



Social Identity and Consumer Preference Formation for High Involvement Products: A Study of Nigerians in the UK

By

EMMANUEL NDI WANKI

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Abstract

One stream of quest by scholars for knowledge development draws from the notion that groups and group behaviour lie at the heart of human society and proposes a social group approach. The notion contends that individuals live, work, and interact in groups and as a result are collaborative architects of the social world they inhabit. Advocates underline the need to improve the general understanding of consumer preference formation theory and the role of social groups' behaviour on the consumption behaviour of individual members of social groups. Inspired by research gaps in this regard, this research examines how social identity / collective identity influences the preference formation of UK based Nigerians (a relatively unexplored social group) for high involvement products. Thus, this study conceptualised social identity / collective identity on the basis of nationality and ethnicity as aspects of consumer social identity. This study has utilised mainstream literature and conceptualised a framework (motivated by research gaps) that draws from identity, self-concept, extended self, culture (and acculturation), social embeddedness, symbolic consumption (clothing, necklaces, cars and mobile phones), networking [educational and employment], interaction and intermingling with other cultures. Exploratory and qualitative research approaches are used in this study and the research has followed interpretive logic that combines semi-structure interviews and observation. Based on the majority of participants in this study, culture plays a significant role in shaping the mindset of UK based Nigerians, and as a result social identity congruence behaviour is common within the Nigerian social community in the UK. Therefore, social identity congruence preference formation behaviour for high involvement products is high among UK based Nigerians. For some members of this social community, exhibiting such social identity congruence behaviour in their high involvement products preference formation is a *sine-qua-non*, a consequence of which is that they do not mind putting themselves through financial stress because they want to blindly follow the bandwagon. Based on purposive sampling, 34 participants were interviewed. The findings asserted that preference formation of UK based Nigerians for high involvement products is conditioned not only by social identity, but also by personal identity features, which includes personal values, religiosity-based values, and beyond own cultural domain imbibed values through networking. This study has contributed to the illumination of behavioural tendencies, social identity, factors that shape and moderate the self-concept and importance attached to membership of identity groups, and how these influence preference formations for high involvement products.

Declaration

I declare that the work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted for a degree or diploma at any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

Sign:  _____

Date: 30/01/2018

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Chapter One: The Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

Social psychology has been gaining increasing research attention since the pioneering works of Tajfel (1978) and Tajfel and Turner (1979) on social group behaviour. The comment by Tajfel (1981) underlines the importance of this topic - “social psychology can and must include in its theoretical and research preoccupations a direct concern with the relationship between human and psychological functioning and the large scale social processes and events which shape this functioning and are shaped by it” (Tajfel, 1981, p.7). Recent literature (Haslam *et al.*, 2012) comments that, “groups and group behaviour lie at the heart of human society. We live, work, and interact in groups and, through this, are collaborative architects of the social world we inhabit” (p.201). Though earlier works on groups and group behaviour were purely sociologically premised, psychoanalytic perspectives have also featured regularly in the literature too (Shimp and Sharma, 1987). Psychological (Pettigrew, 1998; Abrams and Hogg, 2004; Hogg and Abrams, 1993; Haslam *et al.*, 2012) as well as sociological (Branscombe *et al.*, 2003; Ellemers, 1993; Turner *et al.*, 1987; Reid and Hogg, 2003; Tajfel, 1978) perspectives do not only contribute to, but also advocate for further research, towards enhancing the understanding of groups and group behaviour.

Oakes (2002) reinforces this research pertinence commenting that complex processes underlie the complex outcomes about what constitutes the reality of social relations. Commenting further (p.820), she notes that there are shortcomings and omissions, and there has “been some major revisions in our understanding of several issues [e.g., contrast Turner (1982) with Turner *et al.*, (1994) on identity as cognitive structure versus process, and Oakes

(1987) with Oakes *et al.*, (1994) on the related shift to ‘perceiver readiness’ rather than ‘category accessibility’]”.

Psychological theorists argue that social psychology plays a pivotal function in the social and behavioural sciences, and is indeed crucial for numerous levels of explanation that range from individual cognition to interpersonal interaction and group processes to social structure (Pettigrew, 1998; Abrams and Hogg, 2004). Abrams and Hogg (2004) note that European social psychology literature has recognised a distinctive social or collective level of psychological process. In other words, people may not only act as individuals but also as members of a group with shared perceptions, goals and identity. Tajfel (1978), who pioneered social behaviour knowledge enhancement, summarised that “the central idea is that both behaviour and identity could shift along a continuum with extremely unique and personal aspects at one end and extremely common and collective aspects at the other” (see Abrams and Hogg, 2004, p.99).

In this sociological thinking, categorisations such as race, ethnicity, gender etc, have been used as psychological significance elements for self-defining (Tajfel and Turner, 1982; Oakes, 2002; Brown and Lunt, 2002). Thus, membership reference groups are a core identity signalling factor in defining self (Thornton, 1996; Muniz and O’Guinn, 2001; Whittler and Spira, 2002). Further reference group literature (Mihalcea and Cătoi, 2008, p.5) adds that “membership reference groups are groups to which an individual currently belongs (a family, a peer group, one's gender group)”, a conceptualisation that is further enhanced by Muniz and O’Guinn (2001) who add community and cultural groups dimensions of reference groups. In addition to gender, White *et al.*, (2012) mention nationality and ethnicity as aspects of consumer social identity. Muniz and O’Guinn (2001) further note that in such positive

reference group, the individual belongs to, identifies with, is attracted to, and feels psychologically engaged.

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reference group, the individual belongs to, identifies with, is attracted to, and feels psychologically engaged.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

According to the social identity view, when customers become aware of their socio-demographic groups, their psychology has a significant influence in their purchase behaviour (Brown and Lunt, 2002; Chowdhury, 2012). Thus, customers tend to be attracted to those products and brands that are linked to their social identity (Forehand *et al.*, 2002; Chowdhury, 2012). In other words, as Berger *et al.*, (2011) summarised, people use their consumption behaviour to make statements about themselves to others, and observers make inference about other people based on the consumption behaviour they display.

Within this developing knowledge about social identity theory and consumer behaviour, scholars have also tapped into the concept of consumer ethnocentrism (Shimp and Sharma, 1987; Worchel and Cooper, 1979; Chowdhury, 2012). Reviewed literature calls for research that (1) investigates the consumer ethnocentrism perspective of social identity theory and consumer behaviour (Tajfel, 1981; Chowdhury, 2012), and contributes to the understanding of the emerging debate about the applicability of the consumer ethnocentric tendencies scale in both developed and developing nations (Chowdhury, 2012; Shimp and Sharma, 1987). Responding to the second element of the aforementioned call, Chowdhury (2012) investigated two issues of consumer psychology. First, the study challenged the orthodox notion that consumer ethnocentrism is a developed nations phenomenon, and examined the applicability of consumer ethnocentric tendencies scale (CETSCALE) in a developing country context (Bangladesh). Subsequently, the study investigated the applicability of the social identity theory in gauging ethnocentric tendencies in different socio-demographic groups of consumers in Bangladesh. Based on the overall evidence, the study underlines that

while the CETSCALE used in examining developed nations context in past studies is applicable to the developing nation context (Bangladesh), the evidence for the scale differs when the consumers are segregated into smaller social identities. The emergent deviation, Chowdhury (2012) explained further, is due to in-group interests, which supports the applicability of social identity theory.

Reviewed literature shows a trend of increasing call for knowledge enhancement in the area of consumer ethnocentrism. Scholars contend that although the applicability of ethnocentrism to consumer behaviour study has gained recognition (Berkman and Gilson 1978; Markin 1974), there is hardly any study that specifically aligned ethnocentrism to the study of marketing and consumer behaviour (Shimp and Sharma, 1987; Chowdhury, 2012; Witkowski, 1998). Motivated by this and other aforementioned calls, this study is focused on enhancing understanding of the influence of social identity theory on consumer behaviour. In other words, this study is designed to contribute to the understanding of how culturally induced behaviour regulates buying attitude within a social group. While this study taps from the consumer ethnocentrism concept, it is important to emphasise that this study only draws from the theoretical substance of “universal proclivity for people to view their own as the centre of the universe, to interpret other social units from the perspective of their own group, and blindly accepting those who are culturally like themselves” (Shimp and Sharma, 1987, p.280). Thus, this study does not draw from the consumer ethnocentrism substance that purchasing foreign products is wrong, since it causes loss of jobs, and hurts the home economy (Shimp and Sharma, 1987). Specifically, this study draws from what Shimp and Sharma (1987) call the functional terms of consumer ethnocentrism where the interest is on how the individual has a sense of identity, feelings of belongingness, and an understanding of what purchase behaviour is acceptable or unacceptable to the in-group (Levine and Campbell,

1972). Buying attitude is conceptualised to include what the customer buys as well as the decision process involved with regards to when or when not to use the product.

Thus, from the analytics undertaken so far, this study is grounded on ‘social psychology, which as scholars note, “occupies a pivotal position in the social and behavioural science” (Abrams and Hogg, 2004, p.98), and significantly influences the purchasing behaviour of consumers (Chowdhury, 2012). For this purpose of contributing to the knowledge about the social identity theory, and other related theories, and influence on consumer preference formation, this study explores the Nigerian social group in the United Kingdom. The study explores the social identity in consumer preference formation of high involvement products.

1.3 The Research Aim, Objectives and Questions

Sociological phenomena have received insufficient empirical attention from marketing and consumer behaviour scholars (Nicosia and Mayer 1976; Sheth 1977; Shimp and Sharma, 1987; Chowdhury, 2012). This research is, therefore, grounded on this need to enhance sociological understanding. Section 1.1 explained the importance of and the need to explore social identity behaviour (SIB). Inspired by this importance, this study aims to contribute to the understanding of social group behaviour and especially with regards to consumer behaviour. Towards achieving that goal, the study adopts a framework (see Chapter Three) that is motivated by evident gaps in the literature.

Drawing from the social psychology foundation “that a person's conduct oscillates between a personal and a collective frame of reference” (Brown and Lunt, 2002, p.2; Tajfel, 1981), the framework for this research is aimed at using data from the Nigerian social group in the UK to contribute to the social psychology (e.g. Abrams and Hogg, 2004; Jacoby, 1978), social identity theory (SIT) (e.g. Tajfel, 1981; Brown and Lunt, 2002; Chowdhury, 2012; Constanța

and Rodica, 2012) consumer psychology (Chowdhury, 2012; Worchel and Cooper, 1979; Witkowski, 1998) and other interconnected theories that are essential to this understanding.

In their study “metatheory: lessons from social identity research”, Abrams and Hogg (2004) summarise that the discussions with reference to European and North American perspectives focus on groups; theorising about intergroup behaviour, motivation, and self-categorisation. Towards enhancing the understanding of social behaviour with regards to group processes, intergroup relations, and social identity, they recommend that researchers must be armed with a ‘good travel guide’ or ‘metatheory’ that tells “where to go and where not to go, what is worthwhile and what is not” (p.98). Additional to providing structure and direction, such theoretical approach informs the sort of questions one asks. Motivated by evident research gaps, the theoretical foundations that, on the one hand, provide the guide for this study, and which this study aims to contribute to, on the other, are pinpointed in Section 1.1.

To summarise, the central aim of this study is:

To enhance the understanding of the influence of social identity on consumer preference formation of UK based Nigerians.

Sociologists argue that what we consume conveys meaning (Boudieu, 1986; Levy, 1959). Specifically, this study aims to investigate the saliency of social identity on consumer preference formation of UK based Nigerian consumers towards high involvement products. A core theoretical notion within the social identity literature suggests that individual's desire to possess a product can be driven by the need to satisfy psychological needs, such as actively creating one's self concept, reinforcing and expressing self-identity, and asserting one's individuality as well as differentiating oneself from others (Ball and Tasaki, 1992; Belk, 1988; Kleine *et al.*, 1995; Tajfel and Turner, 1987; Oakes, 2002; Mihalcea and Cătoi, 2008). Thus, in such psychological needs driven possession scenario, the self is the stimulus (Oakes,

2002) and possession is motivated primarily by the desire to reflect reference group membership (Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001; Whittler and Spira, 2002). Tapping from this theoretical foundation, this study explores a major social group (Nigerians) in the UK. The focus here is to enhance the knowledge about how UK based Nigerians use their consumption decisions to infer identity, as well as how their consumption patterns are driven by the identity inferences made by others.

Consumer behaviour scholars that have explored the social identity perspective have also underlined the need to study symbolic consumption (Berger *et al.*, 2011; Stigler and Becker, 1977). Past literature identifies clothing styles, car models, music genres, and hair styles as core products that fit the symbolic consumption description (Berger *et al.*, 2011; Bearden and Etzel, 1982; Escalas and Bettman, 2005; Mihalcea and Cătoi, 2008). In their study "identity signalling with social capital: a model of symbolic consumption", Berger *et al.* (2011) stress the need for consumer behaviour research perspectives that go beyond existing models of fads, fashions, herds and conspicuous consumption. Tapping from this view, this study combines the aforementioned dual foundations (high involvement products and symbolic consumption), and considers the product type, e.g., clothing and cars.

Social and Cultural values have long been recognized as a powerful force shaping consumers' motivation, lifestyle, and product choices (Berger *et al.*, 2011; Berger and Heath, 2008; Berger and Rand, 2008; White and Dahl, 2006, 2007). The value system is thought to include sets of beliefs, attitudes, and activities to which a culture or subculture subscribes, and is reinforced by rewards and punishments to those who follow or deviate from these guidelines (Rokeach, 1973). This value system has been expanded in subsequent literature to include the "tool kit" of habits, skills, and styles from which people construct strategies of action (Swidler, 1986). Drawing from this value notion, the products of interest in this research are

high involvement products like those for occasions that form cultural and social value systems.

A prior study on Nigerian consumers in the UK (Kihlstrom, 1992) comments that although an average Nigerian consumer in the UK can potentially self-identify with every possible social category, it is most unlikely that the same social categories would receive significant attention from the consumers. According to related literature, the Black African consumer is likely to attend to those social categories that are specifically self-relevant to their social categories and social identity (Wiedmann and Hennigs, 2013). As Forehand *et al.* (2002) and Stayman & Deshpande (1989) suggest, the fundamental premise that bridges marketing and psychology is that consumers are often attracted to products and brands that are linked to their social identity, a linkage, which as Aaker (1997) argues may come about because the brand or product symbolizes the consumer's own personality traits, or in the case of Nigerian consumers in the UK, it embodies being the "type" of person that the consumer aspires to become (Belk *et al.*, 1982; cf. Levy 1959). Thus, the Nigerian consumer's social identity may motivate him/her to form, hold, and express social identity-oriented beliefs (Shavitt, 1990; Katz, 1960; Smith, Bruner and White 1956).

The focus of this study is to enhance the understanding of how social and cultural values motivate social identity of UK based Nigerians, and how social identity oriented beliefs influence the consumer preferences of UK based Nigerians for high involvement products. For example, consumer behaviour literature identifies fashion and cars as typical conspicuous consumption items (Escalas, 2013; Ireland, 1992; Rafferty, 2014). According to Escalas (2013), it can be questioned why would some Nigerian consumers in the UK drive a specific car to work but choose to drive a different car say for example a BMW to a blind date or to a more prestigious occasion. Furthermore, he questioned, could this be classed as "Impression

management”, “Value expression” or “Need for affiliation”? An example of high involvement product can be highlighted by the style in clothing, which is a combination of personal expression and social rules (Rahman *et al.*, 2014). Dressing is influenced by dominant values, social attitudes, socioeconomic status, life status, and some of the circumstances through which people want to assure their self-introduction (Haley, 2013). Based on the Veblen's *Theory of the Leisure Class* (1912), scholars suggest that a paramount role of fashion is to signal wealth (Ireland, 1992; Pesendorfer, 1995; Bagwell and Bernheim, 1996). High involvement product communicates symbolically the social identity, namely how a person wants and seeks to appear in society (Davis, 1985; Rafferty, 2014; Crane and Bovone, 2006; Auty and Elliot, 1998). For example, why would Nigerians prefer specific clothing for a blind date or prestigious occasion? Thus, this study also aims to enhance the understanding of how social and cultural values influence the self and collective identity of UK based Nigerian consumers in their clothing preference for a blind date or a prestigious occasion.

Drawing from the aforementioned aim, the research objectives are as follows:

1. To contribute to that understanding, a core objective of this study is to shed light on the extent to which consumer preference formation of UK based Nigerians for high involvement products is social group/collective identity or personal identity driven.
2. Another core objective of this study is to understand the extent to which the sub-cultural features in the Nigerian community influence the preference formation of UK based Nigerians. Noting that there are three major sub-cultural groups in the Nigerian nation (the Ibos, the Yorubas, and the Hausas), this study seeks to understand how differences along these sub-cultural levels would impact preference formation of UK based Nigerians for high involvement products.

3. Drawing from aforementioned theoretical foundations, this study seeks to understand how the sub-cultural groups identities motivate adoption (or non-adoption) of social congruence induced preference formation for high involvement products.
4. In their study, White *et al.* (2012) conceptualised university as an element of consumer social identity. Borrowing from and enhancing that viewpoint, this study seeks to understand what role education and other factors such as cross-cultural marriage and country of abode culture play in the social identity behaviour and preference formation of UK based Nigerians for high involvement products.

Within the aforementioned aim and objectives for this study, the research questions are as follows:

1. What features of the consumer preference of explored Nigerians in the UK are driven by personal or collective frame of preference or both? Improving the knowledge about social identity theory and self-categorisation theory is central component in enhancing general understanding of social psychology (e.g. Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel and Turner, 1979; Huddy, 2001; Haslam *et al.*, 2012; Abrams and Hogg, 2004; Oakes, 2002; Berger *et al.*, 2011; Ashmore *et al.*, 2004).
2. What are the sub-groups differences in the social identity influence on high involvement products purchase (and use) preferences of UK based Nigerians? Intergroup relationship literature (e.g. Opute, 2014; Kanter and Corn, 1994; Opute, 2015) contends that cultural diversity shapes the psychological mindset and behaviour of people. Transporting that foundation to the context of this study, bearing in mind the evidence that despite belonging to the Nigerian nation, the Ibo, Yoruba and Hausa cultural enclaves do not entirely share homogeneous features (e.g. Ifeyinwa, 2002; Ebijuwa, 1999), it would seem logical to expect that some sub-culture (within Ibo,

Yoruba and Hausa enclaves) features may differentiate the social identity behaviour of these groups and preference formation influence. Prior study of identity signalling with social capital (Berger *et al*, 2011) suggests that “signals depend on the identities that are associated with, and may be valuable in motivating adoption as well as dis-adoption behaviour” (p.3).

3. What factors (e.g. education, cross cultural marriage, country of abode culture) moderate the influence of social group identity on the consumer preference of UK based Nigerians for high involvement products.

1.4 Contributions of this Study

In addressing the aforementioned research questions, this study also aims to contribute to a foundation that has been mentioned repeatedly in political behaviour perspectives of social identity research (Huddy, 2001; Oakes, 2002; Huddy, 2004; Duckitt, 1989). Hence, this study responds to a research advocacy for insights on the role individual differences play in the process of social identity acquisition and development of out-group antipathy (Huddy, 2001; Huddy, 2004). Within that target, this study also seeks to contribute to symbolic consumption literature (Berger *et al.*, 2011; Berger and Heath, 2008; Berger and Rand, 2008; White and Dahl, 2007) by exploring the in-group versus out-group influence on such consumption of high involvement products.

The logic behind the expectation of symbolic consumption differences based on the in-group and out-group is founded on the psychological notion that, though collective unto itself, the collectiveness in an individual can only achieve a temporary kind of wholeness, as it passes through different social identities or states (Brown and Lunt, 2002). Thus, the contribution made by this study has shown that UK based Nigerians may not only show a high tendency to be open and accommodating to other values, views, principles and ways of doing things, but

also embrace and utilise such in transforming their views of the world and approach to life, paving the way for their preference formation for high involvement products to also be governed by less social identity motives. In addition, this study has contributed and asserted that the consumer preference formation of UK based Nigerians for high involvement products is a factor of the social identity and personal identity features that form the composite identity of individuals – composed of several components – socio-cultural process, lived experiences of individuals, and interpersonal and intergroup interaction experiences of individuals.

1.4.1 Methodology

The first methodological step taken is to position this study in the realm of research paradigm. The paradigmatic position of this study is described as interpretivism (Crotty, 1998), and its suitability has been justified in Section 4.2.2. In line with the aforementioned interpretivism nature, this research is qualitative. Also, the relevant information about the participants in this study and their demographics have been explained in the Methodology Chapter in which the last part has explained the steps taken to ensure the reliability and validity of this research (see Section 4.4.3.2), and the core methodological steps summarised in Table 4.5. Furthermore, in the aforementioned section, the steps taken to ensure ethical conformity have been pinpointed.

1.5 Summary of the Chapter and The Structure of this Research

Chapter One identified and justified the context of the study. In doing that, the theoretical and practical importance of this study was also underlined. Towards ensuring that this study is clearly positioned, the aims and objectives of the study have also been specified.

In addressing the specified research questions, Chapter Two introduced and explained the UK based Nigerian community as the focus of this study. Within that target, this Chapter specifically presented the background information and demographics about Nigerians based

in the UK, and critical cultural features of the Nigerian nation that justified its fit for the exploration of social identity influence on consumer preference formation.

Following that, Chapter Three introduced the theoretical foundations that guide this study by reviewing several and interrelated streams of literature. Firstly, the researcher undertook a literature review of social psychology. Subsequently, literature was reviewed on social identity theory and interrelated theories, such as self-categorisation theory, social dominance theory, group membership theory, symbolic consumption theory, amongst others. Chapter Three has been concluded with a theoretical framework that guided this research.

In Chapter Four, the methodological approach for this study was presented and explained. To commence, the researcher specified and justified the paradigmatic position of this study. Following that, the research design was explained and the methodological fit to the research focus clearly stated. In addition to detailing out the demographics of participants, and justification for their selection, this study also explained the methodological steps taken to ensure reliability and validity in this study. The data analysis was the focus of Chapter Five. In this chapter the analytical protocol was explained and the analytical steps taken to draw meaning from interview reports are also pinpointed.

Following that, Chapter Six presented the findings. To ensure a better organising and understanding of the results from this study, the findings are presented based on the emergent themes. Chapter Seven presented the discussion of the findings and showed how the research questions that underpin this study have been answered and also in relation to relevant literature that connects to the domains covered in these questions. In the final Chapter of this thesis (Chapter Eight), conclusions drawn from this study are pinpointed. Also, in Chapter Eight, the theoretical and managerial implications are specified, explaining clearly how the

findings from the study reinforced and/or enhanced the body of literature, on the one hand, and how the findings are relevant to practitioners, on the other. This Chapter was concluded with an explanation of the limitations of the study and specification of directions for future knowledge development in the area.

Chapter Two: UK based Nigerians as Contest for this Study

2.1 Introduction

Founded on the social identity theory (SIT), this study proposes that consumer preference formation is conditioned by their social group features. To contribute to theoretical development in this domain, this study is located in a context that is characterised by multiple social cultural features, namely Nigeria. Nigeria is a multi-ethnic, multilingual, multi-cultural and multi-religious state. Chapter Two is presented in the following order: (1) a background information of Nigeria as a nation is presented in Section 2.2, and (2) presents the demographic information about Nigerians in the UK.

2.2: A background Information

With an estimated population of 173 million people, Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa (UK Trade and Investment, 2016). In a paper “an exploration into social identity and post-colonialism in the work setting of a developing nation”, presented at the Brunel Business School doctoral symposium, Konya (2011) embraces a post-colonialism conceptualisation to explore social identity behaviour in the Nigerian society. By that conceptualisation, that study seems to suggest that colonialism experience might influence the behavioural tendencies of people and their social identity propensities. Prior literature relating to Nigeria offers a view that lends support to that colonialism logic (Ebijuwa, 1999). Commenting on British colonialism in Nigeria, Ebijuwa (1999) argued that premeditated policies of British colonisers did not only create a demarcation between the core ethnic groups in Nigeria – the Ibos,

Hausas and Yorubas, who till that time seemed to be coherently united, but also dispossessed them of the values and practices that had served as facilitators of social identity and cohesion. The suitability of the Nigerian context, and Nigerian citizens, to the investigation of identity and social behaviour has also been underlined in further studies. One central argument offered in that regard is the fact that Nigeria is multi-ethnic, multilingual, multi-cultural and multi-religious state (Ebijuwa, 1999; Osaghae and Suberu, 2005; Odetola, 1978; Ifeyinwa, 2005). For example, Osaghae and Suberu (2005) comment that Nigeria as a nation presents a context of complex individuals and features that suits the exploration of identity and group behaviour.

Nigeria has a huge ethnic diversity (Edewor *et al.*, 2014; Ifeyinwa, 2002; Mustapha, 2003). According to Mustapha (2003), it is estimated that Nigeria has 250 ethnic groups, while Otite (1990) suggests a tentative list of 374 ethnic groups. Mustapha (2003) suggests that most of the ethnic classifications about Nigeria have been based on the linguistic criteria, an argument which also underlines the multiple language feature of Nigeria as a nation. Agheyisi (1984) argues that there are about 400 language groups in Nigeria. Mustapha (2003) concludes that though the current state of knowledge does not permit a greater precision, the figure of 250 ethnic groups may not be far off the mark. The major ethnic groups in Nigeria are Ibos, Yorubas, and the Hausas, and the major languages spoken in Nigeria are Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, Edo, Ibibio (Efik, Ibibio and Annang language), French, Adamawa Fulfulde, Idoma, Abiriba language, and Central Kanuri (Konya, 2011).

Given the aforementioned multi-ethnic feature of the Nigerian nation, heterogeneity in the cultural setting would seem logical. The multi-cultural feature of the Nigerian nation has been severally mentioned in the literature (e.g. Ifeyinwa, 2002; Osaghae and Suberu, 2005; Edewor *et al.*, 2014). Commenting on the socio-cultural factors and ethnic group relationships

in Nigeria, Ifeyinwa (2002) stressed the importance of culture to identity and inter-group behaviour thus:

The way one relates to somebody has to do with culture. What is very important is to make an attempt to understand the dynamics of social relationships in the environment.... since culture is integrated in society and social development, it must be made manageable. Culture is heterogeneous, dynamic and holistic (p.118).

It has also been emphasised in the literature that the multiple religious' dynamics in the Nigerian nation influences the individuality and group propensities of Nigerian citizens (e.g. Ifeyinwa, 2002; Mustapha, 2003).

2.3 The Demographics of Nigerians in the UK

As pinpointed in Section 2.1 above, the Nigerian social group is the domain explored in this study, given the multiple social cultural features of Nigeria as a nation, a core characteristic which would aid a detailed understanding of socio-cultural influence on identity patterns and consumer preference formation of high involvement products. The Nigerian social group forms an important proportion of the Black African community in the UK (Office of National Statistics, 2015). According to Change Institute (April, 2009), Nigerians have for a long time established communities in London, Liverpool and many other industrial cities.

The migration of Nigerians to the UK commenced before Nigeria's independence from Britain in 1960 when many Nigerians studied in the UK as well as in other Western countries like France and United States, with the majority returning back to Nigeria upon completing their studies (Change Institute, 2009; Migration Policy Institute, 2010). However, due to civil and political unrest, there was a huge influx of Nigerian refugees (including also skilled workers) migrating to Britain in the 1960 (BBC, 2014). Following the collapse of the

petroleum boom, a much higher number of Nigerians migrated to the UK in the 1980s (Change Institute, 2009), a migration wave that has become more permanent than in the pre-independence period.

According to UK Census (2001) data, 88,378 Nigerian-born people were resident in the UK in 2001, while the Office for National Statistics puts the figure at 181,000 in 2013 (Office for National Statistics, 2014). The 2011 Census reports that England and Wales have become more ethnically diverse, with minority ethnic groups increasingly rising since 1991. That census reports that 13% (992,000) of the foreign-born population were of Black/African/Caribbean/Black British identity. The 2011 Census reported a combined figure for England and Wales at 191,183 Nigerians (Office for National Statistics, 2012). Further 2011 Census data put the figure of Nigerians in Scotland and Northern Ireland at 9,458 (National Records of Scotland, 2012) and 543 (Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, 2012) respectively. The population of Nigerians in 2011 in the core locations of UK is presented in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2. 1: Population of Nigerians in major UK locations in 2011

| Population of Nigerians in major UK locations in 2011 | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Location | Nigerian-born Population |
| East Midlands | 6,601 |
| East of England | 15,557 |
| London | 114,718 |
| North East England | 2,768 |
| North West England | 13,903 |
| South East England | 16,273 |
| South West England | 3,941 |
| West Midlands | 8,628 |
| Yorkshire and the Humber | 6,301 |
| Northern Ireland | 543 |
| Scotland | 9,458 |
| Wales | 2,493 |
| Sources: Statistics collated from Office for National Statistics, 2012; National Records of Scotland, 2012 and National Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. | |

2.4 Summary

The Nigerian social group is the domain explored in this study, given the multiple social cultural features of Nigeria as a nation, a core characteristic which would aid a detailed understanding of socio-cultural influence on identity patterns and consumer preference formation of high involvement products. The Nigerian social group forms an important proportion of the Black African community in the UK. Founded on the social identity theory (SIT), this study proposes that consumer preference formation is conditioned by their social group features. To contribute to theoretical development in this domain, this study is located in a context that is characterised by multiple social cultural features, namely Nigeria. Nigeria is a multi-ethnic, multilingual, multi-cultural and multi-religious state. This Chapter also looked into the background information of Nigeria as a nation and it is presented in Section 2.2, and (2) presents the demographic information about Nigerians in the UK.

With an estimated population of 173 million people, Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa. This chapter also embraces a post-colonialism conceptualisation to explore social identity behaviour in the Nigerian society. This study suggest that colonialism experience might influence the behavioural tendencies of people and their social identity propensities.

Chapter Three: Literature Review

3.1 Introduction to the Chapter

In Chapter one, the importance of this study was explained in section 1.1, and the aim and objectives of this study specified in Section 1.2. Following that, Chapter two explained the location of this study which is the United Kingdom. While the UK is the geographical location of this study, the Nigerian social group based in the UK is the focus. Consequently, Chapter two shows demographics about the UK and the Nigerian social group. Chapter two also elaborates further on why the Nigerian social group is the focus of this study.

Guided by the research questions that this study aims to answer (see Section 1.2), the relevant literature that provides the theoretical foundation for this study is reviewed in this present chapter (3). In doing this, this study heeds the research call and recommendation for a metatheory based approach towards improving the understanding of social psychology driven consumer behaviour (Abrams and Hogg, 2004). This study therefore combines unique but interrelated theories to contribute to the understanding about interactionist social identity and consumer behaviour.

Two core steps are taken in the literature process for this study. First, a summary of the central ideas upon which this study is founded is presented in Table 3.1, pinpointing the theoretical or conceptual focus, and the critical insights from selected studies. Following that, the core streams of literature and theoretical foundations are presented, pinpointing the central theoretical notions, core debates, and empirical conclusions. In presenting these

theoretical foundations, the researcher also engages in a critical analysis of existing literature. The theoretical foundations for this study, inspired by the aim of contributing to the understanding of the influence of social identity on consumer preference formation of UK based Nigerians, are explained in the following order:

1. Social Psychology (Section 3.2);
2. Collective Identity (Social Identity) Theory (Section 3.3);
3. Social Dominance Theory and Systems Justification Theory. (Section 3.4);
4. Consumption Preference and Symbolic Consumption (Section 3.5); and
5. Conclusion to Chapter Three and Summary of the Framework for this Study (Section 3.6).

In Section 3.6, the conclusion to this current Chapter (3) is presented, underlining the core theoretical ideas from existing literature. The conceptual framework for this study is also presented and justified in this section.

Before undertaking the aforementioned thematic based literature review, Table 3.1 below highlights some selected past studies relating to the social psychology and consumer behaviour and summarises core emergent insights.

Table 3.1 Selected Past studies relating to Social Identity Theory and Empirical/Conceptual Insights

| S/Nr. | Studies | Theoretical / Conceptual Focus | Empirical / Conceptual Insights |
|-------|--------------------------|---|--|
| 1 | Turner & Oakes (1986) | This paper reproduced a number of key articles published by John Turner in the British Journal of Social Psychology and the European Journal of Social Psychology | The paper sought to explain distinctly the social nature of the human mind by showing how all important forms of social behaviour are grounded, in the sense of the social identity that people derive from their group membership. |
| 2 | Sachdev & Bourhis (1987) | An experimental study involving 120 Introductory Psychology students was carried out to investigate the independent effects of status differentials on intergroup behaviour | The results suggest a main effect for group status but none for salience. Equal status groups discriminated against each other thus replicating the minimal intergroup discrimination effect. High and equal status group members were more discriminatory against out-groups and more positive about their own group membership than were low status group members. |

| | | | |
|----|-----------------------|---|---|
| 3 | Shimp & Sharma (1987) | Consumer ethnocentrism | Consumer ethnocentrism concept and the CETSCALE are useful tools for examining sociological phenomena in the marketing and consumer behaviour domains |
| 4 | Brown & Lunt (2002) | This conceptual study offers a genealogical analysis of the social identity tradition (SIT). Also, drawing from the work of Deleuze and Guattari, this study shows how a range of SIT concepts can be reformulated. | This study suggests that the social identity tradition (SIT) is in trouble. It has more or less “evolved into a mostly experimental study of categorisation as cognitive process and not the mid-range theory of the relationship between individuals and the social order promised by Tajfel (1981)” (p.18). As a consequence, SIT is becoming more highly disputed. The status of the social cannot be taken for granted. Society is engineered and produced through social practices, through the organisation of bodies and materials along with the ordering of categories and identities. |
| 5 | Oakes (2002) | Conceptual: This paper provides a conceptual response to Leonie Huddy's (2001) critique of the social identity approach developed by Tajfel, Turner and their collaborators. | This paper challenged Huddy's (2001) critique of the social identity approach developed by Tajfel and collaborators. This study supports the subjective aspect of group membership, as well as the interpretation of the minimal group paradigm, including as well issues of identity choice, salience and the variations in identity strength. This study gives particular emphasis to the treatment of groups as process in social identity theory and self-categorisation theory. |
| 6 | Abrams & Hogg (2004) | Conceptual: A metatheoretical approach is used to develop group theorising about intergroup behaviour, motivation and self-categorisation | “A valuable way to test the limits of theory is to pitch it into the real world. The principle of functional antagonism between levels of self-categorisation, proposed by self-categorisation theory, did not seem able to capture the complexities and nature of many intergroup encounters” (p.103). Meta theory should be used to consider whether social identity would shape processes among different members within groups (e.g. Abrams, 1990; Hogg, 1996). |
| 7 | Ashmore et al (2004) | The study offers a framework for conceptualising collective identity and distinguished several identity dimensions. | The study offers a framework involves several identity elements and pinpoints critical research directions. The study comments on the process of differentiating and labelling elements and discusses measurement issues involved in measuring identity elements: Also, the study discusses the individual differences in the variability versus stability of the experience and expression of collective identity elements. The study also considers the development of collective identity. |
| 8 | Huddy (2004) | This study explored the approaches that account for variations in the development of in-group cohesion and out-group antipathy among individual group members, across groups, and in different societies. | Social dominance theory is the most ambitious theory in understanding identity acquisition and development of out-group antipathy. Social identity theory provides the greatest nuance in understanding how group membership is likely to translate into group bias and intergroup conflict. System justification theory, the least well-developed of the three theories, helps to explain the existence of quiescence among members of low-status societal groups. |
| 9 | Aries & Seider (2007) | Using data from public and elite private colleges, this study explored the association between social class and identity formation, both as an independent variable that shapes identity (e.g. class position may shape choices, self-conceptions and ideologies) and as a domain of importance and personal relevance to identity. | Social class plays an important role both as an independent variable that shapes the formation of identity and as a domain of identity exploration. This study elaborated the influence of five domains of identity - occupational goals, political beliefs, religious beliefs, sex role attitudes and social class. |
| 10 | Berger et al. (2011) | Identity signalling and symbolic consumption. The study examines how identity signalling explains | This paper presents a model of how people use consumption decisions to infer information about identity, and also how people's consumption decisions are shaped by the identity information they signal to others. The |

| | | | |
|--|------------------------------|--|--|
| | | and predicts aggregate changes in consumption. | model demonstrates how the structure of a social network can give consumption meaning. |
| 11 | Sechrist & Young (2011) | This study (involving two separate studies) examined the role of ingroup identification in the influence of social consensus information (information about others' beliefs) on intergroup attitudes | Both studies demonstrated that in-group identification moderated consensus effects, such that high identifiers were more susceptible to others' beliefs than individuals in the low identification and control conditions. This study demonstrates that identifying with the person or group providing the consensus information is important to changing intergroup attitudes. |
| 12 | Chowdhury (2012) | His study assesses the utility of social identity theory in addressing the ethnocentric tendencies of different socio-economic-demographic groups of consumers. | (1) The CETSCALE is applicable to developing countries (Bangladesh, in this study). (2) Consumer ethnocentric tendencies of different social identities (male and female, consumers of border and non-border districts, students, job holders and businessmen) are highly influenced by their 'in-group' interests that make them act diversely (less or more ethnocentric) from others or 'out-groups'. Thus, social identity theory explains consumer ethnocentrism. |
| 13 | Constanța & Rodica (2012) | Person perception and social illusions | Core conclusions in this study include: (1) a person's status distorts perception, (2) depending on the context, (2) a person's perception is determined by the stereotypes guiding interpersonal evaluation, and (3) one's view of another depends on past experience. |
| 14 | Haslam <i>et al</i> (2012) | This conceptual paper examined the significant role played by John Turner in contributing to the development of social psychology | This study highlighted the foundations and ideas underpinning the instrumental contribution of John Turner to the development of social psychology knowledge. This study pinpointed the key role that John Turner played in communicating the importance of social psychology to human society and galvanising research interest. |
| 15 | White <i>et al</i> (2012) | This study examined the conditions under which consumers demonstrate associative vs dissociative responses to identity-linked products as a consequence of a social identity threat. | This study reports that people with independent self-construals tend to avoid identity-linked products when that identity is threatened versus not threatened. Those with more interdependent self-construals, in contrast, demonstrate more positive preferences for identity-linked products when that aspect of social identity is threatened. |
| 16 | Fellmann (2017) | This conceptual paper examined the relation between personality and society regarding contrast between Eastern and Western cultures. | Personality in the perspective of cultural psychology remains problematic. There are significant cultural and personality contrasts globally. |
| 17 | Islam (2014) | This book chapter conceptually examined social identity theory | The chapter highlights critical debates in the discourse of social identity theory. The chapter argues that SIT offers critical insights about social identity bases of discrimination, prejudice and intergroup conflict by positioning the phenomena as a consequence of group-based categorisation and self-enhancement motives. |
| 18 | McKinley <i>et al</i> (2014) | Based on experimental design, this study examined the influence of exposure to positive Latino media exemplars on ingroup (Latino) and outgroup (white) consumers. | Study 1 and Study 2 suggest that although exposure to positive media depictions of Latinos can prompt more favourable evaluations of ingroup and self among Latinos, the same cannot be said of the effects of exposure to affirmative messages on judgements about Latinos among outgroup members (i.e. whites). |
| Source: Author. Facts collated from referenced sources. | | | |

3.2 Social Psychology

In their Special Issue Editorial “Identity, influence, and change: Rediscovering John Turner's vision of social psychology”, published in the *British Journal of Social Psychology*, Haslam *et al* (2012) note that “groups and group behaviour lie at the heart of human society” (p.201). Since humans live, work and interact in groups, they become collaborative architects of the social world we inhabit, they commented further. Within this process, social psychology plays a fundamental role (e.g. Turner and Giles, 1981; Haslam *et al.*, 2012; Turner, 1975, 1985; Fellmann, 2017). As summarised by Haslam *et al.*, (2012), the core questions that define the field of social psychology, which John Turner devoted himself to addressing in the 37-year period between commencing his PhD at Bristol in 1971 and his retirement in 2008 are: what is the relationship between individual minds, groups and society?

“Social psychology is a crucible for numerous levels of explanations ranging from individual cognition to interpersonal interaction and group processes to social structure” (Abrams and Hogg, 2004, p.98). According to further literature (e.g. Turner, and Giles, 1981; Haslam *et al.*, 2012) social psychology tries to clearly explain the social nature of the human mind by showing how all important forms of social behaviour, especially the propensity for social influence and social change are grounded in the sense of social identity that people derive from their group membership (e.g. McKinley *et al*, 2014; Islam, 2014; Opute, 2017).

To conclude the aforementioned Special Issue Editorial, Haslam *et al.*, (2012) underlined the immense contribution of John Turner to the development of social psychology knowledge. The third and most important of several contributions, they noted, is Turner's commitment and drive to convey the importance of social psychology to human society. As they summarised, “for John Turner, social psychology was never a game, a sideline, a dilettante

pursuit, *rather*¹ it addresses processes of the most profound importance” (p.215). These processes are of critical importance to human society because they enable people to determine whether people divide or unite, whether they fail or flourish, and whether they suffer or succeed (Haslam *et al.*, 2012).

For John Turner, getting social psychology right was the most important of all pursuits, and does not afford space for complacency or compromise (Haslam *et al.*, 2012). Responding to John Turner's call for research, and those of other scholars (e.g. Haslam *et al.*, 2012; Turner and Oakes, 1986; Oakes, 2002), this study aims to contribute to the understanding of “distinctly social nature of the human mind by showing how the important forms of social behaviour are grounded” (Haslam *et al.*, 2012, p.201).

Given the aforementioned aim of this study of contributing to the understanding of “distinctly social nature of the human mind by showing how the important forms of social behaviour are grounded” (Haslam *et al.*, 2012, p.201), it is important to gain some understanding of collective identity or social identity theory (see section 3.3). Prior to doing that, it is also to gain some understanding of critical factors to the understanding of social behaviour and collective or social identity dynamics. Hence, literature is reviewed on:

1. Ethnocentrism Theory (section 3.2.1),
2. Acculturation Theory (section 3.2.2), and
3. Cultural Dimensions (Individualism vs. Collectivism) theory (section 3.2.3).

Engaging with these streams of literature is essential to gaining a better understanding of the role that culture plays in social behaviour grounding of individuals (e.g. Opute, 2015; Houston, 2014; Schwartz *et al.*, 2010; Hofstede, 2011).

¹ The word 'rather' was added by the author.

3.2.1 Ethnocentrism Theory

The global market is increasingly becoming homogeneous. Nevertheless, ethnicity and nationalism remain strong motivational tools that condition modern markets (Akin, 2016). According to Vida *et al.* (2008), ethnicity serves as a balancing force for individuals' sense of identity as well as for the behaviour of individuals who may seem to have lost their sense of identity as a result of globalisation influence.

An ethnicity-based theory that has been utilised in the understanding the socio-psychological perspective of consumers' behaviour is ethnocentrism theory (Bizumic, 2015; Akin, 2016; Sharma *et al.*, 1995; Shimp and Sharma, 1987; Liang and Kong, 2010; Neuliep *et al.*, 2005).

The term ethnocentrism emerged out of the combination of Greek terms *ethnos* (meaning race or nation) and *kentron* (meaning centred) (Usunier and Lee, 2005). Ethnocentrism is a slippery concept that has famously featured across a variety of disciplines, such as anthropology, sociology, psychology, political science, philosophy, education, and the academic study of religion (Bizumic, 2015). The term ethnocentrism was first introduced to the social sciences literature over a century ago (Sumner, 1906). Neuliep *et al.* noted in 2005 that over the past 50 years, considerable research effort has been made in the social science domain regarding the nature and prevalence of ethnocentrism. Over a decade after Neuliep *et al.*'s observation, the pertinence for better understanding of the ethnocentrism theory is no less recognised (e.g. Liang and Kong, 2010; Bizumic, 2015; Akin, 2016, *inter alia*).

In the pioneering engagement with ethnocentrism in the social science field, Sumner (1906) defined ethnocentrism as “the technical name for this view of things in which one's own group is the centre of everything, and all others are scaled and rated with reference to it” (p. 13). According to Bizumic (2015, p.2), “ethnocentrism is usually defined as a kind of ethnic or cultural group egocentrism, which involves a belief in the superiority of one's own group, including its values and practices, and often contempt, hatred, and hostility towards those

outside the group.” Thus, conceptually, individuals who are ethnocentric exhibit attitude and behaviours that favour ingroup members at the expense of the outgroup (e.g. Neuliep *et al.*, 2005; Islam and Hewstone, 1993). As elaborated further in the literature, individuals who are ethnocentric foster cooperative relations with ingroup members but compete with (or even battle with) outgroup members (Neuliep *et al.*, 2005).

Within the consumer behaviour domain, consumer ethnocentrism relates to the opinions and evaluations of consumers concerning the morality of purchasing foreign-made products (Sharma *et al.*, 1995; Shimp and Sharma, 1987). This consumer logic is grounded on the notion that patronising foreign products is detrimental to the domestic economy and leads to unemployment and also contravenes patriotic behaviour (e.g. Auruskeviciene *et al.*, 2012; Asil and Kaya, 2013). Thus, as Shimp and Sharma (1987) argue, ethnocentrism is grounded on the notion that people should take pride in their own norms and virtues, and therefore perceive their own groups (in-groups) as the centre of the universe. Although ethnocentrism is viewed as a negative trait, Sharma and Shin (1995) contend that ethnocentrism lubricates in-group survival, solidarity, conformity, cooperation, loyalty, and effectiveness. Typical socio-psychological factors that affect ethnocentrism include patriotism, collectivism and cultural openness (Liang and Kong, 2010; Akin, 2016)

3.2.2 Acculturation Theory

According to social interaction theorists, social psychology focuses on understanding how our actions, thoughts, and feelings are influenced by the social environments that we live in (Baron *et al.*, 2008). Thus, the focus is on understanding how we act and who we are in various situations (Baron *et al.*, 2000). A pivotal lens for understanding what propels individual behaviour is culture (e.g. Hofstede, 2011; Opute, 2015; Kanter and Corn, 1994). In order to understand better acculturation, it is important to understand what culture is, as both

terms are integrally intertwined with each other (Kim, 2007). According to domain literature, culture, which includes norms, values, beliefs, principles, and ways of doing things (Opote, 2017; Hofstede, 1980), is "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another." (Hofstede, 1991, p.5). In other words, an individual's behaviour is conditioned by the values, norms and principles that are defined by his/her cultural lineage. As a matter of fact, Triandis (1994) adds that culture implies a social group's shared values, traditions, norms, behaviours and rituals.

With this stream of literature is however the notion that culture is not stagnant (e.g. Opote, 2012; Chan and Prendagast, 2007). Thus, cultural transformation can take place, in which case, the mindset and the induced behaviour trend may change. The processes of change with regards to the functioning of the norms, values, traditions, etc. have been represented by two terms: acculturation and enculturation (Kim, 2007).

Acculturation, which is the embraced construct in this study, was first defined by Redfield, Linton and Herskovits (1936) as reflecting those phenomena which exist when groups of individuals sharing diverse cultures come into regular first-hand contact, leading to subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups. This conceptual lens is reinforced by Newman and Sahak (2012) who view acculturation as a learning process, practices and customs of a new culture which acquires the capability to function within a main culture but preserving the original culture. Thus, it means when there is a meeting of two cultures, one culture adopts the beliefs and behaviours of another culture (Ishak *et al.*, 2013). Further literature simply refers to acculturation as changes that occur as a result of contact with culturally dissimilar groups or social influences (e.g. Gibson, 2001; Schwartz *et al.*, 2010 & 2012).

Acculturation, which is viewed as a core domain for research (Schwartz *et al.*, 2010; Kim, 2017; Opute, 2015), can also occur by virtue of globalisation induced intercultural contact (e.g. Annett, 2002), however, most acculturation researches focus mainly on immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, who are assumed to be permanently settled in countries or regions different from their place of birth - a different cultural setting. (Schwartz *et al.*, 2010; Berry *et al.*, 2006).

Cultural psychologists have argued that acquiring the beliefs, values, norms and practices of the country of abode does not necessary imply that the immigrant will discard with or stop endorsing his/her country of birth's beliefs, values and practices (Berry, 1980). Indeed, in line with that viewpoint, the discourse on acculturation has specified four acculturation dimensions (Schwartz *et al.*, 2013), namely assimilation - the immigrant adopts the receiving culture and discards the heritage culture; separation - the immigrant rejects the receiving culture and retains the heritage culture; integration - immigrant adopts the receiving culture and retains the heritage culture; and marginalisation - immigrant rejects both the receiving and heritage culture.

Core catalysts of acculturation include education, social interaction and other forms by which diverse cultures meet (Ishak *et al.*, 2013; Schwartz *et al.*, 2010).

3.2.3 Cultural Dimensions (Individualism vs. Collectivism) Theory

Equally important in the understanding of individual behaviour in general, and social interaction and consumption behaviours, is the theory of cultural dimensions (e.g. Ansah, 2015; Gorodnichenko and Roland, 2010; Hofstede, 2011). Since the early 1950s, scholars have been engaging with the topic of cultural dimensions. As summarised by Grove (2005), cultural dimensions provide concepts and terminologies that enable individuals become more

aware of, to measure, and to understand the values and practices found in the human culture, as well as the common and contrasting features among human cultures.

