CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. Personality and Consumer Behaviour

There has been a number of efforts in the past trying to link personality with consumer behaviour, many of them proving to be disappointing. Decades of personality and attitude research reportedly failed to empirically identify robust relationships between traits and behaviours. Mischel (1968 page 80) argued, “highly generalized consistencies have not been demonstrated, and the concept of personality as broad response predispositions is thus untenable”. He disparagingly used the term ‘personality coefficient’ to describe the very modest correlation coefficients between 0.20 and 0.30 obtained in many studies when personality dimensions were related to external criteria.

Kassrjian and Sheffet (1981) are two vehement critics of personality research in consumer behaviour. They reviewed several studies focusing on the role of personality in consumer behaviour and concluded that the research was equivocal.

Haugtvedt, Petty, Cacioppo and Steidly (1988) referred to the criticism that personality research in consumer behaviour tended to employ shot gun approaches in which predictions were often based on few or no specific hypothesis or theoretical frameworks.
Baumgartner (2002) wrote that personality research has long been a fringe player in the study of consumer behaviour and suggested that the field is balkanized and is in a state of disarray. Further, there is proliferation of trait measures leading to a ‘Babel’ of concepts and scales.

Kassrjian and Sheffet (1991) pointed out several shortcomings to explain the disappointing results. They reported that instruments originally intended to measure gross personality characteristics such as sociability, emotional stability, introversion or neuroticism have been used to make predictions of the chosen brand of tooth paste or cigarette.

Page (1993 page 514) referred to the paradox of personality in marketing in the following words “We all have a personality, but we do not know how it is systematically linked to our consumer behaviour”.

In fact, almost every work on personality and its link with consumer behaviour refers to the seminal works of Kassrjian and Sheffet (1971, 1971 and 1991) citing their admonitions. However, several researchers chose to differ with this gloomy perspective. Albanese (1993) referred to the dark ages represented by the negative attitude researchers had towards the role of personality in consumer behaviour and cited Kassrjian and Sheffet (1991) as the most representative work of this genre. He criticized this pessimistic view and particularly the authors citing the fact that the work of Kassrjian and Sheffet originally published in 1971 was
republished in 1981 and then again in 1991 without any consequential
differences, and suggested that the authors have summarily dismissed two
decades of research without a fair trial.

The renaissance in personality research in marketing came about in eighties and nineties when the researchers refocused their attention on personality. Foxall and Goldsmith (1989) and Albanese (1993) passionately argued for new impetus in personality research. Mooradian and Olver (1994) attempted to relate the well-known personality construct neuroticism with affect and post purchase processes with reasonable degree of success. They believed that while specific behaviours of the consumer may not be predictable with individual personality traits, personality does relate with aggregated behaviours and with cognitive criteria in more complex patterns.

Haugtvedt, Petty, Cacioppo and Steidly (1988) explored the relationship between Need for cognition – a personality variable with advertisement effectiveness and reported that the results are noteworthy.

Many of the modern efforts to study personality as an important factor to explain consumer behaviour followed either of the two approaches described below. One explanation commonly suggested for the apparent lack of relationships between personality variables and consumer behaviour is that the personality variables were borrowed from psychological research especially clinical settings where the context is very different. Therefore, it
made sense according to some researchers to develop constructs unique to marketing. Crosby and Grossbart (1984) in a review of such efforts listed variables such as opinion leadership, deal proneness and purchase impulsivity. Bearden et al (1989) who developed Consumer Susceptibility to Interpersonal Influence (CSII) scale did considerable work along these lines.

A second approach was to take a group of personality factors and relate them to an index of aggregated behaviours over different situations and different products. This method was facilitated with the emergence of sophisticated multivariate analysis methods like Logit and Probit regression, Structural equations Modeling (SEM) etc.

The availability of powerful computer hardware and specialized software also promoted this approach.

However, again very little efforts have been made to explain individual differences in the act of consumption using personality variables. The common scheme is to take the dependent variable as attitude measures indicative of behaviour, or other similar variables like customer satisfaction, brand loyalty etc. The reasons are obvious. A customer may be favorably disposed to a product or brand, which may not result in actual purchase or consumption since a set of situational factors moderate this process.

Conceptually, it may not be farfetched to believe that there are relationships between the personality of the consumer and his product
choices. In every theoretical approach to the study of personality in consumer behaviour, this theme is found to recur consistently.

From the perspective of psychoanalytical theory, human drives are largely unconscious and hence consumers need not be aware of their true reasons for buying what they buy. Consumer purchases and consumption are therefore a reflection and an extension of consumer's own personality. This idea was further developed in the self-theory taking it away from the realm of Freudian psychology.

2.2 Self-theory and consumer behaviour

Rosenberg (1979) conceptualized self as the totality of the individual's thoughts and feelings having reference to himself as an object. It is the objective of view of oneself where an individual turns around and evaluates in an objective manner who or what he or she is. Mehta and Belk (1991) warned that there could be differences in concepts of self across different cultures. They reported in a study on the Hindu immigrants of United States that Hindus are less susceptible to the western view of self as both a subject and an object.

Since people have a need to behave consistently with their self-concept, the perception of self is an important determinant of the personality. It is posited that people act in a manner consistent with their self-concept and gain predictability in their interactions with others. Belk (1988) in his
seminal article put forth the view that possessions play a major role in establishing a person's identity. Possessions are indeed a part of one's self and often defines the self-concept. In today's materialistic society, the value of possessions in defining one's position in the society cannot be over emphasized. Belk (1988 page 517) had noted, "We are what we have (which) may be most basic and powerful fact of consumer behaviour."

In fact, the concept of possessions to define self was suggested much earlier by James (1890 page 487). He wrote rather eloquently on self in the following words. "A man's self is the sum total of all that he can call his, not only his body and psychic powers, but his clothes and his house, his wife and children, his ancestors and friends, his reputation and works, his lands and yacht and bank account. All these things give him the same emotions. If they wax and prosper, he feels triumphant. If they dwindle and die away, he feels cut down- not necessarily in the same degree for each thing, but in much the same way for all."

According to the self-theory, perception of one's self is related to the consistency of behaviour. However there are criticisms against the self theory, especially the view that possessions are extended self. Cohen (1989) criticized Belk's theory of extended self on three grounds. He argued that the concept of self lacks clear meaning, lacks empirical support and lacks explanatory power. He particularly pointed out that the concept of self is vague and with out boundaries.
Belk (1989) countered this argument by saying that the boundaries of self are perceptual not physical or psychological.

The self-concept is understood to be composed of multiple selves. This idea of multiple selves finds extensive support amongst researchers (Markus and Nurius 1986, Sirgy 1992, Syrgy and Johar 1991, Morgan 1993). Eight different dimensions of the self-concept are described by these researchers. They are actual self, ideal self, social self, ideal social self, expected self, situational self, extended self and possible selves. The actual self refers to how a person actually perceive himself. The ideal self describes how a person would like to perceive himself. The social self is concerned about how a person believes others perceive him. The ideal social self is concerned about how a person wants others to perceive him. The expected self is how one would expect to see him at some future time. The situational self-how a person would like to act in various contexts. The extended self already mentioned above is the possessions as an extension of the self-image. Finally, there is the concept of possible selves, which refer to what a person perceive that he would like to become, could become or is afraid of becoming.

