

Existentialism Conceptual Framework of Consumer Behavior in Music Product: Why Consumers Buy?

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Abstract

This paper applies qualitative and philological tools to look into the formation process of Music consumer behaviors. At both micro and macro levels, key consumer behaviorism theories are explored. Moreover, marketing stimuli theories, environmental stimuli theories, and self-identity theories are discussed to identify the key determinants of consumer behaviors in the music industry. The paper concludes with a conceptual model that indicates consumer behaviors in the music industry in a collaborative repercussion of these key factors (marketing stimuli, environmental stimuli, self-identity, etc.), which are culture-based and value-oriented. The existentialism conceptual model, through the contribution of such more empirical theories as consumer behavior theory, marketing stimuli theory, environmental stimuli theory, and self-identity theory, helps us understand why consumers buy a music product. As those complex structures of interconnected factors with multiple levels of correlation that call for further empirical research help them self-actualize the human beings, they understand them as consumer behavior in music products is a process of pursuit of its inner essence. Moreover, structural functionalism sheds light on the research objective: such actions and values are all culture-based.

Keywords: Existentialism; Music; Consumer behavior

1. Introduction

As a science of reasoning, conceptualization and drawing insights, philosophy provides us with a useful tool to look into the objective or phenomenon (consumer and consumer behavior, respectively, in this research) and explore as well questions on what we observe at the most fundamental level in conceptualization of our theoretical insights and explanation (Parsons et al., 1976). Scientific research, as a will-be process of reasoning and conceptualization, should be subjected to this very basic positioning. In other words, the way a researcher takes into the study philosophically will determine the basic orientation, standpoint or cornerstone of his research, in terms of the selection of tools, methodology, logic, etc, that he will incorporate into serving his research objective. In this current research, the subjects are people as consumers and their incarnations are specified and postulated or limited as self-identity. Their certain consumer behaviors are in correspondence towards outer environmental situation or stimuli, which is, in this research, the “marketed” music product and their social milieu. In other words, we cannot avoid or skip this very basic position that

the researcher will hold throughout the whole process of research, that is, “what is the relationship between human being and his social environment,” or more specifically, the human existence and the conditions of this existence. This should be the starting point of the current research, and the researcher will discuss in detail hereafter.

2. Existentialism Theory as the Research Tool

Historically speaking, throughout the thousands of years of philosophical research, great scholars have been posting their own view-points whether this is in oriental or western “styles” or “schools”. In this research, the researcher will adopt the “existentialism” as the basic observation tool to delve into this question. Existentialist thinkers focus on the question of concrete human existence and conditions, especially in stressing that the human essence is determined through life choices. However, even though the concrete individual existence must have priority in existentialism, certain conditions are commonly held to be endemic to human existence.

In this regard, the above-mentioned core statement or doctrine of existentialism provides the researcher two basic insights which will dictate his mentality or orientation. They are as follows:

- What is the justification of consumer’s decision in making or “choice process” in the flabbergasted richness of product provision, especially in the music industry?
- What are these “certain conditions” in defining his consumer behavior, which is part of the influential forces that dominate his humanistic existence?

To understand these inquiries better, we need to look into the meaning of the word “existence”. The word “existence” came from the Latin “existere”, meaning “to stand out”. The basic doctrine of existentialism is that the person exists in a state of distance from the world that s/he nonetheless remains in the midst of. The distance is what enables the person to project meaning into the disinterested world of inner self. In other words, the distance between the human being and the world makes it necessary and inevitable for him/her to act in accordance with the meaning that s/he projected into himself/herself. All the actions are a definite incarnation of his/her meaningfulness. The choice of a consumer makes among the inundating provision is a reflection of his/her “inner-self”.

According to most existentialist philosophers, however, there would be an inauthentic existence. What is meant by the statement is that a person is (1) defined only in so far as s/he acts and (2) that s/he is responsible for his or her action (Parsons, 1961). Furthermore, by action such persons are themselves responsible for their new identity. Upon such postulation, the flow chart of an existentialist understanding of human action, justification and formulation process can be condensed as follows in Figure 1.

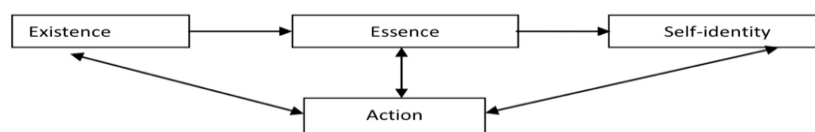


Figure 1: Existentialism causation framework of certain action

In the music market, the consumer firstly realizes his/her essence as uniquely “himself or herself”, and s/he defines his/her self-identity. This personal and unique self-identity will further dictate his/her action, which in this specific milieu, is the choice of his/her music products among the plenitude of display on sale.

Though at this point, we understand that the inner-mechanism of the certain consumer behavior, as above discussed, is a repercussion of his/her self-identity, which is further a humanistic pursuing of his/her “essence” and “meaningfulness of existence”. To sum up, action is a proactive reflection of existence, essence and self-identity. However, if we only stop here and just use these formulas to explore the consumer behavior, we will be in a chaos in posing this question to ourselves when dealing with group action. If we just simplistically attribute the consumer behavior as a self-referred one, how can we explain the phenomenon which is clannish by nature? That is, if everyone has his/her own identity, how can we explain the unanimity among behavior, like a “trend” or “fashion” in a certain historical period among certain groups of people? These phenomena will be further exaggerated and multiplied on a global scale.

In terms of music market, people espouse a certain product or idol while rejecting another, or are the loyal buyers of one company’s product while avoiding another. Many testimonies on the magazine reviews are worthy of further exploring the causation. Though existentialism espouses the freedom of human action, they attribute or delineate the freedom to certain causation (Parsons et al., 1976). The concepts they raise in this context or issue are, but not limit to value, tactility, authenticity, in- authenticity, despair, etc.

These are the insights that can be attributed further to the explanation of certain individual or group behavior of humans. Among them, the concept of value is of special notice to the current research. Existentialist freedom is not situated in some kind of abstract space where everything is possible. Rather, it is implied that this freedom is only in this world, and restricted by it. To be more specific, one is not only responsible for one’s action, but also for the values of one holds. In Kierkegaard’s Judge Wilhelm’s account of “either/or”, making choices without allowing one’s value to confer differing values to the alternatives is in fact “choosing not to make a choice”. His statement highlighted the gist that “value” plays, an indispensable and ineluctable function in the action of a human’s choice.