In the first major article on cultural dimensions published in 1952, U.S. anthropologist Clyde Kluckhohn made a case for universal categories of culture:

“In principle ... there is a generalized framework that underlies the more apparent and striking facts of cultural relativity. All cultures constitute so many somewhat distinct answers to essentially the same questions posed by human biology and by the generalities of the human situation. ... Every society's patterns for living must provide approved and sanctioned ways for dealing with such universal circumstances as the existence of two sexes; the helplessness of infants; the need for satisfaction of the elementary biological requirements such as food, warmth, and sex; the presence of individuals of different ages and of differing physical and other capacities.” (pp. 317-18).

In the second half of the twentieth century many authors have discussed the nature and basic problem of societies that would provide distinct indicators of culture dimensions (for a review, see Hofstede, 2001, pp. 29-31). In the discourse of cultural dimensions, many categorisations have been suggested, with overlaps in several ways (Hofstede, 2011).

American sociologists Talcott Parsons and Edward Shils (1951, p.77) suggested five cultural variables, which they categorise as:

1. *Affectivity* (need gratification) versus *affective neutrality* (restraint of impulses);
2. *Self-orientation* versus *collectivity-orientation*;
3. *Universalism* (applying general standards) versus *particularism* (taking particular relationships into account);

4. *Ascription* (judging others by who they are) versus *achievement* (judging them by what they do);
5. *Specificity* (limiting relations to others to specific spheres) versus *diffuseness* (no prior limitations to nature of relations).

On his part, Dutch sociologist Hofstede, in his research outcome published 1990 in *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*, categorised four dimension in culture, but subsequently categorised five dimensions in 1991. His five dimensions of culture are specified below:

1. Power distance
2. Collectivism vs. individualism
3. Femininity vs. masculinity
4. Uncertainty vs. avoidance
5. Long- vs. short-term orientation

For the purpose of this current study, the central focus is on collectivism vs. individualism dimensions of culture.

The individualism aspect of cultural dimension, which Hofstede (2001), based on a factor analysis, identified as the most important factor, implies the extent to which it is believed that individuals would take care of themselves rather than show a tendency to be integrated and loyal to a cohesive group. Thus, in individualist culture, the ties between individuals are loose, and the expectation is that individuals would look after themselves and their families (Hofstede, 2011). Countries that endorse individualistic culture value personal freedom, personal sovereignty and status (Hofstede, 2011; Gorodnichenko and Roland, 2012).

Collectivism cultural dimension reflects a practice where individuals would consider group interest over their own personal interest. Thus, it means that collectivism cultured individuals

do not value self-freedom, self-sovereignty and status like the individualism cultured people would do, instead the focus is to secure the group interest and be loyal to the group (Hofstede, 2011; Hofstede, 2001; Gorodnichenko and Roland, 2012)

Unlike in the individualistic culture, countries that endorse collectivism cultural dimension value harmony and conformity (Hofstede, 2011; Gorodnichenko and Roland, 2012). Collectivism cultured people are trained to be humane (unlike individualism cultured people) (Hofstede, 2001), and carefully control their actions and impulses, ignore temptations and favour group interests (Schwartz, 1990). Hofstede *et al.* (2010), which provides individualism index score for 76 countries, comment that individualism prevails in developed and Western countries, while less developed and Eastern countries exhibit collectivism features. Impliedly, individuals that originated from collectivism cultured countries would exhibit such features even when they find themselves in a contrasting setting. Same logic also applies for individuals that originate from individualism cultured countries. According to Hofstede *et al.* (2010), Japan takes a middle position on this dimension.

3.3 Collective Identity (Social Identity)

A core theoretical element that has featured predominantly in the effort to enhance the understanding of sociological phenomena is social identity theory (e.g. Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel and Turner, 1979; Oakes, 2002; Abrams and Hogg, 2004; Haslam *et al.*, 2012; Berger *et al.*, 2011). Amiot and Aubin (2013) note that the social identity concept, which was developed by Tajfel and Turner (1979) to understand the psychological basis for intergroup discrimination, is now recognised as a key construct in the social psychological literature, linking individual members' cognitive representation of their group membership to concrete intergroup behaviours (Ellemers *et al.*, 1999; Tajfel and Turner, 1979; Islam, 2014; McKinley *et al.*, 2014; White *et al.*, 2018).

A critical notion upon which the social identity tradition is based, which political philosophers (e.g. Kant, 1991) argue was borrowed from political philosophy literature and problematized or reinvented to hold together a range of interests across social psychology, is “that a person's conduct oscillates between a personal and a collective frame of reference” (Brown and Lunt, 2002, p.2). Earlier literature notes that at the core of the social identity approach is the notion of social identity, which is defined as “that part of the individual's self-concept which derives from his or her knowledge of membership to a social group (or groups) together with the value and the emotional significance attached to it” (Tajfel, 1981, p.255). Further literature that underlines the importance of social identity in the understanding of social behaviour (Amiot and Aubin, 2013, p.563) comment that “social identity has been conceptualised as the 'social glue' through which individuals relate to their group and display continuing efforts on behalf of the collective (van Vugt and Hart, 2004)”. This conceptual view is also captured in more recent literature (e.g. White *et al.*, 2018; Islam, 2014; McKiney *et al.*, 2014).

Recent literature has advocated a shift in terminology from *social identity* to *collective identity* (e.g. Brewer and Gardner, 1996; Sedikides and Brewer, 2001; Simon, 1997; Simon and Klandermans, 2001; Ashmore *et al.*, 2004). Justifying the use of collective identity over social identity, Simon (1997) points out that all aspects of the self are socially influenced. As they elaborated, all aspects of the self “acquire their meaning and significance only within a context of social relations between people” (p.321). Collective identity is a concept that has been used by scholars in the effort to enhance the understanding of social behaviour. In their work aimed at organising the framework for collective identity, Ashmore *et al.* (2004) propose a multidimensional framework, which they offer as a strategy to guide theorists in better articulating the assumptions and the components of their theoretical formulations. Through this process of carefully articulating the multiple individual-level elements that

constitute collective identification, scholars would be better positioned to analyse processes and predict outcomes of identification, they argued.

Before progressing this discourse on collective identity, it is important to note that other terms have been used interchangeably in explaining collective identity. Doing this is important as the researcher will draw from these interchangeably used terms in explaining the collective identity foundation. This interchangeable use of other terms has been emphasised by Ashmore *et al.* (2004) who note that *social identity*, *personal identity*, *relational identity*, and *social roles* have been used in the social science literature to denote collective identity.

Ashmore *et al.*, (2004) warn that there is no single consensus definition of collective identity and draw attention to the fact that a number of scholars have noted that the use of identity in social science literature has a long history and active presence (e.g. Brubaker and Cooper, 2000; Gleason, 1983). In 1983, Gleason provided a historical account of the conceptual development and use of identity in psychology, sociology and related disciplines. The concepts of identity have continued to evade academic discourse since Gleason's analysis. For example, within the social psychology domain, Tajfel's (1978, 1981) social identity theory, and its theoretical cousin, self-categorisation theory (SCT; Turner *et al.*, 1987) have become core to the discipline. In the sociology discipline, identity has featured as a predominant concept in the theories of Stryker (1987), Burke (1980), and McCall and Simmons (1978). According to Erikson (1968, p.22), identity is “a process located in the core of the individual and yet also in the core of his communal culture, a process which establishes, in fact, the identity of these two identities.”

While this current study aligns to the collective identity connotation, it must be taken into consideration that the definitional status of collective identity is of major debate in the social movement literature (e.g. Polletta and Jasper, 2001; Snow, 2001). As Ashmore *et al.* (2004)

summarised, the theoretical terrain that the identity concept occupies, in part or in whole, is vast. Theorists have made diverse assumptions regarding the contents and consequences of collective identity. While such assumptions might be inevitable, they are seldom in accordance with one another (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004). Responding to this state of confusion and contradiction, Brubaker and Cooper (2000) argue for pruning back. They note that identity “is too ambiguous, too torn between ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ meanings, essentialist connotations and constructivist qualifiers, to serve well the demands of social analysis” (p. 2), a conceptual confusion concern also acknowledged by Ashmore *et al.* (2004).

Recognising this confusion, this study supports the notion that this concept should be better articulated rather than abandoned. In that regard, this current study aligns with the advocacy of Ashmore *et al.* (2004) for a multi-dimensional conceptualisation of collective identity. The need for a theoretical approach of multi-dimensional conceptualisation of collective identity, which more or less re-echoes the meta-theory recommendation by Abrams and Hogg (2004), has been emphasised in further literature (e.g. Ashmore *et al.*, 2001; Deaux, 1996; Jackson and Smith, 1999; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992; Phinney, 1992; Sellers *et al.*, 1998).

Summarising the need for a multi-dimensional approach in examining collective identity, they underline that the key to the articulation “is the recognition that collective identity is a multi-dimensional concept” (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004, p.82). Ashmore *et al.* (2004) recommend that in order to better understand collective identity and social behaviour, scholars should examine multiple dimensions, explaining clearly the individual-level elements, facets, or dimensions, their interplay, how the elements covary with one another, and how the elements might combine to form collective identity profiles. Other scholars have shown support for this multi-dimensional logic in the examination of collective identity or social identity (Amiot and Aubin, 2013). For example, scholars have studied a variety of dimensions of social

identity – such as the strength of social identity and its evaluative and cohesive components – to better explain the nature and the components of social identification (e.g. Cameron, 2004; Jackson, 2002; Leach *et al.*, 2008). Also, researchers have explored the different forms social identity can take - such as secure versus insecure identification, and autonomous versus comparative identification (e.g. Jackson and Smith, 1999; Tyler and Blader, 2002; Houston, 2014; McKinley *et al.*, 2014). Following that foundation, this study examines five collective identity elements in Ashmore *et al.* (2004). These elements shown in Table 3.2 were derived based on a comprehensive analysis of existing theoretical and empirical literature on collective identity undertaken by Ashmore *et al.*, (2004). The analytical process followed by Ashmore *et al.*, (2004) combined a top-down approach in which the major theoretical approaches to identity with a bottom-down approach the investigation of specific identities, such as gender, race/ethnicity, political identity, etc, were considered. The goal in the analytical process followed was to identify those element of identification that have featured predominantly in theoretical and empirical work, as well as taking into consideration theoretical concepts that might not yet have been fully addressed in empirical efforts.

Table 3.2: Elements of Collective Identity as Individual-Level Constructs

| Element | Definition |
|--|--|
| Self-Categorisation Placing self in social category Goodness of fit/perceived similarity/prototypicality Perceived certainty of self-identification | Identifying self as a member of, or categorising self in terms of, a particular social grouping. Categorising self in terms of a particular social grouping A person's subjective assessment of the degree to which he or she is a prototypical member of the group The degree of certainty with which a person categorises self in terms of a particular social grouping |
| Evaluation Private regard Public regard | The positive or negative attitude that a person has toward the social category in question Favourability judgments made by people about their own identities Favourability judgments that perceives others, such as the general public, to hold about one's social category |
| Importance Explicit importance Implicite importance | The degree of importance of a particular group membership to the individual's overall self-concept The individual's subjective appraisal of the degree to which a collective identity is important to his or her overall sense of self The placement of a particular group membership in the person's hierarchically organised self-system; the individual is not necessarily consciously aware of the hierarchical position of his or her collective identities |
| Attachment and Sense of | The emotional involvement felt with a group (the degree to which the |

| | |
|--|--|
| Interdependence | individual feels at one with the group) |
| Interdependence/Mutual fate | Perception of the commonalities in the way group members are treated in society |
| Attachment/Affective commitment | A sense of emotional involvement with or affiliative orientation toward the group |
| Interconnection of self and others | The degree to which people merge their sense of self and the group |
| Social Embeddedness | The degree to which a particular collective identity is embedded in the person's everyday ongoing social relationships |
| Source: Ashmore <i>et al.</i> (2004, p.83). | |

Further review of relevant literature (see Table 3.3) supports the relevance of these elements in the effort to better understand collective identity.

Table 3.3 Individual-level elements featured in Four Theories of Collective Identity

| Element | Tajfel & Turner's (1979) social identity theory | Turner et al.'s (1987) self-categorisation theory | Stryker's (1980, 2000) identity theory |
|--|---|---|--|
| Self-categorisation | | | |
| Placing self in category | X | X | X |
| Goodness of fit | | | |
| Perceived certainty | | | |
| Evaluation | | | |
| Private regard | | | |
| Public regard | X | | |
| Importance | | | |
| Explicit importance | | | |
| Implicit importance | | X | X |
| Attachment and interdependence | | | |
| Social embeddedness | | | X |
| Behavioural involvement | | | X |
| Self-attributed characteristics | | X | |
| Ideology | X | | |
| Narrative | | | |
| Note: An X means that the theory features the element. Source: adapted from Ashmore <i>et al.</i> (2004, p. 106). | | | |

Next, these five elements of collective identity are elaborated in Sections 3.3.1 (Self categorisation), 3.3.2 (Evaluation), 3.3.3 (Importance), 3.3.4 (Attachment and Sense of interdependence), and 3.3.5 (Social embeddedness).

3.3.1 Self-Categorisation Theory

Self-categorisation theory gained popularity in the 1980s and early 1990s when John Turner and his colleagues recognised its importance in the developing of the cognitive elements of social identity theory. Utilising that foundation, Social identity theorists have increasingly

emphasised the need to understand self-categorisation theory as a core foundation in the understanding of social identity theory (e.g. Ashmore *et al.*, 2004; Zucker, 2003; Haslam *et al.*, 2012; Abrams and Hogg, 2004; Tajfel, 1978; Oakes, 2002; Huddy, 2001; Trepte and Loy, 2017). In justifying this need, scholars have commented that the first and most basic element of collective identity is self-categorisation (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004) and that self-categorisation is an essential precondition for all other dimensions of collective identity (Phinney, 1995).

Abrams and Hogg (2004) note that “when self-categorisation as a group member is salient, a person is influenced by group norms, behaves in line with those norms, and shares the concerns and interests of the group” (p.102). Thus, “self-categorisation theory explains group phenomena in terms of the structure and functioning of the social self-concept (the system of cognitive representations of self-based upon comparisons with other people and relevant to social interaction)” (Turner and Oakes, 1986, p.241).

Turner and Oakes (1986) specify three important levels of abstraction with regards to self-categorisation: “self-categorisation as a human being (the superordinate category) based on differentiations between species, in-group – out-group categorisations (the self as a social category) based on differentiations between groups of people (class, race, nationality, occupation, etc.) and personal self-categorisations (the subordinate level) based on differentiations between oneself as a unique individual and other (relevant) in-group members.” (p.241). Turner and Oakes (1986) elaborate that, in social psychological terms, group behaviour is mediated by a change in the level of abstraction of self-categorisation from the personal to the social categorical self – and explains how they can provide an interactionist meaning of social influence and thence a new solution to the problem of group polarisation (see also Trepte and Loy, 2017).

In other words, in the self-categorisation theory of social influence, the possibility of influence hinges on the shared, social categorical nature of the self (psychological group formation) and that the perception of individuals and consensual validation are functionally interdependent processes (e.g. Turner and Oakes, 1986; Ashmore *et al.*, 2004; Abrams and Hogg, 2004). As Ashmore *et al.*, (2004) note, mere categorisation is enough to trigger in-group favouring behaviour, in-group loyalty and adherence to group norms. Studies that use the minimal group paradigm however point to the important fact that a person's categorising of self in any given situation is a factor of his/her diverse choices, and these choices may depend on different goals and motives that are salient at a particular time (Nagel, 1996; Phinney, 1996; Trepte and Loy, 2017). For example, sensitising the race component of self-categorising, Ashmore *et al.* (2004) note that a woman who looks to be of Asian origin might be classified by a researcher as *Asian American*, but she might classify herself within the subgroup label *Korean* should this be an option.

In a more recent contribution to social identity theory, Ashmore *et al.* (2004) conceptualise three major components in explaining self-categorisation theory: categorisation, identification and comparison, a perspective that is identical with prior literature (e.g. Turner and Oakes, 1986). In their definition, Thoits and Virshup (1997) emphasise the relevance of categories, as they define social identities as “socially constructed and socially meaningful categories that are accepted by individuals as descriptive of themselves or their group” (9.106). *Categorisation* has been described by Ashmore *et al.* (2004) as the first and foremost component of self-categorisation (see also Deaux, 1996; Phinney, 1995). Deaux comments that categorisation is the heart of collective identity, while Phinney (1995) adds that categorisation is essentially the pre-condition for all other dimensions of collective identity. *Categorisation* is the process of placing oneself in a social grouping. It is a process where individuals associate or identify with particular social groupings based on specific nodes such

as culture, gender or political affiliation (e.g. Brown and Lunt, 2002, Ashmore *et al.*, 2004; Haslam *et al.*, 2012; Appiah *et al.*, 2013). Huddy (2001) note that the categorisation of individuals in social groupings is not always obvious especially in conditions where group boundaries are ambiguous or permeable (for example, boundaries of political groups are often vague). Thus, as Ashmore *et al.* (2004) add, when people feel that they are not representative of a social category (e.g. political party) or that they are marginal in the group, they may be hesitant to categorise themselves as a member of that group.

Identification, on the other hand, is the process by which individuals associate themselves with certain groups (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004). Thus, in-groups are groups which the individual identify with, and outgroups are those that they do not identify with. Within the *identification* component, scholars (e.g. Brown *et al.*, 1986; Myaskovsky and Wittig, 1997; Terry *et al.*, 1999) argue that in order to better understand identification in the social identity theory frame, the ideal approach will be to ask respondents about their degree of identification: How much do you identify with? (cited in Ashmore *et al.*, 2004, p.85).

Ashmore and his colleagues (2004) however criticise this approach of measuring identification noting that the existing measures of the degree or strength of identification tend to be multidimensional and confound the assessment of the prototypicality of self-categorisation not only with the assessment of the importance of identification but also with felt attachment, which contradicts the conceptualisation of both as separate and unique dimensions (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004). Alternatively, they recommend that to collect valuable information on a participant who might not otherwise self-categorise as a member of a certain group, and since different levels of perceived prototypicality have been linked to distinct identity-relevant behaviour (Noel *et al.*, 1995), researchers should adopt a collective identity assessment view that utilises un-confounded questions measuring the goodness of fit of a

person to a particular category. Thus, as Haslam *et al.* (2012) note that the profound notion here is that shared social identity is the basis for mutual social influence.

The third component – *comparison* is the process by which individuals compare their groups with other groups, creating a favourable bias toward the group to which they belong.

Combining insights from existing literature, some representative measures of self-categorisation and its components are summarised in Table 3.4 below. Using this variety of approaches that explicitly assess self-categorisation is critical to ensuring that collective identities of participants are measured appropriately (e.g. Henderson *et al.*, 1994; Phinney, 1992; Zucker, 2003).

Table 3.4 Some Representative Measures of Identity: Self Categorisation

| Authors and Constructs | Measures |
|---|---|
| Placing Self in Social Category | |
| Phinney (1992): ethnic self-definition | “In terms of my ethnic group, I consider myself to be -----.” |
| Shelton & Sellers (2000): Self identification | Participants pick a word from a pair (e.g. <i>Black-feminine</i>). |
| Henderson-King & Stewart (1994): group identity | Women are asked to choose from a list of groups (including women and feminists) those to which they feel they belong and then “Indicate how much you identify with (or feel a part of) that group” (1-5 scale). |
| Zucker (2003): behavioural measure of acceptance of the label <i>feminist</i> | “If you consider yourself to be a feminist, please answer the following questions.” |
| Goodness of fit/perceived similarity/prototypicality | |
| Abrams (2000), Goslinga & Ouwerkerk (2000), Karasawa (1991): identification with school (ID group subscale) | “I am a typical group member.” “Would you think it is accurate if you were described as a typical student of this school?” |
| Triandis et al (1990): Allocentrism-Idiocentrism Scale | Measures the perceived psychological distance of the self from several groups by asking participants to indicate the “distance” between self and group on a scale ranging from <i>we are as similar as possible</i> to <i>we are as different as possible</i> . |
| Perceived certainty of self-identification | |
| Mohr & Fassinger (2000): Lesbian and Gay identity Scale (Identity Confusion subscale) | “I am not totally sure I am a (lesbian/gay man).” |

Source: Adopted from Ashmore *et al.* (2004, p.85).

3.3.2 Evaluation

Once basic categorisation is established, evaluation is the simplest way to think about identity (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004). According to Eagly and Chaiken (1993), “attitude is a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour or

disfavour” (p.1), where entity is used here to imply a particular social category that one claims or acknowledges as one’s collective identity (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004). Utilising this attitude definition, Ashmore et al (2004) explain evaluation as the positive or negative attitude which a person displays towards the social category in question.

Conceptually, evaluation is independent of importance; hence a person can consider an identity positive though that identity might not be highly important (Ashmore *et al.* (2004). Explaining further, they note that when acquired identities might be considered favourable (hence the choice to take them on) but not so important comparative to other identities that one holds. For a compulsive smoker or a gambler, identity might be seen as centrally important to the definition of self, though without putting an entirely positive face on the identity.

Based on the stigmatisation foundation (e.g. Crocker and Major, 1989; Crocker *et al.*, 1998), one’s own evaluation of a collective identity may not necessarily correspond with evaluations by others, a view which contrasts the assumptions of earlier theories such as the “looking glass self” (Cooley, 1902). Consequently, Ashmore et al (2004) distinguish between two forms of evaluation: (1) favourability judgments made by people about their own identities and (2) favourability judgments that one makes about others (such as the general public), to hold about one’s social category. The works of Crocker and her colleagues (Crocker *et al.*, 1994; Luhtanen and Crocker, 1992) and of Sellers and his colleagues (Sellers *et al.*, 1997; Sellers *et al.*, 1998; Shelton & Sellers, 2000) have contributed to enhancing this distinction. In that regard, Sellers and his colleagues use the terms *private regard* and *public regard* to distinguish these evaluation bases. On their part, Crocker and her colleagues include a private and a public subscale in their overall Collective Self-Esteem (CSE) measure. According to Sellers, private regard refers to one's evaluation of his/her own social category as judged by

the self (e.g., How positively or negatively do I view my identity as a psychologist?). On the other hand, public regard refers to the perceived evaluation of others (that is, how positively or negatively I think people in general view my group). Measures for examining the forms of evaluation have been suggested by several scholars.

Table 3.5 Some Representative Measures of Identity: Evaluation

| Author(s) and construct | Measure |
|---|---|
| Private regard | |
| Luhtanen & Crocker (1992): Collective Self-Esteem (CSE; Private Acceptance) | "In general, I'm glad that I'm a member of this group." |
| Sellers et al (1997): Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI; Private Regard) | "I am happy that I am Black." |
| Huo <i>et al.</i> , (1996): identification with a superordinate group [subgroup] | "I am proud to think of myself as a member of the organisation I work for [my ethnic group]." |
| Stryker & Serpe (1982): satisfaction | "In my religious activities, I am very satisfied." |
| Public regard | |
| Luhtanen & Crocker (1992): CSE (Public acceptance) | "In general, others think that the social groups I am a member of are unworthy." |
| Sellers et al (1997): MIBI (Public Regard) | "In general, others respect Black people." |
| Source: Adopted from Ashmore <i>et al.</i> (2004, p.87) | |

3.3.3 Importance

Importance has long been recognised as a core component in scientific approaches to self and identity (see Rosenber and Gara, 1985). In an earlier contribution, James (1890) portrays individual self construals as being arranged along "a hierarchical scale according to their worth" (p.314). Recent literature concerned with self and identity have proposed a number of models often positioned together under the rubric *identity theory* (formulations by Burke, 1980; Burke and Tully, 1997; McCall & Simmons, 1978; Stryker, 1980; Stryker and Serpe, 1994; Abrams and Hogg, 2004).

Combining Tables 3.2 and 3.3, identity theorists do not only emphasise the relevance of, but also the need to enhance the understanding of how the degree of importance (from low to high) of a particular group membership to the individual's self-concept relates to collective

identity behaviour. Two typologies of importance, namely explicit and implicit importance have been captured in the literature (e.g. Ashmore *et al.*, 2004; Stryker and Serpe, 1994; Sellers *et al.*, 1998). As summarised by Ashmore *et al.* (2004), explicit importance is defined as the individual's subjective appraisal of the degree of importance that collective identity holds in his or her overall sense of self; while implicit importance relates to the level of placement (from low to high) of a particular group membership in the person's hierarchy of organised self-system, where the individual may not be consciously aware of the hierarchical position of his or her collective identities.

In a parallel perspective, Chatman *et al.* (2003) propose two forms of importance which they referred to as “explicit racial centrality” (“conscious appraisal of an identity element, in this case race or ethnicity, as an important or central part of the self-concept,” p.2) and “implicit centrality” (“the extent to which a given identity is chronically accessible in individuals’ every day, normative experiences as they relate to the self,” p.3). Thus, although scholars generally agree on the two forms view of importance, the connotation of these forms has varied. For example, sociologists – Stryker and Serpe (1994) referred to the first form as “psychological centrality”, a conceptual connotation which is similar to McCall and Simmons's (1978) “hierarchy of prominence” (pp.74–77, p.262) and Rosenberg's (1979) notion of “centrality” (pp.265–269). Stryker and Serpe (1994) explain “psychological centrality” to mean the individual’s conscious appraisal of the extent to which a particular self-definition (social category membership or collective identity) is relevant to the person’s overall self-concept. Despite the differences in connotations, these are only slight variations from the term *explicit importance* (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004).

Within the sociology domain, the second form of importance distinguished by identity theorists is salience. Stryker and Serpe (1982) suggest that identities are arranged in a “salience hierarchy”:

This hierarchical organization of identities is defined by the probabilities of each of the various identities within it being brought into play in a given situation. Alternatively, it is defined by the probabilities each of the identities have of being invoked across a variety of situations (p.206).

In their later study, Stryker and Serpe (1994) defined salience as “a readiness to act out an identity as a consequence of the identity’s properties as a cognitive structure or schema” (p.17). Analysed from the cognitive social psychological viewpoint, Stryker and Serpe’s (1994) salience is akin to chronic accessibility (Fiske & Taylor, 1991, pp.264–265). Explaining further the notion of salience, Stryker and Serpe (1994) point out that, contrary to psychological centrality, people are not necessarily aware of the salience of their collective identities.

Table 3.6 below shows some representative measures utilised in past studies to enhance the understanding of importance in collective identity theory.

Table 3.6 Some Representative Measures of Identity: Importance

| Author(s) and construct | Measure |
|---|---|
| Explicit importance (variously termed <i>significance, strength, centrality, importance, prominence</i>) | |
| Sellers et al. (1998): Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity | “In general, being Black is an important part of my self-image.” |
| Luhtanen & Crocker (1992): Collective Self-Esteem (Identity subscale) (Centrality subscale) | “Being [X] is an important reflection of who I am.” |
| Stryker & Serpe (1994): psychological centrality | Compare activity pairs and say which is more important “to the way you think about yourself.” |
| Cassidy & Trew (2001; adapted from McCall & Simmons, 1978): psychological centrality | Rate the importance of the identity on 10-point scale from <i>not important at all</i> to <i>very important</i> |
| Implicit importance (variously termed <i>salience, centrality, elevation, importance</i>) | |
| Kuhn & McPartland (1954): Twenty Statements Test | “Who am I?” |
| Stryker & Serpe (1982): salience?” | “What one thing would you tell a stranger about yourself?” |
| M. Rosenberg & Gara (1985): elevation | Participant lists selves (including collective identities) and |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <p>features (traits, feelings, and behaviours) and then rates each self on each feature. A computer algorithm (HICLAS; De Boeck & Rosenberg, 1988) then clusters both selves and features and links these two structures. Degree of elevation of a self (including a collective identity) is how high up in the self's hierarchy the self-definition is.</p> |
| Gurin & Townsend (1986): cognitive centrality | <p>“How often in your everyday life have you thought about being a woman?”</p> |
| Source: Adopted from Ashmore <i>et al.</i> (2004, p.89). | |

3.3.4 Attachment and Sense of Interdependence

Social identity literature proposes that a core element of collective identification is the sense of belongingness or emotional attachment to a group (e.g. Ashmore *et al.*, 2004; Jackson, 2002; Karasawa, 1991). Within this foundation, a sense of belongingness or emotional attachment is defined as the “affective involvement a person feels with a social category or the degree to which the fate of the group is perceived as overlapping with one's personal fate” (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004, p.90). Notably, this dimension has been a subject of much recent theorising and debate given the research contention that the emotional-affective aspect of belonging to the group may not necessarily be dependent on categorisation and evaluation, and moreover the sense of belonging or emotional attachment, on its own, is a strong predictor of important group outcomes (Hinkle *et al.*, 1989; Jackson, 2002; Karasawa, 1991). As Baumeister and Leary (1995) commented, human beings tend to form positive, lasting and stable relationships because of the fundamental need to belong. Based on that theory, since we are driven in part by the need to satisfy this need to belong, we often become members of groups and conform to group norms (e.g. Baumeister and Leary, 1995; Simon and Klandermans, 2001; Trepte and Loy, 2017).

According to further literature, it is not surprising that people tend to emotionally attach to the groups they see as part of their self-concept, just as they get attached to close relationship

partners (Smith, Murphy, & Coats, 1999). Elaborating this behaviour, scholars suggest that identification with important reference groups should be reconceptualised as forming a close relationship with these groups as these groups are core to the self (Aron & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2001; Tropp & Wright, 2001).

A summary of some of the approaches followed and measures applied in measuring the attachment and sense of interdependence component of collective identity is presented in Table 3.7 below.

Table 3.7 Some Representative Measures of Identity: Attachment and Sense of Interdependence

| Author(s) and construct | Measure |
|--|---|
| Interdependence/mutual fate | |
| Der-Karabetian (1980) | “My fate and my future are bound up with that of Armenians everywhere.” |
| Gurin & Townsend (1986): sense of common fate | “Do you think that what happens to women generally will have something to do with what happens in your life?” |
| Jackson (2002): affective ties | “Regarding my in-group, it is accurate to say, ‘United we stand, divided we fall.’” |
| Affective commitment | |
| Attachment/closeness Phinney (1992): Affirmation–Belonging. Perceived acceptance and support | “I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.” |
| Tyler & Blader (2001): Respect | “Do others in the work setting respect the work you do?” |
| Contrada <i>et al.</i> , (2001): Group Membership | “I feel accepted by members of my ethnic group.” |
| Interconnection of self and others | |
| Mael & Tetrick (1992): cognitive merging of self and the group | “When I talk about this organization, I usually say ‘we’ rather than ‘they.’” |
| E. Smith & Henry (1996): merging of self and in-group | Reaction-time paradigm in which participants make timed self-descriptiveness judgments. Merging of self and in-group is measured as faster judgments of traits on which participants match the perceived characteristics of the in-group. |
| Kinket & Verkuyten (1997): ethnic group introjections | “If someone said something bad about Turkish people, would you feel almost as if they had said it about you?” |
| Source: Adopted from Ashmore <i>et al.</i> (2004, p.91). | |

Jackson (2002) note that the instruments of collective identity found in the existing literature reflect closely related measures that tap aspects of group attachment and seemingly load on the same factor. These, Jackson (2002) explains include “the feeling of strong ties to (bonds with) the group; an emotional attachment or felt closeness to the group; a sense of interdependence or interconnectedness; the perception of shared fate with other members of the group; and self–group merging” (cited in Ashmore, 2004, p.90). Ashmore *et al.* (2004) underline a common thread among these measures: their implied extension of the self to the social group. They note however that the conceptualised connection between group and self is much more than simple self-categorization or the perceived similarity of self to other members of the group. Instead, it involves more elaborated cognitive elements, like the perception of interdependence or a shared fate with other group members, as well as affective elements, like felt closeness to and concern about other group members.

Ashmore et al (2004) view the development of a sense of interdependence to transcend a mere perception of others as belonging to the same social category. For example, they note that an art collector will not view himself/herself as interdependent with other art collectors. Interdependence, which is fostered by an awareness of a common or shared fate (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004), is defined as the “perception of the commonalities in the way group members are *treated* in society” (Gurin and Townsend, 1986, p. 140). A sense of mutual fate only develops when people become aware that they are treated as a group member rather than as an individual. Thus, despite individual differences, their fates and outcomes are similar, and individual mobility depends, at least in part, on group membership (Gurin and Townsend, 1986).

Examples of how interdependence or the perception of common fate has been operationalised are shown in Table 3.7.

3.3.5 Social Embeddedness

In his 1985 contribution to the *American Journal of Sociology*, “Economic Action and Social Structures: The Problem of Embeddedness”, Mark Granovetter made one of the major (if not the major) contribution that has defined the theory about social embeddedness. Granovetter (1985) proposed embeddedness as a way of capturing the idea that individuals' choice of actions is importantly refracted by the social relations within which they function. Instrumentally, that work by Mark Granovetter formulated the foundational questions for social sciences with regards to social embeddedness: to what extent do individuals choose their courses of action largely on the basis of a calculation of costs and benefits?, and to what extent, on the contrary, are their actions importantly driven by the normative assumptions they share with other individuals with whom they interact?

Scholars have utilised the foundational ideas of Granovetter (1985) in advancing the understanding of collective identity (e.g. Ashmore *et al.*, 2004; Phinney, 1992; Williams and Lawler, 2001). A primary inspiration for the social embeddedness element of the collective identity theory is Strykers' “commitment” variable which is defined by the social and personal costs that arise when one no longer fulfils a role given on a given identity (Stryker, 1980). As Stryker and Serpe (1994, p.19) add, these costs are understood as a function of the strength of ties to others on social networks.” On their part, Stets and Burke (2000) used the phrase “structural embeddedness or commitment” (p.231). Within this collective identity domain, social embeddedness has been defined as “the degree to which a particular collective identity is implicated in the person’s everyday ongoing social relationships” (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004, p.92).

As Ashmore *et al.* (2004) note, social embeddedness is measurable at the individual level, and there is a likelihood of substantial individual differences in its occurrence. On their part,

Deaux and Martin (2003) stress the need for the interpretation of such measures to take into consideration the opportunity structure that the environment provides for connecting to others based on one's collective identity. The value attached to social embeddedness is high when it would be costly and painful to abandon a particular collective identity because a majority of one's social contacts and relationships reinforce this identity (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004).

In their contribution, Ashmore *et al.* (2004) also explained how social embeddedness differs from affective attachment. They note that while the former is more objective and external, the latter is more subjective and internal. Elaborating, they state that affective commitment relates to how close a person feels to a particular social group, while social embeddedness implies the degree to which an individual's collective identity is embedded in social networks and interpersonal relations.

From the review of existing literature, other theories that have been utilised in the effort to enhance the understanding of social behaviour include social dominance and systems justification theories. This current study also draws from these theories and these are explained in Sections 3.4.1 for the former and 3.4.2 for the latter. Since social behaviour is examined within the context of consumption preference formation, consumption literature is reviewed in Section 3.5 (and sub-sections)

3.4 Social Dominance Theory and System Justification Theory

Further theoretical approaches that have been utilised by scholars in the examination of inter-group relations are social dominance theory (e.g. Sidanius, 1993; Sidanius *et al.*, 2001) and system justification theory (e.g. Jost and Banaji, 1994). As a matter of fact, these two theories have emerged out of the critique of social identity theory (Huddy, 2004; Rubin and Hewstone, 2004), a critique that has been reiterated in more recent literature (e.g. Sidanius *et*

al., 2004; Jost *et al.*, 2004). As Huddy (2004) notes, while each of the three approaches tries to explain variations in the development of in-group cohesion and out-group antipathy among individual group members across social groups and societies, one of the core glaring omissions of the social identity theory is its failure to seriously consider the individual differences in the adoption of group identity or the development of out-group antipathy. Rubin and Hewstone (2004) comment however that "to the best of our knowledge, there has never been a detailed response to this critique" (p.827).

Despite the obvious critique, social dominance theory and system justification are developed to supplement and integrate social identity theory rather than oppose it (Rubin and Hewstone, 2004; Jost *et al.*, 2004; Sidanius *et al.*, 2004), and this study utilises this view towards gaining a deeper understanding of consumer preference formation in the conceptualised social group. Social dominance theory and system justification are elaborated in Sections 3.4.1 and 3.4.2 respectively.

3.4.1 Social Dominance Theory

According to Huddy (2004), social dominance theory explicitly addresses the role of individual-, group-, and societal-level factors. On their part, Sidanius *et al.* (2004) add that social dominance theory considers the similarities and differences across societies, the interaction between psychological and social-contextual processes, and the subtle differences between various types of group-based oppression. Other contributions by Sidanius (Sidanius, 1993; Sidanius and Pratto, 1999) reinforce that background and argue that social dominance theory proposes that society contains ideologies that aid or attenuate intergroup hierarchies (see also Jost *et al.*, 2004; Jost & Thompson, 2000). Thus, individual differences in the extent of competing ideologies are viewed to represent social dominance orientation (Rubin and Hewstone, 2004).

As a matter of fact, Sidanius (1993) defined social dominance orientation as "the degree to which individuals desire social dominance and superiority for themselves and their primordial groups over other groups" (p. 209). Thus, this first version of social dominance theory more or less focused on explaining group favouritism (e.g. Sidanius *et al.*, 1994a). In the second and revised version, social dominance orientation was broadened to include not only " (a) a ... desire for and value given to in-group dominance over out-groups, [but also] (b) the desire for non-egalitarian, hierarchical relationships between groups within the social system" (Sidanius *et al.*, 1994b, p. 1007).

Huddy (2004) comment that social dominance theory has excelled in the area of highlighting individual differences in the need and desire to dominate members of lower-status groups and in also exploring the interaction between individuals and institutions.

However, the social dominance theory has been criticised for a number of reasons. For example, Rubin and Hewstone (2004) note that the dual conceptualization of social dominance orientation (SDO) has led to difficulties concerning the relationship between SDO and group status. Secondly, several contributors have argued that social dominance theory is vulnerable to general criticisms of personality theories of discrimination (e.g., Brown and Turner, 1981, p. 44; Reynolds, Turner, Haslam and Ryan, 2001, p.428). Rubin and Hewstone (2004) support this latter criticism and add that personality theories offer relatively inflexible explanations of discrimination between groups because differences in discrimination are explained in terms of differences in personality that are assumed to be stable across different situations. As a result, therefore, personality theories is neither able to explain how the same person nor the same social group of people can show markedly different degrees of discrimination in different situations.

3.4.2 System Justification Theory

Comparatively, social dominance theory seems to be the most ambitious than the system justification theory, but fails to explain intergroup relations equally well at all three levels pinpointed in Section 3.4.1 above (Huddy, 2004). Thus, Huddy (2004) advocates the use of system justification theory alongside social dominance theory.

According to Jost and Banaji (1994), the central hypothesis proposed by system justification theory central is that people are motivated to justify the status quo of the status systems that their social groups inhabit. In some conditions however, this motivation may clash with the need to create and maintain a positive social identity, they argue.

In her paper, "Contrasting theoretical approaches to intergroup relations", Huddy (2004) comments that "*system justification theory considers a mix of individual and societal-level factors, focusing on the role of support for the status quo in producing acceptance of status inequalities among members of low-status groups, even when it is against their own interest to do so. The theory highlights an important problem — the quiescence of low-status groups — but more work is needed to flesh out the theory and its central concepts.*" (p.947).

System justification theory utilises system justification concept to explain out-group favouritism behaviour by members of low-status groups. Comparatively, while social identity theory assumes that out group favouritism represents consensual discrimination, system justification theory assumes that out-group favouritism represents system justification (Rubin and Hewstone, 2004). Jost *et al.* (2004) add to this comparative analysis thus: while Social identity theory maintains that group members passively reflect stable and legitimate status systems, system justification theory proposes that group members actively legitimize and bolster status system.

As flagged above, while the system justification theory highlights an important problem, more work is needed to understand this theory and its concepts (Huddy, 2004). Rubin and Hewstone (2004) add severally to this research call. For example, they note that “system justification researchers need to show that people are biased in favour of their social systems, rather than simply cognizant of and responsive toward those systems” (p.834). Secondly, they recommend that system justification researchers should prove that the “palliative functions” of system justification (Jost and Hunyady, 2002) are distinct from the cognitive identity management strategies proposed by social identity theorists (Tajfel and Turner, 1979; Blanz *et al.*, 1998). Utilising relevant foundations from these research gaps, this study aims to understand if and how the system justification theory feeds into the in- and out-group behaviour in the consumer preference formations of the explored social group.

3.5 Consumption Preference and symbolic consumption

Section 3.5 contains two main parts. Consumption preference is explained in Section 3.5.1 while symbolic consumption is explained in Section 3.5.2.

3.5.1 Consumption Preference

In the *Handbook of Research on Consumerism and Buying Behaviour in Developing Nations* published in 2016, the Geust Editor - Ayantunji Gbadamosi commented thus:

“Irrespective of the differences between us, one of the binding cords that explains our homogeneity is that we all are consumers. However, there are idiosyncratic issues that might still differentiate consumption in one society from another.” (p.1).

Commenting further, Gbadamosi (2016) notes that consumers are all different in many ways: demographically, emotionally, culturally or in various other contexts and can act differently to the same stimulus. Drawing on this foundation, this study examines the influence of

collective identity on the consumer preference formation for high involvement products within the Nigerian social group in the United Kingdom. According to consumer behaviour theorists, an organising construct through which everyday activities can be understood is the self - a sense of who and what we are (e.g. Kleine *et al.*, 1993; Zinkhan and Hong, 1991; Kleine *et al.*, 2004; Chen *et al.*, 2016) or personalities (e.g. Holbrook, 1992). Thus, life's mundane tasks and the consumer behaviours necessary for enacting them are cast in a perspective of self-described within the social identity theory (Kleine *et al.*, 1993).

The demand for products and the behaviour of consumers change over time. For example, the clothing styles, cars models, music genres, hairstyles, etc. change over time, conditioned on exogenous changes in consumer preferences (Berger *et al.*, 2011; Millan and Mittal, 2017). As Stigler and Becker (1977) summarised, the shifts in consumer demands reflect some underlying preference that leads to such shift.

Many sociologists have studied how what we consume conveys meaning (e.g. Bourdieu, 1986; Levy, 1959; Mehta and Bhanja, 2018). According to renowned economists Adam Smith and Thorsten Veblen, people do not only care about the goods they consume, but also how they are treated by others. Thus, how we are treated depends on how we are perceived, and how we are perceived hinges on our consumption pattern (Berger *et al.*, 2011). Consequently, the consumption behaviour depicted by people is driven in part by the desire to convey information about themselves to others (e.g. Berger *et al.*, 2011; Escalas and Bettman, 2005; Mehta and Bhanja, 2018). Thus, by that fact, revisiting the previous example, the style and design of clothing, car brand and design, and genre of music that people prefer and use may be driven by the desire to make a statement about themselves. Likewise, observers can use the consumption behaviour of others to make inference about them (Berger *et al.*, 2011).

Within reviewed literature, a common term used to describe this consumption behaviour is symbolic consumption (e.g. Berger *et al.*, 2011; Solomon *et al.*, 2013).

3.5.2 Symbolic Consumption

The notion of fit between products and consumers has pervaded marketing thought and practice for a long time. In the analysis of consumption behaviour, the self-concept has gained increasing mention as a core factor. Analysing developing nations, Gbadamosi (2016) noted that income is a defining factor in how consumers make their consumption decisions. Further literature in this regard suggests that consumers' preference formation for symbolic products and social group influence may not follow a linear income influence pattern for all societies. For example, Sun and Collins (2006) suggest that despite their low-income state, some Chinese prefer more expensive imported fruit to domestic type which is relatively cheaper. Efforts to contribute to the understanding of such behavioural patterns point to a dual lens of self-concept - a concept of *Self* based on who people think they really are (known as *the actual self*) and a concept of *Self* based on who people would like to be (*the ideal self*). Thus, scholars are increasingly emphasizing that consumers' decisions are not only driven by functional benefits associated with products but also the symbolic meanings they connote and the value to the buyer (e.g. Solomon, 1983; Belk, 1988; Sirgy and Johar, 1999). Extending that notion, Solomon *et al.*, (2013) emphasise that consumers have many different selves and use different products or services to fulfil or actualize these selves.

Consumers possession of products can therefore be to satisfy psychological needs, such as actively creating one's self-concept, expressing and reinforcing self-identity, and as a basis of differentiating oneself and asserting one's individuality (e.g., Ball and Tasaki 1992; Belk 1988; Kleine, Kleine, and Allen 1995; Mehta and Bhanja, 2018). Possessions can also be used for expressing social purpose by reflecting social ties to one's family, community, and/or cultural groups, including also brand communities (Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001).

Kleine *et al.* (1993, p.2) comment: “assertions like "a BMW is my kind of car" or "she looks terrific in DKNY clothes" express the belief that people are most comfortable with products that are in some sense congruent with their selves (Belk, 1988; Sirgy, 1982; Zinkhan and Hong, 1991) or personalities (Holbrook, 1992).”

Revisiting the clothing point mentioned earlier, it is important to draw from economics perspective which is captured in the Veblens *Theory of Leisure Class* (1912), and formalised by more recent literature (e.g. Ireland, 1992; Pesendorfer, 1995; Bagwell and Bernheim, 1996). These scholars assume that the role of fashion is to signal wealth. In more recent literature, fashion has also been mentioned as a typical consumption item that fits the evaluation of the role of self in consumer behaviour (e.g. Berger *et al.*, 2011; Millan and Mittal, 2017). On their part, Berger and Heath (2008) suggest the relevance of junk foods. The content, based on experimental evidence, that our preferences for junk food depend on who else is eating it.

Kassarjian (1971) commented that despite the intuitive appeal of the symbolic consumption notion, consumer researchers have provided only little empirical evidence to demonstrate a strong association between people and the products they choose. This pertinence for research in this area has been gaining increasing recognition since the early 1990s (e.g. Kleine *et al.*, 1993; Kleine *et al.*, 2004; Berger *et al.*, 2011; Millan and Mittal, 2017).

Concluding their study, Berger *et al* (2011) pinpoint implications that should galvanise further research effort towards enhancing the understanding of identity signalling and individual consumption patterns. They note that while the theoretical foundation for their study was based on existing experimental evidence, much more empirical work remains to be done. They therefore advocate further testing of the theory in other realms, for example in the realms of musical taste, online news, or the fast moving fashion cycles found on Facebook or Twitter.

Finally, the theoretical foundation followed in this study supports the notion that there is need to capture the intrinsic as well as extrinsic components of consumer utilities, towards a better understanding of the interactions within and across consumer groups.

3.6 The Conceptual Model

In Table 3.1, the theoretical premise of selected past studies and core empirical (or conceptual) insights were summarised. Subsequent to that, the theoretical foundation for this study was presented, explaining several streams of literature (Sections 3.2 to 3.5). Based on the literature review undertaken, the core theoretical notions that feed into the conceptual focus of this study are summarised thus:

1. Culture, a core group classification factor in the management (e.g. Opute, 2012; Kanter and Corn, 1994; Opute, 2015; Hong, 2010) and marketing (e.g. Opute, 2009; Kotler *et al.*, 2006; Opute *et al.*, 2013; Eriksen, 2001; Holland, 1997) literatures, is a major psychological behaviour factor in group dynamics (Opute, 2014; Shteynberg *et al.*, 2009; Opute, 2015; Hofstede, 2011; Hofstede *et al.*, 2010). This latter theoretical foundation is reinforced by social identity and self-categorisation scholars (e.g. Eriksen 2001; Holland, 1997; Ashmore *et al.*, 2004; White *et al.*, 2012; Trepte and Loy, 2017) as a core identity shaping factor.
2. Social identity theory and self-categorisation theory are critical foundations in the theoretical analysis of group behaviour (e.g. Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel and Turner, 1979; Haslam *et al.*, 2012; Abrams and Hogg, 2004; Oakes, 2002; Ashford *et al.*, 2004; White *et al.*, 2012; Trepte and Loy, 2017). According to these scholars, the behavioural psychology that an individual shows is a factor of his/her identity within a social group as well as his/her self-identity.

3. Within the aforementioned social identity foundation and group behaviour influence, it is also argued that the cultural background of individuals also influence how individuals perceive the self-concept. Consequently, that shapes also the consumer preference formation of individuals. In other words, the types of products that individuals buy and use are influenced by their social group identity.
4. Further in that consumer preference formation context, social identity induced behaviour has also been explained in line with high involvement and symbolic products. In other words, individuals may patronise high involvement products and or symbolic products as a way of making a statement of themselves, i.e. convey a message about their self-concept. Existing literature distils a dual lens of self-concept - a concept of *Self* based on who people think they really are (known as *the actual self*) and a concept of *Self* based on who people would like to be (*the ideal self*). Within this symbolic foundation, scholars emphasize that consumers' decisions are not only driven by functional benefits associated with products but also the symbolic meanings they connote and the value to the buyer (e.g. Belk, 1988; Sirgy and Johar, 1999; Opute, 2017). Thus, consumers have many different selves and use different products or services to fulfil or actualize these selves Solomon *et al.* (2013).
5. In addition to social identity theory, further theoretical approaches that have been utilised in the examination of inter-group relations are social dominance theory (e.g. Sidanius, 1993; Sidanius *et al.*, 2001) and system justification theory (e.g. Jost and Banaji, 1994). While the latter two theories emerged out of the critique of social identity theory (Huddy, 2004; Rubin and Hewstone, 2004), they are developed to supplement and integrate social identity theory rather than oppose it (Rubin and Hewstone, 2004; Jost *et al.*, 2004; Sidanius *et al.*, 2004). Social dominance theory considers the similarities and differences across societies, the interaction between

psychological and social-contextual processes, and the subtle differences between various types of group-based oppression (Sidanius *et al.*, 2004), while the central hypothesis proposed by system justification theory central is that people are motivated to justify the status quo of the status systems that their social groups inhabit (Jost and Banaji, 1994).

