Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The practice of giving names to living and non-livings started somewhere in 1800 (Rooney, 1995) was an important development for mankind. Practice of giving names and need of identification for products among many similar products gave rise to ‘Brand’ and practice of ‘Branding’. Consumers were taught to use brands. Usage of brands gave rise to association studies (study of impact of associating a brand with various stimuli) which argued that brands user’s image get transferred to brands and eventually give rise to brand personality. Rise of brand personality has its root in human personality. With mass consumption on rise, understanding of human personality and consumption patterns became vital for practitioners. Consumption patterns of consumers’ made scholars to believe that human personality characteristics are inherent to brands and can be mirrored (Wee, 2004) and updated (Johar, Sengupta, & Aaker, 2005) for brands. Since mid of 20th century, attempts among scholar community to understand the process by which personality traits are associated and accepted for brands in consumers mind is on rise. Even possessions of consumers were being studied using traits (Belk, 1985). Gradually, researchers in marketing domain got new construct to scrutinize called ‘Brand personality’ which was called to be a metaphorical transfer for brands from human personality (Achouri & Bouslama, 2010).

Soon, brand personality became topic of choice for many and; its impact was studied for almost all the important aspects of consumer marketing like: country of origin (Wang & Yang, 2008), essence of brand (Rekom, Jacobs, & Verlegh, 2006), customer acceptance of brand, feeling, perception, behaviour and brand management (Freling & Forbes, 2005), prestige, distinctiveness, identity of brand, retail spending/sales (Carlson, Donavan, & Cumiskey, 2009), trust, attachment, commitment to brand (Louis & Lombart, 2010; Bouhlel, Mozoughi, Hadiji & Slimane, 2011), attitudes of consumer (Freling & Forbes, 2005; Madrigal & Boush, 2008), quality of brand (Hayes, Alford, silver & York, 2006; Ramaseshan & Taso, 2007), strength of brand (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2009), brand positioning (Rekom, Jacobs, & Verlegh, 2006).
Quest for attaining marketing success have brought practitioners and academicians to debate over the relationship between human and brand personality. The debate over human-brand personality relationship has advanced with time achieving various milestones like: acceptance of measurement of brand personality using human characteristics by practitioners in 1980s (Plummer, 1985), development of brand personality scale (Aaker, 1997), universal acceptance of five factor model of personality to understand brand personality (which is argued to have revived the trait approach of understanding personality (Baumgartner, 2002)).

This chapter discusses the evolution of brand-human personality relationship from Product Symbolism to Self-Congruity to Brand Personality to Brand Personality Congruence to relationship between Brand and Human Personality. It also discusses the current state of brand-human personality relationships.

**Evolution - Early Researches to 1960s**

Although behaviour-personality relationship study can be dated back to long in history from the times of writing of Chinese, Egyptians, Europeans and relatively contemporary writing of Sigmund Freud (psychoanalytical view of personality) (Kassarjian, 1971), but evidence of association between the two is traced back to nineteenth century (1886) in America when image of Quakers (Name given to members of christian movement known for peaceful principles having beliefs in inner light and soul. This movement had great credibility in society. The movement has objected to formal worship pattern) was used on the boxes of hot cereals. The decision of the company to use the image of Quakers on packaging was read as an attempt to leverage on the credibility of Quakers for product being consumed (Solomon, 2010), so that the cereal brand may acquire brand personality (Massive discussions on brand personality construct has been witnessed late in literature (1990s) but latent discussion in academics can be traced from 1955 (Gardner & Levy, 1955). Brand personality research started picking up pace in second half of twentieth century (Aaker &
Industry or practitioners has also started using the term “Brand personality” at least from 1985 (Plummer, 1985). This association has its root in anthropomorphization (charging human characteristics to non-human substance) which research argues that it has been accepted by consumers (Fournier, 1998). This can also be explained using social self as people were associating themselves with Quakers because it was part of their social identity. It was congruent with their personality which individuals would like to achieve in society. It gave people reason to consume the cereals. Wells et. al. (1957) can be given little credit for starting scrutiny of personality congruity as he attempted to give list of adjectives relating to human personality which can be mirrored for product category of automobiles. This states that work on product personality has started long ago.