In the music product market, consumer behavior is the reflection of his/her value, which in turn, is also one of the incarnations of the reflection of his inner-self or self-identity. This fulfills his/her personal endeavor of pursuing his/her essence and realizing the meaning of his/her existence. This parameter of value should be further incorporated into Figure 1, thus extends the chain into Figure 2 as follows:

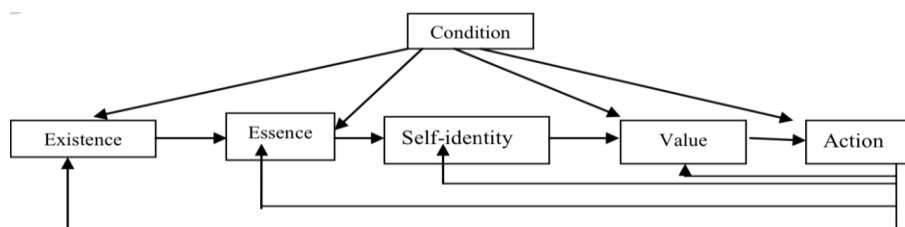


Figure 2: Existentialism causation of certain action in music market

3. Research Paradigm: Value Creation Framework

To integrate and further the contribution from both theories, the researcher hereby would like to propose a value creation framework. This will further reinforce the black box model. Let us go back to the black box model. At the “micro-scope” level, the buyer characteristics will be further gauged in terms of such variables as attitudes, motivation, perceptions, personality, life-style, knowledge, which all can be correlated and attributed to the concept of value (Parsons,1961). In other words, these dimensions give the theoretical insights into the way that we can further explain why and how the consumer, as a concrete human within a concrete environmental condition, makes action or executes certain consumer behavior. This behavior is to realize his/her essence by aligning his/her inner characteristics (his/her definition of self-identity), at the microscopic level, with the environmental factors (marketing stimuli and environmental stimuli). All these are anchored on the value of the person as human being in existence, which contributes to his/her value creation. This procedure of creation is graphed hypothetically further in Figure 3.

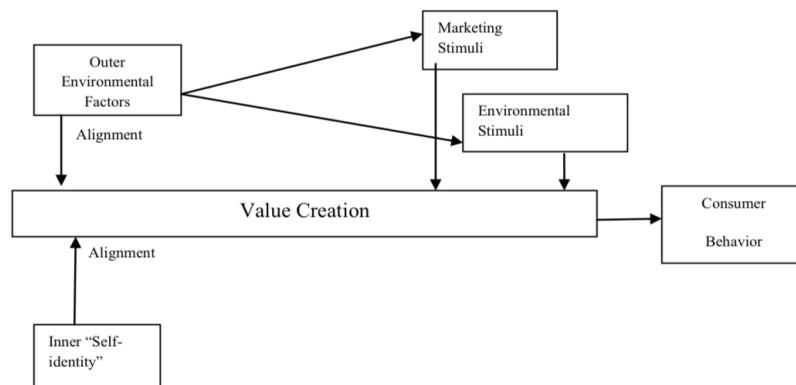


Figure 3: Value creation framework of consumer behavior

The function of this value creation framework is to provide a theoretical premise which can delineate that:

Firstly, the research objective, which is human as consumer in this research, is socialized and acculturated, rather than primitive. The value of the society, including norms and culture, are inculcated, and thus further becomes a shared platform for them to receive, decipher, interpret and communicate with the environmental stimuli. The shared social value in general will provide the theoretical foundation to perceive the same environmental stimulus in a homogeneous manner.

Secondly, the perception of each person towards a particular environment stimulus should be unanimous and homogenous, which further put the theoretical and logical foundation for us to gauge their self-identity characteristics in a fixed, scaled and ordinal way.

For example, when we ask a respondent about his/her personality, the perceptions that listed for his/her choice, like “extrovert” or “introvert”, can be assumed as unanimous among different people, subject to the fact that they base their interpretation on the same social value or norm. This gives the study a more scientific sense and accuracy, as well as logical clarity.

Thirdly, the characteristics of self-identity in this research will be regarded as the independent variables. However, the level on how independent they are is still subject to

further clarification. If different people have different perceptions of the same environmental stimuli, the whole inner self-identity system will become logically confusing, unmanageable, and even interchangeable, because of heterogeneity inside the population in their general concepts. The alignment between individual value and social value makes it actually a “cushion” or mediator, to make the difference among individual characteristics in this research and will not affect their perception towards a same source of stimulus, subject to the same shared social value system.

For example, as to the national anthem, different people may have different aesthetic attitude towards it, subject to their individual characteristics, like knowledge about music, etc. However, this difference will not affect its recognition as an anthem which is subjected to the national legislation or norm, which is part of the value system. And this recognition will be unanimously shared by everyone, after the alignment between the individual value system and social value system. In this case of anthem, the legislation dimension (norm and value) reaches its most authoritative level after the reconciliation of individual and social value system, which indicates the agreement on the function of laws. This is not unlike the case that whether or not you like Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, she is perceived as the president of the Philippines with all the legislated power that should be perceived and shared by everyone. This value alignment will provide the basic assumption that personal characteristics within self-identity will be independent of each other, thus become independent viable logically in future research design. Because, after the alignment, certain social norms have become shared values of everyone, thus making everyone perceive the same environment stimulus the same way from a laboratory sense. In other words, people are mentally and ideologically aligned. their existence following certain social values and norms. From the viewpoint of existentialism, this is a confirmation of the recognition of the conditions of human existence (Parsons et al., 1976).

Under these three premises, the further statistical research among the individual factors of self-identity and consumer behavior will be logically sound and executable. The original black box model is not set on the focus of the processes inside a consumer, but rather the relation between the stimuli and the response of the consumer (Huang and Tang, 2008). In other words, the original intention of this model is to determine the correlation between the consumer/buyer, and certain outer environmental factors (marketing stimuli and environmental stimuli). This “call and response” style remind us of the famous experiment of “salivary dog” that Ivan Pavlov conducted to coin his widely influential concept “conditional reflex”, which is regarded as one of the cornerstones of behaviorism (Gleitman et al., 2004).

This issue again reminds us of the way we treat existing theories. A historical attitude should be adopted when we interpret and apply the existing theories. The clearer that we take the context and background of a theory into consideration, the more accurate we will approach each proponent’s intention. In that case, we cannot avoid facing and thinking over the historical, social, technological and philosophical context and conditions that the theory was born and developed in.

In the case of behaviorism, it presupposes that the man is a mechanistic animal (Gleitman et al., 2004). This kind of mentality further came from the naturalistic ideology that permeated the area of philosophy, art, social science and natural science from later part of the 19th century to the early years of the of 20th century. In the area of philosophy, special terminology was coined as “scientific method” to depict the way we view our objective with presuppositions (Parsons et al., 1976). This “scientific method” is more than often the source of scientific and technological bias in certain scientific theories. Naturalistic psychology was

one of them, which treats of the mental activity causally conditioned by the events of nature in terms of stimulus-recreation relationship (Skinner, 1984). Upon this ideology, behaviorism is one of the most influential schools of theory under this (naturalistic) category (Gleitman et al., 2004).