The framework for this study draws from social interaction and identity signalling to enhance the understanding of consumer behaviour. The foundation upon which this study is grounded draws from the notion that all aspects of the self “acquire their meaning and significance only within a context of social relations between people” (Simon, 1997, p.321).

The theoretical framework guiding this study is summarised in Figure 3.1 below.

Figure 2. 1: The Conceptual Framework for the Study of the Influence of Collective Identity on Consumer Preference Formation

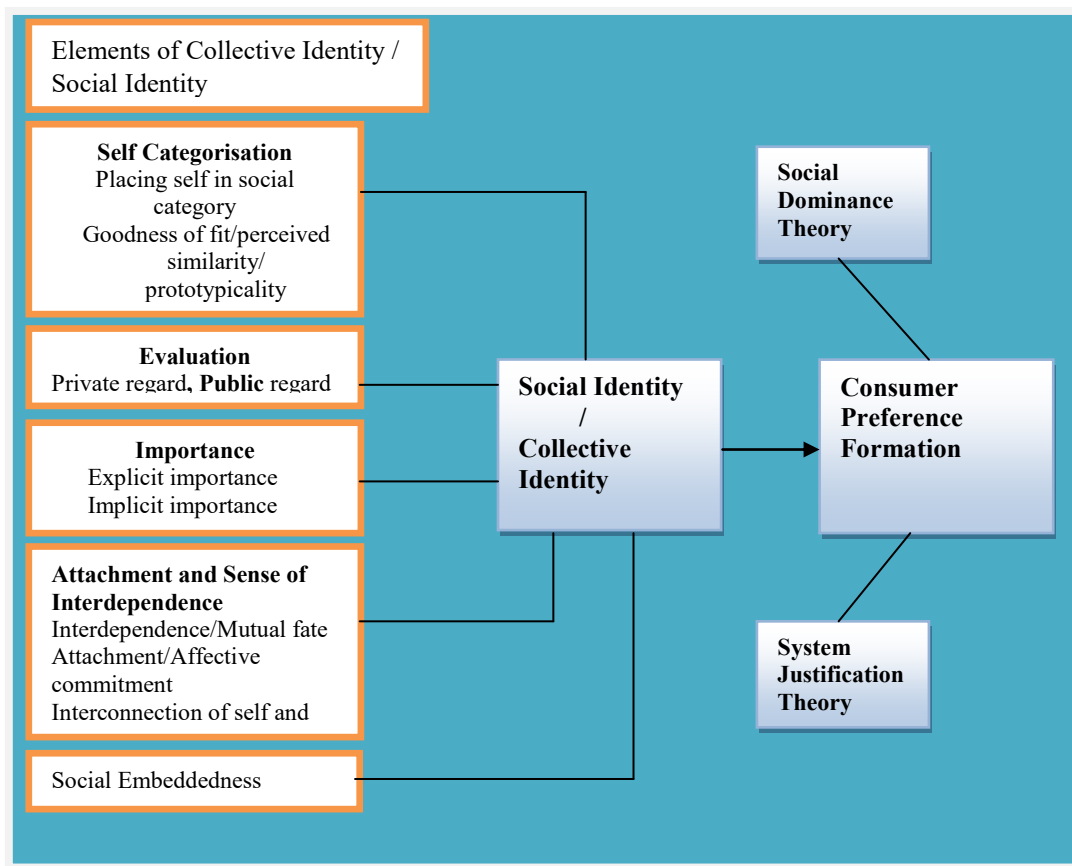


Figure 2.1: The Conceptual Framework for the Study of the Influence of Collective Identity on Consumer Preference Formation

As captured in reviewed literature, collective identity/social identity as a concept has been utilised by scholars in the effort to enhance the understanding of social behaviour. Aiming to organise the framework for collective identity, Ashmore *et al.* (2004) propose a multidimensional framework, which they offer as a strategy towards guiding theorists to better articulate the assumptions and the components of their theoretical formulations. This study embraces the viewpoint represented by Ashmore *et al.* (2004) that through a process of carefully articulating the multiple individual-level elements that constitute collective identification, scholars would be better positioned to analyse processes and predict outcomes of identification.

Central in this articulation focus “is the recognition that collective identity is a multi-dimensional concept” (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004, p.82). Thus, they recommend that in order to better understand collective identity and social behaviour, researchers should aim to examine multiple dimensions, explaining clearly the individual-level elements, facets, or dimensions, their interplay, how the elements covary with one another, and how the elements might combine to form collective identity profiles (see also Amiot and Aubin, 2013). Responding to research call (e.g. Ashmore *et al.*, 2004; Amiot and Aubin, 2013; Cameron, 2004; Leach *et al.*, 2008), a multi-dimensional examination of social identity behaviour is the approach in this current study. In doing that, this study recognises that social identity can take different forms - such as secure versus insecure identification, and autonomous versus comparative identification (e.g. Jackson and Smith, 1999; Tyler and Blader, 2002). Combining these foundations, this study follows Ashmore *et al.* (2004) and conceptualises five collective identity elements.

Within the conceptual framework for this study, the researcher proposes that the consumer preference formation is not only influenced by the national-level, but also the grass-root ethnic social group level artefacts.

Finally, as shown in Figure 2.1, this study also examines if and how social dominance theory and system justification theory influence consumer preference formation in the explored social group.

3.7 Summary

The theoretical premise of selected past studies and core empirical (or conceptual) insights were summarised in Table 3.1. The theoretical foundation for this study was presented, explaining several streams of literature (Sections 3.2 to 3.5). Based on the literature review undertaken, the core theoretical notions that feed into the conceptual focus of this study have been treated, e.g. the Culture which is a core group classification factor in the management literatures. It is a major psychological behaviour factor in group dynamics. This latter theoretical foundation is reinforced by social identity and self-categorisation scholars as a core identity shaping factor. It is also argued that the cultural background of individuals also influence how they perceive the self-concept. Consequently, that shapes also the consumer preference formation of individuals. Social identity induced behaviour has also been explained in line with high involvement and symbolic products. In addition to social identity theory, further theoretical approaches that have been utilised in the examination of inter-group relations are social dominance theory and system justification theory.

Chapter Four: Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

Figure 3.1 (see Chapter three) summarised the theoretical foundations that guide this current study. This Chapter (four) explains the methodological approach followed in addressing the research questions specified in Section 1.2. Two core steps are taken in this Chapter. In the first main section (4.2), a summary of philosophical foundations underpinning methodological approach in research is presented. To conclude that section, the paradigmatic position of this research is specified as well as justified. Following that, Section 4.3 explains why the qualitative approach used is the best fit for gaining a better understanding of the phenomenon. In that Section also, the sampling strategy is explained. To extend the background in Section 4.3, Section 4.4 explains in detail the data collection steps taken in this study, the demographics of participants are explained. To ensure a good flow and easy understanding, the literature review relating to, as well as the actual data analysis for this study, are undertaken hand in hand. In the final Section of this current Chapter, Section 4.5 presents the conclusion to this Chapter, explaining as well the methodological steps taken towards ensuring the reliability and validity of this research.

4.2 Research Paradigms

4.2.1 Introduction – Research Paradigm

Methodological scholars have emphasised the pertinence for researchers to fit their studies within the philosophical realm (e.g. Kuhn, 1962; Guba and Lincoln, 1994). This implies that

a scientist works normally within a theoretical framework (Kuhn, 1962). A paradigm determines what problems are regarded as crucial, how such problems are to be conceptualized, the methods of enquiry that deemed appropriate, and the relevant standards of judgment, etc. (see Philips, 1987). Enc (1999) adds that a paradigm is a set of scientific and metaphysical beliefs that form a theoretical framework within which scientific theories can be tested, evaluated and if necessary revised. Filstead (1970) identifies four main objectives which a research paradigm accomplishes:

1. It offers a guide for professionals in a discipline, for highlighting core problems and issues in the discipline.
2. It aids the development of explanatory schemes (i.e., models and theories) for placing the issues and models in a framework.
3. It defines the criteria for the appropriate 'tools' (i.e., methodologies, instruments, and data collection types and forms).
4. It defines the epistemological lens for viewing the preceding tasks and organizing principles for conducting research in a discipline.

Extending Filstead's (1970) point of view, Hunt (1983) indicates that paradigms are not theories and law-like generalizations, therefore paradigms should be adopted as theoretical foundations for achieving meaning and direction in a research process. Guba and Lincoln (1994) identify four scientific paradigms, namely: Positivism, Critical theory, Constructivism, and Realism.

According to Schram (2006), positivism is founded on the notion that science is, or should be, mainly of interest in explaining matters and the prediction of observable occurrences. Patton (2002) adds that a unique distinguishing feature of positivism is the strong emphasis on prediction and proof. The critical theory paradigm "emphasizes social realities

incorporating historically situated structures” (Healy and Perry, 2000, p.120), and aims to critique and transform the social, economic, political, cultural, and gender aspects of the reality (Perry *et al.*, 1997). Constructivism or social constructivism (Charmaz, 2006) and realism paradigms share similarities with the critical theory paradigm all are subjectivity oriented. Constructivism/social constructivism focuses on the system of belief underlining an aspect of the world and conceives reality to consist of 'multiple realities' in peoples' minds (Healy and Perry, 2000; Charmaz, 2006). On the other hand, realism paradigm suggests that there is a real world to discover, though not perfectly apprehensible (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Healy and Perry, 2000).

Each of the four philosophical paradigms is characterized by three assumptions - epistemology, ontology and methodology (Guba and Lincoln, 1994), and Table 4.1 below summarises the four paradigmatic views based on the aforementioned three assumptions.

Table 4. 1: Four Categories of Scientific Paradigms and Variables

| Four Categories of scientific paradigms and Variables | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| Paradigms | | | | |
| Variables | Critical Theory | Constructivism | Realism | Positivism |
| Ontology | ‘Virtual reality’ shaped by social, economic, ethnic, political, cultural and gender beliefs crystallized over time | Multiple local and specific ‘constructed’ realities | Reality is ‘real’ but only imperfectly and probabilistically apprehensible | Reality is real and apprehensible |
| Epistemology | Subjectivist: Value mediated findings | Subjectivist: created findings | Modified Objectivist: Findings probably true | Objectivist: Findings true |
| Methodologies | Dialogical/Dialectical: researcher is a ‘transformative intellectual’ who changes the social world within which participants live | Hermeneutical/ Dialectical: researcher is passionate participant within the world being investigated | Case Studies/ Convergent Interviewing: triangulation, interpretation of research issues by qualitative methods | Experiment/Surveys: Verification of Hypotheses. Quantitative methods |

Source: Healy and Perry (2000, p.119) based on Guba and Lincoln (1994).

Commenting on the theoretical perspective - philosophical stance behind the methodology in a research, Crotty (1998) suggests a paradigmatic classification that includes positivism, post-positivism, interpretivism and critical theory. The interpretivism philosophy is based on the notion that reality is multiple and relative (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988). These multiple realities depend on other systems for meanings (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), which make interpreting in terms of fixed realities more difficult (Neuman, 2000). As noted by Carson *et al.*, (2001), the knowledge acquired in this discipline is socially constructed rather than objectively determined.

Therefore, the goal of interpretivist research is to understand and interpret the meanings in human behaviour rather than to generalize and predict causes and effects (Neuman, 2000; Hudson and Ozanne, 1988). For an interpretivist researcher it is important to understand motives, meanings, reasons and other subjective experiences which are time and context bound (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988; Neuman, 2000).

4.2.2 The Paradigmatic Position of this Research and Justification

Stating a knowledge claim - paradigm (Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Mertens, 1998) means that researchers commence a research with certain assumptions about how they will learn and what they will learn during their inquiry (Creswell, 2003). Interpretivists adopt a more personal and flexible research structure (Carlson *et al.*, 2001) that is aimed at capturing meaning inherent in human interactions (Black, 2006) towards making sense of what is perceived as reality (Carlson *et al.*, 2001). In the interpretivism paradigm, the researcher and the informants are believed to be interdependent as well as mutually interactive (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988; Creswell, 2003). As a reminder, this study investigates collective identity and influence and consumer preference formations. To gain a comprehensive understanding of

this phenomenon, this study is based on the interpretivism philosophy (Crotty, 1998) for a number of reasons:

1. Interpretive approaches are based on naturalistic methods (interviews, observation and analysis of existing texts (e.g. Charmaz, 2006; Andrade, 2009; Creswell, 2003). Utilising these interpretive approaches is important towards understanding in detail the focus of this study.
2. Also, this research explores a complex phenomenon of understanding the socio-cultural elements that shape collective identity behaviour and influence on consumer preference formations. Here, the aim is to thoroughly understand how participants are making sense of their personal and social world, and the meanings that particular social experiences hold for them. To understand well the conceptualized social world, it is appropriate to use an interpretive approach (Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Opute, 2014; Saunders *et al.*, 2000). The interpretive approach is a good fit in this regard because the meanings that people attach to events are derived from social interaction, as well as conditioned by their environment (Neuman, 2000; Blumer, 1986; Hudson and Ozanne, 1988). This substance is reinforced by Burrell and Morgan's (1979) who comment that in interpretive paradigm, the principal concern is with an understanding of the way in which the individual creates, modifies and interprets the world he/she finds him/herself. Consequently, active researcher engagement in the process is essential. Hudson and Ozanne (1988) and Neuman (2000) further underline insights that underscore the suitability of the interpretivism paradigm to the study – interpretivist aim primarily to understand the motives, meanings, reasons and other subjective experiences in the explored social phenomenon. Finally, Jackson and Sherriff (2012) justify the use of interpretivist – qualitative approach thus:

“we argue that the dominance of (post) positivist research methods in SIA work limits the extent to which it enables an understanding of the complexities of intergroup relations” (p.259). They conclude that by using qualitative approach, researches can highlight important questions and issues that are obscured by traditional psychological approaches to studying intergroup relations.

3. Thus, interpretive approach allows for an adequate dialog between the researchers and those with whom they interact in order to collaboratively construct a meaningful reality (Creswell, 2003).
4. Interpretivism studies use more open-ended research questions (Creswell, 2003). In this current study, open ended research questions are used, hence the use of open-ended interview questions.
5. Furthermore, as explained by Creswell (2003) interpretive studies are often idiographic and are based on a small number of participants, as they are purposed not to generalise but to explore the meanings which participants place on the social phenomena under investigation. This study involves 34 participants, which measures with interpretive approach standards (e.g. Ekanem and Wyer, 2007; Özbilgin *et al.*, 2015).

4.3 The Research Design

4.3.1 The Qualitative Nature of this Study and Justification

In methodological literature, to empirically investigate a phenomenon and answer the research questions in a convincing way, researchers must use appropriate research design (e.g. Nachmias and Nachmias, 2008; Chisnall, 2005). A research design can either be "Exploratory", "Descriptive" or "Causal" (e.g. Creswell, 2003; Yin, 2003). Exploratory

research could be quantitative or qualitative (Chisnall, 2005). The exploratory foundation followed in this research (Yin, 1994, 2003) is qualitative, for a number of reasons.

This approach offers a suitable design for achieving the philosophical premise for this study. This approach offers a good fit for addressing the nature of research questions that form the core of this research. As shown in Table 4.2 (Appendix 7), this approach has been recognised by scholars as appropriate for enhancing the understanding of social identity theory (e.g. Brown and Lunt, 2002; Augoustinos and Walker, 1995; Schiffman and Wicklund, 1992; Potter, 2000). Methodological theorists argue that qualitative method enables the researcher to gain detailed understanding of the phenomenon (Merchant et al, 1995; Silverman, 2005; Saunders et al, 2009). Using a qualitative approach in this study is a response to a research call (Augoustinos and Walker, 1995; Schiffman and Wicklund, 1992; Potter, 2000) for more qualitative perspectives in explaining the contextual features in social identity tradition. As a matter of fact, Brown and Lunt (2002) comment that: “social identity tradition could of course benefit greatly from an exploration of other kinds of methods, like discourse analysis, ethnography or even historical analysis” (p.20).

According to methodological literature (Brymann, 1988), this method offers researchers the opportunity to understand participants well, and explore meanings they attach to ideas within their social reality. Furthermore, regarding point (5) above, using a qualitative approach that utilises open-ended questions is important gaining a thorough understanding of how the consumption preferences of customers are influenced by their social identity features. A qualitative approach is essential when the researcher aims to investigate social phenomena where the focus is to understand the meanings people attach to their experiences (Øvretveit, 1998).

4.4. Data Collection Steps and Analysis

The first objective of this Section is to detail out the data collection modalities followed in this study (Section 4.4.1). Subsequently, Section 4.4.2 explains the analytical process followed in this study. Section 4.4.2 aims primarily at reviewing relevant literature underlying the analytical approach followed in this study. The actual analytical procedures followed are detailed out in Chapter five (5). In the last part of Section 4.4, the conclusion to this current Chapter is presented in Section 4.4.3. In addition to providing a summary of this Chapter, Section 4.4.3 also explains the steps taken to ensure ethical standard, and reliability and validity in this research.

4.4.1 Data Collection Modalities in this Research

In line with the exploratory approach guideline and interpretive lens, the qualitative method is used in this study. Qualitative research methods are suitable for “capturing the complex and fluid stream of events taking place” in social phenomena (Robson, 2000, p.63).

Scholars have recognised the relevance of the qualitative approach in researching social identity/collective identity behaviour.

As stated earlier, this study is qualitative and follows the interpretive logic. In the interpretive approach for this study, two methods of data collection were used and these are explained in Sections 4.4.1.1 and 4.4.1.2. Following that, the demographics of the research participants are presented in Section 4.4.1.3.

4.4.1.1 The Interview

To gain an in-depth understanding of the conceptualised phenomenon, this study is based primarily on interviews with the selected participants (Bowling, 2002).

Semi-structured interview was used in this study, as this interview approach enables the respondents to give detailed responses about complex issues (Bowling, 2002). Bowling (2002), Bryman (2004) comment that semi-structured interviews are flexible in process and allow the interviewees' perspectives to be explored. On the part of the researcher, the interview approach necessitates careful preparation before the session, discipline and creativity during the session, and also time is allowed for analysis and interpretation following the interviews (Wengraf, 2001). Consequently, at the planning stage, several skills were utilised in conducting the interviews. For example, at the start of the interviews, time was spent to establish rapport in the interviewing relationship as this is essential towards ensuring that the interviewee feels at ease (Seidman, 1998). Furthermore, probing techniques was used during the interview to obtain further information, request clarification, and ask for examples (Gillham, 2005).

To ensure its fit to the theoretical domain of study, the interview approach followed methodological guidelines (Ashmore *et al*, 2004) and combined the use of open-ended questions that allow participants to choose their own personal label for a given collective activity (In terms of my ethnic group, I consider myself to be -----") and close ended questions that ask participants to choose among several pre-specified options (e.g. Phinney, 1992; Ashmore *et al*, 2004). Further on the point of open-ended questions, its use is instrumental in this study, as it allows the interviewer and interviewee to diverge so that some particular areas can be explored in detail (Britten, 1995).

The interviewees were clearly informed that this research is for academic purpose and were assured that their identity as well as data collected during the interviews would be kept strictly confidential. A formal consent was obtained from the interviews before the interview and a sample of consent form is provided in Appendix 6. Each interview lasted between 60

and 90 minutes, and the core areas covered included (1) the cultural enclave(s) of the interviewees, (2) the socio-cultural groups they identify with, how much these mean to them and how these influence their preference formations (buying and use), (3) their level of education and engagement with other cultures (including British culture) beyond their individual cultural domains and how these influence their collective identity behaviour and consumption implications, (4) what role, if any, does money play in their collective identity behaviour decision making, and many more (a detailed list of interview questions can be found in Appendix 3).

To allow the interviews to flow as a conversation, the questions were carefully designed to elicit free flowing narratives (Jarvis et al, 1996). Strauss and Corbin (1998) underline a methodological point concerning the use of the interview tool - the initial interview questions may be based on prior literature or experience. A drawback in that approach, they warn, is that it limits the chance to explore emerging concepts. To allow for emerging concepts to be pursued in this current study, the questions for this study were altered in the data collection process, based on prevailing circumstances (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). The respondents were allowed a free-hand in their responses and were encouraged, using the probing technique, to elaborate on their comments (Spence and Rutherford, 2001).

Having assured the respondents that the materials provided would be treated as confidential, all the interviews were tape-recorded.

4.4.1.2 The Participant and Non-Participant Observation

Participant and non-participant observation have been used to study the information needs of various groups of people, often in work settings (Cooper, Lewis, and Urquhart, 2004).

Participant observation has been used in a variety of disciplines as a tool for collecting data about people, processes, and cultures in qualitative research (Kawulich, 2005). Participant

observations can be either covert or overt. Covert is where the study is carried out 'under cover'. The researcher's real identity and purpose are kept concealed from the group being studied. Non-participant observation is when the observer observes the group passively from a distance without participating in the group activities. Here he does not try to influence them or take part in the group activities (Trueman, 2015).

The researcher takes a false identity and role, usually posing as a genuine member of the group. On the other hand, overt is where the researcher reveals his or her true identity and purpose to the group and asks permission to observe (McLeod, 2015).

Behavioural scholars have underlined the important role of emotions and the need to recognise this in the efforts to enhance general understanding of social behaviour (e.g. Opute, 2015; Ayoko *et al.*, 2012; Opute, 2012). Scholars in the area of collective identity formation have also highlighted this importance of emotions (e.g. Hunt and Benford, 2004; Adams, 2003; Hercus, 1999; de Volo, 2006; Fominaya, 2007). Methodological literature has emphasised the need to pay due attention to emotion related issues in social behaviour. Interpretive scholars who draw from this foundation recommend that the observatory tool of qualitative approach be used to fully understand social contexts (e.g. Andrade, 2009; Fade, 2004; Silverman, 1993). Following that methodological foundation, the observation tool was also used in this study to understand the nonverbal cues (e.g. Charmaz, 2006; Biggerstaff and Thompson, 2008; Fade, 2004) in the respondents' description of their collective identity driven consumer preference formation. The importance of using the observation tool in a qualitative study is further emphasised by Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) who argue that not all information is provided by respondents. Therefore, researchers should, in addition to asking questions, also observe, watch, listen and learn, as this would enable them capture vital evidence through symbolic language (Yin, 1994).

Understanding these non-verbal cues, expressed through gestures, voice level, facial expression, postures and general body language is essential to understanding the degree of passion and attachment that respondents display in their description of their social groups and influence on consumption preference. Through non-verbal language, otherwise called language of behaviour (Hall, 1973), real feelings were communicated, enhancing thereby the findings from this current study.

4.4.1.3 The Demographics of the Research Participants

A purposive sampling method, which is a deliberate non-random method, was used in this study, as it allows the researchers to select participants because they have knowledge relevant to the research (Bowling, 2002). Berg (2001) notes that, in some instances, purposive samples are selected after field investigations on some group so that certain types of individuals or persons displaying certain attributes are included in the study. In this current study, efforts were made to understand the backgrounds of participant and how they match with the focus of this study. A number of steps were taken in this regard, for example, a short questionnaire was used to gather relevant information about participants (see Appendix 4). Typical demographics collected through this tool included age, educational background, cultural identification, employment status, and many more, of the participants. Also, during the focus group session, the first stage was structured specifically to help obtain background information of respondents towards confirming their suitability for this study (See Appendix 5).

Prior to achieving the purposive sampling for this study as described above, a combination of convenience sampling (e.g. Salganik, 2006; Saunders *et al.*, 2012) and snowballing (e.g. Salganik and Heckathorn, 2004; Ramirez-Valles *et al.*, 2005; Snijders, 1992) techniques were used. The former was used to establish contact with the first set of participants in this study.

In methodological literature, Salganik (2006) comments that this set of first contact in the target population serve as seeds. Through this approach, the researcher contacted people that are more easily accessible, namely people in his network and neighbourhood (mainly through emails and telephone calls) to check for the suitability and willingness to participate in this study.

According to methodological literature, some research populations could be hidden (e.g. Magnani *et al*, 2005; Ramirez-Valles *et al.*, 2005; Wang *et al.*, 2005). While the population for this current study does not share complete similarities with the contextual domain (medicals) covered in the aforementioned studies, it could be described as a hidden population, as identifying people who do not only fit the cultural domain conceptualised here, but also exhibit the social identity features explored in this study, would be a huge challenge. For circumstances like this, it is practical to use the snowballing approach to achieve a respondent-driven sample (Ramirez-Valles *et al.*, 2005; Wang *et al.*, 2005). In doing that, the first contact respondents were used as seeds (Salganik, 2006) to gain access to other suitable respondents. This approach was followed to achieve the purposive sampling until the desired sample size was reached (e.g. Heckathorn, 2002; Salganik and Heckathorn, 2004).

As Table 4.3 shows, some students participated in this study. To ensure suitability for this study, the circumstances of the participating students did not differ significantly from the circumstances of the 'high society' characteristics depicted by other participants in this study. Thus, all students that participated in the study (1) have very rich parents whose financial capacity does not deviate from the standard shown by other participants, (2) the students have a variety of, or can easily afford a variety of such attires, and (3) the students have access to at least two cars which they can use for such social occasions or depict a high level of affluence related to other collective identity induced consumption items.

Apart from a few students, the majority of the 34 participants in this study are highly educated professionals and working class people. Over 80% of the participants in this study have lived in the UK for at least 10 years, while over 70% have annual earning of at least £40,000.

Table 4. 2: See Appendix 7

Table 4. 3: The Demographics of Participants in this Study

| The Demographics of Participants in this Study | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--------|---------------|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|---|---------------------------|
| Interviewees in serial number | Gender | Age bracket * | Marital Status | Employment status | Level of education | Household income (in thousands) | Own or rent home | Number of children under 18 living with | Lived for how long in UK? |
| 1 | Male | 55 to 64 yrs | Married | Self-employed | Master's degree | £40 - £49 | Rent | 2 | More than 10 yrs |
| 2 | Male | 55 to 64 yrs | Married | Employed FT* | PhD | £40 - £49 | Own | 3 | More than 10 yrs |
| 3 | Male | 45 to 54 yrs | Married | Employed FT | Master's degree | £30 - £39 | Rent | 3 | 6 to 10 yrs |
| 4 | Male | 65 or older | Married | Retired | Less than high school | Under £20 | Rent | 1 | More than 10 yrs |
| 5 | Male | 35 to 44 yrs | Civil partners hip | Employed PT* | High school graduate | £20 - £29 | Rent | 0 | More than 10 yrs |
| 6 | Male | 25 to 34 yrs | Married | Employed FT | Bachelor's degree | £30 - £39 | Other arrangement | 2 | Born in the UK |
| 7 | Male | 35 to 44 yrs | Married | Employed FT | Master's degree | £40 - £49 | Own | 3 | More than 10 yrs |
| 8 | Male | 35 to 44 yrs | Married | Employed FT | Master's degree | £40 - £49 | Rent | 2 | More than 10 yrs |
| 9 | Male | 25 to 34 yrs | Married | Employed FT | Master's degree | £30 - £39 | Rent | 2 | 6 to 10 yrs |
| 10 | Female | 55 to 64 yrs | Married | Student | High school graduate | £20 - £29 | Rent | 1 | More than 10 yrs |
| 11 | Male | 45 to 54 yrs | Married | Self-employed | Master's degree | £40 - £49 | Own | 2 | More than 30 yrs |
| 12 | Female | 45 to 54 yrs | Married | Employed FT | Master's degree | £40 - £49 | Own | 3 | More than 10 yrs |
| 13 | Male | 45 to 54 yrs | Married | Employed PT | Master's degree | £40 - £49 | Own | 2 | More than 10 yrs |
| 14 | Male | 45 to 49 yrs | Married | Employed FT | Master's degree | £50 - £69 | Own | 0 | More than 10 yrs |
| 15 | Male | 45 to 49 yrs | Married | Employed FT | Master's degree | £30 - £39 | Rent | 2 | Almost 20 years |
| 16 | Male | 25 to 34 yrs | Married | Student | High school graduate | Under £20,000 | Rent | 4 | 6 to 10 yrs |
| 17 | Male | 35 to 44 yrs | Married | Employed FT | Master's degree | £30 - £39 | Rent | 3 | More than 10 yrs |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----|--------|--------------|-------------------|---------------|-----------------------|---------------|------|---|------------------|
| 18 | Female | 55 to 64 yrs | Married | Employed FT | Bachelor's degree | £30 - £39 | Own | 2 | More than 10 yrs |
| 19 | Male | 45 to 54 yrs | Married | Self employed | Bachelor's degree | £30 - £39 | Rent | 3 | More than 10 yrs |
| 20 | Male | 55 to 60 yrs | Married | Employed FT | PhD Degree | Above £50,000 | Own | 3 | More than 20 yrs |
| 21 | Male | 45 to 54 yrs | Married | Employed FT | PhD Degree | £40 - £49 | Own | 2 | More than 20 yrs |
| 22 | Female | 45 to 54 yrs | Married | Employed FT | Bachelor's degree | £30 - £39 | Own | 2 | More than 10 yrs |
| 23 | Male | 35 to 44 yrs | Married | Employed PT | Master's degree | £40 - £49 | Own | 1 | 6 to 10 yrs |
| 24 | Female | 25 to 24 yrs | Married | Employed PT | Master's degree | £30 - £39 | Own | 1 | More than 10 yrs |
| 25 | Male | 45 to 54 yrs | Married | Employed FT | Master's degree | £40 - £49 | Own | 1 | More than 10 yrs |
| 26 | Male | 25 to 34 yrs | Married | Student | High school graduate | Under £20 | Rent | 2 | 1 to 5 yrs |
| 27 | Female | 55 to 64 yrs | Married | Employed PT | Bachelor's degree | £40 - £49 | Own | 3 | More than 10 yrs |
| 28 | Male | 45 to 54 yrs | Married | Employed FT | Master's degree | £40 - £49 | Own | 2 | More than 10 yrs |
| 29 | Male | 45 to 54 yrs | Married | Employed FT | Master's degree | £40 - £49 | Own | 1 | More than 10 yrs |
| 30 | Male | 55 to 64 yrs | Married | Self employed | Master's degree | £50 - £69 | Own | 0 | More than 10 yrs |
| 31 | Male | 25 to 34 yrs | Civil Partnership | Employed PT | High school graduate | Under £20,000 | Rent | 2 | More than 10 yrs |
| 32 | Female | 45 to 54 yrs | Widowed | Student | Less than high school | Under £30,000 | Rent | 1 | 6 to 10 yrs |
| 33 | Male | 35 to 44 yrs | Civil Partnership | Employed FT | Master's Degree | £20 - £29 | Own | 2 | More than 10 yrs |
| 34 | Male | 65 or older | Married | Retired | Master's degree | Under £20,000 | Rent | 1 | More than 20 yrs |

Note: * = Since the participants did not want their exact age to be known, they were requested to suggest age range applicable to them.

4.4.2 Data Analysis Procedures in this Research

In this Section the core focus is to introduce the analytical approach for this study, explaining in the process its choice and supporting literature. The actual analytical process followed to engage with emergent data and find reality (e.g. Andrade, 2009; Charmaz, 2006) is however explained in detail in Chapter five (5). In Chapter 5 too, relevant methodological literature would be highlighted along with the analytical steps taken, to ensure a better flow and understanding of the analytical process.

The analytical approach for this study is described as interpretive analysis (IA) (e.g. Andrade, 2009; Straus and Corbin, 1998; Leiblich, 1998) and relevant literature to justify the suitability of this approach to this study is explained in Section 4.4.2.1

4.4.2.1 Interpretive Analysis

Interpretive analysis was introduced earlier as the analytical approach for this study. Thomas (2006) notes that in the analysis of qualitative, interpretive analysis has been used by scholars in several ways. Further literature even argues some analytical approaches are generic and are not labelled within one of the specific traditions of qualitative research (e.g. Ezzy, 2002; Silverman, 2000). For this reason, Thomas (2006) recommends that scholars should clearly specify their interpretive analysis approach and allow that to develop based on underlying assumptions and procedures associated with analysing qualitative data.

Building on hermeneutics (the theory of interpretation), and symbolic-interactionism (Blumer, 1969), Dilthey (1910) suggests that the meanings ascribed to events by an individual are of central concern, though accessible only through an interpretative process. Thus, interpretive research assumes “that our knowledge of reality is gained only through social constructions such as language, consciousness, shared meanings, documents, tools, and other artifacts” (Klein and Myers, p.69).

As Thomas (2006) noted, most qualitative data reported in journal articles have mostly followed a strategy that can be labeled as a “general inductive approach” (p.238). While this strategy is evident in much qualitative data, the analysis strategy is seldom explicitly labeled (Bryman and Burgess, 1994; Dey, 1993). The interpretive analysis approach for this current study is described as inductive analysis (Thomas, 2006; Bryman and Burgess, 1994), which as Thomas (2006) defined, “refers to approaches that primarily use detailed reading of raw data to derive concepts, themes or a model through interpretation made from the raw data by

an evaluator or a researcher” (p.238). In implementing that interpretive analysis approach, this study followed Özbilgin *et al.*, (2015) methodological guide for interpretive analysis (elaborated in Section 5.2).

4.4.2.2 Steps Taken to ensure Ethical Standards, Reliability and Validity in this Research

In order to convince the audience that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, a researcher must take appropriate steps to ensure that ethical, reliability and validity standards of research are satisfied (Robson, 2002; Creswell, 2003; Miles and Huberman, 1994).

Appropriate ethical standards were followed in this current study. First, having met the guidelines of the University, ethical approval was granted (see Appendix 1) for the researcher to commence the fieldwork for this study. Following that, the first contact with participants in this study was made to request their kindness in supporting this study (see Appendix 2). Ethically too, the participants in this study are matured people ranging from a minimum of 25 years of age, thus, no additional ethical permission was required. Further, with regards to participation in this study, participants were kindly requested to support this study and were clearly informed that they could opt out of the interview at any moment if they feel like withdrawing their interest in participating. Furthermore, as required by social science research guidelines, participants were not only assured of their anonymity in this research but also of the fact that the data collected will be strictly used for academic purposes (e.g. Hagan, 1993; Berg, 2001).

To ensure the reliability and validity of this research, several steps were taken (see Table 4.5). As evident in that Table, the theoretical grounding of this current study was motivated by the research gaps (and questions) that this study aimed to fill. Furthermore, relevant

methodological guidelines were followed in ensuring sampling suitability, and rigorous and organised interviewing process that is guided by the code for Social Science Research. Thus, in the interviewing process, not only did the researcher ensure the confidentiality of respondents as well as allowing them the freedom to opt out of the interview process, if they felt like, but also the researcher followed an iterative interview approach in order to gain a deep understanding of the explored phenomenon.

Table 4. 4: The measures used in this study to ensure reliability and validity of the research

| The measures used in this study to ensure reliability and validity of the research | | |
|---|--|---|
| S/Nr. | Reliability / Validity | Methodological Actions Taken |
| 1 | Reliability and validity: Research Problems | The conceptualisation for this research is based on existing research gaps (Griffiths, 2009) |
| 2 | Validity: Interview Related | Reactivity (the influence of the researcher's presence on the interviewee) is one of the known threats of qualitative research (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Robson, 2002). As a result, as these scholars note, respondents may not provide detailed answer on some issues. To address this threat, the researcher repeatedly motivated the interviewee and also assured them that data collected through the interviews will be used only for academic purpose and will be kept strictly confidential - [Appendix 2 and Chapter 4] |
| 3 | Validity: Data Analysis | Researcher biases (influence of the researcher's assumptions and preconceptions) are another threat in qualitative research (e.g. Bryman, 2004; Ahern, 1999). To address this threat, this study followed methodological logic (Bryman, 2004; Ahern, 1999) and applied researcher reflexivity notion. Reflexivity implies that researchers should be aware of the effects of their “methods, values, biases, decisions and mere presence in the situations they investigate” (Bryman, 2004, p.543). Guided by subjective awareness principle, this researcher did not allow his feelings and pre-conceptions influence his sense of judgment and efforts to make meaning out of the collected data |
| 4 | Validity: Findings and influence of subjectivity in interpretation | Appropriate steps were taken in the data analysis procedures to address subjectivity concern in qualitative research. (1) A rigorous data analysis procedure was taken to ensure that the conclusions from this study match with the perceptions of the respondents (2) The interviewees' responses were recorded electronically (Ayoko <i>et al.</i> , 2012; Opute, 2014) (3) The conclusions from this study were checked with respondents to ensure that interpretations do not vary from the perception of interviewees (e.g. Lacey and Luff, 2001; Rowley, 2004) (4) The conclusions from this study are supported with verbatim comments from interviewees (Smith and Osborn, 2003, Ayoko <i>et al.</i> , 2012; Opute, 2014) (5) The conclusions from this study were based on evidence from interviews and observation of respondents during interviews (e.g. Byrne, 2001; Charmaz, 2006) |
| Source: Author | | |

4.4.3 Summary

4.4.3.1 The Main Conclusions in this Chapter

This chapter has explained the methodological approach adopted in exploring the social identity influence on the consumer preference formation of Nigerians in the UK. The methodological features of this study are summarized in Table 4.4 below, and following that, the core steps taken are summarised.

Table 4. 5: The Methodological Features

| The Methodological Features. | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Research Features | For this Study |
| Research Philosophy | Interpretivism |
| Research Approach | Qualitative – Inductive Case Study |
| Data Collection methods | Interpretive Focus Personal interviews, and observation |
| Sampling and Sample size | Purposive sampling enhanced through a combination of convenient sampling and snowballing, to achieved desired sample size. |
| Analysis | Iterative Interpretive Analysis, involving constant comparison of data |

Source: Author

Methodologically, the first step taken in this chapter was to reiterate the aim and location of this study. Following that, several steps were taken to ensure that appropriate methodological benchmarks are achieved “to enable readers to understand what has been done and so make a judgment about the quality and usefulness of the work ” (Fade, 2004, p.648).

The first methodological step taken was to position this study in the realm of research paradigm. The paradigmatic position of this study is described as interpretivism (Crotty, 1998), and its suitability has been justified in Section 4.2.2. In line with the aforementioned interpretivism nature, this research is qualitative and case study based. These features have been explained in this Chapter.

Also, the relevant information about the participants in this study and their demographics have been explained in this Chapter. In the last part of this Chapter, the researcher explained the steps taken to ensure the reliability and validity of this research in Section 4.4.3.2, and the core methodological steps summarised in Table 4.5. Also, in the aforementioned Section, the steps taken to ensure ethical conformity have been pinpointed. Also to ensure ethical conformity, the approval of the Gatekeeper's consent was required in order to permit the researcher to interview workers in the organisation (see appendix 6).

Finally, as Table 4.5 shows too, and elaborated in chapter 5, a rigorous and iterative coding process, involving comparative analysis, was used to obtain a clear understanding of emergent interview data. To check for interviewer subjectivity threats, the conclusions from this current study were checked with the respondents.

Chapter Five: Data Analysis

5.1 Introduction

Having obtained permission from the interviewees, the interviews for this research were audio-taped to make sure that full details, as narrated by the respondents, are retained (Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003; Rich *et al.*, 2002). Later, the audio-recordings were transcribed verbatim (e.g. Opute, 2014; Robson, 2000). These preliminary analytical steps are important and increase the validity of qualitative research findings, as they enable the researcher to obtain a valid description of the verbal communication during the interviews (Robson, 2000). The interview transcripts were then thematically analysed and thoroughly examined for information and the analytical process followed is described in detail in the subsequent sections. Efforts were made to analyse the interview transcripts as soon as possible after each interview was completed to allow the researcher utilise emerging insights as guide for subsequent interviews (Bryman, 2004).

5.2 The Analytical Steps Explained

The purpose of this study is to understand in full the collective identity behaviour of Nigerians based in the UK and the consumers preference formation influence. Consequently, the analytical procedures for this study followed the guideline for interpretive approach (IA) for thematically examining qualitative data (e.g. Andrade, 2009; Fade, 2004; Thomas, 2006). According to Berg (2001), data analysis can be defined as consisting of three concurrent flows of action: data reduction, data display, and conclusions and verification (see also

Huberman and Miles, 1994, pp. 10-12). The analytical steps taken in this study aimed to achieve the aforementioned three flows of action. While also drawing from the iterative perspective, where data collection and analysis were undertaken alongside each other - hence observation approach was implemented alongside interviewing (Hagos, 2015; Andrade, 2009; Bryman, 2004). As recommended in methodological literature (e.g. Bryman, 2004), not only did the researcher refer back from one to the other as the research progressed, but also the analysis of earlier interviews influenced the focus of subsequent interviews, especially where insights were captured that required further investigation (see also Charmaz, 2006).

To gain a full sense of the data for this study, the analytical process involved a thorough reading of the interview transcripts (several times), moving backward and forward in the text (Auerbach and Silverstain, 2003) and appropriate coding was undertaken (e.g. Gill, 2014; Bryman, 2004; Smith and Osborn, 2003). The researcher carefully examined the respondents' comments to identify the core insights with regards to the conceptualised concepts. Using this approach, the core facts in the interviewees' responses have been identified (Czarniawska, 1998). Tables 5.1, 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4 show samples of interview transcripts, non-verbal cues through observation, along with the conceptualised concepts. While Tables 5.1 and 5.3 are presented below, Tables 5.2 and 5.4 are presented in the Appendices section, namely appendices 8 and 9 respectively. Reflecting verbatim responses of interviewees and their non-verbal communications, the contents of all four Tables have been organised uniformly based on central features, for example, influential factors of consumer preference formation, societal pressure, influence of ethnic/tribal culture, influence of national culture, factors considered before buying high involvement products, amongst others.

Table 5. 1: Excerpts from transcripts from Interview with Interviewee about Consumer Preference Formation Towards High Involvement Products

| Excerpts from transcripts from Interview with Interviewee about Consumer Preference Formation Towards High Involvement Products | |
|--|--|
| To protect the confidentiality of respondents, their personal details are not mentioned here. Gestures and body language expressions of the respondents are shown in bold. Minimal coding is shown in italics. | |
| Researcher's Analysis of Transcripts | Transcription of Researcher's questions and Respondent's answers |
| 1 | Q – What in your opinion are the factors that will influence you to buy |
| 2 | high involvement products? |
| 3 Influential factors of | A1 – [Eeemmm], Factors like peer, group or societal pressure |
| 4 consumer preference | influence me [He grins] because I want to measure up to others [<i>happy</i> |
| 5 formation | <i>that he seemed knowledgeable about high involvement products</i>]. He |
| 6 | mentioned a car as an example. [Voice and body showed thinking |
| 7 Example of factors | and blinking]He added that the way each consumer considers a |
| 8 | high involvement product differs for the other. |
| 9 | Q – Why do you think that each of the factors mentioned above are |
| 10 | important to your consumption decisions? |
| 11 | A2 – [He shakes his shoulders] Nigerian background people like |
| 12 Societal pressure | comparison (copycat) [he smiles]. They do not wait to have the |
| 13 | resources. Hence, they end up being indebted. |
| 14 | Q –How much influence does your tribal/ethnic culture have on your |
| 15 Influence of | consumption behaviour? |
| 16 tribal/ethnic culture | A4 – [He leans back, looks to the ceiling], Well, the way I was |
| 17 | brought up is that my consumption pattern should be in line with my |
| 18 Financial strength | pocket [<i>affordability</i>]. Hence, my ethnic/tribal culture has great |
| 19 | influence on me. |
| 20 | Q – How does your national culture influence your purchase and use of |
| 21 Influence of national | the items for social occasions? |
| 22 culture | A7 – Weeeeeeell, our national culture is that whatever thing they see |
| 23 | you with is what they will value you for.....Some people do so, but it |
| 24 | does not influence me. |
| 25 | Q – What factors do you consider when buying your high involvement |
| 26 | products for social occasions? |
| 27 | A11 – [He coughs, stares at me intensely] Factors such as cash |
| 28 | availability, convenience, the type of high involvement product and |
| 29 | family consent (<i>pleased that there is consultation with other family</i> |
| 30 Factors considered | <i>members</i>). |
| 31 before buying high | Q – What factors do you consider in deciding which product you buy? |
| 32 involvement products | A12 – [Sitting upright, thoughtfully and glancing through the window] |
| 33 | Considering factors include: Need, Money, Quality, and Price of the |
| 34 Influenced by the | product. |
| 35 duration of stay in the | Q – How long have you lived in the UK? Do you think that the fact that |
| 36 UK | you have lived in the UK for a fairly long time has some influence on |
| 37 | the products you buy and how you use them for social occasions? |
| 38 | A13 – I have lived in the UK for 10 years. Yes, this period of time has |
| 39 | influence on by buying decisions because as the saying goes, “when |
| 40 | you live in Rome, do what the Romans do”. |
| 41 Influence of a role | Q – Do you have a role model in the Nigerian community in the UK? |
| 42 model | Do you think his/her consumer preference for some products has some |
| 43 | influence on your consumer preference <i>or choice</i> (including buying and |
| 44 | using) for these types of products? If yes, how? |
| 45 | A14 – [Smiles, shakes head from side to side] No, I don't have any |
| 46 | role model. |
| 47 | |
| 48 | |

For transcripts reported here, the interviews were based on questions that sought to understand the factors that influence consumer preference formation towards buying costly products and having high risk. In most cases, the insights gained from the interviews reveal the level of socio-cultural inclination of the consumer of the high involvement products. The respondents were allowed much freedom in their responses. A1, A2, are responses from the same respondent to the different questions.

Table 5.2 - See Appendix 8

Table 5. 2: Excerpts from transcripts from Interview with Interviewee about Consumer Preference Formation Towards High Involvement Products.

| To protect the confidentiality of respondents, their personal details are not mentioned here. Gestures and body language expressions of the respondents are shown in bold. Minimal coding is shown in italics. | |
|--|---|
| Researcher's Analysis of Transcripts | Transcription of Researcher's questions and Respondent's answers |
| Influential factors of consumer preference formation | Q – What in your opinion are the factors that will influence you to buy high involvement products? A1 – [Weeellllhhh], My affordability. [He repositions himself] I question myself, can I bare the loss? Is it useful? Does it really meet my need? What are the benefits of it? [<i>Pleased with his understanding of the subject matter</i>]. Every penny counts. [He tills forward and gesticulates]I will consider what I can do with the money back at home rather than investing it here, e.g. I have been buying musical instruments which cost twice that amount at home. |
| Example of high involvement product | Q –Why do you think that each of the factors mentioned above are important to your consumption decisions? A2–[He thinks for a while] It has to do with my status in this country. I am an economic migrant. The money I make has to be used wisely. To bring up my children is capital intensive. [pauses for a while]. I bought a musical instrument some years ago but the project hasn't started.....just tying down capital. |
| Societal pressure | Q – How much influence does the general culture of your country have on your high involvement products buying behaviour? A3 – The Nigerian culture wants us to consider a substitute product than buying something that is expensive. |
| Influence of tribal/ethnic culture | Q –How much influence does your tribal/ethnic culture have on your consumption behaviour? A4 – [He looks down for a while], My perspective is changing. My tribal/ethnic culture has a moderate influence. [<i>cultural influence is moderate</i>]. Buying something today for me is something I will think in terms of the Naira [<i>Nigerian currency</i>]. |
| Financial strength | Q – To what extent does your peer group influence your buying attitude towards high involvement products? A5 – Peer groups have a huge impact [<i>affirmation of peer group pressure</i>] I do seek their advice. |
| Influence of national culture | Q – How does your national culture influence your purchase and use of the items for social occasions? A7 – My national culture has a great deal of influence. The way I was brought up is important. Nigerians have the flamboyant attitude which plays a great role. |
| Factors considered before buying high involvement products | Q – Could you please explain if and how peer group networks influence your purchase and use of high involvement products for social occasions. A9 – [He ponders for a while] Peer group network will always play a role. People you move with.... you will like to be part of what they do. |
| Influenced by the duration of stay in the UK | |

| | |
|---|---|
| | (<i>strong affirmation of peer influence</i>). My peers are of like minds. We go for what we can buy. |
| Influence of a role model | Q – What factors do you consider in deciding which product you buy? A12 – [Sitting backwards and smiling] Religious belief; is there any alternative? It is very necessary for me to have it? Q – How long have you lived in the UK? Do you think that the fact that you have lived in the UK for a fairly long time has some influence on the products you buy and how you use them for social occasions? A13 – I have been in the UK for 8 years but it has no influence on me. |
| For transcripts reported here, the interviews were based on questions that sought to understand the factors that influence consumer preference formation towards buying costly products and having high risk. In most cases, the insights gained from the interviews reveal the level of socio-cultural inclination of the consumer of the high involvement products. The respondents were allowed much freedom in their responses. A1, A2, are responses from the same respondent to the different questions. | |

Table 5.4 - See Appendix 9.