Recent attempts of understanding behaviour (purchase, reaction to marketing stimuli) of consumer in relation to their personality in literature go back to 1959. Calling products as symbolic in nature (Levy, 1959) could be seen as the starting point of the journey of human-brand personality relationship. Idea of Levy (1959) was later on supported by many scholars when studies found products to be able of communicating with customers and symbolic meaning of products can be used to influence behaviour of consumer (Grubb & Grathwohl, 1967). The view was also supported by Janlert & Stolterman (1997) when their study argued that everything including products has character.

When Levy (1959) was arguing for the symbolism of products, Evans (1959) has attempted to understand the next step of product symbolism (does this symbolism result in personality of product? and; are consumers buying those products which are consistent with their personality?) for Ford and Chevrolet brands. Evans (1959) in his paper which eventually became reference point for many further studies tried to analyze the difference, if any, in personalities of car owners of Ford and Chevrolet. Study did not find any substantial difference in personalities of owners of two car brands. Evans & Steiner (1961) strongly objected to this finding and criticized Evans (1959) for the way the conclusion was drawn. In between, literature started witnessing the arguments of transferring human characteristics to products.

Winick (1961) joined the debate and strongly objected to the conclusions drawn by Evans (1959) study including the conclusion in which no correlation between
personality and brand was found. He gave reference of the studies done by National Broadcasting Company in 1958 & 1959 for Ford and Chevrolet owners, in which significant differences in personalities of the individuals having two brands of car were recorded. This research stated the methodological issues in Evans (1959) work to be responsible for such findings. Though, Evans (1961) in a fresh paper has defended his conclusions but the debate has given a platform for further studies which tested the same relationships. Kuehn (1963) supported Evans & Steiner (1961) view of challenging Evans (1959) and concluded that psychological variables may predict the brand choice. Grubb & Grathwohl (1967) took the reference of self theory and strongly stated that self concept plays important role in determining human behaviour. Study relating to relationship of human personality and product use witnessed a setback when no difference could be found in personalities of individuals carrying compact and standard cars (Westfall, 1962).

Cohen (1967) in a study found significant differences in the personalities of individuals using different dress shirts, mouth wash, men’s deodorant, colong, after shave lotion, bathing soap, razors, tea, gasoline, headache remedies, television preference and magazine preference. The same study found no significant difference between the personalities of individuals consuming different toothpaste, beer and wine (Later on in 2002, Baumgartner (2002) have criticized the idea of understanding personality by looking at the difference in personalities of individuals. He even argued that no research on personality as subject matter is going on in literature). Robertson & Myers (1969) failed to establish a significant relationship between personality and product use. Perry (1973) took the biological root of personality to find relationship between personality and product use for alcohol, cigarettes and coffee but could not found a clear association.

Era of Methodological Debate – 1970s & 1980s

Sparks & Tucker (1971) have accepted the confusion which literature has witnessed with debates over relationship between personality and consumption and stated that post Evans (1959) till 1960s; studies have generally not been able to empirically support the relationship between usage of products and personality of consumers (Sparks & Tucker, 1971; Alpert, 1972). Sparks & Tucker (1971) did not argue that relationship between human personality and consumer behaviour does not
exist but they questioned the methods adopted by previous researchers to understand the relationship. Lack of theoretical framework was the prime reason for not finding significant success as it requires a robust framework to understand the complex relationship of personality and product use; that too when interaction effects of various traits of personality affect the relationship. Before Sparks & Tucker (1971), Brody & Cunningham (1968) have already stated the failure of earlier studies because of inadequate theoretical framework, and conceptual approaches. Various researchers like Evans & Steiner (1961), Winick (1961), Kuehn (1963), Brody & Cunningham (1968), Sparks & Tucker (1971), Alpert (1972), Freling & Forbes (2005) have highlighted methodological flaws as to be the reason for failure of studies in 1960-70’s about personality-behaviour relationship.

