Theorising marketing personality: an offensive/defensive exploration

of the marketer mind-set

Introduction

In a series of related papers (Woodall, 2004, 2007, 2012; Woodall & Swailes, 2009) it is argued that marketing practice is frequently observed to be, and portrayed as, anti-social and anti-relational, in that its objectives - although claimed to be focused on customer satisfaction and value (Levitt, 1960) – are primarily organisation-centric and conducted in a largely utilitarian manner whereby the means (marketing programmes) are mostly justified on the basis of short-term ends (transactions/sales). In consumer contexts marketers themselves cannot, anyhow, enter into relationships with customers directly (Woodall, 2004) so connect vicariously through the medium of technology, service workers and strategy - and it is perhaps this relative disengagement that causes them frequently to focus inwardly and to heed the siren voice of the accountant rather than that of the customer.   Recent travails in the banking industry, exemplified by the global sub-prime mortgage catastrophe (e.g. Coates, 2008; Hall, 2008; Mian & Sufi, 2008) and more recently in the UK via the mis-selling of payment protection insurance (PPI – e.g. Neville, 2012), have demonstrated that 'adverse selection' (Reichheld, 1996) – focusing on the 'wrong' customer as a means of boosting short-term organisational gains – remains a perceived, perhaps even preferred, option for those charged with exploiting the market and this, in turn, exemplifies the frequently wrong-headed and self-serving approach taken by some marketers.

That marketers act chiefly in the interests of their employers should not, of course, normally be cause for either surprise or concern, but the manner *in which* they act, and its implications for longer-term organisational health – customer relationship maintenance, sustainable profitability, corporate reputation, *et al* – and social good (Aditya, 2001), is.

Premised on the notion of a coincident operational and aesthetic offensive/defensive dichotomy (Woodall, 2004; Woodall & Swailes, 2009), and drawing on the humanistic ethics of Erich Fromm (1949), this paper explores further recent and disturbing aspects of marketer (mis)behaviour; their connection with that most contemporary of relational contexts, word-of-mouth (WoM); and their associations with individual difference/personality. A means of both identifying and typifying (e.g. Myers & McCaulley, 1985) those marketers for whom relationship marketing appears a difficult domain is explored, and this is then followed by a discussion identifying empirical limitations and future directions for research.

Argument

In consumer markets, especially, customer/supplier associations have recently developed along two contrasting, but ultimately converging, paths. The first recalls the 'service paradigm' (Gummesson, 1993) which, emerging subsequent to the quality movement of the 1970's/1980's (e.g. Deming, 1982), evolved via interactive (Gummesson, 1987), relationship (Grönroos, 1994) and loyalty-based (Reichheld, 1993) marketing to create a broad managerial philosophy identifying customer satisfaction as the key to business success. Satisfaction worked because it increased the likelihood of re-purchase and maximised the potential for positive WoM and, consequently, customer acquisition (Reichheld, 1996). This broadly 'defensive' marketing approach (Woodall, 2004) is also evident in other recently idealised perspectives, including customer advocacy (Lawer & Knox, 2006); meridian marketing (Cova, 2005); virtue-based marketing (Murphy, Laczniak & Wood, 2007); and well-being marketing (Sirgy & Lee, 2008). Kotler's humanistic marketing (1987) – perhaps, even, Vargo & Lusch's (2004, 2008) service dominant logic - might also be said to belong to this same broad category as, although articulated in disparate ways, each places the customers' interests, plus the development and strengthening

of associated relationships, at the heart of organisational endeavour. Clearly, the prime objective for all is mercantile success, but each is underpinned by some form of socially responsible (Sirgy & Lee, 1996), or socially meaningful objective, premised on mutual trust and commitment (Morgan & Hunt, 1994) and customer/organisation collaborative relationships (e.g. Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2000)

By contrast, conventional (or 4P) marketing has struggled to define for itself a substantive social purpose, and has consequently suffered a reputation both for social disregard and disreputability (Woodall, 2012). Here, customer/supplier connections are largely of the transactional type and are frequently built upon suspicion rather than trust. For example, it was recently reported that 2/3 of US citizens believed advertising to be responsible for the recession (i-level, 2009) whilst Dalsace & Markovitch (2009) uncovered 'compelling evidence' suggesting that public attitudes toward marketing had worsened over the two decades preceding their research. More recently, Heath and Chatzidakis (2012) encountered evidence of consumers believing marketers to be both short-term- and company-focused and, more worryingly, manipulative and deceptive. Offensive marketing (acquiring new customers, Fornell & Wernerfelt, 1987) has seemingly always – and apparently increasingly - demonstrated a propensity to offend (Woodall, 2004).

Brown (2004) has suggested that consumers (like cockroaches) are developing an immunity to conventional marketing, but this is not purely a function of marketing quality, or the extent to which consumers are able to 'see through' and/or reject unwanted or spurious marketing claims; it has been reported that quantity, too, is an issue. Pringle (in Petty & Andrews, 2008, p. 7), for example, notes the promotional 'clutter' (Rumbo, 2002; Swanepoel, Lye & Rugimbana, 2009) inherent in contemporary markets, and claims that of 5000 'overt marketing communications' received daily by consumers only 1% to 2% are absorbed. Sweeney, Soutar &

Mazzarol (2012) also suggest that consumers have become 'less attentive' to traditional advertising. But marketers, of course, are ultimately wise to the wiles of the consumer, and whilst an appropriate response to increasing consumer aversion might have been be to turn collectively to a more cautious and/or less aggressive approach, offensive adherents have instead developed new ways to offend, and revised modes of combative engagement have appeared.

