

BRAND PREFERENCE AND ITS IMPACTS ON CUSTOMER SHARE OF VISITS  
AND WORD-OF-MOUTH INTENTION: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY  
IN THE FULL-SERVICE RESTAURANT SEGMENT

by

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AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

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Department of Hospitality Management and Dietetics  
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## **Abstract**

This study attempted to investigate antecedents and consequences of consumers' utilitarian and hedonic attitudes toward restaurant brands and to examine the effects of brand prestige on brand preference and word-of-mouth intention with customer involvement as a moderator.

In study 1, to investigate the antecedents and consequences of consumer attitudes toward restaurant brands in the full-service restaurant, this study proposed, based on existing theoretical premises, significant interrelationships among three service qualities (i.e., physical environment quality, interactional quality, and outcome quality). This study also hypothesized that these service qualities predict consumers' utilitarian and hedonic attitudes toward restaurant brands. Finally, this study examined the effects of consumer attitudes toward restaurant brands in forming brand preference and relative customer share of visits. A theoretical model was proposed and then tested with data collected from 318 casual and 303 fine dining restaurant patrons. The results of data analysis indicated significant interrelationships among three service qualities in both casual and fine dining restaurants. In addition, interactional and outcome qualities had significant effects on utilitarian and hedonic attitudes toward restaurant brands in the casual dining restaurant. In the fine dining segment, interactional quality significantly influenced both utilitarian and hedonic attitudes toward restaurant brands, while physical environment and outcome qualities had positive impacts only on hedonic attitude toward the restaurant's brand. Finally, utilitarian and hedonic attitudes toward restaurant brands enhanced brand preference, and in turn, brand preference increased relative customer share of visits in both casual and fine dining restaurants.

The purpose of study 2 was to examine the effects of brand prestige on brand preference and word-of-mouth with customer involvement as a moderator in the fine dining restaurant segment. Based on a thorough literature review, this study hypothesized that brand prestige would have positive effects on brand preference and word-of-mouth and that brand preference would have a positive relationship with word-of-mouth. Finally, this study examined the moderating role of customer involvement in the relationships between (1) brand prestige and brand preference, (2) brand prestige and word-of-mouth, and (3) brand preference and word-of-

mouth. A total of 293 questionnaire responses were used to empirically test the proposed relationships in fine dining restaurants. This study found that brand prestige has significant effects on brand preference and word-of-mouth. In addition, brand preference had a positive relationship with word-of-mouth. However, customer involvement as a moderator was not supported.

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# Table of Contents

List of Figures .....	xii
List of Tables .....	xiii
Acknowledgements .....	xiv
Chapter 1 - INTRODUCTION .....	1
Statement of the Problem .....	3
Purposes and Objectives .....	3
Hypotheses .....	4
Hypotheses in Study 1 .....	4
Hypotheses in Study 2 .....	5
Significance of the Study .....	5
Limitations of the Study .....	6
Definition of Terms .....	7
References .....	8
Chapter 2 - REVIEW OF LITERATURE .....	12
Antecedents of Utilitarian and Hedonic Attitudes .....	12
Physical Environment Quality .....	12
Interactional Quality .....	14
Outcome Quality .....	15
Interrelationships among Physical Environment Quality, Interactional Quality, and Outcome Quality .....	16
Consumer Attitudes: Utilitarian and Hedonic .....	17
Effects of Physical Environment Quality on Utilitarian and Hedonic Attitudes toward Restaurant Brands .....	18
Effects of Interactional Quality on Utilitarian and Hedonic Attitudes toward Restaurant Brands .....	19
Effects of Outcome Quality on Utilitarian and Hedonic Attitudes toward Restaurant Brands .....	20
Outcomes of Utilitarian and Hedonic Attitudes .....	20
Brand Preference .....	20

Effects of Utilitarian and Hedonic Attitudes toward Restaurant Brands on Brand Preference .....	22
Customer Share of Visits .....	22
Effects of Utilitarian and Hedonic Attitudes toward Restaurant Brands on Customer Share of Visits.....	23
Effects of Brand Preference on Customer Share of Visits.....	24
The First Proposed Model.....	24
Brand Prestige in the Fine Dining Restaurant Segment .....	26
Brand Prestige.....	26
Effects of Brand Prestige on Brand Preference and Word-of-Mouth.....	27
Word-of-Mouth.....	27
Effects of Brand Preference on Word-of-Mouth .....	28
Customer Involvement.....	28
Moderating Effects of Customer Involvement .....	29
The Second Proposed Model .....	30
References.....	32
Chapter 3 - METHODOLOGY .....	44
Questionnaire Development .....	45
Study 1: Identifying Validated Measures .....	45
Study 2: Identifying Validated Measures .....	47
Content Analysis and Pilot Test.....	48
Testing Reliability and Validity.....	48
Main Survey.....	49
Data Collection .....	49
Data Analysis .....	49
References.....	50
Chapter 4 - THE ANTECEDENTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF CONSUMER ATTITUDES TOWARD RESTAURANT BRANDS IN THE FULL-SERVICE RESTAURANT SEGMENT .....	52
Abstract.....	52
Introduction.....	53



Review of Literature .....	55
Antecedents of Utilitarian and Hedonic Attitudes .....	55
Physical Environment Quality .....	55
Interactional Quality .....	57
Outcome Quality.....	58
Interrelationships among Physical Environment Quality, Interactional Quality, and Outcome Quality.....	59
Consumer Attitudes: Utilitarian and Hedonic .....	60
Effects of Physical Environment Quality on Utilitarian and Hedonic Attitudes toward Restaurant Brands .....	61
Effects of Interactional Quality on Utilitarian and Hedonic Attitudes toward Restaurant Brands .....	62
Effects of Outcome Quality on Utilitarian and Hedonic Attitudes toward Restaurant Brands .....	63
Outcomes of Utilitarian and Hedonic Attitudes .....	63
Brand Preference.....	63
Effects of Utilitarian and Hedonic Attitudes toward Restaurant Brands on Brand Preference .....	65
Customer Share of Visits .....	65
Effects of Utilitarian and Hedonic Attitudes toward Restaurant Brands on Customer Share of Visits.....	66
Effects of Brand Preference on Customer Share of Visits.....	67
The Proposed Model.....	67
Methodology.....	69
Measures .....	69
Data Collection .....	71
Data Analysis and Results .....	71
Full-Service Restaurant Setting with both Casual and Fine Dining.....	72
Data Screening.....	72
Profile of the Sample .....	72
Confirmatory Factor Analysis.....	72

Structural Model of Full-Service Restaurants.....	77
Invariance Models.....	80
Casual Restaurant Setting.....	80
Confirmatory Factor Analysis.....	80
Structural Model of Casual Dining Restaurants.....	84
Fine Restaurant Setting.....	87
Confirmatory Factor Analysis.....	87
Structural Model of Fine Dining Restaurants.....	91
Discussion and Practical Implications.....	94
Limitations and Suggestions for Future Study.....	98
References.....	100
Chapter 5 - THE EFFECTS OF BRAND PRESTIGE ON BRAND PREFERENCE AND WORD-OF-MOUTH: THE MODERATOR ROLE OF CUSTOMER INVOLVEMENT	111
Abstract.....	111
Introduction.....	112
Review of Literature.....	113
Brand Prestige.....	113
Effects of Brand Prestige on Brand Preference and Word-of-Mouth.....	114
Word-of-Mouth.....	114
Effects of Brand Preference on Word-of-Mouth.....	115
Customer Involvement.....	115
The Moderating Effects of Customer Involvement.....	116
The Proposed Model.....	117
Methodology.....	119
Measures.....	119
Data Collection.....	119
Results.....	119
Data Screening.....	119
Profile of the Sample.....	120
Confirmatory Factor Analysis.....	120
Hierarchical Regression Analyses.....	122

Control Variables .....	122
The Effect of Brand Prestige on Brand Preference and the Moderating Role of Customer Involvement .....	122
The Effect of Brand Prestige on Word-of-Mouth and the Moderating Role of Customer Involvement .....	123
The Effect of Brand Preference on Word-of-Mouth and the Moderating Role of Customer Involvement .....	124
Discussion and Practical Implications .....	128
Limitations and Future Research .....	129
References.....	131
Chapter 6 - SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS .....	136
The Antecedents and Consequences of Consumer Attitudes toward Restaurant Brands (Study 1).....	136
Discussion and Practical Implications .....	140
The Consequences of Brand Prestige with Customer Involvement as a Moderator (Study 2) .....	143
Discussion and Practical Implications .....	146
References.....	147
Appendix A - Main Survey Questionnaire of Casual Dining Restaurant with Consent Letter ..	149
Appendix B - Main Survey Questionnaire of Fine Dining Restaurant with Consent Letter .....	160

## List of Figures

Figure 2.1 Conceptual Model for the First Study .....	25
Figure 2.2 Conceptual Model for the Second Study .....	31
Figure 3.1 Data Collection and Analysis Procedures .....	45
Figure 4.1 The First Proposed Model .....	68
Figure 4.2 The Results of Structural Relationships in Full-Service Restaurants.....	79
Figure 4.3 The Results of Structural Relationships in Casual Dining Restaurants .....	86
Figure 4.4 The Results of Structural Relationships in Fine Dining Restaurants .....	93
Figure 5.1 The Second Proposed Model.....	118
Figure 5.2 Simple Slopes Analysis for the Moderating Role of Customer Involvement .....	126
Figure 5.3 The Results of Hierarchical Regression Analyses in Fine Dining Restaurant .....	127
Figure 6.1 Conceptual Model for the First Study .....	138
Figure 6.2 The Results of Hierarchical Regression in Fine Dining Restaurants .....	145

## List of Tables

Table 4.1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis in Full-Service Restaurants: Items and Loadings .....	74
Table 4.2 Descriptive Statistics and Associated Measures in Full-Service Restaurants .....	76
Table 4.3 Results of the Unconstrained Model and Fully Constrained Model.....	80
Table 4.4 Confirmatory Factor Analysis in Casual Dining Restaurants: Items and Loadings .....	81
Table 4.5 Descriptive Statistics and Associated Measures in Casual Dining Restaurants .....	83
Table 4.6 Confirmatory Factor Analysis in Fine Dining Restaurants: Items and Loadings.....	88
Table 4.7 Descriptive Statistics and Associated Measures in Fine Dining Restaurants .....	90
Table 5.1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis in Fine Dining Restaurant: Items and Loadings .....	121
Table 5.2 Descriptive Statistics and Associated Measures in Fine Dining Restaurants .....	122
Table 5.3 The Results of Hierarchical Regression Analyses for Testing the Effect of Brand Prestige on Brand Preference and the Moderating Role of Customer Involvement.....	123
Table 5.4 The Results of Hierarchical Regression Analyses for Testing the Effect of Brand Prestige on Word-of-Mouth and the Moderating Role of Customer Involvement.....	124
Table 5.5 The Results of Hierarchical Regression Analyses for Testing the Effect of Brand Preference on Word-of-Mouth and the Moderating Role of Customer Involvement.....	125
Table 6.1 Major Findings of Study 1 .....	139

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## Chapter 1 - INTRODUCTION

What services are important in a restaurant? Hospitality service is complex, so while restaurateurs must focus on food quality, they must also consider other elements: employee service and the physical environment to attract more customers, serve them better, and keep them coming back (Kivela, 1997; Reuland, Coudrey, & Fagel, 1985). Therefore, restaurants must ensure they meet customers' various needs and wants. The level of performance in serving customers has been the barometer of customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions (Brady & Cronin, 2001), so measuring service quality by comparing customers' expectations with perceived performance has been thoroughly investigated by both marketers and researchers.

To measure service quality in the hospitality industry specifically, previous studies have developed diverse measures such as LODGSERV (Knutson, Stevens, Wullaert, Patton, & Yokoyama, 1990), DINESERV (Stevens, Knutson, & Patton, 1995), TANGSERV (Raajpoot, 2002), and DINESCAPE (Ryu & Jang, 2008). These scales commonly stress the following service dimensions either individually or collectively: physical environment quality, interactional quality, and outcome quality. In many studies, researchers have proposed and confirmed the relationship of these dimensions with core outcome variables like customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions. For example, Han and Ryu (2009) showed that a high quality physical environment (using décor and artifacts, spatial layout, and ambient conditions) creates more customer satisfaction. Kim and Ok (2010) noted that interactional quality affects customer satisfaction. In addition, Namkung and Jang (2007) examined the role of food quality, especially presentation, menu variety, taste, freshness, and temperature, in predicting customer satisfaction. Their findings indicated significant relationships between food quality and both customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions.

However, no studies have yet focused on the interrelationships among all three of these service qualities. Understanding the interrelationships among these three service qualities would provide a new viewpoint for researchers and marketers. For example, customers may first perceive a poor quality physical environment, which could then affect their perception of interactional and outcome qualities. In other words, if the physical environment is not satisfactory, customers might not feel fully satisfied even if restaurant employees provide great

service and food. The results of this study should help researchers and restaurant managers better understand the interrelationships among these three service qualities. Therefore, this study aims to explain each of these service qualities from a different point of view, showing their interrelationships.

Brands are important in every part of our lives (Bhatti, Parveen, & Arshad, 2011). According to Zhou and Wong (2008), some consumers focus heavily on brands, making those brands become more important than product quality per se in purchasing situations. For example, customers do not consider all attributes that restaurants have when dining out but they select a restaurant based on a broad attitude toward a particular restaurant brand. Thus, understanding consumer attitudes toward restaurant brands is critical. Most previous studies have focused on the role of customer satisfaction in the restaurant business. According to Bolton and Drew (1991), customer satisfaction is a customer's evaluation of a specific transaction focusing on the performance of a product or service, while consumer attitudes are the comprehensive evaluation of a brand (Holbrook & Corfman, 1985). The concept of consumer attitudes toward restaurant brands is a broader concept than customer satisfaction; thus, it provides more information to researchers and managers.

In addition, customers no longer focus on functional value alone when making a purchasing decision about products/services (Pitta & Katsanis, 1995). Many consumers are more interested in prestigious brands because of the hedonic and social values that particular brands deliver (Dubois & Czellar, 2002; Baek, Kim, & Yu, 2010). Such customers are called prestige brand seekers (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999). The prestige market has grown as many customers have become more interested in prestigious brands, and many companies invest hundreds of millions of dollars in attracting more prestige brand seekers (Naik, Prasad, & Sethi, 2008). Emphasis on brand prestige is no exception in a fine dining restaurant. Fine dining restaurant patrons are willing to pay a premium for the signal of their social status, wealth, and power (Alden, Steenkamp, & Batra, 1999). Thus, when customers dine out at a fine dining restaurant, they want to be treated differently from patrons of fast food or casual dining restaurants. Thus, understanding the concept of brand prestige is important to restaurants wanting to sustain their status in a fine dining restaurant market because brand prestige attracts more patrons.



