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**Tinjauan tentang Penggunaan Metodologi Aaker dalam Konstruk Kepribadian  
Merek: Tinjauan Sastra*****A Review of the Use of Aaker's Methodology within the Brand Personality  
Construct: A Review of Extant Literature*****Oladipupo Folorunsho Ajeyalemi\* & Bolajoko Nkemdilim Dixon-Ogbechie**  
University of Lagos, Nigeria**Abstrak**

Antropomorfisme adalah kepercayaan bahwa merek dapat memiliki karakteristik manusia, yang memunculkan kecenderungan untuk menetapkan sifat manusia pada benda mati. Pada premis inilah Kepribadian Merek berakar. Beberapa penelitian dalam pengukuran dan pengaruh Kepribadian Merek berlimpah mengarah pada peningkatan argumen tentang metode yang paling tepat untuk digunakan dalam mengukur Kepribadian Merek. Namun, metodologi Aaker menonjol di domain Kepribadian Merek. Studi ini mencoba untuk meninjau literatur Kepribadian Merek untuk mengidentifikasi sejauh mana metodologi ini telah digunakan. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi ruang lingkup dan batasan konstruk Kepribadian Merek Aaker (1997), mengidentifikasi literatur tentang Kepribadian Merek dan mengidentifikasi penggunaan metodologi Aaker (1997) dalam pengembangan skala. Menggunakan desain kualitatif, sampling berturut-turut digunakan untuk menganalisis literatur yang diidentifikasi pada Kepribadian Merek. Data yang dihasilkan dianalisis menggunakan frekuensi dan analisis bergambar dan beberapa tabel menyajikan tinjauan literatur yang dikembangkan.

**Kata kunci:** Kepribadian Merek, taksonomi, *desk research*, pengambilan sampel berurutan, analisis bergambar

**Abstract**

*Anthropomorphism is the belief that brands can possess human characteristics, which raises a tendency to assign human traits to inanimate objects. It is on this premise that Brand Personality takes its roots. Several studies in the measurement and influence of Brand Personality abound leading to increasing arguments on the most appropriate methods to be used to measure Brand Personality. However, Aaker's methodology stands out prominently in the Brand Personality domain. This study attempts to review the Brand Personality literature to identify the extent that this methodology has been used. The objectives of this study are to identify the scope and limitation of Aaker's (1997) Brand Personality construct, identify the literature on Brand Personality and identify the use of Aaker's (1997) methodology in scale development. Using a qualitative design, consecutive sampling was used to analyse the identified literature on Brand Personality. The resulting data was analysed using frequency and pictorial analysis and several tables presenting the review of the literature were developed.*

**Keywords:** Brand Personality, taxonomy, desk research, consecutive sampling, pictorial analysis

## **Introduction**

Brand personality has been identified as a very useful concept when there is a need to differentiate brands within the ever competitive marketplace (Cham-Olstead & Cha, 2008; Wang, Yang & Liu, 2009), influence the prestige and distinctiveness of the brand (Carlson, Donovan & Cumiskey, 2009) and evoke varying emotional responses from consumers in a bid to influence opinion and as a whole purchase intention (De Moya & Jain, 2013). Brand Personality was defined by Aaker (1997: p.1) as “the set of human characteristics associated with a brand.” It is viewed more as the symbolic (or self expressive) rather than the utilitarian use of a brand (Keller, 1993).

Previous research has shown that brand personality could be manipulated in practice in order to influence brand choice (Aaker, 1997; Hassan & Rahman, 2012).

The concept of Brand Personality is not new with research dated as far back as the 80s (e.g. Plummer, 1984; Belk, 1988). Aaker’s (1997) Brand Personality Dimensions, however emerged as a generally acceptable scale for measuring Brand Personality and as such it has become central to development of the Brand Personality literature (Avis, 2012). Aaker’s (1997) Brand Personality Dimensions methodology has been used in examining Brand Personality across different consumer brands within different product categories and cultures (Hosany, Ekinci & Uysal, 2006) with varying results. Researchers (Avis, 2012; Hosany, Ekinci & Uysal, 2006; Cham-Olstead & Cha, 2008; Wang, Yang & Liu, 2009) agree that despite being stable, Aaker’s (1997) Brand Personality Scale may only lend a framework to developing scales across differing products and cultures. This research thus examined the literature of Brand Personality in the last fifteen (15) years to identify the various methodologies used in scale development in a bid to determine if the use of Aaker’s (1997) methodology is the most preferred within the Brand Personality Domain.

The study contributed to the existing literature on Brand Personality in three main ways. First it examined the scope and limitation of Aaker’s (1997) Brand Personality Dimensions construct from the point of view of the Brand Personality literature. Second it provided a taxonomy of the research in Brand Personality over the last 15 years, classifying the various methodologies and identifying the theories used in such research. Third it identified the use of Aaker’s Methodology over the last 15 years within the Brand Personality context which provides insight into the usability of the methodology as a valid scale development method.