In his discussion on the notion of deception in marketing Aditya (2001) focused on some of the more well-known 'scams' practiced by marketers, including sale price discrepancy, pyramid selling and brand confusion strategies, but in recent years a more mendacious phenomenon has been noted, one that involves the use the use of stealth ('reaching customers surreptitiously', Kaikati & Kaikati, 2004) or covert/undercover marketing tactics, and these appear to have grown in inverse proportion to the perceived effectiveness of more established marketing techniques. There are many examples of this – product placement and anti-branding/anti-advertising (Katyal, 2010); advergames/advertainment (Quilliam, Lee, Cole & Kim, 2011) and in-game advertisements (Jung, Min & Kellaris, 2011); posing, buzz and viral marketing (Dobele, Toleman & Beverlan, 2005), advertorials (Dix & Phau, 2009); product seeding (Kozinets, de Valck, Wojnicki & Wilner, 2010); and behavioural advertising (Milne, Bahl & Rohm, 2008) – all of which depend largely on the principle of non-disclosure: "*... an implied representation that the message is not marketing-related because the communication appears to be of a non-marketing nature"* (Petty & Andrews, 2008). Effectively representing a new form of subliminal (Saegert, 1987), but apparently legal, message infiltration, such tactics are favoured largely because they weave marketing messages into the ordinary fabric of daily life (Carl, 2006). Speaking entirely without irony, practitioner Inci (2012/2007) concedes, "*Some victories are achieved in the shadows, in silence, and without words or notice."* whilst one particular online agency - clearly attempting an appeal to the less discerning marketer - recently

promoted an *"Internet marketing weapon so dangerous it should be illegal"* (claim now

removed). In the related area of market research concerns have recently been expressed at how

Facebook, allegedly, covertly collects market-related intelligence, gained from its near-one

billion members, and re-distributes this to interested advertisers (Hodgkinson, 2012) –

demonstrating again how readily marketers can accede to the easy and effortless response.

A point of both convergence (see earlier) and, paradoxically, difference between these

two opposing marketing forms (defensive/relational vs offensive/transactional) can be illustrated

in the context word-of-mouth (WoM), facilitated recently via the emergence of social networks

(Facebook, Twitter, Linkedin, etc.) and other collaborative 'ecosystems'/'virtual communities' -

either peer-to-peer specific (e.g. Tripadvisor) or, like Amazon, deploying existing consumers as

promotional conversational partners. Effectively building new forms of relational exchange –

though with the marketer acting as mediator, or moderator, rather than partner - communication

platforms like these are favoured not only because they replicate/replace natural conversational

settings, but also because of the scale of the networks they inhabit. WoM is key to both

'defensive' and 'offensive' approaches to marketing but, as identified by the UK Word of Mouth

Marketing Association (Word of Mouth Marketing Association, WOMMA, 2007), the means of

operationalisation varies. 'Organic' WoM occurs *"naturally when people become advocates*

because they are happy with a product and have a natural desire to share their support and

enthusiasm" - in true relational fashion; 'amplified' WoM, though, occurs or is facilitated,

"when marketers launch campaigns designed to encourage or accelerate WOM in existing or

new communities" (WOMMA, 2007). Here the marketer manipulates the consumer/consumer

relational context and, essentially, acts as virtual 'dating agency', encouraging – though not

participating directly in – a process of affiliation. In many cases the process of encouragement is

open and honest, but in others it is not. The Word of Mouth Marketing Association discourages

non-disclosure (WOMMA, 2012) and sanctions offending members, but trade regulation has often proved neither to be sufficient nor effective (Sprague & Wells, 2010). Such issues are key when considering the likely ongoing effectiveness of what has recently been termed 'customer engagement' (see, for example, Brodie, *et al*, 2011; Sashi, 2012; Verhoef, Reinartz & Krafft, 2010) where Web 2.0 applications (social media; mobile communication technology, etc.) provide opportunities for brand-based customer-to-customer and customer-to-organisation communications, and where marketers are faced with the option of either fostering or forcing relational exchange.

Offensiveness, defensiveness and productivity

Whether marketers pursue either organic or amplified WoM may well be a function of the offering, but could be a function of personal preference, too. The motivation to either disclose or not, though, is almost certainly 'personal', and whether marketers are of an intrinsically 'defensive', or 'offensive', orientation (Woodall & Swailes, 2009) may well determine their approach. In the same way that some marketers have tended to practice other forms of relationship marketing (e.g. CRM, direct marketing, loyalty programme management) in an inherently cynical rather than co-operational manner (see, for example, Petty, 2000; Mitussis, O'Malley & Patterson, 2006) WoM provides yet further opportunity for avoiding meaningful customer engagement for those for whom true relational principles are hard to grasp or difficult to realise.

Figure 1, below, suggests that offensive and defensive marketing archetypes can be profiled both operationally (as a function of activity or effect) and aesthetically (as a function of sentiment; after Hume in, for example, Grayck, 2011), whilst Woodall and Swailes (2009) argue

that these two modes of understanding may be mutually supportive - and hypothesises that

marketers' operational decisions are likely to be moderated by personality.

Figure 1. Offensive vs defensive marketing (adapted from Woodall, 2004 and Woodall & Swailes, 2009)

Offensive Marketing		Defensive Marketing	
Marketing policy/practice continuum			
Operational definition Any activity or effect that stems from purposeful endeavour primarily related to market research, product promotion, pricing, placement and targeting/positioning that serves to move the customer closer to, or further away, from purchase or repurchase,		**Operational definition** Any activity or effect which stems from product consumption/experience or from perceptions of organisational behaviour that serves to move the customer closer to, or further away, from purchase or repurchase.	
Key Characteristics			
Appropriation	⟵	**Value** ⟶	Co-creation
Making	⟵	**Promise** ⟶	Keeping
Quantity	⟵	**Major Premise** ⟶	Quality
Persuasion	⟵	**Major Focus** ⟶	Performance
Transactions	⟵	**Preference** ⟶	Relationships
Forced	⟵	**Engagement** ⟶	Fostered
Aesthetic definition Marketing in a forceful way; marketing for marketing's sake; marketing in ways that might be construed as exploitative and/or cynical.		**Aesthetic definition** Marketing with humility; marketing with an overriding sense of responsibility for society; marketing 'quietly' with a focus on the long, rather than short, term.	
Marketer attitude/orientation/personality continuum			

The model suggests that those who are aesthetically oriented towards offence will be

attracted more towards operationally offensive activity, and would also, a) likely undertake any

operationally defensive task in an essentially offensive manner, and/or, b) preference an

operationally offensive response to situations where both offense and defence might represent

equally viable solutions. Here we might draw on Erich Fromm's (1949) suggestion that all

personal orientations have both a positive and negative aspect, and whilst offense might on the

one hand infer action, progress and forcefulness, it might also convey notions of belligerence, rudeness and abuse.