## **Statement of the Problem**

Many previous studies in the restaurant setting have focused on understanding how to retain customers. Such efforts have enriched our understanding of the importance of delivering, among many other things, quality service and value. This study extended previous research, taking a different approach. First, this study categorized service quality into three dimensions: physical environment quality, interactional quality, and outcome quality. Although previous studies explored the effects of each dimension on outcome variables like customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions, no study has attempted to investigate the interrelationships among all three service qualities. Second, this study examined consumer attitudes toward restaurant brands instead of customer satisfaction as the consequence of these three service qualities, arguing that consumer attitudes toward restaurant brands built through previous experiences with a restaurant can help explain consumers' behavioral intentions. Despite the increasing importance of the concept, consumer attitudes toward restaurant brands have not been fully investigated in the restaurant industry. Third, most hospitality research has used customer retention to measure customer loyalty, but retention does have limited applicability (e.g., Coyles & Gokey, 2002; Kim, Ok, & Canter, 2010; Verhoef, 2003). In particular, customers have many different brands to consider (Cooil, Keiningham, Aksoy, & Hsu, 2007; Verhoef, 2003); thus, the concept of customer share of visits could better explain customer behavior. This concept may indeed generate further discussion among researchers and managers (Kim et al., 2010), so a better understanding of customer share of visits is critical. This study, therefore, investigated the antecedents of customer share of visits in the full-service restaurant setting. Finally, as fine dining patrons become more interested in brand prestige, understanding the concept of brand prestige is important to sustain a competitive advantage in the fine dining restaurant segment.

## **Purposes and Objectives**

The purposes of this study were, first, to test a theoretical model depicting the interrelationships among physical environment quality, interactional quality, and outcome quality in developing customers' attitudinal and behavioral outcomes; and second, to test how brand prestige affects outcome variables with customer involvement as a moderator. To achieve these purposes, this study proposed two conceptual models. The first model tested the interrelationships among three service qualities (i.e., physical environment quality, interactional

quality, and outcome quality) and their effects on consumer attitudes toward restaurant brands. In addition, this model explored the effects of consumer attitudes toward restaurant brands on brand preference and customer share of visits. The second model tested the effects of brand prestige on brand preference and word-of-mouth with customer involvement as a moderator.

## **Hypotheses**

The conceptual models of this study consisted of a total of 20 hypotheses: 14 for the first model and 6 for the second model. In the first model, consumer attitudes (utilitarian and hedonic) toward restaurant brands were predicted by three antecedents (physical environment quality, interactional quality, and outcome quality) and in turn, these two attitude dimensions were proposed to affect brand preference and customer share of visits. In the second model, brand prestige was conceived as the antecedent of brand preference and word-of-mouth, with the moderating role of customer involvement in the relationships between (1) brand prestige and brand preference, (2) brand prestige and word-of-mouth, and (3) brand preference and word-of-mouth. Hypotheses tested in this study follow.

### ***Hypotheses in Study 1***

**H1:** The perceived physical environment quality positively influences the perceived interactional quality.

**H2:** The perceived physical environment quality positively influences the perceived outcome quality.

**H3:** The perceived interactional quality positively influences the perceived outcome quality.

**H4:** The perceived physical environment quality positively influences utilitarian attitude toward the restaurant's brand.

**H5:** The perceived physical environment quality positively influences hedonic attitude toward the restaurant's brand.

**H6:** The perceived interactional quality positively influences utilitarian attitude toward the restaurant's brand.

**H7:** The perceived interactional quality positively influences hedonic attitude toward the restaurant's brand.

**H8:** The perceived outcome quality positively influences utilitarian attitude toward the

restaurant's brand.

**H9:** The perceived outcome quality positively influences hedonic attitude toward the restaurant's brand.

**H10:** Utilitarian attitude toward the restaurant's brand positively influences brand preference.

**H11:** Utilitarian attitude toward the restaurant's brand positively influences customer share of visits.

**H12:** Hedonic attitude toward the restaurant's brand positively influences brand preference.

**H13:** Hedonic attitude toward the restaurant's brand positively influences customer share of visits.

**H14:** Brand preference positively influences customer share of visits.

### ***Hypotheses in Study 2***

**H15:** Brand prestige positively influences brand preference.

**H16:** Brand prestige positively influences word-of-mouth.

**H17:** Brand preference positively influences word-of-mouth.

**H18:** Customer involvement moderates the relationship between brand prestige and brand preference.

**H19:** Customer involvement moderates the relationship between brand prestige and word-of-mouth.

**H20:** Customer involvement moderates the relationship between brand preference and word-of-mouth.

### **Significance of the Study**

Because service quality significantly affects the ability to sustain status in a competitive restaurant market, existing studies have focused on how to enhance service quality as evaluated by their customers (Andaleeb & Caskey, 2007; Andaleeb & Conway, 2006; Johns & Tyas, 1996). Previous studies consistently suggested that service qualities like physical environment quality, interactional quality, and outcome quality are important because they positively affect customer satisfaction. These service qualities are indeed important to customer satisfaction. However, unlike previous studies, this study argues that service qualities are also important because of their

interrelationships. Previous studies have explained the relationship between three service qualities and customer satisfaction. However, this study searched for other consequences (e.g., consumer attitudes toward restaurant brands) of service qualities instead of customer satisfaction. In other words, this study explored how service quality in restaurants could affect consumer attitudes toward restaurant brands, a critical part of understanding how customers evaluate a restaurant. In addition, very few studies have attempted to apply customer share of visits to restaurants; thus, the concept of customer share of visits is not firmly established. The results of this study should provide researchers and managers in the restaurant business a better understanding of customer share of visits and how it affects practices in the industry. Finally, this study aimed to explain brand prestige in the fine dining restaurant segment. Many customers are more likely to use prestigious brands (Dubois & Czellar, 2002; Baek et al., 2010). Because fine dining restaurant patrons are willing to spend more money for hedonic and social values, the concept of brand prestige becomes inextricably bound to fine dining restaurants. Thus, study results will assist fine dining restaurateurs in attracting more patrons who seek prestigious brands.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study collected data on customer share of visits by using retrospective self-report (Verhoef, 2003). The weakness of the retrospective approach is that collecting data on customer share of visits must rely on customer memory, and therefore, such data may be inaccurate (Kim et al., 2010). However, an individual customer's share of visits can be collected only through customers themselves. To reduce memory bias, this study used direct and indirect methods to improve accuracy in measuring customer share of visits (Kim et al., 2010). The second limitation comes because the data in this study were collected from full-service restaurant customers in the United States. Therefore, findings may not generalize to other types of restaurants or regions. Future research should test the proposed model using different populations in different cultures to ensure external validity. As mentioned earlier, the concept of relative customer share of visits has very rarely been studied in the restaurant industry. Although this study proposed both customer attitudes toward restaurant brands and brand preference as antecedents of relative customer share of visits, only brand preference was found to be an important predictor of relative customer share of visits. Therefore, investigating other predictors of relative customer share of visits will be very meaningful. In addition, despite the increasing importance of brand prestige in

the fine dining restaurant, little research has focused on brand prestige; thus, the findings may serve as a guide for future research aimed at better managing brand prestige in the restaurant industry.

### **Definition of Terms**

- **Physical Environment Quality:** The customer's perception of a man-made environment, not a natural or social environment (Bitner, 1992).
- **Interactional Quality:** The customer's perception of employee service during service delivery (Brady & Cronin, 2001).
- **Outcome Quality:** The customer's perception of the result of the service transaction (Grönroos, 1984, 1990).
- **Utilitarian Attitude:** A dimension of the consumption experience relevant to goal oriented consumption, such as the basic need and the functional task (Overby & Lee, 2006).
- **Hedonic Attitude:** A dimension of consumption experience relevant to pleasure-oriented consumption such as fun, excitement, and uniqueness (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982).
- **Brand Preference:** The extent to which the customer favors the designated service provided by a certain company over the same service provided by other companies (Hellier, Geursen, Carr, & Rickard, 2003).
- **Customer Share of Visits:** The percentage of a customer's total purchases in a product/service category assigned to a specific firm (Peppers & Rogers, 1999).
- **Brand Prestige:** The relatively high status of product positioning associated with a brand (McCarthy & Perreault, 1987; Steenkamp, Batra, & Alden, 2003).
- **Word-of-Mouth:** Informal communication directed at other consumers about the ownership, usage, or characteristics of particular goods and services and/or their sellers (Westbrook, 1987).
- **Customer Involvement:** Perceived personal relevance of the object based on internal causes such as inherent needs, values, and interests and external causes such as stimulus and situation (Peter, Olson, & Grunert, 1999; Zaichkowsky, 1985).

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## **Chapter 2 - REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

This chapter provides the theoretical background on physical environment quality, interactional quality, and outcome quality, utilitarian and hedonic attitudes toward restaurant brands, brand preference, customer share of visits, brand prestige, word-of-mouth, and customer involvement to support the models proposed in this study. Based on the literature review, this chapter also introduces 20 hypotheses.

### **Antecedents of Utilitarian and Hedonic Attitudes**

#### ***Physical Environment Quality***

Restaurant customers want their dining consumption experience to be pleasant, so they seek physical environments that arouse pleasure (Yüksel & Yüksel, 2002). Since Kotler (1973) first introduced the concept of atmospherics (also known as physical environment or servicescape), many scholars have studied the physical environment during consumption. Physical environment is the man-made, physical surroundings, not the natural or social environment (Bitner, 1992). Mehrabian and Russell (1974) first proposed a theoretical model (also called M–R environmental psychology model), explaining the effect of environment on human behavior, and the model is now widely used and strongly supported in many areas, including retailing and marketing. The M–R model suggests that as environments induce customers' emotions including pleasure (e.g., good or happy), arousal (e.g., excited or active), and dominance (e.g., control or importance), customers change their behaviors including approach (positive responses) and avoidance (negative responses). That is, the physical environment can affect peoples' emotions as well as their behavior. Further studies showed that the physical environment is critical to a patron's behavior in a restaurant, suggesting that restaurants should create an image that affects patron satisfaction and behavior (e.g., Baker, Grewal, & Parasuraman, 1994; Bitner, 1990; Kivela, Inbakaran, & Reece, 2000; Kim & Moon, 2009; Robson, 1999). Of the dimensions of physical environment that scholars have suggested, four are widely accepted: ambient conditions (e.g., Kim & Moon, 2009; Lucas, 2003), facility aesthetics (e.g., Wakefield & Blodgett, 1996; Ryu & Jang, 2007), spatial layout (e.g., Bitner, 1992; Wakefield & Blodgett, 1994), and seating comfort (e.g., Bitner, 1992; Wakefield & Blodgett, 1996).

Ambient conditions refer to intangible aspects affecting individual responses to the environment because of their influence on the five human senses (Bitner, 1992). They include background characteristics of the physical environment: lighting level, temperature, aroma, and background music. Lighting is important to ambient conditions in a restaurant. For example, restaurant owners use subdued, warm, and comfortable lighting to enhance the image of full-service restaurants, whereas bright lighting is often used in quick service restaurants (Ryu & Jang, 2007). In addition, temperature is important to comfortable ambient conditions. According to Sundstrom and Sundstrom (1986), a temperature of 67° to 73°F is ideal for comfort. Temperatures lower than 62°F may lead customers to complain (Bell & Baron, 1977). Aroma can also significantly affect a customer's mood and emotion (Bone & Ellen, 1999). Finally, music helps enhance ambient conditions. Music tempo affects customer perceptions while shopping in stores (Mattila & Wirtz, 2001), and Hui, Dube, and Chebat (1997) suggested that music can reduce issues with waiting.

Customers are also attracted by eye-catching aesthetics in a restaurant. Facility aesthetics include architectural design, décor, and interior design, which customers view and evaluate (Wakefield & Blodgett, 1994) and contribute to the attractiveness of the physical environment. In particular, color is important to enhancing facility aesthetics. Tom, Barnett, Lew, and Selmants (1987) suggested that an unpainted exterior, seats, and steps are less attractive than a brightly colored exterior, seats, and steps.

Spatial layout refers to “the ways in which machinery, equipment, and furnishings are arranged, the size and shape of those items, and the spatial relationships among them” (Bitner, 1992, p. 66). An effective spatial layout makes customers more likely to feel comfortable, which means they can enjoy the primary service offering (Wakefield & Blodgett, 1996). Thus, spatial layout is important to the physical environment. According to Bitner (1992), the physical environment should focus on functional comfort because a well-ordered spatial layout makes customers perceive convenience and safety when they move around in a restaurant. In addition, Hui and Bateson (1991) also suggested that customers are more likely to feel uncomfortable if they feel crowded; thus, enough space between seats is important.

Seating comfort refers to the level of physical comfort derived from the seating quality (Lam, Chan, Fong, & Lo, 2011); it is determined by the physical seat itself as well as the space between the seats (Wakefield & Blodgett, 1996). Seating comfort has been known to affect

customer satisfaction with the physical environment. Lam et al. (2011) found that seating comfort in a casino setting is significant for customers who stay longer at a facility. Bitner (1992) also suggested that how long customers stay in a restaurant depends on the degree of seating comfort.

### ***Interactional Quality***

Delivering superior interactional quality enhances success in the restaurant business (Oh, 2000); therefore, the customer's perception of employee service during service delivery is critically important. Researchers have tried to measure interactional quality because it is an important determinant of customer satisfaction (Brady & Cronin, 2001; Jain & Gupta, 2004; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988). Although many multi-dimensional conceptualizations of interactional quality are available, researchers have reached no consensus on what those dimensions are (Brady & Cronin, 2001). Among the diverse measurements, the most well known and most heavily used is SERVQUAL, developed by Parasuraman et al. (1988). SERVQUAL has the advantage of being easy and inexpensive in measuring service quality (Heung, Wong, & Qu, 2000). The SERVQUAL instrument has two sets of 22 statements for measuring consumers' expectations and consumers' perceptions. SERVQUAL operates under the assumption that the smaller the gap between expectations and perceptions, the better the service quality. SERVQUAL consists of five distinct dimensions: assurance (knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence), empathy (caring, individualized attention), reliability (performing the promised service dependably and accurately), responsiveness (willingness to help customers and provide prompt service), and tangibles (physical facilities, equipment, and appearance of personnel). It has been tested for validity and applicability for evaluating overall service (e.g., Bojanic & Rosen, 1994; Johns & Tyas, 1996; Lee & Hing, 1995; Lee & Ulgado, 1997; Saleh & Ryan, 1991). Furthermore, previous studies have demonstrated its positive relationship with outcome variables such as customer satisfaction, future purchase intentions, and word-of-mouth (e.g., Fu & Parks, 2001; Kayaman & Arasli, 2007; Pantouvakis, 2010; Wong & Sohal, 2003; Zhou, Zhang, & Xu, 2002). Carrying this step further, Stevens, Knutson, and Patton (1995) altered SERVQUAL, designing DINESERV to assess specifically the quality of service in restaurants. In the DINESERV study, the authors used the original five SERVQUAL dimensions and added measurement items. They refined 40

measurement items through confirmatory factor analysis, and suggested 29 statements that measure service quality in restaurants. Originally, SERVQUAL and DINESERV captured a five-factor structure; however, this study applied a four-factor structure instead, omitting tangibles because the tangibles dimension does not measure interactional quality.