However, the researcher would rather treat his subjects as proactive towards their environmental stimuli, rather than negatively reactive. The existentialist stance that the researcher espouses in the research, determines a more “phenomenological” than “scientific” approach will be adopted in this research, which can be regarded as a beneficiary “balance-off” in exploring, understanding, and extending this historical but “lopsided” black box model. However, the research does not intend to demean the importance of certain presumptions as this is necessary in scientific research to delimit the scope of the research and guarantee a consistency and rigidity in inner logic.

Basically, the existentialistic viewpoint of this research is determined by adopting a glaring “phenomenological method” in the construction of research intention and conceptual framework. This is further reflected in thus three aspects as follows:

Firstly, it helps to look into the more fundamental formation process, which is basically a matter of relationship between the human being and reality through human behavior, rather than to rely too much in the scientific premise to construct the whole conceptual framework.

The phenomenological approach came from philosopher Edmund Husserl, who was dissatisfied with the science of his time and with an intention to build up a rigorous science (Bulter et al., 1995). Though by nature this “rigorous science” is presupposition less, however, this does not mean that science should be without any presupposition. But rather, a science should contain the least number of primary presuppositions, which are so basic and immediately evident that they do not need to be clarified further or reduced to other presuppositions. In the other words, the more fundamental a research is, the more likely that the research will be phenomenological oriented. In the case of this research, the existentialistic position of the researcher make the research focus on consumer behavior as a fundamental reflection of his/her inner-self or self-identity, in terms of the relationship between the existence of the human being and of reality. This position endows a certain level of phenomenological and fundamental flavor throughout the whole research, which demands much less on the part of scientific presupposition than a “scientific method” will require and depend on.

Secondly, it sheds new lights on focusing deeply on the causation of phenomenon or experience, which is human behavior (consumer behavior) in this research. The basic doctrine of existentialism is a causation of the human act attributed to the reflection of his/her self-identity, which is to fulfill his/her meaning of existence (Parsons, 1951). To be simple and concise, the intentionality (causation) of consciousness (the reflection of his/her self-identity) is among the main focuses of this research. As a main and unique contribution of phenomenology, the notion of intentionality of consciousness points out an important distinction between the scientific attitude and the phenomenological attitude (Bernet, 1993). The scientific attitude views a person as pure consciousness, just a capacity to know things. It is much like the eye peering through the telescope. The telescope focuses; the eye discerns the thing magnified within the scope. Eliminate the scenery captured by the scope and the telescope itself; the eye is still there, ever-ready to see what is there to be seen (Everdell, 1998). The eye (the person or knower) is apart from the scenery and the telescope. In contrast, the phenomenological attitude views a person as immersed in experience. There is an active process, a dynamism that allows one to “see what one sees”. Eliminate experience and one

eliminates even the very possibility for seeing, for knowing, for consciousness. Further, persons are perpetually in contact with experience (whether they are immediately aware of it or not) in a meaningful way (Everdell, 1998).

Thirdly, it helps to form and look from a perspective of totality, thus limiting the skewedness of a scientific research, which is so intrinsic to the scientific method the researchers adopt in conjuring up their presuppositions, to its minimum level, under the current resource availability condition (Fine, 1995). The totality quality that phenomenologists purport coincides with the holistic attitude that existentialists espouse in treating the way they look and reason the matter of inquiring. In the case of this research, the research emphasizes a synergy of outer and inner factors contributing to the action of consumer behavior in music market.

To sum up, this is one of the key points that the researcher would like to reiterate that, the philosophical position or viewpoint that a researcher adopts will greatly determine the direction of his research, in terms of mentality, ideology, focus, methodology and tools.

To further operationalize the influence on consumer behavior from the other outside factors—marketing stimuli factors and environmental stimuli factors—in the next two sections of this paragraph, the researcher will espouse the corresponding theoretical foundation to conceive and lead to his conceptual framework and research paradigm.

4. Analysis and Discussion

4.1 Consumer Behaviorism Theory

Behaviorism, also called the learning perspective (where any physical action is a behavior), is a philosophy of psychology based on the proposition that all things which organisms do, including acting, thinking, and feeling, can and should be regarded as behavior (Skinner, 1984). As for the researcher, one must consider three basic factors in analyzing the music retailing industry based on Katsumata (2008). First, one must consider the complexity of customer preferences as customer never purchased music CDs that do not interest them. Although one can estimate their preferences on the basis of age and gender to some extent, there is significant variability even within the same demographic group. Second, one needs to consider the number of purchases. Third, the number of products needs to be considered. In this research, these factors were taken into consideration.

One of the most prominent theory in this school of thought is black box theory, or “black box theory of consciousness”, which state that the mind is fully understood once inputs and outputs are well-defined, and generally couples this with a radical skepticism regarding possibility of ever successfully describing the underlying structure, mechanism, and dynamics of the mind (Perner, 2008). Based on the above cited statement, the black box model shows the interaction of stimuli, consumer’s characteristics, and decision process and consumer responses. The framework of black box model is graphed in Figure 4A as follows:

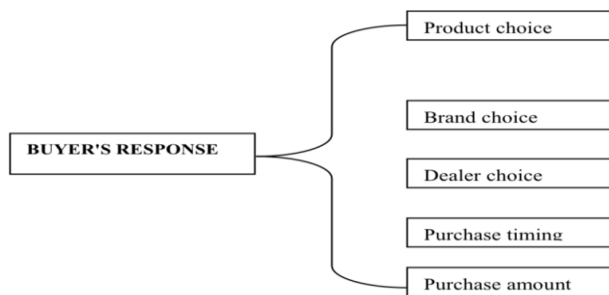


Figure 4A: Black box model

In science and engineering, a black box is a device, system or object which can be viewed solely in terms of its input, output and transfer characteristics without any knowledge of its internal workings, that is, its implementation is "opaque" or black. Almost anything might be referred to as a black box: a transistor, an algorithm, or the human mind.

The black box model shows the interaction of stimuli, consumer characteristics, decision process, and consumer responses (Sandhusen, 2000). It can be distinguished between interpersonal stimuli (between people) or intrapersonal stimuli (within people) (Sandhusen, 2000). The marketing stimuli are planned and processed by the companies, whereas the environmental stimuli are given by social factors, based on the economic, political and cultural circumstances of a society. The buyers' black box contains the buyer characteristics and the decision process, which determines the buyers' response.