In view of the above it cannot be concluded that there is no relationship between personality and product use. Any such conclusion would be highly premature (Brody & Cunningham, 1968). Brody & Cunningham (1968) in their paper proposed a theoretical framework which would not result in the errors noticed in earlier studies and concluded that there exists a relationship between personality variables and product choice. Grubb & Hupp (1968) attempted to understand the personality-behaviour relationship for cars by altering the methodology. They modified the semantic differential scale from two opposite words to one word. Respondent had to give his/her degree of applicability for that word for a specific brand. The study found that owners of one car brands were different from owners of other cars. The idea was further supported by the study of Schaninger, Lessig & Panton (1980) as study could establish relationship between drug use and consumption pattern by changing methodology (canonical and cluster analysis were used in this study). However, Lastovicka & Joachimsthaler (1988) objected to the viewpoint of methodological flaw in personality-behaviour researches. Their paper quoted:

“This is not to say that recent personality-oriented consumer research is methodologically flawed…” (In original)

Instead, the paper stated the reliability, validity and conceptual relevance of the traits (using which personality was operationalized) as reasons for failures.

Note: Even long after the era of replies on methodological flaws in studies pertaining to relationship between brand personality and human personality, scholars
till recent times has kept the debate alive. Aaker (1997) work which is widely accepted and most cited has used quasilexical approach/methodology (by using multiple sources for choosing personality traits) to derive five dimensions of brand personality with 12 facets and 42 traits. Aaker et. al. (2004) have used the longitudinal field experiment to understand the sincerity and excitement traits of brand personalities.

Freling & Forbes (2005) adopted methodological triangulation (multi method qualitative approach including focus group, in-depth interviews and document analysis) over cognitive approach to establish the relationship and succeeded to some extent. The study emphasized on usage of qualitative techniques to understand brand personality which was supported by Hofstede, Hoof, Walenberg & Jong (2007), when they advocated using projective techniques to measure and understand brand image. Their study concluded personification to be a better method to understand brand image. Sweeney & Brandon (2006) strongly urged the brand personality scholars to use interpersonal circumplex method over factor analytical model for understanding brand personality. Study advocated that interpersonal circumplex method (which is rooted into interpersonal theory) have strong theoretical base and establishes the relationship between individuals and others to be the base of personality.

Cui et. al. (2008) used Q methodology (using subjective approach of measuring internal standpoint, then structure is drawn from the subjective approach) to measure the brand personality of McDonalds, Burger King, Wendey’s and Subway. Arora & Stoner (2009) have used mixed methodological approach where both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to understand the brand personality. Study did not find convergence of quantitative and qualitative methods in providing similar results. It was stated that qualitative analysis gave a broader view of brand personality. Muniz & Marchetti (2012) also used mixed methodological approach (exploratory and quantitative both) to arrive at five dimensions of brand personality.

Personality-Behaviour Relationship – 1980s to 2000s

During these debates, despite lack of strong empirical evidence, literature was converging to the viewpoint that there exists a relationship between personality and product choice. This was later on supported to the extent that associations between consumers and their possession (studies of which have been witnessed in literature from 1890 (Belk, 1988)) were called so much strong that possessions of consumers
have become part of their personalities and these possessions can be used to define their owners (Batra & Kazmi, 2009) and in some cases even becoming their extended self. Belk (1988) puts it wonderfully when he starts his paper with these lines:

“*We cannot hope to understand consumer behaviour without first gaining some understanding of the meanings that consumers attach to possessions. A key to understanding what possessions mean is recognizing that, knowingly or unknowingly, intentionally or unintentionally, we regard our possessions as parts of ourselves*” (In original)

Belk (1988) end this paper with the conclusion that possessions of individuals defines people who they are. Associations are argued to be very important for marketers and consumers both (Low & Lamb Jr, 2000) as these associations give rise to the relationship between personality-behaviour.