The analysis consisted of coding and developing themes, organizing the themes, and then deducing and commenting on the findings. The coding was based on the questions asked in the interviews, interpretations by the researchers, and ideas from the relevant literature. Marshall and Rossman's (1999) comparison analysis method was used throughout the data analysis process to link data by constantly comparing and contrasting them (Strauss, 1987). Similar answers were grouped, and frequencies were computed. For the purposes of data presentation, Booms and Bitner's (1981) extended marketing mix (7Ps) was selected as a viable point of departure for organizing store attributes and descriptions, since it is generic, simple, and comprehensive. Both "hard" and "soft" (physical, emotional/affective and cognitive) as well as relational dimensions/components were covered by this framework (Bitner, 1991; Rafiq and Ahmed, 1995). The categories (i.e. the marketing mix elements) were people, physical evidence, place, price, process, product, and promotion. All selected quotes were translated into English in the final stage of report writing.

Although there is no general consensus about how coding should be done, there is agreed understanding amongst scholars that coding should involve moving from generating codes that relate closely to the data towards more abstract conceptualisation (Bryman, 2004). Within the literature on interpretive analysis (also referred to as interpretive phenomenology

analysis [IPA] by grounded theorists), different coding guidelines exist. Grounded theory scholars (Strauss and Corbin, 1998) advocate three levels of coding - open coding, axial coding and selective coding. Axial coding has been criticised severally for the fact that it ends the exploratory stage of coding too early (Bryman, 2004). Social constructivism perspective of grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006; Charmaz, 2001) describes three coding stages, namely initial coding (applying provisional codes that remain close to the data), focused coding (here, the most significant codes are used to synthesize data) and categories.

Following further interpretive analysis logic that it is necessary to apply some flexibility in using these coding procedures (Walker and Myrick, 2006), this current study embraced Özbilgin *et al.*, (2015) and mobilised Glaser's (2005) more open-ended approach in generating codes and identifying the relationship between the codes throughout the iterative process of data analysis (see also Kan and Parry, 2004). Following interpretive analysis guideline (Bryman, 2004), in reviewing the interview transcripts, the theoretical significance of emergent facts was labelled. Furthermore, to achieve the interpretive focus of this study, memos were written during the interviewing (see Table 5.5), and also during the coding process (see Tables 5.6 to 5.9). While Tables 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8 and 5.9 are presented here. In the memos written during the interviews, the researcher flagged the key cues from the interviewees' responses to the questions asked. With regards to the memos written during the coding, the contents of Tables 5.10 to 5.11 (see appendices 8 and 9 respectively) are organised in a way that the emergent coding is flagged alongside the questions that the interviewees responded to.

Table 5. 3: A Sample of Memo written during the Interview

| A Sample of Memo written during the Interview | |
|--|--|
| Interview Questions | Some Key Facts Noted from Interviewee's Responses |
| <p>Q: <i>What in your opinion are the factors that will influence you to buy high involvement products? (I mean products that may be expensive and are used in the Nigerian social community. For example, clothing, jewelleries, mobile phones and expensive cars.</i></p> | <p>Important for him to show his Nigerian identity. The behaviour of other members in the community will influence. But he is more influenced by his finance. I will not borrow in order to behave like some Nigerians would do.</p> <p>I have close friends who are not Nigerians, in a way they also influence my buying behaviour.</p> <p>Needs a car to move from one point to another. Will not buy an expensive car and will also not buy expensive jewelries.</p> |
| <p>Q: <i>How much influence does the general culture of your country have on your high involvement products buying behaviour?</i></p> | <p>As said earlier, it is important for me to show my Nigerian identity; so for example, I buy typical clothing used in the Nigerian community. My family trained me and my brothers to live in this way. So, to some extent, we could spend hugely to meet this clothing need and even mobile phones.</p> |
| <p>Q: <i>To what extent does your peer group influence your buying attitude towards high involvement products?</i></p> | <p>Has many friends and peers who are non-Nigerians. He learns values and views from them and these values and views do influence his thinking and how he makes decisions as to what he buys. I live in a multi-cultured society, so of course the values and the ways that other people do things have some measure of influence on me and my behaviour too.</p> |
| <p>Q: <i>What is your level of education? Do you think your educational exposure influences your purchase behaviour with regards to high involvement products?</i></p> | <p>Holds a Master's degree from a UK university. Educational exposure influences his purchase behaviour of high involvement products</p> |
| <p>Q: <i>How does your educational exposure influence your purchase decisions?</i></p> | <p>Obtained vast knowledge through his education, and through that has enhanced his understanding of life and the way to approach life As a result, how processes information for buying decisions is different from how it was before he studied. He will not just buy things because other people are doing that, but rather his decision to buy things will be influenced more by personal factors.</p> |

Table 5. 4: An Example of the Analytical Memos written during the Coding Process

| An Example of the Analytical Memos written during the Coding Process | |
|---|---|
| Original transcript | Exploratory comments |
| <p>Q: <i>What is your level of education? Do you think your level of education in a way moderates the level of influence of your national or ethnic/tribal or peer group influence on the nature of high involvement products, as well as how you use them for social occasions?</i></p> <p>A: I have Master's in Industrial Relations and another in Business Management. All these do not influence my buying behaviour. My societal relation has more influence.</p> <p>Q: <i>What factors do you consider when buying your high involvement products (products that are expensive and risky) for social occasions?</i></p> <p>A: [He smiles] The first thing I consider is how the society perceives the product. It is not religiously ethical, and also considering the price, quality and durability, I will not buy if these factors are lacking.</p> <p>Q: What factors do you consider in deciding which product you buy?</p> <p>A: Well ..., The society, what is in vogue, the family, price is it affordable? Some. Some products may be fluctuating in price and this should be considered before buying.</p> <p>Q: <i>How long have you lived in the UK? Do you think that the fact that you have lived in the UK for a fairly long time has some influence on the products you buy and how you use them for social occasions?</i></p> <p>A: [Pauses thoughtfully] I have lived in the UK over 7 years. My social classification or orientation has not changed. My living in the UK has not influenced the way I buy such products.</p> <p>Q: <i>Do you have a role model in the Nigerian community in the UK? Do you think his/her consumer preference for some products has some influence on your consumer preference or choice (including buying and using) for these types of products. If yes, how?</i></p> <p>A: [He grins] I don't have a particular role model but I do look up to people how they buy high involvement products. This influences me.</p> <p>Q: <i>How does your national culture influence your purchase and use of the items for social occasions?</i></p> <p>A: [He cogitates] The national culture has great influence on my purchase and use of the items for social occasions. For example, there are some cars that one is not allowed to take to my country. A big car will be preferred over a small sports car. For example, to attend a wedding ceremony, I will use a big car as it is generally accepted in the national culture.</p> | <p><i>Identification of social influence in buying behaviour over the level of education.</i></p> <p><i>Identifies factors to be considered when buy high involvement product for social occasions.</i></p> <p><i>A blend of factors: social, family and financial are identified.</i></p> <p><i>Influence in buying products as a result of living for long in the UK</i></p> <p><i>Identifies no change in buying products despite living in the UK for a long time.</i></p> <p><i>Identifies influence from several people rather than a role model on buying high involvement products.</i></p> <p><i>Identifies that national culture influences the purchase and use of items of social occasions. Shows high level of social engagement.</i></p> |

Table 5. 5: Another Example of the Analytical Memos written during the Coding Process

| Table 5.7: Another Example of the Analytical Memos written during the Coding Process | |
|---|---|
| Original transcript | Exploratory comments |
| <p>Q: <i>What in your opinion are the factors that will influence you to buy high involvement products? (By high involvement products, it means products that are expensive and risky. They are high value goods that are purchased only after long and careful consideration. Purchase decisions will require extensive thought and a high level of involvement.)</i></p> <p>A: [Eeerrrrmmm] The first factor is affordability. I will ask myself the question “can I bear the cost?”, I consider its usefulness. I will also ask “does it really meet my needs?; what are its benefits?, etc. [He makes gestures with the hands and body movement] To me every penny counts. (He shows interest in the topic and with great zeal, he continues talking). I need to save for the time I will return to Nigeria, so I will not spend my money any how here.</p> <p>Q: <i>How much influence does the general culture of your country have on your high involvement products (products that are expensive and risky) buying behaviour?</i></p> <p>A: The culture of Nigeria wants us to consider substitute products rather than buying something that is expensive [He speaks with enthusiasm] Also if you want to buy something, you need to know that person well before you get involved as it is expensive and has a high risk.</p> <p>Q: <i>To what extent does your peer group influence your buying attitude towards high involvement products (products that are expensive and risky)</i></p> <p>A: The influence of my peer group has a huge impact on my buying attitude towards high involvement products. I do seek their advice.</p> <p>Q: <i>How much influence does your social network have on your high involvement products buying attitude and how?</i></p> <p>A: The influence of my social network on my buying attitude of high involvement product is moderate. Whatever people say on the social network influences.</p> <p>Q: <i>How does your national culture influence your purchase (i.e. your buying decision) and use of the items for social occasions?</i></p> <p>A: The influence of my national culture on my purchase and use of the items of social occasions is of great impact on me. [His voice gets louder] The way in which one was brought up is important..... I consider personal needs in relation to the product. This is the culture. Nigerians have a flamboyant attitude which plays an important role.</p> <p>Q: <i>Could you please explain if and how peer group networks influence your purchase and use of high involvement products for social occasions.</i></p> <p>A: Peer group network will always play a role. People you move with you will like to be part of what they do. My peers are of like minds. We go for what we can afford..... No high risks</p> | <p><i>Identification of several factors influencing someone to buying high involvement products.</i></p> <p><i>Thinking ahead about his return to Nigeria- a factor which also influences his spending on high involvement products in the UK.</i></p> <p><i>Substitute products should be considered over expensive ones.</i></p> <p><i>It is important to know the person who you are buying a high involvement product from it is expensive and has high risk.</i></p> <p><i>Identifies that peer group has huge impact on buying attitude towards high involvement products.</i></p> <p><i>Identifies influence of social network on buying attitude of high involvement products.</i></p> <p><i>Identifies that the national culture influences purchasing and the use of items of social occasions.</i></p> <p><i>Identifies that peer group networks influence the purchase and use of high involvement products for social occasions.</i></p> |

Table 5. 6: Another Example of the Analytical Memos written during the Coding Process

| Another Example of the Analytical Memos written during the Coding Process | |
|---|---|
| Original transcript | Exploratory comments |
| <p>Q: <i>How much influence does your social network have on your high involvement products buying attitude and how?</i></p> <p>A: [He laughs] I belong to the Nigerian Chartered Accountant social network. Sometimes membership of this network influence me buy something that I did not intend to buy or did not have the need for</p> <p>Q: <i>How does your national culture influence your purchase (i.e. your buying decision) and use of the items for social occasions?</i></p> <p>A: [He tilts backwards] Our National culture is the type that “whatever they see you with is what they will value you for.” Some people do so but it does not influence me.</p> <p>Q: <i>How does, tribal/ethnic culture influence your purchase and use of high involvement products for attending social occasions?</i></p> <p>A: It does not influence me.</p> <p>Q: <i>Could you please explain if and how peer group networks influence your purchase and use of high involvement products for social occasions.</i></p> <p>A: Again, as I said earlier on, peer group networks do not influence my purchase and use of high involvement products for social occasions [He laughs]. However, I may buy but it depends on my willingness and not on the peer group networks.</p> <p>Q: <i>What is your level of education? Do you think your level of education in a way moderates the level of influence of your national or ethnic/tribal or peer group influence on the nature of high involvement products, as well as how you use them for social occasions? (By peer group, it means people of approximately the same age, status and interest).</i></p> <p>A: My level education is Master’s in Chartered Accountant. Because of the groups that I belong to, sometimes these groups pressured me to buy products of high involvement. However, the determining factor is liquidity (i.e. having the cash to pay for it).</p> <p>Q: <i>What factors do you consider when buying your high involvement products (products that are expensive and risky) for social occasions?</i></p> <p>A: Well, the factors that I consider when buying my high involvement products are: cash availability, convenience, the type of high involvement product, and the family consent.</p> <p>Q: <i>What factors do you consider in deciding which product you buy?</i></p> <p>A: [Blinks rapidly] The factors that I do consider in deciding which product I buy are: need, money, quality, and price of the product.</p> <p>Q: <i>How long have you lived in the UK? Do you think that the fact that you have lived in the UK for a fairly long time has some influence on the products you buy and how you use them for social occasions?</i></p> <p>A: [He takes in a deep breath] I have lived in the UK for 10 years. Yes, it has some influence because “when you are in Rome, you do what the Romans do”. I make sure the products are of good quality but not over the top (that is, not too expensive).</p> | <p><i>Identifies the influence of social network on high involvement products buying attitude.</i></p> <p><i>Identifies that the national culture influences some people but not everyone</i></p> <p><i>Identifies that tribal/ethnic culture does not influence this respondent.</i></p> <p><i>Respondent may be influenced by peer group network depending on his willingness and not on being pressured by them.</i></p> <p><i>The determining factor moderating the level of influence of my national or ethnic/tribal or peer group on the nature of high involvement products is financial rather than the level of education.</i></p> <p><i>Identifies that cash availability is a very determining factor to be considered when buying high involvement products.</i></p> <p><i>The respondent's purchase behaviour is influenced by the length of time he has lived in the UK.</i></p> |

5.3 Making Meaning out of Data: Further Analytical Steps Taken

Following guidelines for a robust analytical process towards ensuring that appropriate meanings are derived from qualitative data, data triangulation (e.g. Yin, 1994; Özbilgin *et al*, 2015) and comparative coding (e.g. Charmaz, 2006; Strauss and Corbin, 1998) were used in this study. Data triangulation - the emergent insights from the analysis of interview data were examined together with the facts that emerged from the observation evidence (see Tables 5.1 to 5.4). In addition to thoroughly engaging with the interview transcripts, involving reading the texts line by line several times (Charmaz, 2006) and comparing with non-verbal communication data, comparative coding was also undertaken. In doing that, the researcher firstly wrote analytical memos for each interview during the analytical process, examples of these memos are presented in Tables 5.6, 5.7, 5.8 and 5.9. Memos were also written for the non-verbal communications (observatory data) (see Tables 5.10 and 5.11). Table 5.10 is presented in the appendices section as appendix 8 and Table 5.11 is also presented in the Appendices section as Appendix 9. In the memos written, the non-verbal communications were flagged, as well as meanings stated.

Table 5. 7: A Sample of the Analytical Memos written during the Coding Process reflecting non-verbal communication

| Sample of the Analytical Memos written during the Coding Process reflecting non-verbal communication | |
|--|---|
| Original transcript | Exploratory comments |
| <p><i>Q: How does, tribal/ethnic culture influence your purchase and use of high involvement products for attending social occasions?</i></p> <p>A: Ehmm, [he smiles broadly] My tribal or ethnic culture is very important to me. It stems from my national culture and people exhibit their wealth during social occasions. It influences and enables me to fit into the society as required.</p> <p>A: Well, I am very proud of my ethnic culture [she opens her eyes widely and depicts grins on the lips]. Oh yes, my tribal culture has great influence on my use of high involvement products, for example, it makes me feel authentic and can identity myself to belong to a group. It gives me high esteem.</p> <p>A: Yes indeed, my tribal culture, just as the national culture is quite important to me [he smiles tenderly], and that is why Nigerians attend birthdays and marriage ceremonies in flashy cars and expensive dresses to show off.</p> <p><i>Q: Could you please explain if and how peer group networks influence your purchase and use of high involvement products for social occasions.</i></p> <p>A: [He sits upright and coughs] ... hesitantly he affirms - It is difficult to say no to your peers since they have supported me before. They may think I am difficult. They can go as far as contributing or donating to enable me to buy ostentatious product.</p> <p>A: [Strong eye contact] We do things together in the peer group and influence each other. For example, some of my peers had JEEP cars and advised me to get one and I did so. We all ride in JEEPs.</p> <p><i>Q: How much influence does your social network have on your high involvement products buying attitude and how?</i></p> <p>A: [He brushes his hair, striking it from fore front to back of the neck] Social network influences very much. There is a saying that "Show me your friends and I will tell you who you are" [he smiles broadly]. I want to identity myself with my social network friends.</p> <p>A: Well ... Ehmm, [robbing his hands] I mean, as Nigerians here, we still live as Nigerians, my social network influences me. Because of advertisements, I want to do the same and look like the others.</p> <p><i>Q: Do you think your level of education in a way moderates the level of influence of your national or ethnic/tribal or peer group influence on the nature of high involvement products, as well as how you use them for social occasions?</i></p> <p>A: Yes! Education matters a lot to me. My level of education moderates the level of influence on the nature of high involvement products and even the way I use them for social occasions. [She gesticulates and rocks forward and backward]</p> <p>A: [Glancing at the ceiling] I am reasonable educated. Education wants me to act on my own values. Yes, it plays a significant role.</p> | <p>The interviewee expresses through a broad smile how important is his tribal culture to him and his way of doing things.</p> <p>By widening the eyes and smiling, she shows happiness with her ethnic culture. Ethnic culture influences and defines social status.</p> <p>He is quite happy about his tribal cultural influence on attending social occasions. He shows off during such occasions.</p> <p>He readjusts his sitting position and coughs – hesitantly and then thoughtfully, he affirms that peer group networks influence each other, give support to enable purchase of ostentatious products</p> <p>She makes a strong eye contact, and then emphasizes on peer group pressure and social identity.</p> <p>While brushing his hair with his left hand palm, he points out that social network is influential and he wants to identify himself to it.</p> <p>He believes that social network influences very much, especially with advertisements.</p> <p>She confirms that her level of education moderates the level influence and the way she uses high involvement products for social occasions.</p> <p>On glancing at the ceiling, he says education plays significant role.</p> |
| Note: The excerpts shown here are based on the interviews with several interviewees. | |

Coding of two interviewees' responses was undertaken as shown in Tables 5.12 and 5.13.

Table 5. 8: A Sample of the Coding of an interview - data1

| Coding | Interviewee's Comment |
|---|--|
| Level of education not influencing buying high involvement products for social occasion | I have Master's in Industrial Relations and another in Business Management. I am a fully trained UK lecturer. But all these do not moderate or influence my ethical or tribal or peer group perception on my buying behaviour. |
| Societal relations and religious perceptions | My societal relation and religious perceptions have more influence on my buying and using of high involvement products for social occasions. |
| Society and product value | My perception of the society of how they see the product, what is the value of the product in the society? If the society does not see the product of value, I cannot place a lot of money on that product. I also consider the price, the quality of the product and for how long I am going to use the product, i.e. the durability? |
| Factors to be considered before buying | The first factor I consider before buying a product is the society (which acts a vogue). I also consider the family, the price; is it affordable? |
| Impact of price fluctuation is considered | There are some products that are considered to be of very high value but the moment you buy them, the following day their price drops. For example, one can buy a car for £50000 and the following week it may be selling for £45000 or lesser. This is something that I consider – the fluctuation in price. |
| Living in the UK and social classification orientation | No, I have lived in the UK for over 7 years now. My social classification orientation has not changed. |

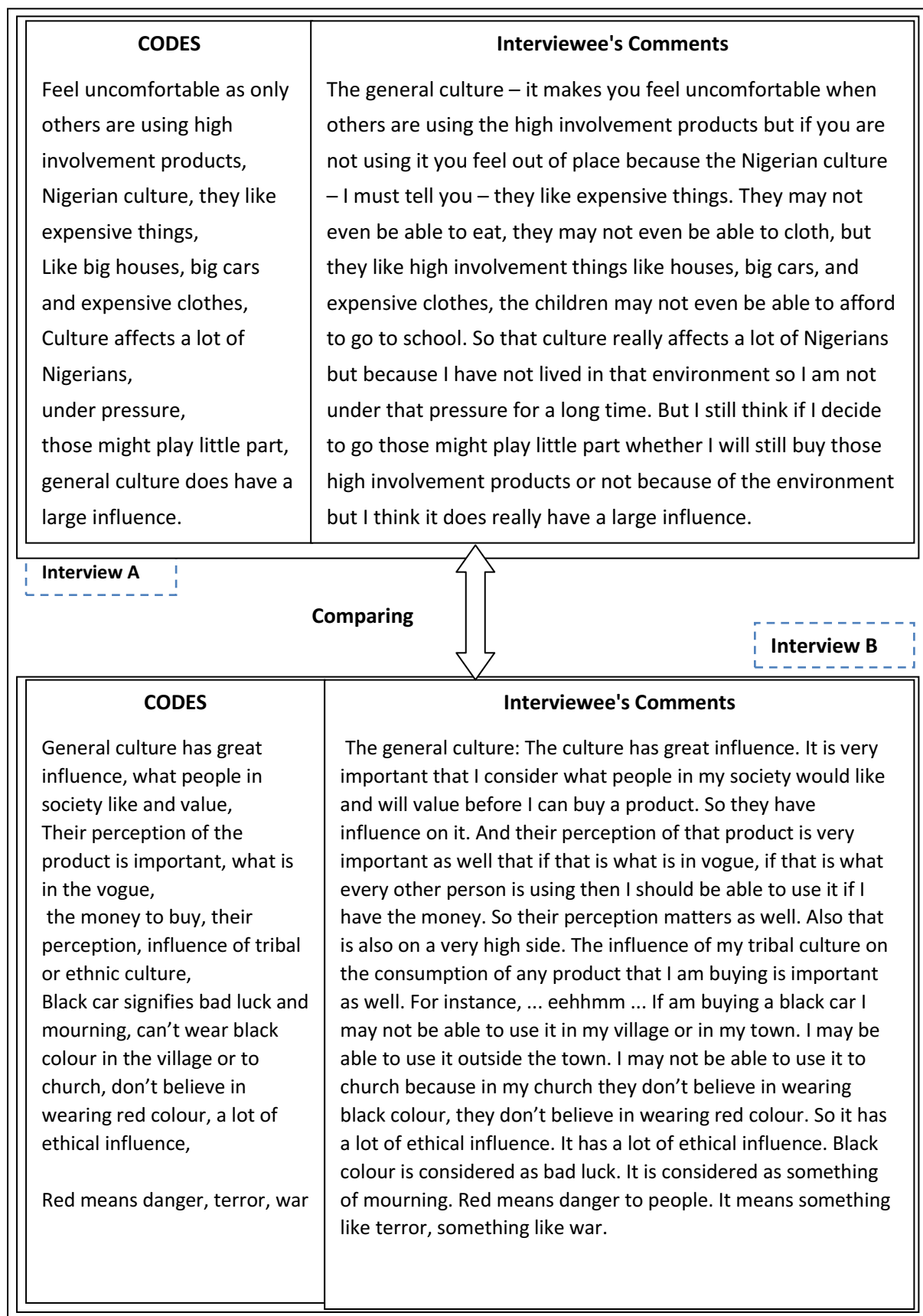
5.4 Comparative Coding

Subsequently, a two-stage comparative coding was undertaken. In the first stage, a comparative examination of the codes from two interviews was undertaken (see Table 5.14 and Figure 5.1). In the second stage, the researcher carried out a cross case examination of the codes for several interviews (see Table 5.15, Appendix 13 and Table 5.16, Appendix 14).

Table 5. 9: A Sample of comparing and contrasting codes and sub-categories emerging from interview data1 and interview data 2

| Interviewees' Comments, Open Coding and Revised Coding | Sub-Categories | Core Categories |
|--|---|---|
| The excerpts for Interviews - data 1 (presented first) and data 2 and coding (and revised coding) are presented here. | | |
| <p>My level of education does not moderate or influence my ethical or tribal or peer group perception on my buying behaviour.</p> <p>My societal relation and religious perceptions have more influence on my buying and using of high involvement products for social occasions.</p> <p><i>Initial coding – Ethical/tribal or peer group perception on buying behaviour is not influenced by the level of education</i></p> <p>My perception of the society of how they see the product, what is the value of the product in the society? If the society does not see the product of value, I cannot place a lot of money on that product.</p> <p><i>Initial coding – Perception of society influences on consumer preference formation</i></p> <p><i>After comparing both excerpts, the initial coding was revised.</i></p> <p><i>New coding (Sub-Categories) – Tribal/ethnic culture, Society</i></p> | <p><i>Educational Exposure</i></p> <p><i>Religious perception</i></p> <p><i>Tribal and ethical culture</i></p> <p><i>Influential societal perception</i></p> <p><i>Tribal/ethnic and Networking influence</i></p> | <p>Cultural Factors (including acculturation)</p> |
| <p>I rather want to be influenced by standards of appearance.</p> <p>The factors I considered when buying my high involvement products for social occasions include usability; I look for something that I will use it over and over; something that will still be useful after the first occasion.</p> <p><i>Initial coding – Uniqueness of the product, appearance</i></p> <p>I will look at the affordability and the appearance on me is very important</p> <p>There are some products with high risks that determine what type of people use them, they have been labeled.</p> <p><i>Initial coding –National culture, peer group influence</i></p> <p><i>After comparing both excerpts, the initial coding was revised.</i></p> <p><i>New coding (Sub-Categories) – Usability, repeated usage</i></p> | <p><i>Factors: usability, durability</i></p> <p><i>Affordability, appearance</i></p> <p><i>National culture,</i></p> <p><i>Repeated usage</i></p> | <p>Finance-based Factors</p> <p>Peer group influence, Affordability</p> |

Figure 5. 1: A Sample of Comparing of Codes from Interviews



Note: Interviewees A and B have been used here to protect the identity of respondents

In the last part of the second stage of the comparative coding, the researcher also carried out a cross case examination of the codes that emerged from the analysis of non-verbal communication of interviewees. A sample of the case by case evidence for each of the non-verbal elements for a few selected codes is presented in Table 5.18.

5.5 Examining (Coding of) Data based on Research Questions

Finally, since this study aimed to address three research questions (see Section 1,3), careful analytical examination of emergent data was undertaken to identify relevant insights that fit within the specific contexts in the underlying research questions. A sample of the emergent coding and themes are presented in Tables 5.17, 5.18 and 5.19. for the individual research questions respectively.

Research question one (RQ1): What features of the consumer preference of explored Nigerians in the UK are driven by personal or collective frame of preference or both? In other words, to what extent is the purchase preference and the use of high involvement products for social occasions influenced by social group identity features or individual features?

Table 5. 10: See Appendix 8

Table 5. 11: See Appendix 9

Table 5. 12: Sample of Open codes for RQ 1

| Open code | Examples of Interviewees' Comments |
|--|---|
| Influential factors are of status issues; Society measures wealth by use of high involvement products; Expensive mobile phone as an example of high involvement product; High involvement products should have incremental value over a period of time – products that appreciate in value when disposed of after usage; High involvement products as means of expressing oneself in society and act as facilitators; Culture links wealth to social status; High involvement products spell and define who one is; One needs accurate and consistent assessment before purchasing; It defines who one is; It creates social status; Consider the impact of buying decision on the family; | <p>The only factors that will influence me are of status issues. [Eeehhmm ... I mean] considering our culture, the type of watch that you wear, the type of jewelry that you wear and the type of clothing that you wear defines who you are. And, our society measures wealth by these high involvement products that we usually buy. If I have to buy a mobile phone for example, I will not just buy any cheap mobile phone. I will buy one which spells and defines my prosperity as you look at it.</p> <p>The type of high involvement product that I may think about is if it has incremental value over a period of time. What I trying to say is if the price of the product that I bought will appreciate and then I can dispose of it and make more wealth out of it, then I will do it.</p> <p>The reason why I do think these factors I have mentioned are important is that I do have a view of expressing myself in society and facilitate as well. Our culture is such that you are not given a nice chair if you are not wealthy. So if I buy, I am buying something that will spell and define who I am as I said earlier on. And my decision in the process will involve accurate and consistent assessment of any product that I want to buy or to invest in; will it define who I am? Will it create social status for me? If that be the case, then I will make a decision on that. I may consider the money involve as well as a key element for decision making and the impact of that product on my family as well. This is something that I may have to consider.</p> |

| | |
|---|---|
| Factor to consider is something to be used for a long time; Low risk, the cost of the product; | Ehmmm ... generally, the factors that will influence me to buy high involvement products will be something that I know that it will be useful to me for a long time and the risk factor there is not going to be too much for me. When I like something, I go for it. I don't go for it because other people are doing it or are using it. Some people use things because they want to show that they are using it but I go in for it because I like it. Is it something that I really need even if is expensive. |
| The factors are affordability, the amount risk involved, the usefulness of the product, the benefits for it; Is the product of immediate need? Should be something of priority; every penny counts, so spend wisely. | Factors that will influence me to buy high involvement products are first of all the affordability also I will also take into consideration whether I will be able to bear the high risk. Can I bear the losses? If it is something that I cannot bear the risk then there is no reason why I should go in for it. I have to look at the issues surrounding it, whether "does it meet my needs?" What are its usefulness? I also have to find out what are the benefits for it. And for me to commit myself to it, I must see if it something of an immediate need; is it something of priority? Is it something that I need at that moment? Every penny counts, so I want to consider what I can do with that money back home. I buy musical instruments which are expensive but the value drops from the moment you buy it if you want to sell it at home. So I will rather sell it here and sent the money home. That is why I have come to that conclusion. If I look at my status in this country, I am an economic migrant and so as I said earlier, every penny counts, as an economic migrant, the amount I send, I have to spend it wisely. |
| Social communities, networks, peers and friend, religiosity, etc. | These kind of products are used typically in social groups, especially in Nigerian social groups to show off. So, peoples buying decisions would be influenced by the behaviour of other people in the social communities towards such products. I buy the kind of things that other people in the Nigerian social group, especially my heroes and people I hold in high esteem, buy. My educational exposure influences my decisions as to what high involvement products I buy. I try to be economically wise, so personal factors are more important to me than social group factors. I have a lot of friends who are not Nigerians, and the way they behave also influences the nature of things that I buy. My religion is very important to me, I will not waste money buying very expensive items. I would rather use the money to help somebody in need. |
| Need is a factor to consider; the importance of the product; the value of the product; the society, the class of people one moves with them; Identifying oneself with a group of people with what one puts on; the price to be considered; consider your personality; | First of all, the factor I consider is my need, it is very important. Do I really need the product? Is the product of any value to me? I also think of the issues of the society and class of people I move with also come into being. What do they use? What is it that if I put on, you will know that I belong to that group? In other words, the trend of the day is very important. Each factor is import because there is an element that constitutes consumer behaviour. When you are buying things, you want to relate it to the class of people you are dealing with. Your culture, your personality, and what you want to get out of the place, then eventually is the price; if can afford it. Every element is important. If it is something you cannot use in the society, then you will not buy. The type of people I mingle with and also the cost. |

Research question two (RQ2): What, if any, are the sub-groups differences in the social identity influence on high involvement products purchase (and use) preferences of UK based Nigerians?

Table 5. 13: Sample of Open codes for RQ 2

| Open code | Examples of Interviewees' Comments |
|--|--|
| General culture or National culture influences or determines consumption behaviour; Examples of high involvement products: jewelry, expensive watches and cars. Ostentatious goods as an expression of wealth. Tribal or ethnic culture exists alongside national culture. At the national culture level, display of wealth is a standard practice at social occasions; Prominent positions can be achieved through exhibition of wealth at social occasions; Buying high involvement products can enable a good fit into the society. The extent to which those behaviours may be exhibited will vary from one ethnic group to another. | <p>The general culture of my country very much influences or determines one's consumption behaviour when buying high involvement products like jewelry, expensive watches and cars, etc. Being in the Western society alone is not something that I may care much about but in my society it is very important to define your wealth to ostentatious goods.</p> <p>My tribe is a very significant tribe in the society. The culture that dominates my tribe is more or less that of the communal culture that you can identify with any other tribes in our society. I will say that my tribal or ethnic culture is influenced by the overall culture of our country. So whatever decision I make, it is influenced by the overruling culture of our country – the national culture.</p> <p>Well, it's just like ... My culture and my ethnicity's impact on my spending and buying behaviour stems from my national culture and I will say the tendency [not sure of that] to show you off; so the national culture twinkles down to my social groupings and culture. And so I am much influenced by my national culture. It is something that for social occasions everyone should use their wealth. It is something that is very well accepted and we all have to show our wealth and that defines who we are if you want to have a prominent position in the country.</p> <p>For social occasions within my tribe, it is better that individuals exhibit their wealth. It is something that is not mentioned enough but it is defined by more or less a kind of psychological contract [kind of]. You come out and exhibit your wealth during festivals, during celebrations and the rest. So wealth is something that is exhibited; it is something that we all do. So buying high involvement products is for me to be able to fit into society as it is required.</p> |
| Peer groups do influence very much attitudes towards buying high involvement products; buying a Mercedes Benz because a friend just got the latest model; enhances status; social network transcends all cultures; impact of social network is very high; social network offers a platform for fast spreading of messages and information is easily shared; peer group and network influence is very, very endemic in making decisions to buy a product but more in some social groups than others.; | <p>Peer groups influence very much my attitude towards buying of high involvement products. The issue of competition is wide endemic in our society and currently I had to buy a new Mercedes Benz because my friends have got the latest one. So it's a kind of status thing. Peers give influence very much on a high note.</p> <p>To an extent my social network transcends my tribal groups and then [Eehhmm] cultural or national identity. I have a very wide network of people from different cultural backgrounds, of different nationalities and these influence me and what I buy, these influence how I behave with regards to buying or not buying of expensive high involvement products. Hence the influence here is not very great. However, if you look at the network, exclusive network of people of my kind and from my ethnic background and my nationality, then the influence is very great and the impact is very high. As I said, the social network in general I can say the impact is very high.</p> <p>Well ... for peer groups, the way it works is that when one comes across something that he or she thinks it is profound, it's well defined, it stands out, it's of durable quality, it's of ...Eehhmm, ... something that stands out, the information is easily shared through, probably discussions and may be you have identified someone that is using the product, you may ask them where did you get this product from, and such may give you some idea. So, ehmmmm, peer group and network influence is very, very endemic in making decisions to buy the product. I give you an example, if I wanted to buy a new car because my friend is driving something which is very attractive. So that is how products are diffused into the communities.</p> |

Research question three (RQ3): What factors (e.g. education, cross cultural marriage, country of abode culture) moderate the influence of social group identity on the consumer preference of UK based Nigerians for high involvement products.

Table 5. 14: Sample of Open codes for RQ 3

| Open code | Examples of Interviewees' Comments |
|---|---|
| Level of education has nothing to do with buying of high involvement products; it's more of rationalizing in decision making than educative approach; Key questions for analyzing or evaluating product purchasing decisions are: 'will it create status' for one in the society? Does it spell out who I am? Does it create some kind of recognition for me? | My level of education, I will say level 7. I do have a Master's degree but when it comes to buying of high involvement products my education has nothing to do with that. It's a cultural thing and is not influenced by the level of education. The question of rationalizing before making decisions, that doesn't follow that kind of educative approach; the key point that you are looking here is: will this create status for me in society? Does it spell out who I am? Does it create some kind of recognition for me? These are the key questions for analyzing or evaluating the product purchasing decisions. Unlike with education, you may go through that kind of systematic analysis, gathering of information, analyzing information and then draw your decision. Here the issue of post purchases doesn't even come in. |
| For some people, staying in UK for long does not influence decision making; More in tune with cultural background and nationality; No role model but being role model to oneself; It is more of peer influence than role model influence; | I have lived in the UK for 35 years. Ehmm ... I don't think because I am very in tune with my cultural background and my nationality as an African or West African, Ehmm ...my staying in the UK has not influenced my decision making when it comes to buying for the reasons that I have mentioned above. I don't have a role model but I have friends who do buy high quality products and ostentatious goods that I can recognize. I am a role model myself. So what it is, is I have to is to identify what my peers do have and upon that I do make decisions when I am going out for socializing or anything of that sort. So it is peer influence than role model. |
| Level of education does not alter or moderate the level of influence; it is difficult to actually detach oneself from national identity and peer grouping; the level of education has actually moderated it slightly in terms of being extravagant; | Honestly, honestly I won't say my level of education has actually altered that and I will begin by first of stating my level of education. Currently I am undergoing a PhD programme as we speak. It hasn't really because you cannot actually detach yourself from your national identity and peer grouping. I have friends that do not even have first degree, that don't even have certificate but for the mere fact that they are friends to me, education hasn't played much part in it as such. I don't think it has. What that has actually done in many instances for me is that it has actually moderated it slightly in terms of being extravagant. But nevertheless, the threats will still there to exhibit as one that is really into it. And I think the orientation probably might be linked to our national orientation the way we are seen as a people and all the rest of it. That's what I think might have happened in that instance. |

Appendix 17: External and strategic development services has been added as a new document as required by the University Ethics Committee for Quality Assurance and Enhancement. It was embedded in the soft bound copy.

5.6 Summary

This Chapter (five) has explained in detail the comprehensive iterative process followed to analyse the emergent data for this study. A thorough analytical process involving the line by line reading of interview transcripts and memos, as well as observatory data memos was followed. To ensure that appropriate meanings are derived from the emergent data, a rigorous multiple stage coding process was used in this study. First, the emergent data for each interview and non-verbal cues were analysed and coded. Second, following guidelines for ensuring appropriate qualitative data analysis, data triangulation and comparative coding were also undertaken in this study. For data triangulation - the emergent insights from the analysis of interview data were examined together with the facts that emerged from the observation evidence. The comparative coding for this study involved two stages. In the first stage, a comparative examination of the codes from two interviews was undertaken while the second stage involved a cross case examination of the codes for several interviews.

In the final analytical process for this study, the emergent codes were examined to identify the core codes and findings that relate to the themes sensitized in the specified research questions.

The findings that emerged from the analytical examination of facts from both interview data and non-verbal cues (observatory tool) are presented in Chapter six (6).

Chapter Six: The Findings

6.1 Introduction

In this Chapter, the findings of this study on the identity perspective of consumer preference formation for high involvement products of UK based Nigerians would be presented. This study of the social identity perspective of consumer behaviour of UK based Nigerians towards high involvement products underlines the important role culture plays in the decision making behaviour of consumers. Consequently, these consumers tend to exhibit different levels of culture induced identity in the way they respond to stimuli - involving processing decisions like should I buy a product?, what is the level of importance of the product?, is buying the product a rational decision or are there more economic and rational options? To ensure a better organising and understanding of the results from this study, the findings are presented based on the emergent themes. For each of these themes, the findings are presented in the following order: the core findings are first specified in the first Section, and then each of these core findings are explained in the subsequent Section. In doing the latter, relevant verbatim quotations from the interviews are used to support the findings. Chapter six (6) is organised further in the following order:

1. The role of Culture on the consumer preference formation of UK based Nigerians towards high involvement products (Section 6.2)
2. The role of Price (one of the 4 Ps of the marketing mix) on the Identity behaviour and consumer preference formation of UK based Nigerians towards high involvement products (Section 6.3). The other 3 Ps of the marketing mix (product, place and

promotion) are addressed in section 8.3.2 in order to highlight their managerial and marketing implications.

3. The moderating factors of the Influence of Culture on the consumer preference formation of UK based Nigerians on high involvement products (Section 6.4).

To conclude this Chapter (6), Section 6.5 provides a summary of the key facts that are transported to Chapter Seven which pinpoints the core conclusions, the implications and future research directions.

6.2 The role of culture on the consumer preference formation of UK based Nigerians towards high involvement products

6.2.1 Introduction

A major finding from this study is the fundamental role that culture plays in the mind-set of UK based Nigerians and the influence on their preference formation behaviour. Most of the respondents in this study indicated a high level of their cultural norms, values and way of doing things in their behavioural propensity (see the comments of Interviewees 32 and 16 below). Consequently, as reflected in those comments and reinforced by interviewees 22 and 33 below, their life style, taste and involvement with products - the perceived personal importance and/or the interest consumers attach to the acquisition, consumption and disposition of a good or service, or an idea (e.g. Celsi and Olson, 1988; Mowen and Minor, 1998), are highly influenced by their culture. Thus, their enactment of self is highly culture driven.

“My culture is very important to me and it influences what I buy and how I live my life. Yes, I will tend to buy those things, e.g. clothing, mobile devices, etc.,

that typically seem to be the trend in the Nigerian community.” (Interviewee 32, table 4.3).

“In my family, it is of high importance to show that we are Nigerians, especially in the way we dress and who we associate with., and it is important that the kind of things we buy measure at least with the standards shown by people we associate with.” (Interviewee 16, Table 4.3)

“I am a Nigerian, and most of my peers are Nigerians, the trend and standard of what they wear is important to me. As a matter of fact, I try to model my taste and what I wear to match with the trend in the community.” (Interviewee 22, table 4.3).

“Yes, I am a Nigerian, and I am a Nigerian to the core, so I try my best to meet the standards by my peers in the Nigerian community.” (Interviewee 33, table 4.3).

The analysis of interview data captured two main elements that drive the extent of culture and social identity congruence of Nigerians based in the UK with regards to high involvement products, namely image attached to membership of a group and hero factor in a group and these findings are explained in sub-sections 6.2.2 and 6.2.3.

6.2.2 Image attached to Membership of a Group

The findings from this study indicate that the consumer preference formation of Nigerians based in the UK for high involvement products is highly congruent with their social affiliations. The preference formation of UK based Nigerian consumers for high involvement product is highly influenced by the level of their peer group’s importance. A core explanation for this consumption behaviour is that the respondents in this study attach a high importance

and image to the membership of their Nigerian social group. For example, the interviewees comment thus: *“it is important to identify with my Nigerian group, so I buy and use things that are highly valued in the group”* (Interviewee 16, table 4.3), and *“I am a Nigerian, and I must keep that image, and the best way to do that is to be an active member of the Nigerian community”* (Interviewee 33, table 4.3). The substance in these comments connects to the theoretical notion that the way consumers enact their identity influences their preference formations (Reed II *et al.*, 2012). Consequently, consumers like products, brands and consumption behaviours that are linked to category labels with which they self-associate. Given that fact, the evidence from this study shows that UK based Nigerians tend to habitually buy particular clothing, jewellery, smartphones, giant plasma HD TV, etc. because of their identity driven effects - such particular products are evaluated highly, thus people strive to associate with them and thus earn the attached reputation in the Nigerian community.

As interview evidence shows, this is a typical consumer behavioural trend amongst Nigerians, regardless of age category, as shown by the comments of Interviewees 16 (age: between 25 and 34 years), 33 (age: between 35 and 44 years), and 22 and 32 (age: between 45 and 54 years) below.

“In my family, it is of high importance to show that we are Nigerians, especially in the way we dress and who we associate with., yes, at times, I spend huge amount of money in order to meet the dressing standard in the Nigerian community. When asked, how he is able to cope financially, he comments: my parents have properties in the UK and they support me.” (Interviewee 16, table 4.3).

“Yes, I am a Nigerian, and I am a Nigerian to the core, so I try my best to meet the standards by my peers in the Nigerian community. Therefore, I buy and use

the kind of high involvement product that my peers use, as being part of this group has a high importance to me.” (Interviewee 33, table 4.3).

It is very important for me to identify with and also show commitment to the Nigerian culture., yes, some of the products could be very expensive, but my friends are able to buy them, so why would not I buy them? For example, in terms of fashion, I am a member of the community and I have to meet up with the dressing code. (Interviewee 22, table 4.3).

“Yes, the decision about how I look and what I wear is influenced by the nature of people around me. Most of my friends and people in my social community are Nigerians, so what I buy depends on the dominant trend in the community.” (Interviewee 32, table 4.3).

Combining the self-image and hero factor (see section 6.2.3) insights and influence on social identity behaviour and preference formation implications, this study supports the view that social comparison is a central factor in social and collective identity behaviour and influence on consumer preference formation for high involvement products.

Interviewees 22 and 33 underline this importance in their decision making approach for the purchase and use of Nigerian-style fashion and jewellery.

“I am a Nigerian, and most of my peers are Nigerians, the trend and standard of what they wear is important to me. As a matter of fact, I try to model my taste and what I wear to match with the trend in the community. To me, it’s not just about belonging to, but about being among the top class in the Nigerian social community.” (Interviewee 22, table 4.3).

“Yes, I am a Nigerian, and I am a Nigerian to the core, so I try my best to meet the standards by my peers in the Nigerian community. If my peers are buying expensive jewellery, then I have to buy them because I do not want to be left

behind. Honestly, sometimes, there seems to be some form of competing amongst the members of the social community, and nobody wants to lose face not displaying affluence.” (Interviewee 33, table 4.3).

Thus, in addition to social comparison, another element that can be identified in the social identity congruent consumer preference formation of UK based Nigerians for high involvement products is the display of affluence driven by ego and the push to outperform other members of the social community. Interviewee 32 (female) does not only underline the image factor, and the social comparison and competition features in the community, but also hints on the dilemma she is facing. According to her, on the one hand, she views the behaviour pattern displayed in the community through the purchase of expensive products to be a waste of resources, but finds discarding with the community and the related display of affluence a challenge, as she does not want to lose face. She notes that *clothing and especially Nigerian fashion are very important in the minds of Nigerian women*, and if she backed out of the community, other members of the community would view her as *either obsolete fashion-wise or stingy*. As a result, she remains an active member of the community. The above comment by Interviewee 32 does show the extent to which social identity influences preference formation amongst UK based Nigerians. To some members of the Nigerian social community, while image and ego are important to them, the extent to which they are willing to comply with the requirements for such image or ego would depend on their personal circumstances. This implies therefore that personal identity features exert a significant influence – hence satisfying psychological needs of image and ego are viewed as secondary. In line with the thematic structure of this Chapter, that point is elaborated in Section 6.4.

6.2.3 Hero Factor in a Group

According to social interaction theory, one's actions, behaviour, and even consumption preference are influenced by trends shown and membership in his/her social interaction domain, of 'significant others' (Saunders, 2001). The phrase 'significant others' is emphasised here and applied in two dimensions: significant from the point of majority of those affiliated to the social group (friends, peers, family members etc.), and significant from the perspective of individuals who are held in high esteem (e.g. heroes, role models, celebrities etc.). Positioned in that thinking, Section 6.2.2 explained the extent to which the drive to boost self-image influences social identity congruence. This current section (6.2.3) extends that background and explains how people held in high esteem (hero factor) drives social identity behaviour and preference formation for high involvement products amongst UK based Nigerians.

Insights from this current study show that social identity exerts immense influence on how individuals enact their self-concept and on their preference formation for products. Interviewees point to the importance for them to be affiliated to their social identity groups. For the majority of the respondents, the importance for such social identity affiliation and influence on preference formation for high involvement products even increases when somebody is held in high esteem, for example when a hero or celebrity is a member of such social community. Thus, consumers may not only tend to compare themselves to peers but also to celebrities. Consequently, celebrity worship becomes a norm in the society. This tendency is illustrated by Interviewees 32, 3 and 5.

Interviewee 32, who seemed to be chronically social identity congruent in her preference formation for high involvement products, was asked to explain what factors are critical in her affiliation to the Nigerian social community and to what extent she is willing to match with the level of competition in the community, and she responded thus:

“If I must repeat, it is important for me not just to be, but also to show practically, that I am a member of the Nigerian social community. Yes, I hold a member of the community in high esteem, in fact he is my hero - he is highly educated, rich, never allows his riches to get into his head, warm hearted and always willing to help those in need, God fearing, and his children are very respectful, humble and well cultured. It is a great honour to be affiliated to a social group with such calibre of person. To be honest, his membership of this social group is a big motivation to me not just to remain in the fold but also to exhibit purchase behaviour that is shown in the group. For example, I always try to follow the clothing trend that is followed in this group.”

The preference formation tendency highlighted in the comment of Interviewee 32 above suggests that celebrity endorsement influences the social identity importance in the mind of individuals and level to which individuals might pursue selfhood enactment through preference formation that matches with that of the celebrity or hero because they strive for identification and intimacy with the celebrity.

Interviewees 3 and 5 offer evidence that reinforce the comment of interviewee 32 in several ways. First, they support the notion of celebrity endorsement and consumer preference formation influence. Second, they offer insights that add support to the theoretical foundations regarding the plausible explanation for such celebrity endorsement influence.

“Being part of the Nigerian social community is important to me because in addition to providing me a second home from the family feeling within my matrimonial home, it enables me to have regular contact and interaction with people who share similar cultural ideas and values. More so, being part of that social community is important to me as I get the chance to meet, identify with

and draw closer to people who have been my heroes from my childhood. No doubt, I am proud being part of the Nigerian community and coming in contact with highly esteemed people, and also sharing common taste with them in terms of clotting and jewelleries.” (Interviewee 3, table 4.3).

“Of course I have people in the Nigerian social community who I hold in high esteem. In my Nigerian culture, rich people are highly respected and to some extent even celebrated and worshiped. For me, it is a big privilege to mingle with two very rich people in my social community, and I try my best to keep a clothing taste similar to theirs, though I must admit that sometimes I am stretched to my financial limit in trying to cope. So far, I have been able to cope and hope to continue coping too.” (Interviewee 5, table 4.3).

Combining the evidence from Interviewees 32, 3 and 5 with regard to celebrity endorsement influence on high social identity behaviour, it would seem rational to suggest that consumers engage in social identity driven preference formation behaviour in order to satisfy their social needs.

