

EXPLORING BRAND PERSONALITY CONGRUENCE: MEASUREMENT AND  
APPLICATION IN THE CASUAL DINING RESTAURANT INDUSTRY

by

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B.S., University of the Philippines, 1999  
M.S., Kansas State University, 2004

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Hotel, Restaurant, Institution Management and Dietetics  
College of Human Ecology

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
Manhattan, Kansas

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## **Abstract**

This study was designed to explore the measurement and application of brand personality congruence (BPC), defined as the gap between the customer's own personality and a restaurant's brand personality as perceived by the customer. The study involved two phases: Phase I primarily focused on the development of the BPC scale based on the existing Brand Personality Scale (Aaker 1997), while Phase II involved testing the relationship between BPC and brand loyalty and the mediating effects of satisfaction and trust on that relationship. Both Phases used the online survey methodology for data collection.

Confirmatory factor analysis was used to test the dimensionality of brand personality. The five-factor solution was supported with the dimensions of sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness. Exploratory factor analysis showed that brand personality dimensions were not stable for measuring customer personality. Only characteristics most closely associated with the Big Five dimensions of agreeableness, extroversion, and conscientiousness significantly loaded on the customer personality scale. A confirmatory factor analysis of the reduced scale resulted in a 5-factor solution: successful, exciting, unique, sincere, and friendly. Because BPC was operationalized as the gap between the customer's perceived personality and the restaurant's brand personality as perceived by the customer, only indicators that were common between the two scales were used to establish the 17-item BPC scale consisting of the following dimensions: exciting, unique, sincere, and leader.

In Phase II, second-order structural equation modeling was used to test BPC as an antecedent of the post-purchase evaluations of trust, satisfaction, and brand loyalty. Results indicated strong positive relationships, which suggested that higher congruence with the brand's personality results in increased trust, satisfaction, and brand loyalty. BPC had the greatest direct effect on trust and also had indirect effects on satisfaction via trust and brand loyalty via trust and satisfaction. Additional analyses showed that trust and satisfaction partially mediated the relationship between BPC and brand loyalty. Trust also mediated the

relationship between BPC and satisfaction. Results implied that as the restaurant brand earns a customer's trust over time, the customer's evaluation of overall satisfaction with the brand also increases and leads to stronger brand loyalty.

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## CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

As the number of meals eaten outside the home continues to increase, competition for loyal customers among branded restaurant chains also becomes more challenging. According to *Restaurants and Institutions* (2006), the 400 largest branded chain restaurants grossed close to \$260 billion in aggregated sales in 2006. In a very saturated industry where services and products (such as menu items and themed concepts) can be duplicated by several competitors, it is more important to keep existing customers than it is to try and attract new ones (Meyer & Blumelhuber, 2000). In addition, Hill and Alexander (2000) state that “a five percent increase in customer loyalty can produce profit increases of 25-85% across a range of industries” (p.23). Perhaps these have given rise to the increasing focus on relationship marketing where strategies to build long-standing relationships with consumers is more important than gaining new customers (Berry, 2000; Hennig-Thurau & Hansen, 2000).

Creating a niche by contrasting a foodservice operation from its competitors is a key in attracting and maintaining a loyal customer base. Not only does a firm have to differentiate itself according to restaurant sectors (quick service, casual dining, and upscale dining), but more importantly from other restaurants in its class. With this in mind, the study focused on casual dining chain restaurants, which accounted for 67 of the top 400 branded restaurant chains for 2006. As global competitiveness becomes more important and domestic casual dining restaurants are seeking to expand worldwide, the need for effective marketing strategies and market share retention is evident. Specifically, the study explored the measurement of brand personality congruence and its influence on the post purchase constructs of trust, satisfaction, and brand loyalty.

Marconi (2000) asserted that brand personality, defined as the “set of human characteristics associated with a brand” (Aaker, 1997), is of great consequence in marketing because the building of a public identification of oneself with the brand can lead to strong brand loyalty. Emphasizing key attributes that customers deem important facilitates self-congruity with the brand’s personality, thus increasing the probability of being chosen by the customer (Aaker, 1999; Kassarian, 1971; Kotler, 2003; Sirgy, 1982; Wee, 2004). In the

context of this study, this identification is operationalized as brand personality congruence (BPC), defined as the gap between the customer's own personality and a restaurant's brand personality as perceived by the customer.

Essentially, the study posited that the smaller this gap is, the closer matched the personalities of the brand and the consumer is. Thus, the greater the congruence between the human characteristics that describe an individual and those that describe the brand, the greater the preference is for the brand.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Past researchers have used the consumer's self-congruity in view of self-concept or self-image rather than the personality construct (Sirgy and Samli, 1985; Chon & Olsen, 1991). Self-concept can vary between an individual's private and public selves (how the consumer sees one's self and how others see the consumer), while personality is more enduring and stable. Similarly, brand image is the brand's current associations as the customer perceives it. These associations can be short term and tactical (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000) while brand personality is more memorable (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000), meaningful (O'Shaughnessy & O'Shaughnessy, 2004), emotionally powerful (Temporal, 2001; Upshaw, 1995), long standing (Temporal, 2001), and consistent (LePla & Parker, 1999; Temporal, 2001). Because loyalty by definition connotes a longstanding relationship between a consumer and a brand, it is rational to study brand loyalty in relation to personality rather than image. This study is designed to fill this research gap and to contribute to the growing literature on relationship marketing.

It is important to pursue the study of BPC because consumers are likely to choose brands whose personalities match their own (Kassarjian, 1971; Kotler, 2003; Sirgy, 1982; Wee, 2004). Research has shown that brand personality influences consumer preferences by allowing them to express themselves through the brands that they use (Aaker, 1997; Keller, 1993; Siguaw et al., 1999, Temporal, 2001). A well-established brand personality can thus lead to increased trust and loyalty (Diamantopoulos et al., 2005; Fournier, 1994; Temporal, 2001). However, BPC has not been studied as a construct in relationship marketing research, and thus has no established measurement. There is a need therefore to establish a valid and reliable scale to facilitate further empirical investigation into the construct's effect



on relational variables such as satisfaction, trust, and brand loyalty. This study aimed to fill this gap in the literature.

Marketing research is increasingly focusing on relational aspects rather than transactional constructs. Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, and Gremler (2000) suggest that customers get four benefits from relationships with the products or service providers that they choose: social, confidence, special treatment, and identity-related benefits. Of these, identity-related benefits have the most relevance in the brand-customer relationship. However, there is no empirical evidence investigating this as the authors only showed that the first three benefits affect the consumer's decision to enter a relationship. Investigating BPC aimed to contribute to this gap in the research literature.

### **Justification**

Research has suggested that having a well-established brand personality could be a competitive advantage, particularly in sustaining brand loyalty. However, focusing on merely establishing the personality is not enough, it must be able to give consumers something they can relate to. Results of the study may provide casual dining foodservice operations information on personality attributes as they relate to the brand personality that they would like to project. The ability of a foodservice operation to clearly define its dominant brand personality may have practical implications in its managerial, communicational, and operational decisions.

Managers can use results of this study as a diagnostic tool to examine if the perceived brand personality is aligned with the organization's mission, vision, and goals. Conversely, existing operations can use results to modify their market positioning, services, or products to increase the congruence between their brand personality and their target market's personality with the ultimate goal of increasing brand loyalty and satisfaction. Comparing across competing brands will have practical implications for brand management, particularly in determining if differentiation among brands in the restaurant class is achieved. In addition, findings from this study provided future avenues for research to explore how to better assess brand personality congruence and address the gaps that may lead to deflated levels of satisfaction, trust, and ultimately, brand loyalty.

Exploring the measurement of BPC offered many possibilities for the use of the BPC scale in relationship marketing research. Having a concise scale will lower likelihood of respondent fatigue or non-participation due to length, enabling researchers to study more constructs simultaneously. This is beneficial because studying the role and importance of BPC on important constructs such as trust, satisfaction, and loyalty will facilitate the development of marketing platforms to address these issues. Research in this area will aid branded restaurants in appropriating resources in the effort to create and effectively market a distinctive brand personality.

Results of the research may have implications for global marketing schemes, particularly promotional and placement considerations across geographic locations. Because demographics and environmental stimuli are not homogenous across geographic locations (especially for multi-national brands), customer personality profiles may also be significantly different. Conclusions from this study may be used in designing cross-cultural and cross-national research to guide marketing managers, better enabling them to create a strong, yet globally identifiable and acceptable brand personality. Establishing a stable personality and knowing how this can be modified or enhanced to match the host country's dominant personality will enable the company to achieve a sense of affinity with its target market while maintaining globally identifiable characteristics.

## **Objectives**

The overall objective of this research study was to establish the relationship between Brand Personality Congruence (BPC) and the postpurchase evaluations of trust, satisfaction, and brand loyalty. In particular, the following research questions were answered: (1) Are the five dimensions of brand personality, as established by Aaker (1997), stable for the casual dining restaurant industry? (2) Are the personality attributes used for brand personality appropriate in measuring customer personality? (3) Does congruence between brand personality and the customer's personality result in higher levels of overall satisfaction, trust, and ultimately, brand loyalty? (4) Is the relationship between BPC and brand loyalty mediated by trust and satisfaction?

An important component in the study was the establishment of a scale that can appropriately measure BPC. Before BPC can be used in testing relationship marketing

models, there was a need to reassess Aaker's framework for the application of the brand personality scale in foodservice research. Thus, the study was designed to explore the appropriateness, reliability, and validity of using Aaker's (1997) scale to calculate BPC. In addition, the study was designed to establish the relationship between BPC and brand loyalty and to test the roles that trust and satisfaction play.

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

As with any consumer-based research, the study was not free of limitations. Due to its exploratory nature, the results of this study cannot be generalized across all branded restaurant chain operations in the United States. Generalizations from the study are limited to outlets of the focal restaurant brand located in urban centers, as the sampling frame was limited to residents of the top 25 metropolitan areas in the United States. This excluded consumers in rural areas who may still dine in casual dining restaurants, although on more limited circumstances. However, the potential usefulness of this type of analysis for marketing professionals working for branded restaurant concepts warranted pursuing the research.

Also, because the restaurant industry is service oriented, there are many variables that could not be controlled such as the consumer's last experience in the restaurant, location, food quality, and consumer's pre-conception about the dining experience. Since the constructs under study are global evaluations, the effect of these uncontrollable variables was minimized.

### **Definition of Key Terminology**

**Brand:** "a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those competitors" (Kotler, 2003, p 418)

**Brand Personality:** "set of human characteristics associated with a brand" (Aaker, 1997, p.347)

**Brand Personality Congruence:** the gap between the customer's own personality and a restaurant's brand personality as perceived by the customer

**Brand Loyalty:** “a deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronize a preferred brand consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same brand or same brand-set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior” (Oliver, 1999, p.34)

**Casual Dining Restaurants:** “foodservice establishments designed to attract middle-income individuals who enjoy dining out but do not want the formality and high price of fine dining restaurants” (Spears and Gregoire, 2007, p. 13)

**Trust:** “one party has confidence in the exchange partner’s reliability and integrity” (Morgan & Hunt 1994, p.23).

**Satisfaction:** “a fairly temporal post usage state for one-time consumption or a repeatedly experienced state for ongoing consumption that reflects how the product or service has fulfilled its purpose” (Oliver, 1999, p.41)

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## **CHAPTER 2 - REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

This chapter summarizes literature related to branding, personality and self-concept, brand image and brand personality, and brand loyalty. The conceptual framework and hypotheses development are discussed. Related literature pertaining to congruence, satisfaction, and trust is summarized. The majority of sources for this chapter are research journals in marketing, psychology, and hospitality.

### **Brands and Customer-based Brand Equity**

Brand research is abundant in marketing literature. It covers a broad array of topics because the term “brand” encompasses symbols or features such as a name, term, or design that sets apart one seller’s good or service from those of other sellers (American Marketing Association, 2006). With this in mind, many research tracks have emerged, particularly because brands provide different types of benefits to consumers: functional, experiential, and symbolic (Keller, 1993, 1998); each of which play different roles in the study of marketing, consumer behavior, and related fields. One area that has been gaining attention is brand equity research, or the study of the “marketing effects uniquely attributable to the brand” (Keller, 1993, p.1). The two main research foci are financial-based brand equity, which primarily deals with asset valuation (Keller, 1993), and customer-based brand equity, which studies the differential effect of a brand on consumer behavior (Keller, 1998). Studying brand equity is important in the foodservice industry because it can affect restaurant choice, the frequency in which the brand is chosen in its class, and the corresponding price premium that consumers are willing to pay for branded concepts as compared to independent restaurants (Chrzan & Fisher, 2006).

Keller (1993) asserts that an integral component of building positive customer-based brand equity is brand knowledge. The theoretical framework proposed by Keller (1993) states that brand knowledge has two primary dimensions: brand awareness and brand image. Brand awareness is “the ability for a buyer to recognize or recall that a brand is a member of a certain product category” (Aaker, 1991, p.61). Brand image is “the set of associations



linked to the brand that consumers hold in memory” (Keller, 1993, p.2). Both of these dimensions play a role in affecting consumer decision making by increasing the probability that the customer will choose the specific brand over other brands offering the same product or service.

Keller (1993) suggested that brands offer three benefits for a consumer: functional, experiential, and symbolic. Of these, brand personality addresses the symbolic or self-expressive function (Aaker, 1997; Siguaw et al, 1999; Keller, 1993; Wee, 2004) and these benefits impact the customer’s behavior towards a brand. Dolich (1969) suggested that a consumer can maintain or enhance one’s self by using products or brands that are symbolically similar to the self. Research has shown that consumers tend to support brands and services whose personalities closely match their own (Fournier, 1994; Kotler, 2003; Siguaw et al., 1999; Sirgy, 1982; Wee, 2004). This underlines the importance of creating favorable, strong, and unique brand associations in the customer’s memory (Keller, 1993). Increased levels of brand knowledge then can lead to greater profits and sustained brand loyalty, even in the presence of switching motivators.

### **Personality and Self-Concept**

Self-concept and personality have been used interchangeably in existing marketing and psychology literature. Rosenberg (1979) defined self-concept as the “totality of the individual’s thoughts and feelings having reference to himself as an object” (p.7). Onkvisit and Shaw (1987) augmented that definition by saying that an individual compares himself to other objects in a frame of reference that is socially determined. In consumer research it is generally accepted that self-concept (also referred to as self-image) has four aspects: actual self (how a person sees himself/herself), social self (how others see him/her), ideal self (how a person would like to see himself/herself), and ideal social self (how a person would like others to see him/her (Sirgy, 1982).

There are two general types of personality research in the literature; one which considers personality as a set of internal traits that dictate a person’s consistent and characteristic response to stimuli which explain a person’s behavioral tendencies (Kotler, 2003; McShane & Von Glinow, 2005, p.57; Sheth & Mittal, 2004), and the other, as an interaction of the individual and the external situation he/she is in (Wee, 2004). Both

research foci have aimed to examine factors that will enable researchers to predict, modify, and control human behavior, relying greatly on knowledge from psychology, sociology, and psychiatry (Sweeney & Brandon, 2006).

By far the most popular model of human personality is the trait-based theory of The Big Five, popularized by Allport and Odbert (1936), Cattell (1946), Norman (1967), and Goldberg (1990), among others. McShane and Von Glinow (2005, p.59) gave the following outline of The Big Five's dimensions (characteristics): conscientiousness (careful, dependable, self-disciplined), agreeableness (courteous, good-natured, empathic, caring), neuroticism (anxious, hostile, depressed), openness to experience (sensitive, flexible, creative, curious), and extroversion (outgoing, talkative, sociable, assertive). Although some debate exists on the dimensionality, appropriateness, and clinical applicability of the Big Five, Sweeney and Brandon (2006) still assert that it provides a useful and reliable means of measuring and characterizing individual differences.

Although related, personality should not be confused with self-concept because the latter can vary between the private and public selves (how the consumer sees one's self and how others see the consumer) and may constantly change as the individual matures, while personality is more enduring and stable (Kotler, 2003) and is largely formed before the age of seven (Temporal, 2001). The current study will focus on personality as it relates to branding and consumer behavior.

### **Brand Image and Brand Personality**

Just as self-image and personality are discrete, brand image and brand personality are also distinct constructs, even if they are both components of customer-based brand equity (Keller, 1998). As previously mentioned, brand image is "the set of associations linked to the brand that consumers hold in memory" (Keller, 1993, p.2). These are based on subjective and perceptual reasons and emotions (Helgeson & Supphellen, 2004) and can be short term and tactical (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000). On the other hand, brand personality involves "the set of human characteristics associated with a brand" as well as the characteristics associated with the company's employees, managers, and endorsers (Aaker, 1997, p. 347). These associations are more memorable (Aaker, 2000), meaningful (O'Shaughnessy & O'Shaughnessy, 2004), emotionally powerful (Temporal, 2001; Upshaw, 1995), long

standing (Temporal, 2001), and consistent (LePla & Parker, 1999; Temporal, 2001) in comparison to brand image associations. In addition, brand personality echoes how people feel about a brand (Keller, 1998) and defines for the consumer the emotions that can be experienced upon its consumption (Batra, Lehmann, & Singh, 1993), whereas brand image reflects what the consumer perceives the brand is (Temporal, 2001) and what he/she expects the brand to do (American Marketing Association, 2006; Keller, 1998). Temporal (2001, p.33) states that, “brand image should reflect and express the brand personality.”

Aaker and Fournier (1995) seem to support the trait-based approach as they defined personality as the “set of meanings constructed by an observer to describe the ‘inner’ characteristics of another person...that can be used to summarize complex behaviors and form expectations of future behaviors” (p. 392). The authors then equated brand personality as the ‘inner’ characteristics of a brand that are created by consumers using behavior exhibited by personified brands or brand characters. That is, brand personality is a consumer’s evaluation of a brand on a pattern of traits that are typically used to describe a person’s personality (Batra, et al., 1993). This is the nature of the brand as intended by its sellers (American Marketing Association, 2006).

In maturing markets where competition is intense (i.e. casual dining restaurants with the same theme / menu concepts), consumers may view brands as the same, with little excitement to offer, minimal differentiation, and a general lack of vigor. Price may begin to be the most important competitive edge. This then leads to having less reason to be committed to a brand, meaning a weaker foundation for loyalty (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000; Aaker, 2004). This supports the assertion that brand differentiation is an important key in attaining a competitive advantage (Aaker, 2004). When not much product differentiation is present, the symbolic meaning and the experience becomes more crucial than what the brand can do functionally (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000; O’Shaughnessy & O’Shaughnessy, 2004; Temporal, 2001). For example, new menu items, products extensions (i.e. signature sauces sold in supermarkets), services, or loyalty programs can be copied, but a distinct brand personality is an intangible differentiator that is specifically created, owned, and difficult to replicate (Aaker, 2004; Temporal, 2001).

A well established brand personality must have the following characteristics: elements of the brand’s marketing mix are deliberately coordinated, personality sought is

competitively distinctive and desirable, and the personality sought is robust and kept consistent over time and over media (Batra et. al, 1993; Lannon, 1993). Although brand personality evolves over the brand's life cycle, it must be stable and not subject to frequent or drastic changes that may lead to inconsistency and unpredictability from the consumer's perspective (Temporal, 2001). A brand lacking a defined and stable personality weakens the customer experience (LePla & Parker, 1999) and will have difficulty in creating awareness and unique identity (Temporal, 2001), positioning (Back, 2005), and building strong brand-customer relationships (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000).

Marketing literature is well populated with brand image research, however, empirical research on brand personality is generally lacking, more so in the realm of hospitality research. To fill this gap, the current study focuses on the measurement and application of brand personality in consumer behavior as opposed to brand image.

### ***Brand Personality Measurement***

Following the trait-based approach, Aaker's (1997) model of brand personality is similar to The Big Five. Aaker (1997) empirically showed that brand personality has five dimensions, which in turn have characteristic facets that define them: sincerity (down-to-earth, honest, wholesome, and cheerful), excitement (daring, spirited, imaginative, and up-to-date), competence (reliable, intelligent, and successful), sophistication (upper class and charming), and ruggedness (outdoorsy and tough). The 15 facets are founded upon 42 personality traits that comprise the Brand Personality Scale (BPS). Because brand personality is a multidimensional construct, there is a multitude of ways that it can be designed so that it is "optimal" given a specific brand (Diamantopoulos et al, 2005). Thus it is reasonable to expect that brands will have different ratings on these dimensions depending on the brand's marketing profile.

Aaker (1997) suggested that sincerity, excitement, and competence are inherent in the brand and are most closely related to the Big Five dimensions of agreeableness, extroversion, and conscientiousness, respectively. Sophistication and ruggedness, however, are desired brand characteristics that do not have any direct counterparts within the Big Five dimensions. Caprara et al. (2001) likewise found that the Big Five framework could not directly be applied to brands and could be reduced to two primary factors: (1) agreeableness and

emotional stability (i.e. stability, predictability, pleasantness) and (2) extraversion and openness (i.e. dynamism, activity, innovation). These observations must be given consideration when applying the framework to studies investigating congruence between the brand and the consumer.

Siguaw, Mattila, and Austin (1999) applied the BPS to three different restaurant brands each across three commercial foodservice segments (fast food, casual dining, and upscale dining) to investigate brand differentiation across the restaurant segments and the individual brands within the segments. Consumers saw little differentiation on brand personality dimensions among casual dining restaurants. Results implied the importance of brand management and positioning strategy because a differentiated brand is a means of achieving competitive advantage. Austin, Siguaw, & Mattila (2003) conducted a follow-up study to examine the generalizability of the BPS. Poor structural fit and mediocre reliability scores led the authors to conclude that the framework does not necessarily allow generalization to individual brands within one product category and indicated that caution should be taken with the application of the scale. A possible explanation for the unsatisfactory results may lay in the lack of clarity of the attributes chosen. Respondents may have interpreted the attributes differently from the context intended by Aaker (1997).

Azoulay and Kapferer (2003) examined the measurement scale and expressed concerns that items on the BPS measure dimensions of product performance and cognitive capacities rather than brand personality. Other concerns with the use of the BPS include the lack of branding descriptors like “economical”, “famous”, or “convenient” (Caprara et al., 2001) and the lack of negative brand attributes like “arrogant”, “coy”, or “dominating” (Mark & Pearson, 2001; Sweeney & Brandon, 2006) which may be needed to fully capture the essence of the brand’s personality.

Going beyond the factor analytical trait approach popularized by Aaker (1997), Sweeney and Brandon (2006) expanded the definition of brand personality by saying that it is the “set of human personality traits that correspond to the interpersonal domain of human personality and are relevant to describing the brand as a relationship partner.” With this concept, the authors have proposed an alternative for measuring the construct, which will facilitate a better understanding of brand personality, particularly in relation to consumer behavior. The model uses the interpersonal circumplex model (IPC), which shows bi-polar

traits conforming to a circular arrangement in a nonrestrictive correlation pattern wherein each trait has a neighboring as well as an opposite trait. This more in-depth model of interpersonal brand personality focuses on the key dimensions of human personality (extraversion and agreeableness) in addition to the five factors developed by Aaker (1997). The IPC also addresses the need for the negative-type brand attributes by including characteristics such as dominant, quarrelsome, and calculating.

Sweeney and Brandon (2006) stressed that the more detailed IPC is a complimentary (and not a replacement) measurement to the broader factor-analytical model proposed by Aaker (1997). Moreover, Diamantopoulos et al. (2005) empirically confirmed that the BPS, less the “western” item, is reliable and may be used with a different population and a different brand from that which Aaker (1997) used. In addition, Murase and Bojanic (2004) showed that the BPS obtained acceptable reliability scores (Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  values ranged from .8065-.9179) for all dimensions when the scale was used for cross cultural research. Thus, Aaker’s framework was used as a basis to achieve the goals of this study.

## **Brand Loyalty**

Many studies have been done to conceptualize, define, and measure brand loyalty. One of the most accepted definitions is that of Oliver (1999, p.34) which states that brand loyalty is “a deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronize a preferred brand consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same brand or same brand-set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior.” This definition is consistent with earlier work by Jacoby and Chestnut (1978), which specified three conditions for brand loyalty to exist. First, the consumer’s information base should indicate that their focal brand is more superior to other brands in its class. Secondly, the consumer must like the brand more than others in its class. And lastly, when purchase situations arise, the consumer must decide to patronize their focal brand instead of any other brand in its class. Jacoby and Chestnut (1978) further specified four kinds of brand loyalty:

1. *True focal brand loyalty* is when the consumer demonstrates loyalty to the brand that is being investigated, referred to as the focal brand. For example, if the

referent restaurant chain is Applebee's, the consumer chooses Applebee's and no other casual dining restaurant in its class.

2. *True multi-brand loyalty* is when the focal brand is included in a set of brands that the customer patronizes. Following the previous example, given a list of casual dining restaurants, the customer may be a frequent diner at Chili's and Applebee's, and chooses these consistently over other restaurant chains in their class.
3. *Nonloyal repeat purchasing of focal brand* occurs when a consumer patronizes a brand even though he or she does not hold a strong emotional commitment towards it. The customer may often dine at Applebee's, but view it more in a utilitarian manner than on an emotional level (i.e.: 'it is a place that serves decent food' in comparison to 'it is a place he or she enjoys eating at').
4. *Happenstance purchasing of focal brand* occurs when consumers of a different brand patronize the focal brand in the absence of their personal choice. For example, a small town may not have Chili's which is the customer's favorite, thus he patronizes Applebee's because it is the only casual dining restaurant in its class that is available.