**Self Expression Perspective**

Work of Greeno, Somers & Kernan (1973) established that personality-behaviour relationship can be established by self-theory perspective of personality. Multiplicity of components in self-concept (actual self (real and actual qualities that individual have), ideal self (how one would like to be seen himself as) and social self) can be scrutinized to understand the behaviour of consumer. Theory suggests that gap between actual and ideal self, social self can explain the conspicuous consumption of consumer. Social identity of a person can be judged by looking at the possessions of individuals. But Sirgy (1982) has restricted this explanation of individual’s behaviour when he points out:

“The choice of which self (Actual self, and so on) to express is influenced by specific characteristics of a given situation. Once an individual decides which image to express in social situation, she looks for ways of expressing it. The use of products is one means by which an individual can express self image.” (In Original)

This behavioural explanation is for situational self image (how one would like himself to be seen as) which is argued to be replacing actual self image and ideal self image in different situations. Alpert (1972) had already stated that relationship between personality and behaviour is complex and could be different across different situations. Sirgy (1982) carried the discussion further and clearly pointed out that self concept is a
complex construct to understand as consumers have multiple self concepts; and congruency between self concept and product consumption should not be universalized as it will vary with situations.

Alpert (1972) support for situational behaviour and Sirgy’s (1982) claim of multiple self concepts makes the understanding between self concept and brand image or product perceptions even more complex. Still, review of earlier studies by Sirgy (1982) has resulted in support of the relationship between self and consumer choice which was also supported by others (Dolich, 1969). Birdwell (1968) tried to find relationship between self image and purchasing behaviour. He concluded that there exists a strong congruence between self image and image of product (car) in consumer mind. The gravity of this relationship is maximum for premium segment cars and it reduces as the price of cars reduces. This was important finding which correlates the self image congruity with the involvement of consumer with the product; with high involvement products having strong relationships in terms of product image and self image of consumer.

Later on, Birdwell (1968) have found supporter in Punyatoya (2011) when his study also found that brand personality has positive impact on both high and low involvement products with gravity of impact being high for high involvement products. One such similar study was carried out by Batra & Homer (2004) where situational influence on the brand image beliefs (associations connected to a brand) in mind of consumers were measured. It was concluded that different situations result in different brand image beliefs. Similar conclusion was drawn by Orth (2005) for individual choice of wine brands. This paper stated that different brands of wine were chosen by same respondent in different situations. This changed behaviour of consumer was also attributed to personality (Orth, 2005). Govers & Schoormans (2005) mentioned in their paper:

“Previous studies have shown that, with regard to the symbolic meaning of products, self-congruence is an important factor in directing consumer preference. Consumers prefer products and brands with a symbolic meaning that is consistent with their self-concept…” (In original).
It is well established that self-expression can explain behaviour (Wallstrom, Steyn, & Pitt, 2010). Existence of self image congruence is a reality as consumption activities are related to self concept of an individual and this behaviour can be understood using self congruity theories (Solomon, 2010). Malar, Krohmer, Hoger & Nyffenegger (2011) found that brands matching with the actual self of consumers will receive more emotional connect in comparison to the brands which matches with the ideal self of a consumer.

**Trait Theory Perspective**

Trait theory of personality was also found out to be a method which can establish personality-behaviour relationship (Greeno et. al.,1973). Trait theory of personality was used in Horton (1979) study which concluded that personality is associated with choice behaviour (study of choice behaviour is the pivotal point of understanding the relationship) (Ballantyne, Warren, & Nobbs, 2006). Study depicted that there is relationship between self confidence and anxiety traits of personality with the choice behaviour of respondent (Horton, 1979).

Studies seeking relationship between human and product personality (when human characteristics are transferred to products and products are called to have acquired human personality traits, product personality is born) are not new. Even till this time, researchers are trying to understand the relationship from different perspectives using direct and indirect methods and attempts have been recorded in literature where different paths were adopted to study the relationship. Sojka & Giese (2001) looked at this relationship by associating the personality traits with consumer information processing and found that processing of visual and verbal information can be explained to some extent by the personality traits of individuals. Govers & Mugge (2004) found that individuals get attached to the products whose personality matches with their own hence establishing product personality congruence. This study review found 2 dimensions of product personality’s definition: 1) human personality characteristics can be used to describe the symbolic meaning associated with product and 2) human personality characteristics can be used to explain and differentiate a product. Both perspectives of product personality confirm that product personality is generating out of the understanding of human personality. Products having traits which match with the human personality traits result in consumer preference which means that product
personality congruence have positive effect on consumer preference (Govers & Schoormans, 2005). In 2008, Hawkins et. al. (2008) supported Govers & Mugge (2004) when their study concluded that consumers prefer the brands having personalities matching with their personality.