## **Research Questions**

1. What is the scope and limitation of Aaker’s (1997) Brand Personality Dimensions construct?
2. What is the previous research that has developed scales to measure Brand Personality using Aaker’s (1997) Brand Personality Scale methodology over the last 15 years?

## **Scope and Limitation of the Study**

This study encompassed articles from all peer reviewed journals archived within three databases – EBSCOHost, Jstor and ScienceDirect which were published within the period of 2000 to 2015. This study is further limited to use of Aaker’s (1997) methodology. It did not consider other methodologies that may exist in the Brand Personality context. The articles studied were limited to journals archived within the stated databases this is due to the fact that those are the databases accessible to the researcher as provided by the University of Lagos Library at the time of the search. Other articles may exist in other databases. Future research may include other databases. The study is also limited to the period of 2000 to 2015. Other literature on Brand Personality may exist before the stated period.

## Literature Review

### *An Overview of Brand Personality*

Ahmad and Thyagaraj (2014) are of the view that the conceptualization of brands as personalities facilitates a firm to position brands with emotional attributes and to develop enduring consumer-brand relationship. In the same vein, previous studies (Biel, 1993; Halliday, 1996) have shown that brand personality plays an important role in differentiating similar products, as it is less weighed by physical attributes. Various frameworks and models have introduced in brand personality studies, for example, Carlson, Donovan and Cumisky (2009) employing a combination of Brand Personality Dimensions and Social Identity Theory as a framework, examined consumer brand relationships in sports by exploring the relationships between brand personality and prestige and distinctiveness (brand identification) of sporting teams; Fennis & Pruyn (2007) employed a framework of the self concept theory and the human personality theory to study brand personality influences of consumer impression formation and Pitt, Opoku, Hultman, Abratt & Spyropoulou (2007) investigated the communication of tourist destination brand personality by African countries using Nation Brand Personality as a framework. However, Aaker's (1997) Brand Personality Dimensions has been regarded as being central to the development of literature in brand personality (Avis, 2012). Aaker (1997) developed a five factor model consisting of 15 facets representing 42 items using a methodology that included – elimination of redundancies from academic trait lists, free association tasks, item purification and reductions, data collection and factor analysis. This has been regarded as one of the more stable methodologies for measuring brand personality (Uskli & Baloglu, 2011; Geuens, Weijters & De Wulf, 2009; Muniz, 2012). Most of the research in brand personality since Aaker (1997) have built in one way or the other on the concept and methodology she developed. (Ahmad & Thyagaraj, 2014).

### *An Overview of Aaker's (1997) Brand Personality Dimensions*

Aaker's (1997) Brand Personality Dimensions has been examined in different cultures, with the result that different factors have been found (e.g. Neatness, Peace and Conservation, Glinska & Kilon, 2014; Vibrancy and Sophistication, Uskli & Baloglu, 2011) as well as new facets and items (e.g. Vibrant and Inventive, Rojas-Mendez et al., 2013). Aaker's (1997) Brand Personality Dimensions' influence on other concepts have also been measured (e.g. Brand Image and Equity, Fennis & Pruyn, 2007; Shyle & Hysi, 2013).

Some notable research across various disciplines and subjects that have been carried out using Aaker's (1997) Brand Personality Dimensions over the past 15 years are presented below in Table 1:

**Table 1: Breakdown of Previous Research**

Subject Matter	Author	Year	Journal
Brand Personality and Sports	Carlson, B. D., Donavan, D. T., & Cumiskey, K. J.	2009	International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management
Brand Personality and Media	Chan-Olmsted, S. M., & Cha, J.	2007	International Journal on Media Management
	Chan-Olmsted, S. M., & Cha, J.	2008	International Journal on Media Management
	Valette-Florence, R., & De Barnier, V.	2013	Journal of Business Research
Brand Personality and Brand Image and Equity	Fennis, B.M., Pruyn, AThH. & Maasland, M..	2005	Advances in Consumer Research