Due to these classifications of brand loyalty, care is required in the measurement of the construct. It is not enough to base loyalty solely on repeat purchasing (Oliver, 1997; Hill & Alexander, 2000). As an alternative, researchers also view loyalty as the strength of the relationship between a consumer's relative attitude and repeat purchase. Dick and Basu (1994) suggested that social norms and situational factors mediate this relationship whose consequences are reduced search motivation, resistance to counter persuasion, and engagement in word of mouth. As suggested by Dick and Basu (1994), loyalty has been generally classified into four categories: true loyalty (high relative attitude and repeat purchase), latent loyalty (high relative loyalty, low repeat purchase), spurious loyalty (low relative loyalty, high repeat purchase), and no loyalty (low relative attitude and repeat purchase).

Loyalty has been viewed to have three specific antecedents, namely cognitive, affective, and conative (Dick and Basu, 1994) and to further understand brand loyalty, it is useful to look at it as phases (Oliver, 1997) in light of these antecedents. One's cognitive

loyalty towards a brand is based on the information that one has access to about the brand. This can be a function of the brand's image, product/service performance in the market, or a similar measure (i.e. "This restaurant chain is superior to other casual dining restaurants in its class"). Affective loyalty deals with the customer's emotional like or dislike toward the brand, which is mostly attributed to past experience (i.e. "I have grown to like this restaurant chain more so than other casual dining restaurant chains"). Conative loyalty deals with behavioral intention, the customer's desire to continue the brand relationship through continued patronage and positive word of mouth (i.e. "I intend to continue dining at this restaurant chain in the future"). In addition, Oliver (1997) and Yi and La (2004) also cited action loyalty, which refers to the transformation of the customer's motivated intention into a readiness to act (i.e. "When I have a need to go to a casual dining restaurant, I dine only at this restaurant").

As more choices appear in the casual dining market, coupled with the rising propensity to eat meals away from home, capturing a truly loyal customer base is paramount. Because the market is continually growing and becoming more saturated, any individual restaurant brand may have difficulty in expanding that base of loyal customers. However, it is important to note that a small but deeply loyal base can still have a substantial contribution to the brand's equity (Aaker , 2000).

## **Hypotheses Development and Conceptual Framework**

### ***Brand Personality Congruence***

Although the development of the brand personality congruence scale is exploratory in nature, it brings together two important areas of research that have been shown to be useful in business and marketing applications: brand personality and congruence. Moreover, marketing professionals will be provided information that may be useful in designing marketing strategies to maximize the leverage that a well established brand personality provides. When the personalities of the brand and the customer are congruent, the chances of a brand to succeed increase markedly (Temporal, 2001). Strong brand loyalty, trust, and high overall satisfaction contribute to competitive advantage, and thus warrants the need to study brand personality congruence as it relates to these constructs.



Research has shown that consumers tend to support brands and services whose personalities closely match their own (Batra, et. al, 1993; Kassarian, 1971; Kotler, 2003; Sirgy, 1982; Temporal, 2001; Wee, 2004), thus allowing them to express themselves through the brands that they use (Aaker, 1997, Dolich, 1969, Fournier, 1994). Wee (2004) concurred by stating that consumers fulfill the need for identity through the brands that they choose to support. This reinforces Grubb and Grathwohl's (1967, p.22) conclusion that self-congruity "links the psychological construct of an individual's self-concept with the symbolic value of goods purchased in the marketplace." Literature shows that there is a positive relationship between self-congruity and brand choice/preference, purchasing and repurchasing decisions, and postpurchase attitudes such as satisfaction and brand loyalty (Back, 2005; Birdwell, 1968; Dolich, 1969; Ericksen, 1996; Graeff, 1996; Sirgy, 1982; Sirgy & Samli, 1985; Sirgy et al., 1997).

As previously mentioned, the terms "self-concept", "self-image", and "personality" have been used interchangeably in existing brand marketing and psychology literature. As yet, no research exists that explores the measurement of brand personality congruence specifically since previous research has focused more on self-concept/self-image congruence rather than personality congruence. Sirgy (1985) expressed image congruence as the match between the brand's image and the self-image of the target customer(s). Past research has shown that congruence encourages the desire to maintain positive customer-brand relationships (Fournier, 1998) and that loyalty is a direct function of image congruence (Sirgy & Samli, 1985). For the purpose of this study, Sirgy's (1985) framework was modified where congruence was operationalized as the level at which brand personality is congruent with customer's personality traits as alluded to by Aaker (1999). This was measured as a gap score between the customer's self-reported evaluation of his/her personality and their evaluation of the restaurant's personality.

The rationale behind using brand personality congruence rather than the traditional construct of self-congruity is that self-concept can vary between the private and public selves (how the consumer sees one's self and how others see the consumer), while personality is more enduring and stable. Helgeson and Supphellen (2004) concluded that brand personality and self-congruity are discriminant constructs; where the former is more broad and the focus is the brand itself while the latter is more narrow and focuses on the self. It

was also empirically proven that self-congruity and brand personality had independent effects on brand attitude.

In looking at the working definition for brand loyalty, it is important to note that it is considered as “a deeply held commitment.” However, marketing literature is lacking in the investigation of direct or indirect paths of congruence to commitment. Fullerton (2003) and other organizational behavior researchers have implied that commitment springs from strong feelings of identification. Marconi (2000) implies that it is the building of a public identification of oneself with the brand that leads to strong brand loyalty. In the context of this study, this identification is operationalized as BPC. Temporal (2001, p.53) asserts that when BPC is high, that is the brand and customer personalities are closer, “the greater the willingness to buy the brand and the deeper the brand loyalty.” Thus, the study seeks to provide empirical proof that brand personality influences consumer preference (Aaker, 1999) by suggesting that high levels of BPC are strongly and positively associated with brand loyalty (H<sub>2</sub>: Brand personality congruence is positively associated with brand loyalty).

### *Trust*

In marketing literature, it is generally accepted that trust is a fundamental component for building successful relationships (Garbarino & Johnson, 1999) and that it exists when one party believes and has confidence in the exchange partner’s reliability and high degree of integrity (Morgan & Hunt 1994; Hennig-Thurau & Hansen, 2000). This study adopted Garbarino and Johnson’s (1999) approach of studying trust in the context of the customer’s trust in the quality and reliability of the services offered in a business-to-customer framework. In the context of this study, the exchange partner will be operationalized as the restaurant brand.

Following Anderson and Narus (1990) and Andaleeb’s (1996) lead, it is believed that the exchange partner will perform actions that will result in positive outcomes for the customer. Because of this, the customer is willing to take more risks in the relationship (Morgan & Hunt, 1994), underscoring Moorman, Deshpande, and Zaltman’s (2001) suggestion that trust exists when the customer is willing “to rely on an exchange partner in whom one has confidence” (p. 221). Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995) suggest that

once trust is built, this reliance can continue even if the individual may not have control or ability to monitor the exchange partner.

Mayer et al. (1995) provided a three-dimensional framework for trust: ability, benevolence, and integrity. In summary, the exchange partner must be competent in providing the product or service, be able and willing to do the best for the trustor beyond the motive of acquiring a profit, and be able to operate within a set of principles and practices that the trustor deems acceptable. A review by Sargeant and Lee (2004) found that consumer research beyond Mayer et al.'s (1995) framework has generally conceptualized trust in two ways. First, trust is seen as a confidence in the trustworthiness of a partner, and second as a behavioral intention that stems from reliance on a partner. Sirdeshmukh, Singh, and Sabol (2002) embody these conceptualizations in their definition of consumer trust as the “expectations held by the consumer that the service provider is dependable and can be relied on to deliver on its promises” (p.17).

In the book *Building Brand Identity*, Upshaw (1995) emphasizes that trust is a dwindling commodity in the market place and that is important to assess the behavior and thought process of consumers when they purchase branded products or services. Upshaw (1995, p. 9) stated that “Branding is the art of trust creation.” An essential step in building this trust is the creation of a stable and trustworthy brand identity. Because brand personality is an important part of branding and the most obviously exhibited, there is merit in investigating the effect of BPC on the feelings of trust that customers feel towards the focal brand. Fournier (1994) suggests that a well-established brand personality can lead to increased trust and ultimately, loyalty. The study proposes that as BPC increases, the propensity to trust the restaurant brand also increases ( $H_1$ : Brand personality congruence is positively associated with trust).

Prominent research by Morgan and Hunt (1994), Garbarino and Johnson (1999), Hart and Johnson (1999), and Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) among others, point to the importance of building trust as a determinant, if not the foundation, of customer retention and loyalty. Bitner (1995) considers each service encounter (in this case, each visit to the restaurant brand) as a chance to build trust and increase loyalty. Similarly, Berry (2000, p.164) believes that trust is “the single most powerful relationship marketing tool available to

a company.” Temporal (2002) further observes that the most successful brands enjoy the trust of their customers and maintenance of that trust facilitates brand loyalty.

Past literature states that trust enhances the strength of loyalty and relationship quality because as trust is built, the perceived risk in and vulnerability to the service provider is reduced (Berry, 2000), and the consumer’s confidence in keeping the relationship is increased (Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Sirdeshmukh et al., 2002; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2002). As a pioneer in relationship marketing, Berry (2000) suggests that “trust is critical to the formation of service-based relationships because of the intangibility of services” (p.163). The study aims to validate the relationship between trust and a measure of composite brand loyalty in the casual dining brand, which includes the cognitive, affective, conative, and action phases. Thus, the study proposes that higher levels of trust lead to higher levels of brand loyalty (H<sub>6</sub>: Trust is positively associated with brand loyalty).

### ***Satisfaction***

An array of definitions for the satisfaction construct is present in the marketing literature. Most of these definitions have involved “*an evaluative, affective, or emotional response*” (Oliver, 1989, p.1), most of which are anchored on the disconfirmation paradigm (Oh & Parks, 1997; Yi, 1990). That is, satisfaction is determined by the comparison of perceptions of product performance with existing expectations (Oliver, 1997). When performance is less than what the customers expect, quality is perceived to be low resulting in negative disconfirmation or dissatisfaction. Conversely, if performance meets customer’s expectations (zero disconfirmation) or exceeds customer’s expectations (positive disconfirmation), quality is perceived to be high and satisfaction results (Bitner, 1990; Kandampully et al., 2001). Furthermore, Oliver (1997) defined satisfaction/dissatisfaction as “the consumer’s fulfillment response, the degree to which the level of fulfillment is pleasant or unpleasant” (p.28).

Oliver (1999) later redefined satisfaction as “a fairly temporal post usage state for one-time consumption or a repeatedly experienced state for ongoing consumption that reflects how the product or service has fulfilled its purpose” (p.41). As such, research has been mixed in the operationalization of the satisfaction construct (Anderson & Fornell, 1994; Jones & Suh, 2000). Satisfaction has been viewed as a transaction specific measure (i.e.:

satisfaction with the current dining experience) and as a cumulative evaluation measure (i.e.: satisfaction with the particular brand of casual dining restaurant over time). In this study, overall satisfaction or the “overall evaluation based on the total purchase and consumption experience with a good or service over time” (Anderson, Fornell, & Lehmann, 1994, p.54) is the primary concern. The ability of the focal casual restaurant chain to consistently deliver the benefits sought by the consumer is evaluated.

Due to the intangible nature of services, the two measurements may not always be positively correlated as one service encounter most likely varies from another (Jones & Suh, 2000). For example, a customer may feel dissatisfaction from one service failure episode (low transactional satisfaction) without necessarily feeling dissatisfaction with the service provider as a whole (high overall satisfaction). Because of this phenomenon, transactional satisfaction is a good predictor of behavioral intention only if overall satisfaction is low (Jones & Suh, 2000). However, when overall satisfaction is high, consumers are less likely to let a single dissatisfying experience affect their overall positive evaluation of the service provider.

Research in marketing and hospitality literature has yet to investigate the relationship between congruence and satisfaction in the framework of brand personality. In self-congruity research, when the difference between the product image and the customer image is low, it is said that positive self-congruity occurs. When there is high congruence, the customer feels that the product or service reinforces their self-concept, thus creating a feeling of satisfaction. Past research has shown that this has a strong relationship with satisfaction due to the social consistency and social approval frameworks (Back, 2005; Chon & Olsen, 1991; Jamal & Goode, 2001; Sirgy, 1982).

The social consistency framework suggests that individuals have an innate need to behave in ways that are consistent with social norms. The social approval framework likewise activates the need for individuals to behave in ways that are consistent with others' expectations. When the brand image congruence is high, both of these needs are met and causes a feeling of satisfaction (Back, 2005; Sirgy et al., 1997). Similarly, Gwinner, Gremler, and Bitner (1998) showed that value congruence is significantly related to satisfaction. When the similarity between the customer's values and the service provider is high, relationship quality is enhanced and satisfaction is increased. In the context of brand

personality, the study proposes that the higher the BPC, the more likely that the customer will experience higher levels of satisfaction (H<sub>3</sub>: Brand personality congruence is positively associated with satisfaction).

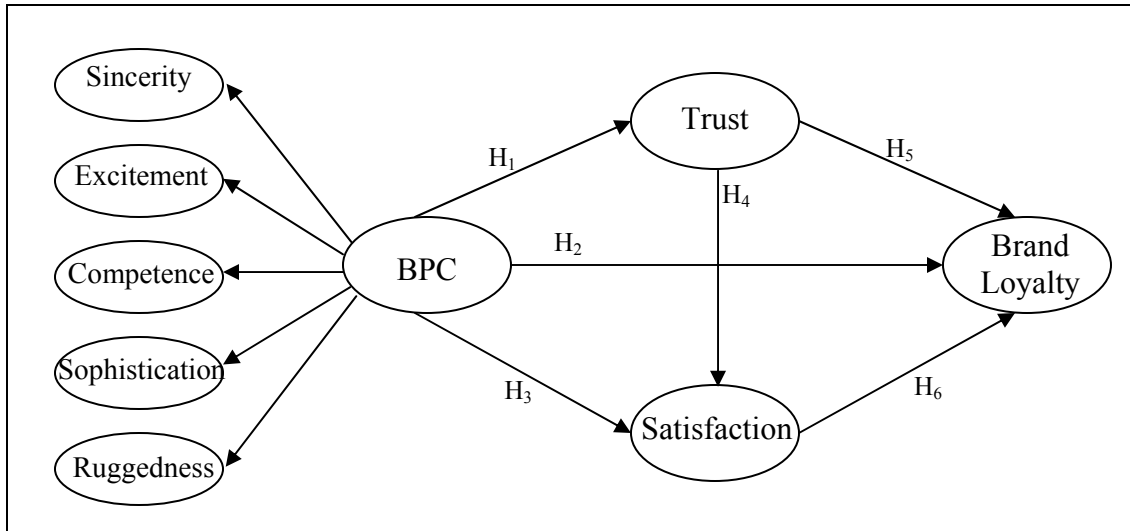
When trust in a brand exists, customers have more tolerance for service failures (O'Shaughnessy & O'Shaughnessy, 2004) and their overall evaluation of satisfaction may not suffer. Additionally, Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, and Gremler (2002) showed that as confidence and trust in the service provider increases, the anxiety related to the relationship is lessened resulting in greater satisfaction. In the context of this study, the service provider is operationalized as the casual dining restaurant brand (H<sub>4</sub>: Trust is positively associated with satisfaction).

Marketing literature is rich with research that has investigated the relationship between brand loyalty and satisfaction and has largely shown it to be positive (Bitner, 1990; Oliver, 1997; Yi, 1990). Jones and Suh (2000) also show that overall satisfaction is a better predictor of repurchase intention, which in turn is a brand loyalty cue (Yi & La, 2004). High levels of overall satisfaction and strong brand loyalty contribute to competitive advantage, and have yet to be studied in relation to brand personality congruence. Thus, the inclusion of this relationship in the model is warranted. The study posits that the more the restaurant satisfies the needs of the customer for quality food and service, the more it will be preferred to other brands in its class (H<sub>5</sub>: Satisfaction is positively associated with brand loyalty).

### ***Conceptual Framework***

In summary, the following conceptual model was developed where BPC was hypothesized to have positive associations with satisfaction, trust, and brand loyalty. Further more, satisfaction and trust have positive associations with brand loyalty and mediate the BPC-brand loyalty relationship (Figure 2.1).

**Figure 2.1 Conceptual framework of brand personality congruence (BPC), satisfaction, trust, and brand loyalty.**



**Hypothesis 1:** BPC is positively associated with trust.

**Hypothesis 2:** BPC is positively associated with brand loyalty.

**Hypothesis 3:** BPC is positively associated with satisfaction.

**Hypothesis 4:** Trust is positively associated with satisfaction.

**Hypothesis 5:** Satisfaction is positively associated with brand loyalty.

**Hypothesis 6:** Trust is positively associated with brand loyalty.

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## **CHAPTER 3 - METHODOLOGY**

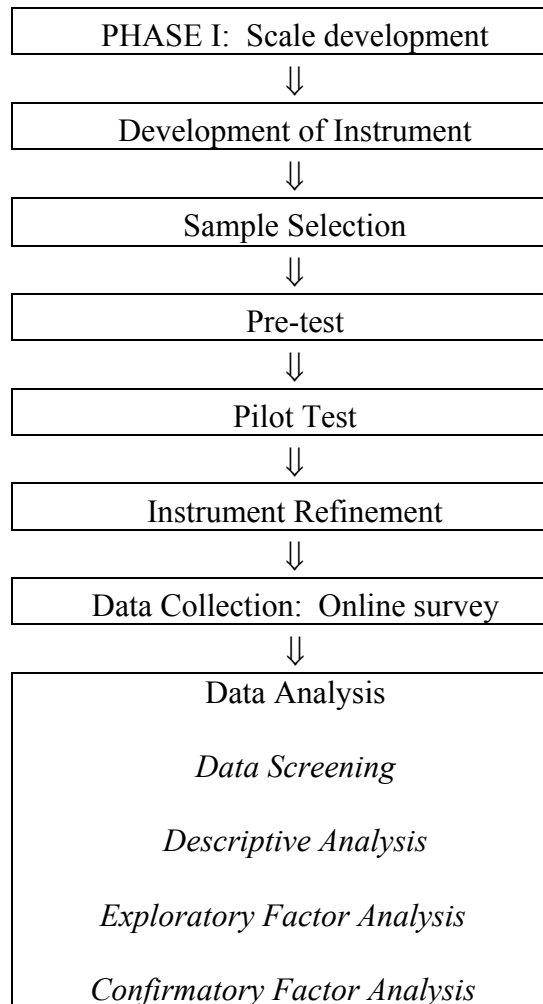
The overall objective of this research study was to establish the relationship between Brand Personality Congruence (BPC) and the postpurchase consumer evaluations of trust, satisfaction, and brand loyalty. This section includes a discussion of the two phases designed to address the research's objectives: scale development (Figure 3.1) and theoretical model testing (Figure 3.4). Phase I primarily focused on the development of the BPC scale based on the existing Brand Personality Scale (Aaker 1997). In addition, scales for trust and brand loyalty were tested for reliability and unidimensionality. Phase II involved testing the relationship between BPC and brand loyalty and the mediating effects of satisfaction and trust on that relationship. Because the study involved gathering data from human subjects, an approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) was obtained prior to the commencement of Phase I. A copy of the approval is in the researcher's permanent file in the academic unit.

### **Phase One**

Figure 3.1 illustrates the overall research design for Phase I. A questionnaire was designed to explore the application of Aaker's (1997) 42-item Brand Personality Scale in the measurement of BPC in the casual dining industry. A review of the literature showed no previous scales measuring this construct, thus the primary objective of this phase was to explore the appropriateness, reliability, and validity of using the Brand Personality Scale to calculate BPC. In addition, modified scales for trust and brand loyalty were examined for reliability.

The sampling frame used was the Faculty and Staff Directory (2005-2006) published by a midwestern university, which contained a database of more than 4,000 possible respondents. As an incentive to increase the response rate during the pilot test and data collection, respondents were asked to choose one of three charities (Manhattan's Boys and Girls Club, Manhattan Bread Basket, and the university Foundation's Changing Lives

**Figure 3.1 Research design flowchart for Phase I**



Campaign) that they wished the researcher to donate \$1. All statistical analyses were performed using SPSS (ver 11.5) and LISREL (ver 8.54) and will be discussed in the following section.

### ***Survey Instrument***

Due to the nature of the survey constructs, a restaurant brand with an outlet located in Manhattan, Kansas was chosen to ensure that the study population was familiar with the restaurant. This brand was ranked by *Restaurants and Institutions* (2006) as one of the top three casual dining restaurant chains in the United States. The questionnaire requested



respondents to evaluate the focal restaurant on three measurement scales: Brand Personality Congruence, Trust, and Brand Loyalty (Appendix A.2):

**Brand Personality Congruence (based on Aaker's (1997) Brand Personality Scale).**

Initially, the Brand Personality Scale (BPS) was used in its entirety. For the first section, respondents were asked to think of the restaurant as though it was a person (i.e.: This restaurant chain is down-to-earth). These responses showed which of the 42 personality traits or human characteristics came to mind when the respondent thought of this particular restaurant. A five-point Likert-type scale anchored at "not at all descriptive" to "extremely descriptive" was used. Because Aaker (1997) stated that the scale can be used to measure human personality, respondents were then asked to rate themselves on the same traits (i.e.: I am down-to-earth). BPC was operationalized as the difference between the respondents' brand personality scores and customer personality scores.

**Trust (Morgan and Hunt, 1994).** A four item seven-point Likert-type scale was used to measure the degree of trust that the respondent felt towards the restaurant chain. The scale was anchored at 1 (Strongly Disagree) and 7 (Strongly Agree).

**Brand Loyalty (Oliver, 1997).** Respondents were asked to rate their attitude towards the restaurant. Five items representing each of the loyalty phases (cognitive, affective, conative, and action) and an overall item ("Overall, I consider myself loyal to this restaurant chain") were used to measure brand loyalty on a seven-point strongly disagree/strongly agree Likert-type scale.

The concluding section of the questionnaire requested respondents to provide demographic data. Information collected included: gender, age, income, employment classification, frequency of dining at focal brand, and frequency of dining out at casual dining restaurants.

### ***Pre-test and Pilot Study***

After instrument development, the questionnaire was formatted and uploaded to the online survey system provided by the university. A link to the survey was sent to 20 faculty and graduate students for evaluation. The pre-test had three primary objectives: 1) to evaluate content validity in terms of sequence and flow of questions, ambiguity or bias of verbiage, ease of understanding, and appropriateness of scale levels and anchoring words; 2) to test ease of use of the online survey instrument in terms of clarity of instructions, format of questions and clarity of scales, length of survey and time of completion; and 3) evaluate cover letter and ability to recruit respondent.

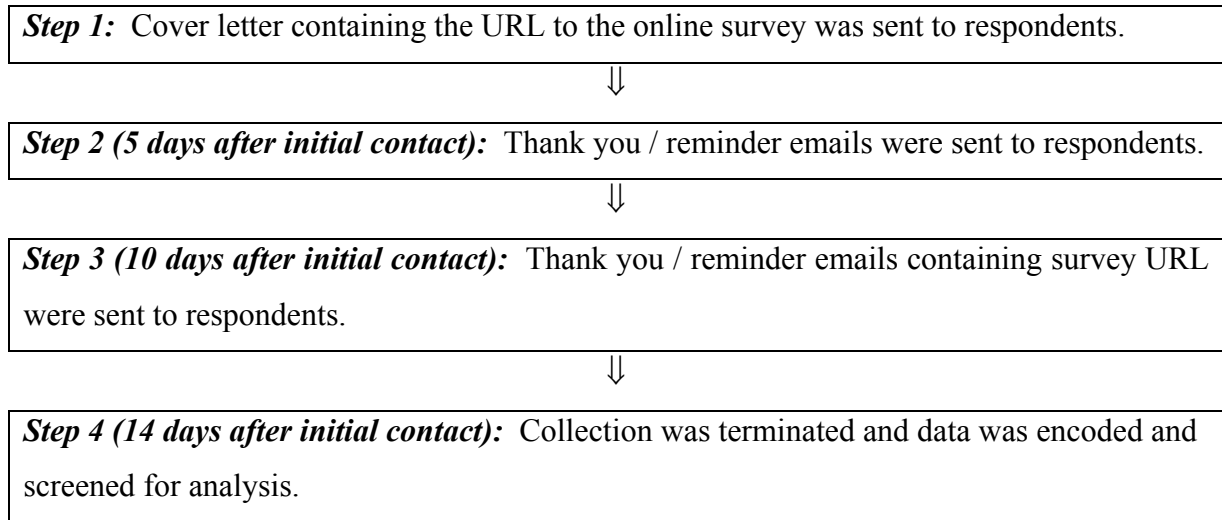
Based on critique provided by the expert panel, the instrument and cover letter were refined. A pilot test was administered to 100 faculty and staff. Using the Select Cases function in SPSS, the sample was randomly generated. The pilot study was designed to estimate the response rate, to assess the effectiveness of the incentive, and to determine the optimum length of time to keep the survey accessible.

### ***Data Collection***

In 2000, Dillman introduced the Tailored Design Method (TDM) of survey research. Its primary goal is to “create respondent trust and perceptions of increased rewards and reduced costs for being a respondent...and ...overall reduction of survey error” (Dillman, 2000, p.5). The TDM suggests that pre-notification to survey respondents be sent prior to sending the cover letter and instrument. After initial contact, a reminder follow up communication should be sent. Depending on the length of the survey period, a third mailing containing a replacement survey and cover letter should be sent to non-respondents after a given period. A final reminder should be sent one week after the last mailing. Utilizing Dillman’s (2000) suggestions, the procedures for this Phase of the study was designed. Figure 3.4 outlines the steps taken in the context of the current study.

Based on the pilot test, a response rate of about 10% was to be expected from the online survey format. To obtain the goal of at least 200 responses, a random sample of 2,000 was generated from the Faculty and Staff directory, excluding those used for the

**Figure 3.2 Modified Tailored Design Model**



pilot test. After further instrument refinement based on results of the pilot test, the survey was administered to the generated sample. The following steps were followed:

**Step 1:** An introductory email, which served as the cover letter (Appendix A.1), included the link to the survey and an explanation of the study and participant incentive. Participants were notified that completion of the survey signified their consent to participate in the study. Participants were also provided a choice to opt-out of the survey by clicking on a separate URL that removed them from the mailing list.