### ***Outcome Quality***

Outcome quality is the result of a service transaction (Grönroos, 1984, 1990), the benefit the customer receives at the final stage of a service transaction. Thus, outcome quality occurs after service delivery (Rust & Oliver, 1994). Researchers have argued that food quality is the most important outcome quality dimension in the restaurant business. It is evaluated after going through process quality (i.e., physical environment and interactional qualities).

Food is the core of the overall restaurant dining experience (Auty, 1992; Kivela, Inbakaran, & Reece, 1999; Raajpoot, 2002). According to Sulek and Hensley (2004), food quality is important in evaluating restaurant performance. Raajpoot (2002) also found that food quality is the key to the overall restaurant dining experience. More recently, Peri (2006) contended that food quality is an absolute standard intended to meet customers' needs and expectations. Thus, food quality is a key to success in the restaurant business.

Food quality has been thoroughly measured using many different attributes. Dulen (1999) examined several attributes of food: aroma, consistency, freshness, innovation, portion size, presentation, taste, temperature, and texture. Among them, food taste was the most significant, followed by temperature and freshness. Raajpoot (2002) suggested that the food quality dimension includes food presentation, serving size, menu design, and variety of food. Andaleeb and Conway (2006) used exact order, error-free order, freshness, and proper temperature to measure food quality. Furthermore, Andaleeb and Caskey (2007) suggested that three key food characteristics determine food quality: menu variety, freshness, and presentation. More recently, Namkung and Jang (2007) suggested five attributes of food quality: food presentation, menu variety, taste, freshness, and temperature. Although different studies have used various measurements of food quality, six are widely accepted as outcome quality in restaurants: food freshness, portion size, menu variety, food presentation, food taste, and food temperature. Freshness is a good criterion of food quality (Namkung & Jang, 2007), making food freshness a fundamental characteristic of overall food quality (Andaleeb & Caskey, 2007; Johns & Tyas,

1996). Portion sizes and menu variety also have been used as important attributes of food quality (Raajpoot, 2002). Food presentation refers to how food is presented on the plate, making food look tastier, and thus it is an important quality of food (Namkung & Jang, 2007, 2008; Raajpoot, 2002). Most researchers agree that taste is the most important attribute of food quality. That is, although other attributes of food may be acceptable, unless it is tasty, food will not satisfy customers. Proper food temperature is related to the sensory elements of taste, smell, and sight (Delwiche, 2004); thus, it is also a critical attribute of food (Andaleeb & Conway, 2006; Namkung & Jang, 2007, 2008).

### ***Interrelationships among Physical Environment Quality, Interactional Quality, and Outcome Quality***

In the restaurant business, the physical environment provides a first impression to customers. In particular, restaurant customers spend considerable time in a physical environment from entry to exit, so physical environment is extremely important. Once customers enter the restaurant, they perceive an image of the restaurant even if they have not yet eaten the food or experienced employee service. Kotler (1973) showed that a positive perception of physical environment can arouse positive emotions, leading to a positive perception of actual service and employee service. Bitner (1990) also suggested that a superior physical environment makes customers feel better, which enhances their perception of products or services. Thus, it is reasonable to postulate that the quality of the physical environment positively affects customers' perceptions of interactional and outcome qualities. In the same context, interactional quality can make customers feel a positive emotion (e.g., Dolen et al., 2004; Wong, 2004). If restaurant customers receive prompt, promised, and dependable service, customers are more likely to enjoy dining. On the other hand, an impolite and indolent server can make customers feel unpleasant even if food quality is satisfactory. Parsa, Self, Njite, and King (2005) also suggested that great food alone cannot assure customer satisfaction because physical environment and interactional qualities can significantly affect the overall dining experience. Thus, the author infers that physical environment and interactional qualities lead to a positive perception of outcome quality. Based on the literature review then, this study proposes the following hypotheses.

**H1:** The perceived physical environment quality positively influences the perceived interactional quality.

**H2:** The perceived physical environment quality positively influences the perceived outcome quality.

**H3:** The perceived interactional quality positively influences the perceived outcome quality.

### **Consumer Attitudes: Utilitarian and Hedonic**

Consumer attitudes have long been deemed significant in developing successful competitive strategies. Therefore, this topic has attracted considerable attention in many areas, including sociology, psychology, and economics, in an effort to understand utilitarian and hedonic components of attitude to better explain customers' consumption experiences (Voss, Spangenberg, & Grohmann, 2003).

Customer satisfaction is the most important variable in evaluating the performance of a product or service (e.g., Oliver, 1980, 1999; Vavra, 1997). According to the conformation/disconfirmation paradigm (Oliver, 1981; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988), customers will be satisfied when the service/product they receive is better than they expected and will be dissatisfied if the perceived performance does not meet their expectations. However, customer satisfaction involves a customer's evaluation of a specific transaction focusing on the performance of a product or service (Bolton & Drew, 1991), while consumer attitudes involve the comprehensive evaluation of a brand (Holbrook & Corfman, 1985). Consumer attitudes are, thus, the global evaluation of brands of products or services (Bolton & Drew, 1991), a broader concept than customer satisfaction. For that reason, understanding consumer attitudes toward a brand/product should help managers predict customers' future intentions whether or not they repurchase/revisit (Voss et al., 2003). Furthermore, marketers can design and develop product positioning strategies based on consumer attitudes toward product brands (Park, Jaworski, & MacInnis, 1986).

Initially, to explain consumer attitudes, many scholars approached attitude as the one-dimensional construct measured using self-reported items (e.g., Osgood, Suci, & Tannenbaum, 1957). However, the unidimensional view does not fully explain consumer attitudes. As a result, a multidimensional construct of consumer attitudes has emerged (e.g., Bagozzi & Burnkrant,

1979; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). In particular, once Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) had introduced the utilitarian and hedonic elements of consumption, many scholars adopted the multidimensional view in measuring consumer attitudes (e.g., Batra & Ahtola, 1990; Voss et al., 2003). The utilitarian dimension is associated with instrumental, efficient, task-specific, and practical benefits (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Thus, customers holding a utilitarian attitude are more likely to choose a product for its economic value, convenience, and time savings (Teo, 2001; Zeithaml, 1988). The hedonic dimension, however, is related to aesthetic, experiential, and emotional arousal (Batra & Ahtola, 1990; Strahilevitz & Myers, 1998). Customers with a hedonic attitude, therefore, are more likely to prefer a product for its fun and playfulness (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Bellenger, Steinberg, & Stanton, 1976). Normally, the hedonic dimension is more subjective than the utilitarian dimension because the hedonic aspect has a strong affective inclination (Babin, Darden, & Griffin, 1994; Carpenter & Moore, 2009; Cottet, Lichtle, & Plichon, 2006).

This multidimensional understanding of consumer attitude has special implications for the restaurant industry. Customers dine out to satisfy their hunger (utilitarian aspect), but also for other purposes, like fun and playfulness (hedonic aspect). In other words, customers are influenced not only by the utilitarian aspect, but also by the hedonic aspect when dining out. Thus, restaurant owners should consider both aspects to serve their customers better.

### ***Effects of Physical Environment Quality on Utilitarian and Hedonic Attitudes toward Restaurant Brands***

Various studies provide enough evidence to suggest that the physical environment is significantly related to the utilitarian attitude toward a particular restaurant's brand. For example, Bitner (1992) suggested that well-designed spatial layouts make customers feel functional. Wakefield and Blodgett (1996) also showed that providing well-ordered spatial layouts help customers feel effective. In addition, Kotler (1973) suggested that physical environment is an antecedent to encouraging customers to purchase products because the physical environment creates emotional reactions (hedonic aspect). For example, facility aesthetics stimulate customers' visual interest, so identifying the customers' emotional reaction to the physical environment is critical. In addition, background music, as part of the physical environment, pleases customers, helping them relax (Ryu & Jang, 2007). Because the physical environment



itself can create emotional responses like excitement, pleasure, or relaxation (Namkung & Jang, 2008), it is significantly related to the hedonic attitude toward a particular restaurant's brand. Based on this theoretical argument, the following hypotheses can be derived:

**H4:** The perceived physical environment quality positively influences utilitarian attitude toward the restaurant's brand.

**H5:** The perceived physical environment quality positively influences hedonic attitude toward the restaurant's brand.

### ***Effects of Interactional Quality on Utilitarian and Hedonic Attitudes toward Restaurant Brands***

Interactional quality is one of the most heavily discussed topics in service industries (Brady & Cronin, 2001). In general, interactional quality contributes to a positive dining-out experience (e.g., Hyun, 2010; Kim, Lee, & Yoo, 2006; Liu & Jang, 2009). This study first suggests that interactional quality influences utilitarian attitude, which includes efficient and practical benefits (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982), toward a restaurant's brand. Therefore, given the definition, as service employees show a willingness to help customers and provide prompt service, customers are more likely to feel a utilitarian benefit. Furthermore, performing the promised service dependably and accurately gives customers a positive utilitarian attitude toward a restaurant's brand. In addition to the utilitarian influence, interactional quality could affect the hedonic attitude, which is related to emotion (Batra & Ahtola, 1990), toward a restaurant's brand as well. Employee performance greatly influences customers' emotional responses (Dolen, Ruyter, & Lemmink, 2004; Wong, 2004). When employees deliver high quality service, customers are more likely to feel joyful, delighted, or happy about a particular brand. It is therefore reasonable to infer that interactional quality positively influences the hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand. Based on the literature review then, the following hypotheses are therefore proposed:

**H6:** The perceived interactional quality positively influences utilitarian attitude toward the restaurant's brand.

**H7:** The perceived interactional quality positively influences hedonic attitude toward the restaurant's brand.

### ***Effects of Outcome Quality on Utilitarian and Hedonic Attitudes toward Restaurant Brands***

Consumers with a utilitarian attitude toward a restaurant's brand prefer to purchase a product for its instrumental, efficient, and practical benefits (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). The fundamental function of food is to satisfy customers' hunger (Andersson & Mossberg, 2004); thus, customers will have a utilitarian attitude after consuming food. It is therefore reasonable to argue outcome quality can enhance a utilitarian attitude toward a restaurant's brand. In addition, as consumers receive emotional arousal benefits, they have a hedonic attitude about a product/service's brand (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). In the restaurant business, outcome quality, or food quality, delights customers, providing them with enjoyment. For example, if customers enjoy an attractive presentation, they are more likely to develop a hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand. Namkung and Jang (2007) also suggested that food quality was important in pleasing customers. Based on the literature review, then, outcome quality positively influences consumer attitudes toward restaurant brands. The following hypotheses are therefore proposed on the relationship between outcome quality and utilitarian and hedonic attitudes toward restaurant brands:

**H8:** The perceived outcome quality positively influences utilitarian attitude toward the restaurant's brand.

**H9:** The perceived outcome quality positively influences hedonic attitude toward the restaurant's brand.

## **Outcomes of Utilitarian and Hedonic Attitudes**

### ***Brand Preference***

Brand is a distinguishing feature of a product and is often important to customers purchasing the product. For example, although customers may be satisfied with the functional value of the product, if the brand is not their favorite, some customers may not purchase the product again (Aaker, 1996; Pitta & Katsanis, 1995; Steenkamp, Batra, & Alden, 2003). For that

reason, many studies have examined diverse concepts of brand such as brand associations (e.g., Chen, 2001; Xu & Chan, 2010), brand attitudes (e.g., Chang & Chieng, 2006; Suh & Yi, 2006), brand credibility (e.g., Kim, Morris, & Swait, 2008), brand equity (e.g., Keller, 1993; Washburn & Plank, 2002), brand experience (e.g., Brakus, Schmitt, & Zarantonello, 2009; Schmitt, 2009), brand identification (e.g., Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010; Kuenzel & Halliday, 2008), brand image (e.g., Martinez, Polo, & Chernatony, 2008; Meenaghan, 1995), brand loyalty (e.g., Kressman et al., 2006; Lee & Back, 2010), brand personality (e.g., Aaker, 1997; Louis & Lombart, 2010), and brand value (e.g., Chu & Keh, 2006; Johansson & Nebenzahl, 1986).

Because brand preference is indispensable in highly competitive businesses, practitioners and researchers have long spotlighted the concept. Brand preference is “the extent to which the customer favors the designated service provided by a certain company, in comparison to the designated service provided by other companies in his or her consideration set” (Hellier et al., 2003, p. 1765). Customers form brand preferences to reduce the complexity of the purchase decision process (Gensch, 1987). The process of forming brand preference involves, first, being exposed to many brands, followed by a complex purchase decision process. Customers often delete some product brands from their memory; then, among remaining brands of products, customers memorize the brands of products they would consider purchasing in the future (Roberts & Lattin, 1991).

Brand preference is important for business as a component of brand loyalty (Rundle-Thiele & Mackay, 2001). For that reason, brand preference is a way to enhance sales. From a business standpoint, the challenge is that customers could change their favorite brands by trying products of other brands (Mathur, Moschis, & Lee, 2003) because they are exposed to a variety of attractive brands. That is, customers tend to seek better brands of products or services, so their brand preference can change. For businesses to reduce that risk, they must identify what affects brand preference and how to build brand preference. Despite the importance of brand preference, few studies have explored its importance in the restaurant industry. Thus, understanding brand preference is important, especially developing brand preference and examining its impact on outcome variables.

## ***Effects of Utilitarian and Hedonic Attitudes toward Restaurant Brands on Brand Preference***

Brand preference depends heavily on previous customer experiences (e.g., Keiningham, Perkins-Munn, Aksoy, & Estrin, 2005). In other words, a positive customer experience leads a customer to form a preference for a brand (e.g., Hellier et al., 2003; Kim, Ok, & Canter, 2010). Consumer attitudes come from evaluating brands after consuming products or services (Bolton & Drew, 1991; Holbrook & Corfman, 1985). Thus, positive utilitarian and hedonic attitudes toward restaurant brands are the result of satisfaction with a particular brand of products or services, which means customers are likely to prefer that particular brand of products or services over others. Following this logic, the author proposes the following hypotheses.

**H10:** Utilitarian attitude toward the restaurant's brand positively influences brand preference.

**H12:** Hedonic attitude toward the restaurant's brand positively influences brand preference.

### ***Customer Share of Visits***

Retaining current customers is important; it is five times more cost effective than acquiring new customers (Hart, Heskett, & Sasser, 1990). Customer defection is growing in the service industries (Skogland & Siguaw, 2004), with high customer defection rates reducing corporate performance about 25 to 50% (Reichheld & Teal, 1996). According to Keiningham et al. (2005), customer share has even more financial impact than customer retention. Thus, improving both customer share and customer retention could be ten times more valuable to a company than focusing only on customer retention (Coyles & Gokey, 2002). Likewise, customer share is the ultimate measure of loyalty (Jones & Sasser, 1995), so improving customer share is important for business managers (e.g., Cooil, Keiningham, Aksoy, & Hsu, 2007; Du, Kamakura, & Mela, 2007; Verhoef, 2003).