There are various studies in support of the hypothesized relationship between self-image and product consumption. Belk, Bahn and Mayer (1982) reported that there is congruence between self image and product image for many products purchased like automobiles, health, cleaning, grooming and leisure products, clothing, cigarettes, home.
appliances, home furnishing and magazines. It is suggested that people buy products primarily not for their functional benefits, but rather for their symbolic value and the perceived match with the self-concept (Levy 1959).

This view of symbolic interactionism suggested that products act as symbols that help define the consumer personality. Therefore it is posited according to the 'image congruence hypothesis' that consumers select products that correspond to their self image (Onkivisit and Shaw 1987).

However, the relationship between self-concept and consumption may be obscured because of other situational factors. Burnkrant and Page (1982) noted that a major problem of the self-concept product congruence theory is that it implies trans-situational consistency in product selection. People may prefer and purchase products that are similar to a relatively stable self-concept they have about themselves. As it is presumed that this self-concept is stable across situations, it is also assumed that product choice must remain stable across situations. However, this implied cross-situation consistency of behaviour does not find support in empirical research. Sandell (1968) found that a person's choice of beverage is highly dependent on the situation and the choice may vary across contexts. Green and Rao (1972) demonstrated that consumer's choice of baked goods varied considerably across several meal situations. Belk (1975) also cited several studies and concluded that the product choice is situational.
2.3 Altering the Self: towards an improved self

A natural offshoot of the self-theory is the concept of altering the self. Consumers show a disposition to change themselves for realizing the goals of being different or having an improved self; using opportunities provided by the consumption of clothing, grooming products, cosmetics etc. This alteration can be by creating a new self, maintaining the existing self or preventing the loss of existing self.

Closely related to this concept is the idea of personal vanity. Netemeyer, Burton and Lichtenstein (1995) conceptualized personal vanity as an individual difference variable composed of two dimensions namely physical vanity and achievement vanity. Physical vanity is an excessive concern for a positive view of one’s physical appearance. Achievement vanity is defined as an excessive concern for one’s personal achievement. They found this construct being related to materialism, use of cosmetics, concern with clothing and country club membership.

The concept of consuming for self-alteration is extensively researched and reported in consumer behaviour literature. Schouten(1991 page 248) suggested that the incompleteness in an individual drives him or her to consumer goods and services and called this phenomenon 'symbolic consumption for the maintenance or reconstruction of the self'. He wrote “One characteristic that make human unique among living creatures is our
ability to examine ourselves, to find ourselves lacking, and to attempt self betterment” Here self betterment in consumer behaviour means improving one’s perceived self through consumption. He expected to find evidence for the self-betterment from the study of one ‘extreme form’ of consumption - aesthetic plastic surgery. Irreversible, expensive, painful and potentially dangerous; nevertheless cosmetic surgery is becoming increasingly popular. It is highly visible and intimately personal. Once perceived as a vain indulgence of the wealthy, it has become more widely available and acceptable to the American middle class as a potential means of self-improvement.

While cosmetic surgery is an extreme form of self betterment, there are less esoteric, but more popular methods adopted by the common man in his everyday life for self improvement. Use of personal care products and cosmetics is such a method. They are primarily purchased and used to effect an improvement in the appearance or to maintain the appearance. It is reasonable to assume that the differences in consumption of such products be related to the self-concept, and the concept of self-betterment or self-alteration may be useful to explain the individual differences in consumption.

Now the use of personal care products is a means to improve one’s physical attractiveness like elective cosmetic surgery. In both the cases, the result is an improvement in the physical attractiveness of the body of the individual. It is well documented in research that an attractive body is perceived as a valuable personal attribute that facilitate success in social,
romantic and even economic endeavours (Berscheid, Hatfield and Bohnstedt 1973; Brislin and Lewis 1968). Therefore, one may have a motive to improve the appearance to facilitate social acceptance and success and personal care products may be consumed to achieve these goals.

2.4 Measurement of the Self-concept

There is a lack of complete agreement among scholars on the idea of self-concept and its measurement. An accepted operational definition to facilitate measurement, which is an essential pre-requisite for empirical research, is difficult to arrive at in the case of self-concept.

Schouten (1991) used the term self-concept as the cognitive and affective understanding of who and what one is. Nevertheless, self-concept is used by many researchers to mean variously role identities, personal attributes, relationships, possessions, fantasies, aspirations and so on. There are many measures like self esteem, self-efficacy, self monitoring, which are conceptually similar and used for research on the self domain as operational constructs.

The schema for self-concept often lacks precision required for measurement. It is worth recalling the criticism of Cohen (1989) that the concept of self lacks a clear meaning and lacks empirical identification. Morgan (1993) wrote about the limitations found in the self-concept literature that there is lack of sound theoretical basis to facilitate
measurement. She concluded that the most studies on self concept focused on repeated empirical testing of largely ‘atheoretical’ models and constructs.

Echoing the same theme, Bettman et.al (1978) observed that the study of self-concept in consumer behaviour had reached the decline stage in the life cycle. Though later there was a renewed vigour in research led by Belk (1988) most of the criticisms levelled against even now holds good.

Sirgy (1982) after reviewing the early consumer self-concept studies commented that there is an ambiguity and confusion on the precise conceptualisation of self-concept in the consumer behaviour literature.

Morgan (1998) commented on this in the following words “Clearly a serious limitation of these early research is the lack of a clearly articulated or commonly accepted definition of the self-concept construct.” According to her, the construct of self-concept is addressed using one dimensional, two-dimensional and multi dimensional definitions and there is a lack of consensus. Within each of these conceptual domains, an overwhelming array of terms may be found most of them apparently addressing the same construct under different names.

Clearly there is a lack of consensus and clarity on the definition and usage of the term self-concept. In such a context, obviously any attempt to develop a reliable and valid measure would prove futile.
Most of the research in self-concept was directed at finding evidence for the ‘image congruence hypothesis’ which suggest that consumers select and use products that correspond to their self-concept (Onkivisit and Shaw 1987). Here a popular methodology adopted is the profiling of the self in terms of some attributes or descriptive labels and relating this profile to the product personality or brand personality, elicited through the same method.

Malhothra (1981) developed a scale to measure the self-concept adopting this approach which may be considered as a representative work of this genre of research. The scale developed in its final form was composed of 15 items in semantic differential format. A few sample items were rugged vs. reliable, rational vs. emotional, modest vs. vain etc. The responses were obtained on a seven-point scale between the semantic extremes provided as labels as above. The same scale was used to profile the self-concept as well as the product or brand personality. Malhothra (1981) reported that the reliability figures were rather low (between 0.41 and 0.65) and attributed this to the multidimensional nature of the scale. Many other such profiling methods are in vogue in the self-concept literature.

It may be seen that the measurement of self-concept involved the idea of profiling the self image on a number of attributes or descriptive labels. While this kind of an approach is suitable to establish the correspondence between the self-image and the product image, the lack of stable measures
inhibit the process of explaining the individual differences in a meaningful way. Eliciting the self-image using semantic differentials is comparable to the early approaches in personality research to identify those descriptive labels that are supposed to tap basic characteristics of the individual.