**Step 2:** Five days after initial mailing, a reminder email was sent to the respondents. Of the 2000 initially selected, 158 were returned as undeliverable, thus only the remaining 1842 received the reminder emails. The communication thanked all those who have already answered the questionnaire and encouraged all those who have not to complete the survey.

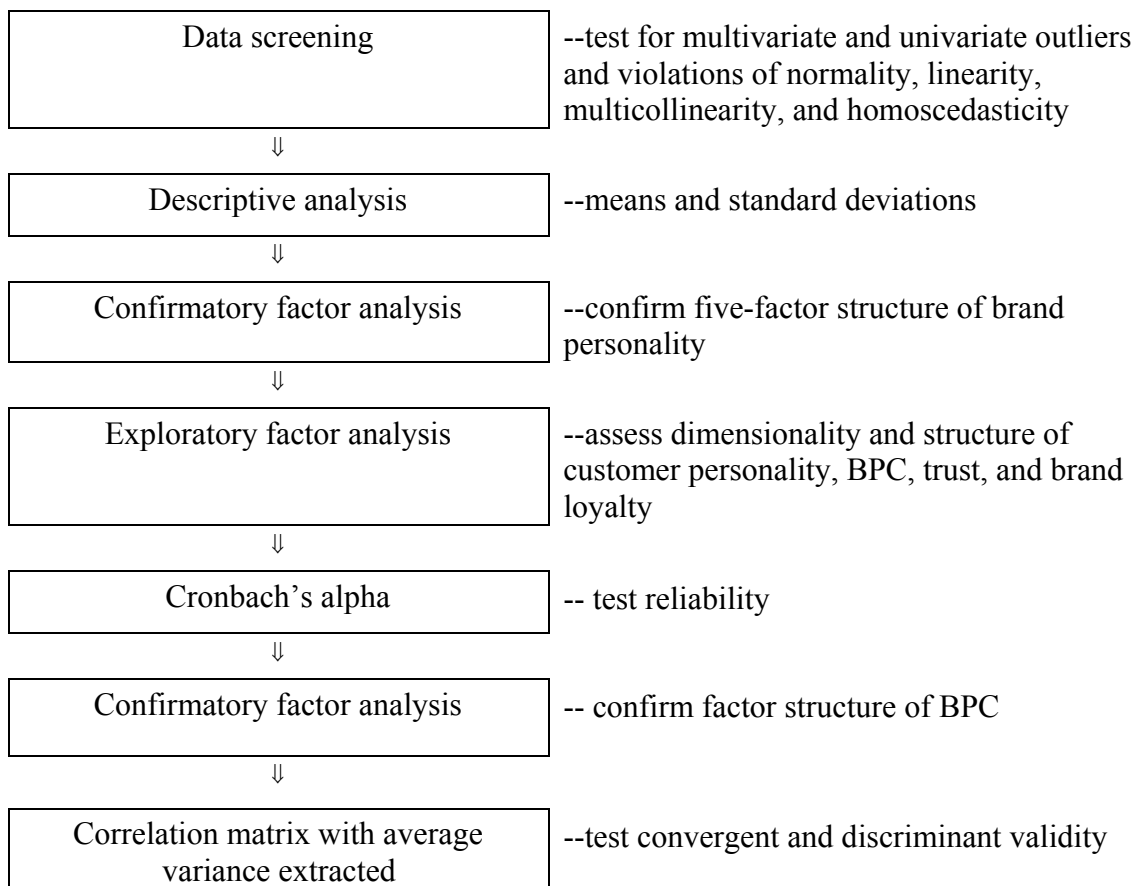
**Step 3:** Ten days after initial mailing, another reminder email was sent to non-respondents. Participants who have chosen to opt-out of the survey did not receive this request.

**Step 4:** Results of the pilot test showed that no additional responses were received past the 14<sup>th</sup> day after the first email. The survey URL was disabled and data collection was terminated. The study generated 237 responses, resulting in a 12.87% response rate.

### *Data Analyses*

Figure 3.3 presents a flowchart of the statistical analyses performed. Before running the analyses, data was checked for possible violations of the assumptions underlying factor analysis. A final usable sample of 221 was established after the data was screened for outliers, missing data, and normality. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize means and standard deviations for all constructs and demographics. The trust and brand loyalty scales were tested for reliability using Cronbach's alpha. Factor analysis was also applied to confirm each scale's unidimensionality.

**Figure 3.3 Phase I data analysis flowchart**



Confirmatory factor analysis (LISREL v. 8.54) was performed on the BP data to assess Aaker's (1997) five-factor structure. Modification of the scale was performed based on factor loadings and modification indices. An exploratory factor analyses with varimax

rotation (SPSS, v.13) was then performed using the CP data to assess the appropriateness of the BPS indicators in measuring human personality. All indicators with loadings of .40 and below were eliminated. Further reliability and correlation diagnostics were performed prior to running confirmatory factor analysis.

After comparing the resulting BP and CP scales, only indicators that loaded on both scales were used for analyses in developing the BPC scale. BPC scores per attribute were calculated and interpreted. An exploratory factor analysis with varimax rotation was used to assess the principal components factor structure of BPC. After factors with loadings less than .40 were eliminated, reliability and correlation diagnostics were performed. The remaining indicators were then subjected to a confirmatory factor analysis to verify the structure of the BPC scale. Using average variances extracted (AVE) and the correlation matrix between dimensions, the resulting scale was checked for convergent and divergent validity. Chapter 4 summarizes the results of the BPC scale development.

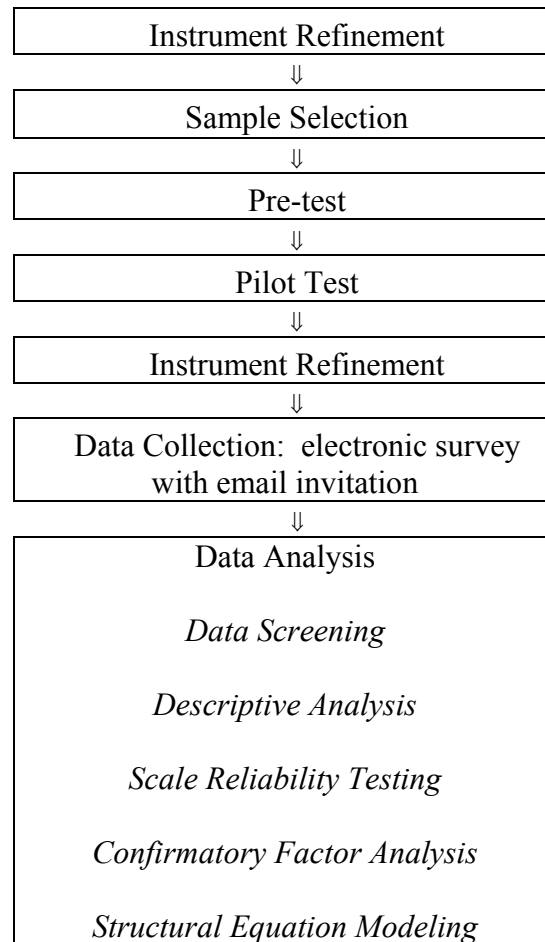
### **Phase Two: Theoretical Model Testing**

Figure 3.4 illustrates the overall design for Phase II of the study. The population is composed of all residents of metropolitan areas who purchase meals from casual dining restaurants. The sampling frame consisted of residents from the top 25 urban areas across the United States.

#### ***Survey Instrument***

The same casual dining brand restaurant that was used in Phase I was used for Phase II. The questionnaire requested respondents to evaluate the focal restaurant on four measurement scales: Brand Personality Congruence, Trust, Satisfaction, and Brand Loyalty (Appendix B.2). Satisfactory reliability and unidimensionality results obtained from Phase I suggested that the trust and brand loyalty scales were appropriate for use as previously described. Although multi-item measurements are recommended for cognitive constructs (Nunnally, 1978; Yi, 1990), a single-item direct measurement of BPC was added as

**Figure 3.4 Research design flowchart for Phase II**



a confirmatory variable for content validity of the gap score method used to calculate BPC. Based on further literature review, the researcher also determined that a satisfaction scale should be added as a construct for model testing in Phase II. The BPC and satisfaction scales are described below:

**Brand Personality Congruence (BPC).** Phase I resulted in a 17-item scale composed of four dimensions: exciting, unique, sincere, and leader. The gap method was used again in Phase II since satisfactory results were obtained with the method in Phase I. To minimize order and response effects, items within the scale were randomized (i.e. “I am a leader” was the first attribute rated on the customer personality section while “XYZ is a leader” was rated 16<sup>th</sup> on the brand personality section).

**Direct Personality Comparison.** A single item five-point semantic-differential scale anchored from “not at all similar” to “similar” was used to measure the direct comparison between the brand and customer personality (If you were to think of restaurant XYZ as a person, please indicate a point along the scale from left to right that matches how similar you see yourself compared to XYZ).

**Satisfaction (Jones & Suh, 2000).** A three item five-point semantic-differential scale was used to measure satisfaction with the restaurant chain. The three sets of anchors were unsatisfied/satisfied, unpleasant/pleasant, and unfavorable/favorable.

Because the population for Phase II was different from that of Phase I, the demographic section was modified to include the following: gender, age, marital status, income, region of residence, frequency of dining at focal brand, frequency of eating meals away from home, and frequency of dining at casual dining restaurants.

### ***Data Collection***

Prior to data collection, an expert panel of 20 graduate students and faculty from a midwestern university were asked to review the instrument. Based on feedback received, the invitation letter and questionnaire were revised. Several panelists also noted that general consumers who are not familiar with the concept of brand personality may have a difficulty in understanding the scale items and may lead to survey non-completion. Panelists suggested that the customer personality section be presented first before the brand personality because respondents would most likely be more comfortable evaluating themselves. To determine if order bias existed, two forms of the survey were prepared for pilot testing. Half of the respondents were asked to evaluate the restaurant’s personality first (Form 1) while the second half rated themselves first before rating the restaurant’s personality (Form 2).

To establish a wider pool of actual consumers, the pilot test was administered using a targeted electronic mailing list purchased from InfoUSA. InfoUSA was chosen for the study due to its prevalent use in scholarly research (not limited to consumer marketing). InfoUSA maintains consumer databases with demographic information obtained from over 5000 public sources and cross-referenced with the USPS National Change of Address File and the

Delivery Sequence File. The databases are updated weekly and more than 20 million calls to consumers are made annually to ensure that data is current. Table 3.1 summarizes the parameters used for creating the mailing list. Respondents 18-years old and below were excluded from the population since parental consent was required as per the IRB approval.

**Table 3.1 Mailing list criteria**

Parameter	Criteria
Age	19-80
Income	Under \$40,000- \$150,000+
Geographic area	Metropolitan areas across the United States
Contact name per email address	1 <i>This excludes general email addresses for businesses, organizations, and other entities ( i.e. organization_name@server.com)</i>
Number of email invitations sent	5000

Following a similar data collection method as Phase I, an invitation email was sent to 5000 prospective respondents (Appendix B.1). As an incentive to increase the response rate, respondents were informed that they would be entered into a raffle for a \$25 dining gift certificate or an iPod Nano. For every 50 responses received, a dining certificate was to be drawn, and for every 150 responses received, an iPod Nano was to be awarded.

Half of the sample received an invitation email that contained the link to Form 1 while the other half received the URL for Form 2. A follow up email was to be sent five days after the initial mailing. Due to very poor response rates (less than one percent), the second mailing was cancelled and alternative data collection methods were investigated. The growing number of unsolicited mail and virus-infected links and attachments may have been a reason that response rates were poor. Moreover, Sheehan (2001) states that increasing recruitment and requests for the general population to complete all types of surveys contribute to the decreasing response rates. Preliminary analyses of the data, however, showed that no order bias was prevalent and that more completed responses were achieved using Form 1.

A secondary pilot study was performed using E-Rewards, a market research provider. In contrast to InfoUSA who compiles email addresses from public sources, e-Rewards uses a



by-invitation only panel as the sampling frame. Each panelist (also referred to as a member) is asked to complete a 300+ item profile that will enable e-Rewards to provide their clients with actual normalized consumer data that matches with the researcher's research requirements. Incentive for respondent participation is in the form of e-Rewards credits or points and is inclusive in the per-completed-response fee paid by the researcher to e-Rewards.

To ensure that the sample is representative of the population of the United States, the company has developed Dirty Balancing. This technique ensures that response rates on the inbound are much closer to Census proportions in terms of age, income, ethnicity, region of residence, and gender by over sampling males, minorities, and lower income members. The benefit of this method over a standard Census balanced outbound sample is that response imbalances are accounted for. For example, given that females respond more quickly and frequently than males, using Dirty Balancing would come closer to a 50-50 split between male and female compared to a 30-70 split if a standard Census balanced outbound sample was used (K. Seeger, personal communication, June 20, 2007).

During the pilot test or soft launch, 581 email invitations were sent to residents from the top 25 metropolitan areas in the United States (New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Dallas-Fort Worth, Philadelphia, Houston, Miami, Washington D.C., Atlanta, Detroit, Boston, San Francisco, Phoenix, Seattle, Minneapolis-St. Paul, San Diego, St. Louis, Tampa, Baltimore, Denver, Pittsburg, Portland, Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Sacramento). Each email contained the URL link to Form 1 and a unique PIN ID. Each respondent was requested to provide the PIN ID upon starting the survey. This ensured that all respondents would receive their e-Rewards points for completing the survey. Within 24 hours, 67 members accessed the link with 52 members successfully completing the survey. After 48 hours, a total of 81 members (13.9%) accessed the link, 63 started the survey. Fifty-nine (59) completed the survey for a usable response rate of 10.15%. This is comparable to the average response rate of 10% for commercial research done by e-Rewards (M. Evans, personal communication, June 25, 2007). Inspection of the pilot data showed acceptable data quality and integrity in terms of demographic distributions and response variability on the survey items.

Having no revisions to the instrument, an additional 6831 invitations were processed with a target of receiving 500 completed and usable responses. Within eight hours, the

survey was terminated with 823 members (12.2%) who accessed the link to the survey, 569 of whom began, and 533 completed the survey.

### *Data Analyses*

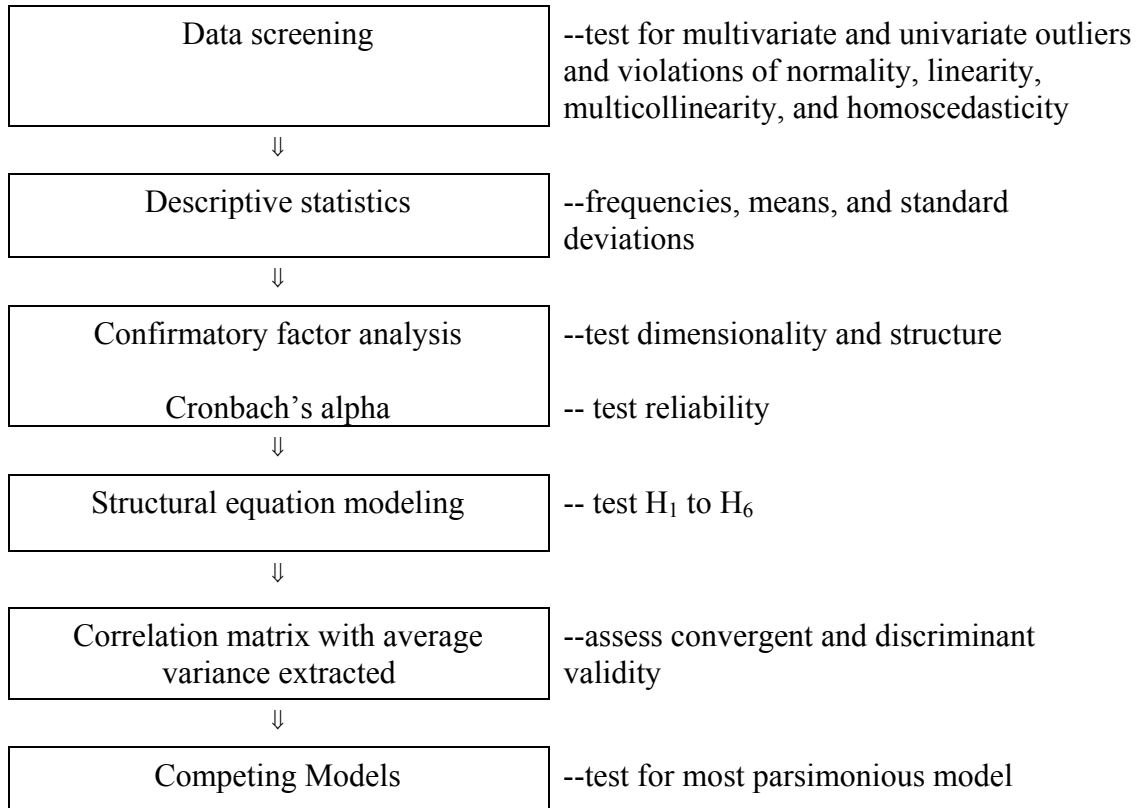
Prior to analyses, data was screened for violations underlying the assumptions for structural equation modeling. Respondents with substantive missing data and poor quality responses (i.e. those who answered neutral or either extreme for all items) were removed prior to analysis. Tests for multivariate and univariate outliers and violations of normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity were performed using SPSS (v.13). Descriptive statistics was used to summarize frequencies of categorical data and means and standard deviations for all continuous variables.

As suggested by Anderson and Gerbing (1988), the two-step approach to model testing was followed using AMOS v.4 (Figure 3.5). Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to verify the factor structure of the measurement scales prior to running the structural equation model to investigate the relationship between BPC and brand loyalty. Because the model involved a 2<sup>nd</sup> order latent variable, two separate CFA were performed. First, the measurement scale for BPC (four factors with 17 items) was tested for fit and reliability. The measurement model for BPC was modified based on the results of the CFA prior to further analysis. Secondly, a CFA for the full model (eight latent variables with 29 items) was performed to ensure that observed indicators appropriately reflected the constructs.

Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the reliability of the scales and resulting dimensions. Alpha values of 0.70 were used as the minimum criterion for reliability (Nunnally, 1978). Calculation of the average variance extracted (AVE) and comparison of the correlation matrix was used as a test for convergent and discriminant validity. An AVE of 0.5 or greater for all latent variables indicates convergent validity and AVE greater than corresponding squared correlation coefficients indicates divergent validity (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair, et al., 1998).

Structural equation modeling (Amos v.4) was used to establish the relationships between the latent variables: BPC, trust, satisfaction, and brand loyalty. Overall fit was evaluated using the following fit indices: chi-square statistic ( $\chi^2$ ), goodness-of-fit index (GFI), adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI); root mean square error of approximation

**Figure 3.5 Phase II data analysis flowchart**



(RMSEA), normed fit index (NFI), comparative fit index (CFI), parsimony normed fit index (PNFI), and parsimony goodness of fit index (PGFI). Hypotheses were supported if directional relationships (p-values) were significant at the .05 level. Mediating effects of trust and satisfaction on the BPC-brand loyalty relationship were also checked using the Baron and Kenny (1986) and Sobel (1982) tests.

Because BPC has not previously been used in consumer behavior studies, competing models were used to ensure model parsimony and appropriateness. Based on initial results of the reliability test for BPC, Competing model 1 proposed a unidimensional structure for BPC. Competing model 2 tested the structural relationship of a single-item direct measure of BPC and competing model 3 proposed partial mediation, with a direct path from satisfaction to trust. Chi-square difference tests and a review of the goodness of fit indices were performed to determine the best fitting model.

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# **CHAPTER 4 - EXPLORING THE MEASUREMENT OF BRAND PERSONALITY CONGRUENCE IN THE CASUAL DINING INDUSTRY**

## **Abstract**

An online instrument was used to explore the application of Aaker's (1997) 42-item Brand Personality Scale in the measurement of brand personality congruence in the casual dining industry. Scales for brand personality and customer personality were verified and analyzed prior to running brand personality congruence data. Brand personality congruence was operationalized as the gap between the customer's perceived personality and the restaurant's brand personality as perceived by the customer. Factor analyses showed that Aaker's scale can be reduced to a valid and reliable scale composed of 17 items with four factors: exciting ( $\alpha=.86$ ,  $R^2=.38$ ), unique ( $\alpha=.83$ ,  $R^2=.13$ ), sincere ( $\alpha=.84$ ,  $R^2=.09$ ), and leader ( $\alpha=.78$ ,  $R^2=.06$ ). LISREL results further confirmed the structure and model fit ( $\chi^2 (113, N=221) = 231.07, p > .001$ ;  $RMSEA = .07$ ;  $NNFI = .96$ ,  $CFI = .97$ ).

Key words: Brand personality, brand personality congruence, casual dining

## Introduction

As global competitiveness becomes more important the need for effective marketing strategies and market share retention is evident. While the restaurant and hospitality industry is experiencing rapid global growth, branded casual dining restaurants are concurrently seeking to expand worldwide. This phenomenon has paved the way for the growing research field of brand equity, or the study of the “marketing effects uniquely attributable to the brand” (Keller, 1993, p.1). Studying brand equity is important in the foodservice industry because it can affect restaurant choice, the frequency with which the brand is chosen in its class, and the corresponding price premium that consumers are willing to pay for branded concepts as compared to independent restaurants (Chrzan & Fisher, 2006).

Keller (1993) suggested that brands offer three benefits for a consumer: functional, experiential, and symbolic. Of these, brand personality addresses the symbolic or self-expressive function (Aaker, 1997; Siguaw et al, 1999; Keller, 1993; Wee, 2004) and these benefits impact the customer’s behavior towards a brand. Dolich (1969) suggested that a consumer could maintain or enhance him/herself by using products or brands that are symbolically similar to oneself. This underlines the importance of creating favorable, strong, and unique brand associations in the customer’s memory (Keller, 1993). Marconi (2000) asserted that brand personality, defined as the “set of human characteristics associated with a brand” (Aaker, 1997), is of great consequence in marketing because the building of a public identification of oneself with the brand can lead to strong brand loyalty. In the context of this study, this identification is operationalized as brand personality congruence (BPC), defined as the gap between the customer’s own personality and a restaurant’s brand personality as perceived by the customer.

The overall objective of this research study is the establishment of a scale that can appropriately measure BPC. It is important to pursue the study of BPC because consumers are likely to choose brands whose personalities match their own (Kassarjian, 1971; Kotler, 2003; Sirgy, 1982; Wee, 2004). Research has shown that brand personality influences consumer preferences by allowing them to express themselves through the brands that they use (Aaker, 1997; Keller, 1993; Siguaw et al., 1999). A well-established brand personality can thus lead to increased trust and loyalty (Diamantopoulos et al., 2005; Fournier, 1994). However, before BPC can be used in testing relationship marketing models, there is a need to

reassess Aaker's framework for the application of the brand personality scale in foodservice research. In addition, before Aaker's framework can be used to measure BPC, there was also a need to verify that the scale was a stable instrument to use in measuring human personality. Thus, this study is designed to explore the appropriateness, reliability, and validity of using Aaker's (1997) scale to calculate BPC.

## **Review of Literature**

### ***Brand Personality***

Aaker and Fournier (1995) defined brand personality as the "set of meanings constructed by an observer to describe the 'inner' characteristics of another person...that can be used to summarize complex behaviors and form expectations of future behaviors" (p. 392). The authors equated brand personality as the 'inner' characteristics of a brand that are created by consumers using behavior exhibited by personified brands or brand characters. That is, brand personality is a consumer's evaluation of a brand on a pattern of traits that are typically used to describe a person's personality (Batra, Lehmann, & Singh, 1993).

A well established brand personality must have the following characteristics: elements of the brand's marketing mix are deliberately coordinated, personality sought is competitively distinctive and desirable, and the personality sought is robust and kept consistent over time and over media (Batra et. al, 1993; Lannon, 1993). Because brand personality echoes how people feel about a brand (Keller, 1998) and defines for the consumer the emotions that can be experienced upon its consumption (Batra, et. al, 1993), this is the nature of the brand as intended by its sellers (American Marketing Association, 2006).

Aaker's (1997) seminal research produced the most commonly used definition in existing marketing literature: brand personality is "the set of human characteristics associated with a brand." Following the trait-based approach to personality, Aaker's (1997) model of brand personality is similar to The Big Five of human personality popularized by Allport and Odbert (1936), Cattell (1946), Norman (1967), and Goldberg (1990), among others. McShane and Von Glinow (2005, p.59) gave the following outline of The Big Five's dimensions (characteristics): conscientiousness (careful, dependable, self-disciplined), agreeableness (courteous, good-natured, empathic, caring), neuroticism (anxious, hostile,



depressed), openness to experience (sensitive, flexible, creative, curious), and extroversion (outgoing, talkative, sociable, assertive). Similarly, Aaker (1997) empirically showed that brand personality has five dimensions, which in turn have characteristic facets that define them: sincerity (down-to-earth, honest, wholesome, and cheerful), excitement (daring, spirited, imaginative, and up-to-date), competence (reliable, intelligent, and successful), sophistication (upper class and charming), and ruggedness (outdoorsy and tough). The 15 facets are founded upon 42 human personality traits that were applied to brands and comprise the Brand Personality Scale (BPS).

Aaker (1997) suggested that sincerity, excitement, and competence are inherent in the brand and are most closely related to the Big Five dimensions of agreeableness, extroversion, and conscientiousness, respectively. Sophistication and ruggedness, however, are desired brand characteristics that do not have any direct counterparts within the Big Five dimensions. Caprara et al. (2001) likewise found that the Big Five framework could not directly be applied to brands and could be reduced to two primary factors: (1) agreeableness and emotional stability (i.e. stability, predictability, pleasantness) and (2) extraversion and openness (i.e. dynamism, activity, innovation). These observations must be given consideration when applying the framework to studies investigating congruence between the brand and the consumer.