Typically, the model argues, offensive marketing/marketers prefer value appropriation over value co-creation (Ramaswamy, 2000; Vargo & Lusch, 2004), may be more attuned to making, rather than keeping, promises (Grönroos, 2006); to forcing, rather than fostering, customer engagement; and are much more interested in coaxing customers to buy, via advertising and coercion, than encouraging purchase/re-purchase via high quality product and/or service quality; that is, by deploying persuasion rather than performance, and eschewing 'defensive' options in favour of more aggressive and/or interventionist approaches.

In Woodall (2012) it is argued that offensive/defensive orientations may be innate and/or 'critically internalised' (Bardzil & Slasky, 2003), and that employees search for contexts in which they can exercise preferred behaviours (Celmer & Winer, 1990).   Stock & Hoyer (2005) suggest that business employees may well often 'act' in a particular manner - that is, demonstrate behavioural, managerial, even theoretical, compliance (Brill, 1994) to a particular operational approach - and even though some may be seen to demonstrate a surface commitment to defensive ideals, they may not possess a natural allegiance, or *real* enthusiasm, for that particular credo and will, ultimately, search out environments in which can 'be themselves'. Through an 'amalgam of calling and character' (Woodall, 2012) 'offensive' personalities may be drawn towards opportunities for practising offensive, and essentially non-relational, modes of marketing - and it is possible that one particular aspect of marketing's appeal is its alluringly disreputable demeanour, and that this might attract those of a 'certain' and 'unproductive' disposition.

According to Fromm (1949), productivity is a complex property that is embodied in the social actor and arises out of three complementary and coexisting conditions: 1) the actor has conviction – that is, he/she is both able and internally motivated to use his/her powers or

potential, 2) the actor has an objective that is focused on humanistic ethics and the development/maintenance of a 'better' society, and 3) the actor is self-willed and his/her ideas are not the result of indoctrination or any other 'easy' or casual mode of determination. Uncommitted employees, of course, may be able to process certain attitude-level modifiers; profess devotion to a cause; and perform in an apparently appropriate manner, but this may only be a temporary or spurious effect and represent productivity in only the most cosmetic of ways. Frommian productivity is only indirectly related to outcome and which can, operationally of course, be uncontrolled, inappropriately directed or intended for expedient purposes only. 'True' productivity, however, aligns strongly with 'care, respect and responsibility' (Fromm, 1949) and is a human characteristic that is consequently a matter of sentiment or taste and, therefore, of an aesthetic nature that, in turn, reflects an incumbent's broader personality.

Empirical work

Research related to attitude, orientation, and personality in the context of marketing managers is sparse (Woodall & Swailes, 2009). Although there is a substantial and ongoing body of work (e.g. Chang, 2006; Corr & Gray, 2011; Farell & Oczowski, 2009; Franke & Park, 2005; Harris & Fleming, 2005; Sawyerr, Srinvas & Wang, 2009; Verbeke & Bagozzi, 2002) relating to customer facing, or 'part-time' (Gummesson, 1991) marketers – service workers, sales personnel and call centre agents, for example - those who market strategically, or 'full-time', appear largely immune to researcher interest. Some commentators (e.g. Ardley, 2005; Brady & Palmer, 2004; Clark, 2000; Coviello, *et al*, 2002; Morgan, McDonagh & Ryan-Morgan, 1995; Forlani, Mullins & Walker, 2002; Wierenga, 2011) have explored marketing manager habits or working preferences, and marketer ethics have been examined extensively by Chonko and colleagues (see Chonko & Hunt, 2000, for a review); but research concerning the 'psychology' of marketing

managers is rare - Carter, 1985; Elliot & Margerison, 1977; Hunt & Chonko, 1984; McIntyre, Capen & Minton, 1995; Nordvik, 1996; and Weber, 2001 typifying the scant and infrequent nature of the relevant body of knowledge.

More recently, though, Woodall & Swailes (2009) used data secured from 109 young marketers (88% aged 35 and under), mostly engaged in certificate-level UK Chartered Institute of Marketing courses - and thus largely on the lower rungs of management - to assess the dispersion of offensive and defensive marketing orientation within a defined practitioner population. Results, based upon a formative three factor structure of hybrid form (Baumann, Elliott & Hamin, 2010), with two sub-measures formative and one reflective (see Jarvis, MacKenzie & Podsakoff, 2003), suggested a propensity for defence (average score of 3.58 on a scale of 1 to 5 ranging fully offensive to fully defensive), a not unsurprising outcome given the likely ideologically conditioned and 'unsullied' nature of the respondents concerned.

The author initially intended using this measure as part of a study to investigate whether marketing practitioners with a defensive (or offensive) marketing orientation were less/more likely to preference an organic or an instrumental approach to word-of-mouth marketing and, also, to investigate the extent to which pertinent practitioners might countenance an instrumental approach that featured non-disclosure as a purposeful strategic attribute. When re-visiting the original data, however, it was noted that case scores on one scale/index did not necessarily align with case scores on another scale/index.

Clearly, work focused on more established practitioners would provide for a more insightful analysis of how 'marketer behaviour' (Woodall, 2012) might be represented and characterised within in the wider business community and, consequently, how this might relate to observations of marketer *mis*behaviour reported further above. In order to develop research further in this direction, though, the present author believes that a more convincing approach

might be needed, one that provides both better structural authority (hybrid measures are not frequently encountered) and also delivers the potential for more diagnostic complexity – via a measure comprising more than the three factors associated with DMO, and thus allowing for the development/analysis of trait *patterns* or *structures,* rather than just score aggregates, so as to give a better approximation of 'personality' (McKenna, Shelton & Darling, 2002).

This present paper, therefore, takes the same data set as was used for Woodall & Swailes (2009) but reports on an alternative analysis; this time using a four factor framework more likely to provide for a deeper understanding of the marketer mindset. Given the relatively small sample size, and the exploratory nature of the work concerned, though, objectives were for determining a more fruitful and interesting direction for further research rather than for finalising an appropriate measure. The remainder of this paper, therefore, represents the development of an agenda, or point of departure, for future work that appears to have more potential than that reported in Woodall & Swailes (2009).