Mugge, Govers & Schoormans (2009) attempted to see product personality as reason for the type of interaction that consumers might have with product and it can culminate to preferring a certain product. Marketers have also accepted this congruence and they try to create personalities for products which match with different consumers (Solomon, 2010). Marketers can execute this by giving product a personality at design stage (Mugge et. al., 2009) which can later on be leveraged by aligning it with target market.

**From Product Personality to Brand personality**

The argument of brand also having symbolic meanings along with products gained pace in 1960’s when Dolich (1969) stated brands as to be having symbolic character (Later on, Plummer (1985) argued that brand personality is also symbolic in nature). He concluded and established relationship between self-concept and brand selection. Fry (1971) has established high magnitude relationship between the personality traits and the brand choice for cigarette by consumers. In 1981, Schaninger & Sciglimpaglia (1981) concluded that personality traits impacts the way the information is acquired by a consumer. Indirectly they were arguing that perception of consumer is influenced by personality. Perception is reality in marketing. Scholars have agreed that brand performance to a greater extent depend on perception of brand (Ghosh, Chakraborty & Ghosh,1955). This perception about brand personality is then matched with consumer personality in consumer mind and hence such studies ignited the spark for scrutinizing relationship between human and brand personality (Schaninger & Sciglimpaglia, 1981)

Maehle et. al. (2011) attempted to investigate – how customer perception is related to brand personality. Study found out that certain associations between brand personality dimensions of a brand and perceptions about them have communalties. Family-related associations were perceived for sincere brands; excited feelings were related to excited brands; and perception of expertise, quality was related with competent brands. Information acquired about a brand plays major role in the formulation of perception about that brand and its brand personality.
It is well established and documented in literature that product personality and brand personality is generated for a brand by marketer using different means of communication and other brand encounters. The notion was strongly supported by Plummer (1985) when his study stated that marketers’ communication is responsible for generation of brand personality. Marketers’ task of ornamenting a brand with personality faces two fold challenge:

- Marketer plan of transferring certain personality traits to brand suffers a setback majorly from those brands encounters which are beyond marketers’ control. It was strongly argued that acquiring personalities is so much natural for brands that brands may acquire it even without the involvement of marketer (Haulins et. al., 2008).
- Even if it is hypothetically assumed that customer is exposed to marketer generated brand encounter only, then also success is not guaranteed. It is because marketers’ communication has to reach to consumer through his/her perceptual senses. The efforts for evolving product/brand personality can go wrong if consumers’ perceptions of product/brand personality are wrongly understood by marketer. It is thus essential to measure the product personality from consumer’s perspective with no potential error. Phau & Lau (2001) very strongly projected the role of consumer in perceiving the brand personality. Study reflected that individual’s self has an important role to play on the perceived personality of brand.

As perception of consumers towards brand personality can be created and influenced by marketer (Solomon, 2010), its importance could be looked at as potential reason for developing scales to measure product and brand personality so that perception could be understood. Mugge et. al. (2009) developed a scale to measure product personality. Another attempt to develop a scale to measure product personality was of Jordan (2002). Aaker (1997) developed scale to measure brand personality. It was called brand personality Scale (BPS). BPS eventually became the widely used scale to operationalize brand personality.

**Brand personality – Congruence V/S Relationship with Human Personality**

The entire debate of personality-behaviour relationship related to product choice was now being mirrored for brand choice. The construct of product personality, product
personality congruence was advancing towards brand personality and brand personality congruence. The shift was operationalized from self-congruity to self-brand congruity to brand personality congruence. Researchers worked on relationship between self-image and the user imagery (image of users of a brand – this has its link to association theory). The relationship between brand personality and human personality is executed by marketers by communicating the associations in mind of consumers keeping in mind that brand is an “active relationship partner” (Hayes et. al., 2006). The typical user’s image gets carried over to brands they are using. This typical user can be an individual or a group like a sports team (Carlson et. al., 2009). This holds true for all type of products and brand. Consumers who are seeking this image which has been acquired by brand (for consumer this image may be his/her ideal or social self) would be deflected towards this brand and self-brand congruity is said to have taken place of brand. When brand personality and self image measures are used to operationalize self-brand congruity, it becomes brand-personality congruency (Parker, 2009). In brand personality congruence, user imagery is considered as point of reference for brand personality. But the two constructs (user imagery and brand personality) are different; as Parker (2009) writes in his paper:

“User-imagery is similar to brand personality, in that both concepts represent human characteristics associated with a brand. However, user imagery simply represents a prototypical person and likely plays a role in the overall brand personality formation. On the other hand, brand personality is a more encompassing perception of a brand’s composite image, derived from multiple source inputs such as product endorsers, celebrity spokesperson, and animated characters.” (In original)

He called human personality and brand user-imagery relationship as brand user imagery based congruity which is different from human brand personality relationship. After empirical investigation, study concluded that the two constructs should be treated separately. Hence, any study which is emphasizing on relationship between human and brand personality should not be called as study of brand personality congruence because of above cited reasons (that’s why this study was not called as brand personality congruence study but simply human-brand personality relationship study).
Brand personality – Post Aaker

Aaker’s work (1997) is most widely accepted attempt to develop a brand specific scale for brand personality (Wang et. al., 2009). The research on brand personality and human personality relationship has picked up pace after Aaker (1997). It was that pioneer work that entire brand personality literature can be divided in two parts – pre Aaker and post Aaker. Her work has excited many to take on brand personality study across the globe.

Acceptance of Aaker’s Brand Personality Scale

In a stream which Aaker work has started, validation of her work was one. There are studies that have tested Aaker (1997) brand personality scale (here onwards BPS) and found it to be good and giving better results. Buresti & Rosenberger-III (2006) found BPS to be able to detect difference in brand personality profiles of three clothing brands. Another study tested the brand personality scale in formula one (F1) racing and successfully differentiated the four formula one team’s brand personality profiles (Rosenberger-III & Donahey, 2008). Popularity of brand personality Scale can be judged from the fact that scholars in United States of America (Kim, 2000), Australia (Buresti & Rosenberger-III, 2006), India (Balaji & Raghavan, 2011), North Africa (Bouhlel et. al.,2011), Scandinavia (Maehle et. al., 2011) and Thailand (Polyorat, 2011) have operationalized BPS without any change across the categories of restaurants, action-sports clothing, corporate brands, mobile phone, qualitative studies and universities respectively.

Extension of Brand personality

Brand personality as a construct has been extended to understanding product performance by different associations. Wang et. al. (2009) tried to find out relationship between product-brand personality and company-brand personality. Study found that congruity between product-brand personality effect the purchase intention more than company-brand personality. Ventura, Kazancoglu, Ustundagli & Tatlidil (2013) extended the concept of brand personality to store personality in Turkey and found out 3 dimensions of store personality. The study was carried out for consumer electronics chain stores. Three dimensions of store personality in this study were – ‘reliability’, ‘pleasantness’ and ‘welcomeness’. Similar study extended the concept of brand
personality to non-profit organizations. Study found out the brand personality dimensions for non-profit organizations. Four dimensions were- ‘integrity’, ‘sophistication’, ‘ruggedness’, ‘nurturence’ (Venable, Rose, Bush & Gilbert, 2005). The expansions of brand in order to leverage the associations of core brand for new brand has no impact on the brand personality of core brands (Diamantopoulos, Smith, & Grime, 2005).

**Aaker’s BP Dimensions and Personality Studies**

Brand personality dimensions proposed by Aaker (1997) were found to be playing pivotal role in brand personality and human personality relationship. Dimensions of ‘sincerity’ and ‘competence’ were found to be contributing to the trust, attachment and commitment (Bouhlel et. al.,2011). Matzler, Bidman, Grabner-Kranter (2006) found ‘extraversion’ and ‘openness’ to be influencing the brand affect. Madrigal & Boush (2008) proposed a new dimension of brand personality – ‘social responsibility’, which the study empirically tested to be different from all dimensions of brand personality of BPS. Study also proved that dimension of ‘social responsibility’ has impact on consumer attitude towards brand.