Azoulay and Kapferer (2003) examined the measurement scale and expressed concerns that items on the BPS measure dimensions of product performance and cognitive capacities rather than brand personality. Other concerns with the use of the BPS include the lack of branding descriptors like “economical”, “famous”, or “convenient” (Caprara et al., 2001) and the lack of negative brand attributes like “arrogant”, “coy”, or “dominating” (Mark & Pearson, 2001; Sweeney & Brandon, 2006) which may be needed to fully capture the essence of the brand’s personality.

Going beyond the factor analytical trait approach popularized by Aaker (1997), Sweeney and Brandon (2006) expanded the definition of brand personality by saying that it is the “set of human personality traits that correspond to the interpersonal domain of human personality and are relevant to describing the brand as a relationship partner.” With this concept, the authors have proposed an alternative for measuring the construct, which will facilitate a better understanding of brand personality, particularly in relation to consumer

behavior. The model uses the interpersonal circumplex model (IPC), which shows bi-polar traits conforming to a circular arrangement in a nonrestrictive correlation pattern wherein each trait has a neighboring as well as an opposite trait. This more in-depth model of interpersonal brand personality focuses on the key dimensions of human personality (extraversion and agreeableness) in addition to the five factors developed by Aaker (1997). The IPC also addresses the need for the negative-type brand attributes by including characteristics such as dominant, quarrelsome, and calculating.

The authors, however, stress that the more detailed IPC is a complimentary (and not a replacement) measurement to the broader factor-analytical model proposed by Aaker (1997). Moreover, Diamantopoulos et al. (2005) empirically confirmed that the BPS, less the “western” item, is reliable and may be used with a different population and a different brand from that which Aaker (1997) used. In addition, Murase and Bojanic (2004) showed that the BPS obtained acceptable reliability scores (Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  values ranged from .8065-.9179) for all dimensions when the scale was used for cross cultural research.

### ***Brand Personality Congruence***

Although the development of the brand personality congruence scale is exploratory in nature, it brings together two important areas of research that have been shown to be useful in business and marketing applications: brand personality and congruence. Moreover, marketing professionals will be provided information that may be useful in designing marketing strategies to maximize the leverage that a well established brand personality provides. Strong brand loyalty and high overall satisfaction contribute to competitive advantage, and thus warrants the need to study brand personality congruence as it relates to these constructs.

Research has shown that consumers tend to support brands and services whose personalities closely match their own (Batra, et. al, 1993; Kassarian, 1971; Kotler, 2003; Sirgy, 1982; Wee, 2004), thus allowing them to express themselves through the brands that they use (Aaker, 1997, Dolich, 1969, Fournier, 1994). Wee (2004) concurred by stating that consumers fulfill the need for identity through the brands that they choose to support. This reinforces Grubb and Grathwohl’s (1967, p.22) conclusion that self-congruity “links the psychological construct of an individual’s self-concept with the symbolic value of goods

purchased in the marketplace.” Literature shows that there is a positive relationship between self-congruity and brand choice/preference, purchasing and repurchasing decisions, and post purchase attitudes such as satisfaction and brand loyalty (Back, 2005; Birdwell, 1968; Dolich, 1969; Ericksen, 1996; Graeff, 1996; Sirgy, 1982; Sirgy & Samli, 1985; Sirgy et al., 1997).

As yet, no research exists that explores the measurement of brand personality congruence since previous research has focused more on self-concept/self-image congruity rather than personality congruence. For the purpose of this study, congruence was operationalized as the level at which brand personality is congruent with customer’s personality traits as alluded to, but not empirically tested, by Aaker (1999). The rationale behind using brand personality congruence rather than the traditional construct of self-congruity is that self-concept can vary between the private and public selves (how the consumer sees one’s self and how others see the consumer), while personality is more enduring and stable. Helgeson and Supphellen (2004) concluded that brand personality and self-congruity are discriminant constructs; where the former is more broad and the focus is the brand itself while the latter is more narrow and focuses on the self. It was also empirically proven that self-congruity and brand personality had independent effects on brand attitude.

## **Methodology**

The sampling frame used was the Faculty and Staff Directory (2005-2006) published by a midwestern university, which contained a database of more than 4,000 possible respondents. As an incentive to increase the response rate during the pilot test and the data collection, respondents were asked to choose one of three charities (Manhattan’s Boys and Girls Club, Manhattan Bread Basket, and the university Foundation’s Changing Lives Campaign) that they wished the researcher to donate \$1.

A random sample of employees from this database received the questionnaire through the university’s online survey system. Each respondent was asked to evaluate the restaurant using the 42-item brand personality scale. The respondent then evaluated their own personality using the same indicators. The resulting gap scores denoted the BPC for that respondent.

### ***Survey Instrument***

Due to the nature of the survey constructs, a restaurant brand with an outlet located in Manhattan, Kansas was chosen to ensure that the study population was familiar with the restaurant. This brand was ranked by *Restaurants and Institutions* (2006) as one of the top three casual dining restaurant chains in the United States. The questionnaire requested respondents to complete three parts: (1) Brand Personality (BP), (2) Customer Personality (CP), and (3) demographics (Appendix A.2).

Initially, the Brand Personality Scale (BPS) was used in its entirety. A five-point Likert-type scale anchored at “not at all descriptive” to “extremely descriptive” was used. Respondents were first asked to rate the focal brand on the 42 personality traits (i.e.: This restaurant chain is down-to-earth). Because Aaker (1997) stated that the scale can be used to measure human personality, respondents were then asked to rate themselves on the same traits (i.e.: I am down-to-earth). BPC was operationalized as the degree to which the respondents’ self evaluation matched their evaluation of the brand’s personality.

The concluding section of the questionnaire was composed of six demographic questions: gender, age, income, employment classification, frequency of dining at focal brand, and frequency of dining out at casual dining restaurants. Respondents were also asked to choose one of three charities (Manhattan’s Boys and Girls Club, Manhattan Bread Basket, and Changing Lives campaign) to donate \$1 to.

### ***Data Collection***

Prior to the pilot test, a link to the survey was sent to 20 faculty and graduate students for evaluation. The pre-test had three primary objectives: 1) to evaluate content validity in terms of sequence and flow of questions, ambiguity or bias of verbiage, ease of understanding, and appropriateness of scale levels and anchoring words; 2) to test ease of use of the online survey instrument in terms of clarity of instructions, format of questions and clarity of scales, length of survey and time of completion; and 3) evaluate cover letter and ability to recruit respondent. Based on critique provided by the expert panel, the instrument and cover letter were refined. A pilot test was administered to a random sample of 100 faculty and staff. The pilot study was designed to estimate the response rate, effectiveness of the incentive, and to determine the optimum length of time to keep the survey accessible.

Based on the pilot test, a response rate of about 10% was to be expected from the online survey format. To obtain the goal of at least 200 responses, a random sample of 2,000 was generated from the Faculty and Staff directory, excluding those used for the pilot test. After further instrument refinement based on the pilot test, the survey was administered to the generated sample. An introductory email, which served as the cover letter, included the link to the survey and an explanation of the study and participant incentive (Appendix A.1). Participants were notified that completion of the survey signified their consent to participate in the study. Results of the pilot test showed that no additional responses were received past the 14<sup>th</sup> day after the first email. Thus, the respondents were given two weeks to respond with two reminder emails sent within the period. Of the 2000 initially selected, 158 were returned as undeliverable, thus only the remaining 1842 received the reminder emails.

### ***Data Analyses***

Statistical procedures included descriptive statistics, exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize means and standard deviations for all variables and demographics. Confirmatory factor analysis (LISREL v. 8.54) was performed on the BP data to assess Aaker's (1997) five-factor structure. Modification of the scale was performed based on factor loadings and modification indices. An exploratory factor analyses with varimax rotation (SPSS, v.13) was then performed using the CP data to assess the appropriateness of the BPS indicators in measuring human personality. All indicators with loadings of .40 and below were eliminated. Further reliability and correlation diagnostics were performed prior to running confirmatory factor analysis.

After comparing the resulting BP and CP scales, only indicators that loaded on both scales were used for analyses in developing the BPC scale. BPC scores per attribute were calculated and interpreted. An exploratory factor analysis with varimax rotation was used to assess the principal components factor structure of BPC. After factors with loadings less than .40 were eliminated, reliability and correlation diagnostics were performed. The remaining indicators were then subjected to a confirmatory factor analysis to verify the structure of the BPC scale.

## Results and Discussion

A total of 237 questionnaires were completed for a response rate of 12.87%. Data screening resulted in a final sample of 221; the majority of whom were female (59.1%) faculty or administrators (44.0%) who annually earn between \$40,000 to \$80,000 (49.3%). Results showed that 59.1% dine out at least once a week, with 25.74% dining at this restaurant at least once every three months.

Table 4.1 shows a summary of the indicators that resulted for the BP, CP, and BPC scales in comparison to Aaker's (1997) original BP scale. Results for each scale will be discussed further in the subsequent sections.

**Table 4.1 Summary table for indicators of Brand Personality, Customer Personality, and Brand Personality Congruence**

Indicators (Aaker, 1997)	Brand Personality	Customer Personality	Brand Personality Congruence
down-to-earth	X		
family-oriented	X		
small-town			
honest	X	X	X
sincere	X	X	X
real	X	X	X
wholesome	X	X	
original	X	X	X
cheerful	X	X	
sentimental			
friendly	X	X	
daring	X	X	X
trendy	X	X	X
exciting	X	X	X
spirited	X		
cool	X	X	X

<b>Indicators (Aaker, 1997)</b>	<b>Brand Personality</b>	<b>Customer Personality</b>	<b>Brand Personality Congruence</b>
young	X	X	X
imaginative	X	X	X
unique	X	X	X
up-to-date	X	X	X
independent	X	X	X
contemporary	X	X	X
reliable	X		
hard working	X		
secure	X	X	
intelligent		X	
technical			
corporate			
successful	X	X	X
a leader	X	X	X
confident	X	X	X
upper class	X	X	
glamorous		X	
good looking	X	X	
charming	X		
feminine	X		
smooth	X		
outdoorsy			
masculine			
Western	X		
tough	X		
rugged	X		

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### **Brand Personality**

Confirmatory factor analysis was used to verify the five-factor structure of brand personality as suggested by Aaker (1997). Initial results suggested that this structure was not appropriate for the casual dining industry ( $\chi^2 (809, N=221) = 2417.57, p > .001$ ;  $RMSEA = .097$ ). Lambda-x values were screened for indicators that failed to load at .40 (Nunnally, 1978). Theta-delta for Items 9 and 11 were allowed to covariate and Item 8 was moved to Factor 2 as per the modification indices given. The resulting scale (Table 4.2) showed an improvement in the fit indices and a chi-square difference test suggested that the modified scale was a better fit to the data ( $\chi^2 (516, N=221) = 1344.36, p > .001$ ;  $RMSEA = .086$ ).

**Table 4.2 Standardized Factor Loadings and Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) for Confirmatory Factor Analysis on Brand Personality Factors (N=221)**

<b>Indicators</b>	$F_1^a$	$F_2$	$F_3$	$F_4$	$F_5$	$\alpha$
sincere	.86					.87
honest	.83					
real	.81					
friendly	.71					
wholesome	.70					
cheerful	.65					
down-to-earth	.60					
family-oriented	.53					
cool		.83				.92
exciting		.81				
imaginative		.80				
up-to-date		.74				
daring		.73				
spirited		.72				
trendy		.69				



unique	.68		
young	.66		
original	.64		
independent	.61		
contemporary	.59		
hard working		.84	.87
reliable		.79	
confident		.73	
secure		.72	
leader		.62	
successful		.61	
good looking		.78	.79
charming		.77	
smooth		.65	
upper class		.53	
feminine		.49	
tough			.96 .84
rugged			.90
Western			.58

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<sup>a</sup>Factor labels:  $F_1$ –Sincerity;  $F_2$  –Excitement;  $F_3$  –Competence;  $F_4$  –Sophistication;  $F_5$  –Ruggedness

Table 4.3 shows how the fit indices obtained in this study compare to Aaker’s (1997) results. The mediocre fit of the initial solution may be an indication respondents may have interpreted the attributes differently from the context intended by Aaker (1997). Because the BPS was also developed using different industries, it may be an indication that these personality characteristics have different implications for casual dining restaurants. For example, the modification indices suggested that moving “original” from sincerity to excitement produced a better fit. In another industry such as department stores, being “original” may mean that the products sold are genuine and not mass produced and falsely branded copies; while in the restaurant industry, being original implies that the restaurant is unique.

**Table 4.3 Summary table for Goodness-of-fit Indices for Brand Personality**

<i>Model</i>	$\chi^2$	<i>df</i>	<i>GFI</i>	<i>RMSEA</i>	<i>NNFI</i>	<i>CFI</i>	<i>RMSR</i>
BPS (Aaker, 1997)	9216.80	809	.91	N/R <sup>a</sup>	N/R <sup>a</sup>	.98	.07
BP (Initial)	2417.57	809	.65	.097	.94	.94	.09
BP (Modified)	1344.36	516	.72	.086	.95	.95	.07

<sup>a</sup>*Not Reported*

Austin, Siguaw, & Mattila's (2003) study also showed poor structural fit and mediocre reliability scores. This led the authors to conclude that the framework does not necessarily allow generalization to individual brands within one product category and indicated that caution should be taken with the application of the scale. In addition, brand personality is a multidimensional construct and there is a multitude of ways that it can be designed so that it is "optimal" given a specific brand (Diamantopoulos et al, 2005). Thus it is reasonable to expect that brands will have different ratings on these dimensions depending on the brand's marketing profile. The use of a specific restaurant brand and dining industry segment may have caused the difference in the fit between Aaker's model and the current data.

### ***Customer Personality***

Because the indicators for the BPS were used in its entirety, an exploratory factor analysis was performed on the CP data to test its appropriateness in measuring human personality. Initially, a 9-factor structure resulted, but the consequent elimination of items that failed to load at the .40 level resulted in a trimmer 6-factor structure. However, with the 6-factor solution, several indicators cross-loaded on two or more factors. Deletion of these indicators produced a more stable 25 item scale with a 5-factor solution ( $\alpha=.90$ ,  $R^2=.61$ ): successful ( $\alpha=.82$ ,  $R^2=.30$ ), exciting ( $\alpha=.83$ ,  $R^2=.12$ ), unique ( $\alpha=.77$ ,  $R^2=.08$ ), sincere ( $\alpha=.82$ ,  $R^2=.06$ ), and friendly ( $\alpha=.75$ ,  $R^2=.05$ ). Confirmatory factor analysis (Table 4.4) shows a reasonable fit for the 5-factor structure ( $\chi^2 (265, N=221)= 623.42, p>.001$ ;  $RMSEA=.078$ ;  $NNFI=.93$ ,  $CFI=.94$ ).

**Table 4.4 Standardized Factor Loadings, Eigenvalues, Variance Explained, and Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) for Confirmatory Factor Analysis on Customer Personality Factors (N=221)**

<b>Indicators</b>	$F_1^a$	$F_2$	$F_3$	$F_4$	$F_5$	<i>Eigen values</i>	<i>Variance Explained</i>	$\alpha$
Confident	.80					7.62	30.48	.82
Successful	.76							
Leader	.68							
Secure	.68							
Intelligent	.65							
Up-to-date	.54							
Upper class	.46							
Exciting		.81				2.98	11.91	.83
Cool		.78						
Trendy		.68						
Good looking		.66						
Glamorous		.59						
Young		.50						
Original			.75			1.91	7.65	.77
Unique			.73					
Imaginative			.68					
Daring			.53					
Contemporary			.52					
Independent			.43					
Sincere				.83		1.45	5.79	.82
Real				.82				
Honest				.81				
Wholesome				.57				
Friendly					.83	1.18	4.72	.75
Cheerful					.74			

<sup>a</sup>Factor labels:  $F_1$ –Successful;  $F_2$  –Exciting;  $F_3$  –Unique;  $F_4$  –Sincere;  $F_5$  –Friendly

According to Aaker's framework, sincerity, excitement, and competence are inherent in the brand and are most closely related to the Big Five dimensions of agreeableness, extroversion, and conscientiousness, respectively. Sophistication and ruggedness, however, are desired brand characteristics that do not have any direct similarities with the Big Five dimensions (Aaker, 1997). Support of this assertion is evident in this study as only 3 of the 11 indicators for these factors loaded on the customer personality scale.

### ***Brand Personality Congruence***

Once the structures of the BP and CP were established, it became possible to see which indicators were appropriate to use in measuring BPC. BPC was operationalized as the gap between the customer's own personality and the restaurant's brand personality as perceived by the customer. Exploratory factor analysis with varimax rotation was used to assess the factor structure of the resulting 23 BPC indicators (Table 4.5).

Although previous research has shown that brand personality has five dimensions, results suggested that this structure was not appropriate for BPC. All indicators with loadings of .40 and below were eliminated. Further reliability and correlation diagnostics resulted in 17 indicators ( $\alpha=.90$ ,  $R^2=.67$ ) with four dimensions: exciting ( $\alpha=.86$ ,  $R^2=.38$ ), unique ( $\alpha=.83$ ,  $R^2=.13$ ), sincere ( $\alpha=.84$ ,  $R^2=.09$ ), and leader ( $\alpha=.78$ ,  $R^2=.06$ ). All of the Cronbach alpha coefficients were above the .70 cut-off, suggesting that scale and factor reliability was satisfied (Nunnally, 1978). LISREL results further confirmed the structure ( $\chi^2 (113, N=221) = 231.07, p > .001$ ;  $RMSEA=.069$ ;  $NNFI=.96$ ,  $CFI=.97$ ).

It should be noted that just like the CP scale, excitement factored into two dimensions (excitement and unique) for the BPC scale. In practice, this is a reasonable because casual dining restaurants can be exciting and trendy without being necessarily unique. Likewise, there are casual dining restaurants that are unique but may not be considered exciting by the general consumer. In addition, the remaining three sophisticated and ruggedness indicators were eliminated, confirming that only inherent traits are relevant in determining BPC. Further, the competence dimension was more appropriately named leader based on the context of the indicators retained for analysis.

**Table 4.5 Factor Loadings, Eigenvalues, Variance Explained, and Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) for Confirmatory Factor Analysis on Brand Personality Congruence Factors (N=221)**

<b>Indicators</b>	$F_1^a$	$F_2$	$F_3$	$F_4$	<i>Eigen values</i>	<i>Variance Explained</i>	$\alpha$
Cool	.82				6.50	38.25%	.86
Exciting	.78						
Trendy	.73						
Up-to-date	.68						
Contemporary	.67						
Young	.60						
Imaginative		.79			2.19	12.88%	.83
Original		.78					
Unique		.73					
Daring		.67					
Independent		.59					
Sincere			.88		1.54	9.07%	.84
Honest			.80				
Real			.75				
Confident				.82	1.07	6.30%	.78
Leader				.70			
Successful				.66			

<sup>a</sup>Factor labels:  $F_1$ –*Exciting*;  $F_2$  –*Unique*;  $F_3$  –*Sincere*;  $F_4$  –*Leader*

The resulting four-factor scale demonstrated convergent and divergent validity (Table 4.6). All average variances extracted ranged from .50 to .66, meeting the criterion of .50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), suggesting the convergent validity of the factors. All factor AVE were greater than the highest squared factor correlations suggesting that discriminant validity was satisfied (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

**Table 4.6 Standardized Correlations (Squared Correlations) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for Brand Personality Congruence Factors (N=221)**

Trait	Exciting	Unique	Sincere	Leader	AVE
<b>Exciting</b>	1				.51
<b>Unique</b>	.68 (.46)	1			.50
<b>Sincere</b>	.27 (.07)	.54 (.29)	1		.66
<b>Leader</b>	.55 (.30)	.44 (.19)	.47 (.22)	1	.53

*Note:  $\chi^2 (113, N=221) = 231.07, p > .001$ ; RMSEA = .069; NNFI = .96, CFI = .97*

### Implications

Research has suggested that having a well established brand personality could be a competitive advantage, particularly in sustaining brand loyalty. However, focusing on merely establishing the personality is not enough, it must be able to give consumers something they can relate to. This study can provide casual dining foodservice operations information on personality attributes as they relate to the brand personality that they would like to project. The ability of a foodservice operation to clearly define its dominant brand personality may have practical implications in its managerial and operational decisions.

Managers can use the modified brand personality scale from this study as a diagnostic tool to examine if the perceived brand personality is aligned with the organization's mission, vision, and goals. Conversely, existing operations can use results to modify their market positioning, services, or products to increase the congruence between their brand personality and their target market's personality with the ultimate goal of increasing brand loyalty and satisfaction.

Siguaw, Mattila, and Austin (1999) applied the BPS to three different restaurant brands each across three commercial foodservice segments (fast food, casual dining, and upscale dining) to investigate brand differentiation across the restaurant segments and the individual brands within the segments. Consumers saw little differentiation on brand

personality dimensions among casual dining restaurants. Results implied the importance of brand management and positioning strategy because a differentiated brand is a means of achieving competitive advantage. Comparing across competing brands will have practical implications for brand management, particularly in determining if differentiation among brands in the restaurant class is achieved. In addition, findings from this study provide future avenues for research to explore how to better assess brand personality congruence and address the gaps that may lead to deflated levels of satisfaction, trust, and ultimately, brand loyalty.

The instrument may be used not only as a benchmarking tool, but also as a means to determine market segmentation for targeted marketing. As more restaurant brands expand globally, companies can use the BPC scale as a component of their feasibility study to determine their personality fit with their prospective host. This will allow the company to better identify the target market that would most likely be a loyal customer base. Evaluations across the different attributes can help managers determine what is important for targeted segments of the customer base such as age groups, gender, or area of residence.

### **Future Research**

Results of this study offer many possibilities for the use of the BPC scale in relationship marketing research. Having a concise scale will lower the likelihood of respondent fatigue or non participation due to survey length, thus enabling researchers to study more constructs simultaneously. This is beneficial because studying the role and importance of BPC on other constructs, such as trust, satisfaction, and loyalty, will facilitate the development of marketing platforms to address these issues. Research in this area will aid branded restaurants in appropriating resources in the effort to create and effectively market a distinctive brand personality.

Future researchers who intend to use Aaker's existing scale may want to consider how some of the indicators may have different connotations for today's respondents as compared to almost a decade ago. Researchers could use the modified scale presented here and improve the richness of the data gathered by adding branding descriptors like economical, famous, or convenient as suggested by Caprara et al. (2001). The thoroughness

of the instrument may also be improved if negative descriptors such as arrogant, coy, or dominating are included (Mark & Pearson, 2001; Sweeney & Brandon, 2006).

Although multi-item measurements are recommended for cognitive constructs (Nunnally, 1978), a single-item direct measurement of BPC may be useful as a global measurement of congruence. For example, a semantic-differential scale anchored from “not at all similar” to “similar” may be used to measure the direct comparison between the brand and customer personality (If you were to think of XYZ as a person, please indicate a point along the scale from left to right that matches how similar you see yourself compared to XYZ). This measurement can validate whether using the gap score method of calculating BPC achieves content validity. In addition, this may be used as a control to determine if any bias is introduced when consumers give socially desirable responses on the customer personality scale.

Aaker (1997) suggested that the brand personality dimensions of sincerity, excitement, and competence are most closely related to the Big Five dimensions of agreeableness, extroversion, and conscientiousness, respectively. A study could be designed to explore the ability of the Big Five dimensions to predict what brand personality profile customers are likely to choose. For example, would a customer who is high on the extroversion dimension be more likely to choose a brand that is evaluated highly on the excitement dimension? In addition, a comparative study can be done to see if the BPC framework presented in the current study is a better predictor of restaurant brand choice than using Aaker’s (1997) and the Big Five scales.



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# **CHAPTER 5 - EXPLORING BRAND PERSONALITY CONGRUENCE: AN ANTECEDENT TO POSTPURCHASE CONSUMER EVALUATION AND BEHAVIOR**

## **Abstract**

The purpose of this phase of the study was two-fold. First, to replicate and validate the measurement of brand personality congruence (BPC) based on results of Phase I. Secondly, to investigate the effect of BPC on the post purchase and relational constructs of trust, satisfaction, and brand loyalty. An online instrument was distributed to members of a consumer research database residing in the top 25 metropolitan areas of the United States. Results of structural equation modeling provided empirical support that BPC significantly affects trust, satisfaction, and brand loyalty. That is, the higher one's BPC (i.e. the smaller the gap between brand and customer personalities), the higher the customer's evaluation of overall satisfaction with the restaurant brand. In addition, BPC positively affects the consumer's propensity to trust in the brand, ultimately facilitating brand loyalty. Furthermore, trust mediates the relationship between BPC and satisfaction. Together, satisfaction and trust partially mediate the relationship between BPC and loyalty.

Key words: Brand personality, brand personality congruence, casual dining, trust, satisfaction, brand loyalty

## Introduction

Increasing competition in the casual dining industry is making it more difficult for branded restaurant chains to maintain a loyal customer base. When competition is intense (i.e. casual dining restaurants with the same theme / menu concepts), consumers may view brands as the same, with little excitement to offer, and minimal differentiation. Research has suggested that having a distinct and consistent brand personality, or a “set of human characteristics associated with a brand” (Aaker, 1997), could be a competitive advantage because it provides consumers a means of differentiating the brand from others in its class. A brand lacking a defined and stable personality weakens the customer experience (LePla & Parker, 1999) and will have difficulty in creating awareness and unique identity (Temporal, 2001), positioning (Back, 2005), and building strong brand-customer relationships (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000).

Marketing literature is well populated with brand image research, however, empirical research on brand personality is generally lacking, more so in the realm of hospitality research. To address this gap, the current study focuses on the measurement and application of brand personality in consumer behavior as opposed to brand image. Although the development of the brand personality congruence (BPC) scale is exploratory in nature, it brings together two important areas of research that have been shown to be useful in business and marketing applications: brand personality and congruence.