Lanyon and Goodstein (1971) based on a review of the different approaches adopted for personality assessment concluded that there are many descriptive labels or adjectives commonly found in the every day language that describe personality. The availability of these one-word adjectives rather than long phrases to describe an individual would indicate the importance of that characteristic in the culture and the society. They wrote "------ the more basic or important a particular personality characteristic is felt to be, the more likely it is to find its way into our natural language as a single word. This position is the one taken by eminent researchers like Allport (1937), Norman and Goldberg 1970. From the descriptive labels or adjectives, it is possible to develop a set of stable characteristics, which are in fact the enduring response dispositions or traits as commonly denoted. Allport and Odbert (1936) found out almost 18000 different trait names from the Webster's second unabridged dictionary while Norman (1963) was successful in listing more than 40000 characteristics. From the very large list of characteristics labels, attempts were made to come out with a few stable and enduring traits based on empirical and statistical methods.
I: is clear from the above discussion that the semantic differential methods to measure the self-concept as self image is very similar to the early research on personality measurement which was the predecessor of the trait method. In such an approach, valid and reliable measures of individual differences that are amenable to further analysis is difficult to obtain since each component is not measured over repeated items. One would require stable measures of individual differences having internal consistency indicated by the reliability to develop better models linking self-concept with consumption.

Pattern matching by semantic differentials is only a beginning. Rather than reinventing the wheel all over again, it makes sense to use the individual measures that are already developed in the domain of self-theory for use in further research. These measure already demonstrated to have a high degree of reliability and validity because of repeated refinements would yield better results in prediction.

Based on the above argument, the researcher used a number of individual difference measures related to the self-domain. Though many of these measures were independently developed according to different perspectives or schools of thought in psychology, they may be integrated into the self-theory domain easily.

2.5 Self concept, Body concept and Social Comparison

The sense of self is dynamic which is shaped by an individual’s interaction with the environment. An important part of this self-concept is the
body concept which is one’s perception of his or her body and its attractiveness. Since personal care products are used to effect an improvement in one’s appearance in terms of the body, body concept may explain their use.

A consumer is exposed to countless media messages and images every day. Most of these media images present an idealized version of life rather than the way life is actually lived. Richins (1992) noted that one important characteristic possessed by the idealized media images is the depiction of highly desirable circumstances that can be achieved by only a few members of the society and that too occasionally. The level of beauty and the physical attractiveness possessed by nearly all actors and models shown in the media are available only to an extremely small segment of the population. Collectively media images present an undemocratic and biased view of life. They do not represent a representative cross section of the life as it is actually lived. Advertisements are a major culprit here in projecting an idealized view of life.

Richins (1992) cited the work of Jordan and Bryant (1979) who analyzed the portrayal of couples in magazine advertisements and found that neither there are old, poor, sick nor unattractive couples depicted in the five hundred odd advertisements sampled in the study.
Belk and Pollay (1985) found that the level of wealth or material comfort displayed in many advertisements is way beyond that available to middle class households.

Richins (1991) noted that the idealized images affect satisfaction with the self through social comparison. People desire to know more about them; one way to know more about one’s self is to compare with others. It was suggested that the most frequent social comparison in the present society is with media images, which is often unsought. Advertisements and entertainment media images are pervasive, providing many opportunities for comparison with respect to material possessions, level of attractiveness and other criteria. Since most of the media images are idealized, the comparison ends up being upward and the comparer finds himself or herself deficient with respect to the comparison standards. This might lead to negative self-feelings or reduction in self-esteem. These negative self-feelings serve a motivating function (Higgins 1987, James 1948) and people strive to eliminate the negative feelings and repair their sense of self-worth. One of the most obvious methods of doing this is by consumption- consumption of these goods and services that promise self-enhancement. Personal care products are such offerings.

2.6 Self-Evaluation and Social Comparison Theory

Festinger (1954) proposed the social comparison theory with three major pre-positions.
People have a drive to evaluate their opinions and abilities.

In the absence of objective bases for comparison, this need can be satisfied by social comparison with other people. Such social comparison will when possible be made with similar others.

It was suggested that the objective of social comparison was self-evaluation. Here self-evaluation can be defined as the judgment of values, worth or appropriateness of one’s abilities opinions and personal traits.

In addition to the self-evaluation, other motives for social comparison can be self-improvement and self-enhancement (Martin and Kennedy, 1994). Here self-enhancement can be similar to ego-enhancement function suggested by Festinger (1954). Self-Enhancement is defined as an individual’s biased attempts to maintain a positive view of him or herself to protect or enhance self-esteem. Thornton and Arrowwood (1966), Hackmiller (1966 a,b) and Wheeler (1966) found support for the existence of this upward drive which is the self-enhancement motive.

Social Comparison can be also for reasons of self-improvement. Wood (1989) provided some evidence in this line. Here self-improvement is defined as an individual’s attempts to learn how to improve or to be inspired to improve a particular attribute.

All the three namely self-evaluation, self-enhancement and self-improvement may be motives for social comparison. Whichever be the
motive, social comparison has a definite effect of self-concept in general and self-esteem in particular.

In today's market place, an individual is exposed to advertising to a significant degree. Many of these advertisements especially those of personal care products routinely use extremely attractive models. Comparisons with such models may result in lowered self-esteem, which might further act as a motive for improving one's appearance to match the perceived standard- that of the reference provided by the attractive model. Martin and Kennedy (1993) and Richins (1991) showed that pre-adolescents and college students do compare their physical attractiveness with those of models in advertisements and find themselves lacking.

Martin and Kennedy (1994) argued that since advertising models represent an ideal and unrealistic image of beauty, the upward comparisons resulting a lowering of the self perception of one's physical attractiveness.

Since advertising is so all-pervasive, and one cannot escape watching such advertisements that feature attractive models, comparison resulting in negative self perception is also a continual process. It may be hypothesized that people of low self-esteem may be affected more by such comparisons and they may adopt strategies to improve their self-esteem. One common such method is the use of personal care products. A similar theory has been used to explain the prevalence of eating disorders in western
societies which posit that people of poor conceptions of self suffer in comparison with attractive media images and the resultant negative self-evaluation acting as a motive to take up excessive dieting and fitness regimen leading to eating disorders.

It is important to note that self-evaluation is a powerful determinant of behaviour and pre-existent negative evaluations manifest itself as poor self concept and such people are more susceptible to suffer in upward social comparisons.

2.7 Self Evaluation – Evidence from research on eating disorders

The notion that the process of social comparison result in a negative evaluation of the self further manifesting in behavioural changes is used to explain eating disorders quite prevalent in the western societies. There is a lot of empirical evidence on this theme that social comparison to attractive models in media images will lead one to have distorted perceptions about a socially desirable body shape. In order to achieve this desirable body, one may resort to excessive dieting that leading to anorexia.