Method

Exploratory principle factor components analysis was employed as a means of 'making sense' of a set of 49 questionnaire items covering a broad range of ideas associated with the dual notions of offense and defence in marketing, and was focused specifically on the identification of the four 'best' available factors, for reasons outlined a little further below. Sound psychometric structure (e.g. high levels of Alpha reliability; 'simple' structure, etc. – DeVellis, 2003) though, is more likely to occur where a clear *a priori* factor framework is in place (Costello & Osborne, 2005) and, perhaps unsurprisingly therefore, outcomes suggested – rather than substantiated - a suitable configuration (whilst factor loadings were a satisfactory 0.47 to 0.72 - with less than half the primary loading on another factor, Cronbach's Alphas were just 0.42, 0.55, 0.59 and 0.61).

11

The principle objective for selecting the 'best' four factors (see Appendix 1 for the final 13 item construct) was, in fact, to pursue a means of aligning the Marketer Personality scale with specific aspects of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator model (MBTI; Myers & McCauley, 1985). Whilst the objective of MBTI, though, is to operationalise Jung's 1921 four-factor theory of generic personality types (Furnham, Moutafi & Crump, 2003) objectives here were more modest, with *marketing* personality the object of interest.

Ones & Viswesvaran (2001) suggest there are two ways of evaluating personality in workplace contexts. The first they suggest is through an understanding of normal adult (NA) personality – usually assessed via 'big five' based personality tests (e.g. Cattell 16PF, Costa and McCrae NEO-PI) and, of course, MBTI. The second they call 'personality at work', which shares some characteristics with NA personality, but is different in that it specifically influences/predicts likely work behaviours within very specific job situations via the evaluation of lower-, rather than higher-, order traits. Psychologists generally agree (e.g. Paunonen & Nicol, 2001; Sullivan & Hansen, 2004) that more nuanced and complex interpretations of job suitability can be achieved by looking at these lower-order personality factors.

Personality at work, according to Ones & Viswesvaran (2001), can be further categorised as either, 1) 'job-focused occupational personality (JOP)' or 2) 'criterion-focused occupational personality (COP)'. The first of these apply to 'job families' (e.g. managers, sales personnel and clerical workers) and relate to job performance, or potential. The second are said to apply to job criteria (e.g. stress tolerance, integrity and customer service orientation), and relate to 'major criteria of interest'. Thus, JOP might determine whether an individual is suited to a particular *form* of working, whilst COP governs behavioural and attitudinal characteristics that relate to a particular *way* of working. Clearly, COP and JOP will interact (e.g. consider the service orientation of a service worker, or the integrity of an accountant) and if/when aligned to specific

practical and ideological criteria will act to define the 'perfect' employee. The measure used

here, which coincidentally combines both COP and JOP characteristics, is intended to evaluate

the "*pattern of relatively enduring ways in which a person thinks, feels and behaves."* (George &

Jones, in McKenna et al 2002, p. 315) but, in this case, in the context of one particular profession,

marketing. It aims to assess embedded personal attributes, though it is acknowledged that as

lower-order traits these might be modified and/or disturbed by contingent or transient phenomena

(see comments earlier concerning CIM students) and that OP is never as entrenched as NAP.

MBTI uses the principle of factor dichotomy to suggest opposing poles for each of four

personality traits (see Table 1). A particular 'type' (there are sixteen possible combinations) is

defined by a set of four letters (one from each of the pairings) - for example, ENTP. Each of the

sixteen 'types' are also represented within a two-by-two matrix identifying four higher order

categories – introvert/sensing; introvert/intuitive; extravert/sensing; or extravert/intuitive – and

these are used to further define an individual's personality (Quenk & Kummerow, 2009). The

Marketing Personality Type Indicator (MPTI) retains MBTI's four factor structure and adopts the

same principle of factor dichotomy to establish binary trait descriptors, but further defines

subjects as either Offensive, Defensive or Intermediate (see also Table 1). The key structural

difference between the two measures, of course, is that MBTI works on the basis of a large

number (88, in the UK/European version) of ipsative questions, whereas MPTI focuses on fewer

items (14), but is organised around a 1-5 Likert scale. Comparison/alignment, therefore, is at

surface level only.

The morphology of the words used to define the dichotomies is such that (as with MBTI)

not all initial letters can be used for representing opposing terms without some resulting

duplication. Where necessary, therefore, second or third letters have also been co-opted, and in

the case of 'Organisation' the letter 'G' has been used (both 'O' and 'R' being the initial letters of

other terms used in the model).   This has resulted in the accidental, but not altogether

unfortunate, application/selection of 'OGRE' to represent a personality type that is fully

offensively oriented. Arising from early French literature (Merriam-Webster, 2012) the notion of

'ogre' resonates with ideas concerning mischief, malevolence and 'monsterish' behaviour - all of

which might easily also be associated with those who market in an aesthetically offensive way.

Table 1. Comparison of MBTI and MPTI

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)	Marketing Personality Type Indicator (MPTI)
Dichotomies Extraversion (**E**)/Introversion (**I**) Sensing (**S**)/Intuition (**N**) Thinking (**T**)/Feeling (**F**) Judging (**J**)/Perceiving (**P**)	**Dichotomies** Opportunism (**O**)/Probity (**P**) Organisation centricity (**G**)/Customer-centricity (**C**) Retention (**R**)/Transference(**T**) Expedience (**E**)/Solicitude (**S**) *Note: Using the first letter of each word for dichotomy identification purposes resulted in duplication of the letter 'O', so another 'significant' letter has been used in one instance ('G' for Organisation) This has resulted in the accidental, but perhaps apposite, acronym 'OGRE' for an entirely offensive personality)*
Further definition Introvert/sensing; Extrovert/sensing Introvert/intuitive; Extrovert/intuitive	**Further definition** Defensive Intermediate Offensive

The dichotomies themselves are derived from the four factors which, redefined as traits of

marketing personality, have been named Marketing Principles, Fundamental Focus, Ego-/exo

centrality and Marketing Pragmatism. Table 2., below, associates trait labels with dichotomies,

and also provides a *rationale* for each trait demonstrating how and why the dichotomy terms

have been selected. MBTI has been used at least once before as a point of departure for

evaluating marketer behaviour (see McIntyre et al 1995), but not – as far as the author is aware –

as a template for determining marketer personality. In their study McIntyre et al (1995) selected

two of MBTIs' dimensions (sensing-feeling and thinking-feeling) to represent 'cognitive style',

and used this as part of a model deployed for assessing relationships between the way that

marketers make ethical decisions and their perceptions of moral judgement, represented either as

idealism or relativism. Their study provided some empirical support for a chain of events that

flows from cognitive style to the development of ethical ideologies to the evolution of specific

stances on ethical issues but didn't seek to typify responding marketers.

