

Differences in the Big Five Personality Traits and Innate Innovativeness among Fashion Innovativeness Groups

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Background and conceptual framework. The big five personality model is a grouping of personality traits. Allport and Odbert (1936) listed 4,500 words related to personality traits and, thus, provided a foundation for studying the dimensions of personality (Vinney, 2018). The OCEAN model includes five key elements of a personality: Openness (i.e., openness to new things), Conscientiousness (i.e., organized/thoughtful), Extraversion (i.e., pursuing stimulation socializing with others), Agreeableness (i.e., compassionate/cooperative), and Neuroticism (i.e., emotional sensitivity to environmental/situational factors).

Prior research has examined the influence of some of the big five personality traits on fashion consumer behavior. For example, Agarwal and Hooja (2020) compared female fashion leaders (innovators, opinion leaders, innovative communicators) on the big five personality traits and found innovators scored significantly higher on openness than opinion leaders and innovative communicators. Further, innovative communicators differed from opinion leaders on agreeableness. Liang et al (2021) found that consumers' intentions toward using mobile self-checkout in fashion retail stores were predicted by openness to experience. Several researchers have looked at variables related to extraversion such as social values (Goldsmith, et al, 1993; Goldsmith & Stith, 1993; Rahman, et al, 2014). Research related to emotional sensitivity to environmental/situational factors (neuroticism) has examined optimum stimulation level (Chakrabarti & Baisya, 2009), need for affect (Cho & Workman, 2014), and self-monitoring (Lee & Workman, 2013). Research related to conscientiousness (i.e., organized/thoughtful) includes styles of information processing.

Muzinich, et al (2003) concluded that innovators must be characterized based on a product category (e.g., fashion). Innovators with some products (e.g., music, art) are not necessarily innovators with other products such as fashion (Bearden et al., 2001; Janssen et al., 1998). The effect of innate innovativeness on fashion adoption is mediated by fashion innovativeness (Goldsmith, Freiden, & Eastman, 1995).

There has been research into the influence of personality traits and innate innovativeness on fashion consumer behavior; however, the OCEAN model has not been used to organize an examination of differences in personality among the four fashion innovativeness groups. Therefore, the purpose of this paper was to examine how innovators, early adopters, late adopters, and reluctant adopters differ in the big five personality traits and innate innovativeness.

The following six hypotheses were proposed:

H1a-e: The four fashion innovativeness groups will differ in the big 5 personality traits of (a) openness, (b) conscientiousness, (c) extraversion, (d) agreeableness, and (e) neuroticism.

H2: The four fashion innovativeness groups will differ in innate innovativeness.

Method. During a four-week period, data were collected from 202 men and 209 women (age 20-39) across the US using an online questionnaire (panel services). Ethnicity included 256 Caucasians, 64 Hispanic/Latino, 46 African Americans, 16 Asian Americans, 6 Native Americans, and 23 classified as other. Valid, reliable, commonly used scales were used to measure fashion innovativeness (Batinic, Wolff & Haupt, 2008), big 5 personality traits (Thompson, 2008), innate innovativeness (Hurt, et al, 2013), and demographics. Data were analyzed via Cronbach's alpha reliability, descriptive statistics, M/ANOVA, and SNK post-hoc tests.

Results. Participants were divided into four fashion innovativeness groups based on the mean and standard deviation: fashion innovators (n=75; 18.2%); early adopters (n=132; 32.1%); late adopters (n=142; 34.5%); and reluctant adopters (n=62; 15.1%). Items were reduced in the personality traits measure to attain acceptable reliability. Reliability of each scale was: Openness (.762); Conscientiousness (.718); Extraversion (.724); Agreeableness (.807); Neuroticism (.676); Innate Innovativeness (.883).

MANOVA with fashion innovativeness groups as the independent variable and dependent variables of five personality traits and innate innovativeness revealed significant effects for fashion innovativeness [$F=6.76$, $p < .000$] on the big five personality traits and innate innovativeness. ANOVA revealed four of the big five personality traits ($p < .000$) and innate innovativeness ($p < .000$) differed significantly among fashion innovativeness groups. Post hoc tests showed that fashion innovativeness groups differed significantly ($p < .05$) from one another on four of the big five personality traits (s: Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness but not Neuroticism). Innate innovativeness differed significantly among the four fashion innovativeness groups. Thus, H1a-d and H2 were supported; H1e was not supported.

Discussion and implications. Results of this study show that fashion innovators scored higher on all five personality traits than the other three groups--significantly higher than the other groups on four of the five traits (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness). Early adopters were significantly different from innovators and from late and reluctant adopters on three of five categories (openness, conscientiousness, and extraversion). The pattern of scores shows that late adopters and reluctant adopters are similar in the big five personality traits; reluctant adopters scored lower than late adopters but not significantly so. Fashion innovators scored highest on innate innovativeness while the other three groups were similar in innate innovativeness. Theoretically, this study suggests that innate innovativeness is an antecedent to fashion innovativeness consistent with Goldsmith, et al, (1995) and Muzinich, et al (2003).

The lack of differences among the fashion innovativeness groups on neuroticism is difficult to explain; perhaps the negative nature of neuroticism items (jealous, moody, emotional, anxious) affected the result. This is a topic that needs more study.

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