Prendergast (1998) made a review of the literature from the psychology and marketing areas and concluded that there is evidence pointing to the connection between the use of thin models in advertisements and the incidence of eating disorders amongst young women.
Eating disorders arise due to an individual's distorted perceptions of his or her own body image. Here the body image is often elastic, unstable and is responsive to social cues like advertising. Individuals internalize the concept of a socially desirable ideal body. The socially represented ideal body is absorbed from the cultural representations of ideals of physical beauty. Killian (1994) suggested that the western standard of beauty and physical attractiveness is thinness as can be seen in media depictions, and concluded that eating disorders like anorexia and bulimia are women's attempts to meet society's standard of attractiveness. Here the important interactions are between the body image, which is a part of self-concept, and the media portrayal of an ideal body. Due to the social comparison process, people perceive that there is a difference between their body and the ideal and this result in negative self-evaluations.

If upward comparisons with idealized media images may result in a poor self-evaluation, the converse may be also true. People with poor self-evaluation are more likely to suffer in the social comparison. What are the personality correlates of those people who are likely to have negative self-evaluations?

If the process of social comparison resulting in poor conceptions of the self and negative self-evaluations can be an explanation of the self, the same process may also explain other self-enhancement strategies focused on the body like the use of personal care products and cosmetics.
People perceive that having an attractive body is important to them and that partly looks determine social acceptance and success. There are however no absolute yardsticks on what constitutes attractiveness. The concept of beauty varies across cultures and over history. Nevertheless, there is the evolution of a uni-cultural world brought about by the increasing economic integration that may lead to the evolution of an ideal beauty concept shared across cultures. Whether this may or may not be the future, there is enough evidence that across cultures, people adopted methods to improve their appearance to come closer to the culturally prescribed norm of attractiveness. In certain ethnic cultures, this has taken extreme forms like tattooing, ritual body scarification, painful constriction of waist and torso etc. (Schouten 1991). These extreme forms are not only observed in certain isolated tribal groups, as many people would expect. In India, traditionally women pierce their ears and nose and wear studs and rings. In Kerala traditionally even men used to pierce their ear and nose to wear ornaments. While normally this is done in early childhood and the decision is taken by the parents, many women are known to pierce their ears in more than one place in their adult hood.

In the American society, it is reported that the concept of beauty involves having a slim body especially among women. Beautiful females were expected to be slim (Garner et.al 1980, Horwath 1979, Wiggins, Wiggins and Conger 1968). This idealization of slimness has resulted in an
obsession and national preoccupation with dieting and exercising for cosmetic benefits rather than fitness.

In addition, the body and the possible adornments of the body can be particularly relevant as avenues of self-expression. Hirshman (1987) studied the impression management adopted by people using commercial products. It is suggested that people may have a ‘marketing character’ by which they manage their lives as commodities and perform in the society in a way to increase their own socio economic exchange value. People may use products and services to improve their appearance in order to further their chances of success in social roles.

From this evidence, it is reasonable to conclude the following.

There is congruence between the self-concept and the consumption of products.

People actively seek self-betterment by self-alteration to fit in better with the society’s prescribed standards.

An important aspect of the self-being the body and the perceptions of its attractiveness, self-alteration is directed towards improvement of one’s appearance.

Since one of the major reasons for the consumption of personal care products is improvement in the appearance, it must be possible to
explain the differences in consumption using the individual differences in the self-concept.

Upward social comparison with idealized media images and culturally prescribed standards result in a negative self-evaluation which may in turn serve as a motive for self-alteration.

Self-evaluation is a powerful determinant of behaviour and pre-existent negative evaluations manifest itself as poor self concept and such people are more susceptible to suffer in upward social comparisons.

The personality factors that determine propensity for poor self-evaluation need to be identified and these factors might explain differences in consumption of personal care products.

Several such personality variables were identified that may explain poor self-evaluation. Some of them were general factors like self-esteem, locus of control, social anxiety and risk taking, while others were specific measures either developed for use in consumer behaviour research like consumer self-confidence or measures related to the body and appearance like body esteem and appearance anxiety.

2.8 Self-awareness

Kant considered self-knowledge as the beginning of all human wisdom. According to Hector (1971) cited by Eysenck, Arnold and Meili
(1975), self-knowledge is an important determinant of behaviour. Self-concept research has shown that what each individual knows about himself and how he sees himself, derives from the way in which he has been and is considered by others. Self-awareness is the precursor to self-knowledge. Argyle (1969) speculated about the impact of the impact of self-awareness on social interaction and Duval and Wickland (1972) have elaborated on an entire theory of self-awareness. A heightened self-awareness can be induced in an individual; with the help of mirrors, cameras or the presence of an audience and this state has resulted in many changes in behaviour as reported. Experimental manipulations of the self-awareness have affected such diverse behaviours as aggression (Scheier, Fenigstein and Buss, 1974), attribution (Duval and Wickland, 1973) and self-esteem (Ickes, Wickland and Ferris 1973).

Self-awareness is understood to have two dimensions namely subjective self-awareness and objective self-awareness. According to Wickland (1975), when a person’s attention is focused on the environment, he is in a state of subjective self-awareness. However, when his attention is focused on himself, then he is in a state of objective self-awareness. The effect of objective self-awareness in the emotional sphere was studied by Scheier and Carver (1977). Burnkrant and Page (1982) studied the effect of self-awareness in consumer behaviour and posited that self-awareness may influence product choice. Wegener and Wallacher (1980) reviewed the
research in self-awareness and wrote that self-awareness lead to a self regulation process that controls the intensity and direction of ongoing behaviour. Specifically, self-attention is presumed to evoke a matching to standards process, whereby the person conforms to whatever he or she takes as the standard of appropriate behaviour. The greater is the self-awareness, the greater is the correspondence to behavioural standards.

Fenigstein, Scheier and Buss (1975) wrote that self-examination and self-awareness enable a person to recognize his conscious thoughts, motives and defences. They wrote that the research on self-awareness has focused on the process of self-focused attention, when a person is focusing on his thoughts, feelings, behaviours or appearance; when he is reflecting, fantasizing or day dreaming about himself; or when he is making decisions or plans that involves himself. However, none of the previous theoretical approaches considered self-awareness as an individual difference variable. They conceptualized self-consciousness as an individual difference variable related to the self-awareness. Self-consciousness is defined as a consistent tendency of people to direct attention inward or outward. They differentiated self-awareness as a state while self-consciousness is an individual difference.

Self-awareness not only include a personal reflection on one’s self, but an awareness of perceptions of others also. People who have heightened self-awareness are more likely to be conscious of their public self-image and would try to create a better impression on others.
and Page (1982). Personal care products promise an improvement in appearance and has a public dimension. They are products for impression management. Therefore, individual differences in self-awareness may explain differences in consumption also. Fenigstein, Scheier and Buss (1975) conceptualised self-consciousness as an individual difference variable having three dimensions namely private self-consciousness, public self-consciousness and social anxiety. In the study, public self-consciousness is taken as a measure of self-awareness.

2.9. Persuasibility and consumer behaviour

'Persuasibility' or susceptibility to persuasion has attracted a lot of research attention in both social psychology and consumer behaviour. It is observed that some people are easily persuaded than others and this tendency is a stable behavioural disposition across situations. Susceptibility to persuasion can be treated as an individual difference variable related to other personality factors.