Mulyanegra et. al. (2009) in their study found significant relationship between human and brand personality for fashion brands. Study concluded that respondents having ‘conscientious’ personality were giving preference to the trusted brands. Female ‘neuroticism’ personality respondents also preferred social brands. Those who were ’extrovert’ preferred social brands. Aaker et. al. (2004) study revealed that brands known for ‘sincerity’ dimension of the brand personality are found to be deepening relationship with time whereas brands with ‘excitement’ dimensions involve in relationship for a shorter duration.

Maehle & Shneor (2010) work added to the list of those who established relationship between human and brand personality. Diversity icebreaker scale was used to operationalized human personality. This scale divides the personality of individuals in three parts – ‘red’ (inclined towards relational focus, personal involvement, social perspective), ‘blue’ (Inclined towards task, structure and logic) and ‘green’ (inclined towards change, vision and Ideas). Study concluded that ‘blue DI’ type individuals dislike the brands having excitement and sophisticated dimensions of brand personality. ‘red DI’ type individuals prefer brands having sincere personality. Lin (2010) carried
out similar study seeking relationship between human and brand personality for toys and video game buyers and found relationship between: ‘extraversion’ trait of human personality and ‘excitement’ trait of brand personality; ‘agreeableness’ trait of human personality and ‘excitement’, ‘sincerity’ and ‘competence’ trait of brand personality. Study used BIG FIVE to measure the human personality and Aaker’s (1997) molded BPS (for Japan) was used to measure brand personality. On the basis of above discussion, it is hypothesized that:

H1: There exists relationship between human personality and brand personality for motor bikes in India.

Aaker Brand personality Dimensions and Global Culture

Plethora of studies carried out using Aaker framework of brand personality highlighted cultural validity problem with brand personality dimensions of BPS. Aaker et. al. (2001) found the three dimensions of brand personality (‘sincerity’, ‘excitement’ and ‘sophistication’) remaining stable across cultures (America, Japan and Spain). The dimension of ‘ruggedness’ in America was replaced by ‘peacefulness’ in Japan. Dimensions of ‘ruggedness’ and ‘competence’ in America were replaced by ‘peacefulness’ and ‘passion’ in Spain. ‘Peacefulness’ dimension was common for Spain and Japan. The reason of shifting of these dimensions was stated to be the culture of these countries. Japan and Spain comparatively have more harmony values and this is reflected in their dimension of ‘peacefulness’ which replaced ‘ruggedness’ (Americans are more self-asserted and independent).

Similar results were reported by Chu & Sung (2010) when they also found three culture specific dimensions of brand personality in china (‘traditionalism’, ‘joyfulness’ & ‘trendiness’). Three dimensions of brand personality in china (‘competence’, ‘excitement’ and ‘sophistication’) were same as that of BPS. Study highlighted the collectivist culture of china rather than individualistic to be the reason for this shifting in dimensions. Rojas-Mendez et. al. (2004) tested five brand personality dimensions in Chile for the brand of Ford. Study resulted into revised scale of brand personality having 16 items in it. The dimension of ‘ruggedness’ was not applicable to ford in Chile. Authors cited the presence of Levi Jeans in each group of brand in Aaker (1997) work might have given extra weight to the dimension of ‘ruggedness’ which otherwise
should not have been there in dimensions of brand personality. In view of the above discussion, it is hypothesized that:

H2: Aaker scale is not absolutely generalizable for motor bikes in India

Sung (1999) explored the Aaker framework for United States of America and Korea. Study gave five dimension framework for USA. Dimensions of brand personality were also matching with that of BPS except ‘tradition’. The deflection and difference in dimension of brand personality within USA made the study to state that for some population within USA, the BIG FIVE structure of brand personality adopted by Aaker is not exhaustive. Same study’s result differs hugely from Aaker’s result in Korea. Study found eight dimensions of brand personality. Even the BIG FIVE structure was not applicable for Korea. The eight dimensions were: ‘sincereity/competence’, ‘excitement1’, ‘excitment2’, ‘peacefulness’, ‘sophistication’, ‘dominance’, ‘tradition’ and ‘ruggedness’. Though number of dimensions were different in Korea yet absolutely new dimensions were only two (‘peacefulness’ and ‘dominance’). Four dimensions were matching with BPS dimensions. Study states the culture of two countries responsible for the difference. Hence, it is hypothesized that:

H2a: There are culture specific dimensions of brand personality for motor bikes in India.