The study of BPC is important to pursue because consumers are likely to choose brands whose personalities match their own (Batra, et. al, 1993; Kassarijan, 1971; Kotler, 2003; Sirgy, 1982; Wee, 2004). Research has shown that brand personality influences consumer preferences by allowing them to express themselves through the brands that they use (Aaker, 1997; Keller, 1993; Siguaw et al., 1999). A well-established brand personality that facilitates congruence can thus lead to increased trust and loyalty (Diamantopoulos et al., 2005; Fournier, 1994).

The overall objective of this research study was the exploration of the relationship between brand personality congruence (BPC) and postpurchase evaluations of trust, satisfaction, and brand loyalty. Emphasizing key attributes that customers consider important facilitates congruence with the brand’s personality, thus increasing the probability of being chosen by the customer. In the context of this study, this congruence is operationalized as

BPC, defined as the gap between the customer's own personality and a restaurant's brand personality as perceived by the customer. Essentially, the study posits that the smaller the gap between customer and brand personality, the higher the BPC. In turn, the greater the congruence, the greater the preference is for the brand. The study also investigates the effect of BPC on post purchase global evaluations of trust and satisfaction and how these interactions affect brand loyalty.

## **Review of Literature and Hypotheses Development**

### ***Definition of Key Constructs***

#### ***Brand Personality***

Although empirical research on brand personality is limited, it has generally been operationalized as a trait-based concept (Aaker, 1997; Aaker & Fournier, 1995; Austin, et al., 2003; Azoulay & Kapferer; 2003; Batra, et al., 1993; Caprara et al., 2001; Mark & Pearson, 2001; Siguaw, et al., 1999; Sweeney & Brandon, 2006). Brand personality involves “the set of human characteristics associated with a brand” as well as the characteristics associated with the company's employees, managers, and endorsers (Aaker, 1997, p. 347). These associations make the brand more memorable (Aaker, 2000), meaningful (O'Shaughnessy & O'Shaughnessy, 2004), emotionally powerful (Temporal, 2001; Upshaw, 1995), long standing (Temporal, 2001), and consistent (LePla & Parker, 1999; Temporal, 2001) for the consumers. Brand personality echoes how people feel about a brand (Keller, 1998) and defines for the consumer the emotions that can be experienced upon its consumption (Batra, et. al, 1993). This is the nature of the brand as intended by its sellers (American Marketing Association, 2006).

Aaker's (1997) seminal research on brand personality has provided the most accepted framework of the concept in marketing literature. It was empirically shown that brand personality has five dimensions, which in turn have characteristic facets that define them: sincerity (down-to-earth, honest, wholesome, and cheerful), excitement (daring, spirited, imaginative, and up-to-date), competence (reliable, intelligent, and successful), sophistication (upper class and charming), and ruggedness (outdoorsy and tough). The 15 facets are founded upon 42 human personality traits that were applied to brands and comprise the

Brand Personality Scale (BPS). A brand lacking a defined and stable personality weakens the customer experience (LePla & Parker, 1999) and will have difficulty in creating awareness and unique identity (Temporal, 2001), positioning (Back, 2005), and building strong brand-customer relationships (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000).

### ***Brand Loyalty***

As defined by Oliver (1999, p.34), brand loyalty is “a deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronize a preferred brand consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same brand or same brand-set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior.” Relationship marketing researchers view loyalty as the strength of the relationship between a consumer’s relative attitude and repeat purchase, suggesting that it is not enough to base loyalty solely on repeat purchasing. This supports Jacoby and Chestnut’s (1978) assertion that three conditions must be met for brand loyalty to exist. First, the consumer’s information base should indicate that their focal brand is more superior to other brands in its class. Secondly, the consumer must like the brand more than others in its class. And lastly, when purchase situations arise, the consumer must decide to patronize their focal brand instead of any other brand in its class.

Loyalty has also been viewed to have three specific antecedents, namely cognitive, affective, and conative (Dick and Basu, 1994). One’s cognitive loyalty towards a brand is based on the information that one has access to about the brand. This can be a function of the brand’s image, product/service performance in the market, or a similar measure. Affective loyalty deals with the customer’s emotional like or dislike toward the brand, which is mostly attributed to past experience. Conative loyalty deals with behavioral intention, the customer’s desire to continue the brand relationship through continued patronage and positive word of mouth. In addition, Oliver (1997) and Yi and La (2004) also cited action loyalty, which refers to the transformation of the customer’s motivated intention into a readiness to act.

As more choices appear in the casual dining market, coupled with the rising propensity to eat meals away from home, capturing a truly loyal customer base is paramount. Because the market is continually growing and becoming more saturated, any individual restaurant brand may have difficulty in expanding that base of loyal customers. Brand and



marketing practitioners should explore all avenues (such as enhancing BPC) that can increase the customer preference for the restaurant brand.

### ***Trust***

Trust is generally considered to be a fundamental component for building successful relationships (Garbarino & Johnson, 1999) and that it exists when “one party has confidence in the exchange partner’s reliability and integrity” (Morgan & Hunt 1994, p.23). It is believed that the exchange partner will perform actions that will result in positive outcomes for the customer (Anderson & Narus, 1990; Andaleeb, 1996). Because of this, the customer is willing to take more risks in the relationship (Morgan and Hunt, 1994), underscoring Moorman, Zaltman, and Deshpande’s (1992, p.82) suggestion that trust exists when the customer is willing “to rely on an exchange partner in whom one has confidence.” Trust is seen first as a confidence in the trustworthiness of a partner, and second as a behavioral intention that stems from reliance on a partner (Sergeant & Lee, 2004).

The exchange partner must be competent in providing the product or service, be able and willing to do the best for the trustor beyond the motive of acquiring a profit, and be able to operate within a set of principles and practices that the trustor deems acceptable (Mayer, et al., 1995). In the context of this study, the exchange partner will be operationalized as the restaurant brand, adopting Garbarino and Johnson’s (1999) approach of studying trust in the context of the customer’s trust in the quality and reliability of the services offered in a business-to-customer framework. Trust is a dwindling commodity in the market place (Upshaw, 1995) and it is important to assess the behavior and thought process of consumers when they decide to continue purchasing branded products or services.

### ***Satisfaction***

Oliver (1997) defined satisfaction as “a fairly temporal post usage state for one-time consumption or a repeatedly experienced state for ongoing consumption that reflects how the product or service has fulfilled its purpose” (Oliver, 1999, p.41). As such, there has been mixed operationalizations of satisfaction in marketing literature (Anderson & Fornell, 1994; Bitner, 1990; Bitner & Hubbert, 1994; Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Jones & Suh, 2000; Oliver & Swan, 1989). The two streams of research measure satisfaction as a transaction specific

measure (i.e.: satisfaction with the current dining experience) or as a cumulative evaluation measure (i.e.: satisfaction with the particular brand of casual dining restaurant over time).

In general however, both measurements are anchored on the disconfirmation paradigm (Oh & Parks, 1997; Yi, 1990) wherein satisfaction is determined by the comparison of perceptions of product performance with existing expectations (Oliver, 1997). When performance is less than what the customers expect, quality is perceived to be low resulting in negative disconfirmation or dissatisfaction. Conversely, if performance meets customer's expectations (zero disconfirmation) or exceeds customer's expectations (positive disconfirmation), quality is perceived to be high and satisfaction results (Bitner, 1990; Kandampully et al., 2001).

Due to the nature of the restaurant industry, the two measurements may not always be positively correlated as one service encounter most likely varies from another (Jones & Suh, 2000) and overall satisfaction is a function of all transaction-specific experiences with the brand or service provider (Teas, 1993). That is to say, a customer may experience one bad service contact episode (low transactional satisfaction), but still hold a positive global evaluation of the service provider (high overall satisfaction). The reverse is also true in that a consumer can generally be disappointed with a brand even after one successful service contact episode. Transactional satisfaction is a good predictor of behavioral intention only if overall satisfaction is low (Jones & Suh, 2000). However, when overall satisfaction is high, consumers are less likely to let a single dissatisfying experience affect their overall positive evaluation of the service provider.

In view of relationship marketing, overall satisfaction is the primary concern in this study as a tool in establishing long-term relationships with a customer base that is brand loyal. The ability of the focal casual restaurant chain to consistently deliver the benefits sought by the consumer is evaluated.

### ***Brand Personality Congruence***

As yet, no research exists that explores the measurement of brand personality congruence since previous research has focused on the measurement and consequences of self-image/self-concept congruity (Fournier, 1998; Sirgy, 1985; Sirgy & Samli, 1985). Sirgy (1985) expressed image congruence as the match between the brand's image and the self-image of the target customer(s). For the purpose of this study, Sirgy's (1985) framework

was modified where congruence was operationalized as the level at which brand personality is congruent with customer's personality traits.

Research has shown that consumers tend to support brands and services whose personalities closely match their own (Batra, et. al, 1993; Kassarian, 1971; Kotler, 2003; Sirgy, 1982; Wee, 2004), thus allowing them to express themselves through the brands that they use (Aaker, 1997, Dolich, 1969, Fournier, 1994). Consumers fulfill the need for identity through the brands that they choose to support (Wee, 2004). This reinforces Grubb and Grathwohl's (1967, p.22) conclusion that self-congruity "links the psychological construct of an individual's self-concept with the symbolic value of goods purchased in the marketplace." Literature shows that there is a positive relationship between self-congruity and brand choice/preference, purchasing and repurchasing decisions, and post purchase attitudes such as satisfaction and brand loyalty (Back, 2005; Birdwell, 1968; Dolich, 1969; Ericksen, 1996; Graeff, 1996; Sirgy, 1982; Sirgy & Samli, 1985; Sirgy et al., 1997). Congruence encourages the desire to maintain positive customer-brand relationships (Fournier, 1998) and loyalty is a direct function of image congruence (Sirgy and Samli, 1985).

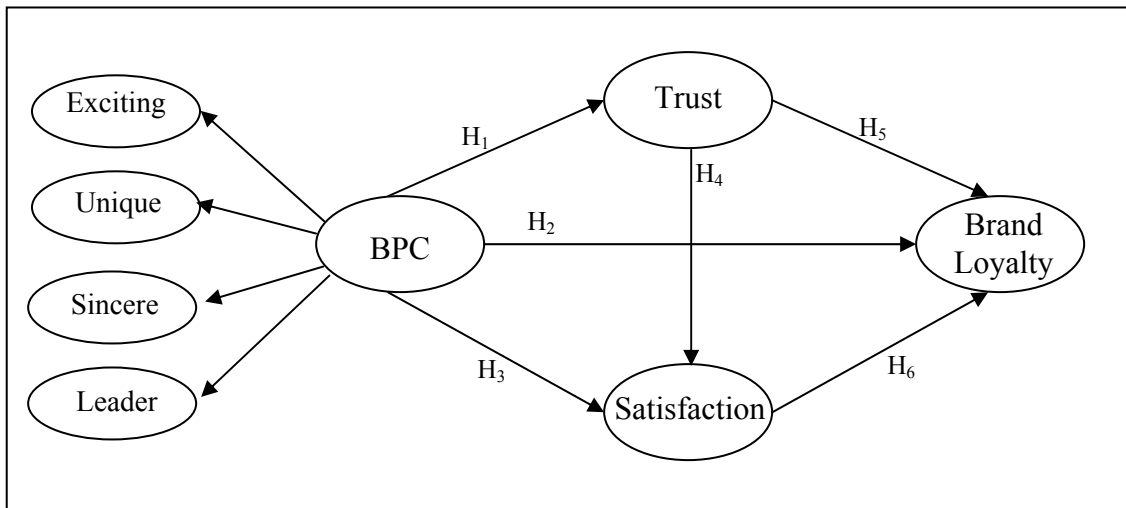
### ***Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses***

Maximizing the leverage that a well-established brand personality provides can include the management and promotion of BPC. When the personalities of the brand and the customer are congruent, the chances of a brand succeeding increase markedly (Temporal, 2001). Strong brand loyalty, trust, and high overall satisfaction contribute to competitive advantage, and thus warrant the need to study brand personality congruence as it relates to these constructs.

In Phase I of the study, it was empirically shown that BPC has four dimensions: exciting, unique, sincere, and leader (refer to Chapter 4 for detailed discussion). The study used a 17-item brand personality congruence scale derived from Aaker's (1997) 42-item Brand Personality Scale. Separate scales for brand personality and customer personality were verified and analyzed prior to running brand personality congruence data. Brand personality congruence was operationalized as the gap between the customer's perceived personality and the restaurant's brand personality as perceived by the customer.

For Phase II of the research, the following conceptual model was developed where BPC is hypothesized to have positive associations with satisfaction, trust, and brand loyalty. Further more, satisfaction and trust have positive associations with brand loyalty and mediate the BPC-brand loyalty relationship (Figure 5.1).

**Figure 5.1 Conceptual framework of brand personality congruence (BPC), satisfaction, trust, and brand loyalty in the casual dining industry**



**Hypothesis 1: Brand personality congruence is positively associated with trust.**

Upshaw (1995, p. 9) stated that ‘Branding is the art of trust creation.’ An essential step in building this trust is the creation of a stable and trustworthy brand identity. Because brand personality is an important part of branding and the most obviously exhibited, there is merit in investigating the effect of BPC on the feelings of trust that customers feel towards the focal brand. Fournier (1994) suggested that a well-established brand personality can lead to increased trust and ultimately, loyalty. The study proposed that as BPC increased, the propensity to trust the restaurant brand also increased.

**Hypothesis 2: Brand personality congruence (BPC) is positively associated with brand loyalty.**

Aaker (1999) stated that brand personality influences consumer preference. Literature further shows that consumers are likely to choose brands whose personalities

match their own (Kassarjian, 1971; Kotler, 2003; Sirgy, 1982; Wee, 2004). Marconi (2000) noted that it is the building of a public identification of oneself with the brand that leads to strong brand loyalty. In the context of this study, this identification is operationalized as BPC. Temporal (2001, p.53) asserted that when BPC is high, that is the brand and customer personalities are closer, “the greater the willingness to buy the brand and the deeper the brand loyalty.” Thus, the study sought to provide empirical proof that brand personality influenced consumer preference (Aaker, 1999) by suggesting that high levels of BPC were strongly and positively associated with brand loyalty

**Hypothesis 3: Brand personality congruence (BPC) is positively associated with satisfaction.**

Gwinner, Gremler, and Bitner (1998) showed that value congruence is significantly related to satisfaction. When the similarity between the customer’s values and the service provider is high, relationship quality is enhanced and satisfaction is increased. Similarly, in self-congruity research, when the difference between the product image and the customer image is low, it is said that positive self-congruity occurs. Past research has shown that this has a strong relationship with satisfaction due to the social consistency and social approval frameworks (Chon & Olsen, 1991; Jamal & Goode, 2001; Sirgy, 1982). When there is high congruence, the customer feels that the product or service reinforces their self-concept, thus creating a feeling of satisfaction. In the context of brand personality congruence, the study proposes that the higher the BPC, the more likely that the customer will experience higher levels of satisfaction.

**Hypothesis 4: Trust is positively associated with satisfaction.**

When trust in a brand exists, customers have more tolerance for service failures (O’Shaughnessy & O’Shaughnessy, 2004) and their overall evaluation of satisfaction may not suffer. Additionally, Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, and Gremler (2002) showed that as confidence and trust in the service provider increases, the anxiety related to the relationship is lessened resulting in greater satisfaction. In the context of this study, the service provider was operationalized as the casual dining restaurant brand.

**Hypothesis 5: Satisfaction is positively associated with brand loyalty.**

Marketing literature is rich with research that has investigated the relationship between brand loyalty and satisfaction and has largely shown it to be positive (Bitner, 1990; Oliver, 1997; Yi, 1990). High levels of overall satisfaction and strong brand loyalty contribute to competitive advantage, and have yet to be studied in relation to brand personality congruence. Thus, the inclusion of this relationship in the model is warranted. The study posited that the more the restaurant satisfies the needs of the customer for quality food and service, the more it will be preferred to other brands in its class.

**Hypothesis 6: Trust is positively associated with brand loyalty.**

Prominent research by Morgan and Hunt (1994), Garbarino and Johnson (1999), Hart and Johnson (1999), and Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) among others, point to the importance of building trust as a determinant, if not the foundation, of customer retention and loyalty. Past literature states that trust enhances the strength of loyalty and relationship quality because as trust is built, the perceived risk in and vulnerability to the service provider is reduced (Berry, 2000), and the consumer's confidence in keeping the relationship is increased (Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Sirdeshmukh et al., 2002; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2002). The study aimed to validate the relationship between trust and a measure of composite brand loyalty, which included the cognitive, affective, conative, and action phases. Thus, the study proposed that higher levels of trust lead to higher levels of brand loyalty.

## **Methodology**

The sampling frame used was a consumer database of residents who live in the top 25 metropolitan areas of the United States and are at least 19 years of age. A random sample of members from this database received the questionnaire through the university's online survey system. Each respondent was asked to evaluate the restaurant using the 17-item brand personality congruence scale. The respondents then evaluated their levels of trust, satisfaction, and brand loyalty to the focal restaurant.

## *Survey Instrument*

Because the sampling frame included prospective respondents from across the United States, a nationally distributed casual dining restaurant brand with outlets located in metropolitan areas was chosen to ensure that the study population was familiar with the restaurant. This brand was ranked by *Restaurants and Institutions* (2006) as one of the top three casual dining restaurant chains in the United States. The questionnaire requested respondents to evaluate the focal restaurant on four measurement scales: Brand Personality Congruence (BPC), Trust, Satisfaction, and Brand Loyalty (Appendix B.2).

The BPC scale was composed of 17 items modified from Aaker's (1997) 42-item Brand Personality Scale. A five-point Likert-type scale anchored at "not at all descriptive" to "extremely descriptive" was used. Respondents were first asked to rate themselves on the 17 traits (i.e.: I am down-to-earth). Respondents were then asked to rate the focal brand on the same traits (i.e.: This restaurant chain is down-to-earth). BPC was operationalized as the degree to which the respondents' self-evaluation matched their evaluation of the brand's personality. To minimize order and response effects, items within the scale were randomized (i.e. "I am a leader" was the first attribute rated on the customer personality section while "XYZ is a leader" was rated 16th on the brand personality section).

Although multi-item measurements are recommended for cognitive constructs (Nunnally, 1978; Yi, 1990), a single-item direct measurement of BPC was added as a confirmatory variable for content validity of the gap score method used to calculate BPC. Additionally, a review of the literature found that researchers do not unanimously agree about using the gap method to measure congruence and similar variables. Several concerns have been raised regarding the validity and reliability of the difference method (Back, 2005; Chon, 1990; Sirgy et al., 1997). Thus, a five-point semantic-differential scale anchored from "not at all similar" to "similar" was used to measure the direct comparison between the brand and customer personality (If you were to think of XYZ as a person, please indicate a point along the scale from left to right that matches how similar you see yourself compared to XYZ).

A four item seven-point Likert-type scale (Morgan & Hunt, 1994) was used to measure the degree of trust that the respondent felt towards the restaurant chain. The scale, anchored at 1 (Strongly Disagree) and 7 (Strongly Agree), measured the degree of reliability,

confidence, integrity, and overall trust in the focal restaurant. Next, a three item seven-point semantic-differential scale (Jones & Suh, 2000) was used to measure satisfaction with the restaurant chain. The three sets of anchors were unsatisfied/satisfied, unpleasant/pleasant, and unfavorable/favorable. Respondents were then asked to rate their loyalty towards the restaurant. Five items (Oliver, 1997) representing each of the loyalty phases (cognitive, affective, conative, and action) and an overall item (“Overall, I consider myself loyal to this restaurant chain”) were used to measure brand loyalty on a seven-point strongly disagree/strongly agree Likert-type scale.

The demographic section included the following: gender, age, marital status, income, region of residence, frequency of dining at focal brand, frequency of eating meals away from home, and frequency of dining at casual dining restaurants.

### ***Data Collection***

Two independent external consumer data providers were used for the study. The pilot test was administered using a targeted electronic mailing list purchased from a consumer data provider that was prevalently used in scholarly research (not limited to consumer marketing). An invitation email was sent to 5000 prospective respondents (Appendix B.1). As an incentive to increase the response rate, respondents were informed that they would be entered into a raffle for a \$25 dining gift certificate or an iPod Nano. For every 50 responses received, a dining certificate was to be drawn, and for every 150 responses received, an iPod Nano was to be awarded. A follow-up email was to be sent five days after the initial mailing. Due to very poor response rates (less than one percent), a second mailing was cancelled and alternative data collection methods were investigated. Poor response may have resulted from recipients discarding the invitation email as junk/bulk mail.

A secondary pilot study was performed using a market research provider that maintains a by-invitation-only database. Incentive for respondent participation was in the form of credits or points and was inclusive in the per-completed-response fee paid by the researcher to the company. A soft launch of 581 email invitations were sent to residents from the top 25 metropolitan areas in the United States (New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Dallas-Fort Worth, Philadelphia, Houston, Miami, Washington D.C., Atlanta, Detroit, Boston, San Francisco, Phoenix, Seattle, Minneapolis-St. Paul, San Diego, St. Louis, Tampa,



Baltimore, Denver, Pittsburg, Portland, Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Sacramento). Each email contained the URL link to the survey and a unique PIN ID as a control point to ensure the integrity of the data. Within 24 hours, 67 members accessed the link with 52 members successfully completing the survey. After 48 hours, a total of 81 members (13.9%) accessed the link, 63 of which started the survey. Fifty-nine (59) completed the survey for a usable response rate of 10.15%. This is comparable to the average response rate of 10% for research done by the company for commercial clients (M. Evans, personal communication, June 25, 2007). Inspection of the pilot data showed acceptable data quality and integrity in terms of demographic distributions and response variability on the survey items. Having no revisions to the instrument, an additional 6831 invitations were processed with a target of receiving 500 completed and usable responses.

### *Data Analyses*

Prior to analyses, data was screened for violations underlying the assumptions for structural equation modeling. Descriptive statistics (SPSS v.13) was used to summarize frequencies of categorical data and means and standard deviations for all continuous variables. As suggested by Anderson and Gerbing (1988), the two-step approach to model testing was followed using AMOS v. 4. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to confirm the factor structure of the measurement scales prior to running the structural equation modeling to investigate the relationship between BPC and brand loyalty. Composite reliability was used to assess the reliability of the scales and resulting dimensions. The mediating effect of satisfaction and trust on the BPC-brand loyalty relationship was tested using structural equation modeling and the Sobel test. Calculation of the average variance extracted (AVE) and comparison of the correlation matrix was used as a test for convergent and discriminant validity. Because BPC has not previously been used in consumer behavior studies, competing models were used to ensure model parsimony and appropriateness. Chi-square difference tests and a review of the goodness of fit indices were performed to determine the best fitting model.

## Results

### *Data Screening and Characteristics of Sample*

Within eight hours of the email invitation, the survey was terminated with 823 members (12.2%) who accessed the link to the survey, 569 of whom began, and 533 completed the survey. Respondents with substantive missing data and poor quality responses (i.e. those who answered neutral or either extreme for all items) were removed prior to analysis ( $n=15$ ). Tests for multivariate and univariate outliers and violations of assumptions for structural equation modeling were performed using SPSS (v.13). By exploring the Mahalanobis distances and resulting chi-square values ( $p<.001$ ), four cases were determined as multivariate outliers and excluded from succeeding analyses. Although some conditioning indices were greater than 30, these were not coupled with more than two variances greater than 0.5, thus there were no severe threats of multicollinearity (Belsely, Kuh, & Welsch, 1980). In addition, bivariate correlations did not exceed 0.9. No further case deletions or transformations were made ( $N=514$ ).

There was a relatively even split between females (51.9%) and males (48.1%). The majority of respondents were between the ages of 26 to 45 (51.4%), married (50.8%), living in the Northeast or Midwest (52.5%), and earning an annual income between \$40,000 and \$80,000 ( $n=185$ ). Results (Table 5.1) showed that a majority (68.3%) of the respondents dine out up to three times a week, with 29.8% dining at casual dining restaurants at least once a week. In addition, 83% of the respondents have eaten at the focal restaurant, 17.5% of which visit at least once a month.

### *Brand Personality Congruence Scale*

To measure BPC, respondents were first asked to rate themselves on a 17-item personality module. Following this, they rated the focal restaurant on the same items. Difference scores were calculated and recoded to reflect the operationalization described in the study. A gap score of five or negative five meant that the respondent did not feel congruent to the brand at all reflecting poor congruence. Conversely, a gap score of zero meant that the respondent was in perfect congruence with the brand, reflecting high levels of BPC. For ease of interpretation of the results, the absolute value of the gap score was calculated and subtracted from five, the maximum score for BPC. For example, a score of

**Table 5.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N=514)**

<b>Demographic Characteristic</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Demographic Characteristic</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Age</b>			<b>Marital Status</b>		
19-25	42	8.2	Single	173	33.7
26-35	148	28.8	Married	261	50.8
36-45	116	22.6	Divorced	46	8.9
46-55	108	21.0	Domestic partnership	23	4.5
56-65	81	15.8	Widow/widower	7	1.4
66-75	13	2.5	Prefer not to respond	4	0.8
76+	5	1.0			
No response	1	0.2			
<b>Area of Residence</b>			<b>Income</b>		
Northeast	104	20.2	<\$20,000	29	5.6
Mid-Atlantic	34	6.6	\$20,000-39,999	115	22.4
Midwest	166	32.3	\$40,000-59,999	124	24.1
Southwest	70	13.6	\$60,000-79,999	61	11.9
Southeast	51	9.9	>\$80,000	151	29.4
Prefer not to respond	89	17.3	Prefer not to respond	34	6.6
<b>Frequency of Dining Away from Home</b>			<b>Frequency of Dining At Casual Dining Restaurants</b>		
Never	2	0.4	Never	23	4.5
Less than once a week	78	15.2	Less than once a week	206	40.1
Once a week	149	29.0	Once a week	153	29.8
2-3 times a week	202	39.3	2-3 times a week	113	22.0
4-7 times a week	70	13.6	4-7 times a week	15	2.9
8+ times a week	11	2.1	8+ times a week	2	0.4
Prefer not to respond	2	0.4	Prefer not to respond	2	0.4
<b>Frequency of Dining at Focal Restaurant</b>			<b>Gender</b>		
Never	85	16.5	Male	247	48.1
Less than once a month	290	56.4	Female	267	51.9
Once a month	90	17.5			
2-3 times a month	43	8.4			
4-7 times a month	4	0.8			
Prefer not to respond	2	0.4			

four on the customer personality (CP) and a score of three on the brand personality (BP) will result in an absolute gap score of one. Therefore, the customer's BPC score on that item will be four, which indicates a fairly high congruence. Conversely, a score of one on the CP and five on the BP results in a gap score of negative four. Taking the absolute value and recoding it will result in a BPC score of one indicating low congruence. The study postulated that higher BPC values result in higher trust, satisfaction, and brand loyalty values.