Overall, having emphasised the key role that culture plays in the preference formation behaviour of UK based Nigerians, it is important to underline that a central argument from this current study is that, amongst Nigerians based in the UK, consumer preference formation for high involvement products is influenced by both social identity and personal identity factors. Thus, while cultural attachment plays a major role in the way UK based Nigerians enact their selves through preference formation for high involvement products, the price (money) factor is also given due consideration (at least for some of the respondents). This role is elaborated in Section 6.3. Furthermore, given the importance of the price factor, religiosity, educational background, sub-cultural (ethnic) features and acculturation factors exert some moderating influence on the social identity behaviour of UK based Nigerians with

regards to high involvement products, and these points are elaborated in sections 6,3 and 6.4 and sub-sections.

6.3 The Role of Price on the Identity Behaviour and Consumer Preference Formation

6.3.1 Introduction

As flagged earlier in Section 6.2, insights from this study point to social identity as well as personal identity driven behaviour in the way UK based Nigerians process their decisions towards preference formation for high involvement products. One of the central themes that emerged from this study relates to the influence of price on preference formation behaviour. Therefore, in this current Section (6.3. and sub-sections), the findings relating to the role price plays on the identity behaviour and preference formation of UK based Nigerian for high involvement products are presented.

Two major insights were captured with regards to money as a factor of consumer preference formation for high involvement products amongst Nigerians based in the UK. On the one hand, this study captured money factor as a driver of personal identity driven consumer preference formation. On the other hand, this study suggests that since money is a symbol for displaying wealth and affluence, it is also a driving factor of social identity behaviour in the preference formation of Nigerian consumers. These empirical insights are elaborated in two sub-sections:

1. Money as a driver of personal identity and influence on consumer preference formation (Section 6.3.2), and
2. Money as a driver of social identity and influence on consumer preference formation (Section 6.3.3).

6.3.2 Money as a Personal Identity Factor

From the interview with respondents, while UK based Nigerians seem to show a high cultural loyalty, they may not always be blindly driven by the cultural loyalty. A core factor that may prompt UK based Nigerians not to exhibit a notorious cultural loyalty in their preference formation behaviour is price (see for example the comments of Interviewee 17 and 25 below).

For these category of UK based Nigerians, personal identity rather than social identity is the dominating rationality for preference formation behaviour. Affordability is a core decision factor, so emotional attachment to a social group is not paramount in the mind of such UK based Nigerians. Core high involvement products for which individuals tend to display this personal identity tendency includes expensive cars, jewelleryes and modern multi-media devices (e.g. iPhone).

“Nigerians tend to exaggerate and compete in the display of affluence. As a matter of fact, it hurts me to see how some people invest huge sums of money to obtain the most recent versions of mobile phones. In this drive to show that they are among the rich, some Nigerians do not only invest such huge sums to obtain such devices for themselves but also for their children. For me, it is against my moral standard to invest £500 and above to obtain such devices. I am not saying that I do not buy things that people in my Nigerian social community buy, of course I do that, but the extent, to which I do that, especially when it concerns buying expensive phone devices, is determined by the cost involved. I have hero figures in the Nigerian community, but I do not have to buy things because my heroes buy them. The cost involved plays a major role in my preference formation decision making for phone devices and jewelleryes.” (Interviewee 17)

Interviewee 25 provides evidence that lends support to the view of Interviewee 17 with regards to how money as a personal identity factor influences the preference formation for high involvement products amongst UK based Nigerians. Explaining how the money factor influences his decision whether to buy the typical jewellerys that are used in the Nigerian community to make a statement of class, Interviewee 25 pinpoints core personal features that drive his behaviour. According to him, people who are very conscious of their origin and keep strong bonds with their family members and friends back in Nigeria would tend to be more prudent with their resources and also cultivate the habit of supporting people back home rather than lavishing their money on expensive items to show off. He comments:

“Unlike most Nigerians, I don't think I have to wear very expensive jewellerys in order to look good. I understand that I have to match with the trend shown by my Nigerian friends and peers, but it is not in my nature to follow with their trend when doing that will imply that I have to spend a huge amount. I have family members and friends back in Nigeria who would be very grateful to me if I support them financially. Even in our close neighbourhood, there are people who have vital need for support, and it will be a blessing to me if I support such people instead of buying very expensive jewellerys because other people are buying them.” (Interviewee 25, table 4.3).

In addition to flagging strong bond and attachment to family members and friends back in Nigeria and the pertinence for supporting them, and also people with support needs in the immediate neighbourhood in the UK, as factors that motivate a tendency for personal identity congruent preference formation, Interviewee 25, who is a Muslim by faith, provides evidence that adds support to the theoretical notion that religiosity exerts influence on the preference formation for products.

Explaining his preference formation for high involvement products, Interviewee 21 adds further support to the argument that money is a core personal identity factor. According to him, Nigerians tend to use car brand as a tool for making a statement about their class, and to match with that trend some members of the community would deem it fit to also exhibit such preference formation, even if it means living above their means. When asked how he responds to such social group preference formation pressure, he responds: *No, I am not into that habit of spending huge amount of money to buy expensive cars to make other people think that I am very rich, although I am not. If the feeling inside me says a car is too expensive, I will not buy the car no matter the level of importance and ego associated with that car in my Nigerian social community.* (Interviewee 21, table 4.3).

This view of not allowing social identity background to influence their preference formation for cars, especially for very expensive cars, was also supported by interviewees 13 and 28. From the facts detailed out above, while Nigerians may buy into social identity congruent preference formation behaviour, this may not generally hold for the majority of UK based Nigerians, as their personal identity also plays a significant role, especially when the cost involved is deemed huge.

Based on the response from interviewees, price induced personal identity dominance over social identity in the preference formation behaviour of UK based Nigerians is highly common amongst educated, acculturated (diversely – see Section 6.4), and religiosity inclined UK based Nigerians, as the comments of Interviewees 25 (earlier) and 21 (below) demonstrate.

"My father invested hugely into my education, because as he often said, he wanted me to be wise in the use of economic logic. I owe my father a duty to

show economic wisdom in my decisions; I cannot spend money unwisely because of my affiliation to a social group." (Interviewee 21, table 4.3).

6.3.3 Money as a Driver of Social Identity

The money factor as captured in this study has a two dimensional influence on the preference formation behaviour for high involvement products of UK based Nigerians, and can be described proverbially as a two edged-sword. On the one hand, as elaborated in Section 6.3.2, money is a critical factor that drives personal identity behaviour and preference formation influence. In this current section (6.3.3) the focus is to explain the other side of the coin - how the money factor influences the social identity behaviour of UK based Nigerians in the way they enact their selfhood through their preference formation with regards to high involvement products.

A central finding from this study relates to the use of money and spending power to make a statement about oneself and status. Seemingly, display of wealth and affluence is typical of the Nigerian society, and living lives that mirror one as financially affluent and belonging to a high social class would be common. Typically, too, UK based Nigerians prioritise packaging themselves in a way that their enactment of self (financial power and status) would be reflected through their social identity (social group affiliations). The comments below (Interviewees 33 and 12) shed some light on respondents view the importance for belonging to their social identity groups and the importance of the money factor in enacting the image and status they want to keep.

"I am currently a member of a number of Nigerian social groups in the UK. For some of these social groups, very high standards are required, because basically display of affluence is the norm. In other words, one joins fully conscious of the financial challenge. Staying in this group is important to me, because I want to

engage and compete with the best and the wealthy, so I also follow the standards and buy things that communicate affluence and wealthy status. The products that I buy should speak about my class.” (Interviewee 33, table 4.3).

“It is a basic truth that members of Nigerian social communities in the UK, at least the ones I am a member of, use such social forums to compete and flex their financial muscles. So, joining the high society social groups is more or less saying I want to join the swagger club, where the primary goal is making a statement about ones' financial power by engaging in highly symbolic products buying behaviour.” (Interviewee 12, table 4.3).

These insights underline how important it is for the status and image of the respondents in being members of their social groups. Critical to this image and status motive is the use of spending power to communicate that one is rich and belongs to the high society.

Another critical insight that emerged from this study with regards to the money factor as a driver of social identity behaviour and preference formation impact, relates to the fact that it leads to materialistic-value behaviour in the social community. Across the various levels of high involvement products captured in this current study, respondents unanimously suggest that materialistic behaviour is typical in social identities, as members of such groups are persistently engaging in social comparison and striving to outplay one another in setting new defining standards in the group. Interviewees 27 and 20 (see comments below) shed light on the extent of this consumption competition trend and the cultural motivations underlying the trend.

“In my Nigerian culture, clothing is a tool for making statement that one is a true Nigerian. So, we proudly invest in clothing, and we do not mind if we get materialistic, as it is important for us, especially we women, to use our clothing trend to show our cultural identities.” (Interviewee 27, table 4.3).

“Yes, I must say that there is a spirit of competition in this community, people trying to outperform others in the display of wealth through the purchase of modern and expensive mobile phone devices. No doubt, whether intended or not, one develops a tendency to become materialistic in the effort to cope with the buying syndrome going on in this community.” (Interviewee 20, table 4.3).

Commenting, interviewee 12 noted that the pressure to match social group competition could, over time, become so burdensome for members, as they view themselves somehow compelled to show a consumption attitude that is in line with the main consumption drivers in the social group. As a result, in this attempt to match the ever growing consumption competition and display of a spending behaviour that portrays affluence, members of such social groups may unconsciously develop a tendency to be materialistic oriented.

Usually, there are specific standards in every social group and members would generally strive to meet these standards, which may not necessarily be documented but would develop on the individual tastes triggered by members of the social group. For top social groups, typical standards might involve buying expensive posh cars, jewelleries, clothing and mobile multi-media devices (such as i-phones and i-pads). Essentially, the expressive elements of consumption would be driven by a materialistic-value orientation which would increase over time as members of social groups learn the symbolic meaning of goods through regular interaction with their peers and members of the social community (e.g. Achenreiner, 1997; Moschis and Churchill, 1978).

As evident in the respondents' comments, the drive for display of affluence and materialism is not only driven by the individual goal of showing that one is wealthy, but also by the desire to boost their image and status through money spending and materialism and membership of their highly esteemed social groups.

Thus, in living out their social identities, materialistic-value orientation not only becomes a norm but also becomes something that gives them a source of joy - they derive psychological value because they believe that the acquisition and possession of materialistic items in addition to increasing their collection enables them to enhance their identification and symbolic affinity to their group (and also their heroes and role models in the group).

Thus, when a member of a social group views another member of same social group as a hero or role model, he/she would tend to show preference formation attitude that matches with that of the hero or role model., as he/she tends to view the actions and signals coming from the hero or role model as important, and since he/she admires the hero or role model, he/she would enact his/her desired self or ‘extended self’ (Belk, 1988) to agree with that of the hero or role model. Consequently, he/she is likely to develop a materialistic behaviour, as celebrity worshipping would drive materialistic-value orientation. For example, Interviewee 33 comments thus:

“A member of my social group is not only like a father figure to me but he is also my hero. He has achieved a lot in life, and I must admit that the fact that he is a hero to me I kind of worship him and tend to cultivate a materialistic orientation that matches with his.”

This comment by Interviewee 33 lends support to the celebrity worshipping notion that celebrity admirers consider celebrity idols as their idealised self-images, and consequently, such admirers seek to develop or refine personality traits that are similar to their idols. On the part of celebrities, the findings from this study with regards to the development of materialistic behaviour highlight insights that connect to and enhance the hero status and social congruence behaviour logic. Specifically, this study suggests that celebrities on their part might engage in materialistic behaviours that obviously aim to trigger response from

celebrity worshippers. The comments below evidence a tendency for a hero or somebody held in high esteem to provoke social congruence materialistic behaviour response (Interviewees 27) and the plausible celebrity worshipping materialistic response (Interviewee 32):

“..... Sure, there is no doubt, sometimes people who are viewed as heroes in the group might deliberately buy some expensive items to prompt some action from other members.” (Interviewee 27, table 4.3).

..... Yes, I hold a member of the community in high esteem, in fact he is my hero - he is highly educated, rich, never allows his riches to get into his head, warm hearted and always to help those in need, God fearing, and his children are very respectful, humble and well cultured. It is a great honour to be affiliated to a social group with such calibre of person. To be honest, his membership of this social group is a big motivation to me not just to remain in the fold but also to exhibit purchase behaviour that is shown in the group. For example, I always try to follow the clothing trend that is followed in this group.” (Interviewee 32, table 4.3).

A plausible reason for such a ‘hero’ congruent response as described by Interviewee 32 is that individuals seem to have a need for identification and intimacy with celebrities.

6.4 The Moderating Factors of the influence of Culture on the consumer preference formation

6.4.1 Introduction

A core finding from this study relates to the significant role that culture plays in the mindset of UK based Nigerians and influence on their behavioural tendency with regards to preference formation for high involvement products. The extent to which they live out this culture driven preference formation behaviour is however conditioned by a number of factors, this study indicates. For UK based Nigerians who do not display chronic social identity behaviour, preference formation for high involvement products is rationalised on other variables not social identity, even when such Nigerians are keen to boost their standing, or have hero figures, in the Nigerian social community (see Interviewee's 2 comment below. As a result, the extent to which such UK based Nigerians are willing to comply with the requirements for such image or ego would depend on their personal circumstances. This implies therefore that personal identity features exert a significant influence - hence satisfying psychological needs of image and ego are viewed as secondary. Interviewee 2 explains this point thus:

“What you wear is important and for one moment it could say something about your social class and image, but there are other things of more importance like meeting the daily and routine needs of oneself and family. When asked if his preference formation behaviour would likely change if a member of his social community were to be his hero or role model, he responded: there are many behavioural features that would exert significant psychological impact in the mind-set of an individual, in my opinion the fashion or clothing trend that one keeps is not one of them. To me, the core values that critical for one to be my hero are humility, respect and acceptance of other people, not being arrogant,

good moral values, willingness to support those in need, amongst others, but not what the person wears.”

The purpose of Section 6.4 is therefore to present the findings on the core factors that moderate the influence of cultural affiliations on their preference formation. In other words, this Section presents the findings regarding the factors that explain why UK based Nigerians may exhibit social identity or personal identity congruence behaviour in their preference formation for high involvement products. The examination of this theme (moderating factors of the influence of culture on the consumer preference of UK based Nigerians for high involvement products) captured four central sub-themes, and these are presented in the following sub-sections:

1. Educational background and religiosity of a person as a moderator (or not) of the influence of social group identity on the consumer preference of UK based Nigerians for high involvement products (Section 6.4.2);
2. Acculturation factor as a moderator (or not) of the influence of social group identity on the consumer preference of UK based Nigerians for high involvement products (Section 6.4.3); and
3. Sub-Cultural (Tribal and Ethnical) factor as a moderator of the influence of social group identity on the consumption preference of UK based Nigerians for high involvement products (Section 6.4.4).

6.4.2 Educational Background and Religiosity as Moderator (or not) of the Influence of Social Group

Empirically, this study shows that while Nigerians living in the UK display a high level of attachment to the culture of their country of origin, the nature and level of educational exposure moderates the level of their country of origin cultural influence on their preference

formation for high involvement products. The important role that educational exposure plays in shaping the mind construction of Nigerians in their decision making process for high involvement products is underlined in interviewee 15's comment below.

“I have lived in England for almost 20 years, and as a matter of fact it was academic pursuit that motivated my coming to England. I have studied in this country, and going through these educational training has helped me to view things from a more different perspective than I would have done if I was in Nigeria. Although my Nigerian culture is important to me, because the Nigerian community is where I belong, my purchase decision and use of cars and fashion is also influenced by principles and values acquired through education. While I would like to mingle with my fellow Nigerians, what I buy and how I use them will depend on my priority scale.”

This notion of the importance of educational background in the decision making process of the purchase and use of high involvement products is also supported and extended by interviewee 17, table 4.3. According to him, *“it is good to identify with ones' social group, but I personally I also take into consideration my core personal values in my decisions concerning purchase and use of high involvement products. I have studied in this country, and my educational training guides me in making economically wise decisions in what I buy and when I buy them. Moreover, the nature of courses I did have enabled me to understand better cross-cultural issues and how to relate and integrate with people from other cultural backgrounds. These features also influence my decision making process with regards to what I purchase, how I use them, and in general how my high involvement products behaviour is influenced by social group attachment or personal factor. I identify with my Nigerian social group, in fact I am emotionally attached to my Nigerian*

social group, but I will not go out of my way to spend unwisely because I want to meet high social group standards.”

In the educational background regard, this study also suggests that nature of educational background and content of knowledge gained influence the extent to which the identification with, and emotional attachment to ones' social group dictates in the decision making process towards consumer preference formation for high involvement products.

Previous literature (White *et al.*, 2012) stressed that the preference formation of individuals is influenced by personal identity and social identity features, a theoretical substance that finds resonance in this current study. Narrating their individual preference formation for high involvement products, interviewees 20 and 6 (see comments below) offer insights that connect to this logic. Interview evidence shows that while individuals attach to their social enclaves, consumer preference formation in some circumstances may be more influenced by the individual's personal identity.

“As a Nigerian, I mingle with Nigerians and I also buy and use products that are valued amongst Nigerians. For example, I buy and use typical clothing that have a high identity symbol in the Nigerian cultural domain. However, whether I buy and when I buy clothing that seem to be in vogue in the community depends not only on my appreciation of its reception in the community, but also on my personal values. What do you mean?, I asked, and he responds: I do not always have to do things because other people are doing them. I don't always follow the bandwagon logic; rather I make my preference decision based on my inner personal feelings.” (Interviewer 20, table 4.3).

“There is no doubt, I take pride in showing that I am a Nigerian, and I buy typical clothing, and necklace brands used in the Nigerian community to make

a statement about oneself. However, I am not notoriously inclined to buying and using such products because I want to be like others. I am Nigerian but I am also British and have also studied and engaged with other cultures, so I will not feel in any way odd if I wear British or Western pattern clothing amongst other Nigerians. So, if you want, I can say, yes, my preference formation is influenced by both social identity and personal identity features, in fact I would say 50-50.” (Interviewee 6, table 4.3).

Combined, the above comments (Interviewees 20 and 6) add support to the role that social identity and personal identity features play in the consumer preference formation for high involvement products. As a matter of fact, examining the overall evidence, this study suggests that most individuals may not be completely biased in favour of their social systems, but only identify with and respond to them, to match with their circumstances. Interviewee 20 who holds a PhD degree explains how his preference formation for Nigerian fashion and the purchase and use of highly celebrated car brands in the Nigerian community is influenced by a number of factors.

“For me, it is important to identify with my Nigerian cultural society. However, I do not “nigerianise” like most members would do”. What do you mean by “nigerianise”?, I chipped in. “Some people are so inclined to the notion that they have to do everything to make people believe that they are core patriots. For such people, they might go to the extent of borrowing to display wealth which they may not have. For me, I am driven by two questions - must I buy something (do I really need it)?, or can I use the money to help somebody in need? I am a Christian, and it will be stupid of me to spend money to buy things I do not necessarily need. Rather, I would use the money to help people in need.

For example, I occasionally give financial support to students from poor families to aid their educational pursuit.”

The above insight indicates that religiosity would exert some influence on consumers' propensity to chronically view the importance of their social identity, and the extent to which they are willing to go out of their way to spend hugely to display emotional attachment to their social identity. Explaining further on this point, interviewee 20 commented that *“I will only be helping the already rich to become richer by spending so much money to buy expensive cars. No, I would be silly to do that. I have studied to become wiser and I need to show that I am wiser in the way I spend money.”*

In addition to supporting the evidence from interviewee 6 on how educational background may directly moderate the degree to which Nigerians may be chronically social identity driven, Interviewee 20 (see table 4.3) also offers insight on how this moderating influence may be enhanced through a networking impulse that emerges through a long academic training. According to interviewee 20, he has established a huge social network involving people of diverse cultural lineage, and this also plays a role in his preference formation for high involvement products:

“During my long years of academic training, involving undergraduate and postgraduate (MBA and PhD) studies, I have engaged with a lot of people from diverse cultural backgrounds. As a matter of fact, I have a friendly and close relationship with most of them and engage in inter-cultural exchange with them. One thing I know for sure is that most of my friends who are non-Africans are not into showing off. Financially, I thank God that I am where I am, so I can easily afford the expensive taste that most Nigerians want to exhibit, but I do not deem it necessary to do that. I would say that identifying with the Nigerian community is

a good thing to do, but not a priority for me. So, my preference formation for products like clothing, cars and jewelleries would be influenced by my identity with the Nigerian community, my educational background, as well as my networking (peers, friends, ex-and current colleagues) beyond the Nigerian domain.” (Interviewee 20, table 4.3).

For consumers that are completely biased in favour of their social system, their psychological mind-set is completely driven by their cultural identification. Thus, regardless of the level of educational exposure and interaction with other cultures, these categories of consumers show a purchase and use decision making pattern that prioritises the importance of commitment and loyalty to their cultural identity. Responding to the question of how educational background influences his social group behaviour and extended high involvement preference formation, interviewee 11 commented thus with regards to his consumer preference formation for Nigerian fashion:

“My level of education, I will say level 7. I do have a Master’s degree but when it comes to buying of high involvement products my education has nothing to do with that. It’s a cultural thing and is not influenced by the level of education. The question of rationalizing before making decisions, that doesn’t follow that kind of educative approach; the key point that you are looking here is: will this create status for me in society? Does it spell out who I am? Does it create some kind of recognition for me? These are the key questions for analyzing or evaluating the product purchasing decisions. Unlike with education, you may go through that kind of systematic analysis, gathering of information, analyzing information and then draw your decision. Here the issue of post purchases doesn’t even come in.”

Dwelling further on the point of processing information (gathering information and analysing information) towards decision making, the researcher sought to know more about this interviewee's decision making outcomes, if the emergent information about the fashion and jewellery under consideration revealed that a reasonable amount of money is required. Responding, interviewee 33 further stressed the importance of identifying with and staying committed to his Nigerian identity. According to him, what is of central importance is that he does not detach from his country of origin culture, a behavioural mode which is also important to him in keeping with the expectations of his father, whom he does not only hold in high esteem but also views as a role model. This latter driving factor connects to earlier discussion on the role model (Hero Factor) influence on high involvement products preference formation behaviour (see Section 6.2.3).

Interviewees 22, 28 and 34 lend support to this evidence of strong cultural enclave allegiance and influence on consumer preference formation. As a matter of fact, interviewees 22 - a female, and 34 - a male, who are not only relatively educated but also have lived in the UK for a long time (more than 10 years), offer insight that extend the above argument. Both interviewees who explained the importance of using the respective brands of car emphasise the pertinence for them to secure their high status and ego in the Nigerian community.

“My country of origin culture is very important to me. In fact, my country of origin culture forms me, shapes me it is in fact my domain. Identifying with my country Nigerian and keeping to the high taste and keeping trendy, both fashion-wise as well as car choice is very important to secure my image, and this will be my way of life regardless of the cost involved and my level of education. I have to measure up to the standard by women I associate with.” (Interviewee 22, table 4.3).

“I am a Nigerian, I am proud to be a Nigerian, and if you want to show your pride in being a Nigerian, then you have to allow the Nigerian culture to show in your behaviour. At my level, there are standards I have to match to keep my status in the community. People hold me in high esteem, and if I want people to continue to show me that level of respect and recognition, then I have to continue to show high standards. May be, if I am to have a PhD qualification, people will even respect me more, but it is the identification with my country of origin culture that matters more and also influences my preference formation for high involvement products.” (Interviewee 34, table 4.3).

Probing further, the researcher asked the interviewee if he would go out of his way to do things in order to show that he is trendy and values his Nigerian culture, even if that will involve a huge sum of money. Responding, interviewee 34 said, *“my culture as a Nigerian is very important to me, so I would say yes”*. Given that you receive under £20,000 yearly, how do you cope with such a life style of coping with such huge financial demands, the researcher asked. He comments thus: *“I am financially ok, and can cope from savings”*.

Religiosity was also captured as a factor that influences the extent to the preference formation for individuals in the various sub-culture groups would be personal identity or social identity driven. Interviewee 10, table 4.3, who belong to the Hausa cultural group seem to be strongly driven by the religiosity factor in their decision making behaviour for high involvement products. Explaining his preference formation behaviour for high involvement products, Interviewee 10, table 4.3, talked at length about her Islamic faith and why giving alms to those in need is of high importance to her.

“Allah blesses me with abundant resources, and I have a duty to support those in need. In Islam poverty is seen as a threat to the faith, so every true Muslim must

support the fight against poverty. And as a way of appreciating Allah for HIS goodness, I give Zakat and Waqf (forms of support) to those in need. Doing that is more important to me than wasting my money on expensive mobile phone devices.”

(Interviewee 10, table 4.3).

According to Interviewee 10, she does understand that being part of a social group, there is need for her to show behaviours that match the trend in the group, as a result therefore, she tries to buy clothing that are typically used in the social group. The only circumstance that might lead her to spending a big amount and show social group congruent behaviour for clothing is when such clothing has some element of religious importance attached to it.

Religiosity induced preference formation behaviour was also captured in the case of Interviewee 20, table 4.3 who is of Delta origin. Similar (religiosity influence) but contrasting (faith) to Interviewee 10, Interviewee 20 indicates that religiosity (Christianity) induces a personal identity congruent preference formation behaviour for high involvement products.

He commented:

“Some people are so inclined to the notion that they have to do everything to make people believe that they are core patriots. For such people, they might go to the extent of borrowing to display wealth which they may not have. For me, I am driven by two questions - must I buy something (do I really need it)?, or can I use the money to help somebody in need? I am a Christian, and it will be stupid of me to spend money to buy things I do not necessarily need. Rather, I would use the money to help people in need. For example, I occasionally give financial support to students from poor families to aid their educational pursuit.”

Based on these facts, it seems right to conclude that UK based Nigerians who are religiously oriented are likely to prioritise the need to use their position to help those in need rather than the need to respond to social group induced consumption actions.

6.4.3 Acculturation and Social Group Identity

This study suggests the existence of some acculturation process taking place in the UK based Nigerians sample examined in this research. Through this process of acculturation, the concerned UK based Nigerians engage with other cultures and imbibe other cultural norms, values, principles, views and beliefs that enable them to act, decide and respond in ways that were previously in disparity with their established norms, values, principles, views and beliefs. Thus, this acculturation process influences their decision making with regards to their preference formation for high involvement products.

Empirically, this study suggests that UK based Nigerians acculturate and this acculturation propensity influences the extent to which their preference formation behaviour for high involvement products may be personal identity or social identity driven. Examples of comments of respondents (17, 20 and 15) in that regard are shown below.

“There is no doubt my behaviour and the way I do things have changed a lot due to the influence of my wife. Yes, that includes too how I behave in the Nigerian community. There are some life style behaviours, for example the things that I buy to show off and identify with the Nigerian social community, which I now no longer have those behaviours. Don't get me wrong, my wife loves me and loves my culture, but she will not want me to spend money unwisely.” (Interviewee 17, table 4.3).

“When I look back into last 12 years or more, I would say my life has changed a lot. My life style, the kind of occasions I attend, and the kind of

things I spend money on have changed a lot, due to the influence of my wife.

..... My wife even wears typical Nigerian style fashion when we attend occasions. But, my wife does not tolerate wastefulness and showy attitude” (Interviewee 20, table 4.3).

“Eeeemm [He smiles] for sure, anyone who knew me before I got married will easily confirm that there is some change in the way I express myself socially since I got married. My wife will act differently to some of the things we Nigerians would do in showing our cultural pride. My wife is my companion for life, so her views are important to me, even when it concerns how I express myself and what I buy and the extent of my engagement in the Nigerian social community. Yes, I work together with my wife, so her ideas, views and values influence my decision making as to whether I will be personal identity or social identity driven in my preference formation for items like clothing, jewelleries, mobile phones and expensive cars.”
(Interviewee 15, table 4.3).

Based on the sub-themes that emerged from the data, acculturation as a moderator of social identity behaviour and influence on the preference formation of UK based Nigerians for high involvement products is explained in the following sub-sections:

1. Cross-Cultural Marriage driven Acculturation (Section 6.4.3.1),
2. Social Network drive Acculturation (Section 6.4.3.2), and
3. Country of Abode driven Acculturation (Section 6.4.3.3).

6.4.3.1 Cross-Cultural Marriage Driven Acculturation

One of the core insights that emerged from this study of UK based Nigerian consumers relates to the evidence of cross-cultural marriage induced acculturation and the influence on

the propensity of UK based Nigerians to exhibit a preference formation behaviour that is personal identity or social identity congruent. Two of the participants in this study are married to European Partners (one British and one French) for about fifteen and eight years respectively, one to a Brazilian wife, while another had a British wife for six years but got married to a Nigerian woman after divorce. Analysis of interview data shows that through this process of regular interrelation and living together some degree of inter-cultural exchange, adaptation and transformation takes place. In other words, the psychological mindset and the influence on the cultural orientation, identification with and emotional attachment to their original cultural identity, are transformed. Consequently, as respondents reported (see comments of Interviewees 20, 17 and 15 below). This cultural adaptation and transformation moderates the social identity influence on the consumer preference formation for high involvement products for Nigerians that pass through this cultural transformation.

Interviewee 20 does not explain how the marriage to his European wife influences his preference formation behaviour but also explains how important his wife is to him and why his wife's influence weighs heavily on his decision making. He comments thus:

“I met my wife about a year after my arrival for studies in England, and she has been a massive support and motivation for me. When times were hard for me as a self-funding student, she stood firmly by me, sacrificing her own interest and working full-time to support us (herself, her son which she brought into our marriage and myself). My wife is very open, tolerant, and encourages a humble life style. It is important that I stay in touch with trends in my Nigerian social community and my wife knows that and even accompanies me to Nigerian social events. She even plays an active role in the decision making of what we buy, and especially how we respond to the buying syndrome actions in the social group. Luckily, we are financially stable and can afford affluent life, but we buy our

clothing, expensive mobile phone devices and expensive cars based on our ascertained need but not driven by the social identity factor.” (Interviewee 20, table 4.3).

The comments by interviewees 17 and 15 enhance the view of intercultural marriage driven acculturation and preference formation behaviour influence suggested by interviewee 20 above.

“There is no doubt my behaviour and the way I do things have changed a lot due to the influence of my wife. Yes, that includes too how I behave in the Nigerian community. There are some life style behaviours, for example the things that I buy to show off and identify with the Nigerian social community, which I now no longer have those behaviours. Don't get me wrong, my wife loves me and loves my culture, but she will not want me to spend money unwisely. My Nigerian social society is important to me, but it does not mean that I have to behave in the same arrogant and extravagant way that some members of the group behave. Sometimes I and my wife attend Nigerian social occasions with Western style clothing, and we do not go about with very expensive jewelleries and mobile phones like other members do, but that does not make me a lesser Nigerian. To the contrary, I am happy that I bring these Western ideas and values into the group.” (Interviewee 17, table 4.3).

“Eeeemm [He smiles] for sure, anyone who knew me before I got married will easily confirm that there is some change in the way I express myself socially since I got married. My wife will act different to some of the things we Nigerians would do in showing our cultural pride. My wife is my companion for life, so her views are important to me, even when it concerns

how I express myself and what I buy and the extent of my engagement in the Nigerian social community. Yes, I work together with my wife, so her ideas, views and values influence my decision making as to whether I will be personality identity or social identity driven in my preference formation for items like clothing, jewelleries, mobile phones and expensive cars. Before I met my wife, I was very Nigerian in my behaviour - I bought every new thing that was bought by the members, from clothing to jewelleries and newest mobile phone devices. But when I married my wife, I started adopting new values and started spending money wisely. Yes, I would say my buying behaviour or preference formation (to use your words) is more personal identity driven” (Interviewee 15, table 4.3).

This study also suggests a further interesting insight about intercultural marriage induced acculturation and preference formation influence for high involvement products. This study argues that the extent of acculturation with regards to whether intercultural marriage would lead to a dominant personal identity or social identity congruent preference formation behaviour would depend on the level of similarity, closeness or disparity with the Nigerian culture. Interviewee 3, who seems to proudly show his identity as a Nigerian, emphasised the importance for him to buy clothing and fashion that are common in the Nigerian community. In other words, his preference formation is mainly driven by this social group allegiance factor, even though he is married to a Brazilian woman. He commented thus:

“In my family, my parents taught me and my brothers to appreciate our culture, and always show this wherever we might be. And one way we do this is by wearing typical clothing that people wear in Nigerian social groups. I have been married to my Brazilian wife for about 15 years now and I know

that she does not have a different view about this matter.” (Interviewee 3, table 4.3).

Explaining further, Interviewee 3 commented that for high involvement products such as clothing there is no cultural difference between him and his wife, a conclusion that would make sense given that Brazilian culture would share commonalities, with African cultures than Western culture. However, for other high involvement products such as expensive jewellery, expensive cars and expensive mobile phones, preference formation is not driven by social identity, but rather personal identity, as the wife plays a major role in the decision making. This additional evidence thus indicates that the extent of influence that acculturation may have on preference formation behaviour of Nigerians would depend on the nature of the high involvement product involved.

6.4.3.2 Social Network Driven Acculturation

This study identified social network and intermingling as a core acculturation factor, that extendedly influences the extent to which UK based Nigerians may seek self-enactment through preference formation for high involvement products. This study proposes that intermingling with other cultures moderates the extent to which people incline to their country of origin values, ideas and ways of doing things. Supporting the facts in the comments of Interviewees 20, 11 and 15 (see Section 6.4.3), Interviewees 19 and 21, table 4.3, explain how intermingling with other cultures influence their preference formation behaviour:

“Coming to the UK to study has helped me in many ways, on the one hand to achieve my academic objectives, and on the other hand to enhance my values, view of life and the way I live. In my development as a person, and especially

in my personal value enhancement process, I have benefitted a lot from contact with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. Through them I have acquired values and principles that have shaped my thinking and behaviour. Yes, of course that includes what I buy and what drives my buying. To respond specifically to your question, yes I will not just buy clothing, jewelleries, cars or mobile phones just because other people in the Nigerian social community are doing the same. What I buy depends on my personal evaluation of circumstance, including the need for the buying.” (Interviewee 19, table 4.3).

“I have studied for a long time and I have made many contacts and friends along the way, many of whom are from a completely different culture. Even at the workplace, currently and in the past, I have close contacts. I do exchange ideas with these contacts, and no doubt I do learn ideas and values that are though different from m usual values and norms but are however useful for life. To mention one of several such people, I learn a lot about German values of humility, politeness and simplicity. These values and life principles that I have obtained through this intermingling with people from other cultures have helped in great measures to transform my behaviour. I like my Nigerian social community, but it is no longer a core life style for me that I should try to show off and buy very expensive cars, jewelleries and mobile phones because I want to match the standard shown by some people in the Nigerian community. What I buy, be it clothing, jewelleries, cars or mobile phone, is largely driven by my personal identity - values which I deem are very important to me as an individual, and not social identity.” (Interviewee 21, table 4.3).

“When I look back into last 12 years or more, I would say my life has changed a lot. My life style, the kind of occasions I attend, and the kind of

things I spend money on have changed a lot, due to the influence of my wife. Also, the kind of friends I keep and network with influence my behaviour. By my nature, I value relationship and I also learn from my networks from my previous studies and work life. I live in foreign culture and I adapt by learning different views and values. I love to identify with my Nigerian social community, but my priority is determined by my personal values which are also largely influenced by the values and ideas I get from my networks. No, I will not just buy very expensive things because other people are buying them.” (Interviewee 20, table 4.3).

Thus, this study suggests that as UK based Nigerians cross-socialise, network and mingle with people of other cultures, they imbibe new cultural understanding that enhances their views, personal identities, as well as social identity propensity. Through this process of constant interacting with other cultural systems, norms, attitudes, motivations and behaviours would be transmitted amongst consumers (Chan, 2006) and these would shape preference formation behaviour.

Another insight captured in this study with regards to this element of social network acculturation and preference formation behaviour influence relates to the role that educational road path plays in shaping an individual's tendency to be social identity or personal identity congruent driven. According to interviewees 20 and 15 (elaborated in Sections 6.4.2 and 6.4.4), their educational trainings enabled them to interact and engage socially with colleagues of diverse cultural background, thus allowing them to engage in cross-cultural sharing, adaptation and embracing of other cultural views, that enabled them to imbibe other behavioural values that also shaped their preference formation tendencies. In other words, this study suggests that the level of educational exposure may moderate the propensity to

acculturate. Based on the evidence from this study (Interviewees 20 and 15, table 4.3), the higher the level of educational pursuit the higher the propensity for cultural assimilation, adaptation and acculturation. That notion is further supported by Interviewee 2, table 4.3 who commented thus:

“Passing through the educational system involves more than studying to enhance one's technical knowledge of mathematics, English, Geography etc., it also involves gaining further knowledge like cross cultural knowledge and understanding interpersonal relationships, for example. Such additional skills are essential towards knowing how to behave and present oneself in a modern day multi-cultural society. No doubt, my educational experience has enabled me to adapt to other cultures.”

(Interviewee 2, table 4.3).

However, the evidence from this study suggests that the capacity of cultural adaptation or acculturation, whether by virtue of educational exposure and networking or general networking and inter-cultural mingling, might hinge largely on the dynamics of the specific context. This tendency has been explained in detail in Section 6.4.2, supported severally (Interviewees 12, 14, 22, 28, 33 and 34, table 4.3). As a reminder, Interviewees 22 and 34 commented thus:

“My country of origin culture is very important to me. In fact, my country of origin culture forms me, shapes me it is in fact my domain. Identifying with my country Nigerian and keeping to the high taste and keeping trendy, both fashion-wise as well as car choice is very important to secure my image, and this will be my way of life regardless of the cost involved and my level of education. I have to measure up to the standard by women I associate with.” (Interviewee 22, table 4.3).

“I am a Nigerian, I am proud to be a Nigerian, and if you want to show your pride in being a Nigerian, then you have to allow the Nigerian culture to show in your behaviour. At my level, there are standards I have to match to keep my status in the community. People hold me in high esteem, and if I want people to continue to show me that level of respect and recognition, then I have to continue to show high standards. May be, if I am to have a PhD qualification, people will even respect me more, but it is the identification with my country of origin culture that matters more and also influences my preference formation for high involvement products.” (Interviewee 34, table 4.3).

The aforementioned comments, but with particular emphasis on Interviewees 22 and 34's comments, show a case of high social embeddedness, where it is costly and painful for an individual to abandon a particular collective identity because a majority of one's social contacts and relationships reinforce this identity. Interestingly, all the aforementioned interviewees have long years of interacting with other cultures (all have lived at least 10 years in the UK). Rather, this study adds that the propensity of UK based Nigerians to adapt culturally or acculturate and preference formation influence would depend on other contingencies, for example the geographical context involved and the country-of-origin cultural features that condition the mind-set of individuals.

6.4.3.3 Country of Abode Driven Acculturation

The evidence emerging from the interviews with participants indicates that this acculturation logic is also valid in the context of how consumers make their preference formations for high involvement products and the social identity influence. This study suggests that although Nigerians in the UK tend to show a high level of identification and emotional attachment

with their Nigerian cultural enclave, especially with regards to the purchase and use of high involvement products, there is an emerging trend of acculturation taking place in their mindset and shaping the extent to which that identification and emotional attachment is lived in their purchase and use of high involvement products. While the cross-cultural marriage driven acculturation was explained in Section 6.4.3.1, social network driven acculturation was the focus of Section 6.4.3.2). In this current Section (6.4.3.3) the country of abode driven acculturation and preference formation influence is explained. The comments of interviewees 6, and 8 shed more light on the country of abode acculturation features around the consumer preference formation for high involvement products amongst Nigerians in the UK.

“I was born in the UK and I lived all my life with my parents who are Nigerians until I got married. I am a British citizen, but I also feel Nigerian inside me. There is no doubt, I take pride in showing that I am a Nigerian, and I buy typical clothing, and necklace brands used in the Nigerian community to make a statement about oneself. However, I am not notoriously inclined to buying and using such products because I want to be like others. I am Nigerian but I am also British and have also studied and engaged with other cultures, so I will not feel in any way odd if I wear British or Western pattern clothing amongst other Nigerians. To the contrary, I was born here and I live here and the British culture also influences how I make my decisions about what I buy.” (Interviewee 6, table 4.3).

“I have lived in this country for more than 10 years, there is no doubt the culture and the way the indigenes behave influence the way I behave. It is to be expected that when one is living in a community, the way of life that one adopts would be influenced by the core characteristics that dominate in the community, after all

one would interact, network and co-exist with other cultures. The truth is that what I buy and use is influenced not only by my Nigerian identity but also by the characteristics that I learn from the British culture.” (Interviewee 8, table 4.3).

Thus, UK based Nigerians acculturate to country of abode culture and this moderates their social identity driven preference formation for high involvement products. A contrast however to this notion of the ability and willingness of Nigerians to acculturate and how that influences their social identity behaviour with regards to high involvement products preference formation is also found in this study. Based on this contrast, it seems that this willingness and the need to acculturate might hinge largely on the contingencies of the context. In other words, what is the level of importance that the consumer attaches to the high involvement product, and what are the psychological features that feed into the cultural mind-set of the consumer, insights that add support to the contingency insight with regards to social network induced acculturation. For example, explaining the criticality of staying in tune with Nigerian dressing code, interviewees 3 and 9 provide evidence that not all Nigerians may exhibit such willingness to acculturate when making fashion related preference decisions:

“I am a Nigerian and I always want people to know that I am one and I am proud to show it. I engage intensively with the Nigerian social community in London and keeping the dressing code is important to me, no matter what goes on around me.” (Interviewee 3, table 4.3).

“I know I live in the UK, Yes, ... don't get me wrong, I have a few friends who are UK citizens and from other countries, but our friendships are more work related, and outside the work context there is not much between us. I feel much at home in my Nigerian cultural community, and I cannot sacrifice my cultural identity, which includes showing dressing behaviour that fits the trend in the community. ... The fact that I am living in the UK does not affect my social

identity with the Nigerian community and how I make my preference formation.”

(Interviewee 9, table 4.3).

The above evidence that some consumers' preference formation for high involvement products is not influenced by the fact that they have lived in the UK for a fairly long time is further stressed by interviewee 11 who has lived in the UK for over 30 years. According to him:

“My level of education, I will say level 7. I do have a Master’s degree but when it comes to buying of high involvement products my education has nothing to do with that. It’s a cultural thing and is not influenced by the level of education. The question of rationalizing before making decisions, that doesn’t follow that kind of educative approach; the key point that you are looking here is: will this create status for me in society? Does it spell out who I am? Does it create some kind of recognition for me? These are the key questions for analyzing or evaluating the product purchasing decisions. Unlike with education, you may go through that kind of systematic analysis, gathering of information, analyzing information and then draw your decision. Here the issue of post purchases doesn’t even come in.

I have lived in the UK for 35 years. Ehmm ... I don’t think because I am very in tune with my cultural background and my nationality as an African or West African, Ehmm ...my staying in the UK has not influenced my decision making when it comes to buying for the reasons that I have mentioned above.

I don’t have a role model but I have friends who do buy high quality products and ostentatious goods that I can recognize. I am a role model myself. So what it is, is that I have to identify what my peers do have and upon that I do make

decisions when I am going out for socializing or anything of that sort. So it is peer influence than role model.” (Interviewee 11, table 4.3).

Comparing the emergent insights from the above two groups of interviewees, that is interviewees 6 and 8 on the one hand and interviewees 3, 9 and 11 on the other, and also the fact that in the case of the former, the interviewees were either born in the UK or have lived in the UK for more than 10 years; while the latter group of interviewees (namely 3 and 9) have lived in the UK for between 6 and 10 years, it might seem rational to suggest that willingness to acculturate might grow over time. The evidence for interviewee 11, table 4.3, points to the fact that the tendency for the willingness to acculturate to grow over time might be influenced by other contingencies that have not been captured in this study. It must however be noted that this evidence of the tendency of some Nigerians to behave in a way that reflects strict inclination to their country of origin, as reflected in this case of interviewee 11. Furthermore, and especially with regards to the evidence for interviewees 3 and 9, this study seems to support ethnic identity literature which suggests that new immigrants may not wish to be totally assimilated but instead may want to preserve their ethnic identities.

6.4.4 Sub-Cultural (Tribal/Ethnic) Factors as moderator of social group identity and influence on consumer preference for high involvement products

A trend of ethnicity based behaviours was noticed in the preference formation of UK based Nigerians for high involvement products. In the Hausa sub-group, there is a higher influence of personal identity comparative to social identity on consumer preference formation for high involvement products, especially for high involvement products such as expensive cars and mobile phone devices. Interviewees however indicate a tendency for social identity congruent behaviour for clothing. These patterns of consumer preference formation behaviour are highlighted in the comments below:

“No, it is not in my nature to spend so much money to buy expensive cars because people I know are doing the same. Of course, I need a good car, but one very important value in my life is to spend wisely. For me, the thing I look out for in a car is durability and not flashy design for big money. For clothing, I can buy clothing as a result of influence in my social group.” (Interviewee 25, table 4.3).

“Yes, I am Hausa by origin, I have lived here for over 10 years and I would say that I mingle with the Nigerian social community in the part of UK where I live. I would describe my financial position as stable. I can afford what I need because I get support from my parents in Nigeria. Yes, I use a simple mobile phone because I do not see any need to spend so much money on mobile phone devices, even though I could easily afford them. I am a Muslim, and I would rather such money to somebody in need instead of spending them living a luxury life buying expensive mobile phone. Yes, I always try to match the clothing trend in my social group.” (Interviewee 10, table 4.3).

Interestingly, the emergent interview data suggest the opposite for the other two major cultural groups in Nigeria - the Ibo and the Yoruba cultural groups. Overall, the interviewees with Ibo and Yoruba cultural identifications respectively seemed to show similar levels of identification and emotional attachment and influence on consumer preference formation for high involvement products. They showed a tendency to be highly driven by their social cultural identities.

For the Ibo sub-cultural group, the evidence suggests a possibility of both personal identity and social identity congruent preference formation behaviour, depending on the individual

decision making involved. The overall trend suggests that for high involvement product such as clothing, social identity congruence level is dominant, but for high involvement products like jewelleries, cars and mobile phone devices where some reasonable investment would be involved, personal identity is a major preference formation factor. For example, Interviewee 29, table 4.3 (supported by Interviewees 15, 18 and 19 - see Sections 6.4.3.1 and 6.4.3.2) comments thus:

“Belonging to a social group does not mean that one has to do everything other members would do. The decision of what to buy involves processing relevant information - do I need to buy something, if others buy it, can I afford it without causing myself avoidable monetary stress. The decision making is one that involves careful consideration of my personal values as well as the social group values.” (Interviewee 29, table 4.3).

An empirical insight for the Yoruba sub-cultural group is captured in the comment of Interviewee 26, table 4.3 (supported by Interviewees 23, 11 and 28).

“In my tribe (meaning Yoruba ethnic group) [he smiles], cultural identity is very important, so a typical Yoruba person, which I would say I am, would do almost everything possible to proudly display his identity, Yes, the truth is that in most cases, rational thinking plays a secondary role, because people are more interested in saving face in the social community.”
(Interviewee 26, table 4.3).

For the mid-West (Delta) sub-cultural enclave, while emergent evidence supports a case of both personal identity and social identity congruent preference formation behaviour, the former component seems to be a more dominant decision making logic. An outcome which seems logical, given two plausible reasons: (1) the Delta region in Nigeria is characterised by heterogeneous cultural identities (cultural norms, religion, languages, etc.), as a result people

of Delta origin may be very familiar with cultural adaptation - acculturation, and would tend to be more personal identity driven; and (2) Delta origin participants in this study depict a high level of educational training, a factor that explains their high propensity for personal identity rather than social identity, given the educational impact highlighted earlier (see for example the comment of Interviewee 20 in Section 6.3.3).

This study suggests that an individual may display a tendency to show a strong motivation for extended self-drive in his preference formation behaviour by engaging in a consumption behaviour that is driven by a desire to enhance self-image or satisfy the high standard of his/her idol or role model):

“As far as I am concerned, showing that I am Yoruba is important, and I have to show this in my behaviour, in what I wear, who I associate with, and the things that I buy in general. Do the things I wear and buy measure with the quality shown by other members of the Nigerian and Yoruba community. These are the questions that are important to me because my image is at stake.” (Interviewee 26, table 4.3).

“Yes, to be honest, I sometimes buy things out of the need to match the trend in the community. For example, there is a highly position member of the group who is not only very rich but is also respected in the community in general. I would say this person is like my idol and because I hold him in high respect, I always try to keep his life style. So, I more or less try to boost my image to match with his.” (Interviewee 23, table 4.3).

In the examination of the sub-cultural evidence from this study, three factors were found to moderate the level of social identity or personal identity behaviour and preference formation influence in the various sub-cultural groups namely educational background, religiosity and acculturation. Further findings are therefore organised in the following order:

1. Sub-Cultural (Ethnic) Features of Social Identity Driven Preference Formation - Educational Background Influence (Section 6.4.4.1), and
2. Sub-Cultural (Ethnic) Features of Social Identity Driven Preference Formation - Acculturation Influence (Section 6.4.4.2).

6.4.4.1 Sub-Cultural (Ethnic) Features of Social Identity Driven Preference Formation - Educational Background Influence

Examining the evidence from this study based on the sub-cultural levels, this study suggests that the nature of influence that the level of education may have on the extent to which preference formation for high involvement products of UK based Nigerians may be personal identity or social identity congruent, is conditioned by their ethnic identities.