Hovland and Janis (1959) conducted an extensive series of investigations on this phenomenon and concluded that there are 'persuasible personalities' who are easily influenced by any type of messages from any type of source. However, they also observed that the explanatory power of this construct is rather weak. Consequently efforts to find a personality correlate of persuasion shifted from looking for global personality type of
persuasibility to looking for particular aspects of the personality like intelligence and self-esteem, which may be related to the individual's likelihood of succumbing to or resisting persuasion (Worchel and Cooper 1983). One important such variable is self-esteem, which is found to explain differences in persuasibility. Cohen (1959), Gollob and Dittes (1965) and Silverman (1964) demonstrated that people of low self-esteem are more easily persuaded.

Since marketing effectiveness depends heavily on success in persuading people, there has been a lot of attention on persuasibility in consumer research. McGuire (1968) conceptualized the construct of 'influencibility' which is consistent with the early research on persuasibility and formed the basis of specific constructs like consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence (CSII) developed for research in marketing (Bearden, Netemeyer and Teel, 1989). The argument that global constructs of persuasibility do not have much of predictive power also influenced the development of domain specific constructs like CSII. Susceptibility to television advertising is another construct specifically developed for use in consumer research (Barr and Kellaris 2000).

Since purchases decisions are shaped by the reference group influences, which may be in the form of social influence as well as media influence, it is reasonable to expect that differences in persuasibility may have significant effect on consumption. Most personal care products promise
an improvement in appearance or maintenance of appearance. The concern on appearance does have a social dimension. The heavy users of such products are likely to be concerned about the impressions of relevant others and may show a motivation to conform to the expectations of relevant others. Therefore, it is posited that significant differences will be seen in the consumption of personal care products at levels of persuasibility. Consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence is included in the study to account for the reference group influences (Bearden, Netemeyer and Teel, 1989). The variable susceptibility to television advertising is included in the study to account for media influence.

2.10 Personality Factors related to self-evaluation, self-awareness and persuasibility.

Self-Evaluation

Self-evaluation can be defined as the judgment of values, worth or appropriateness of one's abilities, opinions, and personal traits. It is considered an important motive for social comparison. Upward social comparisons with idealized images result in poor self-evaluation and conversely, people having a poor self-evaluation are more susceptible to develop negative self-perceptions and anxieties as a result of social comparison. What are the factors that may explain poor self-evaluation? Self-esteem, locus of control, risk taking, social anxiety, appearance anxiety, consumer self-confidence, and body esteem are the variables that are included in the study related to self-evaluation.
1. Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is one of the most widely used constructs in the self-domain. It refers to the degree to which an individual values himself or herself internally on a personal level or externally as a member of a group. In fact, this construct or similarly defined constructs are given several different names like self regard, self worth, self efficacy etc. It is the evaluative dimension of one’s self-concept through which an individual develop a sense of worth about himself.

Rosenberg (1965) described Self-esteem as a favourable or unfavourable attitude toward the self.

Blascowich and Tomaca (1991) defined Self-esteem as the individual’s sense of his or her value or worth, or the extent to which a person values, approves of, appreciates, prizes, or likes him or herself. It is an evaluative component of the self concept, a broader representation of the self that includes cognitive and behavioural aspects as well as evaluative and affective ones. Self-Esteem is reported to be associated negatively with depression, social anxiety, loneliness and alienation. Hicran (2001) reported that among adolescent patients, self-esteem is dependent upon interactions with significant others and is related to depressive affect.

A person can be regarded as having high self-esteem if he or she exhibits a respectable level of self-approval and displays confidence in his or
her daily undertakings (Bednar, Wells and Peterson 1989). Here there can be a debate on what is an acceptable level of self-esteem to be called high and what are its implications. But generally it is agreed that social success demands a self-esteem level where an individual is neither narcissistic nor self-deprecating. This careful balance may be an antecedent of social success (Rholes, Jones and Wade 1980).

Self-esteem as a construct has been extensively researched especially in the field of social psychology (Baumeister 1993, Wells and Marwell 1976). Cast and Burke (2002) reviewed many research studies and noted that since over a period of time, so much attention has been given to self-esteem that it seemed to be synonymous with self-concept in the literature on self. This is because high self-esteem is associated with positive outcomes for the individual and for the society as a whole (Baumeister 1993, Smelser 1989).

Cast and Burke (2002) suggested that self-esteem is composed of two dimensions namely competence and worth. The competence dimension also called efficacy based self-esteem refers to the degree to which people see themselves as capable and efficacious. The worth dimension or the worth based self-esteem refers to the degree to which individuals feel they are persons of value.
Research on self-esteem has generally proceeded on the presumption of one of three conceptualisations, and each conceptualisation has been treated almost independently of the others. First self-esteem has been investigated as an outcome. Scholars taking that approach have focused on processes that produce or inhibit self-esteem. Coppersmith (1967), Rosenberg (1979), Peterson and Rollins (1987) and Harter (1993) considered self-esteem as an outcome. Second, self-esteem has been investigated as a self-motive, noting the tendency of people to behave in ways that maintain or increase positive evaluations of the self (Kaplan 1975, Tesser, 1988). Finally self-esteem has been investigated as a buffer for the self, providing protection from experiences that are harmful (Longmore and DeMaris 1997, Thoits 1994).

Cast and Burke (2002) agreed with the view that self-esteem is a buffer that protects the individual against negative feelings arising from disruptive or threatening experiences. Moses and Sunder (1991) experimentally demonstrated that low self-esteem is associated with a drive for thinness in afro-American women. Here chronic dieting is a strategy adopted as a coping response by the women to overcome their feelings of insufficiency with regard to the body shape induced by the social comparison process. It is reasonable to assume that, consumption of personal care products may also be used by individuals to improve their attractiveness and this might be related to self-concept and body image. Therefore, low self-
esteem increases the negative feelings and anxiety. People of low self-esteem are likely to have negative evaluations about themselves and suffer more from upward comparisons. These people are also more likely to have anxieties. It will be appropriate to consider self-esteem as a representative variable from the self-evaluation. It may be posited that since people of low self-esteem suffer more from upward comparisons and have more anxieties; they are also likely to consume more of personal care products.

2. Locus of Control

The concept of locus of control was first proposed by Rotter (1966). Locus of control is understood as a form of generalized expectancy useful in explaining personality differences in people's beliefs about the source of reinforcement. Locus of control is may be internal or external. Internal Locus of control may be defined as a belief that reinforcement is brought about by one's own behaviour. External Locus of control is a belief that reinforcement is under the control of other people, fate or luck. Rotter (1966) developed a self report inventory to assess the locus of control containing 23 forced choice alternative statements. Another very popular scale commonly used is the Norwicki- Strickland Scale developed by Norwicki and Strickland (1973) later refined by Strickland and Haley (1980) and Strickland (1989).
Studies have shown that Locus of Control is related to age (Heckhausen and Schulz 1995, Ryckman and Malikivisi 1975). However, no gender differences have been reported (Debrabander and Boone 1990).

Extensive research evidence is available linking locus of control to an array of observed behavioural differences.

Internally oriented people are more likely than externally oriented people to engage in daydreams about achievements than failure. They acquire and process more information, experience more personal choice, have higher self esteem and are more socially skilful (Abdullah 1989, Brannigan and Guay 1991, Lefcourt et al 1988).