### ***Measurement Model***

Prior to testing the hypothesized model, the structure of BPC was investigated. In Phase I of the study (Chapter 4), it was empirically shown that the 17-item BPC measurement has four dimensions: Exciting ( $F_1$ ), Unique ( $F_2$ ), Sincere ( $F_3$ ), and Leader ( $F_4$ ). A first-order confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed on data collected in Phase II to validate these results. For all analyses, one indicator for each dimension was fixed at 1.00 to set the unit of measurement. Acceptable model fit is achieved when the Root Mean Square of Approximation (RMSEA) ranges between .05 (Browne & Cudeck, 1993) and .06 (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Values of .90 and above for the different goodness-of-fit indices likewise indicate good fit (Byrne, 2001).

The measurement model for BPC showed that the model fit the data well ( $\chi^2 (113, N=514) = 293.37$ ;  $RMSEA = .06$ ). A goodness-of-fit index (GFI) of .94 and adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI) of .91 suggested that assigned indicators appropriately measured the latent variables (Table 5.2). Based on modification indices, the item *daring* was moved from  $F_2$  to  $F_1$ , resulting in a better fitting model as evidenced by the improvement in goodness of fit indices ( $\chi^2 (113, N=514) = 251.74$ ;  $GFI = .94$ ;  $AGFI = .92$ ;  $RMSEA = .05$ ). Factor loadings ranged from .40 to .74 and were statistically significant. An evaluation of the critical ratios of differences for the residuals of the factors showed that the values were statistically different, thus the residuals were not constrained as equal (Byrne, 2001). No further modifications were performed. Table 5.2 shows the means, standard deviations, factor loadings, composite reliabilities, and average variances extracted (AVE) for the four-factor BPC scale.

**Table 5.2 Means, Standard Deviations, and Factor Loadings, Standardized Correlations (Squared Correlations), Composite Reliability, and AVE for Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Brand Personality Congruence (N=514)**

Scales and Indicators	Standardized Loadings <sup>a</sup>				<i>M</i> ± <i>SD</i> <sup>b</sup>
	<i>F</i> <sub>1</sub> <sup>c</sup>	<i>F</i> <sub>2</sub>	<i>F</i> <sub>3</sub>	<i>F</i> <sub>4</sub>	
Cool	.67				4.04 ± .93
Exciting	.65				4.02 ± .90
Contemporary	.62				4.12 ± .87
Up-to-date	.61				4.07 ± .86
Daring	.56				3.96 ± .92
Trendy	.41				3.82 ± .96
Young	.40				3.93 ± .96
Imaginative		.72			3.89 ± .96
Original		.68			3.90 ± .92
Unique		.65			3.56 ± 1.11
Independent		.61			3.69 ± 1.00
Real			.74		3.92 ± .98
Honest			.71		3.70 ± .88
Sincere			.70		3.59 ± .95
Leader				.63	3.87 ± .90
Confident				.60	4.06 ± .89
Successful				.46	4.07 ± .82
<b>Standardized Correlations (Squared Correlation)</b>					
Exciting	1.00				
Unique	.81 (.65)	1.00			
Sincere	.56 (.32)	.80 (.63)	1.00		
Leader	.85 (.72)	.85 (.72)	.63 (.40)	1.00	
<b>Composite Reliability</b>	.76	.76	.76	.58	
<b>AVE</b>	.32	.44	.51	.32	

<sup>a</sup>All factor loadings were significant at .001

<sup>b</sup>Scales (Min/Max): BPC (0-perfectly incongruent/5-perfectly congruent)

<sup>c</sup>BPC Factor labels: *F*<sub>1</sub>–*Exciting*; *F*<sub>2</sub> –*Unique*; *F*<sub>3</sub> –*Sincere*; *F*<sub>4</sub> –*Leader*

Note:  $\chi^2$  (113, N=514)=251.74; GFI= .94; AGFI=.92; RMSEA=.05

Although all factor loadings were significant at .001 confirming convergent validity (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Kline, 1998), AVE values ranging from .32 to .51 provided mediocre results. The criterion for convergent validity (AVE>.50) as suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981) was not achieved for three of the dimensions. Additionally, AVE values were not greater than the highest squared correlation, suggesting that discriminant validity was not satisfied (Fornell and Larcker, 1981) for the BPC dimensions.

### ***Competing Model 1: BPC as a multi-item unidimensional construct.***

Although the composite reliability for the BPC scale (.91) as a whole was well above the criterion of .70 (Nunnally, 1978), reliability coefficients of three of the four dimensions of BPC were slightly above the acceptable cut-off. Additionally, one dimension (reliability<sub>leader</sub>=.58) failed to meet the criterion even if all factor loadings for these items were above .40 and were significant. The relatively high correlations between factors suggested that a better fit to the data might be obtained if all indicators were assigned to one factor. In an effort to improve reliability and model fit, the four factors of BPC were eliminated and all 17 items were allowed to load onto BPC.

A single factor competing model of BPC resulted only in fair goodness-of-fit measures ( $\chi^2$  (119, N=514)= 507.55; GFI= .88; AGFI=.84; RMSEA=.08). Statistically, modification indices greater than 50 suggested that the errors for the following indicator pairs be allowed to covariate: cool/trendy and sincere/honest. Taking into consideration the contextual perspective, it seemed reasonable to allow these errors to covariate as they measure conceptually similar indicators. This improved the fit considerably ( $\chi^2$  (117, N=514)= 398.75; GFI= .91; AGFI=.88; RMSEA=.07). However, a significant chi-square difference test ( $\Delta\chi^2=147.01$ ,  $\Delta df=4$ ,  $p<.001$ ) confirmed that the four-factor structure of BPC was still a better model.

### ***Second Order CFA for Brand Personality Congruence***

Because brand personality is a multidimensional construct, there is a multitude of ways that it can be designed so that it is “optimal” given a specific brand (Diamantopoulos et al, 2005). It thus follows that consumers may be more congruent with some aspects of the brand’s personality than others. Therefore, measuring BPC with a second order factor takes into account the effect of all the dimensions as a whole on consumer preferences and

behavior rather than only the direct effects of each dimension on the exogenous variables. Second order CFA was performed with one second order latent variable (BPC) and four first order latent variables (exciting, unique, sincere, and leader). As suggested by Byrne (2001), the variance of BPC was set to 1.00. The CFA showed a slightly better fit to the data than the first order specification ( $\chi^2 (114, N=514) = 247.76$ ;  $GFI = .94$ ;  $AGFI = .93$ ;  $RMSEA = .05$ ). Table 5.3 summarizes the comparison of fit indices for the preceding analyses.

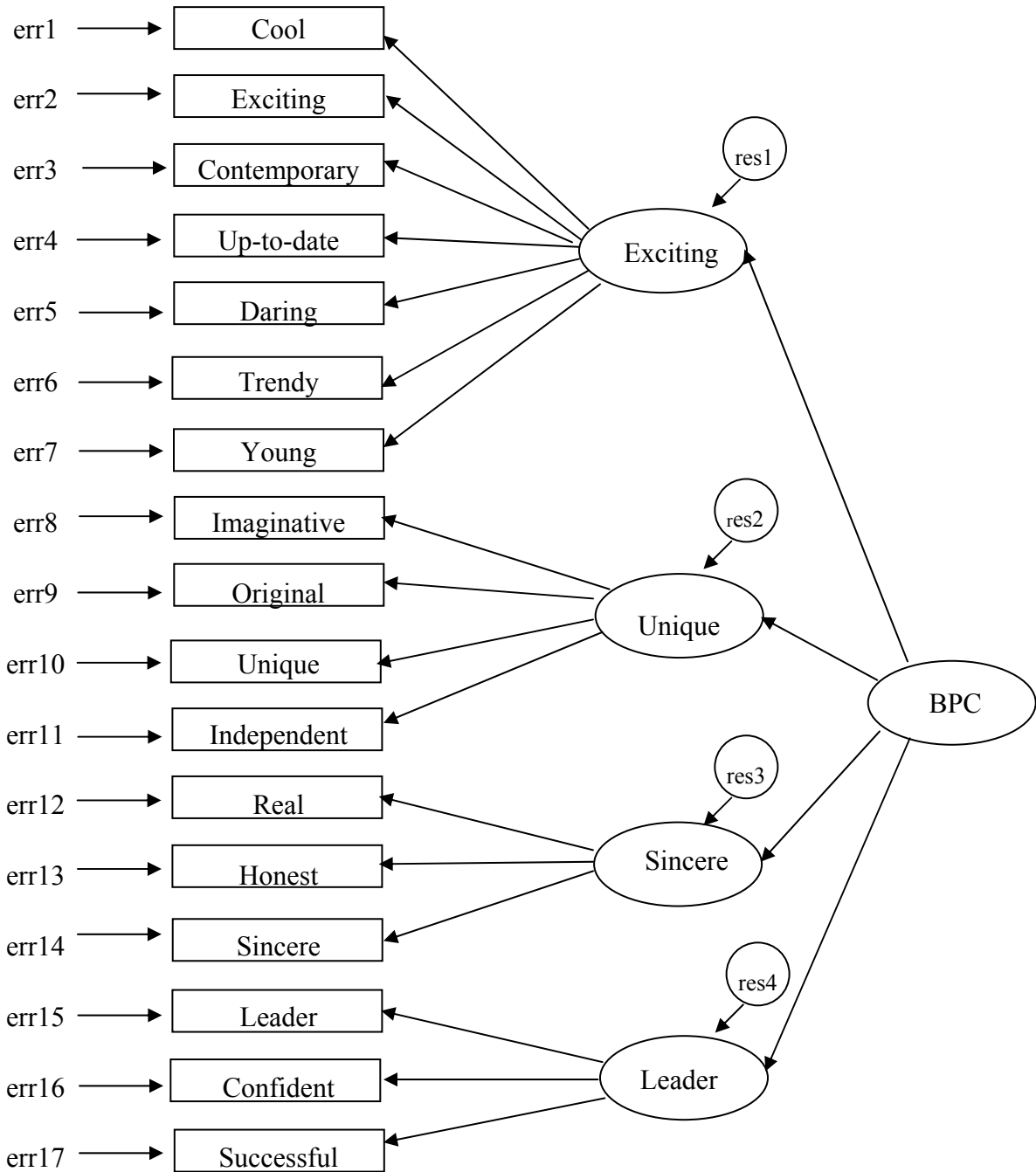
**Table 5.3 Fit indices for Brand Personality Congruence Scale (N=514)**

<i>Model</i>	$\chi^2$	<i>df</i>	<i>GFI</i>	<i>AGFI</i>	<i>RMSEA</i>	<i>NFI</i>	<i>CFI</i>	<i>PNFI</i>	<i>PGFI</i>
<b>Measurement 1<sup>st</sup> order</b>	293.37	113	.94	.91	.06	.89	.93	.74	.69
<b>Modified 1<sup>st</sup> order CFA</b>	251.74	113	.94	.92	.05	.91	.95	.75	.70
<b>Modified 1factor BPC</b>	398.75	117	.91	.88	.07	.85	.89	.73	.69
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> order CFA</b>	247.76	114	.94	.93	.05	.91	.95	.76	.70

\*Note:  $\Delta\chi^2$  between modified 1<sup>st</sup> order and 2<sup>nd</sup> order CFA = 3.98,  $df=1$ , not significant

A non-significant chi-square difference test between the first order model and the second order model showed that the second-order structure (Figure 5.2) is acceptable for use in the structural equation modeling. Following Byrne (2001, p.121), the second order model satisfied the following characteristics: (1) Congruence was measured by four first-order factors (exciting, unique, sincere, and leader) and one second order factor (BPC); (2) each indicator had a non-zero loading on the factor it was measuring, and zero loadings on all other factors; (3) Item error terms were uncorrelated (with the exception of error terms for cool and trendy as per modification indices); and (4) Covariation of first order factors were fully accounted for by their regression on BPC.

**Figure 5.2 Second order CFA Model for Brand Personality Congruence**





### ***Theoretical Model Testing***

Using a second order structural equation model, a hypothesized (mediated effects) model and alternative models were compared to assess the relationship between four latent variables: brand personality congruence (*BPC*), Trust (*TR*), Satisfaction (*SAT*), and Brand Loyalty (*BL*). The four first order factors comprising *BPC* were also latent variables: Exciting (*Excite*), Unique, Sincere, and Leader. *TR* was composed of four indicators, *SAT* was composed of three, and *BL* was composed of five (Table 5.4). For all analyses, one indicator for each construct was fixed at 1.00 to set the unit of measurement of the latent variables. As suggested by Byrne (2001), the variance of *BPC* was set to 1.00. Anderson and Gerbing's (1998) two-step approach to model testing was adopted for this phase of the study.

### ***Measurement Model and Confirmatory Factor Analyses***

Results showed that the model fit the data fairly well ( $\chi^2 (355, N=514) = 985.37$ ;  $GFI = .88$ ;  $AGFI = .86$ ;  $RMSEA = .06$ ) with all factor loadings significant at .001. Table 5.4 summarizes the means standard deviations, and standardized factor loadings for *TR*, *SAT*, and *BL* while Table 5.5 provides a summary of the standardized correlations, squared correlations, composite reliability, and average variances extracted (AVE) for all first level latent constructs. Composite reliability scores for all scales ( $BPC = .91$ ,  $TR = .96$ ,  $SAT = .96$ , and  $BL = .90$ ) were above the .70 cut-off, suggesting that scale reliability was satisfied (Hair, et al., 1998). Although not all factors of the *BPC* scale met the criterion for composite reliability, values below .70 are acceptable if the research is exploratory in nature (Hair, et al., 1998).

### ***Hypotheses Testing***

The initial hypothesized model showed a significant Chi-square ( $\chi^2 (366, N=514) = 1054.18$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and acceptable goodness of fit indices ( $GFI = .87$ ;  $AGFI = .85$ ;  $RMSEA = .06$ ). Changes based on modification indices resulted in a much better fitting model ( $\chi^2 (365, N=514) = 892.67$ ,  $p < .001$ ;  $GFI = .89$ ;  $AGFI = .87$ ;  $RMSEA = .05$ ). No further modifications were made and all fit indices indicated a good model fit. The hypothesized

**Table 5.4 Means, Standard Deviations, and Factor Loadings for Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Trust, Satisfaction, and Brand Loyalty (N=514)**

<b>Scales and Indicators</b>	<b>Standardized Loadings<sup>a</sup></b>	<b><i>M</i> ± <i>SD</i><sup>b</sup></b>
<b><i>Trust</i></b>		
I think XYZ is reliable.	.92	4.98 ± 1.22
I have confidence in XYZ.	.94	4.87 ± 1.25
I think that XYZ has high integrity.	.90	4.72 ± 1.23
Overall, I trust the XYZ brand of restaurants.	.93	5.01 ± 1.34
<b><i>Satisfaction</i></b>		
Unsatisfied/satisfied	.95	5.17 ± 1.37
Unpleasant/pleasant	.91	5.25 ± 1.27
Unfavorable/favorable	.96	5.18 ± 1.30
<b><i>Brand Loyalty</i></b>		
XYZ is superior to other casual dining restaurants in its class.	.88	4.02 ± 1.35
I have grown to like XYZ more so than other casual dining restaurant chains.	.92	3.75 ± 1.51
I intend to continue dining at XYZ in the future.	.78	4.65 ± 1.63
When I have a need to go to a casual dining restaurant, I dine only at XYZ.	.59	2.32 ± 1.45
Overall, I consider myself loyal to XYZ.	.77	3.02 ± 1.59

<sup>a</sup>All factor loadings were significant at .001

<sup>b</sup>Scales (Min/Max): Trust (1-Strongly Disagree/ 7-Strongly Agree); Satisfaction (1-Unsatisfied, Unpleasant, Unfavorable / 7- Satisfied, Pleasant, Favorable); Brand Loyalty (1-Strongly Disagree/ 7-Strongly Agree)

**Table 5.5 Standardized correlations (squared correlations), Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for Latent Variables (N=514)**

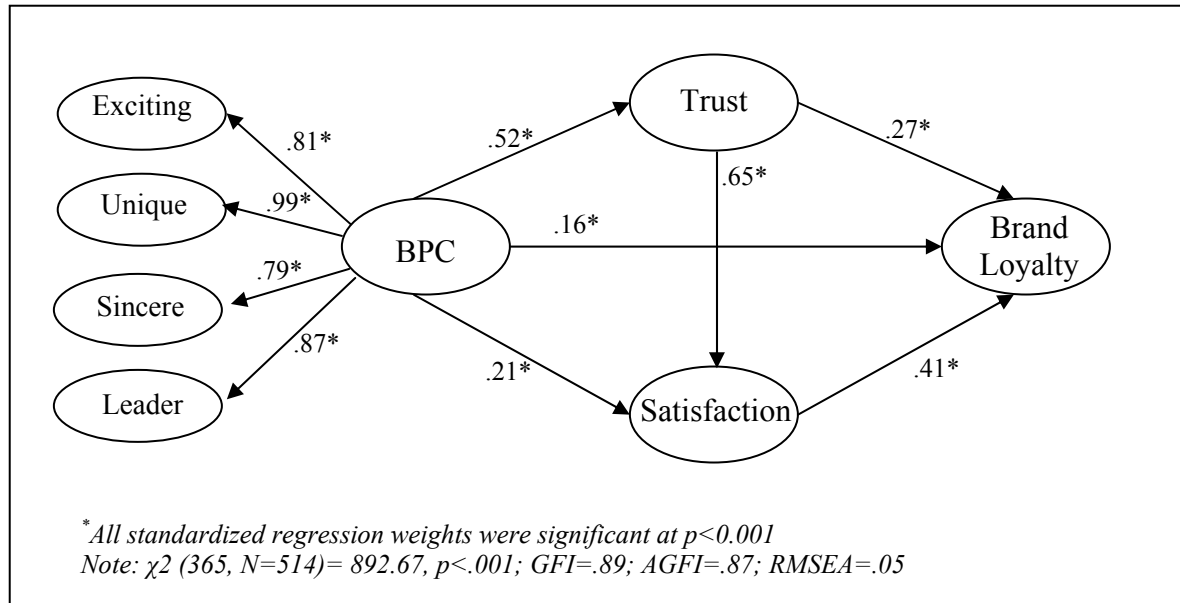
LATENT VARIABLE	Exciting	Unique	Sincere	Leader	TR	SAT	BL
<b>Exciting</b>	1.00						
<b>Unique</b>	.81 (.65)	1.00					
<b>Sincere</b>	.56 (.32)	.80 (.63)	1.00				
<b>Leader</b>	.85 (.72)	.85 (.72)	.63 (.40)	1.00			
<b>TR</b>	.32 (.10)	.52(.27)	.58 (.34)	.40 (.16)	1.00		
<b>SAT</b>	.40 (.16)	.55 (.30)	.56 (.31)	.40 (.16)	.76 (.58)	1.00	
<b>BL</b>	.37 (.13)	.53 (.29)	.52 (.27)	.42 (.18)	.66 (.44)	.69 (.48)	1.00
<b>Composite Reliability</b>	.75	.76	.76	.58	.96	.96	.90
<b>AVE</b>	.31	.44	.51	.32	.85	.88	.65

\*Note: TR=Trust, SAT=Satisfaction, BL=Brand loyalty  
Composite Reliability BPC<sub>16 items</sub>: .91

model proposed direct relationships from BPC to TR, SAT, and BL, direct effects of TR on SAT and BL, and direct effects of SAT on BL (Figure 5.3).

Parameter estimates for the relationship of BPC to trust, satisfaction, and brand loyalty all indicated strong positive relationships ( $BPC \rightarrow TR = .52, t=11.40$ ;  $BPC \rightarrow SAT = .21, t= 5.35$ ;  $BPC \rightarrow BL = .16, t=3.60$ ). All hypothesized relationships were significant at the .001 level, thus Hypotheses 1 to 3 were supported (Table 5.6). Results showed that BPC had the greatest direct effect on trust thus providing empirical evidence that strengthening BPC leads to higher levels of trust. Hypothesis 4 was likewise strongly supported ( $TR \rightarrow SAT = .65, t=16.74$ ), showing that as the restaurant brand earns a customer's trust over time, the customer's evaluation of overall satisfaction with the brand also increases. Results also supported previous literature that trust and satisfaction have significant positive relationships with brand loyalty ( $TR \rightarrow BL = .27, t=4.86$ ;  $SAT \rightarrow BL = .41, t= 7.05$ ), thus Hypotheses 5 and 6 are supported.

**Figure 5.3 Structural model testing for BPC, trust, satisfaction, and brand loyalty**



**Table 5.6 Parameter Estimates of Hypothesized Model**

Hypotheses	Regression Weights	t-value <sup>a</sup>
<b>H1:</b> Brand personality congruence (BPC) is positively associated with trust.	.52	11.40
<b>H2:</b> BPC is positively associated with brand loyalty.	.16	3.60
<b>H3:</b> BPC is positively associated with satisfaction.	.21	5.35
<b>H4:</b> Trust is positively associated with satisfaction.	.65	16.74
<b>H5:</b> Satisfaction is positively associated with brand loyalty.	.27	4.86
<b>H6:</b> Trust is positively associated with brand loyalty.	.41	7.05

<sup>a</sup>All standardized regression weights were significant at  $p < 0.001$   
 Note:  $\chi^2 (365, N=514) = 892.67, p < .001$ ;  $GFI = .89$ ;  $AGFI = .87$ ;  $RMSEA = .05$

### ***Mediating Effect of Trust and Satisfaction***

To test the mediating effects of trust and satisfaction, the total and indirect effects values were analyzed (Table 5.7). Initial assessment indicated that BPC had indirect effects on satisfaction via trust (.34), and brand loyalty via trust and satisfaction (.37).

**Table 5.7 Standardized Indirect and Total Effects**

	Trust (TR)		Satisfaction (SAT)		Brand Loyalty (BL)	
	Indirect	Total	Indirect	Total	Indirect	Total
BPC	---	.52	.34	.55	.37	.53
TR	---	---	---	.65	.27	.52
SAT	---	---	---	---	---	.41

*\*Note: All indirect and total effects were significant at  $p < 0.001$*

A series of model respecifications were performed to ascertain the mediating effects of trust and satisfaction. The models were subjected to the three-step Barron and Kenny (1986) test for mediating variables. The three conditions of the test were satisfied for all models (all relationships were significant at .001). The effect of BPC on loyalty decreases in the presence of trust showing that the relationship is partially mediated. Similarly, satisfaction partially mediated the relationship between BPC and loyalty. Identical results were obtained for the partial mediation of trust in the BPC to satisfaction relationship.

Further analyses confirmed that trust (*Sobel*  $t_{BPC \rightarrow TR \rightarrow BL} = 4.50, p < .001$ ) and satisfaction (*Sobel*  $t_{BPC \rightarrow SAT \rightarrow BL} = 4.25, p < .001$ ) indeed mediate the relationship between BPC and brand loyalty (Sobel, 1982). Likewise, results showed that trust mediates the relationship between BPC and satisfaction (*Sobel*  $t_{BPC \rightarrow TR \rightarrow SAT} = 8.70, p < .001$ ). Although BPC on its own was shown to affect brand loyalty, these results reinforce the importance of trust and satisfaction in building brand loyalty.

### ***Competing Models***

In an effort to improve model fit and find the most parsimonious model, competing models were established. Table 5.8 summarizes the fit indices for the measurement, hypothesized, and competing models.