Depending on the industry, the concept of customer share may be defined as “share of wallet” in the financial industry, “share of garage” in the automobile field, “share of closet” in the fashion industry, and “share of eyeballs” in the media industry (Du et al., 2007). Customers naturally deny sole loyalty. Because customers have polygamous relationships with brands

(Cooil et al., 2007), they do not simply prefer one brand over all others but consider diverse brands when purchasing. Thus, customer share may be a better measure of customers' future behavioral intentions than customer retention. Customer share is the percentage of a customer's total purchases in a product/service category assigned to a specific firm (Peppers & Rogers, 1999). For example, if customer A has a larger customer share of visits to restaurant B, that means customer A visits restaurant B more often than other restaurants.

Customer retention and customer share, though related, are not identical. Customer retention is a measure of a continuing relationship with a firm; thus, customer response is single-answer (i.e., a matter of yes or no) (Cooil et al., 2007), which is an easy measure to make. On the other hand, customer share is a measure of the strength of that relationship with a firm; thus, customer response is relative expenditures allocated to a firm (Kim et al., 2010). Because customer share is implicitly part of comparing competition, it provides more information for researchers and managers than customer retention (Kim et al., 2010).

For restaurant managers, enhancing their customer share of visits is a great challenge. Unlike customer retention, however, the concept of customer share of visits is limited because of the difficulty of collecting exact information on customer share (Perkins-Munn, Aksoy, Keiningham, & Estrin, 2005). Fortunately for the restaurant industry, customers normally take one meal per visit, while customers in other industries, such as retail and banking, spend as much as they want per visit (Kim et al., 2010). In other words, the expenditure of each customer per visit is much more constant in the restaurant industry than in other industries and more easily measured, so customer share of visits is much more easily measured in the restaurant setting.

### ***Effects of Utilitarian and Hedonic Attitudes toward Restaurant Brands on Customer Share of Visits***

Consumers with positive utilitarian and hedonic attitudes toward a particular brand's product or service are more likely to use/purchase that brand. In addition, Blackston (1995) and Chang and Chieng (2006) showed that consumers' attitudes toward a particular brand is vital to maintaining a brand relationship. In other words, customers with positive attitudes toward a particular brand are more likely to continue using that brand. It is, therefore, reasonable to expect that utilitarian and hedonic attitudes toward restaurant brands have a positive influence on customer share of visits.

**H11:** Utilitarian attitude toward the restaurant's brand positively influences customer share of visits.

**H13:** Hedonic attitude toward the restaurant's brand positively influences customer share of visits.

### ***Effects of Brand Preference on Customer Share of Visits***

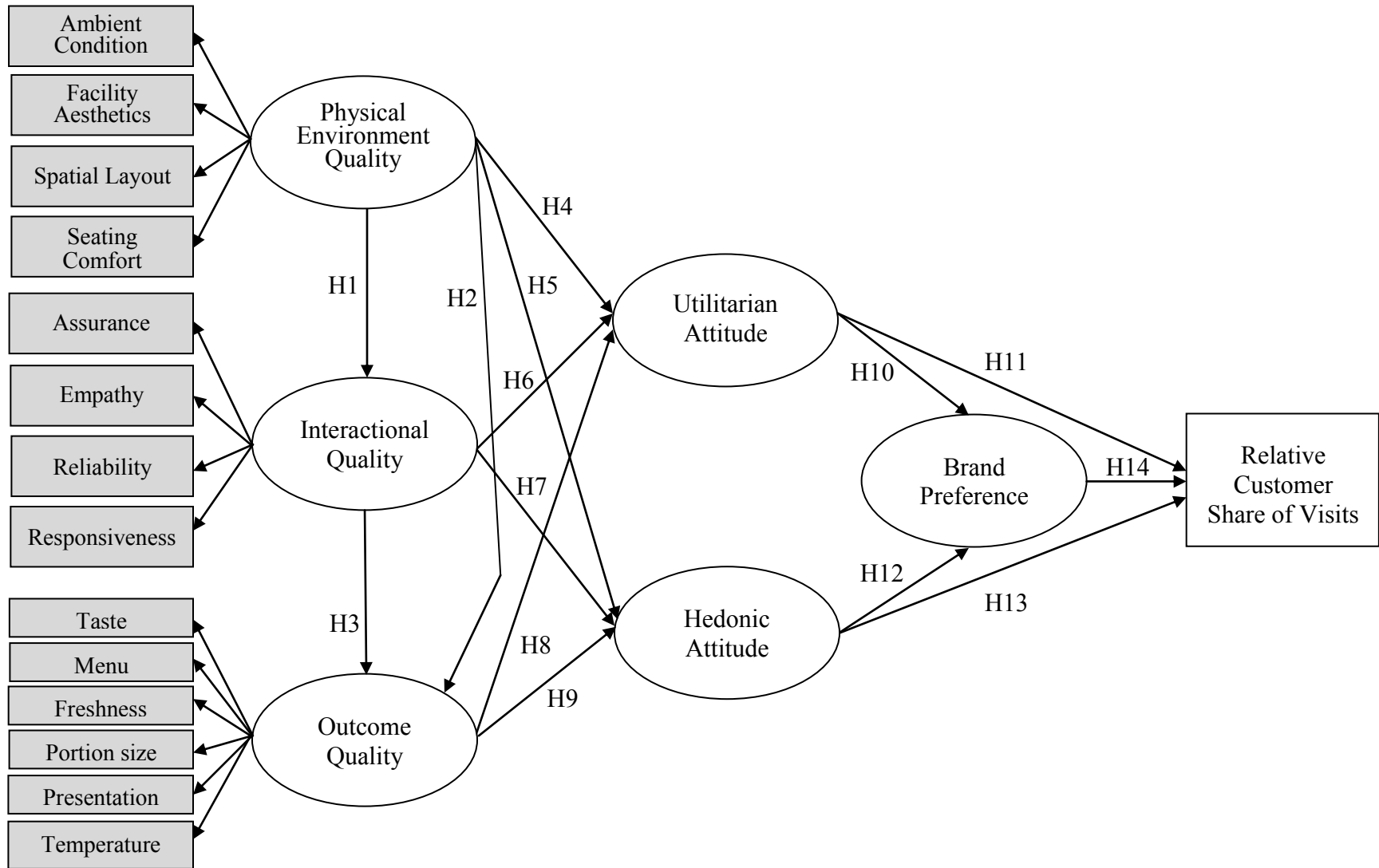
Given the previous definition of brand preference, consumers who favor a particular restaurant brand would assign a larger customer share of visits to that restaurant, decreasing customer share of visits to other restaurants. It is therefore reasonable to expect that brand preference and customer share of visits are positively associated. Recent research has also supported the relationship between brand preference and customer share. Keiningham et al. (2005) suggested a significant relationship between brand preference and customer share. More recently, Kim et al. (2010) empirically demonstrated that brand preference is a key predictor of customer share of visits. Accordingly, brand preference should influence customers to allocate a larger share of their visits to a restaurant.

**H14:** Brand preference positively influences customer share of visits.

### **The First Proposed Model**

Figure 2.1 shows the first proposed model. Physical environment quality, interactional quality, and outcome quality are antecedents of utilitarian and hedonic attitudes toward restaurant brands, and brand preference and customer share of visits are consequences of utilitarian and hedonic attitudes toward restaurant brands.

**Figure 2.1 Conceptual Model for the First Study**



## **Brand Prestige in the Fine Dining Restaurant Segment**

Understanding the concept of brand prestige is important to restaurants wanting to sustain their status in a fine dining restaurant market because brand prestige attracts more patrons. However, no studies have focused on the concept of brand prestige in the restaurant setting. Thus, understanding the concept of brand prestige is meaningful.

### ***Brand Prestige***

The term brand prestige refers to the relatively high status of product positioning associated with a brand (McCarthy & Perreault, 1987; Steenkamp, Batra, & Alden, 2003). An inherent, unique know-how are key characteristics for a brand to be judged prestigious (Dubois & Czellar, 2002), and a prestigious brand is typically more aggressive on pricing than non-prestigious brands (e.g., Lichtenstein, Ridgway, & Netemeyer, 1993; Wiedmann, Hennigs, & Siebels, 2009; Truong, McColl, & Kitchen, 2009). For that reason, the wealthier classes are more likely to purchase prestigious brands (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999), which symbolize social status, wealth, or power (Alden et al., 1999). That is, compared with non-prestigious brands, consumers expect to receive not only tangible benefits like functional value from prestigious brands, but also intangible benefits like signaling social status. In addition, prestige brand seekers consider themselves different. In other words, they wish to be treated differently from other customers (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999) as part of their compensation for purchasing a prestigious brand. Therefore, the effect of prestige on consumers would be maximized when purchases of certain prestigious brands are rare (Phau & Prendergast, 2000; Verhallen, 1982; Verhallen & Robben, 1994).

We must also distinguish between prestige and luxury. Both terms are used synonymously, but they have different implications. Strictly speaking, brand prestige includes luxury. Vigneron and Johnson (1999) categorized prestigious brands as upmarket, premium, or luxury, in increasing order of prestige. That is, luxury, part of a smaller category of brand prestige, represents the extreme of the prestigious brand (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999). In consumer behavior and marketing areas, a few researchers have studied the importance of brand prestige and its positive effect on outcomes (e.g., perceived quality, Steenkamp et al., 2003; perceived value, Vigneron & Johnson, 1999; well-being perception, Eastman, Goldsmith, &



Flynn, 1999; overall satisfaction, Baek et al., 2010; purchase intentions, Wong & Zhou, 2005). However, despite the importance of brand prestige in a fine dining restaurant where customers are willing to spend more money to symbolize social status, wealth, and power, no studies have examined the effect of brand prestige on customer behavior.

### ***Effects of Brand Prestige on Brand Preference and Word-of-Mouth***

This study develops hypotheses based on the following inferences. Many consumers purchase prestigious brands because they believe doing so enhances their social status, wealth, or power (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999). In other words, prestige brand seekers link self-concept and social image through purchasing prestigious brands (Alden et al., 1999). The restaurant brand that provides an impression of strong prestige will long remain in a customer's memory because prestige brand seekers usually consider upscale and high status as evidence of prestige (Baek et al., 2010; Tellis & Gaeth, 1990; Vigneron & Johnson, 1999). Conversely, if a restaurant brand loses the image of upscale and high status, that restaurant brand may no longer appeal to prestige brand seekers. Therefore, considering the definition of brand preference, a restaurant brand with a strongly prestigious image would have a high priority for customers who use brand in deciding where to dine. Furthermore, consumers who have a memorable, prestigious experience at a restaurant will spread positive word-of-mouth to others. Following this logic, this study hypothesized that brand prestige is positively associated with brand preference and word-of-mouth.

**H15:** Brand prestige positively influences brand preference in fine dining restaurants.

**H16:** Brand prestige positively influences word-of-mouth in fine dining restaurants.

### ***Word-of-Mouth***

Customers are greatly influenced by information from people around them: friends, relatives, and colleagues (Söderlund, 1998). Word-of-mouth is a key to judging and choosing new products or services (e.g., Fong & Burton, 2006; Harrison-Walker, 2001; Oliver, 1980; Richins, 1983). From the business standpoint, word-of-mouth is an economical way to promote products/services. Many studies have spared no effort to find what increases word-of-mouth. According to Westbrook (1987, p. 261), word-of-mouth is "informal communication directed at other consumers about the ownership, usage or characteristics of particular goods and services

and/or their sellers.” As a commercial advertisement approaches customers with a particular purpose (e.g., selling and promoting products), it arouses the customer’s curiosity; however, the advertisement does not ensure enough trust to make customers purchase products/services. Unlike such commercial advertisements, information from close friends creates trust, and thus word-of-mouth communication from acquaintances influences decisions more than other sources of information. Indeed, studies have confirmed that word-of-mouth has a significant, positive impact on not only on customer decision making but post-purchase perceptions (e.g., Herr, Kardes, & Kim, 1991; Hennig-Thurau & Walsh, 2003).

### ***Effects of Brand Preference on Word-of-Mouth***

Brand preference is crucial as a key predictor for word-of-mouth. If customers prefer a certain brand, they spread positive word-of-mouth about a product/service of that brand to others. For example, Kim, Han, and Lee, (2001) showed that word-of-mouth functions as the most powerful form of communication in the hotel industry. Zhang and Bloemer (2008) showed that customers highly committed to a particular brand are more likely to spread positive word-of-mouth to others in retailing. More recently, according to Kim, Magnini, and Singal (2011), the influence of brand preference on positive word-of-mouth is important for restaurant businesses as well. Based on the literature review then, this study proposes the following hypothesis.

**H17:** Brand preference positively influences word-of-mouth in fine dining restaurants.

### ***Customer Involvement***

The concept of customer involvement has been widely studied in the field of consumer behavior, focusing on advertisements, product, brand, and purchase decisions (Zaichkowsky, 1985). Customer involvement has three major antecedents: (a) the person’s characteristics: needs, values, and interests; (b) stimulus characteristics: type of communication media or variations within the product class; and (c) situation characteristics: purchase occasion or the perceived risk associated with the purchase decision (Peter, Olson, & Grunert, 1999; Zaichkowsky, 1985). Customer involvement is shaped by the perceived personal relevance of the object based on internal causes like inherent needs, values, and interests, as well as external causes like stimulus and situation (Peter et al., 1999; Zaichkowsky, 1985).

In the low involvement stage, necessity motivates use/purchase, and customers attach no

particular meaning to other motives to use/purchase (Cushing & Douglas-Tate, 1985; Warrington & Shim, 2000). On the other hand, in the high involvement stage, customers are enthusiastic; they are motivated to search for a product, brand, or store-related information and use/purchase such things more often (Bloch, Sherrell, & Ridgway, 1986; Shim & Kotsiopulos, 1993). Therefore, highly involved customers have a sharper and stronger ability to distinguish advantages and disadvantages to purchases (Suh & Yi, 2006; Warrington & Shim, 2000). For instance, in Shim and Kotsiopulos's study (1993), customers showing high involvement with clothing visit clothing stores more often and spend more money on clothing than customers with low involvement. Consequently, if a particular brand provides impressive utility values, customers showing high involvement are more likely to patronize the brand more often (Iwasaki & Havitz, 1998; Mittal & Lee, 1989).

Many previous studies in the marketing field have supported the relationship between customer involvement and brand. According to Beatty et al. (1988), involvement positively and directly affects brand commitment. Mittal and Lee (1989) showed that involvement positively affects brand commitment, which in turn positively affects brand support. Park (1996) also proved that involvement and attitudinal loyalty correlate highly. Similarly, LeClerc and Little (1997) found that customers with high levels of involvement were more likely to show brand loyalty.