The black box model considers the buyers response as a result of a conscious, rational decision process, in which it is assumed that the buyer has recognized the problem. However, in reality many decisions are not made in awareness of a determined problem by the consumer.

In the level of the music industry, the buyer's response can be identified in different ways. First, for the product choice, it is a given fact that the product refers to are music products like music CDs and DVDs or online data streaming service. However, detailing this product choice may include the number of music products bought. This may also include genre choice as a choice of product, a choice that can be affected by multitude of internal and external stimuli. Product choice can also include the most preferred artist. And a preferred artist can have many names and classifications. This level of product choice can be limited as to whether the artist is male or female, or whether the artist that the consumer had chosen was not a single artist but a band.

In such a way, brand choice can also be defined in the context of the music industry. Brand choice can be the preferred recording company of the consumer. This choice can also be affected by a multitude of factors and upon passing through the organism (the consumer) will result to a certain preference for a recording company.

Dealer choice refers to the choice of the consumer where to get or buy the music product. Dealer or source of music products can either come from either legitimate or illegitimate sources. The research is limited in the purchase of legal music products as against illegal means like piracy or unauthorized internet downloading. Thus, a consumer who chooses to purchase music products in legal stores already made a dealer choice. For this reason, dealer choice was considered constant. In this regard, this level of consumer behavior was excluded in the research and conceptual paradigm.

Purchasing time can be directly identified as the time spent by the consumer in selecting products, or the number of times a consumer would buy a product. Either way, such consumer behavior can also be affected by his/her environment and his/her internal state that this research aimed to discuss. Lastly, purchasing amount is the amount of money that the consumer spends in purchasing music products. It is important to clarify these things out because consumer behaviors have a wide array of criteria, but this research can only be functional if it limits at which levels of consumer behavior does the research focuses on.

Thus, the research paradigm on consumer behavior will be like as follows.

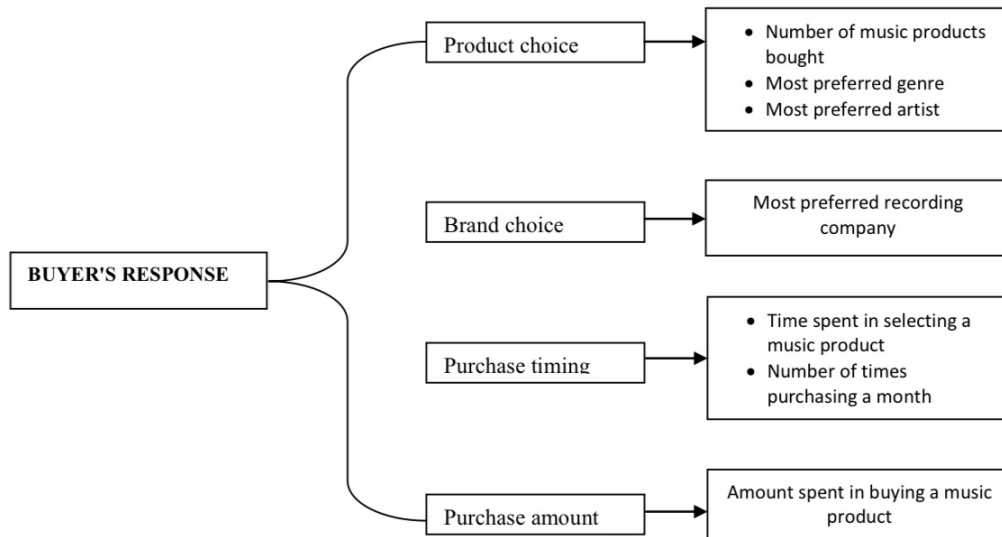


Figure 4B: Adjusted black box model

Going back to the black box model, its main contributions to this research are: Firstly, this model recognizes the action of consumer behavior as based on a synergy between environmental factors and buyers’ own attributes (Mitchell et al., 1996). In other words, it depicts an “outer space” and “inner-space” synchronized in the decisions making of buyers. Based on this theoretical classification, the researcher would like to theorize further into “macro-scope” and “micro-scope” of his research and observation of consumer behavior in music industry scenario.

The macro-scope of the study takes into consideration all the environmental factors which contribute to certain consumer behavior or action, and which correspond to a former statement of “concrete human existence and the conditions of his existence”. The world where humans exist is a concrete one. The human action, which in the context of black box model is the buyers’ response, is subjected to the environmental factors or conditions.

In the meantime, consumer behavior (buyers’ response), is also a repercussion of consumers’ inner self-concepts, who live in a certain existence of humans and in the context of this research. In other words, the consumer behavior is also subjected to his/her inner, “microscopic” causation. That is, his/her self-identity.

Thus the above postulates will be further grafted into Figure 5.

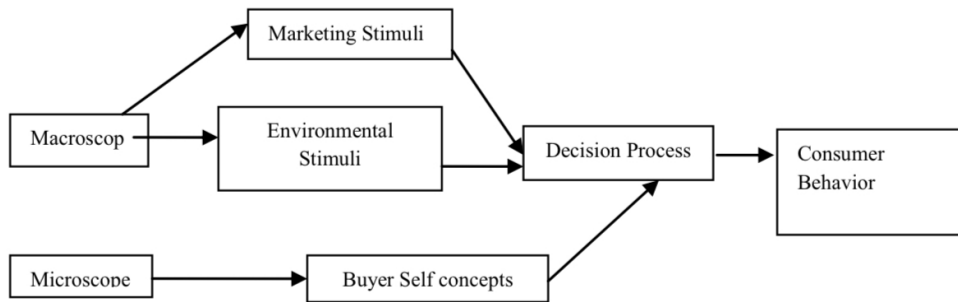


Figure5: Macro-scope and micro-scope in understanding consumer behavior

The macro-scope level, which deals into rather obvious and observable processes, looks into the marketing and environmental stimuli. At the macro-scope level, one can generalize and is interested with factors that are common to a group or culture. As was explained in the preceding sections, marketing and environmental stimuli are factors “outside” the person. These factors affect the decision-making process of the consumer. The same process is affected by the consumer’s self-concept, one of the factors that lie “within” the person. And since, it is within the person, it could only be looked into the microscopic level, to the level in which all individuals are considered unique or different with one another. All these factors affecting decision process are a result to consumer behavior.

Secondly, the differentiation and synergy between marketing stimuli and environmental stimuli, contribute to the researchers’ organization of “marketing parallelism”, which postulates two parallel processes: a “natural reaching process” and a “marketing strategic process” that coexist in the cultural industry setting (Yalch, 1993). This theory will be presented in greater detail in the next section of this chapter – the conceptual framework.

