the results showed a
indicated gender-related differences in part worths -
designed stimuli based
to various features of vacation trips (pleasure, risk, viewing, warmth, and
Psychographics and Preferences for Jazz Artists
At the simplest level of model building, one might inquire whether a personality variable exerts a moderating effect on the importance weights
developed by Holbrook and Olney (1991) used a method analogous to componental segmentation (Green and DeSarbo 1979) to test whether an index of romanticism-classicism (the RC Index) would account for shifts in the utilities attached
to various features of vacation trips (pleasure, risk, viewing, warmth, and luxury). A sample of 115 student subjects evaluated 32 factorially
designed stimuli based on all possible combinations of the five two-level travel features. Consistent with the authors' expectations, the results
indicated gender-related differences in part worths - with women (versus men) displaying significantly more positive evaluative weights for
Romanticism-Classicism and Travel Preferences
At the simplest level of model building, one might inquire whether a personality variable exerts a moderating effect on the importance weights
attached to different product features. In this connection, Holbrook and Olney (1991) used a method analogous to componental segmentation (Green and DeSarbo 1979) to test whether an index of romanticism-classicism (the RC Index) would account for shifts in the utilities attached
to various features of vacation trips (pleasure, risk, viewing, warmth, and luxury). A sample of 115 student subjects evaluated 32 factorially
designed stimuli based on all possible combinations of the five two-level travel features. Consistent with the authors' expectations, the results
indicated gender-related differences in part worths - with women (versus men) displaying significantly more positive evaluative weights for
psychographic items (each of which was used to split the overall sample of respondents
(3 RELATIONSHIPS OF INCREASED COMPLEXITY: FROM SIMPLE CORRELATIONS TO MODERATING AND MEDIATING EFFECTS
Thus far, the relationships between patterns of preference and aspects of personality have appeared in the form of straightforward simple
measures of correlational association. Further issues concern the complications that arise when we examine the possible moderating and
directing effects wherein personality can intervene in the chain of effects between stimulus properties and preferences or purchase
Intentions. In describing such models, I shall briefly mention four studies with escalating levels of complexity.
Romanticism-Classicism and Music Preferences
Pursuing a somewhat more complex modeling approach, Holbrook and Cowman (1985) manipulated various aspects of a music-listening
task (including the design of the music itself) on a number of dimensions and studied the effects of these task differences on preferences (as
measured by a four-item index of affect) as well as on various intervening value judgments (concerning beauty, quality, convenience, and
fun). As tested on a sample of 21 female subjects, these manipulations led to 32 listening experiences (N = 32 X 21 = 672), the intervening value judgments
beauty, quality, and fun) and their various interactions with gender and romanticism-classicism provided a fairly strong explanation of
preference (R = 0.88, p < 0.0001). Here, as expected, those higher in romanticism (versus classicism) showed a significantly more positive
contribution of beauty to preference (p = 0.002).
Visualizing-Verbalizing Tendencies and Emotional Responses to Video Games
Using a path-analytic approach comparable to that employed in the study just described, Holbrook, Chestnut, Oliva, and Greenleaf (1984)
test the previous focus to the domain of leisure activities (Unger and Kernan 1983) by investigating the emotional responses of 60
student subjects to the experience of playing a video game (in either a verbal or visual format). Measures of emotional responses included a
global assessment of negative-positive feeling borrowed from Byrne (1971) and the six-item indices of pleasure, arousal, and dominance
developed by Mehrabian and Russell (1974). The key personality variable of interest concerned an index of visualizing-verbalizing tendency (the VV Index). The results showed significant VV X game interactions in explaining three of the emotional measures (but not arousal).
Specifically, for visual (versus verbal) games, visualizing tendency contributed significantly more positively to feeling (p < 0.10), pleasure (p < 0.05),
and dominance (p < 0.05). This suggests that personality (visualizing-verbalizing tendency) plays a complex role in moderating the
enjoyment of playful consumption experiences (video games).
Intrinsic-Extrinsic Motivation, Self-Monitoring, Social Impression, and General Likin
Finally, Bell, Holbrook, and Solomon (1991) have recently reported results for a still more complex model designed to link personality,
esthetic, social, and attitudinal variables via various moderating and mediating effects. With particular relevance to the present discussion, this
model proposes that personality variables determine one's ideal impression which, in turn, moderates the effect of product-related person
perceptions on the favorability of social impressions that contribute to general liking. Specifically, evaluations of 32 factorially designed
furniture combinations by 227 student subjects suggested that intrinsic motivation (Deci 1975) and self-monitoring (Snyder and Gangestad 1986) contributed positively to desired flexibility as part of one's ideal impression (p < 0.0001 and p = 0.04, respectively), that this ideal impression exerted a positive moderating effect on the contribution by the perceived flexibility of the furniture's person perception to
explaining the favorability of its social impression (p = 0.002), and that social impression (p < 0.0001) and esthetic response (p < 0.0001)
combined to determine general liking (R = 0.88). Thus, these results support a complex model wherein personality determines the ideal
impression that one wishes to project which, in turn, moderates the effect that perceptions concerning the sort of person who would own the
product exert on the favorability of its social impression and wherein this social impression works together with esthetic response to mediate
the flow of effects from product features to general liking.
CONCLUSIONS