**Competing Model 2: BPC as a single-item global measurement**

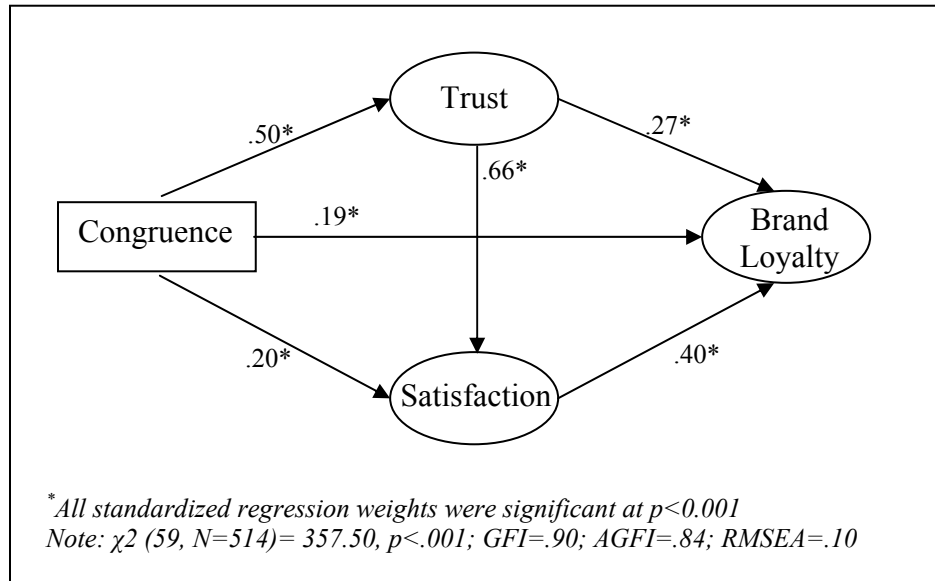
The reliability of the multi-item gap score method used for mathematically calculating congruence has been questioned in the literature (Back, 2005; Chon, 1990; Sirgy et al., 1997). A competing model using a single-item direct measurement of BPC was established. Initial evaluation may lead to the conclusion that the model fitted the data extremely well ( $\chi^2 (59, N=514) = 357.49, p < .001; CFI = .96; NFI = .95$ ). The NFI and CFI values were higher for the competing model, but other fit indices implied that the hypothesized model was a better fit (AGFI, PNFI, and PGFI were all higher for the hypothesized model, and RMSEA was much lower). Given that a significant Chi-square difference test ( $\Delta \chi^2 = 535.18, \Delta df = 306, p < .001$ ) was achieved, the RMSEA value of .10 indicated considerable errors of approximation resulting in a very poor fit (Byrne, 2001) and poor reliability (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

**Table 5.8 Fit indices for Models (N=514)**

<i>Model</i>	$\chi^2$	<i>df</i>	<i>GFI</i>	<i>AGFI</i>	<i>RMSEA</i>	<i>NFI</i>	<i>CFI</i>	<i>PNFI</i>	<i>PGFI</i>
<b>Measurement</b>	985.37	355	.88	.86	.06	.90	.93	.79	.72
<b>Hypothesized</b> (Figure 5.3)	892.67	365	.89	.87	.05	.91	.95	.82	.74
<b>Competing 2</b> (Figure 5.4)	357.49	59	.90	.84	.10	.95	.96	.72	.58
<b>Competing 3</b> (Figure 5.5)	940.39	366	.89	.87	.06	.91	.94	.82	.75

*Note.* *GFI*= goodness-of-fit index; *AGFI*= adjusted goodness-of-fit index; *RMSEA*= root mean square error of approximation; *NFI*= normed fit index; *CFI*= comparative fit index; *PNFI*= parsimony normed fit index; *PGFI*= parsimony goodness of fit index.

**Figure 5.4 Structural model testing for BPC as a single-item global measurement**



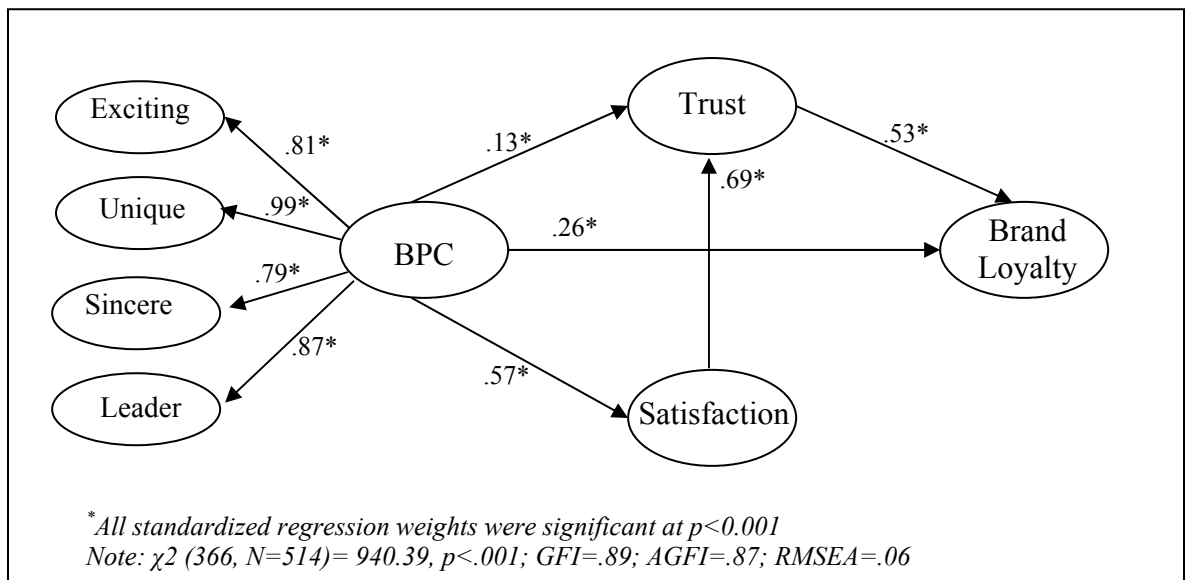
Results showed that the gap score method obtained a similar coefficient structure as the global measurement. Standardized total effects for the single item ( $Congruence \rightarrow TR = .50$ ;  $Congruence \rightarrow SAT = .53$ ;  $Congruence \rightarrow BL = .54$ ) closely matched that of the hypothesized 17-item gap measurement ( $BPC \rightarrow TR = .54$ ;  $BPC \rightarrow SAT = .55$ ;  $BPC \rightarrow BL = .53$ ). The standardized regression weights of the direct effects ( $Congruence \rightarrow TR = .50$  vs.  $BPC \rightarrow TR = .53$ ,  $Congruence \rightarrow SAT = .20$  vs.  $BPC \rightarrow SAT = .21$ , and  $Congruence \rightarrow BL = .19$  vs.  $BPC \rightarrow BL = .16$ ) and indirect effects ( $Congruence \rightarrow SAT = .33$  vs.  $BPC \rightarrow SAT = .34$ . and  $Congruence \rightarrow BL = .35$  vs.  $BPC \rightarrow BL = .37$ ) were likewise similar. These results showed that using the gap method appropriately measured BPC and that using the multi-item scale in structural analyses provides relatively similar results as a direct global measurement of the construct. In effect, these results also provided evidence that the personality gap scale had content validity in that it was just as effective in measuring actual congruence as a direct global method did.

Although the Chi-square change was significant, the change in the variance explained in brand loyalty was not substantial ( $R^2_{hypothesized} = .55$ ;  $R^2_{Model2} = .56$ ). This indicated that the model may benefit from an increased number of indicators and that the multi-item latent variable BPC may indeed be a better method.

**Competing Model 3: Direct path from satisfaction to trust.**

Keller (1993) has suggested that trust could be influenced by post consumption evaluations such as satisfaction. Although empirical evidence supporting a direct path from satisfaction to trust is not extensive in current marketing literature, a competing model was developed to test this relationship in the context of the branded casual dining industry. An accumulation of positive satisfactory experiences with the brand encourages a stronger relationship with the consumer (Selnes, 1998) and leads the consumer to expect the brand to reliably deliver a satisfactory dining experience over time. Thus, this competing model postulated that as overall satisfaction increases over time, trust in the restaurant brand also increases (Figure 5.5).

**Figure 5.5 Structural model testing for competing model (SAT → TR)**



Garbarino and Johnson (1999) suggested that for high relational customers (i.e. brand loyal restaurant customers), focusing on trust as driver of loyalty is more important than building satisfaction. Increased trust leads to higher brand loyalty (Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Garbarino & Johnson, 1999; Hart & Johnson, 1999; Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Thus, the direct path from satisfaction to brand loyalty has been eliminated in this competing model



because satisfaction has no significant influence on future intentions for high relational customers (Garbarino & Johnson, 1999).

Chi-square and goodness of fit results indicated good model fit ( $\chi^2 (366, N=514)=940.39$ ;  $GFI=.89$ ;  $RMSEA=.06$ ). However, a significant chi-square difference test ( $\Delta \chi^2=47.72$ ,  $p<.001$ ) in favor of the hypothesized model confirmed that it was a better fit than the competing model. In addition, the hypothesized model was able to explain more of the variance in brand loyalty than the competing model ( $R^2_{hypothesized} = .55$ ;  $R^2_{Model3} = .50$ ).

## **Discussion and Implications**

The study provided empirical evidence that brand personality congruence has significant and positive effects on brand loyalty. As suggested in the literature, consumers tend to support brands and services whose personalities closely match their own (Batra, et. al, 1993; Kassajian, 1971; Kotler, 2003; Sirgy, 1982; Wee, 2004). The study also showed that BPC directly influenced the relational constructs of trust and satisfaction. The results indicated that the smaller the gap between the brand's personality and their target market's personality, the greater the propensity of gaining the customer's trust and maintaining a positive evaluation of overall satisfaction. Because the relationship was partially mediated, the indirect effects of BPC on brand loyalty were greater than its direct effects suggesting that it can be used as a foundation for trust and satisfaction which will ultimately lead to stronger relationship quality and brand loyalty.

As more choices appear in the casual dining market, coupled with the rising propensity to eat meals away from home, capturing a truly loyal customer base is paramount, but extremely difficult. Looking at the brand loyalty indicators, it can be seen that action loyalty has the lowest factor loading and affective loyalty has the highest. Even though customers have positive emotional attachment to the brand, they do not limit their dining consumption only to that brand. Furthermore, even when respondents rated the focal brand superior in comparison to others in its class, this did not necessarily translate to choosing only the focal restaurant each time that they dined out. Additionally, respondents were sampled from the top 25 urban centers in the United States where there are more choices and variety in the casual dining market. Thus, multi-brand loyalty may be the reason for this phenomenon.

It is not uncommon for casual dining restaurants to fall into the trap of offering the same menu items and concepts as a means of keeping at par with the competition. However, consumers may start to view brands as the same, with little excitement to offer, and minimal differentiation. This then leads to having less reason to be committed to a brand, meaning a weaker foundation for loyalty (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000; Aaker, 2004). In this regard, it is worthy to note that in the casual dining industry scenario, the Unique dimension had the greatest loading among the BPC factors. This is important for brand management because this suggests that consumers value differentiated brands that can satisfy their need to express their originality, uniqueness, imaginativeness, and independence.

Although there is evidence in the literature that the use of difference scores could be problematic with regards to validity (Cronbach & Furby, 1970; Peter et al., 1993; Wall & Payne, 1973) as evidenced by the unsatisfactory AVE values obtained, the richness of the data collected here could still have implications for branded restaurants, particularly if the BPC is to be used as a benchmarking tool. The purpose of the survey and the sampling frame should dictate whether a direct measure is more appropriate than a difference score methodology. Direct measurements cannot provide the brand manager information on how the consumer perceives the brand and what this indicates of the respondent's personality. For example, given a five-point Likert-type scale anchored at 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), a respondent can report a score of 5 on the item "I am as exciting as XYZ." This only shows that the customer feels congruent with the restaurant brand, but not whether he/she feels that the restaurant is exciting or boring. However, if the instrument is to be administered to a targeted sample that is known to possess the characteristics that the brand desires, then a direct measure method will be sufficient in determining the brand's fit with its consumers. Careful consideration will allow the marketing practitioners to fully utilize the information collected as strategies for increasing BPC are developed.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

Due to the exploratory nature of the study, there were several theoretical and methodological limitations that need to be addressed in future research. Although previously recognized in existing literature as an important factor in relationship marketing, little empirical research has been done on brand personality and its effects on consumer

behavior. Additionally, image, concept, and personality have been used interchangeably in psychology, marketing, and hospitality research and have not been clearly delineated. Thus, there was a lack in theoretical background to clearly conceptualize the brand personality congruence construct in relation to trust, satisfaction, and brand loyalty. However, the potential usefulness of this type of analysis for marketing professionals working for branded restaurant concepts warranted pursuing the research.

The unstable reliability of the BPC scale between the two phases of the study may be an artifact of the sample or the method. First, Phase I used a primarily homogenous sample of professionals while Phase II was a more representative sample of the United States population. A more heterogeneous sample may have provided more variability in interpretation and evaluation, thus not replicating the reliability of the first scale. Secondly, personality descriptors within the scale were randomized in Phase II to minimize order and response error (i.e. “I am a leader” was the first attribute rated on the customer personality section while “XYZ is a leader” was rated 16th on the brand personality section). The difference in reliability coefficients between Phases I and II may have stemmed from this. A replication of the study can confirm if the good reliability coefficients in Phase I were artifacts of order and/or response error.

The use of difference scores to measure congruence constructs needs to be reevaluated for applications of the BPC scale developed in the study. Future researchers can use the 17 indicators of the BPC scale to ask consumers to directly compare themselves to the brand. For example, instead of asking the consumer to first evaluate him/herself (i.e. “I am exciting.”) and then evaluate the focal restaurant (i.e. “This restaurant is exciting.”), the respondent can simply answer one question (i.e. “I am as exciting as this restaurant.”) on a five-point Likert-type scale anchored on strongly agree and strongly disagree. This will eliminate the need to calculate difference scores and may result in a more valid instrument that is less time consuming to complete. This will also address the challenges of using the gap methodology in so far as construct reliability and artificial correlations are concerned (Cronbach & Furby, 1970; Peter et al., 1993; Wall & Payne, 1973). In addition, direct measurements may minimize any bias that is introduced when consumers give socially desirable responses on the customer personality scale. This subjective evaluation method

captures the exact degree of personality congruence that the customer experiences on each attribute on the scale.

Generalizations from the study are limited to branded casual dining restaurants located in urban centers, as the sampling frame was limited to residents of the top 25 metropolitan areas in the United States. This excluded consumers in rural areas who may still dine in casual dining restaurants, although on more limited circumstances. Similarly, the respondents for both phases of the study were limited to individuals with access to the internet and those who had personal e-mail addresses. Replication involving a wider consumer base is necessary to ensure that the usefulness of the framework presented in the dissertation is not sample specific. Multi-mode data collection for future studies may be considered. Mail surveys can be sent to possible respondents, both from urban and rural areas, with the choice of completing the paper survey or accessing the link to the online version. Giving the respondent the choice for the method of response may give them the perception that the researcher is catering to their preference and thus increase response rates.

The BPC framework presented in the dissertation could be used in future research to study the effect of congruence on trust, satisfaction, and brand loyalty in other foodservice operations. Contrasting the influence of BPC in the more functional quick-service restaurant (QSR) industry compared to the more symbolically driven fine dining industry could provide brand managers important information as this relates to building long-term relationships with consumers. In addition, constructs such as involvement, conspicuousness, and price could be added to the model as they relate to the dining experience.

The BPC measurement can also be used to investigate the moderating effect of BPC on brand loyalty and its antecedents. For example, the following research questions may be developed: (1) Is the strength of the relationship between trust and brand loyalty stronger for highly congruent customers? (2) How does the magnitude of the relationship between value and brand loyalty change as one moves from congruence to incongruence? (3) Does BPC affect the relationship between price and brand loyalty? The incremental validity that BPC contributes to these models may have implications in guiding marketing strategies.

In a market that is increasingly becoming saturated with competitors, establishing strong relationships and identification with customers is key in building a foundation for brand loyalty. Because this study has shown that BPC does affect brand loyalty, both

directly and indirectly through trust and satisfaction, future researchers are encouraged to continue to explore the applications, antecedents, and consequences of establishing and strengthening brand personality congruence.

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## CHAPTER 6 - SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Competition for loyal customers among branded restaurant chains continues to be more challenging as the market becomes more saturated. When several competitors can duplicate menu items and themed concepts, differentiation is vital. Research has suggested that having a well-established brand personality could be a competitive advantage, particularly in establishing a differentiated brand and sustaining brand loyalty. However, there is a lack of empirical evidence in foodservice and hospitality literature to support this claim. This study was designed to explore this gap in the research literature by investigating the appropriateness, reliability, and validity of using Aaker's (1997) scale to calculate BPC and to establish the relationship between BPC and brand loyalty. The study involved two phases: Phase I primarily focused on the development of the BPC scale based on the existing Brand Personality Scale (Aaker 1997), while Phase II involved testing the relationship between BPC and brand loyalty and the mediating effects of satisfaction and trust on that relationship. Both phases used the K-State online survey system for data collection.

This chapter summarizes key findings of the study, theoretical and practical implications, and suggestions for future research related to the branded casual dining restaurant industry. Modifying an existing reliable multi-item scale such as the Brand Personality Scale (Aaker, 1997) and adapting it to measure congruence between the foodservice operation and the customer can be instrumental in discovering personality characteristics that affect consumer behavior. It is also a viable source for foodservice managers and relationship-marketing professionals to find out how brand personality congruence (BPC) affects the restaurant's ability to gain the trust of the consumer, satisfy their needs, and capture them as loyal customers.

## Major Findings

### *Phase I: Brand Personality Scale Development*

The goal of this phase of the study was to develop a valid and reliable instrument to measure brand personality congruence in a branded casual restaurant setting. BPC was operationalized as the gap between the customer's perceived personality and the restaurant's brand personality as perceived by the customer. The following section also summarizes major findings in relation to each research question and primary objective.

**Research Question 1:** Are the five dimensions of brand personality, as established by Aaker (1997), stable for the casual dining restaurant industry?

Although model fit was less impressive, the study supported Aaker's five-factor framework ( $\chi^2 (516, N=221) = 1344.36, p > .001; RMSEA = .086$ ), retaining the dimensions of sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness. Modification of the factor structure was necessary to obtain acceptable fit. The scale was reduced from 42 items to 34. The use of a specific restaurant brand and dining industry segment may have caused the difference in the fit indices between Aaker's model and the current data. This indicated that the brand personality items as proposed by Aaker (1997) are industry-specific and may hold different connotations depending on the product or service provided by the brand being evaluated. For example, in another industry such as retail stores, being "original" may mean that the products sold are not falsely branded or labeled, while in the restaurant industry, being original implies that the restaurant is unique. Conceptually, "original" for the retail industry would fall under the dimension "sincerity" while the trait would fall in the dimension "excitement" for branded restaurant settings.

**Research Question 2:** Are the personality attributes used for brand personality appropriate in measuring customer personality?

Exploratory factor analysis showed that brand personality dimensions were not stable for measuring customer personality. Only characteristics most closely associated with the Big Five dimensions of agreeableness, extroversion, and conscientiousness significantly

loaded on the customer personality scale, reducing the number of items from 42 to 25. A confirmatory factor analysis of the reduced scale ( $\chi^2 (265, N=221) = 623.42, p > .001$ ;  $RMSEA = .078$ ;  $NNFI = .93$ ,  $CFI = .94$ ) resulted in a 5-factor solution ( $\alpha = .90, R^2 = .61$ ): successful ( $\alpha = .82, R^2 = .30$ ), exciting ( $\alpha = .83, R^2 = .12$ ), unique ( $\alpha = .77, R^2 = .08$ ), sincere ( $\alpha = .82, R^2 = .06$ ), and friendly ( $\alpha = .75, R^2 = .05$ ).

**Objective 1:** Develop a valid and reliable scale for measuring brand personality congruence.

Because BPC was operationalized as the gap between the customer's perceived personality and the restaurant's brand personality as perceived by the customer, only indicators that were common between the two scales could be used to measure BPC. Factor analyses of the 23 common indicators showed that Aaker's scale can be reduced to a valid and reliable BPC scale composed of 17 items that fall into four factors: exciting ( $\alpha = .86, R^2 = .38$ ), unique ( $\alpha = .83, R^2 = .13$ ), sincere ( $\alpha = .84, R^2 = .09$ ), and leader ( $\alpha = .78, R^2 = .06$ ). Confirmatory factor analysis showed good model fit ( $\chi^2 (113, N=221) = 231.07, p > .001$ ;  $RMSEA = .069$ ;  $NNFI = .96$ ,  $CFI = .97$ ).

### ***Phase II: Theoretical Model Testing***

Phase II of the study focused on establishing the relationship between brand personality congruence (BPC), trust, satisfaction, and brand loyalty. Six hypotheses were proposed and tested using structural equation modeling. The following section summarizes major findings in relation to research questions and hypotheses proposed:

**Research Question 3:** Does congruence between brand personality and the customer's personality result in higher levels of overall satisfaction, trust, and ultimately, brand loyalty?

Three hypotheses were proposed to address this research question:

H1: BPC is positively associated with trust.

H2: BPC is positively associated with brand loyalty.

H3: BPC is positively associated with satisfaction.

Parameter estimates for the relationship of BPC to trust, satisfaction, and brand loyalty all indicated strong positive relationships ( $BPC \rightarrow TR = .52, t=11.40$ ;  $BPC \rightarrow SAT = .21, t= 5.35$ ;  $BPC \rightarrow BL = .16, t=3.60$ ). All hypothesized relationships were significant at the .001 level, thus Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 were supported. Results showed that BPC had the greatest direct effect on trust thus providing empirical evidence that strengthening BPC leads to higher levels of trust. Assessment of total effects indicated that BPC also had indirect effects on satisfaction via trust and brand loyalty via trust and satisfaction.

**Research Question 4:** Is the relationship between BPC and brand loyalty mediated by trust and satisfaction?

Three hypotheses were added to the model to address this research question:

H4: Trust is positively associated with satisfaction.

H5: Satisfaction is positively associated with brand loyalty.

H6: Trust is positively associated with brand loyalty.

Parameter estimates for these proposed associations all indicated strong positive relationships ( $TR \rightarrow SAT = .65, t=16.74$ ;  $TR \rightarrow BL = .27, t=4.86$ ;  $SAT \rightarrow BL = .41, t= 7.05$ ). All hypothesized relationships were significant at the .001 level, thus all three of these hypotheses were supported. Further analyses shows that trust (*Sobel*  $t_{BPC \rightarrow TR \rightarrow BL} = 4.50, p < .001$ ) and satisfaction (*Sobel*  $t_{BPC \rightarrow SAT \rightarrow BL} = 4.25, p < .001$ ) indeed mediate the relationship between BPC and brand loyalty (Sobel, 1982). Likewise, results show that trust mediates the relationship between BPC and satisfaction (*Sobel*  $t_{BPC \rightarrow TR \rightarrow SAT} = 8.70, p < .001$ ). Results suggested that as the restaurant brand earns a customer's trust over time, the customer's evaluation of overall satisfaction with the brand also increases and leads to stronger brand loyalty.

### Other Findings

The reliability of the multi-item gap score method used for mathematically calculating congruence has been questioned in the literature (Back, 2005; Chon, 1990; Sirgy et al., 1997). In addition to the gap score methodology, the study used a single-item five-point semantic-differential scale as a global measure of congruence. (If you were to think of



XYZ as a person, please indicate a point along the scale from left to right that matches how similar you see yourself compared to XYZ). Results showed that the gap score method obtained a similar coefficient structure as the global measurement. Standardized total effects for the single item ( $Congruence \rightarrow TR = .50$ ;  $Congruence \rightarrow SAT = .53$ ;  $Congruence \rightarrow BL = .54$ ) closely matched that of the hypothesized 17-item gap measurement ( $BPC \rightarrow TR = .54$ ;  $BPC \rightarrow SAT = .55$ ;  $BPC \rightarrow BL = .53$ ). The standardized regression weights of the direct effects ( $Congruence \rightarrow TR = .50$  vs.  $BPC \rightarrow TR = .53$ ,  $Congruence \rightarrow SAT = .20$  vs.  $BPC \rightarrow SAT = .21$ , and  $Congruence \rightarrow BL = .19$  vs.  $BPC \rightarrow BL = .16$ ) and indirect effects ( $Congruence \rightarrow SAT = .33$  vs.  $BPC \rightarrow SAT = .34$  and  $Congruence \rightarrow BL = .35$  vs.  $BPC \rightarrow BL = .37$ ) were likewise similar. These results showed that using the gap method appropriately measured BPC and that using the multi-item scale in structural analyses provides relatively similar results as a direct global measurement of the construct.

As more choices appear in the casual dining market, coupled with the rising propensity to eat meals away from home, capturing a truly loyal customer base is paramount, but extremely difficult. The results of the study showed that action loyalty has the lowest factor loading and affective loyalty has the highest. Even though customers have positive emotional attachment to the brand, they do not limit their dining consumption only to that brand. Furthermore, even when respondents rated the focal brand superior in comparison to others in its class, this did not necessarily translate to choosing only the focal restaurant each time that they dined out. Additionally, respondents were sampled from the top 25 urban centers in the United States where there are more choices and variety in the casual dining market. Thus, multi-brand loyalty may be the reason for this phenomenon.

## **Conclusions and Implications for the Foodservice Industry**

The results indicated that the smaller the gap between the brand's personality and their target market's personality, the greater the propensity of gaining the customer's trust. As a result, the perceived risk in and vulnerability to the service provider is reduced (Berry, 2000). Customers have more tolerance for service failures (O'Shaughnessy & O'Shaughnessy, 2004) and their overall evaluation of satisfaction may not suffer. As a result, the consumer's confidence in keeping the relationship is increased (Morgan & Hunt,

1994; Sirdeshmukh et al., 2002; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2002) and brand loyalty is strengthened. As Temporal (2001, p.53) asserted, when BPC is high, that is the gap between the brand and customer personalities is smaller, willingness to purchase the brand's products and services is greater, as is brand loyalty.

Although the development of the brand personality congruence scale and its application to relationship-marketing research was exploratory in nature, the study resulted in a means to measure BPC and consequently provided empirical evidence that BPC positively affects trust, satisfaction, and brand loyalty. The study provided a baseline model that could be used for future studies investigating other relationship-marketing constructs.

Apart from the theoretical application of the BPC scale, there are also practical implications for foodservice operators and marketing professionals:

- ❖ Managers can use the modified brand personality scale from this study as a diagnostic tool to examine if the perceived brand personality is aligned with the organization's mission, vision, and goals. A periodic benchmarking system can be particularly useful as a baseline measurement for branded restaurants that are considering any of the following: expansion in global markets, extension via co-branding, and mergers of branded concepts. Conversely, existing operations can use results to modify their market positioning, services, or products to increase the congruence between their brand personality and their target market's personality with the ultimate goal of increasing brand loyalty and satisfaction.
- ❖ Because a differentiated brand is a means of achieving competitive advantage, comparing across competing brands will have practical implications for brand management, particularly in determining if differentiation among brands in the restaurant class is achieved.
- ❖ The instrument may be used not only as a benchmarking tool, but also as a means to determine market segmentation for targeted marketing. As more restaurant brands expand globally, companies can use the BPC scale as a component of their feasibility study to determine their personality fit with their prospective host. This will allow the company to better identify the target market that would most likely be a loyal customer base. Evaluations across the different attributes can

help managers determine what is important for targeted segments of the customer base such as age groups, gender, or area of residence.