	Shyle, I. & Hysi, V.	2013	The 1st International Conference on "Research and Education – Challenges Towards the Future" (ICRAE2013), 24-25 May 2013
Brand Personality and Tourism	Hultman, M., Skarmas, D., Oghazi, P., & Beheshti, H. M.	2015	Journal of Business Research
	Kumar, V., & Nayak, J. K.	2014	Tourism Management Perspectives
	De Moya, M., & Jain, R.	2013	Public Relations Review
	Ekinci, Y., Sirakaya-Turk, E., & Preciado, S.	2013	Journal of Business Research
	Usakli, A., & Baloglu, S.	2011	Tourism Management
	Pitt, L. F., Opoku, R., Hultman, M., Abratt, R., & Spyropoulou, S.	2007	Tourism Management
	Hosany, S., Ekinci, Y., & Uysal, M.	2006	Journal of Business Research
Brand Personality and Place Branding	Glińska, E., & Kilon, J.	2014	Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences
	Rojas-Méndez, J. I., Murphy, S. a., & Papadopoulos, N.	2013	Journal of Business Research
	Muniz, K. M.	2012	Brazilian Administration Review
	Geuens, M., Weijters, B., & De Wulf, K.	2009	Journal of Research in Marketing
Brand Personality and the Corporate Brand	Raffelt, U., Schmitt, B., & Meyer, A.	2013	International Journal of Research in Marketing
	Hassan, H., & Rahman, M. S.	2012	International Journal of Business and Management
	Herbst, U., & Merz, M.	2011	Industrial Marketing Management
Brand Personality and Consumer Perception	Seimiene, E., & Kamarauskaite, E.6	2014	Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences
	Mathur, P., Jain, S. P., & Maheswaran, D.	2012	Journal of Consumer Psychology
	Park, J. K., & John, D. R.	2012	Journal of Consumer Psychology
	Sheena, & Naresh, G.	2012	Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences
	Kim, D., Magnini, V. P., & Singal, M.	2011	International Journal of Hospitality Management
	Pantin-sohier, G., Decrop, A., & Brée, J.	2005	Innovative Marketing

Source: Researcher's Desk Research

### ***The Limitation of Aaker's (1997) Brand Personality Dimensions***

Kumar & Nayak (2014) identified two distinct methodologies employed by researchers in the measurement of brand personality as – the structured method, which is the use of a standardised instrument and the unstructured method, which is the use of free elicitation of traits by respondents using a qualitative design. Aaker's (1997) BPS methodology can thus be regarded as a structured method of brand personality measurement. It involves generation of trait lists using academic sources as well as free association tasks, elimination of redundancies and duplications from both sources, item purification and reductions, data collection and factor analysis. Kumar and Nayak (2014) further identified various limitations of using both methodologies. For the unstructured methodology, they limited the successful use to the high level of variability of verbal and writing skills of subjects, their willingness to provide multiple details and their base knowledge about the product (McDougall & Fry, 1975). Kumar and Nayak (2014) further argued that the scope for analyzing the collected data through statistical tools is limited and also that comparative analyses, amongst various product categories are not possible using unstructured methodologies. On the other hand, for the structured methodology, limitations such as the infrequent use of negative traits; the specificity of culture; and the inability to measure unique characteristics were identified by Kumar and Nayak (2014). They also added that structured scales are attribute focused, and as thus they force respondents to think about product personality in terms of attributes specified by the scales.

Furthermore, in his review of Brand Personality factor-based models, Avis (2012) identified several limitations that can be ascribed to Aaker's (1997) BPD. These are - the category confusion problem, where it is difficult to determine whether researchers are measuring category or brand perceptions, or whether consumer perceptions of both are being measured; the domain adjustment problem, where meanings of words, as understood and used by consumers, may be subject to change according to the domain that they refer to; and the descriptor selection problem, where there may be a lack of a theoretical foundation that might provide boundaries of what can be included as brand personality.

On her own part, Aaker (1997) also highlighted several limitations to her study to include – inability of the scale to measure how brand personality information is processed by consumers and the extent to which the scale is generalizable or stable across cultures. This study in an attempt to overcome the limitation of generalization considered traits which are peculiar to the Nigerian culture in addition to those used in Aaker's (1997) Brand Personality Scale. This is supported by Geuens, Weijters and De Wulf (2009) and Glinska & Kilon (2014).

### **Method**

This study employed the desk research approach. (Avis, 2012). Using consecutive sampling to select all articles on Brand Personality from the 3 identified Databases that follow laid down elimination criteria which are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: Elimination Criteria for Articles**

S/No	Criteria	Reference
1.	Articles must be fully accessible to the researcher.	Ahmad & Thyagaraj (2014), Binder and Belz (2014)
2.	Articles must contain the term 'brand personality' in the title, abstract and keywords.	Ahmad & Thyagaraj (2014), Binder and Belz (2014)
3	Articles that have search terms appearing in the abstract or keywords must be of relevance to the study.	Ahmad & Thyagaraj (2014), Binder and Belz (2014)
4.	Articles must be peer-reviewed.	Binder and Belz (2014)
5.	Articles must be in English Language.	Binder and Belz (2014)

Source: Developed by researcher

## Results and Discussion

### *General Breakdown of Statistics*

The results of the breakdown of all databases are presented in Table 3:

**Table 3: General Breakdown of Statistics**

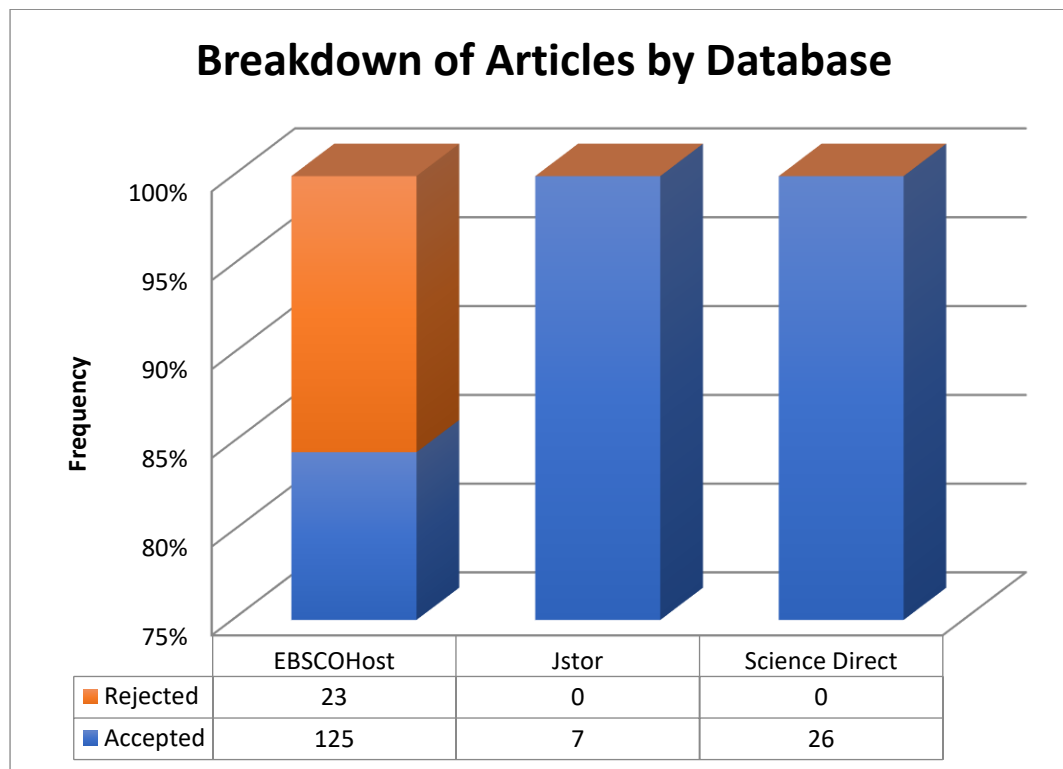
Database	Total No. of Articles in Database	Total No. of Articles between 2000 and 2015	Total No. of Articles on BP	Total No. of Articles Selected	Total No. of Articles Rejected
EBSCOHost	>4,600,000	987,015	125	102	23
JsTor	9,619,417	1,523,768	7	7	0
Science Direct	13,652,857	7,206,644	26	26	0
Total	27,869,274	9,717,427	158	135	0

Source: Desk Research

The breakdown above shows that the study of Brand Personality is still in its infancy. More attention should be paid to this concept. The selected figures account for only 0.0014% of available literature in all the databases for the period under review. It is also interesting to note that EBSCOHost has the highest number of relevant articles with up to 75.56% of the recovered articles. Some articles in EBSCOHost were however rejected due to the following reasons:

- i. They were not full text articles.
- ii. They did not directly measure Brand Personality.
- iii. They did not show adequate information on publication journal or date of publication.

The Fig. 1 below shows a pictorial representation of the relevant articles by database.



**Figure 1: Bar Chart of Breakdown of Articles According to Database**

**Statistics of Articles found in EBSCOHost**

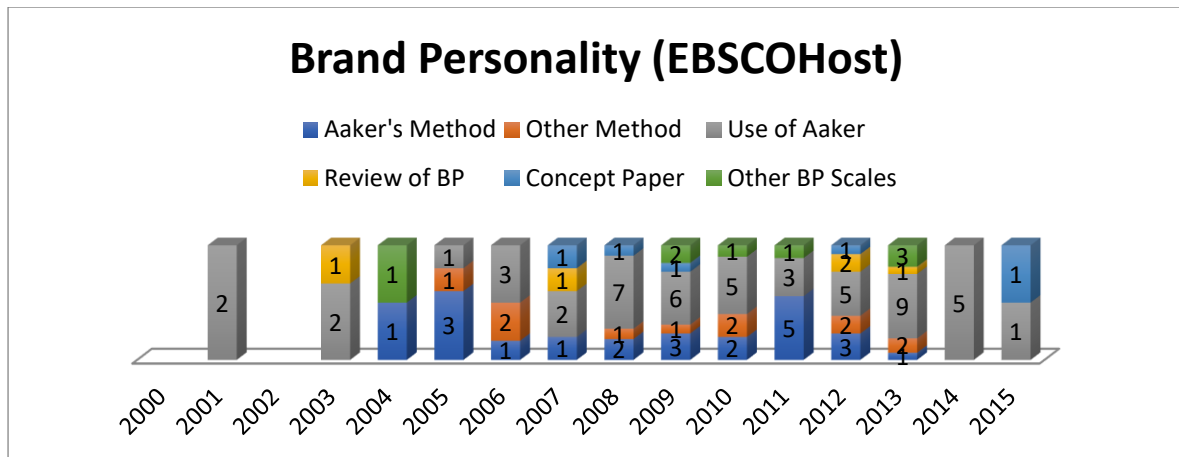
The statistics for articles found on EBSCOHost are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4: Statistics of articles found in EBSCOHost**