### ***Moderating Effects of Customer Involvement***

A fine dining restaurant provides a memorable, prestigious impression on customers, who are thus more likely to have positive brand preference and word-of-mouth. Customers with high involvement in dining out select a restaurant because they are knowledgeable about dining out. Thus, if customers with high involvement in dining-out are satisfied with a particular restaurant brand, they show more interest in that restaurant brand. Finally, they will be more likely to spread positive word-of-mouth to others. Therefore, the author would expect brand prestige to play a larger role in brand preference and word-of-mouth formation when customers are highly involved in dining out. Similarly, brand involvement should moderate the relationship between brand preference and word-of-mouth. That is, customers who favor a particular restaurant brand appear to be more likely to spread positive word-of-mouth to others because of their inherent interest in dining out. A few previous studies have also showed the moderating role of

involvement. For example, Ambroise et al. (2005) showed that customer involvement significantly moderates the relationships between brand personality and attitude towards the brand and commitment in the soft-drink and sportswear market. Xue (2008) also found involvement is a significant moderator in relationships between brand image and brand choice in the automobile industry. More recently, Kim, Ok, and Canter (2010) showed that customer involvement significantly moderated the relationships between brand preference and customer share of visits in the restaurant industry. Based on this theoretical background and these empirical studies, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

**H18:** Brand involvement moderates the relationship between brand prestige and brand preference in fine dining restaurants.

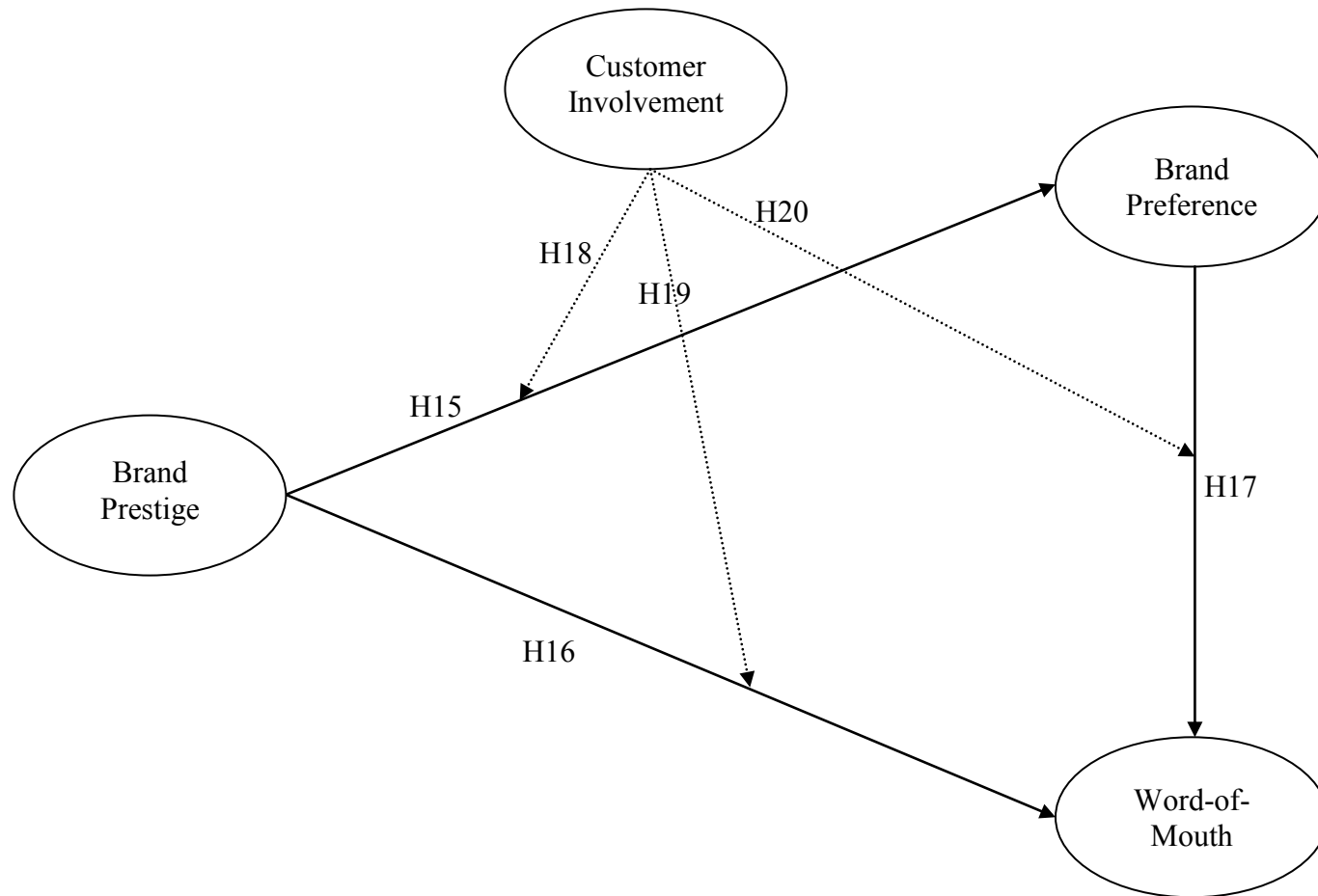
**H19:** Brand involvement moderates the relationship between brand prestige and word-of-mouth in fine dining restaurants.

**H20:** Brand involvement moderates the relationship between brand preference and word-of-mouth in fine dining restaurants.

### **The Second Proposed Model**

Figure 2.2 presents relationships proposed in the study where brand prestige is conceived as an antecedent of brand preference and word-of-mouth with the moderating role of customer involvement between (1) brand prestige and brand preference, (2) brand prestige and word-of-mouth, and (3) brand preference and word-of-mouth.

**Figure 2.2 Conceptual Model for the Second Study**



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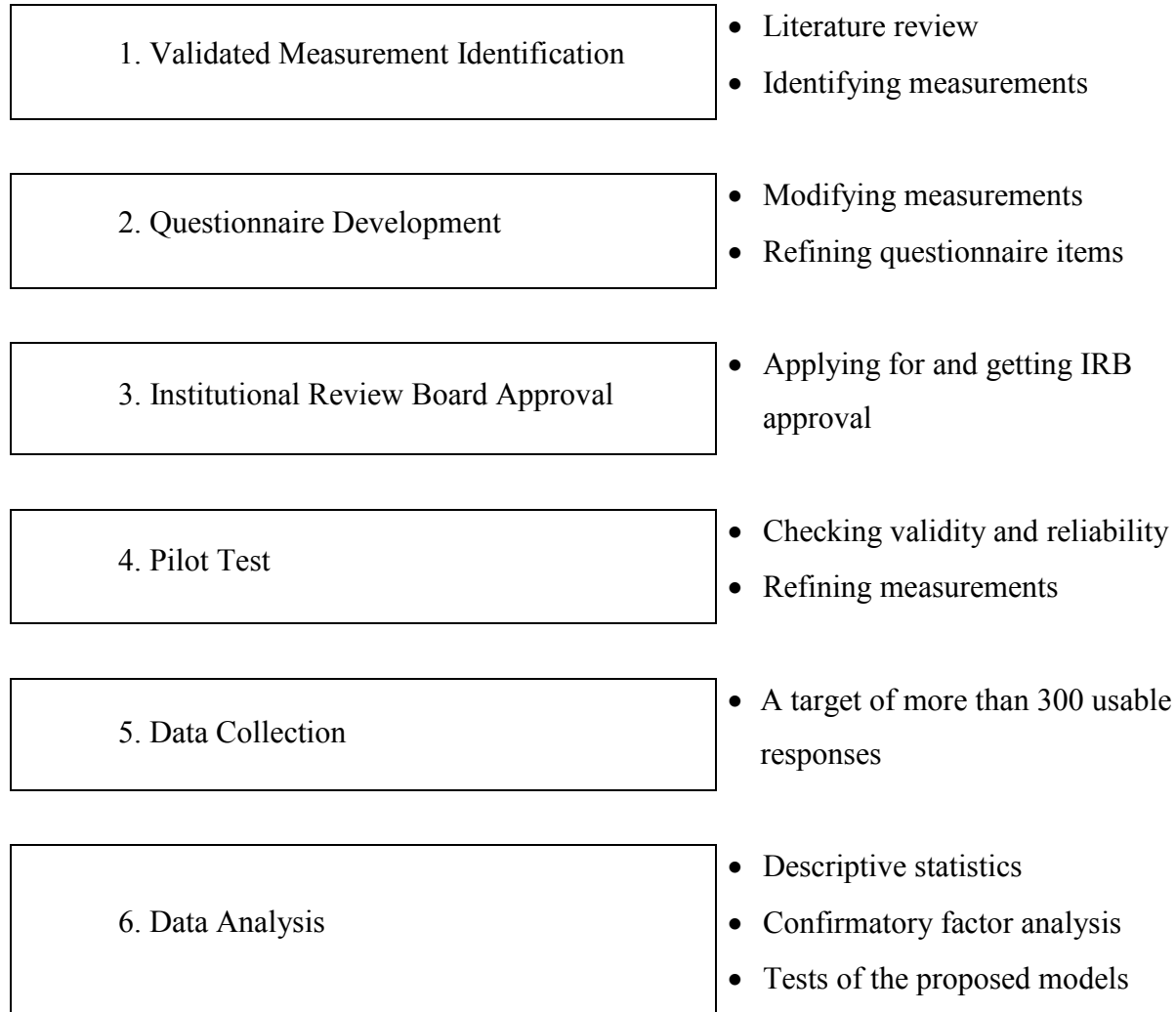
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## **Chapter 3 - METHODOLOGY**

This chapter describes the development of the questionnaire, data collection, and data analyses used to reach the research objectives. This study followed the procedures shown in Figure 3.1. In step 1, validated measurement items were identified through a literature review. In step 2, measurement items were modified, and the questionnaire was developed and refined after review by hospitality faculty members and graduate students. In step 3, the questionnaire was sent to the Institutional Review Board for approval. In step 4, upon approval from the Institutional Review Board, a pilot test was conducted with casual dining restaurant customers and fine dining restaurant customers, and the questionnaire was refined as needed. In step 5, the final version of the questionnaire was sent to casual dining and fine dining restaurant customers in the United States using an online survey company. The researcher expected about 600 responses. In step 6, after collecting the data, descriptive data analysis using SPSS was conducted, and confirmatory factor analysis using Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) was used to check reliability, convergent and discriminant validity, and model fit of the proposed models.

**Figure 3.1 Data Collection and Analysis Procedures**

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## **Questionnaire Development**

### ***Study 1: Identifying Validated Measures***

Multi-item scales from the literature that had already been validated and widely adopted were identified and modified to fit the restaurant setting. Seven constructs were used in this study. Physical environment quality included four subdimensions: ambient conditions, facility aesthetics, spatial layout, and seating comfort. Ambient conditions were measured with four items developed by Baker (1986) and Kim and Moon (2009). Facility aesthetics were measured with five items used by Wakefield and Blodgett (1996) and Kim and Moon (2009). Spatial

layout was measured with four items developed by Bitner (1992) and Kim and Moon (2009). Seating comfort was measured with three items from Wakefield and Blodgett (1996) and Kim and Moon (2009). Interactional quality consisted of four subdimensions including assurance, empathy, reliability, and responsiveness developed from Parasuraman et al. (1988) and Stevens et al. (1995). Outcome quality refers to the result of a service transaction (Grönroos, 1984, 1990), so food quality would be the outcome quality in a restaurant. It was measured using six items: taste, menu variety, freshness, portion size, presentation, and temperature; these items were adapted from Andaleeb and Conway (2006), Liu and Jang (2009), and Raajpoot (2002). To measure the utilitarian and hedonic attitudes of consumers, this study used ten items developed from Voss et al. (2003). Measures for brand preference were developed from Hellier et al. (2003) and Kim et al. (2010). The questionnaire used a seven-point Likert-type scale, anchored from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). This study used both direct and indirect measures of the respondent's relative share of visits to increase the accuracy of the measure by asking the percentage of the customer's total visits of the particular restaurant that each participant visited most recently. Further details are provided in the following section.

### ***Measures for Relative Customer Share of Visits***

This study used relative customer share of visits rather than customer share of visits to increase the accuracy of data interpretation. A given percentage of customer share of visits could mean different things in different situations. For example, if a customer visited 10 different restaurants for a given period, 25% of customer share of visits of particular restaurant means that the customer visited that restaurant relatively more often than other restaurants. In this case, the average percentage of visits is 10 (1 divided by 10, then multiplied by 100), and 25% is more than 10%, the average. However, if a customer visited three different restaurants in a given period of time, 25% of customer share of visits to any particular restaurant indicates that the customer visited that restaurant relatively less often than at least one other restaurant because in this case, the average percentage of visit is 33.33 (1 divided by 3, then multiplied by 100), and obviously 25% share of visit is less than 33.33%. Thus, depending on the number of different restaurants the customer visited, a given percentage of customer share of visits could mean different things.

To better explicate share of visits, Kim et al. (2010) contrived the concept of relative customer share of visits, suggesting that the percentage of customer share of visits be weighted by multiplying the average by the total number of restaurant brands visited. Using the above examples, customer A's share of visits (40%), with a total number of 10 restaurant brands visited, gives us a relative customer share of visits equaling 400% ( $40\% \times 10$ ). In the other case, customer B's share of visits (40%), with a total number of three restaurant brands visited, gives us a relative customer share of visits equaling 120% ( $40\% \times 3$ ). Although the two customers' share of visits is the same, their relative share of visits are quite different. This study used the relative customer share of visits to quantify customers' visits to their selected restaurants (participants were asked to report total visits to all restaurants and total consumption counts for the last three months).

This study used both direct and indirect measures of respondents' relative share of visits (Kim et al., 2010). For the indirect measure, respondents were asked two questions. This study first asked about the respondent's total visits to casual/fine dining restaurants (restaurants, hereafter) as follows: "How often do you dine at ( ) restaurants on average per year?" Then, this study asked about the respondent's total visits to the particular restaurant: "How often do you dine at this restaurant on average?" To quantify customer share of visits to that restaurant, this study divided the respondent's total visits to restaurants into the respondent's total visits to one particular restaurant. For the direct measure, a respondent's relative share of visits to a particular restaurant was quantified using the following question: "For the past six months, the number of visits to this restaurant was about ( ) % of my total visits to restaurants." Then, the author averaged the respondent's indirect and indirect measures, and the resulting value was used for the relative customer share of visits. The author believes that this measure of customer share of visits (i.e., the average of direct and indirect measure) provided a more reliable relative customer share of visits. Finally, this study asked the respondent's the following question: "How many different restaurants brands would you consider when dining out at a restaurant?" Then, that number of restaurants was multiplied by a customer share of visits to get a relative customer share of visits.

### ***Study 2: Identifying Validated Measures***

In study 2, brand prestige was measured using three items from Baek, Kim, and Yu

(2010). Three items for word of mouth were adapted from Gremler and Gwinner (2000). In addition, customer involvement was measured with ten items adopted from Zaichkowsky (1994). The questionnaire used a seven-point Likert-type scale, and each scale item was anchored from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7).

### ***Content Analysis and Pilot Test***

Four faculty members and ten graduate students in a hospitality program evaluated the content validity of the questionnaire (i.e., appropriateness of wording, etc.). After content analysis, the revised questionnaire was pilot-tested by full-service restaurant customers. First, the questionnaire was distributed to 504 general, casual dining restaurant customers in the U.S. via an online survey company's system. Of them, 235 customers completed the questionnaire (46.63% response rate). Of the 235 respondents, 143 respondents were disqualified because of incomplete responses. In addition, 62 respondents were also disqualified because of unsuitable responses (e.g., too few times visiting restaurants and inconsistent responses). As a result, 30 respondents were used for the pilot test (12.76% valid response rate).