Thirdly, the macro-scope specifies marketing stimuli such as product, price, place, promotion (4Ps), and also the environmental stimuli comprising these dimensions such as economic, technological, political, cultural, demographic, and natural. These specifications will provide the researcher with the necessary theoretical framework to further gauge the concrete condition parameters in his further study. However, the 4Ps marketing stimuli will be further expanded into 7Ps which will be specified later in the section. Among those micro-scope variables, this research gives high importance to the cultural dimension of environmental stimuli, wherein the cultural aspect will be fully explored and expanded, This study of music industry will explore the highly “pop culturally-oriented” section of the society that we are living in.

Fourthly, besides other important factors in defining the buyer characteristics, such as motivation, attitudes, etc, one salient point of notice by the researcher is the inclusion of personality (Perner, 2008). This will be further explored and reinforced in the following section which deals with personality school and their theory contribution to this research.

4.2 Marketing Stimuli Theories

There are plenty of versions on how to define marketing academically. For example, marketing is defined by the American Marketing Association (2007) as the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large. On the other hand, marketing is referred to as an integrated communications-based process through

which individuals and communities are informed or persuaded that existing and newly-identified needs and wants may be satisfied by the products and services of others (Perner, 2008). Marketing is used to create the customer, to keep the customer and to satisfy the customer needs.

This research adopts the definition from American Marketing Association, on the basis that this definition is anchored on value of the individual as well as of society-at-large wide, the core of this research. The research is focused on the dynamism between self-identity and consumer behavior, while the value is an immediate incarnation of self-identity. At the meantime, the research is fundamentally premised on that people are value-aligned, subject to the perception of certain definite and common social values.

However, the researcher also recognizes the communication dimension role that exists in the music market setting, which is reflected in the definition from different sources. In the early 1960s, Professor Neil Borden at Harvard Business School identified a number of company performance actions that can influence the consumer decision to purchase goods or services (Wind et al., 2002). Borden suggested that all those actions of the company represented a “marketing mix”. Professor E. Jerome McCarthy, at the Michigan State University in the early 1960s, suggested that the Marketing Mix contained 4 elements: product, price, place and promotion (Wind et al., 2002).

The marketing mix is the combination of four major tools of marketing— products, price, promotion and place—known widely as the 4Ps. The marketing mix is an important tool for creating and maintaining an offering that is of value to customers. There have been many proposals to extend the original 4Ps. The most useful of these is Booms and Bitner’s proposal that in order to characterize the marketing mix for services (Herr et al., 1991), the 4Ps should be extended to 7Ps to include people, processes and physical evidence. This 7Ps model will be adopted in this research on the base that it provides three additional variables, namely people, processes and physical evidence, thus giving a more holistic horizon than the historical 4Ps model. Especially important is the inclusion of people and process, which coincides well with the consumer decision making process and consumer behavior in the black box model, thus giving this research logical consistency the depth in its scope.

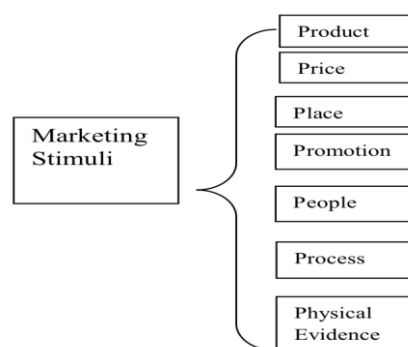


Figure 6A: Marketing stimuli 7Ps model

These components of 7Ps model are further specified as follows:

- Product is the aspect of the marketing mix that deals with the creation, development and management of products. Product decisions are important because they directly involve creating products that satisfy customer’s needs and wants. An organization must maintain

- a satisfactory set of products; this involves introducing new products, modifying existing ones and eliminating those that no longer satisfy costumers and/or yield acceptable profits.
- Price relates to activities associated with establishing pricing objectives and strategies and determining products prices. It defines the value obtained in an exchange. It may be used as a competitive tool and is one of the marketing mix variables that can be altered relatively quickly to respond to changes in the environment. Price plays both an economic and a psychological role. From a psychological perspective, it may be used as an indicator of service quality. In the service sector, the psychological role of price is magnified because consumers must rely on it as the sole indicator of service quality: the intangible nature of services meaning that other quality indicators are absent.
 - Products must be available at the right time and at a convenient location. Place is concerned both with consumer service delivery points such as retail and libraries and with the distribution network that ensures the products make their way from the producer or creator to the user or consumer. Delivery channels are significant factors within an industry and involve a complex web of organizational relationships, in which collaboration and competition are equally important.
 - Promotion relates to activities used to inform one or more groups of people about an organization and its products. It can be used more generally to increase public awareness of an organization and of new or existing products, or alternatively, to educate consumers about product features, or to maintain public awareness of existing products. Promotion includes advertising, public relations, personal selling and direct marketing. It is one element of the two-way communication with customers forming the basis for customer relationships. Promotion of services presents specific difficulties because they are intangible. It is difficult to depict the intangible in advertising. Service advertising needs to emphasize tangible clues, such as physical facilities or other concepts that project an image that reflects services. Personal selling can be powerful in services because this form of promotion allows customers and sales persons to interact. Customer contact personnel therefore have an important promotional function.
 - Most services use people in service delivery, often creating and delivering the product in interaction with customer. The quality of the interaction between the service agent and the customer has a major influence on satisfaction. In services where the level of contact is high, as in dentistry or physiotherapy, the customer needs to feel comfortable with the service agent, to trust them, and develop a rapport with them, probably over a service relationship that comprises several episodes. Even where the service is less intimate, as in a shop or a library, the attitude and responsiveness of the staff can make a difference to the acceptability of the service experience.
 - Services involve an interaction between two people and here, it is more difficult to exercise control and ensure consistency. Marketers, together with managers, need to design the service process carefully. This can include queuing arrangements, processing customer details and payment, as well as elements of the core service delivery. Thus call center operators and help lines may have a standard set of questions that they ask each caller, and dentist's practice will have a standard approach to receiving patients, calling them into surgery, and giving treatment. Once a customer has experienced a service process for the first time, they start to learn what their contribution to the process should be, or to 'learn the script'; this helps them to feel more comfortable with the process. In self-service environments, for example, a public access kiosk, the customer is taken through a process by the prompts on the computer screen.

- Physical Evidence is concerned with the physical surroundings from which a service is delivered and other tangible elements in a service episode. Physical evidence is important in service delivery, because it is usually the only tangible clue that the customer has about the quality of the service experience.

From the above discussion, we can make the conclusion that since all the 7P marketing factors are targeted at influencing the consumer behavior, the buyers in pop music industry are also influenced by these factors. The theoretical challenge in this research is to find out the extent by which these factors, in the pop music industry, exert their influence on the consumer behavior in relationship to his/her inner self-identity factors.