As the interview response of Interviewee 10, table 4.3 (Hausa ethnic group) shows, highly educated Hausas would tend to be influenced by their educational exposure, and therefore would show preference formation tendencies for high involvement products that are personal identity congruent. Commenting, she states: *“I am studying to gain more knowledge for the future, and also be able to make decisions based on reasonable logic. I cannot just do things because other people are doing the same.”*

This reasonability logic and influence on personal identity congruent behaviour is also supported in the evidence for Interviewee 20, table 4.3, of Delta origin who has a high level of educational exposure (PhD holder). Interviewee 20 noted that he is conscious of the importance of identifying with his Nigerian community; however, he does not blindly follow the bandwagon. In other words, his educational exposure immensely influences his decision making behaviour, as a result his preference formation behaviour would be highly personal identity congruent.

“To respond to your question, yes my educational exposure influences how I make decisions and what I decide for. Without doubt, driven by my

educational exposure, the decision of what I buy will be more influenced by personal identity logic than social group logic.” (Interviewee 20, table 4.3).

For the Yoruba sub-cultural group, this study found evidence that supports a conclusion of chronically social identity congruent preference formation behaviour despite level of educational exposure. In other words, regardless of whether they are educated or not, the Yorubas tend to be highly loyal to the social communities, and would as a result show behaviour that match with developments in the social group (Interviewees 23 and 11). According to them:

“My level of education, I will say level 7. I do have a Master’s degree but when it comes to buying of high involvement products my education has nothing to do with that. It’s a cultural thing and is not influenced by the level of education. The question of rationalizing before making decisions, that doesn’t follow that kind of educative approach; the key point that you are looking here is: will this create status for me in society? Does it spell out who I am? Does it create some kind of recognition for me? These are the key questions for analyzing or evaluating the product purchasing decisions”. (Interviewee 11, table 4.3).

“While education adds value to my life, it cannot substitute for the joy, identity and affiliation benefits that I gain from my Nigerian community. My decision making for high involvement products such as clothing, jewelleries and mobile phone devices is majorly influenced by the social groups that I belong to.” (Interviewee 23, table 4.3).

On the other hand, the evidence for the Ibo sub-cultural group suggests a mixed picture. For example, while Interviewee 15 suggests a higher influence of personal identity, Interviewee

18 suggests that social identity has the dominating influence, on the decision making for preference formation.

“I have lived in England for almost 20 years, and as a matter of fact it was academic pursuit that motivated my coming to England. I have studied in this country, and going through these educational training has helped me to view things from a more different perspective than I would have done if I was in Nigeria. Although my Nigerian culture is important to me, because the Nigerian community is where I belong, my purchase decision and use of cars and fashion is also influenced by principles and values acquired through education. While I would like to mingle with my fellow Nigerians, what I buy and how I use them will depend on my priority scale.”

(Interviewee 15, table 4.3).

Interviewee 19, who is also of Ibo origin, supports this educational exposure driven personal identity congruent behaviour pinpointed in the comment of Interviewee 15. He comments thus: *“Of what help is it to me if I engage in illusionary behaviour buying expensive cars and jewelleries and creating a false impression that I am living in affluence because other people are doing the same. I have studied so that I can use my senses rationally. I am a Nigerian and I value the importance of identifying with Nigerian values, but to me, image has more to do with what I feel inside me rather than what I am wearing on my hands or the posh cars that I am driving.”* (Interviewee 19, table 4.3).

“The answer is a straight ‘no’, whether I am educated or not has nothing to do with my social identity and how I express myself in terms of my fashion trend. It is important that any one that wants to show that he is a proud Nigerian should feel proud to also put on the typical clothing trends. My

social identity has a big influence on the type of clothing that I buy.”

(Interviewee 18, table 4.3).

6.4.4.2 Sub-Cultural (Ethnic) Features of Social Identity - Acculturation Influence

As interviewees' responses show, the acculturation process amongst the Nigerian sub-cultures is driven by two central factors - intercultural marriage and intercultural networking.

With regards to the former, this study indicates that intercultural marriage drives acculturation and extended influence on the purchase decision making for high involvement products amongst the UK based sub-cultural Nigerian groups. Interviewees 17 and 20 (of Mid-West [Delta]) origin and 15 (Ibo) exhibited a high sense of acculturation, relational openness and a consumer preference formation attitude that is not highly driven by identification and emotional attachment to the Nigerian social group. But rather, their decision making for the purchase and use of high involvement products is strongly influenced by their personal identities.

The comments of Interviewees 17, 20 and 15, table 4.3 are presented below, while the acculturation and intercultural marriage influence and extended preference formation impact is elaborated in Section 6.4.3.1.

“There is no doubt my behaviour and the way I do things have changed a lot due to the influence of my wife. Yes, that includes too how I behave in the Nigerian community. There are some life style behaviours, for example the things that I buy to show off and identify with the Nigerian social community, which I now no longer have those behaviours. Don't get me wrong, my wife loves me and loves my culture, but she will not want me to spend money unwisely.” (Interviewee 17, table 4.3).

“When I look back into last 12 years or more, I would say my life has changed a lot. My life style, the kind of occasions I attend, and the kind of things I spend money on have changed a lot, due to the influence of my wife. My wife is not against my Nigerian culture, as a matter of fact, she embraces my Nigerian culture, for example, she wears typical Nigerian style fashion when we attend occasions. But, my wife does not tolerate wastefulness and showy attitude and the constant competition that goes on in the Nigerian social community. For example, my wife will not permit that we spend huge sums of money to buy jewelleries, mobile phones or very expensive cars because other people are doing the same.” (Interviewee 20, table 4.3).

*“Eeeemm [**He smiles**] for sure, anyone who knew me before I got married will easily confirm that there is some change in the way I express myself socially since I got married. My wife will act different to some of the things we Nigerians would do in showing our cultural pride. My wife is my companion for life, so her views are important to me, even when it concerns how I express myself and what I buy and the extent of my engagement in the Nigerian social community. Yes, I work together with my wife, so her ideas, views and values influence my decision making as to whether I will be personality identity or social identity driven in my preference formation for items like clothing, jewelleries, mobile phones and expensive cars.” (Interviewee 15, table 4.3).*

While this study did not capture any sub-culture level differences in the intercultural marriage induced acculturation evidence and influence on preference formation for high involvement products, the evidence for the intercultural networking induced acculturation and influence on

preference formation showed differences in the various sub-cultural levels. Thus, this study suggests that the extent to which intercultural networking may be valued and embraced and extended influence of preference formation for high involvement products amongst UK based Nigerians will depend on the unique features that distinguish the sub-cultural groups (see, for example, the comments of Interviewees 20, 11 and 15, table 4.3 below):

Interviewee 20, table 4.3, who is of mid-West (Delta) origin, commented thus:

“....., yes my educational exposure influences how I make decisions and what I decide for. Without doubt, driven by my educational exposure, the decision of what I buy will be more influenced by personal identity logic than social group logic. Through contacts back in the days of my educational exposure and also through my daily contact neighbours and other people from different cultures, I learn and adopt new views, views and ideas that enable me make the right decisions on what to, and what not to buy. Therefore, I will not just buy things because my fellow Nigerians buy them”. (Interviewee 20, table 4.3).

For the Yoruba sub-cultural group, Interviewee 11 who has lived in the UK for over 30 years, offers insight that underline that while acculturation might take place in settings with a multicultural population, the tendency for that happening will depend on the nature of cultural artefacts (norms, values, beliefs, principles, etc.) that shape the behavioural capacity of an individual. As previously explained, the evidence from this study indicates that the Yorubas tend to be highly loyal to the social communities, and would as a result show behaviour that match with developments in the social group. As Interviewee 11 shows below, this is also the case, regardless of the educational exposure and the intercultural networking that may develop as a result:

“My level of education, I will say level 7. I do have a Master’s degree but when it comes to buying of high involvement products my education has nothing to do with that. It’s a cultural thing and is not influenced by the level of education. Yes, I still have contacts with some of my former colleagues and I also have some social contacts with people from my area of work. But they have their views, principles and cultures which are different from mine, and they should not influence what I do. Whether I buy clothing, jewelries or expensive mobile phones depends on what I deem necessary in keeping up with the trend in my Nigerian social group.”

(Interviewee 11, table 4.3).

The Ibo sub-cultural group evidence supports the evidence for the mid-West (Delta) sub-cultural group. For example, Interviewee 15, table 4.3 suggests a higher influence of personal identity induced on the one hand by educational exposure and resulting intercultural networking, and on the other hand by daily intermingling induced networking in the immediate neighbourhood and at work.

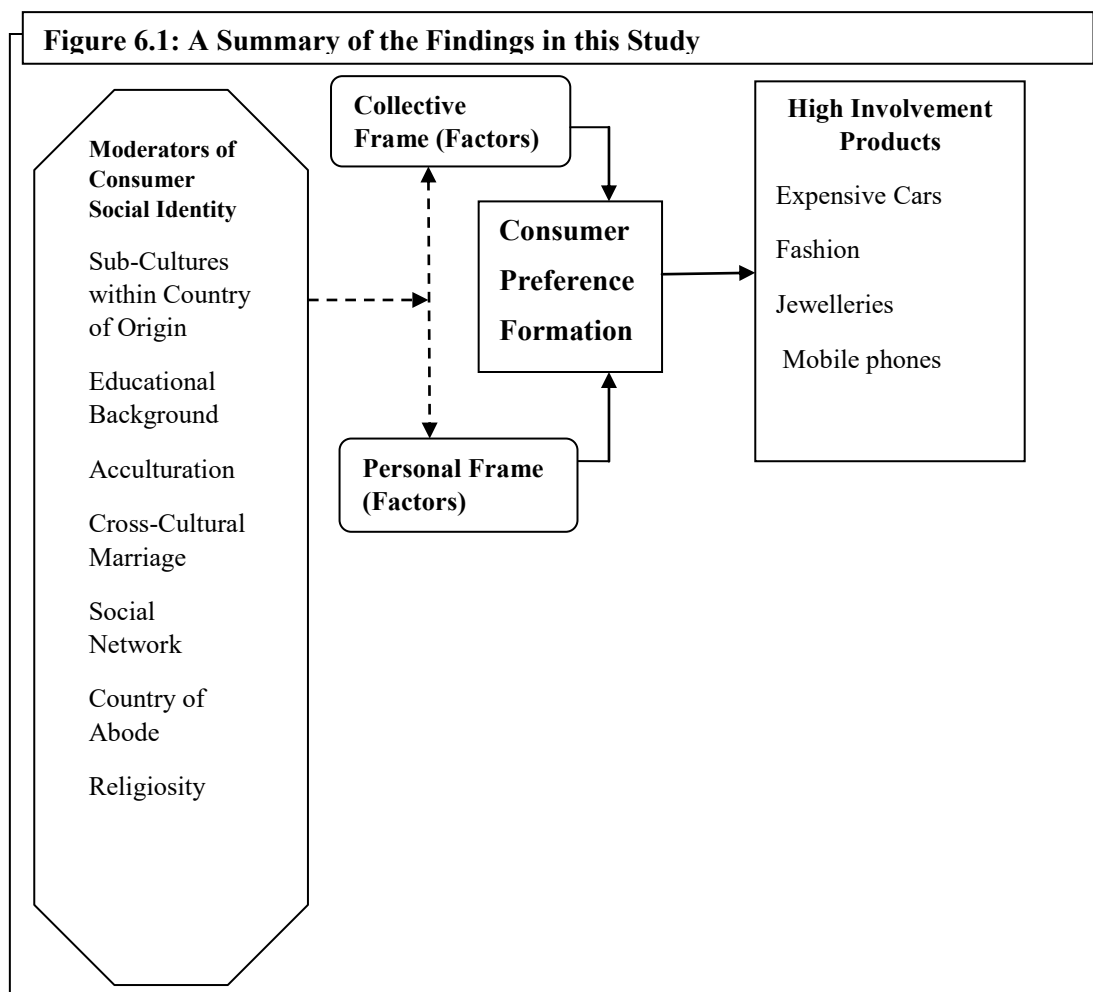
“I have lived in England for almost 20 years, I have studied in this country, and going through these educational training has helped me to view things from a more different perspective than I would have done if I was in Nigeria. I have friends from my study days, and also friends that I have made through daily engagements and at work, and the views, ideas and values that I get from them influence the way I behave. Although my Nigerian culture is important to me, because the Nigerian community is where I belong, my purchase decision and use of cars and fashion is also influenced by principles and values acquired through education and the values I get from other cultures. While I would like to

mingle with my fellow Nigerians, what I buy and how I use them will depend on my priority scale.” (Interviewee 15, table 4.3).

6.5 Summary

In this Section, a conclusion to this Chapter is presented pinpointing briefly the core findings that would be transported to Chapter seven. In doing this, the researcher first summarises the core findings in Figure 6.1. Following that, the core findings of this study are briefly flagged to give the reader some idea of what to expect in the major conclusions of this study that would be presented in Chapter 8.

Figure 6. 1: A Summary of the Findings in this Study



A central insight that emerged from this study relates to the crucial role that culture plays in shaping the psychological mind-set of UK based Nigerians and extended influence on their preference formation for high involvement products. Therefore, whether UK based Nigerians would be personal or social identity driven in their preference formation would depend on the cultural features that shape their behaviour.

From the emergent evidence from this study, it is underlined that there is significant level of social identity congruent behaviour amongst UK based Nigerians with regards to the way they seek to enact their selfhood from the point of the preference formation for high involvement products, which, as captured in this study include clothing, jewellery, mobile phones and expensive cars. That said, this Chapter also indicates that personal identity of the individuals also exerts some degree of influence in the way UK based Nigerians process their decisions on whether to buy or not to buy any of the aforementioned high involvement products.

Overall, this study suggests that the extent to which the consumer behaviour of UK based Nigerians with regards to high involvement products would be social identity or personal identity congruent or a combination of both would depend on their psychological mind-set – a state of mind that is conditioned by numerous factors, such as national level cultural features, sub-cultural level features, educational background, religiosity and acculturation.

In a multicultural setting, it is a known fact that two cultural forces come into play: the familiar culture which an individual identifies with (cultural enclave), and the unfamiliar culture grounded on values, norms, beliefs, ideas and principles contrary to an individual's ways of understanding (beyond cultural enclave). A critical fact that must be underlined in line with the finding of social cultural process, and cross-cultural interaction and engagement influence on their preference formation behaviour is the evidence of a potential of

acculturation and cultural transformation that may take place through intercultural mingling. This study suggests that although UK based Nigerians would seemingly acculturate, the extent to which they would show such acculturation tendency would hinge on a number of factors, such as cross cultural marriage, the extent of educational exposure and lasting impact, and the extent of social networking and country of abode culture.

It is also underlined in this study that religiosity exerts some influence on the behavioural tendencies of UK based Nigerians with regard to how they may prioritise personal or social identity in their preference formation for high involvement products. As a result, the preference formation for high involvement products for religiously oriented UK based Nigerians may be more personal identity driven as their religious grounding prompts them to have other priorities instead of spending hugely to achieve social identity targets.

This Section (6.5) has summarised the findings from this study as presented in Chapter 6. In doing that, Section 6.5 has identified some of the core takes from this study, and thereby offered a pre-ambles to the discussion (Chapter 7) and conclusions that would be flagged and elaborated in Chapter 8.

Chapter Seven: Discussion of Findings

7.1 Introduction

In their study “identity-based consumer behaviour”, Reed II *et al.*, (2012) emphasised the “fundamental human drive to understand who one is, what one believes and what one does” (p.310). Aligning to the notion that consumers can potentially identify with a limitless array of different category labels, they define identity as any category label that the consumer self-associates with, either by choice or endowment. Prior literature that connects to that foundation (Oyserman, 2009) elaborates that the category label invokes a mental representation (i.e. a clear picture) of what that “kind” of person looks like, thinks, feels, and does. A central finding from this study of consumer preference formation of UK based Nigerians for involvement products relates to its reinforcement of the importance of mental representation components of what an individual likes, thinks, feels and does, in the understanding of identity behaviour.

Bearing in mind that central finding, it is important to call to mind that, as explained in Section 1.3, three research questions form the bases of the framework for this study. For that reason, the findings from this study are discussed in three sections, each explaining the findings relating to each of the questions, and in doing that the relevant cases of the aforementioned mental representation components as flagged in Chapter six would be discussed.

Chapter six (6) has presented the findings from this current study, based on the core themes that emerged from the study and findings are presented in Chapter (7). The overall evidence from this study of preference formation behaviour of UK based Nigerians for high involvement products supports the notion of interactions of personal, social, cultural, psychological and commercial factors of how ethnic minority consumers (blacks) in London make their consumption decisions and manage their various selves (Gbadamosi, 2015). In discussing the findings from this study in Chapter (7), it is important to show how the research questions that underpin this study have been answered and also in relation to relevant literature that connect to the domains covered in these questions. Therefore, the discussion of the findings is organised in the following order:

1. RQ1 - What features of the consumer preference of explored Nigerians in the UK is driven by personal or collective frame of preference or both? In other words, to what extent is the purchase preference and the use of high involvement products for social occasions influenced by social group identity features or individual features? (Section 7.2).
2. RQ2 - What, if any, are the sub-groups differences in the social identity influence on high involvement products purchase (and use) preferences of UK based Nigerians? In other words, what are the core differences in the consumer preferences for high involvement products of the three major sub-groups (cultural groups) within the Nigerian community (the Ibos, the Yorubas, and the Hausas)? (Section 7.3).
3. RQ3 - What factors (e.g. education, cross cultural marriage, country of abode culture) moderate the influence of social group identity on the consumer preference of UK based Nigerians for high involvement products. Or following the conceptual logic in white *et al.*, (2012) where university was conceptualised as an element of consumer social identity, is university qualification or some

other forms of qualification a consumer social identity element amongst UK based Nigerian consumers? (Section 8.4).

In Section 8.5 the conclusion to this Chapter is presented.

7.2 Purchase Preference and use of High Involvement Products for Social Occasions: The Personal and (or) Collective Identity Features

Section 7.2 has flagged a central finding from this study - the critical role that culture plays in the preference formation behaviour of UK based Nigerians for high involvement products. In explaining that role, the social identity and personal identity implication was also emphasised. This personal identity and collective (social) identity and preference formation connection is the realm of research question one (RQ1):

RQ1 - What features of the consumer preference of explored Nigerians in the UK is driven by personal or collective frame of preference or both? In other words, to what extent is the purchase preference and the use of high involvement products for social occasions influenced by social group identity features or individual features?

Empirically, the preference formation of UK based Nigerians for high involvement products is influenced by their level of social (collective) identity and personal identity congruence, evidence which reinforces previous literature that association of personal and social identity to consumer preference behaviour for symbolic products (e.g. Gbadamosi, 2015; Ashmore *et al.*, 2004; Reed II *et al.*, 2012). Extending the symbolic products discussion, the personal and social identity insight from this study lends support to insights about ethnic minority consumer behaviour in London (Gbadamosi, 2015; Gbadamosi, 2012).

Furthermore, this study offers insights that explain the preference formation behaviour of UK based Nigerians and the motives behind the behavioural pattern they display. Thus, this combination of personal and social identity components from the psychological mind-set of UK based Nigerians that shapes the way the respondents enact their selfhood through their consumption behaviour for symbolic products. Putting together the evidence of personal and social identity features that feed into this self-enactment, this study reinforces Leary and Tangney (2011) who broadly conceptualised that the self represents a person as a whole, and includes personality, personal beliefs, feelings, experiences, and the regulatory self.

Further, given the evidence that in addition to social identity factors, there are also personal identity factors that influence decision making and preference formation for high involvement products amongst UK based Nigerians, the insights from this study add support to the notion of composite identity, which as Ting-Toomey (2015) summarised includes group membership, relational role and individual self-reflexive implications.

UK based Nigerians who are highly social identity congruent exhibit high symbolic consumer behaviour, as they view the cues from such purchase behaviour as important to their image and how they perceive their selves (e.g. Kim *et al.*, 2013; Fournier and Yao, 1997; Gbadamosi, 2015) and extended self (e.g. Belk, 1988; Naim *et al.*, 2008; Amine and Lazzaoui, 2011). Furthermore, most of the UK based consumers who show this social identity driven symbolic preference formation tendency seemingly derive happiness in doing that as they perceive such purchase behaviour (e.g. for particular clothing brands and mobile devices used by a hero figure in the social community) to boost their image and personal status (Lai, 1994), which connects to the notion by Castano *et al.*, (2010) that the issue of consumption reflects not only what is in our mind but what is in our hearts. Also, the product type behaviour finding flagged above lends support to brand personification literature (Lee,

2013; Schade *et al.*, 2014; Brown, 2011), while the symbolic preference formation behaviour driven by extended self-values reinforce celebrity endorsement of ethnic minority consumers (Gbadamosi, 2015). Also, on the emergent evidence (see Section 6.2.2), this study lends support to the notion that social identity exerts immensely on consumer preference formation (e.g. White *et al.*, 2012; Escalas and Bettman, 2005) but also the fact that constant comparison between peers and members is typical of social communities (e.g. Saunders, 2001; Chan and Zhang, 2007; Yue and Cheung, 2000).

Elaborating further the push to enhance image and hero factor influence on social identity behaviour and preference formation for high involvement products, it seems UK based Nigerians (most respondents in this study) are highly culture driven, evidence which lends support to a recent UK research (Alakija, 2016). Examining the behavioural pattern of Nigerians based in London (Peckham area), Alakija (2016) reports that despite having lived in the UK for a long time, majority of the study participants behaved in the same manner that Nigerians would typically behave back in Nigeria. Furthermore, that evidence lends support to the findings in Gbadamosi (2012) which suggests that in the Nigerian community in the UK, people (women in that study) use their clothing to make a statement about their image.

The aforementioned preference formation insights reinforce Escalas and Bettman (2005) who argue that consumers enact their self-identity based on the congruency between brand-user associations and self-image associations. Since the image factor is critical to them, consumers would chronically view such products as important, regardless of the attached cost, because they value the need to boost their ego and self-esteem, and by so doing the desired psychological utility – affiliating or sharing belongingness and similar identity with their idols, heroes. In other words, their ego is boosted as a signal effect of using a brand is triggered, and their opinion of self is boosted because of their view of what the brand says

about them as consumer and to others. Their self-image and ego is further boosted by the fact that they have heroes or people they hold in high esteem who are members of their social community, insight that connects to the literature on social behaviour of individuals and leadership influence. In other words, leaders and especially people who are viewed as role models or hero are held in high reverence. Consequently, individuals who experience such hero or leader figure in their lives would potentially draw from the cues they get from such leaders or role models to shape their behaviours, even to the extent of influencing the preference formation for products. Thus, consumers use their behaviour patterns to make a statement about their identity (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001; Escalas and Bettman, 2005).

Further insights relating to the hero factor and social identity propensity and preference formation impact support the theoretical foundation that celebrity endorsement significantly influences the social identity importance in the mind of individuals and the degree of influence it exerts on the nature of products they buy (e.g. Chan and Zhang, 2007; Yue and Cheung, 2000). Explained further, the insight supports previous literature which argues that individuals may endorse celebrities and try to enact a selfhood that matches with that of the celebrity or hero because they strive for identification and intimacy with the celebrity (e.g. Josselson, 1991), and also because celebrities are often extremely wealthy and also attract more attention than ordinary people (Chan and Zhang, 2007).

Analysing the celebrity endorsement evidence and high social identity behaviour association in line with social needs theory (e.g. Maslow, 1970; Baumeister and Leary, 1995; Smith, 2013), it would seem rational to argue that this current study lends support to the notion that consumers engage in social identity driven preference formation behaviour because of the critical importance of satisfying their social needs (e.g. Baumeister and Leary, 1995; Deci and Ryan, 2000; Syrjälä *et al.*, 2014). Justifying further the reason for such social identity

congruent behaviour and preference formation influence, Syrjälä *et al.*, (2014) add that such high involvement products have both utility-driven and symbolically driven functions while Baumeister and Leary (1995) contend that the need to belong is pervasive and inescapable and can be “almost as compelling a need as food” (*ibid.*, 498). Finally, Syrjälä *et al.*, (2014) describe the preference formation behaviour depicted by the aforementioned respondents as ‘consuming to affiliate’. Over time, this habit of consuming to affiliate intensifies. The reason for that trend is that celebrity worshipping tends to exert influence on shaping the followers' values, attitudes and behaviours (Schultze *et al.*, 1991).

Furthermore, these insights of image as an influencing factor in the social group driven consumer preference formation of UK based Nigerians for high involvement products connect to prior literature which argues that social relations with peers and celebrity figures drive social group congruent consumer preference formation (e.g. Chan and Zhang, 2007). Again, this image factor insight and importance to their identity add to earlier literature which suggests that as an important element of life, clothing could be used to convey the inner self of the users (e.g. Moody *et al.*, 2010) and that clothing is one of the ways that people express their cultural identities (e.g. Gbadamosi, 2012).

Further insights however show that not all UK based Nigerians exhibit this high level of social identity driven behaviour in the preference formation for high involvement products. Past literature has underlined that given the complexity and diversity of human behaviour, the way brand personification is perceived may differ across products, situations and customer groups, especially as these factors influence the degree of involvement that people have in various goal objects (Zaichkowsky, 1985; Gbadamosi, 2013). While some respondents value their affiliation to the Nigerian social community, they do not show a preference formation behaviour that is driven by a blind commitment to social identity values to boost image and

ego, but rather preference formation decision for high involvement products is rationalised on personal identity values.

Consumer involvement has been defined as the perceived personal importance and/or the interest consumers attach to the acquisition, consumption and disposition of a good or service, or an idea (Celsi and Olson, 1988; Mowen and Minor, 1998). Whatever the goal object driving the consumer, the involvement that consumers have with such goods, services or ideas varies in terms of its level (Gbadamosi, 2009) would depend not only on their social but also personal identities. The findings from this current study lend support to that substance. Some UK based Nigerians value the importance of identifying with their culture and Nigerian community, but however do not perceive the personal identity importance for them to be economically irrational (as one respondent put it). To these group of UK based Nigerians, price is a critical factor of preference formation even for high involvement products, insights that reinforce price sensitivity literature of consumer behaviour (e.g. Shi et al, 2005; Ndubisi and Moi, 2006; Gbadamosi, 2009). For this category of UK based Nigerians, their preference formation behaviour is driven by the principle of value for money in their purchases (e.g. Gbadamosi, 2009). Price level and affordability are important in the minds of these individuals, their self-concept and personal identity and their consumption behaviour.

Since price and affordability play a role in the mind-set of some of the UK based Nigerians, a consequence of which is the money factor influence on personal identity behaviour and preference formation of such UK based Nigerians, the other side of the coin relates to the money factor influence on social identity behaviour. Since the status and image of the respondents in being members of their social groups are of importance to them, a habit of materialism and the use of spending power to communicate that one is rich and belongs to the

high society becomes the unavoidable outcome. These insights connect to past literature which emphasise that materialistic tendencies might develop (Chan and Zhang, 2007) - thus, excessive spending driven by the quest to achieve desired self-concept is a core element in social identity driven preference formation behaviour. Examining the materialistic-value insight further, this study lends support to the study of La Ferle and Chan (2008) who noted that, with time, adolescents develop a materialistic behaviour driven by consumer socialising. Furthermore, from the above discussion, the findings from this study also corroborate past research that argues that clothing has been an important element of human life and is viewed as a medium to convey the inner self of the users (Moody *et al.*, 2010), and that especially women have the habit of using fashion products to make a statement about their cultural identities (Gbadamosi, 2012). It must be noted that the materialistic-value orientation would increase over time as members of social groups learn the symbolic meaning of goods through regular interaction with their peers and members of the social community (e.g. Achenreiner, 1997; Moschis and Churchill, 1978). Thus, this willingness to comply with the wishes of others, otherwise referred to as 'normative influence' (La Ferle and Chan, 2008) reflects a person's need to identify or enhance one's image with significant others through material possession (Bearden *et al.*, 1989).

Aligned to the self-categorisation literature (e.g. Ashmore *et al.*, 2004; Tee *et al.*, 2013), the combined two streams of evidence (the use of money and spending power to display affluence to boost image and status, and materialism as a core element in social identity behaviour) adds support to the notion that an actor's enactment of social identity is "triggered by a process of individual depersonalization, whereby the individual changes their self-conceptualization and frames their identity not solely on individual idiosyncrasies, but more on group-relevant attributes" (Tee *et al.*, 2013, p.904; Turner, 1987), hence respondents drive for affluence display and materialism is not only driven by the individual's goal of showing

off wealth, but also by the desire to boost their image and status through money spending and materialism and membership of their highly esteemed social groups. These insights support further literature on the motivation for acquisition and possession of materialistic items and how individuals use their collection to enhance their identification and symbolic affinity to their group (and also their heroes and role models in the group) (e.g. Richins and Dawson, 1992; La Ferle and Chan, 2008). Thus, as literature on brand consumption affirms, enhancing and protecting self-esteem are core identity-related motives for preference formation (e.g. Kressmann *et al.*, 2006; He *et al.*, 2012).

Explained further in line with the celebrity literature, an individual is likely to develop a materialistic behaviour, as celebrity worshiping would drive materialistic-value orientation (e.g. Belk, 1988; La Ferle and Chan, 2008). This theoretical substance is further enhanced by other literature which suggests that in circumstances where members of social communities imitate celebrities (or heroes or role models, as in the case of this current study) an increase in materialistic behaviour is to be expected (e.g. Chan and Prendergast, 2007; Chan and Zhang, 2007; Goldberg *et al.*, 2003; La Ferle and Chan, 2008). A plausible reason for this is that individuals who exhibit this level of symbolic attachment and celebrity admiration consider idols as idealised self-images (Caughey, 1984; 1985), and as such seek to develop or refine personality traits that are similar to their idols - and in doing that may want to revise their physical appearance, abilities, values and attitudes to match with those of their idols (La Ferle and Chan, 2008; La Ferle and Choi, 2005).

Revisiting the point of a social group member with a 'hero' status, Section 6.2.3 explained the hero factor in a group and influence on social congruence behaviour with regards to symbolic consumption amongst Nigerians based in the UK. According to the underlying leadership foundation, social behaviour of individuals is associated to leadership influence.

Thus, since leaders and especially people who are viewed as role models or hero are held in high reverence, individuals who experience such hero or leader figure in their lives would potentially draw from the cues they get from such leaders or role models to shape their behaviours, even to the extent of influencing the preference formation for products. As a consequence, individuals may engage in consumption tendencies in order to make a statement about one's social reference - reflecting social ties to brand communities (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001; Escalas and Bettman, 2005) and heroes and celebrities (e.g. Chan and Zhang, 2007; Yue and Cheung, 2000). Thus, consumers use their purchase behaviour patterns to make a statement about their identity and express celebrity worship.

As flagged in Section 6.2, two factors within group features contribute to high social identity congruence behaviour and preference formation impact amongst UK based Nigerians, namely image attached to membership of a group and hero factor in a group. Synthesising existing literature, Reed II *et al.* (2012) identify five (5) important “identity principles” that connect the various streams of literature, and provide a refined structure for the important processes and mechanisms that have emerged from the available literature. Two of these identity principles, they note are: (1) “identity salience: identity processing increases when the identity is an active component of the self;” and (2) “identity relevance: the deliberative evaluation of identity-linked stimuli depends on how diagnostic the identity is in the relevant domain” (p.311). The findings from this study provide insights that connect to these principles. The elaboration of the core values that guide the decision on who is a hero or role model and social identity and preference formation influence (see Section 6.4) lends support to the understanding of the extent to which personal identity (and core components) influence consumer preference formation (e.g. White *et al.*, 2012; Ashmore *et al.*, 2004). Furthermore, this insight regarding the self-image driven behaviour if one's hero or role model was to be a member of the social community contrast insights about the Chinese context (Chan and

Zhang, 2007). According to Chan and Zhang (2007) young Chinese consumers tend to exhibit chronic social identity congruent preference formation behaviour due to the influence of peers and media celebrities' endorsement. As Chan and Zhang (2007) further note, the plausible explanation for that trend is that in countries like China where culture is collective, social relations, whether personal or celebrity-mediated, plays a significant role in the establishment of consumption values.

The findings from this study indicate that the consumer preference formation of Nigerians based in the UK for high involvement products is highly congruent with their social affiliations. Empirically, the preference formation of UK based Nigerian consumers for high involvement products are highly influenced by the level of their peer group's importance. A core explanation for this consumption behaviour is that the respondents in this study attach a high importance and image to the membership of their Nigerian social group. Thus, UK based Nigerians tend to habitually buy particular clothing because of their identity driven effects – such particular clothing is evaluated highly, thus people strive to associate with them and thus earn the attached reputation in the Nigerian community. This identity trend reinforces the “identity relevance” principle that the deliberative evaluation of identity-linked stimuli depends on how diagnostic the identity is in the relevant domain (Reed II *et al.*, 2012). Extending this discussion further, this insight adds substance to the notion that social networking exerts positive influence on the consumption content of participants in the social networking (Makri and Schlegelmich, 2017).

This study has also identified a number of factors that influence the mindset of UK based Nigerians, their personal identity and social identity congruence propensity and preference formation influence on high involvement products, and these have been discussed in detail under the relevant research questions (see Sections 7.3 and 7.4).

7.3 Social Identity Influence: Sub-Cultural Groups Differences and Moderating Influence

7.3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this Section (7.3) is to discuss the findings that have been presented in Section 6.4.4, and in so doing, show how the second research question (RQ2) (as reminded below) has been answered.

RQ2 - What, if any, are the sub-groups differences in the social identity influence on high involvement products purchase (and use) preferences of UK based Nigerians? In other words, what are the core differences in the consumer preferences for high involvement products of the three major sub-groups (cultural groups) within the Nigerian community (the Ibos, the Yorubas, and the Hausas)?

According to past literature, the effectiveness of identity-linking strategies to brands may depend on contextual factors (e.g. White and Argo, 2009; White *et al.*, 2012). Emergent insights from this study connect to that foundation. Empirically, this study argues that the extent to which individuals attach importance, and stay committed to collective identity depends on the cultural enclave and the norms and values that characterise the culture. Thus, this study suggests that there are some differences between the three core cultural groupings in Nigeria (Yoruba, Ibo and Hausa) in the level of importance they attach to social identity (or collective identity) and its influence on their purchase and use decision making for high involvement products. This insight lends support to the theoretical foundation that views ethnicity as a core social identity factor (e.g. Hagos, 2015; Opute *et al.*, 2016), a core factor that shapes the behaviour of Africans (e.g. Opute *et al.*, 2016; Alexander and Honig, 2016), and a consumer social identity element in the choice of brands (e.g. White *et al.*, 2012).

Empirically, UK based Nigerians who are of the Yoruba ethnic group seem to display a preference formation behaviour for high involvement products that is highly social identity congruent, while those of Delta background seem to have a preference formation behaviour that is more personal identity congruent.

Further reinforcements of this study to the body of knowledge relate to ethnic membership identity (e.g. Ting-Toomey, 2015; Opute *et al.*, 2016), the composite identity forces that drive preference formation (e.g. Ashmore *et al.*, 2004; Haslam *et al.*, 2012), and how people use consumption and cultural behaviours to signal their identity (e.g. Berger and Heath, 2007; Berger and Rand, 2008; Berger *et al.*, 2011). Explaining the ethnicity-based findings of this study in line with the foundation of how people enact selfhood (e.g. White *et al.*, 2012), this study pinpoints core personal identity and social identity features that govern preference formation for high involvement products amongst UK based Nigerians. Within that premise, this study offers insight that connects to the classical theory of consumer demand, which contends that rational behaviour as well as immutable preferences govern most conduct in individuals' decisions making (McFadden, 1999), assumptions that form the cornerstone of a number of models on consumer behaviour (Simonson & Tversky, 1992).

On the point of ethnic origin driven preference formation, an interesting insight was captured with regards to the Yoruba sub-cultural group. Empirically, the Yorubas may not only exhibit a chronically social- group behaviour, but this tendency may be strongly driven by a desire to achieve a high image - 'extended self' (Belk, 1988). Based on extended self-theory (e.g. Belk, 1988; 2013), individuals may consciously or unconsciously exhibit a behaviour that regards their possessions as part of them. As Belk (1988) elaborates, the extended self-construction is enhanced by various possessions that are recognised by their owners as having different degrees of centrality to one or more of their individual or aggregate senses of self.

Insights from this current study connect to these foundations. Interviewees' comments reveal the extent to which their social cultural and intergroup and interpersonal interaction encounters motivate strong affiliation drive to achieve the extended self and or adopt new identities.

Resonating with the extended self-theory (Belk, 1988), this study suggests that an individual may display a tendency to show a strong motivation for extended self-drive in his preference formation behaviour by engaging in a consumption behaviour aimed at enhancing self-image or satisfying a high standard for somebody he holds in high esteem (e.g. his idol or role model) (see Section 6.4.4).

On the part of the Ibo sub-cultural (ethnic) group, there seems to be a mixed level of this social group consciousness and allegiance in the consumer preference formation for highly educated members of the Ibo social group (see Section 6.4.4.1), while the Hausa sub-cultural (ethnic) group seem to be highly personal identity driven in their preference formation for high involvement products. The aforementioned evidence of a mixed level of social group consciousness and allegiance in the consumer preference formation for highly educated members lends support to social networking scholars (e.g. Goldsmith *et al.*, 2013; Makri and Schlegelmilch, 2017) who underline the role of individual trait variables in their actual network behaviours.

Two factors were captured that explain the extent to which preference formation behaviour of UK based Nigerians in the various explored sub-cultural groups may be social identity or personal identity congruent – educational background and acculturation. While this study did not capture any sub-culture level differences in the intercultural marriage induced acculturation evidence and influence on preference formation for high involvement products,

the evidence for the intercultural networking induced acculturation and influence on preference formation showed differences in the various sub-cultural levels. Thus, this study suggests that the extent to which intercultural networking may be valued and embraced and extended influence of preference formation for high involvement products amongst UK based Nigerians will depend on the unique features that distinguish the sub-cultural groups (see, for example, the comments of Interviewees 20, 11 and 15 in Section 6.4.4.1).

The combined evidence for the Ibo and mid-West (Delta) sub-cultural groups lend support to the notion that when individuals engage with other cultures, they adopt values, ideas and views that influence their own personal values, which in turn impact on their behaviour (Efferin and Hopper, 2006; Opute, 2016; Hewege, 2011; Opute *et al.*, 2016). The theoretical substance suggested here resonates with a recent exploration of UK based Nigerians (Opute *et al.*, 2016) which concluded that UK based Nigerian entrepreneurs are open, engage with other cultures, network within and beyond their cultural enclaves, and these contribute to a more strategic entrepreneurial orientation and performance.

Overall evidence for the sub-cultural (ethnic) groups indicate that highly educated are likely to be more personal identity than social identity driven in their preference formation for high involvement products, except for the Yoruba sub-cultural group where even for highly educated people seemed to exhibit a high social identity induced preference formation.

7.4 Other Factors that Moderate the influence of social group identity

7.4.1 Introduction

In Sections 6.3 and 6.4 of Chapter 6 the findings were presented with regards to the nature of factors that exert some influence on the extent to which preference formation propensity of UK based Nigerians is influenced by their social identity behaviour. Using the third research question (RQ3) as a guide (see below), the emerging findings from this study are discussed taking into consideration existing literature in the area.

RQ3 - What factors (e.g. education, cross cultural marriage, country of abode culture) moderate the influence of social group identity on the consumer preference of UK based Nigerians for high involvement products. Or following the conceptual logic in white et al (2012) where university was conceptualised as an element of consumer social identity, is university qualification or some other forms of qualification a consumer social identity element amongst UK based Nigerian consumers?

Multiple factors were captured that moderate the influence that social identity behaviour has on the preference formation of UK based Nigerians for high involvement products. The emergent insights lend support to the notion that the more people of a social community mingle and cross interact with people from other cultural domains the more the tendency for acculturation, adaptation and cross-cultural learning (e.g. Opute, 2015; Baron *et al.*, 2008). Baron *et al* (2008) elaborate that social interactions which refer to practices, acts or actions of two or more people jointly concerned with each other's selves; affect each other's personal intentions or experiences, a foundation that is reinforced in this study – UK based Nigerians' enactment of selves through product involvement behaviour is influenced by contact with personalities in their social domains.

Furthermore, taking into consideration the nature of social interaction factors (education, diverse acculturation components and religiosity) captured in this study and the influence on the level of social identity behaviour with regards to preference formation for high involvement products, this study lends support to the conceptualisation that social interactions assist in shaping how we act and who we are in various situations (Baron, Byrne, & Suls, 2000) on the one hand, and the broad categorisation of social interaction factors (Hockenbury & Hockenbury, 2006), on the other hand.

The discussion of emergent findings is organised as specified below:

- a. Educational background and religiosity of a person as moderator of the influence of social group identity on the consumer preference of UK based Nigerians for high involvement products (Section 7.4.2); and
- b. Acculturation factor as a moderator of the influence of social group identity on the consumer preference of UK based Nigerians for high involvement products (Section 7.4.3).

7.4.2 Educational background and religiosity as moderator of social group identity influence

As shown in Sections 6.3 and 6.4, two dimensions of educational background features exert influence on the social identity behaviour and preference formation impact for high involvement products amongst UK based Nigerians. namely the level of educational exposure one had, and education path induced acculturation through inter-mingling with people of other culture during educational training. The former feature is discussed in this current section while the latter is discussed in Section 7.4.3.

This study suggests that the nature and level of educational exposure moderates the level of country of origin cultural influence on the preference formation of UK based Nigerians for high involvement products. This finding lends support to White *et al.*, (2012) conceptualisation of university qualification as a consumer social identity element. Further theoretical support from the findings from this study relates to the notion that university qualification is an element of consumer social identity (White *et al.*, 2012). Furthermore, the evidence of identification with, and emotional attachment to their social enclave (the Nigerian community) connects with the theoretical substance underlined in Tajfel (1978) when he defined social identity as “that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership” (p.63).

Calling for researches that enhance the discourse about the connection between the systems justification and social identity theory, Rubin and Hewstone (2004) note that “system justification researchers need to show that people are biased in favour of their social systems, rather than simply cognizant of and responsive toward those systems” (p.834). Further evidence captured with regard to educational background and consumer preference formation features influence on social identity behaviour and consumption behaviour connects to the debate about the connect between systems justification theory (e.g. Rubin and Hewstone, 2004; Jost and Banaji, 1994) and social identity theory (e.g. Ashmore *et al.*, 2004; Jackson, 2002) in understanding consumer preference formation. For example, as reported by some respondents (e.g. Interviewees 20 and 6) although some consumers would buy and use typical clothing that have a high identity symbol in the Nigerian cultural domain, whether they would actually buy and when they buy clothing that seem to be in vogue in the community depends not only on my appreciation of its reception in the community, but also on their personal values. Thus, this study suggests that most individuals may not be completely biased

in favour of their social systems, but only identify with and respond to them, to match with their circumstances.

Furthermore, regarding the direct moderating influence of educational background on the extent to which UK based Nigerians may be social identity driven, this study adds that the extent of influence may be enhanced through a networking input that emerges through a long academic training. In other words, UK based Nigerian gain some behaviour input through their inter-cultural mingling (elaborated in Section 7.4.3) and networking during their long years of academic training, and these combine with the educational background input to influence the extent to which their preference formation may be social identity congruent. This insight concerning broad networking and influence on an individual's self-concept and buying behaviour adds support to prior literature which proposed that self's formation develops through social interactions (Kunchambo *et al.*, 2017).

This study has shown that a reasonable number of the participants in this study are high social identity congruent. For this group of UK based Nigerians that are completely biased in favour of their social system, their psychological mind-set is mainly driven by their cultural identification. As a result, the level of educational exposure and interaction with other cultures do not influence behaviour, hence consumers show a purchase and use decision making pattern that prioritises the importance of commitment and loyalty to their cultural identity. Even in circumstances where the product is deemed very expensive, this category of UK based Nigerians would still maintain their social identity congruent behaviour because of the 'importance of identifying with and staying committed' (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004) to their Nigerian identity, of which culture is one of the major tools for communicating this. They feel detaching from their social community is never an option, no matter the cost involved. As a matter of fact, displaying their commitment to their social community through their

preference formation behaviour is a core ego boosting step, evidence that lends support to personality foundation on consumer behaviour (e.g. Armstrong and Kotler, 2015).

In addition to educational background, empirical evidence also suggests religiosity as a factor that influences consumer behaviour. This study argues that religiosity drives consumer preference formation behaviour in such a way that individuals may not be biased in favour of their social system. Based on the above insight, religiosity would exert some influence on consumer behaviour. In other words, the extent to which individuals would chronically view the importance of their social identity, and the extent to which they are willing to go out of their way to spend hugely to display their emotional attachment to their social identity, or engage in compulsive shopping (Saraneva and Sääksjärvi, 2008), would be influenced by their level of religiosity, a finding that corroborates a recent study in the United States (Martinez *et al.*, 2016) which identified religious identity as a critical factor that shapes the behavioural pattern of people. Based on the evidence from this study, religiosity, whether Christianity or Islamic grounded, would moderate the extent to which consumer preference behaviour of UK based Nigerians for high involvement products would be social identity congruent. As a matter of fact, this study suggests that UK based Nigerians who are religiously oriented would be highly personal identity driven in their preference formation behaviour for high involvement products, as they would prioritise the need to use their position to help those in need rather than the need to respond to social group induced consumption actions. This insight connects to Islamic context consumer behaviour literature (Moufahim, 2013) which suggests that since Muslim pilgrims attach high importance to solidarity and community bonding, gift giving is prioritised in the preference formation behaviour. For religiously oriented UK based Nigerians, the only circumstance that may prompt social identity congruence preference formation is in the case of clothing and especially when such clothing has some element of religious importance attached to it.

On the combined evidence regarding the influence of educational background (and inter-cultural mingling and networking component) and religiosity, this study enhances literature in several ways. First, it adds support to the social identity theory that an individual's identity comprises of personal identity and social identity components (e.g. Tajfel and Turner, 1986; Turner, 1985). Second, the insights lend support to the recent proposition by Ting-Toomey (2015) that an individual's composite identity has group membership, relational role and individual self-reflective implications. According to Ting-Toomey (2015), typical avenues for acquiring individual composite identity include social-cultural conditioning process, individual lived experiences, and the repeated intergroup and interpersonal interaction experiences. Finally, and especially with regards to interviewee 20's comment, this study supports the notion that (1) consumers' decision for products would be dependent on social identity congruence if an individual chronically views the social identity as important (e.g. Kleine *et al.*, 1993), and (2) identity transition takes place over time (e.g. Chen and Xie, 2008).

Furthermore, the combined evidence on educational background and religiosity driven moderation of social identity congruent preference formation behaviour contrast as well as corroborate further literature that explored individual behavioural patterns, though beyond the consumption domain. For example, this study supports the recent study of Hagos (2015) which proposes that some cultures (in that study - Eritrean culture) exert very deeply rooted influence on the behaviour of its citizens. Connecting to the role model argument, Hagos (2015) which explored ethnic minority entrepreneurship behaviour amongst Eritreans in the UK, also contends that due to the nature of psychological artefacts that feed into the culture of a people (see also Opute *et al.*, 2016), citizens from such cultural identity would almost chronically not want to detach from their culture, and especially when they attach a role model status to someone in that cultural enclave.

On the other hand, given that all the aforementioned respondents, as well as other interviewees that offered insights that connect to the above arguments (e.g. 12 and 14), have all gained educational exposure in the UK, this study contrast Opute *et al.*, (2016) which argued that over time, people with higher educational exposure may not be so inclined to their country of origin culture, as the social contact and networking inputs from their educational journey would impact on them.

7.4.3 Acculturation as a moderator of social group identity influence

Scholars from diverse theoretical domains have emphasised the important role culture plays in determining the relational behaviour of an individual in his/her communities (e.g. Hofstede *et al.*, 2010; Opute, 2014), a foundation that provides one of the central underlying theoretical components for this study. In line with that theoretical foundation, the need for, and importance of acculturation towards interpersonal relationship and cross-cultural understanding, has been severally emphasised by scholars (e.g. Opute, 2015; Berry *et al.*, 2006; Berry, 1997).

Redfield *et al.*, (1936) define acculturation as "...those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups" (p.149). Thus, through this process of acculturation, the concerned engage with other cultures and imbibe other cultural norms, values, principles, views and beliefs that enable them to act, decide and respond in ways that were previously in disparity with their established norms, values, principles, views and beliefs. In addition to capturing culture as a core factor that drives social identity / collective identity behaviour, this study also found a tendency for acculturation driven features to moderate the extent to which social group identity might

influence consumer preference formation for high involvement products amongst UK based Nigerians.

Based on the emergent findings from this study, the acculturation related insights enhance social embeddedness theory (e.g. Ashmore *et al.*, 2004; Opute *et al.*, 2016; Hagos, 2015), social identity theory (e.g. Ashmore *et al.*, 2004; Armstrong and Kotler, 2015), Inter-cultural relationship theory (e.g. Opute, 2014; Opute *et al.*, 2016) and consumer behaviour theory (e.g. Gbadamosi, 2016; Armstrong and Kotler, 2015).