Year	Total No.	New Scale Devt.	Aaker's Method	Other Method	Use of Aaker's Scale	Review of BP	Conceptual Paper on BP	Use of Other BP Scale
2000	0	0						
2001	2	0			2			
2002	0	0						
2003	3	0			2	1		
2004	2	1	1					1
2005	5	4	3	1	1			
2006	6	3	1	2	3			
2007	5	1	1		2	1	1	
2008	11	3	2	1	7		1	
2009	13	4	3	1	6		1	2
2010	10	4	2	2	5			1
2011	9	5	5		3			1
2012	13	5	3	2	5	2	1	
2013	16	3	1	2	9	1		3
2014	5	0			5			
2015	2	0			1		1	
2016	0	0						
<b>Total</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>

Source: Desk Research

Analysis shows that EBSCOHost has the highest number of articles on Brand Personality. This was dominated by research using Aaker's (1997) Brand personality Scale with 50% of the research using the scale. New Scale Development followed with 32.35% of total research on Brand Personality. This was further divided into Scale Development using Aaker's Methodology, which accounted for 21.57% and Scale Development using other Methodology which accounted for 10.78% of New Scale Development. Also worthy of note is research carried out using other pre-validated Brand Personality Scales than Aaker's (1997) scale which accounted for about 7.84% of total research housed within the EBSCOHost Database. Fig. 2 presents pictorial representation of the data.



**Figure 2: Statistics of articles found in EBSCOHost**

### *Statistics of Articles Found in Jstor*

The statistics for articles found on Jstor are presented in Table 5.

The analysis shows that there was not so many articles archived within Jstor that focused on Brand Personality. The search limitations only uncovered seven (7) usable articles. However, more studies concentrated more on the measurement of Brand Personality using Aaker's (1997) scale (42.86%) than with new scale development. It is further interesting to note that the only instance of scale development employed Aaker's (1997) methodology. Fig. 3 presents the pictorial representation of the statistics.

**Table 5 Statistics of articles found in JStor**

Jstor								
Year	Total Number	New Scale Development	Aaker (1997)	Other Methodology	Use of Aaker (1997) Scale	Review	Conceptual Paper	Use of Other BP Scale
2000	0	0						
2001	0	0						
2002	0	0						
2003	0	0						
2004	0	0						
2005	1	0			1			
2006	2	0			1			1
2007	0	0						
2008	1	0				1		
2009	2	1	1					1
2010	1	0			1			
2011	0	0						
2012	0	0						
2013	0	0						



2014	0	0						
2015	0	0						
2016	0	0						
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>