In order to operationalize the 7Ps of marketing in this research, the researcher made an adjustment to the 7Ps model. The product aspect was excluded. Since product refers to the product the producer produces and the consumer consumes, the product in this research refers to music products. Thus, all respondents were bound to buy same products. In that sense, product was considered constant. Hence, it shall not be included in the variables.

The place as a marketing component refers to the delivery channels where music products are distributed. This refers to a strategic place like a city or a mall. All respondents were in the same place (in the mall) during the time of data gathering. Thus, place is also constant and was not included as a part of marketing stimuli. People refer to the service personnel performing promotional activities. Thus, such variable is co-linear or much related closely to promotion. This research selected promotion over people to explain that part of marketing stimuli. Physical evidence was also excluded because this refers to the physical surroundings. This study was conducted in a mall and the physical surroundings for all consumers was the same. Like other variables, such was considered as a constant.

Therefore, such adjustments lead to the following research paradigm for marketing stimuli in Figure 6B.

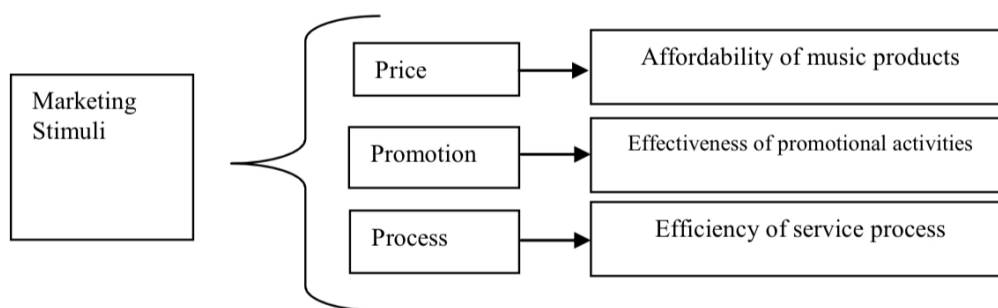


Figure 6B: Adjusted marketing stimuli model

4.3 Environmental Stimuli Theories

As previously mentioned, environmental stimuli are given by social factors, based on the economical, political and cultural circumstances of a society. In one way, this definition points out that people living in a single society are encapsulated in a common environment, e.g., it physical, social, political or cultural. Thus, it is important for this study to present some part of the environmental dimension that would be unique for different people. The goal of this study is to explain buyers' response, and it could only be explained by accounting the

differences in such response. If the environmental context would be the same, then it would not be able to explain the differences in buyers' response.

This research adopts and integrates Grewal's environment model, which is graphed as follows, to estimate how these factors affect the consumer behavior in pop music industry:

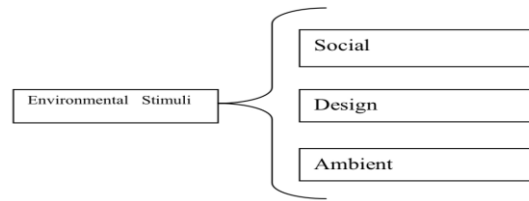


Figure 7A: Environmental stimuli model on consumer behavior

Environmental stimuli model refers to the environmental situation within the store and not the macro socio-cultural-political-economic-and-technological system. This approach is to “minimize” the “insurmountable” environmental stimuli that exist within a society (Grewal et al., 2003). In this limited model, the scope was focused on a part of the environment where the consumer and the dealer meet. In such part of environment, the individual will have to interact with another individual (interpersonal encounter), which entails a sociological relationship between the people delivering the service and the consumer (Wind et al., 2002). That refers to the social aspect. That also makes the physical environment of the store a very significant stimulus in the way the consumer purchases products. This physical environment is different from marketing in such a way that marketing refers to conscious efforts directed to attract consumers (Perner, 2008). This physical environment involves the design and the ambient. Hence, the physical environment of the store, in this research, does not refer to the arrangement but on the consumer's attitude toward the physical environment itself.

With above mentioned dichotomy in mind, this research combined design and ambient to make a clear impact on the physical environment as a stimulus of consumer behavior. Thus, environment stimuli shall be divided into two: the software (social component) and the hardware (physical component). The figure to illustrate this point is shown as follows in Figure 7B.

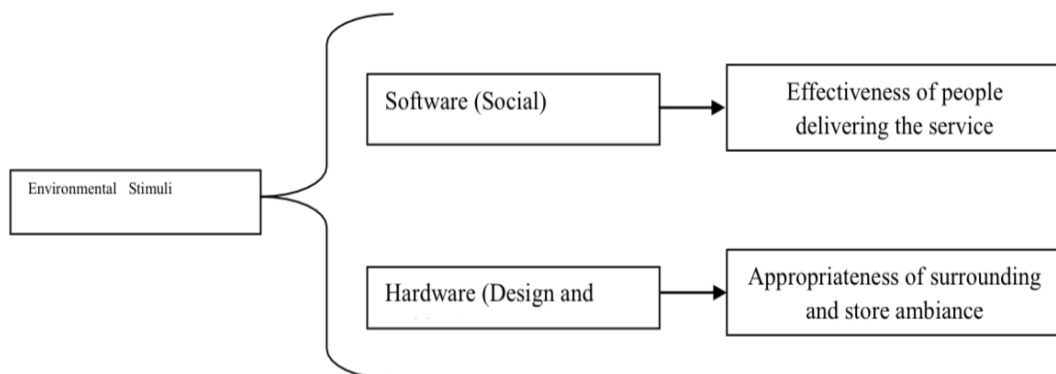


Figure 7B: Adjusted environmental stimuli model

4.4 Self-identity (Self-concept) Theory

People buy product that are compatible with their self-concept, or rather that enhances their ideal-self (Zaphiris et al., 2006). Though some scholar might differentiate self-identity from

self-concept in this current research, these two terms are used interchangeably in this paper. The self-identity or self-concept is composed of relatively permanent self- assessments, such as personality attributes, knowledge of one's skills and abilities, one's occupation and hobbies, and awareness of one's physical attributes (Gleitman et al., 2004). For example, the statement, "I am lazy" is a self-assessment that contributes to the self- concept. In contrast, the statement "I am tired" would not normally be considered part of someone's self-concept, since being tired is a temporary state. Nevertheless, a person's self-concept may change with time, possibly going through turbulent periods of identity crisis and reassessment.

The self-concept is not restricted to the present. It includes past selves and future selves (Zimbardo et al., 2003). Future selves or "possible selves" represent individuals' ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming. They correspond to hopes, fears, standards, goals, and threats. Possible selves may function as incentives for future behavior and they also provide an evaluative and interpretive context for the current view of self.