- ❖ With minor adjustments, the BPC scale and methodology can be useful for other foodservice operations such as non-commercial institutions that have similar “branded” concepts. An example of this is the use of mascots and symbols for schools (for National Breakfast and/or Lunch Programs) or colleges and universities (for residence hall dining). Brand loyalty (particularly re-purchase intention) can be translated as increased participation in cafeteria or meal plans.

### **Limitations and Implications for Future Research**

Due to the exploratory nature of the study, there were several theoretical and methodological limitations that need to be addressed in future research. Although previously recognized in existing literature as an important factor in relationship marketing, little empirical research has been done on brand personality and its effects on consumer behavior. Additionally, image, concept, and personality have been used interchangeably in psychology, marketing, and hospitality research and have not been clearly delineated. Thus, there was a lack in theoretical background to clearly conceptualize the brand personality congruence construct in relation to trust, satisfaction, and brand loyalty. However, the potential usefulness of this type of analysis for marketing professionals working for branded restaurant concepts warranted pursuing the research.

Researchers who intend to use Aaker’s existing scale should consider that some of the indicators may have different connotations for today’s respondents as compared to almost a decade ago. Researchers could use the modified scale presented in the dissertation and improve the richness of the data gathered by adding branding descriptors like economical, famous, or convenient as suggested by Caprara et al. (2001). The thoroughness of the instrument may also be improved if negative descriptors such as arrogant, coy, or dominating are included (Mark & Pearson, 2001; Sweeney & Brandon, 2006).

The unstable reliability of the BPC scale between the two phases of the study may be an artifact of the sample or the method. First, Phase I used a primarily homogenous sample of professionals employed in higher education while Phase II was a more representative

sample of the United States population. A more heterogeneous sample may have provided more variability in interpretation and evaluation, thus not replicating the reliability of the first scale. Secondly, personality descriptors within the scale were randomized in Phase II to minimize order and response error (i.e. “I am a leader” was the first attribute rated on the customer personality section while “XYZ is a leader” was rated 16th on the brand personality section). The difference in reliability coefficients between Phases I and II may have stemmed from this. A replication of the study can confirm if the good reliability coefficients in Phase I were artifacts of order and/or response error.

The use of difference scores to measure congruence constructs needs to be reevaluated for applications of the BPC scale developed in the study. Future researchers can use the 17 indicators of the BPC scale to ask consumers to directly compare themselves to the brand. For example, instead of asking the consumer to first evaluate him/herself (i.e. “I am exciting.”) and then evaluate the focal restaurant (i.e. “This restaurant is exciting.”), the respondent can simply answer one question (i.e. “I am as exciting as this restaurant.”) on a five-point Likert-type scale anchored on strongly agree and strongly disagree. This will eliminate the need to calculate difference scores and may result in a more valid instrument that is less time consuming to complete. This will also address the challenges of using the gap methodology in so far as construct reliability and artificial correlations are concerned (Cronbach & Furby, 1970; Peter et al., 1993; Wall & Payne, 1973). In addition, this subjective direct evaluation method may minimize any bias that is introduced when consumers give socially desirable responses on the customer personality scale.

Aaker (1997) suggested that the brand personality dimensions of sincerity, excitement, and competence are most closely related to the Big Five dimensions of agreeableness, extroversion, and conscientiousness, respectively. A study could be designed to explore the ability of the Big Five dimensions to predict what brand personality profile customers are likely to choose. For example, would a customer who is high on the extroversion dimension be more likely to choose a brand that is evaluated highly on the excitement dimension? In addition, a comparative study can be done to see if the BPC framework presented in the current study is a better predictor of restaurant brand choice than using Aaker’s (1997) and the Big Five scales.

The BPC framework presented in the dissertation could be used in future research to study the effect of congruence on trust, satisfaction, and brand loyalty in other foodservice operations. Contrasting the influence of BPC in the more functional quick-service restaurant (QSR) industry compared to the more symbolically driven fine dining industry could provide brand managers important information as this relates to building long-term relationships with consumers. In addition, constructs such as involvement, conspicuousness, and price could be added to the model as they relate to the dining experience.

The BPC measurement can also be used to investigate the moderating effect of BPC on brand loyalty and its antecedents. For example, the following research questions may be developed: (1) Is the strength of the relationship between trust and brand loyalty stronger for highly congruent customers? (2) How does the magnitude of the relationship between value and brand loyalty change as one moves from congruence to incongruence? (3) Does BPC affect the relationship between price and brand loyalty? The incremental validity that BPC contributes to these models may have implications in guiding marketing strategies.

Generalizations from the study are limited to outlets of the focal casual dining restaurant located in urban centers, as the sampling frame was limited to residents of the top 25 metropolitan areas in the United States. This excluded consumers in rural areas who may still eat in casual dining restaurants, although on more limited circumstances. Similarly, the respondents for both phases of the study were limited to individuals with access to the internet and those who had personal e-mail addresses. Replication involving a wider consumer base is necessary to ensure that the usefulness of the framework presented in the dissertation is not sample specific. Multi-mode data collection for future studies may be considered. Mail surveys can be sent to possible respondents, both from urban and rural areas and give the subjects the choice of completing the paper survey or accessing the link to the online version. Providing the respondent the choice for the method of response may give them the perception that the researcher is catering to their preference and thus increase response rates.

In a market that is increasingly becoming saturated with competitors, establishing strong relationships and identification with customers is key in building a foundation for brand loyalty. Because this study has shown that BPC does affect brand loyalty, both directly and indirectly through trust and satisfaction, future researchers are encouraged to

continue to explore the applications, antecedents, and consequences of establishing and strengthening brand personality congruence.

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## Appendix A.1 - Cover Letter for Phase I

Dear Faculty/Staff member:

What influences your selection of restaurants? I would like to request your participation in a research study assessing the relationship between brand personality congruence (how closely the restaurant reflects your personality), trust, and brand loyalty. Completion is strictly voluntary and there is no penalty for not completing the survey. Results of the study will be used by restaurants to establish appropriate marketing strategies. In addition, the researchers will use the results to develop a valid and reliable instrument to measure brand personality congruence and to assess the relationship between trust and loyalty.

In appreciation of your completion of the questionnaire, a dollar will be donated to ONE of the following: Boys and Girls Club of Manhattan, Flint Hills Breadbasket, or K-State Changing Lives Campaign. At the end of the survey, you will be asked to choose the recipient of your contribution.

Please take a few minutes to complete the questionnaire. All responses will be kept confidential and anonymous. Results will be reported in summary form only. Return of the questionnaire indicates your willingness to participate in the study.

If you have any questions regarding the study or your rights as a participant, please feel free to contact any of the following:

Dr. Rick Scheidt, Committee Chair, KSU Institutional Review Board; (785) 532-3224

Amelia Estepa Asperin, amelia@ksu.edu, (785) 532-2213

Dr. Carol W. Shanklin, shanklin@ksu.edu, (785) 532-7927

Dr. Ki-Joon Back, kback@uh.edu, (713) 743-2530

Thank you for your participation. Your input is essential to the success of this study.

Sincerely,

Amelia Estepa Asperin  
Ph.D. Candidate

Carol W. Shanklin, Ph.D.  
Co-Major Professor

Ki-Joon Back, Ph.D.  
Co-Major Professor

## Appendix A.2 - Online Survey Instrument for Phase I (Screen shots)



### Survey Description:

Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedules to take this survey. Completion is strictly voluntary and there is no penalty for not completing the survey. Completion of the questionnaire indicates your consent to be involved in the study. Your responses will be anonymous and only aggregate data will be reported. All responses collected will be used for academic purposes only.

In appreciation of your completion of the questionnaire, a dollar will be donated to one of the following: Boys and Girls Club of Manhattan, Flint Hills Breadbasket, or K-State's Changing Lives Campaign. At the end of the survey, you will be asked to choose the recipient of your contribution.

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Kansas State University has reviewed and approved this research. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact any of the researchers, [Rick Scheidt](#) (IRB Committee Chair), or the University Research Compliance Office at (785) 532-3224.

Your contribution to this study is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

[Amelia Estepa Asperin](#)

Graduate Student  
Hotel, Restaurant, Institution Management and Dietetics  
Kansas State University

[Carol W. Shanklin](#)

Associate Dean, Graduate School  
and Professor, Hotel, Restaurant, Institution Management and Dietetics  
Kansas State University

[Ki-Joon Back](#)

Associate Professor  
Hotel and Restaurant Management  
University of Houston

### Opening Instructions:

Please complete all items to reflect your opinions and experiences. The average time required for completing the questionnaire is approximately 10 to 15 minutes.

Next 

# AXIO SURVEY

## Brand Personality Congruence in the Casual Dining Restaurant Industry

**Page 1**

**Question 1**

For the following section, we would like you to think of XYZ as though it was a person. We are interested in finding out which personality traits or human characteristics come to mind when you think of this particular restaurant. Rate each characteristic from 1 (not at all descriptive) to 5 (extremely descriptive).

1 - Not at all descriptive | 2 -- | 3 - Neutral | 4 --  
5 - Extremely Descriptive

	1	2	3	4	5
1.1 This restaurant chain is down-to-earth.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.2 This restaurant chain is family-oriented.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.3 This restaurant chain is small-town.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.4 This restaurant chain is honest.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.5 This restaurant chain is sincere.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.6 This restaurant chain is real.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.7 This restaurant chain is wholesome.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.8 This restaurant chain is original.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.9 This restaurant chain is cheerful.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.10 This restaurant chain is sentimental.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.11 This restaurant chain is friendly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.12 This restaurant chain is daring.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.13 This restaurant chain is trendy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.14 This restaurant chain is exciting.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.15 This restaurant chain is spirited.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.16 This restaurant chain is cool.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.17 This restaurant chain is young.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.18 This restaurant chain is imaginative.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.19 This restaurant chain is unique.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.20 This restaurant chain is up-to-date.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.21 This restaurant chain is independent.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.22 This restaurant chain is contemporary.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.23 This restaurant chain is reliable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.24 This restaurant chain is hard working.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.25 This restaurant chain is secure.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.26 This restaurant chain is intelligent.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.27 This restaurant chain is technical.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.28 This restaurant chain is corporate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.29 This restaurant chain is successful.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.30 This restaurant chain is a leader.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

1.31 This restaurant chain is confident.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.32 This restaurant chain is upper class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.33 This restaurant chain is glamorous.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.34 This restaurant chain is good looking.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.35 This restaurant chain is charming.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.36 This restaurant chain is feminine.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.37 This restaurant chain is smooth.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.38 This restaurant chain is outdoorsy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.39 This restaurant chain is masculine.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.40 This restaurant chain is Western.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.41 This restaurant chain is tough.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.42 This restaurant chain is rugged.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Next 

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## AXIO SURVEY

### *Brand Personality Congruence* in the Casual Dining Restaurant Industry

#### Page 2

#### Question 2

For the following section, we would like you to rate yourself on each of these characteristics from 1 (not at all descriptive) to 5 (extremely descriptive).

1 - Not at all descriptive | 2 - - | 3 - Neutral | 4 - -  
5 - Extremely Descriptive

	1	2	3	4	5
2.1 I am down-to-earth.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.2 I am family-oriented.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3 I am small-town.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.4 I am honest.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.5 I am sincere.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.6 I am real.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.7 I am wholesome.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.8 I am original.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.9 I am cheerful.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.10 I am sentimental.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.11 I am friendly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.12 I am daring.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.13 I am trendy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.14 I am exciting.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2.15 I am spirited.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.16 I am cool.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.17 I am young.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.18 I am imaginative.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.19 I am unique.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.20 I am up-to-date.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.21 I am independent.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.22 I am contemporary.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.23 I am reliable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.24 I am hard working.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.25 I am secure.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.26 I am intelligent.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.27 I am technical.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.28 I am corporate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.29 I am successful.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.30 I am a leader.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.31 I am confident.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.32 I am upper class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.33 I am glamorous.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.34 I am good looking.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.35 I am charming.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.36 I am feminine.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.37 I am smooth.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.38 I am outdoorsy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.39 I am masculine.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.40 I am Western.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.41 I am tough.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.42 I am rugged.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Next 

**Brand Personality Congruence  
in the Casual Dining Restaurant Industry**

**Page 3**

**Question 3**

The following set of statements relate your level of trust in XYZ . Circling 1 means that you **strongly disagree** with the statement and circling a 7 means that you **strongly agree**. There are no right or wrong answers, all we are interested in is a number that best shows your trust in the restaurant.

1 - Strongly Disagree | 2 - Disagree | 3 - Moderately Disagree  
4 - Neutral | 5 - Moderately Agree | 6 - Agree | 7 - Strongly Agree

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.1 I think XYZ is reliable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.2 I have confidence in XYZ .	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.3 I think that XYZ has high integrity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.4 Overall, I trust the XYZ brand of restaurants.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Next

**Brand Personality Congruence  
in the Casual Dining Restaurant Industry**

**Page 4**

**Question 4**

The following set of statements relate to your attitude toward XYZ . Circling 1 means that you **strongly disagree** with the statement and circling a 7 means that you **strongly agree**. There are no right or wrong answers, all we are interested in is a number that best shows your attitude towards the restaurant.

1 - Strongly Disagree | 2 - Disagree | 3 - Moderately Disagree  
4 - Neutral | 5 - Moderately Agree | 6 - Agree | 7 - Strongly Agree

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.1 XYZ is superior to other casual dining restaurant chains in its class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.2 I have grown to like XYZ more so than other casual dining restaurant chains.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.3 I intend to continue dining at XYZ in the future.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.4 When I have a need to go to a casual dining restaurant, I dine only at XYZ.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.5 Overall, I consider myself loyal to XYZ.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Next

**Brand Personality Congruence  
in the Casual Dining Restaurant Industry**

**Page 5**

**Question 5**

Please provide the following information.

Gender

- Male
- Female

**Question 6**

Age

Characters Remaining: 3

**Question 7**

Employment Classification

- Classified staff
- Unclassified staff
- Faculty
- Administrator
- Other:

**Question 8**

Please indicate your annual income.

- less than \$20,000
- \$20,000-\$39999
- \$40,000-\$59999
- \$60,000-\$79999
- more than \$80,000
- Prefer not to respond

Next 

**Brand Personality Congruence  
in the Casual Dining Restaurant Industry**

**Page 6**

**Question 9**

Which statement best describes how often you dine out?

- Never.
- At least once a week.
- At least once every two weeks.
- At least once a month.
- At least once every three months.
- At least once every six months.
- At least once a year.

**Question 10**

Which statement best describes how often you dine at XYZ ?

- Never.
- At least once a week.
- At least once every two weeks.
- At least once a month.
- At least once every three months.
- At least once every six months.
- At least once a year.

Next

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**Brand Personality Congruence  
in the Casual Dining Restaurant Industry**

**Page 7**

**Question 11**

Please indicate the charity you choose to receive the \$1 donation for your participation in this study.

- Boys and Girls' Club of Manhattan
- Flint Hills Breadbasket
- K-State Changing Lives Campaign

Done

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***Brand Personality Congruence***  
**in the Casual Dining Restaurant Industry**

**Closing Message**

Thank you for your time and input.

*Your survey has been successfully submitted.  
Please close your browser to exit.*

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## Appendix B.1 - Cover Letter for Phase II


### HTML version for fully supported email servers

**Does your restaurant choice reflect your personality?**

Competition for loyal customers in the restaurant industry is becoming tougher. We would like to know what influences your selection of restaurant chains. We would like to request your participation in a research study that looks at how closely a restaurant brand reflects your personality and whether this affects your attitude towards the restaurant. The survey will require approximately 5 minutes of your time.

- **Participation is strictly voluntary and there is no penalty for not completing the survey.**
- **All responses will be kept confidential and anonymous.**
- **Return of the questionnaire indicates your willingness to participate in the study.**
- **Win a \$25 Chili's gift certificate or an iPod Nano**

**Your input is essential to the success of this study.**



**[CLICK HERE](#)**  
to take the survey

**Please respond by June 5**

**Thank you for your participation.**

If you have any questions regarding the study or your rights as a participant, please contact the following:  
Dr. Rick Scheidt, Committee Chair, KSU Institutional Review Board; (785) 532-3224  
Amelia Estepa Asperin, amelia@ksu.edu, (785) 532-2213  
Dr. Carol W. Shanklin, shanklin@ksu.edu, (785) 532-7927  
Dr. Ki-Joon Back, kback@uh.edu, (713) 743-2530

## Document version for non-HTML email servers



### *Does your restaurant choice reflect your personality?*

Competition for loyal customers in the restaurant industry is becoming tougher. We would like to know what influences your selection of restaurant chains. We would like to request your participation in a research study that looks at how closely a restaurant brand reflects your personality and whether this affects your attitude towards the restaurant. The survey will require approximately 5 minutes of your time.

- ❖ **Participation is strictly voluntary and there is no penalty for not completing the survey.**
- ❖ **All responses will be kept confidential and anonymous.**
- ❖ **Return of the questionnaire indicates your willingness to participate in the study.**
- ❖ **Win a \$25 Chili's gift certificate or an iPod Nano**

**Your input is essential to the success of this study.**

**[CLICK HERE](#) to take the survey**

**Please respond by June 5**

**Thank you for your participation.**

If you have any questions regarding the study or your rights as a participant, please contact the following:

Dr. Rick Scheidt, Committee Chair, KSU Institutional Review Board; (785) 532-3224

Amelia Estepa Asperin, amelia@ksu.edu, (785) 532-2213

Dr. Carol W. Shanklin, shanklin@ksu.edu, (785) 532-7927

Dr. Ki-Joon Back, kback@uh.edu, (713) 743-2530

## Appendix B.2 – Online Survey Instrument for Phase II (Screen shots)

AXIO SURVEY

*Does your restaurant choice reflect your personality?*

### Survey Description:

Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedules to take this survey. Completion is strictly voluntary and there is no penalty for not completing the survey. Completion of the questionnaire indicates your consent to be involved in the study. Your responses will be anonymous and only aggregate data will be reported. All responses collected will be used for academic purposes only.

Please make sure that you copy the PIN ID issued to you by e-Rewards and paste that to the first question on the survey. This is a 10 digit PIN with the format KSTATE-xxxx. This will ensure that you are credited for your participation. Once you have completed the study, please allow up to 7-10 business days for your e-Rewards credit to appear in your e-Rewards account. Thank you for your time and opinions! Your contribution to this study is greatly appreciated.

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Kansas State University has reviewed and approved this research. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact any of the researchers, [Rick Scheidt](#) (IRB Committee Chair), or the University Research Compliance Office at (785) 532-3224.

Sincerely,

[Amelia Estepa Asperin](#)

Graduate Student  
Hotel, Restaurant, Institution Management and Dietetics  
Kansas State University

[Carol W. Shanklin](#)

Associate Dean, Graduate School  
and Professor, Hotel, Restaurant, Institution Management and Dietetics  
Kansas State University

[Ki-Joon Back](#)

Associate Professor  
Hotel and Restaurant Management  
University of Houston

### Opening Instructions:

Please complete all items to reflect your opinions and experiences. The average time required for completing the questionnaire is approximately 7 minutes.

AXIO SURVEY

*Does your restaurant choice reflect your personality?*

### Page 1

#### Question 1 **\*\* required \*\***

Please enter the e-Rewards PIN ID located in the email invitation sent to you. The format for the PIN is KSTATE-xxxx.

Characters Remaining: 20

Next

# AXIO SURVEY

## Does your restaurant choice reflect your personality?

### Page 2

#### Question 2 **\*\*required\*\***

For the following section, we would like you to rate yourself on each of these characteristics from 1 (not at all descriptive) to 5 (extremely descriptive).

1 - Not at all descriptive | 2 - - | 3 - Neutral | 4 - -  
5 - Extremely Descriptive

	1	2	3	4	5
2.1 I am a leader.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.2 I am sincere.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3 I am imaginative.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.4 I am original.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.5 I am confident.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.6 I am independent.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.7 I am exciting.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.8 I am up-to-date.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.9 I am young.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.10 I am real.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.11 I am successful.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.12 I am cool.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.13 I am trendy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.14 I am honest.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.15 I am unique.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.16 I am contemporary.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.17 I am daring.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Next 

**Does your restaurant choice reflect your personality?**

**Page 3**

**Question 3 *\*\* required \*\****

For the following section, we would like you to think of **XYZ** as though it were a person. We are interested in finding out which personality traits come to mind when you think of this particular restaurant. Rate each characteristic from 1 (**not at all descriptive**) to 5 (**extremely descriptive**).

1 - Not at all descriptive | 2 - | 3 - Neutral | 4 - | 5 - Extremely Descriptive

	1	2	3	4	5
3.1 XYZ is original.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.2 XYZ is sincere.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.3 XYZ is trendy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.4 XYZ is honest.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.5 XYZ is daring.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.6 XYZ is real.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.7 XYZ is exciting.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.8 XYZ is cool.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.9 XYZ is successful.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.10 XYZ is imaginative.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.11 XYZ is young.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.12 XYZ is confident.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.13 XYZ is independent.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.14 XYZ is contemporary.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.15 XYZ is unique.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.16 XYZ is a leader.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.17 XYZ is up-to-date.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Next 

AXIO SURVEY

Does your restaurant choice reflect your personality?

Page 4

Question 4 **\*\* required \*\***

If you were to think of XYZ as a person, please indicate a point along the scale from left to right that matches how similar you see yourself compared to XYZ.

Not at all similar      Extremely similar

Next

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AXIO SURVEY

Does your restaurant choice reflect your personality?

Page 5

Question 5 **\*\* required \*\***

The following set of statements measures your level of trust in XYZ. Indicating 1 means that you **strongly disagree** with the statement and a 7 means that you **strongly agree**. There are no right or wrong answers, all we are interested in is a number that best shows your trust in the restaurant.

1 - Strongly Disagree | 2 - Disagree | 3 - Moderately Disagree  
4 - Neutral | 5 - Moderately Agree | 6 - Agree | 7 - Strongly Agree

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.1 I think XYZ is reliable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.2 I have confidence in XYZ.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.3 I think that XYZ has high integrity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.4 Overall, I trust the XYZ brand of restaurants.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Next

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**Does your restaurant choice reflect your personality?**

**Page 6**

**Question 6 *\*\* required \*\****

Please evaluate your overall dining experience(s) at XYZ. Indicate a point along the scale from left to right that indicates your evaluation.

Unsatisfied        Satisfied

Unpleasant        Pleasant

Unfavorable        Favorable

Next

**Does your restaurant choice reflect your personality?**

**Page 7**

**Question 7 *\*\* required \*\****

The following set of statements reflects your attitude toward XYZ in comparison to other casual dining restaurants (i.e. Applebee's, TGIFriday's, Outback, Cheesecake Factory, etc) . A rating of 1 means that you strongly disagree with the statement and a rating of 7 means that you strongly agree. There are no right or wrong answers, all we are interested in is a number that best shows your attitude towards the restaurant.

1 - Strongly Disagree | 2 - Disagree | 3 - Moderately Disagree  
4 - Neutral | 5 - Moderately Agree | 6 - Agree | 7 - Strongly Agree

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.1 XYZ is superior to other casual dining restaurant chains in its class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7.2 I have grown to like XYZ more so than other casual dining restaurant chains.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7.3 I intend to continue dining at XYZ in the future.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7.4 When I have a need to go to a casual dining restaurant, I dine only at XYZ.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7.5 Overall, I consider myself loyal to XYZ.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Next



***Does your restaurant choice reflect your personality?***

**Page 8**

**Question 8** *\*\* required \*\**

Please provide the following information.

Gender

- Male
- Female

**Question 9**

Age

Characters Remaining: 3

**Question 10**

Marital Status

- Single
- Married
- Divorced
- Domestic Partnership
- Widow/Widower
- Prefer not to respond

Next 

*Does your restaurant choice reflect your personality?*

**Page 9**

---

**Question 11**

---

Area of Residence

- Northeast
- Mid-Atlantic
- Midwest
- Southwest
- Southeast
- West

**Question 12**

---

Please indicate your annual income.

- less than \$20,000
- \$20,000-\$39999
- \$40,000-\$59999
- \$60,000-\$79999
- more than \$80,000
- Prefer not to respond

---

Next 

**Does your restaurant choice reflect your personality?****Page 10****Question 13** *\*\*required\*\**

Which statement best describes how often you dine out *per week*?

- Never.
- Less than once a week.
- Once a week.
- 2-3 times a week.
- 4-7 times a week.
- 8+ times a week.

**Question 14** *\*\*required\*\**

Which statement best describes how often you dine at casual dining restaurants *per week* (i.e. Applebee's, Chili's, Outback, Cheesecake Factory, etc)?

- Never.
- Less than once a week.
- Once a week.
- 2-3 times a week.
- 4-7 times a week.
- 8+ times a week.

[Next](#)

***Does your restaurant choice reflect your personality?***

Page 11

**Question 15 *\*\*required\*\****

Which statement best describes how often you dine at XYZ *per month*?

- Never.
- Less than once a month.
- Once a month.
- 2-3 times a month.
- 4-7 times a month.
- 8+ times a month.

**Question 16 *\*\*required\*\****

Please list the three casual dining restaurants that you dine at most frequently:

Characters Remaining: 200

Done

***Does your restaurant choice reflect your personality?***

**Closing Message**

*Please allow up to 7-10 business days for your e-Rewards credit to appear in your e-Rewards account.*

***Thank you for your time and input.***

*Your survey has been successfully submitted.  
Please close your browser to exit.*