Table 2. Labels and rationale for Marketing Personality elements

Trait Label	Names for sub-scale 'Dichotomies'	Personality trait rationale
Marketing principles	Opportunism - Probity	Measures the extent to which the marketer is committed to doing what might be perceived as being socially acceptable/proper.
Fundamental focus	Organisation centricity – Customer centricity	Measures the extent to which the marketer is focused externally on the customer, as opposed to internally on the organisation.
Ego-/exo-centrality	Retention - Transference	Measures the extent to which a marketer is happy to cede, or transfer, authority/responsibility for marketing beyond the Marketing Department.
Marketing pragmatism/idealism	Expediency - Solicitude	Measures the extent to which a marketer favours immediately realised short-term marketing advantage over potential long-term marketing benefit. (reverse scored)

Results

Table 3 (further below) displays the results of hierarchical cluster analysis (performed on

data obtained from the 109 respondent sample) which was used to surface the nature and

dispersion of differing marketing 'types' within the sample. Given, as identified earlier, that

there is a definite 'defensive' tendency within the sample it is perhaps not surprising that the most

frequently occurring type is 'PCTS', representing a respondent profile with the following

dominant trait facets: Probity, Customer-centricity, Transference and Solicitude - an essentially

aesthetically defensive profile, indicating a predisposition towards a defensively operational

approach. Only 23 of the 109 respondents are entirely 'defensive', however, and all others – 79% of the sample – demonstrate at least some mark of an 'offensive' character.

Table 3. Results of hierarchical cluster analysis (Note: offensive characteristics are highlighted 'bold/underlined' so as to differentiate between these and 'defensive' characteristics)

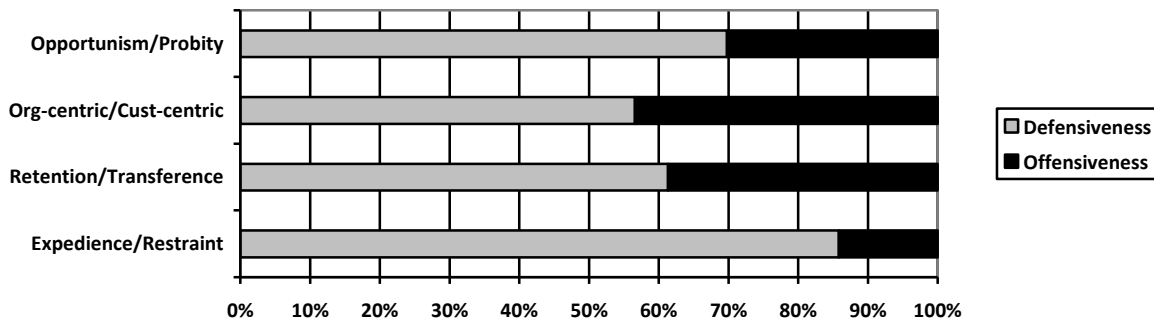| Marketing Personality trait								Incidence	Personality Type
Opportunism/ Probity		Org. centricity/ Cust. centricity		Retention/ Transference		Expediency/ Restraint			
O	P	**G**	C	**R**	T	**E**	S		
	x		x		x		X	PCTS (23)	Defensive
	x	x			x		X	P**G**TS (16)	Defensive
	x		x	X			X	PC**R**S (14)	Defensive
	x	x		X			X	P**GR**S (9)	Intermediate
x		x		X			X	**OGR**S (8)	Offensive
	x		x		x	x		PCT**E** (7)	Defensive
x			x		x		X	**O**CTS (7)	Defensive
x		x			x		X	**OG**TS (7)	Intermediate
x			x	X			X	**O**C**R**S (7)	Intermediate
	x	x			x	x		P**G**T**E**(3)	Intermediate
x		x		X		x		**OGRE** (3)	Offensive
x		x			x	x		**OG**T**E**(2)	Offensive
	x	x		X		x		P**GRE** (1)	Offensive
	x		x	X		x		PC**RE**(1)	Intermediate
x			x	X		x		**O**C**RE** (1)	Offensive
7	8	8	7	8	7	7	8	15 'types'	

The dendrogram at Appendix 2 illustrates that 15 (of a potential 70) combinations are present within the sample. In addition to PCTS two further 'types' are strongly represented – both 'P**G**TS' and 'PC**R**S' occur to a substantial extent (16 and 14 respectively) - whilst a further six 'types' occur to a similar and relatively frequent degree (frequencies between 7 and 9). Three respondents only have an entirely offensive (**OGRE**) profile, but it might, perhaps, be appropriate to say that a profile containing three or more bold/underlined letters represents an 'offensive' type (15 total, 14% of the sample); that a profile containing three or more normal

letters represents a 'defensive' type (67 total, 61%); and that a profile containing an even number of the differently identified letters, denotes an Intermediate type (27 total, 25%).

Figure 2. Traits compared

For the population concerned, Figure 2 (above) shows that 'offensiveness' was primarily characterised by organisation-centricity and retention, and least by expedience; implying a relatively strong sense of fidelity towards the organisation and conventional organisational structure, plus a generally long-term business outlook. At this early stage in their careers these marketers – as a group - appear not to be entirely anti-relational, though this may in itself be a spurious or short-term effect, and may possibly be a function of career-stage contingency.