It should appear clear from the verbal description just offered that models designed to reveal the effects of personality on patterns of product preferences have become fairly complex and, indeed, that such complications must be included to address the issues of theoretical interest - namely, the role of Self (personality) in shaping Mundane Everyday Consumption (patterns of product usage, object preferences, and related activities) via the intervening role of Social Impressions.

If we return, for purposes of comparison, to the earlier oversimplified formulation that did not work, I believe we are now in a position to construct an extended, expanded, and elaborated schema that might work - or, at least, that might work better than the discredited simplistic view. Specifically, the improved schema would be structured as follows:

FIGURE

This extended, expanded, elaborated representation only begins to suggest the host of questions that remain unanswered and deserve exploration in future studies. Perhaps the present brief overview has offered some grounds for hoping that such further investigations may prove worthwhile.

REFERENCES


Anand, Punam and Morris B. Holbrook (1990), "Reinterpretation of Mere Exposure or Exposure of Mere Reinterpretation?" Journal of Consumer Research, 17 (September), 242-244.


not entirely impossible, and be aware that faulty self-assessment tests often lead (3). In fact, reading comprehension is a good starting point in discerning passive readers from active readers. Almost as soon as I could walk, I started helping put things on the shelves and so on, and then from the age about nine I used to serve the customers. Of course I wasn’t on the payroll, nor did I ever think I should have been. This new arrangement meant that my parents had to have the shop front painted in the company colours. Personality Some of us seem to be infinitely kind, while others seem to (52) down on everyone around them. Some of us never forget an argument, while others (53) up and forgive easily. For people with the ENFP personality type, relationships are a joyous process of mutual exploration and imagination, a chance to connect with another soul. ENFPs take their relationships seriously, and are known for their uninhibited and unshakeable devotion to the people to whom they’ve committed their hearts. ENFPs have the advantage of irresistible charm when it comes to attracting a partner – ENFPs’ warmth, excitement and passion are simply alluring. In the dating phase, if ENFPs can be said to tolerate such a formal process to begin with, they will show these qualities by showering their This essay will discuss the effects of these changes, focusing on positive and negative impacts. Technology impacts today’s world positively by two main ways. First, it makes life more convenient and easier. With the help of technology, many works for example household chores can be done without human. An article of Buzzel.com states that time are saving thanks to the help of machines which could learn and complete task efficiently. Technology has become more and more important to human’s life. Therefore, advance in technology has tremendous changes on today’s world. This essay will discuss the effects of these changes, focusing on positive and negative impacts. Technology impacts today’s world positively by two main ways. First, it makes life more convenient and easier.