Source: Desk Research

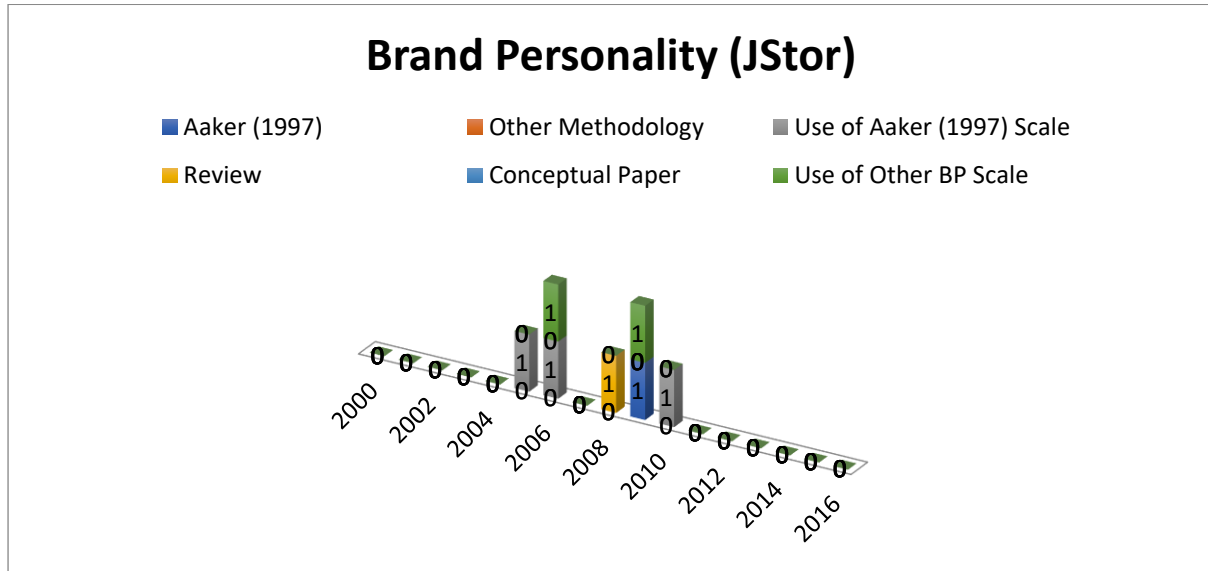


Figure 3: Statistics of articles found in Jstor

Table 6: Statistics of articles found in ScienceDirect

Year	Total Number	New Development	Scale	Aaker (1997)	Other Methodology	Use of Aaker (1997) Scale	Review
2000							
2001	1	1		1			
2002							
2003							
2004							
2005	1	1		1			
2006							
2007	3	1			1	2	
2008							
2009	1	1		1			
2010							
2011	4	2		2		2	
2012	4					3	1
2013	5	2		1	1	3	
2014	4	1		1		3	
2015	2	1		1		1	

2016	1				1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1</b>

Source: Desk Research

**Statistics of Articles Found in Science Direct**

The statistics for articles found on Science Direct are presented in Table 6.

The analysis in Table 5 shows that more research was archived in the ScienceDirect data base in 2013 than in any other year. There was also a larger cluster around the use of Aaker’s (1997) scale than there was for any other focus with more than 57.69% of the research incorporating it’s use. This was closely followed by scale development which in itself was divided in to the use of Aaker’s (1997) methodology with 30.77% of the focus and use of other methodologies with only 7.69% of the focus. Fig. 4 below shows the pictorial analysis of the data above.

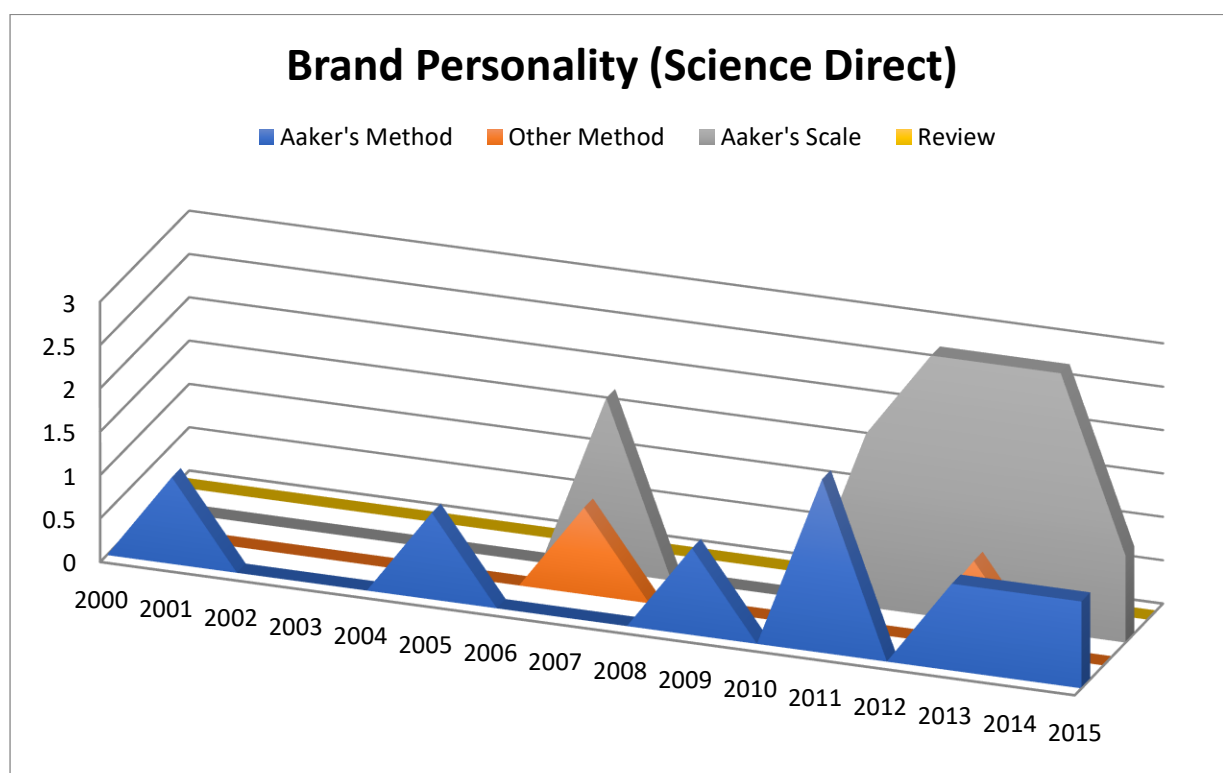


Figure 4: Statistics of articles found in ScienceDirect

**Statistics of Articles Found in All Databases**

Table 7 presents results of all research over the past 15 years that focused on the concept of Brand Personality.