Psychologically, self-concept is composed of self-image and self-esteem. A person's self-image is the mental picture, generally of a kind that is quite resistant to change, that depicts not only details that are potentially available to objective investigation by others (height, weight, hair color, gender), but also items that have been learned by that person about himself or herself, either from personal experiences or by internalizing the judgments of others (Rogers et al., 1977). Thus, different types of social identity are integrative component of self-image. Such identities include ethnicity, national identity, religion, profession, gender, and politics.

The overall theoretical framework of self-concept is graphed as follows in Figure 8A.

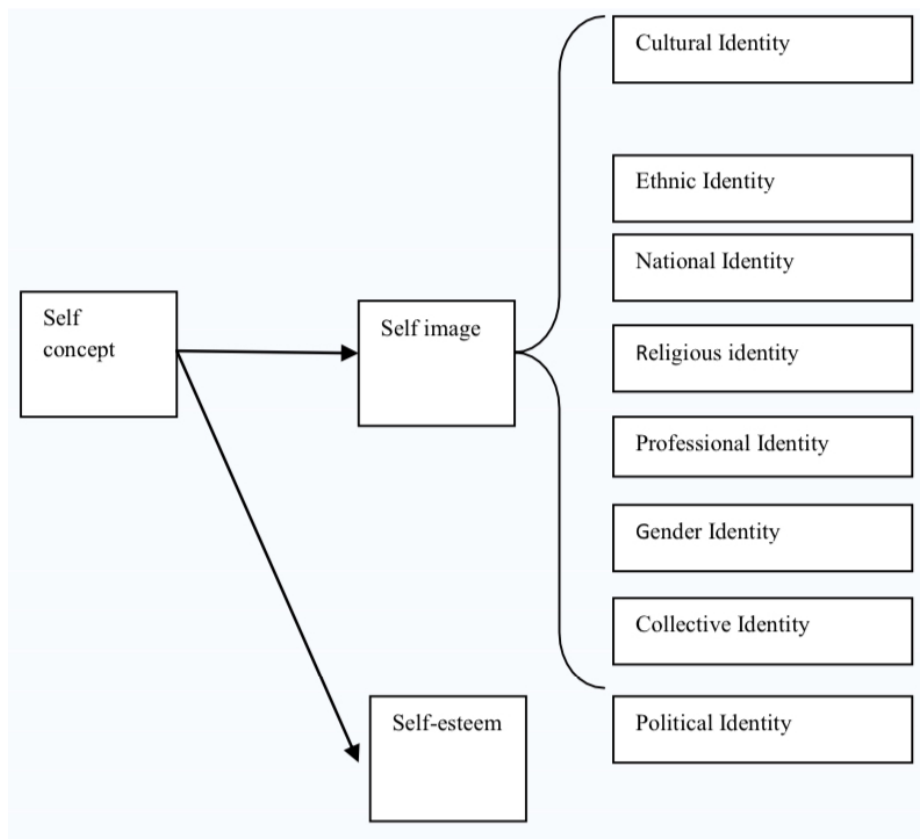


Figure 8A: Framework of self-identity (self-concept)

In order to make self-concept or self-identity measurable, some parts of self-image were excluded. Cultural identity is a very large concept that is hard to measure (Sandhusen, 2000). Culture is defined as the way of life (Parsons et al., 1976). This definition entails wide aspect that may include other identities therein (i.e. ethnic, national, religious, gender, etc.). Thus, it was not included because at the moment, it can hardly be measured. The situation is the same with ethnic identity. The problem with this variable is the definition of ethnicity. Ethnicity refers to having a common origin (Parsons et al., 1976).

To adjust for the theoretical implication of excluding some aspects of self-image, demographics like age, place or residence and educational attainment were included in self-identity. This is because demographics give information that makes the person unique and comparable among the rest. Such information delineates one person to the other, which means that they serve as another form of stimuli. The following figure shows the adjustment from the original self-identity paradigm.

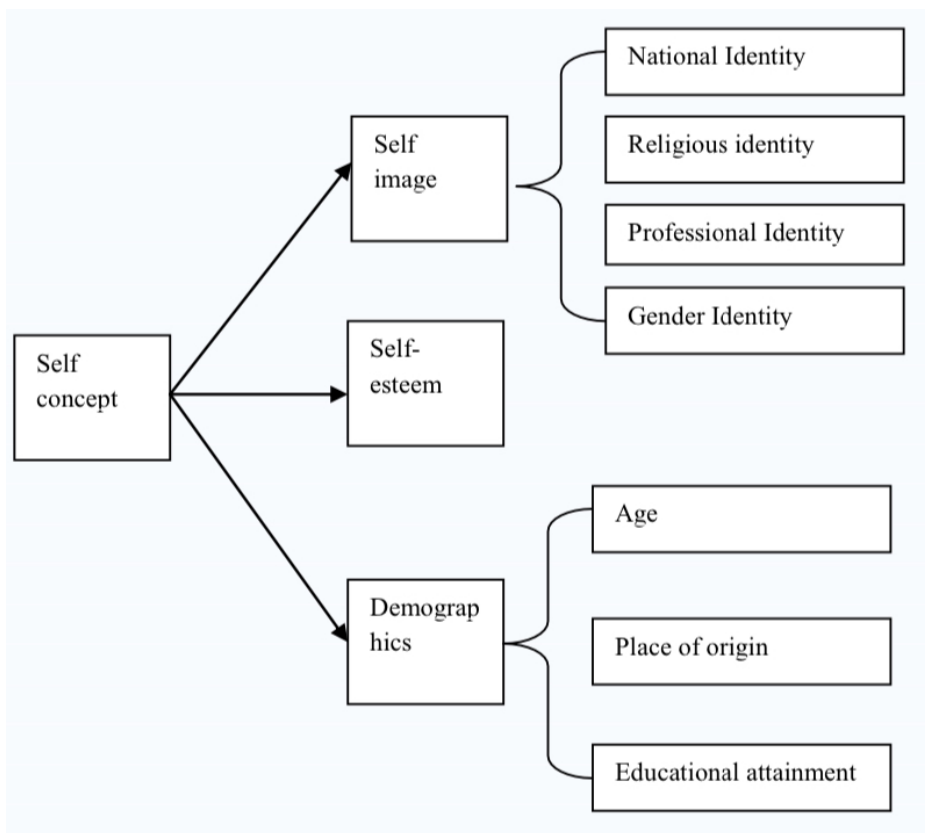


Figure 8B: Adjusted framework of self-identity

4.5 Structural Functionalism and its Cultural Dimension

After we explore both the inner and outer, macro-scope and micro-scope of the structured paradigm of consumer behavior, the research would like to further discover the techniques that we can align the micro-world and macro-world, consumer and market together, to reach the integrity among them and thus further create a win-win result for every factor involved. On one hand, consumers realize his/her meaning of existence, value or self-identity through certain action like buying. On the other hand, the music market will draw the maximum profit out from these actions. The inner world and outer environment the meantime reach their synergistic harmony and consonance. To this end, we need to draw certain elements that can

be applied and shared by all those dimensions above cited. Culture elements are the insightful tool in this level, which is well espoused by structural functionalism school.