People of internal locus of control are less likely to have emotional problems, cope better with stress and experience less anxiety (Benassi, Sweeney and Dufeur 1988). These kind of subjects were also more resistant to persuasion and coercion (Findley and Cooper 1989, Lefcourt 1982).

However there are not many studies reported linking locus of control to consumption except in the case of consumption of alcohol. In the consumer behaviour literature, attribution style is a more popular term which is more or less a similar construct. According to the concept of attribution style, people may be inner directed or other directed depending on where they place causality for the success or failure experienced.
Generally external locus subjects attribute theirs success to external factors like chance, luck or significant others. They are less sure of themselves and hence poor self-evaluation and it may be expected that such people will look at personal care products as solutions that will provide them with an improved appearance leading to a better acceptance from significant others. Since they are concerned about others and the role played by others in their lives, they may place an emphasis on conforming to the expectations of others and obtaining social acceptance.

3. Risk taking

Risk taking may be defined as the consistent behavioural disposition among individuals to prefer risky options in choice situations. People with high-risk taking are more confident of their judgments and consider less number of alternative options. They are also more tolerant of ambiguity.

Despite the extensive research on risk taking behaviour over the past several years, the construct itself is quite elusive and defies explicit definition. It is often understood as a process than an individual difference variable in research. Kogan and Wallach (1967) describe risk-taking behaviour on the basis of the kind of situations in which it is likely to be elicited. For these authors, behaviour reflective of risk taking disposition occurs in “situations where there is a desirable goal and a lack of certainty that it can be attained. The situation may take the form of requiring a choice
between more and less desirable goals, with the former having a lower probability of attainment than the latter. A further possible, not necessary, characteristic of such situation is the threat of negative consequences for failure so that the individual at the post decisional stage might find himself worse off than he was before he made the decision. 

The factors that are important in the case of risk taking are task and situational influence, personality characteristics and influences from group interaction.

The task and situational influences were studied from the pint of view of chance versus skill tasks. Slovic and Lichtenstein (1968) on the basis of several empirical studies on gambling games reported two fundamental aspects of risk taking. The choice depended on a) relative importance that subjects assign to the various probability and pay off components of a bet and b) limitations on information processing capacities which lead the decision maker to focus on particular components of a bet to the exclusion of other components. Cohen (1960) also compared chance versus skill situations and suggested that under equi-probable conditions, people generally prefer the skill games.

Another important characteristics relevant to risk-taking are the personal characteristics. Sex, age and social class differences in risk taking are reported in research (Kass 1964, Kogan and Wallach 1964, Scodel, Ratoosh and Minas 1959). Most of the research in risk taking as a behavioural disposition was related to achievement motive (Atkinson 1959).
There were numerous efforts to study risk taking as an individual difference variable. However, the view that risk taking is extremely situational and do not show generality across situations is the dominant viewpoint. Slovic (1962), Kogan and Wallach (1964) reported after extensive experimental studies that risk taking may be situational. However there may be some general patterns in risk taking. Bruner and Tajfel (1961) distinguished between narrow categorizers and broad categorizers and suggested that both handle risk in different manner. Kogan and Wallach (1964) reported that narrow categorizers might show conceptual conservatism.

Kogan and Wallach (1964) tried to relate risk-taking to personality variables. They posited that risk-taking might be related to impulsiveness, self-sufficiency and independence. People who report self-sufficiency and score high on independence were found to have higher risk taking than others. However, these results were moderated by the gender and not conclusive.

In consumer behaviour risk-taking is considered often as a process and perceived risk is related to various aspects like information search behaviour, brand and store loyalty etc. However, similar constructs are used as individual difference measures also like venturesomeness, sensation seeking, and conservatism. In the present study, risk taking is conceptualised as an individual difference construct.
It is reasonable to expect that people of high risk taking show less tendency to undervalue themselves in social comparisons as their perception of risk is lower especially in social interactions.

4. Social anxiety

Social anxiety is defined as the discomfort one feels in the presence of others. Social Anxiety is a feeling of fear, dread, unease, discomfort or apprehension that arises without a clear or appropriate real-life justification. Some authorities differentiate anxiety from true fear in that the latter is experienced in response to an actual threat or danger, such as those to one's physical safety.

Fenigstein, Scheier and Buss (1975) conceptualized the construct of self-consciousness as an individual difference variable related to self awareness.

They developed a scale to measure self-consciousness and the use of factor analysis revealed that the trait self-consciousness is a composite factor having three sub dimensions. The dimensions were termed private self-consciousness, public self-consciousness and social anxiety by the researchers. Further research evidence on the constructs is provided in the literature review concerning public self-consciousness Social anxiety may be considered as an outcome or as an inherent state. One may experience social
anxiety because of social comparisons. It may be posited that social anxiety is the offshoot of poor self-evaluation.

5. Consumer Self confidence

Bearden, Hardesty and Rose (2001) defined Consumer Self Confidence as the extent to which an individual feels capable and assured with respect to his or her market place decisions and behaviour. Consumer Self Confidence reflects subjective evaluations of one's ability to generate positive experiences as a consumer in the market place. It is multifaceted secondary disposition which is relatively stable self appraisal. Conceptually this construct is related to more basic constructs like self-esteem, perceived control and dominance.

Bearden, Hardesty and Rose (2001) developed a scale to measure Consumer Self Confidence which was proved to have high reliability and validity after extensive empirical testing.

Research revealed that Consumer Self Confidence is positively related to self-esteem and negatively related to CSII. People of high Consumer Self Confidence are less susceptible to external influence and are surer of themselves and their judgment. Therefore they more likely to take rational decisions and less concerned about the expectations of relevant others. It may be expected that Consumer Self Confidence determine the use of personal care products at least partially.
6. Appearance Anxiety

While beauty may be indeed in the eye of the beholder, research has provided rather consistent evidence that perceptions of physical attractiveness are subject to perceptual contrast effect. Thornton (1999) argued that one may feel less physically attractive when comparisons are made involving highly attractive others like the idealized media images. This may lead to an appearance anxiety, which may act as a motive to seek self-improvement. This is supported by earlier research done by Kenrick and Gutierres (1980) and Kenrick, Gutierres and Goldberg (1989).

The social comparison contrast effect for physical attractiveness influence not only the self perception of attractiveness, but also other aspects of the social self. In addition to diminished perceptions of attractiveness, other effects like decreased self esteem, increased public self-consciousness and heightened social anxiety are reported (Thornton and Moore 1993).

Appearance anxiety is defined as the apprehension or worry about whether one's physical appearance is adequate and about the way; one's appearance is evaluated by other people. There are several studies reported on the concept of appearance anxiety, which is an apprehension, or experienced unease of an individual about his or her appearance, body or physical attractiveness. It is conceptualised as an individual difference variable.
Davis et al. (1993) suggested that appearance anxiety is an apprehension about aspects of one’s physical appearance and how others evaluate them. Most of the studies reported have focused on the female population. However Davis et al. (1993) argued that there is enough evidence to show that men are increasingly being concerned about matters of physical appearance and in the study conducted it was found that most of the variance in appearance anxiety in males is accounted for by the measure of upper body esteem.