Table 7: Statistics for all Databases

Year	Total Number	New Scale Development	Aaker (1997)	Other Methodology	Use of Aaker (1997) Scale	Review	Conceptual Paper	Use of Other Scale	of BP
2000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2001	3	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	

2002	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2003	3	0	0	0	2	1	0	0
2004	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	1
2005	7	5	4	1	2	0	0	0
2006	8	3	1	2	4	0	0	1
2007	8	2	1	1	4	1	1	0
2008	12	3	2	1	7	1	1	0
2009	16	6	5	1	6	0	1	3
2010	11	4	2	2	6	0	0	1
2011	13	7	7	0	5	0	0	1
2012	17	5	3	2	8	3	1	0
2013	21	5	2	3	12	1	0	3
2014	9	1	1	0	8	0	0	0
2015	4	1	1	0	2	0	1	0
2016	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>135</b>	44	<b>31</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>

Source: Desk Research

The analysis shows that trend of research in Brand Personality in all the databases under review. It is apparent the Aaker’s (1997) Brand Personality Scale has been widely used in the measurement of Brand Personality in the period under review with over 51% of the research employing the scale (or modified versions) directly. 70.46% of the studies that developed new scales for measuring Brand Personality employed Aaker’s (1997) methodology, which suggests that this may be the more accepted method for scale development. Obviously some researchers do not agree with Aaker’s method and have theorized alternative methods to measure Brand Personality. This is evident by the 9.63% that utilized alternative methods for scale development and 7.41% that used scales developed by other researchers. Another finding of interest is the fact that more of the research in Brand Personality appears to be clustered around the period of 2005 to 2013 with about 122 or 90.37% of the research falling within this period. The year 2013 appeared to have the highest amount of research in Brand Personality with about 15.56% of all the studies carried out in that year. Fig. 5 pictorially depicts the statistics for all databases.

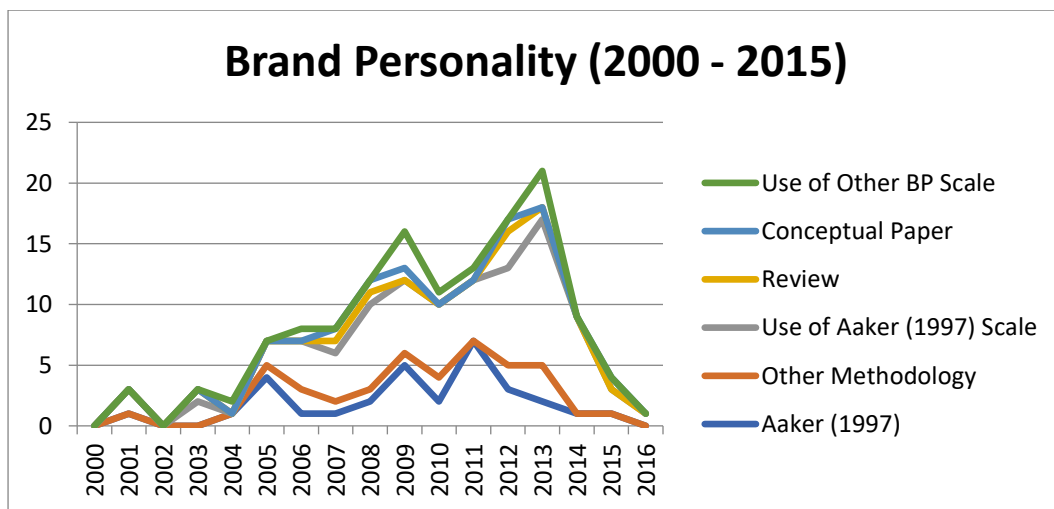
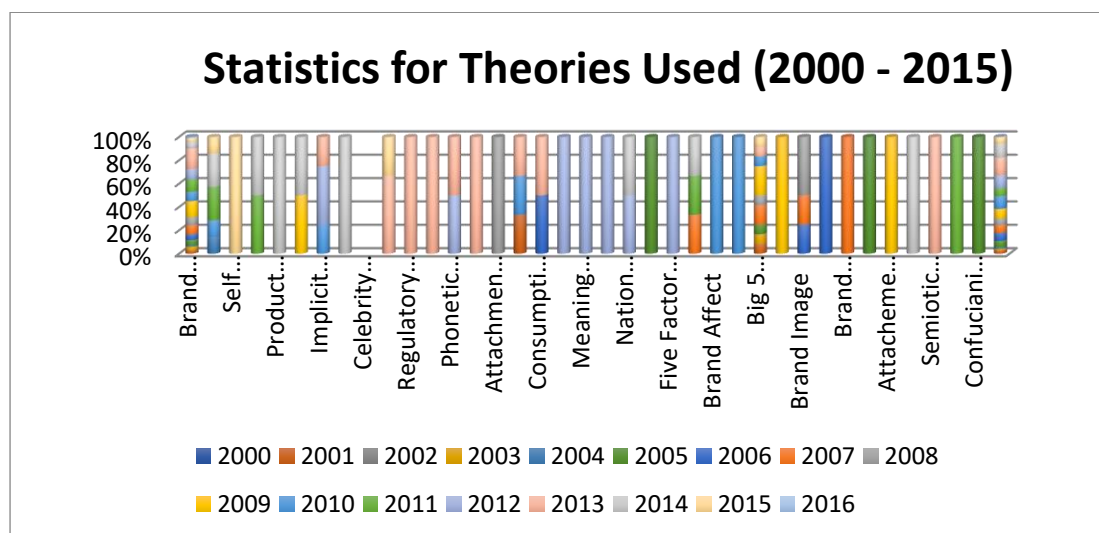