The questionnaire was also distributed to 476 general, fine dining restaurant customers in the U.S. through an online survey company's system. Of this group, 231 customers completed the questionnaire (48.52% response rate). Of the 231 respondents, 136 respondents were disqualified because of incomplete responses. Another 65 respondents were disqualified because of unsuitable responses (e.g., too few times visiting restaurants and inconsistent responses). Finally, 30 respondents were used for the pilot test (12.98% valid response rate).

### ***Testing Reliability and Validity***

After finishing statistical analysis of 60 pilot test responses, the author revised the questionnaire. Reliability was good, with Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of all constructs over .70 (Nunnally, 1978). Second, the author did correlation analysis to predict the relationships among constructs. The results of the correlation analysis showed that all relationships among constructs were sound except as related to relative customer share of visit. As a result, the unit of relative customer share of visit was changed from per month to per year to more accurately measure relative share of visit. Third, convergent validity was assessed by checking the significance of standardized factor loadings of measurement items to their constructs. As a result, all factor loadings of measurement items were higher than .5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

## **Main Survey**

### ***Data Collection***

After finishing pilot test, the questionnaire was refined and then distributed to both casual dining and fine dining restaurant customers through an online survey company's system. The target sample size of 600 including 300 casual and 300 fine dining restaurant customers was enough to test two models, including seven constructs for the first model and four constructs for the second model.

### ***Data Analysis***

In the main study, the two-step approach was followed to evaluate the quality of measurement properties and to test relationship among constructs. First, convergent validity was assured by checking the significance of standardized factor loadings of measurement items to their constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The conventional method of testing discriminant validity suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981) was used; all AVE values should be greater than the value of squared correlations between constructs. For study 1, structural equation modeling was used to test 14 hypotheses through AMOS. For study 2, hierarchical regression analyses were used to test 6 hypotheses.

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# **Chapter 4 - THE ANTECEDENTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF CONSUMER ATTITUDES TOWARD RESTAURANT BRANDS IN THE FULL-SERVICE RESTAURANT SEGMENT**

## **Abstract**

To investigate the antecedents and consequences of consumer attitudes toward restaurant brands in the full-service restaurant, this study proposed, based on existing theoretical premises, significant interrelationships among three service qualities (i.e., physical environment quality, interactional quality, and outcome quality). This study also hypothesized that these service qualities predict consumers' utilitarian and hedonic attitudes toward restaurant brands. Finally, this study examined the effects of consumer attitudes toward restaurant brands in forming brand preference and relative customer share of visits. A theoretical model was proposed and then tested with data collected from 318 casual and 303 fine dining restaurant patrons. The results of data analysis indicated significant interrelationships among three service qualities in both casual and fine dining restaurants. In addition, interactional and outcome qualities had significant effects on utilitarian and hedonic attitudes toward restaurant brands in the casual dining restaurant. In the fine dining segment, interactional quality significantly influenced both utilitarian and hedonic attitudes toward restaurant brands, while physical environment and outcome qualities had positive impacts only on hedonic attitude toward the restaurant's brand. Finally, utilitarian and hedonic attitudes toward restaurant brands enhanced brand preference, and in turn, brand preference increased relative customer share of visits in both casual and fine dining restaurants. The findings of this study have both theoretical and managerial implications.

Keywords: Service quality, customer attitudes, brand preference, relative customer share of visits

## **Introduction**

What services are important in a restaurant? Hospitality service is complex, so restaurateurs must focus not only on food quality but also other elements such as employee service and the physical environment to attract more customers, serve them better, and keep them returning (Kivela, 1997; Reuland, Coudrey, & Fagel, 1985). Therefore, restaurants must ensure their services meet various customers' needs and wants. The level of performance in serving customers has been the barometer of customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions (Brady & Cronin, 2001), so measuring service quality by comparing customers' expectations with perceived performance has received much attention from both marketers and researchers.

To measure service quality specifically in the hospitality industry, previous studies have developed diverse measures like LODGSERV (Knutson, Stevens, Wullaert, Patton, & Yokoyama, 1990), DINESERV (Stevens, Knutson, & Patton, 1995), TANGSERV (Raajpoot, 2002), and DINESCAPE (Ryu & Jang, 2008). These scales commonly stress the importance of service dimensions either individually or collectively: physical environment quality, interactional quality, and outcome quality. In many studies, researchers have proposed and confirmed the relationships of these dimensions with core outcome variables like customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions. For example, Han and Ryu (2009) showed that a high quality physical environment (using décor and artifacts, spatial layout, and ambient conditions) results in higher consumer satisfaction. Kim and Ok (2010) noted that interactional quality affects customer satisfaction. In addition, Namkung and Jang (2007) examined the role of food quality, especially presentation, menu variety, taste, freshness, and temperature, in predicting customer satisfaction. Their findings indicated significant relationships between food quality and both customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions.

Since the level of service quality in the restaurant business significantly affects a business's ability to sustain its status in a competitive restaurant market (Andaleeb & Caskey, 2007; Andaleeb & Conway, 2006; Johns & Tyas, 1996), existing studies have focused on how to enhance service quality as evaluated by customers. The primary implication in previous studies is that service qualities like physical environment quality, interactional quality, and outcome quality are important because they positively affect customer satisfaction.

However, no studies have yet focused on the interrelationships among all three of these service qualities. Finding the interrelationships among these three service qualities would provide new information for both researchers and marketers. For example, customers may first perceive a poor quality physical environment, which could then affect their perception of interactional and outcome qualities. In other words, if the physical environment is not satisfactory, customers may not feel fully satisfied even if restaurant employees provide great service and food. The results of this study should enable researchers and restaurant managers to better understand how these three service qualities interact.

In addition to service quality, brands are important to customers. Brands are part of every aspect of our lives (Bhatti, Parveen, & Arshad, 2011). According to Zhou and Wong (2008), some consumers focus more on brand than product quality, making brand more important than product quality itself. For example, customers do not consider all attributes that restaurants have when dining out but they select a restaurant based on a broad attitude toward a particular restaurant brand. Thus, understanding consumer attitudes toward brands is critical. Most previous studies, however, have focused primarily on customer satisfaction in the restaurant business. According to Bolton and Drew (1991), customer satisfaction is a customer's evaluation of a specific transaction focusing on the performance of a product or service, while consumer attitudes are the comprehensive evaluation of a brand (Holbrook & Corfman, 1985). The concept of consumer attitudes toward restaurant brands is a broader concept than customer satisfaction; thus, it provides more information to researchers and managers. However, most previous studies have focused only on the relationship between three service qualities and customer satisfaction. Thus, this study seeks other consequences of service qualities instead of customer satisfaction, exploring how service quality in restaurants could affect consumer attitudes toward restaurant brands.

Finally, although most hospitality research has used customer retention to measure customer loyalty, it does have limited applicability (e.g., Coyles & Gokey, 2002; Kim, Ok, & Canter, 2010; Verhoef, 2003). In particular, customers have polygamous brands in their mind (Cooil, Keiningham, Aksoy, & Hsu, 2007; Verhoef, 2003); thus, the concept of customer share of visits could better explain customer behavior. In fact, customer share of visits may generate more in depth discussion among researchers and managers (Kim et al., 2010). A better understanding of customer share of visits is critical. However, very few studies have attempted to

apply customer share of visits to the restaurant setting; thus, the concept of customer share of visits is not firmly established. This study, therefore, aimed to find the antecedents of customer share of visits in the full-service restaurant setting and thus provide researchers and managers in the restaurant business with a better understanding of customer share of visits.

## **Review of Literature**

### **Antecedents of Utilitarian and Hedonic Attitudes**

#### ***Physical Environment Quality***

Restaurant customers want their dining consumption experience to be pleasant, so they seek physical environments that arouse pleasure (Yüksel & Yüksel, 2002). Since Kotler (1973) first introduced the concept of atmospherics (also known as physical environment or servicescape), many scholars have studied the role of the physical environment during consumption. Physical environment is the man-made, physical surroundings, not the natural or social environment (Bitner, 1992). Mehrabian and Russell (1974) first proposed a theoretical model (also called M–R environmental psychology model), explaining the effect of environment on human behavior, and the model has been widely used and strongly supported in many areas, including retailing and marketing. The M–R model suggests that as environments induce customers' emotions including pleasure (e.g., good or happy), arousal (e.g., excited or active), and dominance (e.g., control or importance), customers change their behaviors including approach (positive responses) and avoidance (negative responses). That is, the physical environment can affect peoples' emotions as well as their behavior. Further studies showed that the physical environment is critical to a patron's behavior in a restaurant, suggesting that restaurants should create an image that affects patron satisfaction and behavior (e.g., Baker, Grewal, & Parasuraman, 1994; Bitner, 1990; Kivela, Inbakaran, & Reece, 2000; Kim & Moon, 2009; Robson, 1999). Of the dimensions of physical environment that scholars have suggested, four are widely accepted: ambient conditions (e.g., Kim & Moon, 2009; Lucas, 2003), facility aesthetics (e.g., Wakefield & Blodgett, 1996; Ryu & Jang, 2007), spatial layout (e.g., Bitner, 1992; Wakefield & Blodgett, 1994), and seating comfort (e.g., Bitner, 1992; Wakefield & Blodgett, 1996).

Ambient conditions refer to intangible aspects affecting individual responses to the environment because of their influence on the five human senses (Bitner, 1992). They include background characteristics of the physical environment: lighting level, temperature, aroma, and background music. Lighting is important to ambient conditions in a restaurant. For example, restaurant owners use subdued, warm, and comfortable lighting to enhance the image of a full-service restaurants, whereas bright lighting is often used in quick service restaurants (Ryu & Jang, 2007). In addition, temperature is important to comfortable ambient conditions. According to Sundstrom and Sundstrom (1986), a temperature of 67° to 73°F is ideal for comfort. Temperatures lower than 62°F may lead customers to complain (Bell & Baron, 1977). Aroma can also significantly affect a customer's mood and emotion (Bone & Ellen, 1999). Finally, music helps enhance ambient conditions. Music tempo affects customer perceptions while shopping in stores (Mattila & Wirtz, 2001), and Hui, Dube, and Chebat (1997) suggested that music can reduce issues with waiting.

Customers are also attracted by eye-catching aesthetics in a restaurant. Facility aesthetics include architectural design, décor, and interior design, which customers view and evaluate (Wakefield & Blodgett, 1994) and contribute to the attractiveness of the physical environment. In particular, color is important to enhancing facility aesthetics. Tom, Barnett, Lew, and Selmants (1987) suggested that an unpainted exterior, seats, and steps are less attractive than a brightly colored exterior, seats, and steps.

Spatial layout refers to “the ways in which machinery, equipment, and furnishings are arranged, the size and shape of those items, and the spatial relationships among them” (Bitner, 1992, p. 66). An effective spatial layout makes customers more likely to feel comfortable, which means they can enjoy the primary service offering (Wakefield & Blodgett, 1996). Thus, spatial layout is important to the physical environment. According to Bitner (1992), the physical environment should focus on functional comfort because a well-ordered spatial layout makes customers perceive convenience and safety when they move around in a restaurant. In addition, Hui and Bateson (1991) also suggested that customers are more likely to feel uncomfortable if they feel crowded; thus, enough space between seats is important.

Seating comfort refers to the level of physical comfort derived from the seating quality (Lam, Chan, Fong, & Lo, 2011); it is determined by the physical seat itself as well as the space between the seats (Wakefield & Blodgett, 1996). Seating comfort has been known to affect

customer satisfaction with the physical environment. Lam et al. (2011) found that seating comfort in a casino setting is significant for customers who stay longer at a facility. Bitner (1992) also suggested that how long customers stay in a restaurant depends on the degree of seating comfort.

### ***Interactional Quality***

Delivering superior interactional quality enhances success in the restaurant business (Oh, 2000); therefore, the customer's perception of employee service during service delivery is critically important. Researchers have tried to measure interactional quality because it is an important determinant of customer satisfaction (Brady & Cronin, 2001; Jain & Gupta, 2004; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988). Although many multi-dimensional conceptualizations of interactional quality are available, researchers have reached no consensus on what those dimensions are (Brady & Cronin, 2001). Among the diverse measurements, the most well known and most heavily used is SERVQUAL, developed by Parasuraman et al. (1988). SERVQUAL has the advantage of being easy and inexpensive in measuring service quality (Heung, Wong, & Qu, 2000). The SERVQUAL instrument has two sets of 22 statements for measuring consumers' expectations and consumers' perceptions. SERVQUAL operates under the assumption that the smaller the gap between expectations and perceptions, the better the service quality. SERVQUAL consists of five distinct dimensions: assurance (knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence), empathy (caring, individualized attention), reliability (performing the promised service dependably and accurately), responsiveness (willingness to help customers and provide prompt service), and tangibles (physical facilities, equipment, and appearance of personnel). It has been tested for validity and applicability for evaluating overall service (e.g., Bojanic & Rosen, 1994; Johns & Tyas, 1996; Lee & Hing, 1995; Lee & Ulgado, 1997; Saleh & Ryan, 1991). Furthermore, previous studies have demonstrated its positive relationship with outcome variables such as customer satisfaction, future purchase intentions, and word-of-mouth (e.g., Fu & Parks, 2001; Kayaman & Arasli, 2007; Pantouvakis, 2010; Wong & Sohal, 2003; Zhou, Zhang, & Xu, 2002). Carrying this step further, Stevens, Knutson, and Patton (1995) altered SERVQUAL, designing DINESERV to assess specifically the quality of service in restaurants. In the DINESERV study, the authors used the original five SERVQUAL dimensions and added measurement items. They refined 40

measurement items through confirmatory factor analysis, and suggested 29 statements that measure service quality in restaurants. Originally, SERVQUAL and DINESERV captured a five-factor structure; however, this study applied a four-factor structure instead, omitting tangibles because the tangibles dimension does not measure interactional quality.

### ***Outcome Quality***

Outcome quality is the result of a service transaction (Grönroos, 1984, 1990), the benefit the customer receives at the final stage of a service transaction. Thus, outcome quality occurs after service delivery (Rust & Oliver, 1994). Researchers have argued that food quality is the most important outcome quality dimension in the restaurant business. It is evaluated after going through process quality (i.e., physical environment and interactional qualities).

Food is the core of the overall restaurant dining experience (Auty, 1992; Kivela, Inbakaran, & Reece, 1999; Raajpoot, 2002). According to Sulek and Hensley (2004), food quality is important in evaluating restaurant performance. Raajpoot (2002) also found that food quality is the key to the overall restaurant dining experience. More recently, Peri (2006) contended that food quality is an absolute standard intended to meet customers' needs and expectations. Thus, food quality is a key to success in the restaurant business.