7. Body Esteem

It is already established that the perceptions of an individual about his body forms an important part of his or her self-concept. Here the influence is bi-directional. Self-concept influence the body image and people of poor self-concept are likely to have negative evaluations of their physical attractiveness. Similarly, a poor evaluation of one’s body is likely to lead to a poor self-concept. Our society places a premium of physical attractiveness and the media contains a number of images that represent an idealized body that is beyond the reach of the majority. Applications of the social comparison theory suggested that upward comparison with these idealized images may result in negative evaluation of one’s own body and this might act as motive making an individual strive to attain the elusive ideal body. One possible outcome of this striving is eating disorders like anorexia. Extensive research studies focusing on the problems of eating disorders prevalent in western societies produced
empirical evidence supporting this theme. Killian (1994) and Prendergast (1998) has provided reviews of such studies.

Since advertisements frequently portray idealized images of body, they may influence one’s body concept extensively. Here again there a lot of empirical support from research in eating disorders to establish a link between advisements, body images, and eating disorders.

Petersou (1987) reported that among his respondents who are women, advertisements created strong images about the desirability to have thin body inducing them to reduce body weight.

Martin and Kennedy (1993) suggested that the tendency among adolescents to compare themselves to the models in advertisements is greater for those with poorer self-perceptions of physical attractiveness.

Stephens et.al. (1994) noted that when exposed to advertisements with thin models, women’s dissatisfaction with their body shape increases. This dissatisfaction may result in the women trying to achieve the same body shape as the model in the advertisement and this is often done through dieting and chronic dieting may lead to eating disorders.

Moses and Sunder (1991) experimentally demonstrated that low self-esteem is associated with a drive for thinness in afro-American women. Here chronic dieting is a strategy adopted as a coping response by the women
to overcome their feelings of insufficiency with regard to the body shape induced by the social comparison process. It is reasonable to assume that, consumption of personal care products may also be used by individuals to improve their attractiveness and this might be related to self-concept and body image. Self-Esteem is taken as a representative variable in the self-concept domain. A similar variable may be used to measure the body image.

Bell (1991) described the body image as a mental construction than an objective evaluation. Therefore, body image can deviate significantly from the person’s objective physical characteristics. Body image may have four dimensions. Bell (1991) suggested that one might draw upon four reference models, which are the constituents of the body image. They are 1) socially represented ideal body, 2) internalised ideal body, 3) present perceived body image and 4) objective body shape. Here the socially represented ideal boy leads to internalised ideal body which in turn determine the present perceived body image.

There are numerous efforts at measuring the body concept as an individual difference variable. Folk, Pedersen and Cullari (1993) conceptualised and developed body satisfaction measure, which used five-point scale from very unhappy to very happy. Nine aspects of the body namely face, body, arms, hips, waist, legs, skin, height and weight were the items. Results on the use of this scale is reported by Guiney and Furlong (2000).
Franzoi and Shields (1984) conceptualised the construct ‘body esteem’ which is a thirty five item inventory measuring the feelings of subjects about a particular body part or asset. This scale is reported to have high test re-test reliability and internal validity (Franzoi (1994). Cecil and Stanley (1991) reported reliability estimates ranging from 0.89 to 0.94 for the scale.

Since body esteem represent the perceived worth component of the body image, it is expected that low body esteem be related to consumption of personal care products.

**Self-awareness**

Self-awareness is the awareness of one as a social object. This is a form of self-consciousness which may lead to an individual trying to manage his image as it appear to others. Self-awareness is understood to have two dimensions namely subjective self-awareness and objective self-awareness. According to Wickland (1975), when a person’s attention is focused on the environment, he is in a state of subjective self-awareness. However, when his attention is focused on himself, then he is in a state of objective self-awareness. Fenigstein, Scheier and Buss (1975) conceptualised the construct of self-consciousness as an individual difference variable related to self awareness.

1. **Public Self-consciousness**

Public self consciousness is the awareness of self as a social object Fenigstein, Scheier and Buss (1975) conceptualised the construct of
self-consciousness as an individual difference variable based on their 
observation that there are some people who constantly think about 
themselves, scrutinize their behaviour and mull over their thoughts to the 
point of obsession while some others show an absence of self-consciousness 
leading to an absolute lack of understanding of their own motives or how 
they appear to others. This consistent tendency of persons to direct attention 
inward or outward is termed the trait of self-consciousness.

They developed a scale to measure self-consciousness and the use 
of factor analysis revealed that the trait self-consciousness is a composite 
factor having three sub dimensions. The dimensions were termed private 
self-consciousness, public self consciousness and social anxiety by the 
researchers, High degree of reliability was reported for the sub scales 
(Chronbach alpha of 0.84, 0.79 and 0.73 respectively for private self­ 
consciousness, public self-consciousness and social anxiety) Validity was 
established with the help of factor analysis.

Based on the factor loadings of individual items, the factors were 
interpreted and defined as follows.

Fenigstein, Scheier and Buss (1975) posited that there are two 
separate aspects of self consciousness which they called private self 
consciousness and public self consciousness. The private dimension is 
similar to the Jungian concept of introversion with focus on the thoughts and 
reflections that deal solely with the self. Public self consciousness is the
awareness of self as a social object which comes as a result of an awareness of another's perspective. Here the emphasis is on the reactions of others to the self. The public self consciousness factor was defined as a general awareness of the self as a social object that has an effect on others. While public self consciousness is a process of self focused attention, social anxiety is a reaction to this process. Here social anxiety is a discomfort one feels in the presence of others.

The authors found the three dimensions to have a small correlations with to each other. No difference across gender was reported. The authors were more particularly interested in the clinical applications of the concept.

Subsequent to the development of the scale, considerable research attention has been focused on validating the instrument further by exploring the factor structure. Carver and Scheier (1978) demonstrated the convergent and discriminant validity of the subscales. Martin and Debus (1999) also explored the factor structure and modified the scale by changing some items to yield results that are more consistent. A lot of experimental studies were also undertaken on the subscales by manipulating the private and public awareness and relating the changes to specific behavioural variables. In many of these studies, self-consciousness was experimentally manipulated by using mirrors in front of the subjects.

Brockner (1979), Gibbons (1983), Scheier and Carver (1973), Scheier, Carver and Gibbons (1979) reported results of such studies.
Since Public Self Consciousness is an awareness of oneself as a social object, this trait may be related to one’s efforts at managing the public image. Current research in this domain suggest that high public self consciousness subjects should be more sensitive to protecting and enhancing their feelings of personal worth and competency and to maintaining and restoring a positive self image.

Cheek and Briggs (1982) proved that public self-consciousness was linked to impression management or overt displays. Empirical evidence indicate that the public self-consciousness and the concern for impression management are related constructs, both involving a desire to protect one’s public image (Schlenker 1980). Therefore, public self-consciousness can be posited to be related to self-alteration or self improvement. Since personal care products are used heavily in order to effect an improvement in one’s social image, it is reasonable to expect that people of high public self-consciousness are likely to be heavy users of such products.

Similarly social anxiety may also be related to the consumption of such products. A person of high social anxiety is likely to be worried about his appearance and is therefore prone to use personal care products to overcome his or her feelings of inadequacy.