Structural functionalism is a sociological paradigm which addresses what social functions various elements of the social system perform in regard to the entire system (Parsons, 1951). Social structures are stressed and placed at the center of analysis, and functions are deduced from these structures. It was developed in the United States by sociologist Talcott Parsons. It was developed, independently, in the United Kingdom by the students of social anthropologists Bronisław Malinowski and Alfred Radcliffe-Brown (Goldthorpe, 1987). Functionalism is most often associated with sociology and socio-cultural anthropology. Influenced by such European sociologists as Emilee Durkheim and Max Weber, Parsons developed a theory of social action that was closer to British social anthropology than to Boaz's American anthropology (Parsons, 1951), and which he also called "structural functionalism." Parson's intention was to develop a total theory of social action (why people act as they do), and to develop at Harvard an inter-disciplinary program that would direct research according to this theory. His model explained human action as the result of four systems:

- The "behavioral system" of biological needs.
- The "personality system" of an individual's characteristics affecting their functioning in the social world.
- The "social system" of patterns of units of social interaction, especially social status and role.
- The "cultural system" of norms and values that regulate social action symbolically based on above cited systematic classification, Parsons' developed an action-theory based on system-theoretical concept and on the methodological principle of voluntary action. He stated that "the social system is made up of the actions of individuals" (Parsons et al., 1976). His starting point was the interaction between two individuals (Parsons, 1961). Those individuals were faced with a variety of choices about how they might act. However, those choices are influenced and constrained by a number of physical and social factors (Parsons et al., 1976). Parsons determined that each individual has expectations of the other's action and reaction to their own behavior, and that these expectations would (if successful) be derived from the accepted norms and values of the society which they inhabit (Parsons, 1961). However, as Parsons emphasized in the general situation, where would never exist any perfect "fit" between behavior and norms; so such a relation was never complete or "perfect."

5. Conclusion

The paper concludes with a culture-based conceptual model, as shown in Figure 9. The existentialism conceptual model, through the contribution of such more empirical theories as consumer behavior theory, marketing stimuli theory, environmental stimuli theory, and self-identity theory, helps us understand why consumers buy a music product. As those complex structures of interconnected factors with multiple levels of correlation that call for further empirical research help them self-actualize the human beings, they understand them as consumer behavior in music products is a process of pursuit of its inner essence.

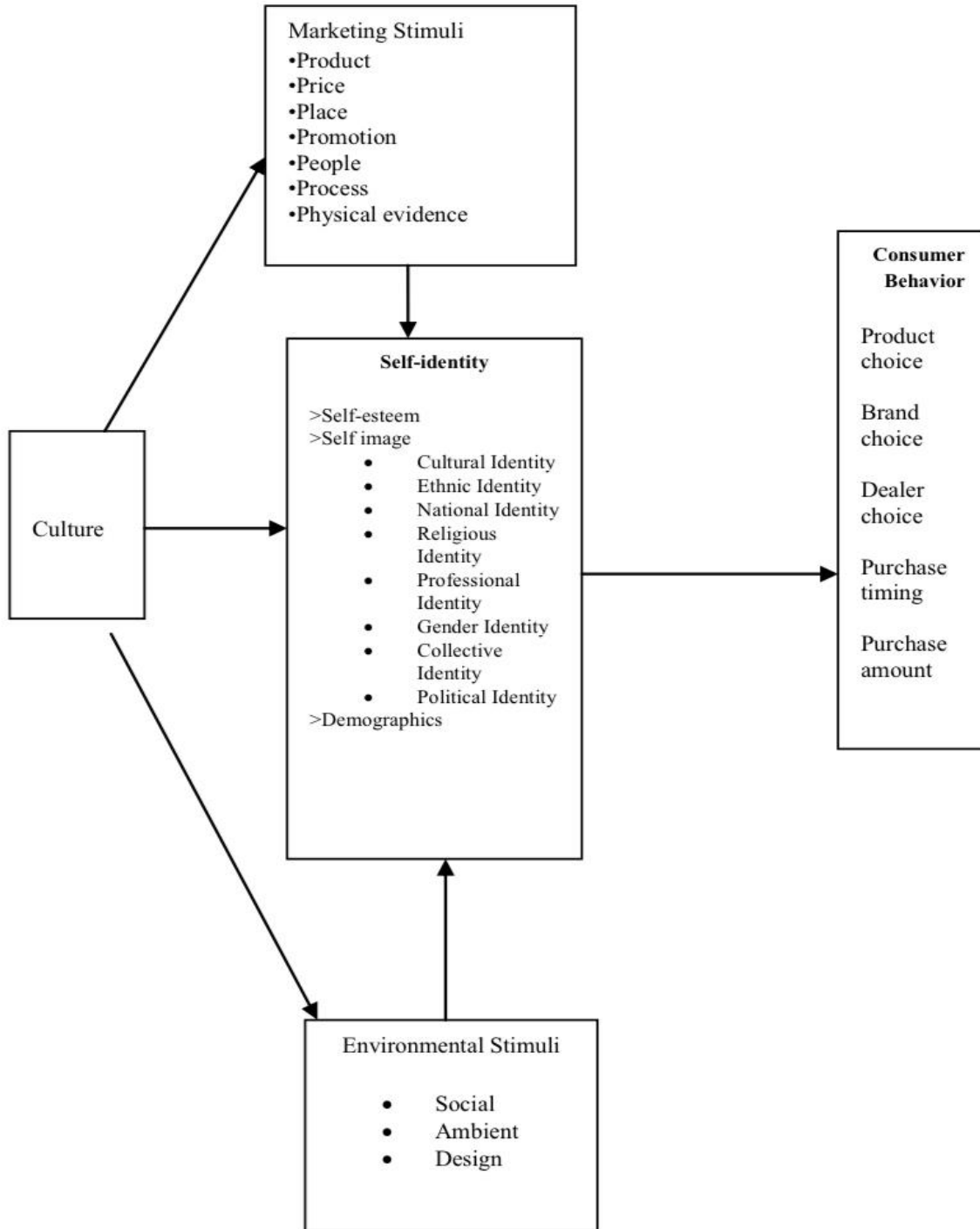


Figure 9: Culture-based consumer behavior model in music product

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