Food quality has been thoroughly measured using many different attributes. Dulen (1999) examined several attributes of food: aroma, consistency, freshness, innovation, portion size, presentation, taste, temperature, and texture. Among them, food taste was the most significant, followed by temperature and freshness. Raajpoot (2002) suggested that the food quality dimension includes food presentation, serving size, menu design, and variety of food. Andaleeb and Conway (2006) used exact order, error-free order, freshness, and proper temperature to measure food quality. Furthermore, Andaleeb and Caskey (2007) suggested that three key food characteristics determine food quality: menu variety, freshness, and presentation. More recently, Namkung and Jang (2007) suggested five attributes of food quality: food presentation, menu variety, taste, freshness, and temperature. Although different studies have used various measurements of food quality, six are widely accepted as outcome quality in restaurants: food freshness, portion size, menu variety, food presentation, food taste, and food temperature. Freshness is a good criterion of food quality (Namkung & Jang, 2007), making food freshness a fundamental characteristic of overall food quality (Andaleeb & Caskey, 2007; Johns & Tyas,



1996). Portion sizes and menu variety also have been used as important attributes of food quality (Raajpoot, 2002). Food presentation refers to how food is presented on the plate, making food look tastier, and thus it is an important quality of food (Namkung & Jang, 2007, 2008; Raajpoot, 2002). Most researchers agree that taste is the most important attribute of food quality. That is, although other attributes of food may be acceptable, unless it is tasty, food will not satisfy customers. Proper food temperature is related to the sensory elements of taste, smell, and sight (Delwiche, 2004); thus, it is also a critical attribute of food (Andaleeb & Conway, 2006; Namkung & Jang, 2007, 2008).

### ***Interrelationships among Physical Environment Quality, Interactional Quality, and Outcome Quality***

In the restaurant business, the physical environment provides a first impression to customers. In particular, restaurant customers spend considerable time in a physical environment from entry to exit, so physical environment is extremely important. Once customers enter the restaurant, they perceive an image of the restaurant even if they have not yet eaten the food or experienced employee service. Kotler (1973) showed that a positive perception of physical environment can arouse positive emotions, leading to a positive perception of actual service and employee service. Bitner (1990) also suggested that a superior physical environment makes customers feel better, which enhances their perception of products or services. It is therefore reasonable to postulate that the quality of the physical environment positively affects customers' perceptions of interactional and outcome qualities. In the same context, interactional quality can make customers feel a positive emotion (e.g., Dolen et al., 2004; Wong, 2004). If restaurant customers receive prompt, promised, and dependable service, customers are more likely to enjoy dining. On the other hand, an impolite and indolent server can make customers feel unpleasant even if food quality is satisfactory. Parsa, Self, Njite, and King (2005) also suggested that great food alone cannot assure customer satisfaction because physical environment and interactional qualities can significantly affect the overall dining experience. It is therefore reasonable to infer that physical environment and interactional qualities lead to a positive perception of outcome quality. Based on the literature review then, this study proposes the following hypotheses.

**H1:** The perceived physical environment quality positively influences the perceived interactional quality.

**H2:** The perceived physical environment quality positively influences the perceived outcome quality.

**H3:** The perceived interactional quality positively influences the perceived outcome quality.

### **Consumer Attitudes: Utilitarian and Hedonic**

Consumer attitudes have long been deemed significant in developing successful competitive strategies. Therefore, this topic has attracted considerable attention in many areas, including sociology, psychology, and economics, in an effort to understand utilitarian and hedonic components of attitude to better explain customers' consumption experiences (Voss, Spangenberg, & Grohmann, 2003).

Customer satisfaction is the most important variable in evaluating the performance of a product or service (e.g., Oliver, 1980, 1999; Vavra, 1997). According to the conformation/disconfirmation paradigm (Oliver, 1981; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988), customers will be satisfied when the service/product they receive is better than they expected and will be dissatisfied if the perceived performance does not meet their expectations. However, customer satisfaction involves a customer's evaluation of a specific transaction focusing on the performance of a product or service (Bolton & Drew, 1991), while consumer attitudes involve the comprehensive evaluation of a brand (Holbrook & Corfman, 1985). Consumer attitudes are, thus, the global evaluation of brands of products or services (Bolton & Drew, 1991), a broader concept than customer satisfaction. For that reason, understanding consumer attitudes toward a brand/product should help managers predict customers' future intentions whether or not they repurchase/revisit (Voss et al., 2003). Furthermore, marketers can design and develop product positioning strategies based on consumer attitudes toward product brands (Park, Jaworski, & MacInnis, 1986).

Initially, to explain consumer attitudes, many scholars approached attitude as the one-dimensional construct measured using self-reported items (e.g., Osgood, Suci, & Tannenbaum, 1957). However, the unidimensional view does not fully explain consumer attitudes. As a result, a multidimensional construct of consumer attitudes has emerged (e.g., Bagozzi & Burnkrant,

1979; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). In particular, once Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) had introduced the utilitarian and hedonic elements of consumption, many scholars adopted the multidimensional view in measuring consumer attitudes (e.g., Batra & Ahtola, 1990; Voss et al., 2003). The utilitarian dimension is associated with instrumental, efficient, task-specific, and practical benefits (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Thus, customers holding a utilitarian attitude are more likely to choose a product for its economic value, convenience, and time savings (Teo, 2001; Zeithaml, 1988). The hedonic dimension, however, is related to aesthetic, experiential, and emotional arousal (Batra & Ahtola, 1990; Strahilevitz & Myers, 1998). Customers with a hedonic attitude, therefore, are more likely to prefer a product for its fun and playfulness (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Bellenger, Steinberg, & Stanton, 1976). Normally, the hedonic dimension is more subjective than the utilitarian dimension because the hedonic aspect has a strong affective inclination (Babin, Darden, & Griffin, 1994; Carpenter & Moore, 2009; Cottet, Lichtle, & Plichon, 2006).

This multidimensional understanding of consumer attitude has special implications for the restaurant industry. Customers dine out to satisfy their hunger (utilitarian aspect), but also for other purposes, like fun and playfulness (hedonic aspect). In other words, customers are influenced not only by the utilitarian aspect, but also by the hedonic aspect when dining out. Thus, restaurant owners should consider both aspects to serve their customers better.

### ***Effects of Physical Environment Quality on Utilitarian and Hedonic Attitudes toward Restaurant Brands***

Various studies provide enough evidence to suggest that the physical environment is significantly related to the utilitarian attitude toward a particular restaurant's brand. For example, Bitner (1992) suggested that well-designed spatial layouts make customers feel functional. Wakefield and Blodgett (1996) also showed that providing well-ordered spatial layouts help customers feel effective. In addition, Kotler (1973) suggested that physical environment is an antecedent to encouraging customers to purchase products because the physical environment creates emotional reactions (hedonic aspect). For example, facility aesthetics stimulate customers' visual interest, so identifying the customers' emotional reaction to the physical environment is critical. In addition, background music, as part of the physical environment, pleases customers, helping them relax (Ryu & Jang, 2007). Because the physical environment

itself can create emotional responses like excitement, pleasure, or relaxation (Namkung & Jang, 2008), it is significantly related to the hedonic attitude toward a particular restaurant's brand. Based on this theoretical argument, the following hypotheses can be derived:

**H4:** The perceived physical environment quality positively influences utilitarian attitude toward the restaurant's brand.

**H5:** The perceived physical environment quality positively influences hedonic attitude toward the restaurant's brand.

### ***Effects of Interactional Quality on Utilitarian and Hedonic Attitudes toward Restaurant Brands***

Interactional quality is one of the most heavily discussed topics in service industries (Brady & Cronin, 2001). In general, interactional quality contributes to a positive dining-out experience (e.g., Hyun, 2010; Kim, Lee, & Yoo, 2006; Liu & Jang, 2009). In this study, this study first postulates that interactional quality influences utilitarian attitude, which includes efficient and practical benefits (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982), toward a restaurant's brand. Therefore, given the definition, as service employees show a willingness to help customers and provide prompt service, customers are more likely to feel a positive utilitarian benefit. Furthermore, performing the promised service dependably and accurately gives customers a utilitarian attitude toward a restaurant's brand. In addition to the utilitarian influence, interactional quality could affect the hedonic attitude, which is related to emotion (Batra & Ahtola, 1990), toward a restaurant's brand as well. Employee performance greatly influences customers' emotional responses (Dolen, Ruyter, & Lemmink, 2004; Wong, 2004). When employees deliver high quality service, customers are more likely to feel joyful, delighted, or happy about a particular brand. It is therefore reasonable to infer that interactional quality positively influences the hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand. Based on the literature review then, the following hypotheses are proposed:

**H6:** The perceived interactional quality positively influences utilitarian attitude toward the restaurant's brand.

**H7:** The perceived interactional quality positively influences hedonic attitude toward the restaurant's brand.

### ***Effects of Outcome Quality on Utilitarian and Hedonic Attitudes toward Restaurant Brands***

Consumers with a utilitarian attitude toward a restaurant's brand prefer to purchase a product for its instrumental, efficient, and practical benefits (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). The fundamental function of food is to satisfy customers' hunger (Andersson & Mossberg, 2004); thus, customers will have a utilitarian attitude after consuming food. It is therefore reasonable to argue outcome quality can enhance a utilitarian attitude toward a restaurant's brand. In addition, as consumers receive emotional arousal benefits, they have a hedonic attitude about a product/service's brand (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). In the restaurant business, outcome quality, or food quality, delights customers, providing them with enjoyment. For example, if customers enjoy an attractive presentation, they are more likely to develop a hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand. Namkung and Jang (2007) also suggested that food quality was important in pleasing customers. Based on the literature review, then, outcome quality positively influences consumer attitudes toward restaurant brands. The following hypotheses are therefore proposed on the relationship between outcome quality and utilitarian and hedonic attitudes toward restaurant brands:

**H8:** The perceived outcome quality positively influences utilitarian attitude toward the restaurant's brand.

**H9:** The perceived outcome quality positively influences hedonic attitude toward the restaurant's brand.

## **Outcomes of Utilitarian and Hedonic Attitudes**

### ***Brand Preference***

Brand is a distinguishing feature of a product and is often important to customers purchasing the product. For example, although customers may be satisfied with the functional value of the product, if the brand is not their favorite, some customers may not purchase the product again (Aaker, 1996; Pitta & Katsanis, 1995; Steenkamp, Batra, & Alden, 2003). For that

reason, many studies have examined diverse concepts of brand such as brand associations (e.g., Chen, 2001; Xu & Chan, 2010), brand attitudes (e.g., Chang & Chieng, 2006; Suh & Yi, 2006), brand credibility (e.g., Kim, Morris, & Swait, 2008), brand equity (e.g., Keller, 1993; Washburn & Plank, 2002), brand experience (e.g., Brakus, Schmitt, & Zarantonello, 2009; Schmitt, 2009), brand identification (e.g., Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010; Kuenzel & Halliday, 2008), brand image (e.g., Martinez, Polo, & Chernatony, 2008; Meenaghan, 1995), brand loyalty (e.g., Kressman et al., 2006; Lee & Back, 2010), brand personality (e.g., Aaker, 1997; Louis & Lombart, 2010), and brand value (e.g., Chu & Keh, 2006; Johansson & Nebenzahl, 1986).

Because brand preference is indispensable in highly competitive businesses, practitioners and researchers have long spotlighted the concept. Brand preference is “the extent to which the customer favors the designated service provided by a certain company, in comparison to the designated service provided by other companies in his or her consideration set” (Hellier et al., 2003, p. 1765). Customers form brand preferences to reduce the complexity of the purchase decision process (Gensch, 1987). The process of forming brand preference involves, first, being exposed to many brands, followed by a complex purchase decision process. Customers often delete some product brands from their memory; then, among remaining brands of products, customers memorize the brands of products they would consider purchasing in the future (Roberts & Lattin, 1991).

Brand preference is important for business as a component of brand loyalty (Rundle-Thiele & Mackay, 2001). For that reason, brand preference is a way to enhance sales. From a business standpoint, the challenge is that customers could change their favorite brands by trying products of other brands (Mathur, Moschis, & Lee, 2003) because they are exposed to a variety of attractive brands. That is, customers tend to seek better brands of products or services, so their brand preference can change. For businesses to reduce that risk, they must identify what affects brand preference and how to build brand preference. Despite the importance of brand preference, few studies have explored its importance in the restaurant industry. Thus, understanding brand preference is important, especially developing brand preference and examining its impact on outcome variables.

## ***Effects of Utilitarian and Hedonic Attitudes toward Restaurant Brands on Brand Preference***

Brand preference depends heavily on previous customer experiences (e.g., Keiningham, Perkins-Munn, Aksoy, & Estrin, 2005). In other words, a positive customer experience leads a customer to form a preference for a brand (e.g., Hellier et al., 2003; Kim, Ok, & Canter, 2010). Consumer attitudes come from evaluating brands after consuming products or services (Bolton & Drew, 1991; Holbrook & Corfman, 1985). Thus, positive utilitarian and hedonic attitudes toward restaurant brands are the result of satisfaction with a particular brand of products or services, which means customers are likely to prefer that particular brand of products or services over others. Following this logic, the author proposes the following hypotheses.

**H10:** Utilitarian attitude toward the restaurant's brand positively influences brand preference.

**H12:** Hedonic attitude toward the restaurant's brand positively influences brand preference.

### ***Customer Share of Visits***

Retaining current customers is important; it is five times more cost effective than acquiring new customers (Hart, Heskett, & Sasser, 1990). Customer defection is growing in the service industries (Skogland & Siguaw, 2004), with high customer defection rates reducing corporate performance about 25 to 50% (Reichheld & Teal, 1996). According to Keiningham et al. (2005), customer share has even more financial impact than customer retention. Thus, improving both customer share and customer retention could be ten times more valuable to a company than focusing only on customer retention (Coyles & Gokey, 2002). Likewise, customer share is the ultimate measure of loyalty (Jones & Sasser, 1995), so improving customer share is important for business managers (e.g., Cooil, Keiningham, Aksoy, & Hsu, 2007; Du, Kamakura, & Mela, 2007; Verhoef, 2003).

Depending on the industry, the concept of customer share may be defined as “share of wallet” in the financial industry, “share of garage” in the automobile field, “share of closet” in the fashion industry, and “share of eyeballs” in the media industry (Du et al., 2007). Customers naturally deny sole loyalty. Because customers have polygamous relationships with brands

(Cooil et al., 2007), they do not simply prefer one brand over all others but consider diverse brands when purchasing. Thus, customer share may be a better measure of customers' future behavioral intentions than customer retention. Customer share is the percentage of a customer's total purchases in a product/service category assigned to a specific firm (Peppers & Rogers, 1999). For example, if customer A has a larger customer share of visits to restaurant B, that means customer A visits restaurant B more often than other restaurants.

Customer retention and customer share, though related, are not identical. Customer retention is a measure of a continuing relationship with a firm; thus, customer response is single-answer (i.e., a matter of yes or no) (Cooil et al., 2007), which is an easy measure to make. On the other hand, customer share is a measure of the strength of that relationship with a firm; thus, customer response is relative expenditures allocated to a firm (Kim et al., 2010). Because customer share is implicitly part of comparing competition, it provides more information for researchers and managers than customer retention (Kim et al., 2010).