Discussion

The measure clearly offers the potential for comparatively profiling populations of marketers in a range of constituencies (say, service sector vs manufacturing sector; banking vs 'the rest'; successful vs less successful companies; established marketers vs newer marketers) and over time. From a group perspective understanding the characteristics that define marketers in a particular country, culture or industry/sector can provide further and fascinating insight into

factors that help shape not only consumer behaviour and organisational success but, also, general social well-being. Knowing the strengths, weaknesses and proclivities of marketers too may also help provide awareness regarding the effectiveness and impact of marketer recruitment and training/educational strategies, both generically and for specific institutions and firms – and for this latter, of course, both group *and* individual understanding will be of benefit. Appendix 1 profiles Case 1 from the sample, and gives trait descriptions organised against each of the Offensive, Defensive and Intermediate categories. It offers an overall 'personality narrative' for the individual concerned and takes account of both typology and *extent* to which a particular marketer adhers to a particular trait(s). For the individual concerned this profile suggests scrupulous honesty, strong support for the part-time marketer (and, therefore, no silo mentality and a relatively neutral view regarding both organisation interest vs customer interest and customer retention vs customer acquisition. Perhaps a 'solid' or 'steady' employee, with a cautious, but defensive-leaning personality - one that might appeal to a good range of employers.

There will, of course, though, be environments within which an offensive-leaning character might not be considered such a bad thing. It has been broadly mooted within this paper that extreme (ogre-ish) marketer misbehaviour, characterised in a 'Web 2.0 world' via non-disclosure and inappropriate intervention in social media/conversational partnering, would be detrimental both to society and, in the longer run, to the credibility of marketing itself (for a further development of this argument see Woodall, 2012). There will, though, be those for whom this alternative position has greater resonance and it has been suggested, for example, that within a highly sophisticated, postmodern, marketplace an aggressive, or at least artful, way of marketing might be considered appropriate. Brown (2007), Carson, Gilmore & MacClaren (1998), Smith and Higgins (2000) and Godin (2005) have all made convincing cases for demurring marketing rectitude and, instead, adopting what might be termed an 'authentic'

(Godin, 2005) approach to marketing. Such strategy perceives the marketer and consumer as equals, locked in an increasingly complex and heterodoxical – but mutually rewarding - battle for superiority. Thus, the argument runs, rather than carrying guilt for past decades of apparently damaging consumerism, the marketer should be encouraged to recognise a "*celebratory and liberatory view of consumption*" (Venkatesh, 1999, p. 167) that frees him or her to conduct business in whichever way they wish. Arguments concerning the benefits of ethical behaviour generally (see Carroll & Buccholtz, 2012) – one element of the 'marketer personality' battery – are, of course, subject to debate, and the preferencing of specific marketer behaviours is likely to be contingent upon stakeholder objectives. Thus, it might be argued, that 'offense' – even its most pejorative form – could be considered either as 'good', or as 'bad', dependent upon ones view on the purpose of the market.

One further complication, of course, is that pejorative interpretations of 'offense', themselves, might in some quarters be considered misguided; also that 'defense' could, in itself, be thought of as a negative characteristic. Fromm (1949; see earlier sections of this paper) argues that any personal characteristic can have either a productive or a non-productive aspect. The words 'offensive' (active, dynamic *or* abusive, aggressive) and 'defensive' (fortifying, careful *or* self-protective, diffident) can be interpreted differently, and Table 4 (below) offers insight into potential paradoxes that might be observed in relation to the suggested MPTI model and its lexicon. It may, therefore, be possible that 'offense' can be practised either productively or non-productively and, likewise, 'defence', and it might be possible to generate an accompanying scale that measures Frommian productivity, thus giving some insight into the underlying motives of the marketer(s) concerned. There are, therefore, issues to consider before assuming that a defensive profile might be 'best'; firstly whether or not extreme 'offense'- interpreted in its most pejorative sense - should be considered always in a negative light and, second, whether

'offensive' activity might be regarded more favourably (or defensive activity less favourably) dependent upon the interpretation applied to the terms concerned.

Table 4. Dichotomy paradoxes

Factor name	MPTI Dichotomy	Paradox	
		Negative/pejorative view	Positive view
Marketing principles	Opportunism	Unscrupulous, speculative	Resourceful, insightful
	Probity	Self-righteous, narrow	Veracious, scrupulous
Company/customer focus	Organisation-centric	Blind to the customer	Properly focused
	Customer-centric	Reckless, profligate	Properly focused
Ego-/exo-centrality	Retention	Obstinate, lacking trust	Accepts responsibility
	Transference	Abdication of responsibility	Willing to cede responsibility
Marketing pragmatism/idealism	Expedience	Negligent, incautious	Timely, decisive
	Solicitude	Staid, passive, sluggish	Judicious, careful, sensible

Given current circumstances, though (recession, growth of anti-consumerism, greater focus on corporate social responsibility) postmodern, materialistic and mercantile perspectives may currently need to take a back seat, and those articulated at the beginning of this paper given priority, but the business world is a complex and capricious entity with constantly shifting agendas, and competing debates regarding the relative merits of deontological vs consequentialist vs relativist positions will continue apace (Caroll & Buchholtz, 2012).

Conclusions, limitations and directions for further research

MBTI and its foundational philosophy, of course, have a wider, more substantive and substantiated, rationale than MPTI. As a representation of Jung's theory of individual personality MBTI clearly attempts to profile the whole 'natural adult' (Ones & Viswesvaran, 2001)

personality and, as such, provides a comprehensive and detailed view of the individual's preferred modes of behaviour. By contrast, MPTI addresses just limited, and highly selective, aspects of an individual's persona, and attempts to illustrate how these might be expressed in a marketing context via the use of a personality-style taxonomy. Essentially, 'marketing personality' represents a marketer's *'acquired system of motivation'* (Allport, in Monte, 1995, p. 638) and is designed to reveal the combination of trait-level attitudes that underpin the marketer's underlying perspective on the nature and role of marketing in contemporary society. Limitations apply, of course, and are discussed below.