Three modes of acculturation were found in this study to moderate the extent to which the preference formation of UK based Nigerians for high involvement products may be social identity or personal identity congruent, hence the discussion of findings is categorised in the below order:

- a. Cross-Cultural Marriage driven Acculturation and preference formation (Section 7.4.3.1),
- b. Social Network driven Acculturation and preference formation (Section 7.4.3.2), and
- c. Country of Abode driven Acculturation and preference formation (Section 7.4.3.3).

7.4.3.1 Cross-Cultural Marriage driven Acculturation

This study found that cross-cultural marriage induced acculturation influences the propensity of UK based Nigerians to exhibit a preference formation behaviour that is personal identity or social identity congruent. The emergent cross-cultural marriage induced acculturation influence insight connects to literature that addresses intercultural engagement. For example, the aforementioned evidence reinforces relationship management literature which underlined that the more people of diverse culture cross-interact, the higher the chance for cross-cultural

understanding and bridge building (e.g. Opute, 2012, and 2015; McIntyre, 2014; Berry *et al.*, 2006).

Furthermore, this study suggests that the extent of acculturation with regards to whether intercultural marriage would lead to a dominant personal identity or social identity congruent preference formation behaviour would depend on the level of similarity, closeness or disparity with the Nigerian culture. According to Interviewee 3, who is married to a Brazilian woman, there is hardly an influence of inter-cultural marriage induced acculturation on social identity congruent preference formation for clothing, and the reason is the close similarity in the Nigerian and Brazilian clothing styles. For other high involvement products, such as expensive jewellerys, expensive cars and expensive mobile phones, preference formation is not driven by social identity, but rather by personal identity, as the wife plays a major role in the decision making.

Finally, the combined evidence from this study of the nature and influence of cross-cultural marriage induced acculturation adds support to cross-cultural psychology literature which underlines that the long-term psychological consequences of migrants' acculturation hinge both on the personal as well as the social variables that reside in the host society (Berry, 1997).

7.4.3.2 Social Network driven Acculturation and Preference Formation

According to mainstream identity literature, an individual's identity is composed of personal identity and social identity components (e.g. Ashmore *et al.*, 2004; White *et al.*, 2012; Ting-Toomey, 2015). In other words, an individual has a composite identity, which as Ting-Toomey (2015) elaborates, is acquired through socio-cultural conditioning process, lived experiences of individuals, and the intergroup and interpersonal interaction experiences of the

individual. These socio-cultural and intergroup and interpersonal interaction encounters - a 'person's everyday ongoing social relationships' as captioned in social embeddedness theory (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004) define an individual's collective identity. This study offers insights that not only support the importance of such social relationships as central social/collective identity features, but also illuminate the nature and extent of influence on the social identity drive of UK based Nigerians by virtue of the preference formation for high involvement products. For example, UK based Nigerians with cross-cultural social networks imbibe values, norms and principles that dilute the extent to which they may be social identity congruent in the preference formation for typically high involvement products in the Nigerian social community.

The plausible explanation for the aforementioned preference formation trend is found in relationship management and team management literature (e.g. Opute, 2012 and 2015) which underlines that cross-cultural interaction and inter-mingling promotes cross cultural learning and training, and fuels acculturation towards better mutual understanding and co-existence.

Within the consumer behaviour perspective of social identity theory, there is the notion that due to consumer socialising (e.g. Chan, 2006; La Ferle and Chan, 2008), identity transformation may take place over time (Chan, 2006). This study offers insights that connect to that foundation. Empirically, through their networking and engagement with other cultures, UK based Nigerians imbibe cultural understanding that enables them to enhance their views, personal identities, as well as social identity propensity. A plausible explanation for this outcome is that, since culture is not a stagnant system (Zhao, 1997), a process of constant interacting with other cultural systems would lead to norms, attitudes, motivations and behaviours being transmitted amongst consumers (Chan, 2006).

Furthermore, the findings from this study indicate that preference formation for high involvement for some UK based Nigerians is largely driven by personal identity behaviour induced by intercultural networking and engagement. Over time, therefore, driven by the emergent behavioural transformation, their identity would align more to the foreign culture. This possibility lends support to the study of Hagos (2015) which argued that due to their colonisation journey and engagement with the Italian culture, Eritreans tend to view themselves as Italians.

In the aforementioned social network acculturation and preference formation behaviour influence regard, another insight captured in this study relates to the role that educational road path plays in shaping an individual's tendency to be social identity or personal identity congruent driven. This study also contends that no matter the driving factor, i.e. whether by virtue of educational exposure and networking or general networking and inter-cultural mingling, the capacity of cultural adaptation would depend largely on the dynamics of the specific context. As a result, there is a possibility of a case of high social embeddedness, where it is costly and painful for an individual to abandon a particular collective identity because a majority of one's social contacts and relationships reinforce this identity (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004). For such high social embeddedness type of individuals, acculturation capacity is very low regardless of long years of interacting with other cultures.

This insight contrasts Opute (2016) who argued that over time, driven by the cross-cultural interaction input, cross-cultural adaptation and acculturation will hold. Thus, this study contends that the propensity of UK based Nigerians to adapt culturally or acculturate and preference formation influence would depend on other contingencies, for example the geographical context involved and the country-of-origin cultural features that condition the mind-set of individuals, conclusions that resonate with Opute *et al.*, (2016) recent

investigation of the moderating influence of culture on the entrepreneurial orientation of African (Nigerians and Eritreans) entrepreneurs in the UK. Opute *et al.*, (2016) argue that the extent to which UK based Nigerian and Eritrean entrepreneurs would acculturate and extended entrepreneurial orientation implications would hinge largely on cultural artefacts that shape the psychological mind-set of individuals.

7.4.3.3 Country of Abode driven Acculturation

Investigating the impact of acculturation on immigrant consumer behavior, Abedin and Brettel (2011) commented thus:

“Leaving one country and settling down in another entails a series of challenges and questions for immigrants. Two questions that all immigrants have to address are: “to what extent are cultural identity and characteristics considered to be important, and their maintenance strived for,” and “to what extent should they become involved in other cultural groups, or remain primarily among themselves” (Berry 1997, p.9). Berry (1997) denotes the answers to these questions as “acculturation strategies.” (p.271).

Analysing the above comment by Abedin and Brettel (2011), two core conclusions can be made: (1) culture (i.e. the programming of the mind (Hofstede, 1994)) is a common feature that immigrants bring with them, and (2) consequently, acculturation is a necessity in their new place of abode (Berry, 1997).

The evidence emerging from the interviews with participants indicates that this acculturation logic is also valid in the context of how consumers make their preference formations for high involvement products and the social identity influence, though level of acculturation would depend on the contextual contingencies. As flagged in Section 6.4.3.3, country of abode acculturation is taking place in the minds of some UK based Nigerians and also influencing

the extent to which their preference formation behaviour may be social identity congruent. This emergent insight lends support to the literature on acculturation and the role of country of abode (e.g. Hewege, 2011). Specifically, based on the above insight, this study supports to the notion that immigrants often adjust to the dominant culture which is often the culture of the host country where the immigrants have found a new home (e.g. Sam and Berry, 2006; Hewege, 2011). So, at the end, the immigrants acculturate and integrate into the host culture and would tend to adopt the prevailing behaviour of the dominant culture (e.g. Alba and Nee, 1997; Sam and Berry, 2006).

Like in the case of social network induced acculturation, this study suggests that the extent to which UK based Nigerians would yield to country of abode acculturation would depend on the level of importance attached to the product and need for cultural enclave affiliation, as well as other contextual contingencies (see Section 6.4.3.3). Based on the interviewees' comments, this study lends support to the view by Gbadamosi (2016) that some consumers may exhibit a high level of emotional engagement. For this category of Nigerians, strict inclination to their country of origin is of central importance to them, a conclusion that is in agreement with recent study (Alakija, 2016) which examined the behaviour of Nigerians residing in the Peckham area of London. It must however be noted that based on the overall comments of the interviewees, it seems that country of abode acculturation may grow over time.

Analysing further the emergent insights, this study supports ethnic identity literature which suggests that new immigrants may not wish to be totally assimilated but instead may want to preserve their ethnic identities (e.g. Hewege, 2011; Butt and Run, 2012). Also, based on the evidence for interviewee 34, this current study lends support to the notion that migrants that

are not acculturated within their countries of residence often retain their distinct culture and continue to have linkages with their countries of origin (e.g. Hagos, 2015; Opute *et al.*, 2016).

In the migrant acculturation literature, three paradigms are captured. The first suggests a one-dimensional view where there is the adoption of a new culture and the abandonment of a former culture (Rogler *et al.*, 1991). In the second perspective, scholars have proposed two fundamental dimensions of acculturation: maintenance of one's original cultural identity and adoption of, or relationships with, another culture (Greif, 2006; Riddle and Brinkerhoff, 2011). According to the third stream of literature, acculturation involves a multidimensional phenomenon that include one's orientation towards one's ethnic group, towards society at large and possibly towards other ethnic cultures (Efferin and Hopper, 2006; Hewege, 2011; Riddle and Brinkerhoff, 2011).

First, the insights from this current study connect to social embeddedness theory with regards to ethnic minorities: a core factor of their behaviour, either entrepreneurially (e.g. Ram *et al.*, 2008; Opute *et al.*, 2016; Hagos, 2015) or as a consumer (as in the case of this current study) is their cultural mind-set and willingness to engage cross-culturally and utilise inherent benefits. Regarding the aforementioned theoretical perspectives on migrant acculturation, it is argued that, based on the overall evidence, cross-cultural encounter, cross-cultural relationship, social networking across cultural boundaries, and other acculturation drivers have facilitated cross-cultural learning, adaptation and acculturation and influence on consumer preference formation for high involvement products. Thus, the findings from this study corroborate the multi-dimensional conceptualisation of acculturation, which suggests that acculturation includes one's orientation towards one's ethnic group, towards society at large and possibly towards other ethnic cultures (e.g. Hewege, 2011; Riddle and Brinkerhoff, 2011). Given the diverse interaction mechanisms that have been captured in this study to

breed acculturation, and reduce social identity congruence behaviour amongst ULK based Nigerians; this study enhances the understanding of the multi-dimensionality of acculturation and the contextual forces that influence the acculturation process (Schwartz *et al.*, 2013; Schwartz and Zamboanga, 2008; Berry, 1980).

Explaining further the acculturation-based insights and in connection with consumer behaviour literature, this current study lends support to consumer life cycle literature (e.g. Wells and Guba, 1966; Murphy and Staples, 1979; Wilkes, 1995) which underscored the importance of consumer life cycle, including individual and household change, to consumer behaviour. In line with that foundation, this current study suggests that the acculturation driven changes in the consumers' life cycle, through cross-cultural marriage (and lasting impact, should there be a divorce), social networking, and country of abode, influence the consumer behaviour amongst individuals.

Finally, this study also supports psychological perspective on relationship management (e.g. Opute, 2014; Opute, 2015) and on identity transformation (e.g. McGinnis *et al.*, 2006; Kelly *et al.*, 2006). With regards to the former, this study supports the notion that over time, intercultural understanding and acculturation would take place amongst culturally diverse groups, through inter-cultural mingling and also joint educational training. In the latter connection, this study argues that through such inter-cultural encounter described above, identity transformation will take place, because as Heatherton and Nichols (1994) note, other people's input and perceptions seem to make a big difference in the way purchase information is processed.

7.5 Summary

Overall, this study suggests that the extent to which social identity behaviour or personality behaviour or a combination of both would determine the consumer behaviour of UK based Nigerians with regards to high involvement products would be contingent on their psychological mind-set, a state of mind that is conditioned by numerous factors, such as national level cultural features, sub-cultural level features, educational background, religiosity and acculturation. With regards to acculturation, this study suggests that UK based Nigerians seemingly display a high propensity to acculturate, but also warns that the propensity level may vary due to a number of factors, such as cross cultural marriage, the extent of educational exposure and lasting impact, the extent of social networking and country of abode culture. Putting the overall evidence together on how the participating respondents enact their selfhood, the findings from this study show that the self represents a person as a whole, and includes personality, personal beliefs, feelings, experiences, and the regulatory self.

Furthermore, this study offers insights that explain the preference formation behaviour of UK based Nigerians and the motives behind the behavioural pattern they display. Social identity can include ethnic membership identity, social class identity, and family role issues.

The composite identity of individuals is composed of several components - socio-cultural process, lived experiences of individuals, and interpersonal and intergroup interaction experiences of individuals. For example, how UK based Nigerians respond to stimuli in their consumer preference formation is influenced by values, norms, ethics and principles impacted onto them by their parents, ethnic and national values and norms that characterise the environment in which they were raised, their daily lived experiences and interaction and engagement with other cultures, either through work, educational exposure and cross-cultural marriages.

A critical fact that must be underlined in line with the finding of social cultural process, and cross-cultural interaction and engagement influence on their preference formation behaviour is the evidence of a potential of acculturation and cultural transformation that may take place through intercultural mingling. It is also underlined in this study that religiosity exerts some influence on the behavioural tendencies of UK based Nigerians with regard to how they may prioritise personal or social identity in their preference formation for high involvement products, insight which reinforces past literature which posits the theoretical notion that religiosity exerts influence on the preference formation for products.

Chapter Eight: Conclusions, Implications, Limitations, and Future Research Directions

8.1 Introduction

The aim of this research was defined in section 1.3. As explained, this research aimed to contribute to knowledge regarding the preference formation behaviour of UK based Nigerians for high involvement products groups, from a social identity perspective. Specifically, inspired by knowledge gaps, this research aimed to contribute to the understanding of:

1. What features of the consumer preference of explored Nigerians in the UK are driven by personal or collective frame of preference or both? In other words, to what extent are the purchase preferences and the use of high involvement products for social occasions influenced by social group identity features or individual features?
2. What, if any, are the sub-groups differences in the social identity influence on high involvement products purchase (and use) preferences of UK based Nigerians? In other words, what are the core differences in the consumer preferences for high involvement products of the three major sub-groups (cultural groups) within the Nigerian community (the Ibos, the Yorubas, and the Hausas)?
3. What factors (e.g. education, cross cultural marriage, country of abode culture) moderate the influence of social group identity on the consumer preference of UK based Nigerians for high involvement products?

The findings for each of the aforementioned research questions were explained in Chapter six and summarised in Figure 6.1. In Section 8.2, the main conclusions from this study are presented. In doing that, a strategic approach is followed to show how the aforementioned research questions have been answered, as well as how emergent conclusions improve knowledge in this area. Since a number of the factors examined in this study (e.g. culture) featured across several of the theoretical foundations in the research targets emphasized above, it seemed appropriate to jointly present the emergent conclusions. Therefore, the conclusions from this study are presented in a way that enables the aforementioned three research questions to be addressed concurrently.

8.2 The Conclusions of this Study

A central conclusion from this study relates to the instrumental role culture plays in shaping the mind-set of UK based Nigerians and how that influences the way they process information towards preference formation for involvement products such as clothing, jewellery, mobile phones and expensive cars. This study concludes that when considering the country of origin, cultural factor plays a significant role in the behaviour of UK based Nigerians. Thus, the typical UK based Nigerians tend to maintain heritage culture and identity. In other words, showing a tendency to firmly cling to Nigerian ideas, values, ways of doing things and seeking inflated image at all cost, or do it the Nigerian way as one of the respondents described it, is not only a behaviour that a Nigerian should show, but also be proud of.

Given their strong commitment and allegiance to their heritage culture, their enactment of selfhood in their preference formation for high involvement products is highly social identity congruent, as they attach high importance to their membership and attached pride.

Consequently, a lot of effort is invested in ensuring that their high involvement preference formation behaviour matches with the prevailing standard in the social community. The results from this study showed a high propensity of social identity congruent behaviour of UK based Nigerians for clothing and jewellerys, however more for the former.

This study concludes also that UK based Nigerians may not always be social identity congruent in their behaviours, as a result personal identity features, driven by daily lived experiences, intercultural interaction, intermingling and cross-cultural engagement and price factors, also play a role in the way UK based Nigerians may value the importance of doing things the Nigerian way. Thus, as this study has shown, UK based Nigerians may not only show a high tendency to be open and accommodating to other values, views, principles and ways of doing things, but also embrace and utilises such in transforming their views of the world and approach to life, paving the way for their preference formation for high involvement products to also be governed by less social identity motives. For this category of UK based Nigerians, a chronically social identity behaviour is not a priority, especially when high involvement products like expensive smart phones and cars are concerned.

Merging the above two conclusions, this study concludes that the consumer preference formation of UK based Nigerians for high involvement products is a factor of the social identity and personal identity features that form the composite identity of individuals - composed of several components - socio-cultural process, lived experiences of individuals, and interpersonal and intergroup interaction experiences of individuals. Several complexities and heterogeneity have been reported about the Nigerian nation, one of which relates to culture (e.g. Ebijuwa, 1999; Osaghae and Suberu, 2005; Ifeyinwa, 2005). The emergent results from this study lend support to the heterogeneity argument regarding cultural differences between the core sub-cultural (ethnic) formations in Nigeria. Hence, it is

concluded here that the extent to which UK based Nigerians would exhibit social identity congruent or personal identity congruent behaviour, or a combination of both, would depend on their ethnic groupings and the core norms, values, beliefs and principles that characterise the individual sub-groups. A high level of personal identity driven or a combination of both personal identity and social identity driven preference formation was captured amongst respondents of Delta (Middle belt) and Ibo ethnic groups, while respondents of the Yoruba ethnic group exhibited a high tendency for chronically social identity congruent behaviour. The sub-cultural features of the preference formation behaviour of UK based Nigerians are pinpointed in the subsequent conclusions with regards to the various acculturation avenues and generational differences.

Another revelation or finding from this study relates to the role price plays in the way that UK based Nigerians process their buying decisions with regards to high involvement products. Though highly social identity conscious, UK based Nigerians take into consideration the price involved in acquiring these products for showing class and affiliation to their social communities. Thus, this study suggests that consumers (UK based Nigerians in this case) in their drive to express their pride and boost their image in associating with their social groups, give due consideration to the price factor. As a result, therefore, most participants in this study are price conscious for high involvement products like expensive jewellerys, mobile phones, and cars. This trend was also evident even amongst those that seemed to be financially stable. A plausible reason for this is that a number of other personal features, values and norms shape the personal identity of individuals, for example commonsensical rationality logic and life values and principles obtained through every day experience and engagement with other cultures - colleagues at work and also during educational exposure, and also religious principles. It is also important to underline that the extent to which this price factor induced preference formation behaviour may be exhibited

may vary from one sub-cultural group to another. For example, participants of Delta (Middle belt) and Ibo origin seemed to show a high tendency for such price factor induced behaviour.

Another major conclusion from this study relates to the tendency for, extent of, driving factors and moderating influence of acculturation on the way UK based Nigerians process information in the preference formation behaviour for high involvement products. As highlighted above, UK based Nigerians are seemingly social identity conscious. To some however, their personal identity, induced both by values and principles obtained through their families and national and ethnic backgrounds, as well as acculturation induced values, plays a significant role in their preference formation behaviour for high involvement products.

UK based Nigerians do not only respond to social group stimuli but also to the cultural stimuli from their immediate environments, either by virtue of their marital circumstance, educational exposure, regular interaction with people of other culture in their neighbourhoods or networking at their work domains. With regards to the marital component of acculturation, this study concludes that for Nigerians whose partners or ex-partners are of Western background, cultural adaptation would take place, leading to the adoption of new values, norms and principles that would bring about some behavioural changes in the way decisions are made. Consequently, such Nigerians would seemingly become more personal identity driven in their preference formation behaviour for high involvement products like clothing, jewellery, mobile phones and cars.

This study concludes also that whether UK based Nigerians would acculturate and the magnitude of their acculturation would be influenced by the nature (content) and extent (length and level) of their educational exposures. This study suggests that UK based Nigerians that undergo higher level educational training would imbibe intercultural relationship skills, through the technical contents of their educational journey, as well as

through the networks that they build during that educational journey. The knowledge, values and principles gained through such educational encounters bring about behavioural changes that prompt UK based Nigerians to discard with some of the social identity driven nature. Thus, their preference formation for high involvement products would be more rationalised on personal factors and economic rationality than on blind allegiance to social group stimuli. Further on the point of networking, this study concludes that through the process of regular interaction with people from other cultural backgrounds in their areas of abode, as well as networking with former colleagues and colleagues at work and other areas of life, UK based Nigerians undergo an acculturation process that enhances their views, principles and consumer behaviour tendencies and especially their response to social group induced stimuli. As a consequence, UK based Nigerians who are open and interact regularly and intermingle with the aforementioned groups of people would be highly personal identity driven in their preference formation for high involvement products.

Therefore, there is evident difference in their prioritisation logic. A plausible reason for this is the diversity in norms and values, hence the tendency that some ethnic groups may exhibit chronically social identity behaviour while others are more personal identity driven, especially when the high involvement product concerned is very expensive. For ethnic groups that exhibit such social identity orientation, the pride for cultural identification and allegiance is a priority that cannot be undermined by the cost attached to the preference formation decision.

Further in line with the acculturation factor mentioned earlier, one further insight from this study relates to the generational differences based evidence with regards to preference formation of UK based Nigerians for high involvement products. Overall, the trend of preference formation behaviour for high involvement products as captured in this study lends

support to the understanding that culture is not stagnant (e.g. Opute, 2015; Alexander and Honig, 2016). With regards to the acculturation insight, a higher level of acculturation propensity was found amongst the younger generation of respondents. As a result, the young generation UK based Nigerians were seemingly more personal identity driven in their preference formation behaviour. On the other hand, while some degree of acculturation (i.e. exhibited some degree of personal identity driven behaviour) was found amongst the older generation UK based Nigerians, their overall preference formation behaviour was predominantly social identity congruent.

Overall, the combined evidence for this study with regards to acculturation adds support to cross-cultural psychology literature which underlines that the long-term psychological consequences of migrants' acculturation hinge both on the personal as well as the social variables that reside in the host society (Berry, 1997).

Finally, this study concludes that religiosity is an important factor that influences the tendency of UK based Nigerians to be social identity or personal identity congruent in their preference formation for high involvement products like clothing, jewelleries, mobile phones and cars. Empirically thus, the way UK based Nigerians enact their selfhood through their consumption behaviour with regards to high involvement products will depend on the nature of religiosity features, values, norms and principles that guide their mind-set. Consequently, UK based Nigerians that are religiously guided would seemingly not display chronically social congruent behaviour in their preference formation for high involvement products. Thus, instead of investing reasonable sum of money on jewelleries, mobile phones and expensive cars, they would prefer to invest in other people's lives by supporting the needy financially. This insight supports prior research that has flagged this importance especially regarding how UK based Nigerians receive and respond to social identity driven symbolic

consumption (e.g. Gbadamosi, 2012). According to Gbadamosi (2012), some respondents in that study indicated that the design of some of the clothing offered by most widely available fashion marketers in London often conflicts with their religious belief as some of these are body revealing and seductively expose the body curves which they believe holds significant implications for their moral disposition. Hence, they often would not engage in the purchase of clothing in London. This current study found that UK based Nigerians who are religiously grounded may not chronically display social identity congruent preference formation for high involvement products.

8.3 The Implications of this Study

In this current Section (8.3), the researcher explains the implications of these findings for theory development on consumer behaviour and identity influence, as well as other related theoretical foundations (Section 8.3.1). Also, the researcher explains the implications of these findings for marketing and management practitioners (Section 8.3.2).

8.3.1 The Theoretical Implications of this Study

This study contributes in several ways to the understanding of the motivational antecedents of the preference formation behaviour of UK based Nigerians with regards to high involvement products. The insights from this study contribute to several unique but inter-related behavioural theories, for example identity theory (e.g. Ashmore *et al.*, 2004; White *et al.*, 2012; Martinez *et al.*, 2016), self-concept (e.g. Reed II *et al.*, 2012; Reed II, 2004), planned behaviour theory (e.g. Urban and Ratsimanetrimanana, 2015; Urban, 2006; Liñán and Chen, 2009), cultural diversity theory (e.g. Opute, 2014; Hofstede, 1980; Opute, 2015; Ting-Toomey, 2015), inter-cultural relationship theory (e.g. Opute, 2014; Opute *et al.*, 2016), acculturation and adaptation theory (e.g. Opute, 2015; Gbadamosi, 2012; Berry, 1997;

Abedin and Brettel, 2011; Riddle and Brinkerhoff, 2011), and consumer behaviour theory (e.g. Gbadamosi, 2012, 2016; White *et al.*, 2011; Armstrong and Kotler, 2015; La Ferle *et al.*, 2000; Chan and Prendergast, 2007; La Ferle and Chan, 2008).

Within the target of explaining the identity theory association of the findings from this study, it is important to underline that country of origin culture plays a significant role in shaping the mindset of UK based Nigerians. In other words, most UK based Nigerians tend to maintain their heritage culture and identity, an insight that lends support to prior studies that examined the contingencies surrounding the behavioural tendencies of UK based Africans (e.g. Hagos, 2015; Opute *et al.*, 2016) and UK based Nigerians (e.g. Opute *et al.*, 2016). Given this significance, UK based Nigerians are highly social identity driven in the way they seek to enact their selfhood through their preference formation for high involvement products. This substance lends support to the notion that individuals would evaluate products more favourably when the particular product is linked with an aspect of social identity that is chronically viewed as important (e.g. Kleine *et al.*, 1993; White *et al.*, 2012).

The aforementioned insights about the composite nature of identity - Personal identity and social/collective identity also connect to the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) which suggests three motivational antecedents of behaviour in different countries - personal attitude, subjective norm and perceived behaviour (e.g. Liñán and Chen, 2009; Urban, 2006). This current study lends support to that foundation and suggests that personal attitude (identity) and a combination of the social congruent motivations - including within and beyond social group norms and values that one embraces, influence the decision making of UK based Nigerians in the preference formation for high involvement products. Explained further in line with TPB literature (Urban and Ratsimanetrimanana, 2015), this current study also adds that the extent to which the beliefs concerning the social desirability and personal desirability

for high involvement products are plausibly influenced by the cultural environment (which includes the overall cultural mind-set of the individual - within cultural norms and values and willingness to acculturate or adapt).

Furthermore, despite the tendency of UK based Nigerians to exhibit a consumer preference formation for high involvement products that is highly social identity congruent, this study also underlined that social networking and interaction beyond their cultural domain, through educational exposure, intermingling with people of other cultures (at work or in their neighbourhoods and other areas of activity) moderate the extent to which UK based Nigerians would exhibit such social identity congruent behaviour in their preference formation for high involvement products. In other words, UK based Nigerians who pass through these levels of intermingling and networking would be less chronically social identity congruent in their preference formation behaviours, as the views, values, norms and principles encountered through their networks and intermingling exert some influence on the way decisions are made. Thus, whether they prioritise the need for social identity congruence or personal identity congruence or both, will depend not only on their ethnic and national culture induced norms, values and principles, but also on those values, views and norms that are induced by networking and inter-cultural mingling. Therefore, despite cultural heterogeneity amongst cultural enclaves (e.g. Hofstede, 1980; Opute, 2015; Ting-Toomey, 2015), consumer behaviour for high involvement products is often conditioned by economic rationality thinking. As a result, consumers will easily embrace norms, values and principles beyond their cultural domain in making such decisions.

These aforementioned networking and intermingling insights enhance knowledge in several ways. First, the findings connect to the notion that social interactions play a crucial role in the self-concept changes that take place in the mind of individuals (e.g. Schlencker *et al.*, 1994).

As explained in further literature, the plausible reason for that trend is that as people try to change, other people's input and perceptions seem to make a big difference (Heatherton and Nichols, 1994). Finally, based on this insight that networking and intercultural mingling moderate the extent to which UK based Nigerians might be driven by their social identity in their preference formation behaviour, this current study lends support to a recent study (Opote, 2015) which contends that the more people of diverse cultures interact and intermingle, the higher the level of cultural adaptation, mutual understanding and oneness in ideology. Thus, some form of cultural transformation may take place as people tend to embrace the values and norms from other cultural domains in making more rational preference formation decisions.

Taking together the overall emergent networking and intercultural mingling consumer behaviour evidence, this study offers insights that connect to and enhance the view expressed by Baumeister *et al.*, (2007) that individuals will avoid, ignore or discount events that can change their self-opinions. This current study argues that, induced by their networking, encounters and intermingling beyond their cultural domains, some level of change in self-opinion may take place, however dependent on the contextual factors that define their country of origin culture (norms, values, principles and ways of doing things).

Finally, on the point of acculturation, the overall evidence from this study suggests that while individuals may be open to acculturation, some would chronically resist other cultures. On this evidence, this current study corroborates past immigration literature which has argued that there are two dimensions underlying the process of acculturation (Berry, 1974, 1980 and 1997; Phinney, 1990): their cultures of origin, and their societies of settlement.

This study contributes also to the knowledge about brand management, especially when considered from the point of brand identity, personality and associations (e.g. Escalas *et al.*,

2005; Walley *et al.*, 2007; Bastos and Levy, 2012, as well as luxury brand-building (e.g. Gutsatz and Heine, 2018). A central functional role that branding plays is to enable individuals to be of consequence, create a personal and social identity and develop a feeling of affiliation to a reputable group (e.g. Bastos and Levy, 2012; Gutsatz and Heine, 2018). The insights from this study highlight social identity and personal identity features in the preference formation of UK based Nigerians towards high involvement products, evidence that tie into the dynamics of brand management (elaborated under managerial and marketing implications).

Furthermore, this study offers insights that connect to brand-building literature. Based on the insights relating to the social identity congruence, as well as personal identity driven preference formation behaviours, this study points to issues that organisations must take into consideration in their brand-building efforts (Gutsatz and Heine, 2018; Davcik and Rundquist, 2012).

8.3.2 The Managerial and Marketing Implications

This study has illuminated the behavioural intricacies of consumers' preference formation for high involvement products from the purview of UK based Nigerians. In doing that, the study sheds light on the critical role that culture plays, from the point of its social identity association, personal identity, acculturation and adaptation potentials and the tendency for identity transformation, and the influence of each of these components on how individuals make decision as to what to buy. The emergent consumer behaviour insights from this study are of relevance to marketing and management professionals whose functional roles involve profitably satisfying the consumer.

As Darley and Blankson (2008) commented, since marketing involves an outlay of resources, marketers must strive to be more receptive to cultural differences. The pertinence for that

approach is increasing given that culture has a fundamental influence on marketing practices and consequently cultural differences affect marketers' behaviour in ways parallel to their effects on consumers (Omar *et al*, 2003). Lending support to this need for marketers to give due attention to culture and cultural differences and influence on consumer behaviour, Nwankwo (2000) notes that understanding and appreciating the African culture is not an option but a necessity.

First, marketers of high involvement products that are used by UK based Nigerians need to bear in mind that although most UK based Nigerians seem to be social identity congruent in their preference formation behaviour, a tendency of economic rationality driven transformation, and therefore a higher level of personal identity congruent preference formation behaviour, lubricated by several societal developments, is emerging. Before explaining these societal features that fuel this growing trend of declining social identity congruent behaviour, it is also important to underline that some sub-cultural (ethnic) groups of the large UK based Nigerian community seem to be more personal identity driven and may not respond in favour of high involvement products as economic rationality is a major preference formation decision factor in their mind-set. Consequently, marketers must bear this in mind and find a means of keeping their offerings within the economically rational space of such groups. Marketers may therefore consider introducing affordable brands for such customers that will also allow them to have a sense of belongingness to their main socio-cultural groups. As a matter of fact, belongingness to their Nigerian social community is of importance to these customers, and since they value the need to show their Nigerian identity like the more social identity congruent members of the community do, they may evaluate and embrace alternatives. Thus, marketers must find a way of drawing closer to such customers and providing them affordable options.

Marketers' and managers' attention is drawn to a number of societal features that influence the preference formation behaviour and social identity connection of UK based Nigerians, namely acculturation and religiosity. Supporting past literature which contends that culture is not stagnant (e.g. Opute, 2015; Chan, 2006), this current study contends that there is an established level of diversely fuelled acculturation (cross-cultural marriages, country of abode, and educationally and employment based networking) in the UK based Nigerian community. This cultural transformation or adaptation leads to a mind-set whereby preference formation decisions for high involvement products tend to be more personal identity than social identity congruent. Marketers of the high involvement product types covered in this current study must therefore bear in mind these cultural contingencies that influence the consumption behaviour of UK based Nigerians, and ensure that their marketing strategies are accordingly aligned to meeting this trend. Doing this is critical for competitive advantage, as customers who undergo such cultural transformation journey adopt new values, norms and principles that fit their economic rationality stand, and therefore search and evaluate available options rather than spending blindly to satisfy social identity pressure. In other words, emotional attachment and affiliation to the social community is not the key factor, but instead the economic factor.

This line of thinking where the economic factor is considered more significant than the image gained through emotional attachment and affiliation to the social community, is also evident in the preference formation pattern for UK based Nigerians, regardless of whether they belonged to the Christian or Islamic faith. Marketers need to take into consideration that customers who are strongly religiously inclined would prefer to channel their finances to supporting the needy rather than spending huge sums of money to satisfy the desire to show attachment and affiliation to a social community. Consequently, marketers must find a means of meeting the product expectation of such category of customers at an affordable price.

Renowned management theorist – Peter Drucker (1999) commented that the purpose of business is to create and keep customers while the function of marketing is to attract and retain customers at a profit. UK's Chartered Institute of Marketing (2007) does not only reinforce that understanding of the marketing function, but also utilises the word strategic in enhancing the understanding of that function: “the strategic business function that creates value by stimulating, facilitating and fulfilling customer demand” (cited in Solomon *et al.*, 2009, p.9). Thus, the underlying idea behind marketing is ensuring a strategic approach for profitably satisfying the customer, a focus which involves paying close attention to the 4Ps of marketing - product, price, place and promotion (e.g. Solomon *et al.*, 2009; Jobber, 2001; Grönroos, 1989).

This therefore implies that in order to realise the goal of profitably satisfying the customer, the marketing function must carefully arm itself with a strategy to effectively blend its acts in the 4P areas - the hallmark of effective of marketing mix (Jobber, 2001, p.15). The marketing function must therefore respond sensibly and strategically in its decision making taking into consideration the behaviour of the target customer. Taking into consideration this pertinence, the price insights from this current study must be deeply considered by marketing managers of the product types covered in this study. Towards achieving a competitive edge in their market domain, the marketing managers must ensure a strategy that achieves a clear performance differential over the competition on the factors which are important to the concerned UK based Nigerian consumers (Jobber, 2001). They must realise that the marketing mix variables are interdependent and must be effectively aligned to achieve a strong strategy.

Without doubt, it is the desire of companies to have more new customers, more retention, less competition, more profitability, and better results from their marketing investments. On the

other hand, customers want the best value for their purchasing decisions. Organisations must ensure that their marketing approach reinforces the customer-centric focus. To achieve the target of profitably satisfying the customer - UK based Nigerians, a sensible and strategic alignment of the marketing mix must be ensured to retain this category of customers who are less social identity congruent and instead are highly price conscious. Marketing managers would need to organise their marketing mix strategically to build a case that facilitates a positive decision making process of the customers. The marketer must find a way of understanding what factors weigh heavily in the decision processing for preference formation of the concerned customers, and try to offer them a motivation to believe in the company's product. Marketers must make genuine efforts to educate the customers to enable them understand what constitutes the best deal in their area and offer them a quantifiable justification that the company offers the best deal in terms of price and value. The company needs to convince the customers of unique product features that convey customer benefits in excess of what the competitors are offering (Jobber, 2001). If marketers are able to go beyond their usual self-serving initiatives and communicate their messages in a way that the customer is convinced that his/her interest is given due attention, then the customer will pay attention to the messages of the company.

From the product point, there is a need for the marketer to consider core questions that play a role in the way UK based Nigerians view the value they get from the concerned products, and as a result why price weighs heavily in the minds of the concerned category of UK based Nigerians in their preference formation for high involvement products. For example, what does the customer want from the product?, how does the product meet the desired needs?, how and where will the customer use it?, how does the product compare to the other options offered by the competitors?, and how much does the product cost?

Through a sensible and strategic management of the “place” component of the marketing mix, marketers can also stimulate and facilitate a positive decision making towards the product on the part of UK based Nigerians who are highly price sensitive. For example, the marketers could ensure a marketing strategy that makes the product more easily accessible than the competitor - easy access through close shops and supermarkets, effective and convenient distribution channels or other relevant options (online option).

Further on the point of promotion, the marketers must adopt suitable and strategic promotional initiatives towards convincing this category of customers about the value they would get from the product. The marketers could gain the loyalty of these customers if their marketing messages are communicated timely (morning or lunch time or night hours) and through suitable channels (e.g. radio, TV, in the press, online or on billboards, public furniture or a combination of these) to the target market. Marketers may also need to consider if seasonal marketing might be more ideal or if for environmental or societal reasons, such promotional activities can only be carried out at restricted hours or periods. Finally, marketers must also consider what promotional options the competitors are using.

For UK based Nigerians whose price factor response has a religious moderating influence, marketers must also ensure a marketing mix alignment that embraces necessary initiatives (for example justifying value equivalence of the price, and also ensuring that the product does not in any way contrast religious codes) in facilitating a positive decision making for the product.

Furthermore, from the purview of practitioners, another impact of the findings from this study relates to brand management, especially from the point of brand identity, personality and their associations. According to Kotler (1988), a brand represents the promise made by a business to provide its customers, on a consistent basis, with specific set of product or

services features and benefits. Thus, organisations must ensure that their brand design creates and develops positive features that makes customers to hold favourable associations of the brand in their minds (Walley *et al.*, 2007).

Bastos and Levy (2012) commented that “at the root of all branding activity is the human desire to be someone of consequence, to create a personal and social identity, to present oneself as both like other people (e.g. to belong and unlike other people (e.g. to stand out), and to have a good reputation.” (p.349). The insights from this study have indicated that while most Nigerians based in the UK may be exhibit social identity congruence behaviour with regards to preference formation for high involvement products, some may be more driven by personal identity factor. Marketing practitioners must therefore take into consideration that the high social identity induced consumption behaviour is driven by a personality mindset or self concept that seeks affiliation with revered social community. For this personality drive, such customers would want to associate with a brand image, as this offers them the much desired image boosting satisfaction. Marketers must therefore adopt a branding strategy that enables them serve the needs of such social identity congruent behaviour customers. Marketer should adopt a brand management approach that communicates a positive brand identity message (Aaker, 1997) through its product, its unique brand name, various symbols and distinct logos that represents it, as well as its advertising presence and brand creator reputation (Bastos and Levy, 2012; Kapferer and Bastiens, 2009; Walley *et al.*, 2007). Adopting that approach would enable marketers of the high involvement product types explored in this study to achieve brand loyalty amongst the customers.

To enable marketers effectively implement a brand management strategy that meets the needs of the customers, customer profiling would be of importance. Since not all UK based Nigerians may exhibit social identity congruent behaviour in their preference formation for high involvement products, it is important that marketers utilise customer profiling tool to

enable them align their brand management efforts to match with the needs of the personal identity driven customers.

Furthermore, taking into consideration luxury brand-building literature (e.g. Gutsatz and Heine, 2018), the insights from this study offer substance that marketing practitioners should take into consideration to enable them adopt a branding strategy that is aligned to the customer profiles. Thus, in branding the luxury products to make the customers hold favourable associations of the brand in their minds (Walley *et al.*, 2007), practitioners must bear in mind that while some customers may be chronically social identity congruent in their preference formation behaviour for high involvement products, others may be more personal identity driven due to a combination of acculturation inducing factors.

Overall, to stay competitive in the modern market landscape, marketers of the high involvement products covered in this study need to be armed with a consumer behaviour conscious marketing strategy that seeks to understand the market factors, of which consumer behaviour motivations is paramount. If the marketers do this, there is a high likelihood of achieving the target of loyal customers amongst the UK based Nigerians for the high involvement products, and achieving higher margins.

8.4 The Limitations of this Study

Three main research questions were addressed in this study. In doing that, this study offered insights that enhance the understanding of the conceptualised phenomenon. In Section 7.3.1, it is explained how the findings from this study enhance and extend theoretical foundations, while the managerial / marketing implications are explained in Section 7.3.2. It must however be borne in mind that this research has a number of limitations. Consequently, care must be taken in transposing the findings from this study into other contexts.

Culture is a core element in the conceptualisation of this study. Empirically too, culture was identified as a crucial factor in the way UK based Nigerians enact selfhood through the preference formation behaviour. Bearing the culture significance in mind, one major limitation of this study relates to the fact that it explored the preference formation for high involvement products amongst only UK based Nigerians. Taking into consideration the immense cultural heterogeneity amongst African countries (Alexander and Honig, 2016) on the one hand, and at the global level (McIntyre, 2014) on the other, care must be taken in transposing the emergent findings into other African or global cultural groupings. This caution is the more pertinent given the evidence that some measure of behavioural differences were captured amongst the ethnic (sub-cultural levels) of UK based Nigerians.

Another limitation of this study relates to the conceptual approach. This study conceptualised a social identity perspective of consumer preference formation for high involvement products. Given the specified conceptual premise, this study did not consider other behavioural components that may influence preference formation for high involvement products of UK based Nigerians, either directly or indirectly. For example, while as underlined earlier, culture is a crucial factor that explains the behavioural propensity of UK based Nigerians, and existing literature suggests that the behavioural tendencies shown by individuals is contingent on the cultural artefacts that shape their psychological mindset (e.g. Hagos, 2015; Opute *et al.*, 2016), this study did not examine how the various artefacts of culture moderate the preference formation behaviour of UK based Nigerians. This limitation is recognised and should be taken into consideration when interpreting the findings of this study.

In this study, an interpretive methodology was used to examine the conceptualized framework. Since every methodological philosophy – and its corresponding data collection

methods – has its own inherent and practical limitations (Saunders *et al.*, 2000), care must be taken to adopt the findings from this study, taking into consideration the limitations associated with the methodological approach used in examining the conceptualised framework in this study. For example, there is the danger of subjectivity in interpretation, given that the researcher plays an active role in the research process, including interpretation of wordings from the respondents (Larkin *et al.*, 2006; Smith *et al.*, 1999). Given this subjectivity shortcoming, methodologists have warned that what is captured of another's experience using such interpretive approach should be viewed as indicative and provisional rather than absolute and definitive (Smith *et al.*, 1999; Larkin *et al.*, 2006).

Extending the point on the pertinence for interpretive deduced outcomes to be viewed as indicative and provisional rather than absolute and definitive, another methodological limitation of this study relates to the findings. This study conceptualized and examined preference formation behaviour of UK based Nigerians and the nature and extent of identity influence. Methodological theorists (e.g. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Easterby-Smith, 1991) have reiterated the inadequacy of a qualitative approach in exploring causal relationship, be it direct or moderating. In presenting the results from this current study, conclusions of direct and moderating influence have been made. It is therefore important to underline here that these causal terms have been implied within the qualitative definition (Lin, 1998). In other words, causality does not follow the positivist notion that discovers causal relationships; rather, it explores causal mechanisms (Lin, 1998). Thus, within the defined causality conceptualization, this study suggests the possibility of a direct and or moderating influence between the emphasized factors. Caution is, therefore, advised in transposing these findings.

Another limitation of this study which connects also to the aforementioned methodological approach for this study as well the findings relates to the sample explored in this current

study. Participants in this study are UK based Nigerians, a social group that shares a common national background and reasonably close cultural identity with the researcher in this study. Methodological debates have emphasised the influence of the researcher/researched relationship (e.g. Creswell *et al.*, 2003; Al-Natour, 2011; Greenwood *et al.*, 2014). Within this debate, scholars interested in this relationship contend that this distance/closeness influences the richness and quality of data (e.g. Al-Natour, 2011; Greenwood *et al.*, 2014). Greenwood *et al.* (2014) note that homogeneity in participants' ethnic group membership influence the nature of responses that participants give. Indeed, they contend that participants would feel more comfortable and actively engage in discussions (for focus group scenario) and responding to questions. In addition, more valuable data would be derived from participants with homogenous ethnic background than from participants with heterogeneous ethnic background (Greenwood *et al.*, 2014).

Researchers are equally an important part of the research data as their participants (Al-Natour, 2011; Larkin *et al.*, 2006). Thus, the ethnic group homogeneity substance underlined above may not only have influential impact on participants, but also on the researcher, especially when the researcher shares in this homogeneity. As flagged in this study, homogeneity in culture drives emotional attachment. Given that the researcher shares same national attachment with the research participants, there is a tendency that participants may have been emotional in their behaviour with regards to this research. While that may have contributed to the collection of rich and quality data, there still exists a possibility of validity threat arising from the national homogeneity factor. Equally, there exists also analysis induced validity concern here, as the researcher may not have completely detached from his national homogeneity driven attachment and emotions in the analysis of emergent data. Thus, there is a further danger of subjectivity in interpretation (Smith *et al.*, 1999; Larkin *et al.*,

2006). These national/ethnic group homogeneities induced limitations of this study must be taken into consideration when embracing the findings from this study.

Finally, this study suggests that the preference formation for UK based Nigerians for high involvement products, and the propensity of social identity or personal identity congruence, may vary amongst the various sub-cultural (ethnic) levels within the Nigerian cultural domain. It must be warned that this conclusion was based on a limited number of responses; therefore, caution must be applied in the interpretation of that finding.

8.5 Future Research Directions

The theoretical conceptualisation for this study underlined the important role that culture plays in framing the mind-set of a people (e.g. Opute, 2015; Schteynberg *et al.*, 2009). The empirical findings from this study corroborate this importance within the Nigerian population in the UK. Past literature on Nigeria has however suggested immense heterogeneity in the Nigerian culture, a factor that would undoubtedly exert influence on the behavioural propensity of Nigerian diasporas. For example, there is a huge ethnic diversity in Nigeria (e.g. Edewor *et al.*, 2014; Ifeyinwa, 2002; Mustapha, 2003) and Nigeria is estimated to have 250 ethnic groups (Mustapha, 2003) or 374 ethnic groups as tentatively suggested by Otite (1990). Given this cultural and multi-ethnicity differences evidence, future research efforts should be invested into enhancing the understanding of the preference formation behaviour of Nigerians, illuminating the sub-cultural (ethnic) level contingencies, especially from the point of the cultural heterogeneity artefacts and how that shapes psychological mind-set in the various ethnic groups and social identity and personal identity influence towards preference formation.

This pertinence for future studies that take into consideration the multi-ethnicity features of the Nigerian populace is further supported by the emergent evidence from this study pertaining to the insights for participants of Mid-West (Delta) origin, a region that is highly cosmopolitan in mix-multiple ethnicity, multiple language, multiple culture and multiple religion. The consumer behaviour evidence for participants who originate from this region showed a high level of both personal identity and social identity congruent tendencies, as well as a high level of openness and willingness to acculturate. Future studies that shed more light on this group and what factors influence their decision making pattern for preference formation for high involvement products are pertinent.

Furthermore, the conceptual framework explored in this current study can be validated in other African diasporas contexts, a landscape that offers a huge research space, bearing in mind that Africa as a continent is characterised by a heterogeneous and complex cultural magnum (Alexander and Honig, 2016)., which shapes their psychological mind-set (Opute *et al.*, 2016). In this drive to validate the findings from this current study, future research that aims to enhance the understanding of the multiple ethnicity features and consumer preference formation behaviour of Nigerians of Mid-West (Delta) origin on the one hand, and the consumer preference formation behaviour of culturally diverse Africans on the other, should also utilise a quantitative tool or a combination of both quantitative and qualitative tools to illuminate this topic. Majority of the participants in this study are males. Future research efforts to illuminate the gender perspective on the consumer preference formation for high involvement products of Nigerians based in the UK and other Western countries would contribute to the general understanding of this topic. In this gender approach, studies that adopt a comparative analysis, both from the point of age-based generational differences, country versus country analysis and high involvement product types, would contribute to enhancing knowledge in this area.

While culture plays a major role in the preference formation behaviour of UK based Nigerians for high involvement products, this study has also suggested a high acculturation propensity amongst the explored population, though to a limited extent in some sub-cultural (ethnic) groups. There is pertinence for further knowledge development in this area, and future research should therefore aim to enhance general understanding of acculturation propensity amongst (but not limited to) UK based Nigerians, contingencies, ethnic level intricacies, and influence on their personal identity, social identity and preference formation behaviour.

8.6 Summary

The primary goal of this current study was to understand the extent to which the preference formation of UK based Nigerians for high involvement products, such as jewellery, mobile phones, clothing and expensive cars, is social / collective identity congruent. In this Chapter (8) the core conclusions from this study have been pinpointed. One of the major conclusions from this study relates to a strong cultural identification of UK based Nigerians, given their strong commitment and allegiance to their culture, their enactment of selfhood in their preference formation for high involvement products is highly social identity driven as they attach high importance to membership and affiliation to their cultural domain.

This study has also concluded that personal identity equally plays a role in shaping the way UK based Nigerians process their preference formation decisions. In other words, both social identity and personal identity play a role in the way UK based Nigerians process preference formation decisions, and whether the social or personal component takes the overriding hand in the decision making for high involvement products would depend on other factors that condition the mindset of UK based Nigerians. Typical factors in this regard include religiosity, acculturation, educational training induced behaviour. Overall, this study

concludes that the preference formation of UK based Nigerians for high involvement products is a factor of the social identity and personal identity features that form the composite identity of individuals – composed of several components – socio-cultural process, lived experiences of individuals, and interpersonal and intergroup interaction experiences of individuals. Finally, this study also concluded that sub-cultural (tribal) level characteristics (core norms, values, beliefs and principles that characterise the individual sub-groups) also determine the extent to which preference formation for high involvement products may be social or personal identity congruent.