Bumkrant and Page (1982) citing works of Fenigstein (1979) and Scheier (1980) suggested that it is very likely for some people to be more
sensitive than others to the impressions called for or likely to be rewarded in social situations. These people are more inclined than others to present an image of themselves that would lead to the desirable impression in these situations. Public self-consciousness was posited to be a variable that would help explain the differences in concern for impression. They concluded "It is reasonable to expect, but has never been shown, that people who score highly on this variable (public self-consciousness) would also be more inclined than low scorers to use consumer goods to create favourable impressions."

Generally self-awareness theory is concerned with the self regulation process that control the intensity and direction of ongoing behaviour. Wegener and Vallacher (1980) posited that self attention may evoke a matching to standards process, whereby a person conforms to whatever he or she takes as a standard of appropriate behaviour.

Turner et al (1978) had also reached the same conclusion that people of high public self-consciousness are likely to be particularly concerned with their social appearance and impressions they make on others.

Fenigstein (1979) found that women who score high on public self-consciousness were more sensitive to peer group rejection.

Scheier (1980) hypothesized that individuals high in public self-consciousness should try harder to create a favourable public image and should therefore be more likely to change their beliefs in order to make them
more consistent with the beliefs of others around them. These assumptions were tested by an experimental method where subjects were asked to write essays reflecting their opinions on an issue under instructions that these essays will be discussed with the others. The results reported support the assumptions made. It was found that people who scored high on public self-consciousness expressed opinions that were more moderate than they actually held under the condition that these essays would be revealed to others. The low scorers were found not to differ in their opinions.

Turner, Guililand and Klein (1981) posited that publicly self-conscious individuals have more well defined physical attractiveness self schema than their less conscious counterparts and they therefore respond more quickly to evaluative judgments of their appearance. This make them more attentive to their physical image. Various research studies reported that high public self-consciousness individuals engage in behaviours like extensive make up use to enhance their physical appearance (Cash and Cash 1982; Lypson, Przybyla and Byrne 1983; Miller and Cox 1982)

It is also reported that public self-consciousness particularly characterizes of appearance–schematic women who maintain strong beliefs regarding the importance of physical appearance in one’s life (Cash and Labarge 1996) and these women have displayed preferential attention towards processing appearance related information (Labarge, Cash and Brown 1998)
Based on the above evidence, it was decided to use the variables public self-consciousness and social anxiety as predictor variables to explain the differences in the consumption of personal care products.

**Persuasibility**

Persuasibility or susceptibility to persuasion is conceptualised as an individual difference variable. It is observed that some people are easily persuaded than others and this tendency is a stable behavioural disposition across situations. These were numerous efforts to measure persuasibility, but it is felt that a general construct of persuasibility do not have a great deal of explanatory power and therefore specific measures were developed in marketing for use in research. Consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence (CSII) and Susceptibility to television advertising are two such measures.

1. **Consumer Susceptibility to Interpersonal Influence**

An important determinant of an individual’s behaviour is the influence of relevant others. Advertisers understand this and resort to portrayal of products shown to be consumed publicly. The same reasoning is also used in the case of endorsements by celebrities and other spokespersons. In fact no model of consumer behaviour is complete without including the effect of interpersonal influence. Interpersonal Influence plays an important
role on the development of norms, values, attitudes and aspirations which finally gets reflected in purchase behaviour (Stafford 1966).

Early attempts were made to study the susceptibility to influence by several researchers. McGuire (1968) suggested the construct of ‘influencibility’ as a general behavioural disposition. Research done Cox and Bauer (1964) and Janis (1954) also addressed this construct and suggested that the influencibility may be measured as an individual difference variable. These studies proved that some people are consistently more amenable to social influence than others. Janis (1954) concluded that people of low self-esteem tend to be more readily influenced than others. Park and Lessig (1977) borrowing heavily from the previous reported research, developed a scale to measure susceptibility to interpersonal influence using 14 projective statements. These items were used in several studies by Bearden and Etzel (1982) and Brinberg and Plimpton (1986). However since the items were projective in nature, it was difficult to establish the psychometric properties of the instrument using statistical means.

In order to overcome these limitations, Bearden, Netemeyer and Teel (1989) developed and tested an instrument to measure Consumer Susceptibility to Interpersonal Influence called Suscep or CSII. Extensive empirical testing demonstrated the reliability and Validity of the instrument. Factor Analytic Studies revealed the scale is in fact composed of two dimensions termed Normative and Informational. Here the Normative
component (Consumer Susceptibility to Normative Influence) is defined as the tendency to conform to the expectations of others. The Informational Component (Consumer Susceptibility to Informational Influence) is defined as the tendency to accept information from others as evidence of reality.

Including both these components, Consumer Susceptibility to Interpersonal Influence (CSII) was defined as the need to identify or enhance one’s image with significant others through the acquisition and use of products and brands, willingness to conform to the expectations of others regarding purchase decisions and or the tendency to learn about products and services by observing others and or seeking information from others.

CSII was found to be positively correlated to the construct Attention to Social Comparison Information (ATSCI) and negatively correlated to Self-Esteem.

Since personal care products are used to improve one’s appearance and social acceptance thereby, it is reasonable to conclude that the heavy users of such products be more concerned about what others think as well as more likely to seek information from others regarding what is more appropriate. It may be therefore expected that people of high CSII, being more susceptible to influence are more likely to be heavy users of personal care products.
2. Susceptibility to Television Advertising

Personal Care products are extensively advertised especially in the audiovisual media. This advertising plays a major role in influencing the use of such products. Since personal care products generally are low involvement, consumers may not be expected to use a rational problem solving approach. The peripheral route to persuasion according to the elaboration likelihood model is likely to work more in this regard. Generally, consumers who are more susceptible to persuasion from the audiovisual media may be posited to be heavy users of personal care products.

Barr and Kellaris (2000) proposed an individual difference measure called susceptibility to Advertising and attempted to develop an inventory to measure the construct.

Susceptibility to Advertising was defined as the extent to which individuals attend to and value commercial messages as sources of information for guiding their consumptive behaviours. The researchers developed the scale and tested it extensively for both reliability and validity. The measure of reliability obtained is reported which is Cronbach alpha of 0.8271. The scale was also validated using confirmatory factor analysis by LISREL.

STA showed significant positive correlations between similar constructs namely Attention to Social Comparison Information (ATSCI), both normative and informational dimensions of Consumer Susceptibility to Interpersonal Influence (CSII)
Susceptibility to Advertising is also reported to be positively correlated with the three dimensions of materialism scale namely centrality, happiness and success.

The researchers drawing on the work done on the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) proposed by Petty and Cacioppo (1981), suggested that people with high Susceptibility to Advertising are less critical in their evaluations of advertisements, and use more of heuristic processing methods. This is also consistent with the tenets of the Heuristic –Systematic Model (HSM) framework proposed by Chaiken (1980). Experimental studies offered some evidence in support of this theme.

Barr and Kellaris (1997 and 2000) focused on the medium of television since the peripheral route to persuasion is mostly the approach suited for such a low involvement medium and specifically developed the construct in the domain of television advertising. STA in its current form is therefore Susceptibility to Television Advertising.

Personal Care products being low involvement products and since they are advertised heavily in television media, it is reasonable to assume that consumers who are more susceptible to television advertising are more likely to form favorable attitudes towards the product or brand advertised. This may result in differences in purchase and consumption.