Results included in the empirical sections of this paper must be interpreted in the context of implied reliability and validity; the first of which is not as strong as is traditionally expected of a measure of this type (i.e. Cronbach's Alphas of 0.42 to 0.61 rather than recommended 0.7 minimum; Peterson, 1994) whilst the second has thus far only been considered in respect of content. This paper does not, however, offer 'the finished article' - its key contribution is to explore and articulate possibilities and/or potential regarding the further development of a trait-based measure that focuses upon the contrasting notions of 'offense' and 'defense' in marketing (see Woodall, 2004, and Woodall & Swailes, 2009); and from this perspective results are promising. Analysis identified an encouragingly parsimonious number of frequently occurring marketing 'types' (from within a sample of 109 marketing practitioners), and also demonstrated how a marketer population might readily be segmented to show proportions of offensive, defensive and intermediate adherents, and to predict a) which specific 'types' were most likely to be found, and b) the relative strength/weakness of measured traits within a population. Appendix 3 also shows how it might be possible to use the measure to derive both a quantitative and qualitative personal marketer profile, meaning the measure has application potential for recruitment as well as for marketer behaviour research. Although used so far just to evaluate the

21

dispersion of marketing personality types within a constituency of relatively limited interest, the potential for comparative analysis is huge, and could aid in the understanding/evolution of both mercantile and sociological contexts.

From a conceptual perspective the measure captures a range of complementary and contemporary concerns. Most measures of marketer attitude and behaviour (assuming these extend to those in strategic positions and, usually, this is not the case) they focus primarily on one issue – ethics, perhaps (e.g. Hunt & Vitell, 2006; Schlegelmilch & Öberseder, 2010; Williams & Aitken, 2011) or customer orientation (e.g. Rapp, Trainor & Agnihotra, 2010; Coelho, *et al*, 2010; Homburg, Müller & Klarman, 2011) but there is no other extant measure that also takes account of issues such as expediency and scope, and which thus render this measure as one that addresses personality rather than orientation or attitude; but it could – of course – be improved. The measure was developed inductively using PCA via a largely 'Churchillian' (1979) process, but much has been written and debated over recent years regarding the best ways of operationalising constructs for the social sciences (e.g. Gilliam & Voss, 2012; Rossiter, 2011; Salzberger & Koller, 2012; Mowen & Voss, 2008) and a different means of development, though focusing on the same basic issues, might help secure a more robust and psychometrically sound structure.

Finally, a further concern is that of the potential for response bias, particularly that related to social desirability. This is relevant for all self-report personality measures, not least for those addressing issues where norms are readily assimilated and where either social desirability bias (SDB) *per se*, or 'faking' are likely to be prevalent. Bowen, Martin & Hunt (2002) distinguish between these closely related manifestations of partiality by suggesting that social desirability relates to the likelihood of respondents providing 'overly positive self-descriptions', whilst faking is more associated with a perhaps inevitable tendency for occupational aspirants to claim

empathy with the perceived values of potential employers. These are likely to apply

differentially, of course, when the measure is used either for recruitment (where faking could be

the key concern) or for market research (where social desirability could is likely to be a factor).

It is suggested (e.g. Baron, 2011) that ipsative scales such as those employed for MPTI help

overcome the impacts of bias, but that the nature of their construction obviates application in

comparative contexts. They are therefore best used for purposes of individual self-improvement,

and this is not – at this stage - the primary objective of MPTI.

King & Bruner (2000), speaking specifically in the context of consumer research, note

two competing views in respect of bias of this kind; one that this is an undesirable contaminant

that must be 'partialled out'; the other that this is *"a variable of theoretical interest in its own*

right" (King & Bruner, 2000, p. 98). In the survey used for this present paper confidentiality was

used as a means of helping minimise bias and – except for a handful of exceptions who returned

responses via email – absolute anonymity was achieved; but bias cannot be ruled out, and future

research is likely to adopt the view that whilst bias should be limited it is still an issue of interest.

The likelihood of faking/SDB is said to be a function of the degree of discrepancy believed to

exist between what the respondent believes and what he/she believes they should believe (e.g.

Chung & Munroe, 2003) and, of course, different people will assess this differently. For some

the existence of a large gap might either reinforce a firmly held belief in the inappropriateness of

society norms or, alternatively, might cause the respondent to 'correct' their responses so as to

fall in line with perceived societal expectations, and this – of course – is largely dependent on the

values held by relevant individuals (Fisher & Katz, 2000) and for marketer research some

measure of this would be of interest. There are various alternatives now available for evaluating

SDB (see Blake, *et al*, 2006) and both this and a supplementary scale addressing Frommian

productivity (to be developed) would add substantially to an understanding of those motivational factors underpinning orientations towards either offensive or defensive behaviour.

Finally, an interesting alternative is suggested via work undertaken by, for example, Boddy, Ladyshewsky & Galvin (2010), and Mahaffey & Marcus, (2006), specifically in the context of narcissism and corporate psychopathy (constructs which, perhaps, could reasonably be associated with 'offensiveness' in marketing). Here an interpersonal, or 'in the eye of the beholder', approach is adopted whereby scores are obtained not from research subjects but from research observers. With questions focused on experience of others rather than on personal introspection, observer/respondents have been found to offer relatively unbiased perspectives on how things are done within prescribed contexts. Using suitably and differently worded items, this may, therefore, help overcome one of the primary dangers to response validity, especially for instances where research might be focused on the presence of 'ogres' in the broader marketer population. For recruitment/individual evaluation purposes Ones, Viswesvaran & Reiss (1996) have suggested that SDB is not a 'pervasive' issue anyhow and, under any circumstances, it would never be appropriate to rely entirely on test results, as these can be triangulated/verified through interview. Further, job candidates are not likely to know what a 'correct' response might be, as an organisation will have its own perspectives that may, or may not, be reflective of society norms, and it might not be sensible for an applicant to speculate on these.

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Appendix 1: Scale items

Marketing Principles (Cronbach's Alpha 0.594)
- Marketing practice must be ethically and morally beyond question.
- Marketers/Marketing should always tell customers the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.
- Even if it assists in selling a product/service, Marketing should never stretch the truth in describing that product/service to a customer.

Fundamental focus (Cronbach's Alpha 0.420)
- ✓ Before a new product is proposed marketing should always ensure that there is no possibility of adverse reaction from any section of society.
- ✓ The customer is always right
- ✓ The customer's interests should always come first, ahead of management's.

Exo-/ego-centrality (Cronbach's Alpha 0.614)
- ✓ The values of a company/brand are represented primarily through the actions of its front-line employees.
- ✓ Front-line employees know more about what the customer wants than do members of the Marketing Department.
- ✓ The training of front-line employees should be an item on the Marketing Department's budget.