Asperin (2007) found the five dimensions of brand personality validated by application of confirmatory factor analysis for casual dining restaurant industry in United States. Bosnjak, Bochmann & Hufschmidt, (2007) followed Aaker to find out brand personality dimensions in Germany. Study followed three stage process to identify 84 traits which were subjected for 13 brands which were kept in three groups. Like Aaker (1997), one brand (Coca-cola) was kept in all the groups of 13 brands. Post factor analysis, the study concluded four dimensions of brand personality. These dimensions were – ‘drive’, ‘conscientiousness’, ‘emotion’ and ‘superficiality’. All dimensions were one-dimensional with no facets except ‘drive’ dimension which was found to be having two facets: ‘excitement’ and ‘boredom’. This resulted into a new 20 item scale of brand personality. The scale was also subjected to validation using confirmatory factor analysis. Scale stood well to the validation (Bosnjak et. al., 2007). This study is a classic example of brand personality being culture specific. Aaker’s
(1997) steps and framework were followed absolutely to generate the brand personality in this study.

Sung & Tinkam (2005) also attempted to find out brand personality dimensions in USA and Korea separately and combined. Study objective was to find out cultural differences for dimensions of brand personalities across two countries. Study concluded eight dimensions of brand personality for USA & Korea combined (‘competence’, ‘trendiness’, ‘likeableness’, ‘western’, ‘sophistication’, ‘ruggedness’, ‘tradition’ and ‘ascendancy’). Brand personality dimensions for USA only were also eight (‘likeableness’, ‘competence’, ‘trendiness’, ‘sophistication’, ‘ruggedness’, ‘tradition’, ‘white collar’ and ‘androgyne’). Study found eight Korean brand personality dimensions – ‘competence’, ‘trendiness’, ‘likeableness’, ‘passive likeableness’, ‘sophistication’, ‘ascendancy’, ‘ruggedness’ and ‘traditionalism’. It concluded that some dimensions are common but some culture specific dimensions like ‘white collar’ and ‘ascendancy’ for Korea are worth noting.

Muniz & Marchetti (2012) used Aaker (1997) traits of brand personality to find out dimensions of brand personality for Brazil. Study adopted mixed methodological approach to generate items and conclude that five factor structure of dimensions of brand personality hold true for Brazil but the dimensions were different. Study gave five new dimensions of brand personality as: ‘credibility’, ‘joy’, ‘audacity’, ‘sophistication’ and ‘sensitivity’.

Application of Aaker (1997) BPS on Colgate brand in India gave different results from that of Aaker. Dimensions for Colgate brand were found out to be 13 and there were 10 traits from the list suggested by Aaker which were not applicable to Colgate (Thomas & Sekar, 2008). In view of the above discussion, it is hypothesized that:

H2b: There are more than five dimensions of brand personality for motor bikes in India.

The above review convinces that culture has impact on the dimensions of brand personality and Aaker (1997) dimensions should not be blindly followed in cultures different from American. Indian culture is different from American and this study will fill the gap of validating the Aaker (1997) scale for India.
Relationship between human and brand personality has been established across many categories post Aaker’s (1997) work. Aaker (1997) scale has been used massively across various product categories and brands across different regions and cultures. Many countries have seen the application of the Aaker scale. India as a country has been devoid of this advancement. With massive adoption across regions, Aaker (1997) scale has been criticized also for multiple reasons (Alpatova & Dall’Olmo Riley, 2011; Davies, Chun, Da Silva & Roper, 2001; Cui, Albanese, Jewel & Hu, 2008). List of criticizers is huge. Moreover Kassarjian (1971) has strongly advocated researchers to develop their own measures for constructs (Kassarjian, 1971). No study has been reported in literature till this time which checks the stability of Aaker (1997) brand personality scale for motor bikes brands in India. This has created a gap. Indian two wheeler industry currently responsible for 77 percent share in automobile industry cannot be devoid of academic input in terms of brand personality. This study has tried to identify the relationship between human personality and brand personality of motor bikes in order to fill up this existing gap in literature.