Figure 5: Statistics of articles found in all Databases

### *Statistics of Relevant Theories used in the Study of Brand Personality*

The breakdown of Relevant Theories used in research of brand personality is presented in Appendix 1. While it is not surprising that most of the studies used the Brand Personality Dimensions concept as a framework for their studies with about 73.38% of the studies using the concept. Also worthy of note are the Self Congruity Theory (5.04%) and Big 5 Human Personality Theory (8.63%), which also featured more frequently than others. In line with earlier findings, 2013 still remains the year with more research being done focusing on Brand Personality. Fig. 6 presents pictorial analysis.



**Figure 6: Statistics for Theories Used**

### **Conclusion**

This study employed the desk research methodology to review 135 peer-reviewed, published research that have focused on the Brand Personality construct contained within three specific academic databases with a view to categorizing as well as recording the trend of such research over the last 15 years. The findings are quite interesting as they suggest that since Aaker's (1997) paper most of research in the area have built upon this model in one way or the other.

Analysis shows an outstanding 73% of all reviewed research have used the Brand Personality Dimensions construct developed by Aaker while even those not using the model have cited to it in some way or the other. (Heere, 2010; Geuens, Weijters & De Wulf, 2009). The findings also show that research in Brand Personality peaked around 2013 with over 15% of all the research carried out in that year alone. This is however not to say that interest in the field has waned as findings show that at least one paper has already been published in the 2016 edition of the journal – *Tourism Management*. (Liu, Sam, Hallak & Liang, 2016). Also, the years 2014 and 2015 show good representation with 6.67% and 2.96% respectively.

The analysis further suggests a dearth in the study of the Brand Personality construct in terms of conceptual development and theory reviews. These two areas accounted for only 5.18% and 3.70% of the total research encountered.

In conclusion, this study has examined the extent of research into the Brand Personality construct and the findings suggest that there are still a lot of lacunae to be filled especially in the area of differences in culture (country) and various product categories where previous research has not covered.

### ***Implications for Research within the Brand Personality Domain***

This study supports Avis (2012) assertion that Aaker's (1997) methodology may be the most appropriate method to develop scales for the measurement of Brand Personality. Furthermore, this study has identified gaps in the literature on Brand Personality, which show that there is a need to fill the lacunae as far as culture is concerned. This means that researchers from various countries can contribute to the domain by developing scales that measure the perception of Brand Personality from the point of view of the resident of that country. Such scales would take into cognizance the individual native jargons of host countries. Aaker's (1997) methodology appears to be a useful tool to develop such scales as it offers the flexibility required to adopt these individual mannerisms and local dialect. (Hultman, Skameas, Oghazi and Beheshti, 2015).

### ***Future Research***

The areas of future research arising from this study include:

- a. The study restricted the search to only three databases whereas other databases exist. Therefore, future research should include these other databases in further search.
- b. This study also did not consider the geographic location where individual studies were carried out. It is entirely possible that a pattern to the focus of research carried out may emerge if this factor is taken into account. There is need for further research in this area.
- c. The qualifiers set for articles used in this study may have disqualified some otherwise relevant articles. This suggests that future research should adopt less stringent qualifiers in order to achieve different results.

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