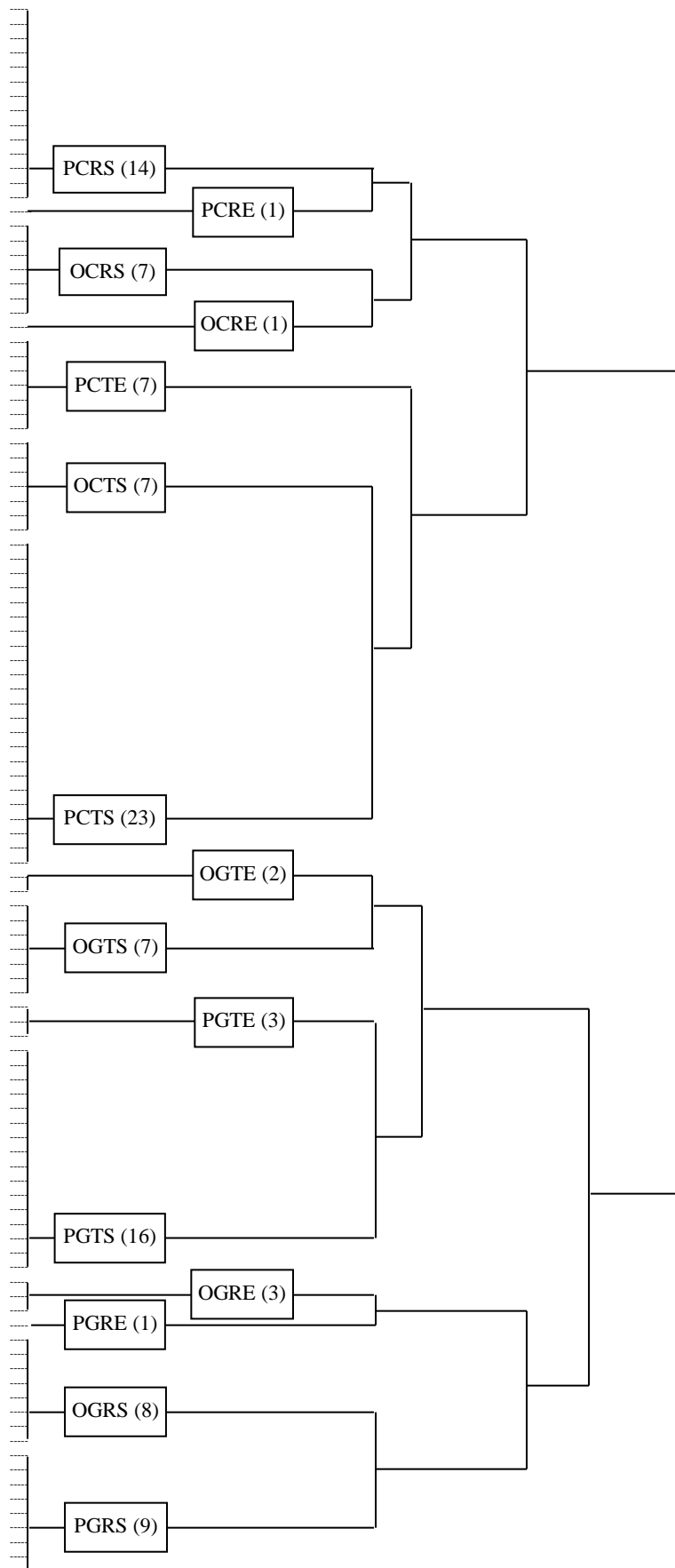**Marketing pragmatism/idealism*** (Cronbach's Alpha 0.545)
- ✓ When it comes to winning customers the end always justifies the means
- ✓ Quality of goods and services is fine provided it doesn't get in the way of a good idea
- ✓ Corporate social responsibility is fine if it can be shown to improve the bottom-line but a waste of time if it can't.
- ✓ Reputation helps, but advertising is the key to increased sales.

*Measured as marketing pragmatism, but reverse scored to indicate marketing idealism.

THEORISING MARKETING PERSONALITY

Appendix 2: Dendrogram

Appendix 3: Individual personality profile for Case 1

Trait/Scale	Offensive		Defensive
Marketing principles (4.67)	It isn't necessary to tell customers the whole truth – what matters is that they buy our product.	Stretching the truth may be occasionally OK, but normally we should try to be honest.	Marketers should always be entirely honest in their communications with the customer.
	OPPORTUNISM (O)		**PROBITY (P)**
Fundamental focus (2.67)	Protecting the company's immediate financial interests should always take priority over satisfying the customer.	Customer satisfaction is often in the best interests of the organisation and should normally be pursued.	The customers' needs and wants should always take primacy over the immediate needs of other stakeholders.
	ORGAN'N-CENTRICITY (G)		**CUSTOMER-CENTRICITY (C)**
Ego-/exo-centrality (4.00)	Part-time marketers have only incidental impact on the organisation's marketing capability.	Part-time marketers can be a useful marketing resource.	Part-time marketers, and the impact they have, are key to organizational success
	RETENTION (R)		**TRANSFERENCE (T)**
Marketing idealism (3.50)	Winning new customers and maximising revenue are Marketing's primary concerns, and should be pursued at all costs.	Marketing strategies should normally be subject to a full risk-benefit analysis and not pursued if quality or reputation are likely to be compromised.	Assuring high performing goods and services and enhancing corporate reputation are key marketing concerns.
	EXPEDIENCY (E)		**SOLICITUDE (S)**

MARKETING PERSONALITY TYPE DESCRIPTION	
General Type	Broadly defensive (P**G**TS)
Essential Traits	Behaves with probity Focus is largely, but not entirely, organization-centric Accepts marketing happens beyond the marketing department Medium- to long-term business focus
Personality narrative	*Scrupulously honest, and keen to ensure marketing communications are perceived as fair. Is not prepared to take risks with the company's reputation, nor with company finances, unless the consequences have been fully assessed and costed before-hand. Is aware of the importance of satisfying customers but not likely to advance the customer's cause over that of the organization. Not, however, afraid of involving other departments/staff in marketing decisions/activities. Generally a rather conservative marketer but a good 'company person' – unlikely to offend the customer, but also not likely to look to delight him/her, either. Similarly unlikely, therefore, to practice non-disclosure, and to facilitate (though not pursue) organic word-of-mouth.*