Subsequent to pinpointing the conclusions from this current study, the implications of the findings from this study were outlined. First, the implications of the findings were explained from the angle of how these connect to existing literature. In doing that, this chapter explained how this current study corroborates, enhances or contrasts existing theory. Second, the implications of the findings from this study on practitioners was also explained, pinpointing the need for marketing managers to pay particular attention to the emergent insights from this study and draw from the insights to adopt appropriate marketing strategy to respond to the needs of customer. In that regard, this chapter has also pinpointed necessary steps that marketing managers must take towards effectively responding to customer cues from the point of the four Ps of marketing.

To conclude, this chapter has also acknowledged the limitations of this study and flagged several critical directions for further knowledge development in this area. Amongst others, this chapter has flagged methodological and thematic options towards enhancing knowledge in the explored theoretical domain.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Ethics Approval Letter

Annexe 1: Research Integrity

University of East London

[relevant campus address: **Stratford campus, Water Lane, London, E15 4LZ**]

Research Integrity

The University adheres to its responsibility to promote and support the highest standard of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research; observing the appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks.

The University is committed to preserving your dignity, rights, safety and wellbeing and as such it is a mandatory requirement of the University that formal ethical approval, from the appropriate Research Ethics Committee, is granted before research with human participants or human data commences.

The Principal Investigator/Director of Studies

[Name(s): **Dr Ayantunji Gbadamosi**]

[Contact Address(es): **Stratford campus, Water Lane, London, E15 4LZ**]

[Telephone/fax/email (including an out-of-hours number):]

Student researcher

[Name(s): **Emmanuel NDI WANKI**]

[UEL telephone/email:

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with the information that you need to consider in deciding whether to participate in this study.

Project Title

[full title of the programme: **PhD in Business**]

["Consumer Preference Formation of UK based Nigerians towards High Involvement Products: A Social Identity Perspective"]

Project Description

[The aim of this research is to examine the effects of social identity in consumer preference formation. The study will focus on high involvement products (i.e. products that are expensive, having high risk and are purchased only after long and careful consideration) in guise to explore the potency (power or influence) of social identity on the Africans in the UK with a sample drawn from the Nigerian consumer choice of high involvement products. Also, focus will be on investigating the Nigerian consumer's social identity tendencies that may motivate him/her to form, hold, and express social identity-oriented beliefs. Social and Cultural values have long been recognized as a powerful force shaping consumers' motivation, lifestyle, and product choices. Therefore, this study is set out to investigate and identify reasons why – from the sample group – an average Nigerian consumer preference in the UK will go for some high involvement products for social and cultural occasions in the face of other less popular products (alternatives products).

The focus here is to enhance the knowledge about how UK based Nigerians use their consumption decisions to infer identity, as well as how their consumption patterns are driven by the identity inferences made by others. A prior study on Nigerian consumers in the UK (Kihlstrom, 1992) comments that although an average Nigerian consumer in the UK can potentially self-identify with every possible social category, it is most unlikely that the same social categories would receive significant attention from the consumers]

[Participants will be interviewed on a one-to-one basis]

[Participants will be approached and will be asked if they are willing to participate in the interview. If anyone is willing to participate, then I will proceed to carry out the interview (on a person-to-person basis). I will organise a sitting place that will be authorised. Each individual interview will last for 45 to 60 minutes. The focus groups interview will last for 60 to 75 minutes per group.]

[There is no hazard or risk involved]

[There are no likely after-effects, discomfort or distress which might be experienced]

[There is no after-care which might be required]

[This is a declaration statement that where participants are in a dependent relationship with any of the researchers that participation in the research will have no impact on assessment / treatment / service-use or support]

Confidentiality of the Data

[In the event where the sample size is small, this may have implications for confidentiality / anonymity]

[Participants in focus groups will be informed that confidentiality / anonymity will be observed]

[This is a statement of declaration that, where possible, participants' confidentiality will be maintained unless a disclosure is made that indicates that the participant or someone else is at serious risk of harm. Such disclosures may be reported to the relevant authority]

[The data generated in the course of the research will be retained in accordance with the University's Data Protection Policy. Hard copies such as interview notes, prints of photographs, or video or audio tapes need to be kept securely locked away - for example in a locked filing cabinet that can only be accessed by agreed members of the research team]

[The data will be anonymised and will undergo secure disposal.]

[The data generated in the course of the research will be retained and securely locked away in a locked filing cabinet that can only be accessed by agreed members of the research team.]

Location

[Participants will be interviewed at places where cultural activities are taking place, shopping malls and in church congregations]

Disclaimer

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time during the research. Should you choose to withdraw from the programme you may do so without disadvantage to yourself and without any obligation to give a reason. Please note that your data can be withdrawn up to the point of data analysis – after this point it may not be possible.

University Research Ethics Committee

If you have any concerns regarding the conduct of the research in which you are being asked to participate, please contact:

**Catherine Fieulleateau, Research Integrity and Ethics Manager, Graduate School, EB 1.43
University of East London, Docklands Campus, London E16 2RD
(Telephone: 020 8223 6683, Email: researchethics@uel.ac.uk)**

For general enquiries about the research please contact the Principal Investigator on the contact details at the top of this sheet.

Annexe 2: Consent to Participate in a Programme Involving the use of Human Participants

UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON

Consent to Participate in a Programme Involving the Use of Human Participants

[Please note that where the study involves different groups of participants, or different activities, e.g. parents, staff, questionnaires, focus groups etc., a separate information sheet and consent form may be appropriate for each]

[Please note that for children under 16 an age-appropriate assent form is required, as well as parental consent]

[PhD in Business;

“Consumer Preference Formation of UK based Nigerians towards High Involvement Products: A Social Identity Perspective”]

[Names of researcher(s): **Emmanuel NDI WANKI**]

Please tick as appropriate:

| | YES | NO |
|--|-----|----|
| I have read the information leaflet relating to the above programme of research in which I have been asked to participate and have been given a copy to keep. The nature and purposes of the research have been explained to me, and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions about this information. I understand what is being proposed and the procedures in which I will be involved have been explained to me. | | |
| I understand that I to be audio or video recorded during the interview | | |
| I understand that my involvement in this study, and particular data from this research, will remain strictly confidential as far as possible. Only the researchers involved in the study will have access to the data. <i>(Please see below)</i> | | |
| I understand that maintaining strict confidentiality is subject to the following limitations: [If the sample size is small, or focus groups are used state that this may have implications for confidentiality / anonymity, if applicable] [A clear statement that, where possible, participants’ confidentiality will be maintained unless a disclosure is made that indicates that the participant or someone else is at serious risk of harm. Such disclosures may be reported to the relevant authority] | | |
| I understand that anonymized quotes will be used in publications | | |
| I understand that I have the option to be named in publications | | |
| I have been given proposed method(s) of publication dissemination of research findings | | |
| [If applicable, obtain participants’ permission to use the data in future research by your team] | | |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| [If applicable, obtain participants' permission to be contacted for future research studies by your team] | | |
| It has been explained to me what will happen once the programme has been completed. | | |
| I understand that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and I am free to withdraw at any time during the research without disadvantage to myself and without being obliged to give any reason. I understand that my data can be withdrawn up to the point of data analysis and that after this point it may not be possible. | | |
| I hereby freely and fully consent to participate in the study which has been fully explained to me and for the information obtained to be used in relevant research publications. | | |

Participant's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

.....

Participant's Signature

.....

Investigator's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

.....

Investigator's Signature

.....

Date:

Appendix 2: A Sample of Letter Requesting Respondents to Participate in this Study

Consent for Participation in Interview Research

Study Title: "Consumer Preference Formation of UK Based Nigerians Towards High Involvement Products: A Social Identity Perspective"

Researcher: Emmanuel Ndi Wanki

Before agreeing to participate in the interview for this research, I strongly encourage you to read the following explanation of this study. This statement describes the purpose and procedures of the study. Also described is your right to withdraw from the study at any time. This study has been approved by the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) of the University of East London.

Explanation of Procedures:

This interview is designed to find out about your consumer preference formation as a UK based Nigerian towards high involvement products (i.e. products of high risk and very expensive) and how the purchase of such products may be influenced by social identity. (High involvement products mean products that are expensive and risky. They are high value goods (costly goods) that are purchased only after long and careful consideration. Purchase decisions will require extensive thought and a high level of involvement.)

We are conducting this study to learn more about this question since it has not been studied much in the past. Participation in the study involves a face-to-face interview, which will last for approximately 45 to 60 minutes. The interviews will be conducted by me (the researcher).

Risks and Discomforts:

There are no risks or discomforts that are anticipated from your participation in the study. Potential risks or discomforts include possible emotional feelings of sadness when asked questions during the interview.

Benefits:

The anticipated benefits to participants in this study are that it will contribute to knowledge and understanding or practice relevant to the topic. They will understand the meaning of high involvement products and the influence of social identity on consumer preference.

Confidentiality:

The information gathered during this study will remain confidential in secure premises during this project. Only the researchers will have access to the study data and information. There will not be any identifying names on the interview transcripts; they will be coded and the key to the code will be kept locked away. Your names and any other identifying details will never be revealed in any publication of the results of this study. The results of the research will be published in the form of a research paper and may be published in a professional journal or presented at professional meetings. It may also be published in book form. The knowledge obtained from this study will be of great value in guiding consumer preference.

Withdrawal without Prejudice:

Participation in this study is voluntary; refusal to participate will involve no penalty. You are free to withdraw consent and discontinue participation in this project at any time without prejudice or penalty. You are also free to refuse to answer any question we might ask you.

Further Questions and Follow-Up:

You are welcome to ask the researcher any questions that occur to you during the interview. If you have further questions once the interview is completed, you are encouraged to contact the researcher using the contact information given below.

I have read the above information. I freely agree to participate in the interview for this study. I understand that I am free to refuse to answer any question and to withdraw from the interview at any time. I understand that my responses will be kept anonymous.

Participant Signature

Date

Researcher contact information:

Email:

Appendix 3 A Sample of Interview Questions for this Study

List of Questions for Interviews

1. What in your opinion are the factors that will influence you to buy high involvement products? *(By high involvement products, it means products that are expensive and risky. They are high value goods that are purchased only after long and careful consideration. Purchase decisions will require extensive thought and a high level of involvement.)*
2. Why do you think that each of the factors mentioned above are important to your consumption decisions?
3. How much influence does the general culture of your country have on your high involvement products *(products that are expensive and risky)* buying behaviour?
4. How much influence does your tribal/ethnic culture have on your consumption behaviour?
5. To what extent does your peer group influence your buying attitude towards high involvement products *(products that are expensive and risky)*
6. How much influence does your social network have on your high involvement products buying attitude and how?
7. How does your national culture influence your purchase*(i.e. your buying decision)* and use of the items for social occasions?
8. How does, tribal/ethnic culture influence your purchase and use of high involvement products for attending social occasions.
9. Could you please explain if and how peer group networks influence your purchase and use of high involvement products for social occasions.
10. What is your level of education? Do you think your level of education in a way moderates the level of influence of your national or ethnic/tribal or peer group influence on the nature of high involvement products, as well as how you use them for social occasions? *(By peer group, it means people of approximately the same age, status and interest).*
11. What factors do you consider when buying your high involvement products *(products that are expensive and risky)* for social occasions?
12. What factors do you consider in deciding which product you buy?

13. How long have you lived in the UK? Do you think that the fact that you have lived in the UK for a fairly long time has some influence on the products you buy and how you use them for social occasions?
14. Do you have a role model in the Nigerian community in the UK? Do you think his/her consumer preference for some products has some influence on your consumer preference *or choice* (including buying and using) for these types of products. If yes, how?
15. Tell me something else that is not yet covered so far in this interview that you think may be important to contribute to this research.

Appendix 4: A Short Questionnaire Used to Obtain Background Information of Interviewees

Demographic Survey Question

*(Please note, your information will **not** be sold or given to outside entities. It is for internal use only.)*

Name: _____

Please answer the following questions by circling the number that is most appropriate to your response.

1. What is your gender?

- a) Male
- b) Female
- c) Rather not say

2. Can you please tell me which age bracket you fall into?

- a) 18 to 24 years
- c) 25 to 34 years
- d) 35 to 44 years
- e) 45 to 54 years
- f) 55 to 64 years
- g) 65 or older

3. What is your marital status?

- a) Never married
- b) Married
- c) Separated
- d) Widowed

- e) Divorced
- f) Civil partnership

4. What is your employment status?

- a) Employed full time
- b) Employed part time
- c) Self-employed
- d) Unemployed
- e) Retired
- f) Student

5. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- a) Less than high school
- b) High school graduate
- c) Bachelor's degree
- d) Completed some postgraduate
- e) Master's degree
- f) PhD

6. Approximately what is your household income?

- a) Under £20,000
- b) £20,000 - £29,999
- c) £30,000 - £39,999
- d) £40,000 - £49,999
- e) £50,000 - £69,999
- f) £70,000 - £99,999
- g) £100,000 - £149,999
- h) £150,000 or more

7. Do you own or rent your home?

- a) Own
- b) Rent
- c) Other arrangement

8. How many children under the age of eighteen years are currently living in your household?

- a) 1
- b) 2
- c) 3
- d) 4
- e) 5 or more

9. How long have you lived in the United Kingdom?

- a) Less than one year
- b) 1 to 5 years
- c) 6 to 10 years

- d) More than 10 years
- e) Not applicable

Appendix 5: Focus Group Topic Guide

Name of Moderator _____

Date _____

Attendees _____

Focus Group Topic Guide

Participants of the focus group: UK-based Nigerian consumers

Evaluation Questions: Are you consumers of expensive products? Do you like to buy products with high risk? Why will you take the risk to buy such products? Are there any external pressures influencing your buying decision for such expensive and risky products? Do social and cultural factors play a role in your buying behaviour? Do you normally consult your friends and family members before buying expensive and risky products? Do you think your level of education helps you to make decisions of what to buy? Have you ever regretted having bought a product of high risk and expensive?

Introduction

Give an explanation

*Good morning/afternoon. My name is _____
Thank you for coming. (A focus group is a relaxed discussion.....)*

Present the purpose

We are here today to talk about your consumer buying behaviour in regards to products that are very expensive and with high risk (also known as products of high involvement). The purpose is to get your understanding of the factors that motivate you to buy such expensive and risky goods. I am not here to share information, or to give you my opinions. Your perceptions are what matter. There are no right or wrong or desirable or undesirable answers. You can disagree with each other, and you can

change your mind. I would like you to feel comfortable saying what you really think and how you really feel.

Discussion procedure

I will be taking notes and tape recording the discussion so that I do not miss anything you have to say. I explained these procedures to you when we set up this meeting. As you know everything is confidential. No one will know who said what. I want this to be a group discussion, so feel free to respond to me and to other members in the group without waiting to be called on. However, I would appreciate it if only one person did talk at a time. The discussion will last approximately one hour. There is a lot I want to discuss, so at times I may move us along a bit.

Participant introduction

Now, let's start by everyone sharing their name, what they do in life, and how long they've been in the UK.

Rapport building

I want each of you to think of a product or products that you consider to be expensive and of high risk. Why will you be interested in buying such products? Please briefly explain why a particular group may influence your buying behaviour.

Interview

1. What in your opinion are the factors that will influence you to buy high involvement products? *(By high involvement products, it means products that are expensive and risky. They are high value capital goods that are purchased only after long and careful consideration. Purchase decisions will require extensive thought and a high level of involvement.)*

Why do you think that each of the factors mentioned above are important to your consumption decisions?

2. How much influence does the general culture of your country have on your high involvement products *(products that are expensive and risky)* buying behaviour?
3. How much influence does your tribal/ethnic culture have on your consumption behaviour?
4. To what extent does your peer group influence your buying attitude towards high involvement products *(products that are expensive and risky)*

5. How much influence does your social network have on your high involvement products buying attitude and how?
6. How does your national culture influence your purchase (*i.e. your buying decision*) and use of the items for social occasions?
7. How does, tribal/ethnic culture influence your purchase and use of high involvement products for attending social occasions.
8. Could you please explain if and how peer group networks influence your purchase and use of high involvement products for social occasions.
9. What is your level of education? Do you think your level of education in a way moderates the level of influence of your national or ethnic/tribal or peer group influence on the nature of high involvement products, as well as how you use them for social occasions? (*By peer group, it means people of approximately the same age, status and interest*)
10. What factors do you consider when buying your high involvement products (*products that are expensive and risky*) for social occasions?
11. What factors do you consider in deciding which product you buy?
12. How long have you lived in the UK? Do you think that the fact that you have lived in the UK for a fairly long time has some influence on the products you buy and how you use them for social occasions?
13. Do you have a role model in the Nigerian community in the UK? Do you think his/her consumer preference for some products has some influence on your consumer preference *or choice* (including buying and using) for these types of
14. products? If yes, how?
15. Tell me something else that is not yet covered so far in this interview that you think may be important to contribute to this research.

Closure

Though there were many different opinions about high involvement products, it appears unanimous that socio-cultural factors do play a big role in deciding what to buy. Does anyone see it differently? It seems most of you agree _____, but some think that _____. Does anyone want to add or clarify an opinion on this?

Is there any other information regarding your experience with or following the focus group discussion that you think would be useful for me to know?

Thank you very much for coming today. Your time is very much appreciated and your comments have been very helpful.

Appendix 6: Sample of Gatekeeper's Consent Form

Gatekeepers' Consent

To Whom It May Concern

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a PhD researcher of University of East London and as part of my research project I am required to conduct an interview. I have identified a need for research into "Consumer Preference formation of UK based Nigerians Towards High Involvement products: A Social Identity Perspective". As part of the process, I have chosen your organisation to visit to interview some people. Therefore, I will appreciate it so much if I am allowed to come in and interview some of your members.

I would anticipate that each individual interview period would be as short as possible and I can guarantee that the information will not be used for other purpose than for this research project. I will inform you of the start date once the University Research Ethics Committee approves my ethics application.

I hope that you find the attached project of interest. Please feel free to contact me if you have any queries. Alternatively, you may wish to contact the research manager, the UREC Servicing Officer, Catherine Fieulleteau via researchethics@uel.ac.uk if you would like a reference or other information.

Many thanks for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely,

Emmanuel N Wanki

Gatekeeper's approval

Name of organisation:

Name of Gatekeeper:

Signature:

Date:

Appendix 7: Methodological Approach of Past Studies of Social Identity (Table 4.2)

Table 4. 2: Methodological approach in Past Studies of Social Identity

| Methodological approach in Past Studies of Social Identity | | |
|--|--|---|
| Studies | Methodological Approach | Other Relevant Details |
| Amiot & Aubin (2013) | Quantitative tool | The study explored how the three forms of social identification regroup together and predict different individual and intergroup outcomes. |
| Constanța & Rodica (2012) | Research methods used include experiment, questionnaire, observation and statistical techniques. | The sampling group comprised of 100 participants identified through simple random sampling. |
| Jackson & Sherriff (2012) | Qualitative - interviews | This study used a qualitative approach to explore the applicability of the social identity approach to “messy” school contexts |
| Yip et al (2012) | Qualitative - Face-to-face Interviews | This study explored the young consumers social group, examining the 'hard' and 'soft' aspects of the retail marketing mix in appealing to this consumer segment. This study explored consumers' store preferences. |
| Sneijder & te Molder (2009) | Qualitative - detailed analysis of online talk | This study uses discursive psychology to explore the relation between ideologically based food choice and identity in an online forum on veganism. The discursive psychological perspective underlines the notion of identities being part of social actions performed in talk. |
| Exton (2008) | Qualitative - Interviews | This study explore how American Indian secondary teachers from the Ute Teacher training program develop teacher identity |
| Hornsey (2008) | Qualitative - Historical | This study carried out a historical review of how thinking and research within the social identity approach has evolved. |
| Aries & Seider (2007) | Qualitative - Interviews | Interviews were conducted with 45 undergraduates drawn from three groups in the United States. Each group had 15 participants |
| Chan (2006) | Qualitative - Interviews | This study analysed the consumer socialisation of Chinese children in schools based on consumption values. |

| | | |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| Abrams & Hogg (2004) | Review of Literature | The study documents efforts to explicate the social identity approach in social psychology and offers examples of the way social identity metatheory has informed research in the area of social identity. |
| Ashmore et al (2004) | Critical Analysis of existing literature | Thorough evaluation of existing literature of collective identity, leading to the proposition of a multidimensional framework for knowledge enhancement. |
| Harewood (2004) | Qualitative - Interviews | This study explored the relational, role, and social identity as expressed in grandparent's personal website |
| Wilson (1998) | Qualitative - Interviews | This study explored the development of national identity in 5 to 11 year old English School children. |
| Source: Author | | |

Appendix 8: A First Sample of the Analytical Memos

Table 5.10: A Sample of the Analytical Memos written during the Coding Process reflecting non-verbal communication

| Original transcript | Exploratory comments |
|---|---|
| <p>Q: <i>How does, tribal/ethnic culture influence your purchase and use of high involvement products for attending social occasions?</i></p> <p>A: Ehmm, [he smiles broadly] My tribal or ethnic culture is very important to me. It stems from my national culture and people exhibit their wealth during social occasions. It influences and enables me to fit into the society as required.</p> <p>A: Well, I am very proud of my ethnic culture [she opens her eyes widely and depicts grins on the lips]. Oh yes, my tribal culture has great influence on my use of high involvement products, for example, it makes me feel authentic and can identity myself to belong to a group. It gives me high esteem.</p> <p>A: Yes indeed, my tribal culture, just as the national culture is quite important to me [he smiles tenderly], and that is why Nigerians attend birthdays and marriage ceremonies in flashy cars and expensive dresses to show off.</p> <p>Q: <i>Could you please explain if and how peer group networks influence your purchase and use of high involvement products for social occasions.</i></p> <p>A: [He sits upright and coughs] ... hesitantly he affirms - It is difficult to say no to your peers since they have supported me before. They may think I am difficult. They can go as far as contributing or donating to enable me to buy ostentatious product.</p> <p>A: [Strong eye contact] We do things together in the peer group and influence each other. For example, Some of my peers had JEEP cars and advised me to get one and I did so. We all ride in JEEPs.</p> <p>Q: <i>How much influence does your social network have on your high involvement products buying attitude and how?</i></p> <p>A: [He brushes his hair, striking it from fore front to back of the neck] Social network influences very much. There is a saying that "Show me your friends and I will tell you who you are" [he smiles broadly]. I want to identity myself with my social network friends.</p> <p>A: Well ... Ehmm, [robbing his hands] I mean, as Nigerians here, we still live as Nigerians, my social network influences me. Because of advertisements, I want to do the same and look like the others.</p> <p>Q: <i>Do you think your level of education in a way moderates the level of influence of your national or ethnic/tribal or peer group influence on the nature of high involvement products, as well as how you use them for social occasions?</i></p> <p>A: Yes! Education matters a lot to me. My level of education moderates the level of influence on the nature of high involvement products and even the way I use them for social occasions. [She gesticulates and rocks forward and backward]</p> <p>A: [Glancing at the ceiling] I am reasonable educated. Education wants me to act on my own values. Yes, it plays a significant role.</p> | <p>The interviewee expresses through a broad smile how important is his tribal culture to him and his way of doing things.</p> <p>By widening the eyes and smiling, she shows happiness with her ethnic culture. Ethnic culture influences and defines social status.</p> <p>He is quite happy about his tribal cultural influence on attending social occasions. He shows off during such occasions.</p> <p>He readjusts his sitting position and coughs – hesitantly and then thoughtfully, he affirms that peer group networks influence each other, give support to enable purchase of ostentatious products</p> <p>She makes a strong eye contact, and then emphasizes on peer group pressure and social identity.</p> <p>While brushing his hair with his left hand palm, he points out that social network is influential and he wants to identify himself to it.</p> <p>He believes that social network influences very much, especially with advertisements.</p> <p>She confirms that her level of education moderates the level influence and the way she uses high involvement products for social occasions.</p> <p>On glancing at the ceiling, he says education plays significant role.</p> |
| Note: The excerpts shown here are based on the interviews with several interviewees. | |

Appendix 9: A Second Sample of the Analytical Memos

Table 5.11: A Sample of the Analytical Memos written during the Coding Process reflecting non-verbal communication

| Original transcript | Exploratory comments |
|---|---|
| <p><i>Q: How does, tribal/ethnic culture influence your purchase and use of high involvement products for attending social occasions?</i></p> | |
| <p>A: [He coughs softly] My tribal or ethnic culture is very important, for example, I cannot buy a black car and use it in my village or go to church with it because my tribal culture considers black colour as bad luck, or terror or war.</p> | <p><i>The interviewee coughs softly and says his tribal culture considers black colour as black luck or terror or war. So he cannot buy a black car and use it at his home.</i></p> |
| <p>A: Eehhmm, I like my ethnic culture [<i>she smiles</i>]. I am very ethnocentric. My tribal culture has a very great influence on my use of high involvement products. I use it to express myself conspicuously.</p> | <p><i>With a smile she confirms that she is ethnocentric and uses it to identify herself socially and conspicuously.</i></p> |
| <p><i>Q: Could you please explain if and how peer group networks influence your purchase and use of high involvement products for social occasions.</i></p> | |
| <p>A: [Shrugs his shoulders] Peer groups are important because they are social groups that I belong to. They will have a say to my buying any high involvement product especially when they are already using such a product.</p> | <p><i>The interviewee shrugs his shoulders to express his belongingness to the peer group networks. They communicate and influence each other.</i></p> |
| <p>A: [Folds his hands] When I go about with friends, I have the tendency to do as they do, e.g. buying expensive clothes, shoes, etc. They have a lot of influence on me.</p> | <p><i>He folds his hands and says he has the tendency to be influenced by his peer groups.</i></p> |
| <p><i>Q: How much influence does your social network have on your high involvement products buying attitude and how?</i></p> | |
| <p>A: They do have a positive influence. [<i>He laughs</i>] On Social network, people communicate their own interest. They give you enough information of how to get involved. Once I am convinced I will follow and do as the others are doing.</p> | <p><i>He laughs and confirms the social network as a communication platform of influence.</i></p> |
| <p>A: Eeehmm My social network transcends my national cultural group. It is of much influence to me.</p> | <p><i>He believes that social network the national cultural group and has strong influence on him.</i></p> |
| <p><i>Q: Do you think your level of education in a way moderates the level of influence of your national or ethnic/tribal or peer group influence on the nature of high involvement products, as well as how you use them for social occasions?</i></p> | |
| <p>A: [Fiddles with her fingers] My level of education influences me but not as much as my tribal or ethnic culture. However, it enlightens me to make decisions on the way I buy flamboyant or flashy products.</p> | <p><i>She fiddles with her fingers and acknowledges that her level of education enlightens on buying decisions.</i></p> |
| <p>A: [He scratches his head] My level of education plays an important role. It helps moderate my level of involvement.</p> | <p><i>On scratching his head, he confirms that it moderates his level of involvement.</i></p> |
| <p>Note: The excerpts shown here are based on the interviews with several interviewees.</p> | |

Appendix 10: Excerpts from transcripts from Interviews

Table 5. 15: Excerpts from transcripts from Interviews with an Interviewee about Consumer Preference Formation Towards High Involvement Products.

| To protect the confidentiality of respondents, their personal details are not mentioned here. Gestures and body language expressions of the respondents are shown in bold. Minimal coding is shown in italics. | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|
| | Researcher's Analysis of Transcripts | Transcription of Researcher's questions and Respondent's answers |
| 1 | | Q – What in your opinion are the factors that will influence you to buy high involvement products? |
| 2 | | A1 – [Eeehhh], My need is very important. [He pauses] I question myself to |
| 3 | Influential factors of | find out if it is of any value to me. The class of people I deal with is of |
| 4 | consumer preference | influence to me. The trend of the day is important [<i>Pleased with his</i> |
| 5 | formation | <i>understanding of the subject matter</i>]. The aspect of social affiliation plays a |
| 6 | | great role of influence [Voice is raised]What is it that when I put on it |
| 7 | Example of factors | shows that I belong to that class?.....so social affiliation.. |
| 8 | | Q –Why do you think that each of the factors mentioned above are important |
| 9 | | to your consumption decisions? |
| 10 | | A2 – [He ponders for a while] because before buying one needs to |
| 11 | | consider the type of people that one deals with, the cost, your cultural believes, |
| 12 | Societal pressure | your personality..... [he smiles]. If it is something affordable, then one can |
| 13 | | buy it. |
| 14 | | Q – How much influence does the general culture of your country have on |
| 15 | Influence of tribal/ethnic | your high involvement products buying behaviour? |
| 16 | culture | A3 – Culture is very important. You don't want to spend money on what is not |
| 17 | | important in the cultural aspect. Hence, the product may not be of value. |
| 18 | Financial strength | Q –How much influence does your tribal/ethnic culture have on your |
| 19 | | consumption behaviour? |
| 20 | | A4 – [He smiles], My tribal/ethnic culture is of much or very high influence |
| 21 | Influence of national | [<i>cultural influence is affirmative</i>]. |
| 22 | culture | Q – To what extent does your peer group influence your buying attitude |
| 23 | | towards high involvement products? |
| 24 | | A5–Peer groups play an important role because they are social groups I belong |
| 25 | | to and because they will have a say about the product especially as they are |
| 26 | | also using it. |
| 27 | | Q – How does your national culture influence your purchase and use of the |
| 28 | | items for social occasions? |
| 29 | | A7 – My national culture has a great deal of influence, for example, my car, ... |
| 30 | Factors considered before | I bought it because I need it and my peers have the same mark. |
| 31 | buying high involvement | Q – Could you please explain if and how peer group networks influence your |
| 32 | products | purchase and use of high involvement products for social occasions. |
| 33 | | A9 – [He assumes a new position] My car, for example,if I go out to a |
| 34 | Influenced by the duration | party I want to have the same brand of car,so why not buy and be like them |
| 35 | of stay in the UK | [<i>strong affirmation of peer influence</i>]. |
| 36 | | Q – What factors do you consider in deciding which product you buy? |
| 37 | | A12 – [Leaning forward] My age, my academic background or status, the |
| 38 | | nature of the job I do, the affordability to buy the product, the type of life and |
| 39 | Influence of a role model | the people I deal with. |
| 40 | | Q – How long have you lived in the UK? Do you think that the fact that you |
| 41 | | have lived in the UK for a fairly long time has some influence on the products |
| 42 | | you buy and how you use them for social occasions? |
| 43 | | A13 – I have been in the UK for about 25 years and this plays an important |
| 44 | | part on what I buy. |
| 45 | | |
| 46 | | |
| 47 | | |
| 48 | | |

For transcripts reported here, the interviews were based on questions that sought to understand the factors that influence consumer preference formation towards buying costly products and having high risk. In most cases, the insights gained from the interviews reveal the level of socio-cultural inclination of the consumer of the high involvement products. The respondents were allowed much freedom in their responses. A1, A2, are responses from the same respondent to the different questions.

Source: Author

Appendix 11: Excerpts from transcripts from Interviews

Table 5. 16: Excerpts from transcripts from Interview with interviewee about Consumer Preference Formation Towards High Involvement Products.

| To protect the confidentiality of respondents, their personal details are not mentioned here. Gestures and body language expressions of the respondents are shown in bold. Minimal coding is shown in italics. | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|
| | Researcher's Analysis of Transcripts | Transcription of Researcher's questions and Respondent's answers |
| 1 | | Q – What in your opinion are the factors that will influence you to buy high |
| 2 | | involvement products? |
| 3 | Influential factors of | A1 – [Looks very relaxed but focused], The need for it. I want to buy a |
| 4 | consumer preference | property. The long term benefits outweigh the risks. [<i>Pleased with his</i> |
| 5 | formation | <i>understanding of the subject matter</i>]. In this case one goes in for it. |
| 6 | | Q – Why do you think that each of the factors mentioned above are important to |
| 7 | | your consumption decisions? |
| 8 | Example of high | A2 – The quality is important. I want to get a product that last longer to avoid |
| 9 | involvement product | cost of maintenance. |
| 10 | | Q – How much influence does the general culture of your country have on your |
| 11 | | high involvement products buying behaviour? |
| 12 | | A3 – The national culture influences a lot. We like to be part of what is going |
| 13 | | on in the society. |
| 14 | Societal pressure | Q – How much influence does your tribal/ethnic culture have on your |
| 15 | | consumption behaviour? |
| 16 | | A4 – [He thinks a bit], Ethnic wise the culture is not that very influential like |
| 17 | Influence of tribal/ethnic | the national culture. It questions why we want to spend on expensive items. |
| 18 | culture | Buying something today for me is something I will think in terms of the Naira |
| 19 | | [<i>Nigerian currency</i>]. |
| 20 | Financial strength | Q – To what extent does your peer group influence your buying attitude |
| 21 | | towards high involvement products? |
| 22 | | A5 – [He shock up his body] It is a very good question ... Some of them want |
| 23 | Influence of national | to buy high involvement products and will encourage one to do so. [<i>affirmation</i> |
| 24 | culture | <i>of peer group pressure</i>] They have influence. |
| 25 | | Q – How much influence does your social network have on your high |
| 26 | | involvement products buying attitude and how? |
| 27 | | A6 – They do have a positive influence. They try to communicate their own |
| 28 | | interest. [<i>Speaking assertively</i>]. They give you enough information on how to |
| 29 | | get you involved and will give you useful websites. |
| 30 | | Q – How does your national culture influence your purchase (<i>i.e. your buying</i> |
| 31 | | <i>decision</i>) and use of the items for social occasions? |
| 32 | Factors considered before | A7 – My national culture has got a lot of influence for me. |
| 33 | buying high involvement | Q – Could you please explain if and how peer group networks influence your |
| 34 | products | purchase and use of high involvement products for social occasions. |
| 35 | | A9 – [He hesitates] Yes! Peer group network, we do have similar issues. They |
| 36 | Influenced by the | have influence through advice on what to buy and how in relation to social |
| 37 | duration of stay in the UK | occasions (<i>strong affirmation of peer influence</i>). |
| 38 | | Q – What is your level of education? Do you think your level of education in a |
| 39 | | way moderates the level of influence of your national or ethnic/tribal or peer |
| 40 | | group influence on the nature of high involvement products, as well as how you |
| 41 | | use them for social occasions? |
| 42 | Influence of a role model | A10 – Yes! It plays an important part. The level of education moderates the |
| 43 | | level of interest. |
| 44 | | Q – What factors do you consider in deciding which product you buy? |
| 45 | | A12 – Price plays a major role; quality and then durability. |
| 46 | | |
| 47 | | |
| 48 | | |
| For transcripts reported here, the interviews were based on questions that sought to understand the factors that influence consumer preference formation towards buying costly products and having high risk. In most cases, the | | |

insights gained from the interviews reveal the level of socio-cultural inclination of the consumer of the high involvement products. The respondents were allowed much freedom in their responses. A1, A2, are responses from the same respondent to the different questions.

Source: Author

Appendix 12: Excerpts from transcripts from Interviews

Table 5. 17: Another Example of the Analytical Memos written during the Coding Process

| Another Example of the Analytical Memos written during the Coding Process | |
|---|---|
| Original transcript | Exploratory comments |
| <p>Q: <i>What in your opinion are the factors that will influence you to buy high involvement products? (By high involvement products, it means products that are expensive and risky. They are high value goods that are purchased only after long and careful consideration. Purchase decisions will require extensive thought and a high level of involvement.)</i></p> <p>A: The factors are my family needs, e.g. grown up children [He smiles] I am tending to become grand dad and this is something that enhances my statues.</p> <p>Q: <i>How much influence does the general culture of your country have on your high involvement products (products that are expensive and risky) buying behaviour?</i></p> <p>A: The culture of Nigeria is of great influence as cultural attachment to the family is important.</p> <p>Q: <i>To what extent does your peer group influence your buying attitude towards high involvement products (products that are expensive and risky)</i></p> <p>A: The influence of my peer group does not affect me. I don't buy things based on influence of others.</p> <p>Q: <i>How much influence does your social network have on your high involvement products buying attitude and how?</i></p> <p>A: I am not influenced by my social network on my buying attitude of high involvement products.</p> <p>Q: <i>How does your national culture influence your purchase (i.e. your buying decision) and use of the items for social occasions?</i></p> <p>A: The influence of my national culture on my purchase and use of the items of social occasions is important. If attending a marriage ceremony there is a special way to dress up, then I will dress like every other person. [His looks up at the ceiling briefly] The choice of the car we drive to such social occasion is influenced by the national culture.</p> <p>Q: <i>How does, tribal/ethnic culture influence your purchase and use of high involvement products for attending social occasions.</i></p> <p>A: My tribal/ethnic culture influences my purchase and use of high involvement products for attending social occasions. It has great influence.</p> <p>Q: <i>How long have you lived in the UK? Do you think that the fact that you have lived in the UK for a fairly long time has some influence on the products you buy and how you use them for social occasions?</i></p> <p>A: I have lived in the UK for 30 years. At my age, I know that family is important and finance is taken into consideration. Affordability is important.</p> | <p><i>Identification of family need influencing someone to buying high involvement products.</i></p> <p><i>Identification of national culture influencing buying behaviour.</i></p> <p><i>Peer group not influential on buying attitude for this respondent</i></p> <p><i>Social network does not influence buying attitude for this respondent</i></p> <p><i>Identifies that the national culture influences purchasing and the use of items of social occasions.</i></p> <p><i>Identifies that tribal/ethnic culture influences the purchase and use of high involvement products for social occasions.</i></p> |
| Source: Author | |

Appendix 13: Excerpts from transcripts from Interviews

Table 5. 18: A Sample of the Analytical Memos written during the Coding Process reflecting non-verbal communication

| A Sample of the Analytical Memos written during the Coding Process reflecting non-verbal communication | |
|---|---|
| Original transcript | Exploratory comments |
| <p><i>Q: How does, tribal/ethnic culture influence your purchase and use of high involvement products for attending social occasions?</i></p> <p>A: [He coughs softly] My tribal or ethnic culture is very important, for example, I cannot buy a black car and use it in my village or go to church with it because my tribal culture considers black colour as bad luck, or terror or war.</p> <p>A: Eehhmm, I like my ethnic culture [<i>she smiles</i>]. I am very ethnocentric. My tribal culture has a very great influence on my use of high involvement products. I use it to express myself conspicuously.</p> <p><i>Q: Could you please explain if and how peer group networks influence your purchase and use of high involvement products for social occasions.</i></p> <p>A: [Shrugs his shoulders] Peer groups are important because they are social groups that I belong to. They will have a say to my buying any high involvement product especially when they are already using such a product.</p> <p>A: [Folds his hands] When I go about with friends, I have the tendency to do as they do, e.g. buying expensive clothes, shoes, etc. They have a lot of influence on me.</p> <p><i>Q: How much influence does your social network have on your high involvement products buying attitude and how?</i></p> <p>A: They do have a positive influence. [<i>He laughs</i>] On Social network, people communicate their own interest. They give you enough information of how to get involved. Once I am convinced I will follow and do as the others are doing.</p> <p>A: Eeehhmm My social network transcends my national cultural group. It is of much influence to me.</p> <p><i>Q: Do you think your level of education in a way moderates the level of influence of your national or ethnic/tribal or peer group influence on the nature of high involvement products, as well as how you use them for social occasions?</i></p> <p>A: [Fiddles with her fingers] My level of education influences me but not as much as my tribal or ethnic culture. However, it enlightens me to make decisions on the way I buy flamboyant or flashy products.</p> <p>A: [He scratches his head] My level of education plays an important role. It helps moderate my level of involvement.</p> | <p>The interviewee coughs softly and says his tribal culture considers black colour as black luck or terror or war. So he cannot buy a black car and use it at his home.</p> <p>With a smile she confirms that she is ethnocentric and uses it to identify herself socially and conspicuously.</p> <p>The interviewee shrugs his shoulders to express his belongingness to the peer group networks. They communicate and influence each other.</p> <p>He folds his hands and says he has the tendency to be influenced by his peer groups.</p> <p>He laughs and confirms the social network as a communication platform of influence.</p> <p>He believes that social network the national cultural group and has strong influence on him.</p> <p>She fiddles with her fingers and acknowledges that her level of education enlightens on buying decisions.</p> <p>On scratching his head, he confirms that it moderates his level of involvement.</p> |
| Note: The excerpts shown here are based on the interviews with several interviewees. | |
| Source: Author | |

Appendix 14: Coding of an interview – data 2

Table 5. 19: A Sample of the Coding of an interview – data 2

| Coding | Interviewee's Comment |
|---|--|
| Level of education influencing buying high involvement products for social occasion | It is more of a personal thing than academic level. Hence, I should not be going for things that I cannot even afford. My level of education does not influence or moderate my buying behaviour. I rather want to be influenced by standards of appearance. |
| Factors considered when buying products of high involvement | The factors I consider when buying high involvement products for social occasions include usability and durability; I look for something that I will use it over and over; something that will still be useful after the first occasion. There are some things that Nigerians buy and after that occasion you cannot use them again. |
| Example of high involvement product | For example, there are some dresses that after using them, there are no occasions that they can fit in. Then I will look at the affordability and also the appearance on me is very important; something that will not portray who I am and any negativity on me is not good; such clothes are the ones I will never put them on. And also what that product is known for. There are some products with high risks that determine what type of people use them, they have been labeled. This also determines whether I buy it or not. |
| Some high risk products labeled by the type of people using them | Factors I consider for the type of product I buy are religion, are there any other cheaper alternatives, the importance of it, is it very necessary to have it? |
| Factor to consider when buying | I have lived in the UK for 8 years now but I don't think it has any impact on the product that I buy. |
| Length of stay in the UK | |
| Source: Author | |

Appendix 15: Comparison of codes and categories – Deriving selective codes

Table 5.15: Sample of comparison of codes and categories - Deriving selective codes

| Axial Codes | Open Codes | Cross Case Evidence from Interviews | | | | | | |
|--|--|-------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| | | 03 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 15 | 23 |
| Culture, wealth and social status | Influential factors are of status issues | | Y | | | | Y | Y |
| | Society measures wealth by use of high involvement products | | | Y | Y | | | Y |
| | Culture links wealth to social status | Y | Y | | Y | | Y | Y |
| | Consider the impact of buying decision on the family | Y | Y | | Y | Y | Y | |
| | High involvement products have incremental value over a period of time | Y | Y | Y | Y | | | |
| | High involvement products spell and define who one is | Y | Y | | Y | | | Y |
| Social Benefits and Financial factors | Something to be used for a long time (Durable) | Y | Y | Y | | Y | Y | Y |
| | Low risk, the cost of the product | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| | The usefulness of the product | Y | Y | | | Y | Y | |
| | The social benefits | Y | Y | | | Y | | Y |
| | Consider your personality | | Y | | | Y | | Y |
| Social Identity and Cultural Factors | Need is a factor to consider | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| | The value of the product | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| | Societal influence | Y | Y | | Y | | | Y |
| | The class of people and peer group one moves with them | Y | Y | | | | Y | Y |
| | Consider your personality and general/national culture | Y | Y | | Y | Y | | Y |
| | Influence of tribal or ethnic culture | Y | Y | Y | Y | | | Y |
| Networking | Networking does influence ones buying attitude | Y | Y | | Y | | Y | Y |
| | Buying ostentatious product because networking friends just got the latest model | Y | Y | | Y | Y | | Y |
| | Social network enhances status | Y | Y | | | Y | | Y |
| | Social network transcends all cultures | | | | | | Y | Y |
| | Impact of social network is very high | | | | * | * | Y | * |
| | Social network offers a platform for fast spreading of messages and information is easily shared | Y | Y | | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| | Networking is very endemic in making decisions to buy the product | | Y | | | Y | Y | |

Note: Respondents are represented by 03, 09, 10, 11, 12, 15 and 23 to protect the identity of the Interviewees; Y = Yes. This Table combines details for factors that influence/hinder buying ostentatious products and factors that one considers in deciding which product to buy; hence, for example, Finance Availability (Affordability), Usefulness, Uniqueness. * = very low influence


Appendix 16: Comparison Observational Data

Table 5.16: Sample of comparison Observational Data

| Codes | Non-Verbal Communication | Cross Case Evidence | | | | |
|--|---|---------------------|----|----|----|----|
| | | 02 | 03 | 11 | 15 | 23 |
| Ethnic / Tribal Culture | He/She smiles broadly (shows his/her culture is very important to him/her) | Y | | Y | | Y |
| | Head nodding (supportively) | Y | Y | | | Y |
| | He/She smiles gently (shows happiness) | Y | | Y | | |
| | The eye lights with the mouth (reflects happiness) | Y | Y | | | Y |
| UK Influence (Culture) | He/She scratches his head (surprised that he needs to embrace the UK culture) | Y | | | | Y |
| | He/She nods his/her head (acknowledges the importance) | Y | | | Y | |
| | Arms crossed (disapproving that he/she needs to embrace UK culture) | Y | Y | Y | | Y |
| | | | | | | |
| Peer Group Influence | He/She nods his head (acknowledges the importance) | Y | | | Y | |
| | Arms crossed (disapproves the influence of peer groups) | | Y | | Y | Y |
| | | | | | | |
| Networking Influence of buying behaviour | He/She smiles (reflecting happiness) | Y | | | Y | Y |
| Level of education influences buying attitude | He/She smiles (suggesting the level of education does influence) | Y | | | Y | |
| | He/She shakes his/her head (underplays its influence on buying attitude) | Y | Y | Y | | Y |
| | His/Her sitting position changes (expressing uneasiness) | Y | Y | Y | | |
| | He/She hisses (showing disapproval) | | Y | Y | | |
| | He/She makes a facial expression (frowning in disapproval) | Y | | Y | | |
| | | | | | | |

Appendix 17: EXTERNAL AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

EXTERNAL AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
uel.ac.uk/qa
Quality Assurance and Enhancement



22 July 2016

Dear Emmanuel,

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Project Title: | Consumer Preference Formation of UK based Nigerians towards High Involvement Products: A Social Identity Perspective |
| Principal Investigator: | Dr Ayantunji Gbadamosi |
| Researcher: | Emmanuel Ndi Wanki |
| Reference Number: | UREC 1516 133 |

I am writing to confirm the outcome of your application to the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC), which was considered by UREC on **Wednesday 18 May 2016**.

The decision made by members of the Committee is **Approved**. The Committee's response is based on the protocol described in the application form and supporting documentation. Your study has received ethical approval from the date of this letter.

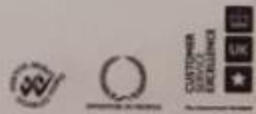
Please note the UREC Application Form for ethical approval has been revised. For future applications please use the revised application form which can be found on:
<https://uel.ac.sharepoint.com/ResearchInnovationandEnterprise/Pages/Ethics.aspx>

The Committee would like to commend you on the presentation of this application for ethical approval.

Should you wish to make any changes in connection with your research project, this must be reported immediately to UREC. A Notification of Amendment form should be submitted for approval, accompanied by any additional or amended documents:
<http://www.uel.ac.uk/wwwmedia/schools/graduate/documents/Notification-of-Amendment-to-Approved-Ethics-App-150115.doc>

Any adverse events that occur in connection with this research project must be reported immediately to UREC.

Docklands Campus, University Way, London E16 2RD
Tel: +44 (0)20 8223 3322 Fax: +44 (0)20 8223 3394 MINICOM 020 8223 2853
Email: r.carter@uel.ac.uk



**Approved Research Site**

I am pleased to confirm that the approval of the proposed research applies to the following research site.

| Research Site | Principal Investigator / Local Collaborator |
|---|---|
| Shopping malls, church halls, African cultural associations | Dr Ayantunji Gbadamosi |

Approved Documents

The final list of documents reviewed and approved by the Committee is as follows:

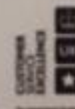
| Document | Version | Date |
|--|---------|--------------|
| UREC application form | 2.0 | 12 July 2016 |
| Participant Information Sheet | 2.0 | 12 July 2016 |
| Consent Form | 2.0 | 12 July 2016 |
| Consent Form for participation in interview research | 2.0 | 12 July 2016 |
| Demographic survey questions | 2.0 | 12 July 2016 |
| Interview questions | 2.0 | 12 July 2016 |
| Focus group topic guide | 2.0 | 12 July 2016 |
| Gatekeeper consent – Sam O Adewunmi | 2.0 | 12 July 2016 |
| Gatekeeper consent – Solomon Adewale Odegbesan | 2.0 | 12 July 2016 |
| Gatekeeper permission – Adeboye Olalekan Dada | 2.0 | 12 July 2016 |

Approval is given on the understanding that the [UEL Code of Practice in Research](#) is adhered to.

The University will periodically audit a random sample of applications for ethical approval, to ensure that the research study is conducted in compliance with the consent given by the ethics Committee and to the highest standards of rigour and integrity.

Please note, it is your responsibility to retain this letter for your records.

With the Committee's best wishes for the success of this project.





Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Catherine Fiouletteau'.

Catherine Fiouletteau
Research Integrity and Ethics Manager
University Research Ethics Committee (UREC)
Email: researchethics@uel.ac.uk