For restaurant managers, enhancing their customer share of visits is a great challenge. Unlike customer retention, however, the concept of customer share of visits is limited because of the difficulty of collecting exact information on customer share (Perkins-Munn, Aksoy, Keiningham, & Estrin, 2005). Fortunately for the restaurant industry, customers normally take one meal per visit, while customers in other industries, such as retail and banking, spend as much as they want per visit (Kim et al., 2010). In other words, the expenditure of each customer per visit is much more constant in the restaurant industry than in other industries and more easily measured, so customer share of visits is much more easily measured in the restaurant setting.

### ***Effects of Utilitarian and Hedonic Attitudes toward Restaurant Brands on Customer Share of Visits***

Consumers with positive utilitarian and hedonic attitudes toward a particular brand's product or service are more likely to use/purchase that brand. In addition, Blackston (1995) and Chang and Chieng (2006) showed that consumers' attitudes toward a particular brand is vital to maintaining a brand relationship. In other words, customers with positive attitudes toward a particular brand are more likely to continue using that brand. It is, therefore, reasonable to expect that utilitarian and hedonic attitudes toward restaurant brands have a positive influence on customer share of visits.



**H11:** Utilitarian attitude toward the restaurant's brand positively influences customer share of visits.

**H13:** Hedonic attitude toward the restaurant's brand positively influences customer share of visits.

### ***Effects of Brand Preference on Customer Share of Visits***

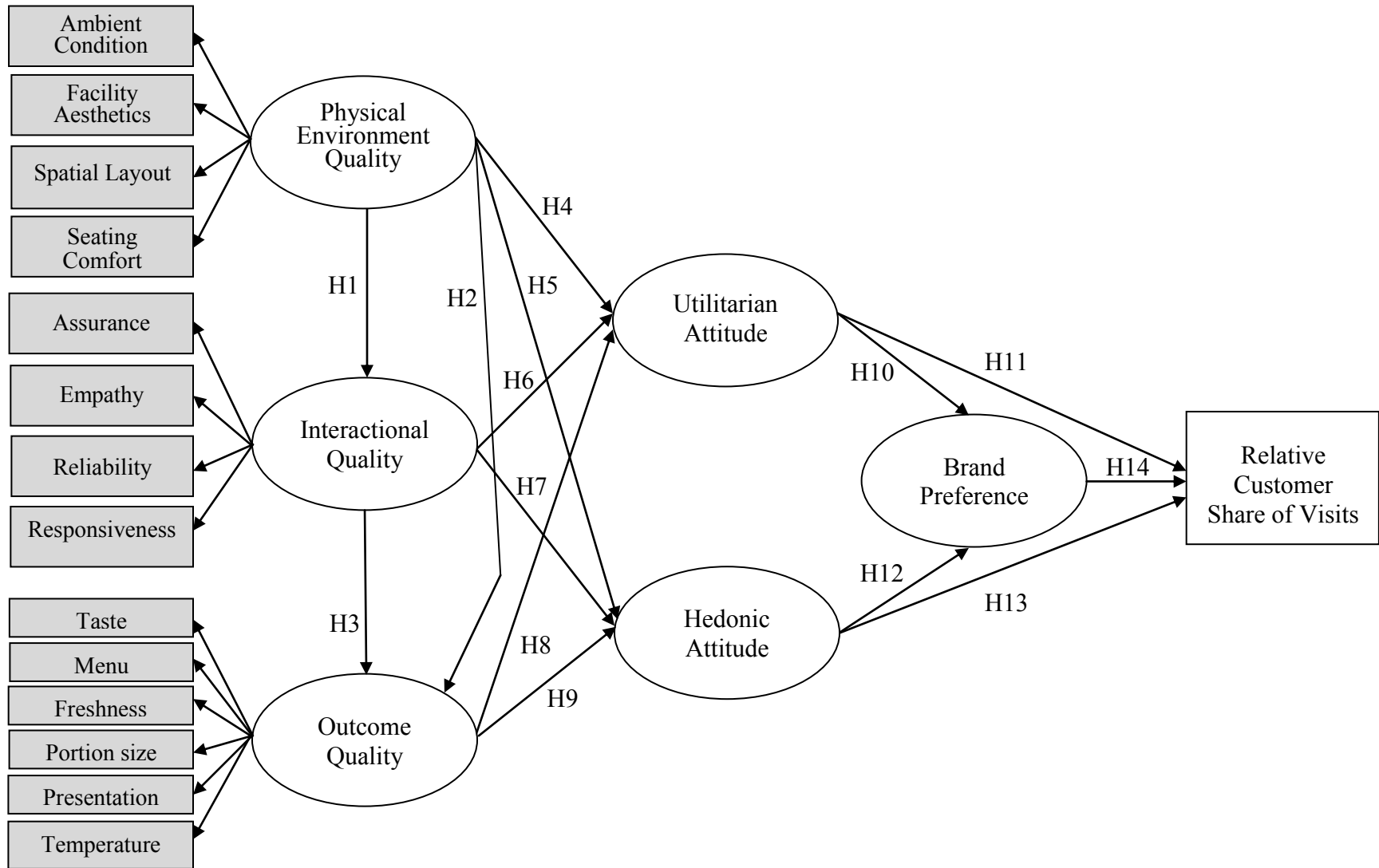
Given the previous definition of brand preference, consumers who favor a particular restaurant brand would assign a larger customer share of visits to that restaurant, decreasing customer share of visits to other restaurants. It is therefore reasonable to expect that brand preference and customer share of visits are positively associated. Recent research has also supported the relationship between brand preference and customer share. Keiningham et al. (2005) suggested a significant relationship between brand preference and customer share. More recently, Kim et al. (2010) empirically demonstrated that brand preference is a key predictor of customer share of visits. Accordingly, brand preference should influence customers to allocate a larger share of their visits to a restaurant.

**H14:** Brand preference positively influences customer share of visits.

## **The Proposed Model**

Figure 4.1 shows the first proposed model. Physical environment quality, interactional quality, and outcome quality are antecedents of utilitarian and hedonic attitudes toward restaurant brands, and brand preference and customer share of visits are consequences of utilitarian and hedonic attitudes toward restaurant brands.

**Figure 4.1 The First Proposed Model**



## **Methodology**

### ***Measures***

Multi-item scales from the literature that had already been validated and widely adopted were identified and modified to fit the restaurant setting. Seven constructs were used in this study. Physical environment quality included four subdimensions: ambient conditions, facility aesthetics, spatial layout, and seating comfort. Ambient conditions were measured with four items developed by Baker (1986) and Kim and Moon (2009). Facility aesthetics were measured with five items used by Wakefield and Blodgett (1996) and Kim and Moon (2009). Spatial layout was measured with four items developed by Bitner (1992) and Kim and Moon (2009). Seating comfort was measured with three items from Wakefield and Blodgett (1996) and Kim and Moon (2009). Interactional quality consisted of four subdimensions including assurance, empathy, reliability, and responsiveness developed from Parasuraman et al. (1988) and Stevens et al. (1995). Outcome quality refers to the result of a service transaction (Grönroos, 1984, 1990), so food quality would be the outcome quality in a restaurant. It was measured using six items: taste, menu variety, freshness, portion size, presentation, and temperature; these items were adapted from Andaleeb and Conway (2006), Liu and Jang (2009), and Raajpoot (2002). To measure the utilitarian and hedonic attitudes of consumers, this study used ten items developed from Voss et al. (2003). Measures for brand preference were developed from Hellier et al. (2003) and Kim et al. (2010). The questionnaire used a seven-point Likert-type scale, anchored from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). This study used both direct and indirect measures of the respondent's relative share of visits to increase the accuracy of the measure by asking the percentage of the customer's total visits of the particular restaurant that each participant visited most recently. Further details are provided in the following section.

### ***Measures for Relative Customer Share of Visits***

This study used relative customer share of visits rather than customer share of visits to increase the accuracy of data interpretation. A given percentage of customer share of visits could mean different things in different situations. For example, if a customer visited 10 different restaurants for a given period, 25% of customer share of visits of particular restaurant means that the customer visited that restaurant relatively more often than other restaurants. In this case, the

average percentage of visits is 10 (1 divided by 10, then multiplied by 100), and 25% is more than 10%, the average. However, if a customer visited three different restaurants in a given period of time, 25% of customer share of visits to any particular restaurant indicates that the customer visited that restaurant relatively less often than at least one other restaurant because in this case, the average percentage of visit is 33.33 (1 divided by 3, then multiplied by 100), and obviously 25% share of visit is less than 33.33%. Thus, depending on the number of different restaurants the customer visited, a given percentage of customer share of visits could mean different things.

To better explicate share of visits, Kim et al. (2010) contrived the concept of relative customer share of visits, suggesting that the percentage of customer share of visits be weighted by multiplying the average by the total number of restaurant brands visited. Using the above examples, customer A's share of visits (40%), with a total number of 10 restaurant brands visited, gives us a relative customer share of visits equalling 400% ( $40\% \times 10$ ). In the other case, customer B's share of visits (40%), with a total number of three restaurant brands visited, gives us a relative customer share of visits equalling 120% ( $40\% \times 3$ ). Although the two customers' share of visits is the same, their relative share of visits are quite different. This study used the relative customer share of visits to quantify customers' visits to their selected restaurants (participants were asked to report total visits to all restaurants and total consumption counts for the last one year).

This study used both direct and indirect measures of respondents' relative share of visits (Kim et al., 2010). For the indirect measure, respondents were asked two questions. This study first asked about the respondent's total visits to casual/fine dining restaurants (restaurants, hereafter) as follows: "How often do you dine at ( ) restaurants on average per year?" Then, this study asked about the respondent's total visits to the particular restaurant: "How often do you dine at this restaurant on average?" To quantify customer share of visits to that restaurant, this study divided the respondent's total visits to restaurants into the respondent's total visits to one particular restaurant. For the direct measure, a respondent's relative share of visits to a particular restaurant was quantified using the following question: "For the past six months, the number of visits to this restaurant was about ( ) % of my total visits to restaurants." Then, the author averaged the respondent's indirect and indirect measures, and the resulting value was used for the relative customer share of visits. The author believes that this measure of customer share

of visits (i.e., the average of direct and indirect measure) provided a more reliable relative customer share of visits. Finally, this study asked the respondent's the following question: "How many different restaurants brands would you consider when dining out at a restaurant?" Then, that number of restaurants was multiplied by a customer share of visits to get a relative customer share of visits.

### ***Data Collection***

The questionnaire was distributed to full-service restaurant customers, both casual and fine dining. The respondents were asked to select a casual/fine dining restaurant that he or she had visited most recently and to answer all questions based on the selected restaurant. A total of 634 responses were collected through an online survey from 36 states in the United States.

More specifically, for casual dining, the questionnaire was distributed to 3,345 casual dining restaurant patrons via an online survey company's system. From these patrons, 438 answered the questionnaire (13.09% response rate). Of the 438 respondents, 19 respondents were disqualified because of incomplete responses. In addition, 95 respondents were disqualified because of unsuitable responses (e.g., the number visits to restaurants, the average check size per person). As a result, 324 respondents were used for analyses (9.68% valid response rate).

For the fine dining segment, the questionnaire was distributed to 4,346 fine dining restaurant customers through an online survey company's system. Of this group, 439 customers participated in the survey (10.10% response rate). Of the 439 respondents, 25 respondents were disqualified because of incomplete responses. In addition, 104 respondents were disqualified because of unsuitable responses (e.g., the number visits to restaurants, the average check size per person). In the end, 310 respondents remained for analyses (7.13% valid response rate).

### **Data Analysis and Results**

The full-service restaurant segment includes both casual and fine dining restaurants; however, it is rather difficult to regard them as the same restaurant because, first, the two types have different concepts. A casual dining restaurant creates a casual atmosphere where patrons enjoy dining-out at moderate prices, while a fine dining restaurant provides an elegant, even luxurious, atmosphere where customers pay a relatively high price. Second, the two restaurants differ in menu style including foods and drinks. For example, a fine dining restaurant provides

more specific, dedicated courses than a casual dining restaurant; in addition, a casual dining restaurant focuses more on soft drinks or beer, while a fine dining restaurant attaches great importance to wine or whisky. Even the dress of the two types of restaurant customers differs widely. Normally, dress is informal in the casual dining restaurant, while dress is formal in the fine dining restaurant. For example, Locke-Ober, a fine dining restaurant located in Boston, asks their customers to wear jackets. In conclusion, although both casual and fine dining restaurants fall under the category of full-service restaurant, it is hard to treat them as same type. Therefore, for the overall results of full-service restaurant setting, this study first tested both casual and fine dining responses combined ( $n = 634$ ). Then, to find the differences between casual and fine dining restaurants, this study evaluated casual ( $n = 324$ ) and fine dining ( $n = 310$ ) responses separately.

## **Full-Service Restaurant Setting with both Casual and Fine Dining**

### ***Data Screening***

Before analysis, data screening was conducted to examine the assumptions for a general linear model. Normality of variable was assessed by the skewness. The skewness of the variables was within acceptable ranges, explaining normal distributions of the variables. Univariate and multivariate outliers were examined, and 13 outliers (including six and seven outliers in the casual and fine dining settings, respectively) were removed, leaving 621 respondents for further analysis. Lastly, the multicollinearity test showed that tolerance levels of the variables were higher than .10, which is the recommended cutoff (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

### ***Profile of the Sample***

Of 621 respondents, 353 (56.8%) were male, and 268 (43.2%) were female. Most participants were 50 or older. For annual household income, the highest percentage category of respondents earned over \$100,000 ( $n = 190$ , 30.6%). In terms of education, the largest categories were 4-year College or University ( $n = 212$ , 34.1%) followed by graduate degree ( $n = 206$ , 33.2%) group. Finally, most participants were White ( $n = 584$ , 94.0%).

### ***Confirmatory Factor Analysis***

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to (1) check the unidimensionality of the

scales measuring each concept and (2) validate the measurement model. According to the CFA results, the overall fit of the measurement model was satisfactory (NFI = .932, CFI = .951, TLI = .941, RMSEA = .063) (Byrne, 2001). Table 4.1 shows the variables used in this study, with their standardized factor loadings.

**Table 4.1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis in Full-Service Restaurants: Items and Loadings**

Construct and scale items	Standardized Loading <sup>a</sup>
<b>Physical environment quality</b>	
Ambient conditions	.842
Facility aesthetics	.783
Spatial layout	.676
Seating comfort	.771
<b>Interactional quality</b>	
Assurance	.919
Empathy	.901
Reliability	.924
Responsiveness	.914
<b>Outcome quality</b>	
Taste	.860
Menu variety	.764
Freshness	.876
Portion size	.782
Presentation	.888
Temperature	.927
<b>Utilitarian attitude toward a restaurant's brand</b>	
Effective	.904
Helpful	.933
Functional	.788
Necessary	.621
Practical	.680
<b>Hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand</b>	
Fun	.837
Exciting	.741
Delightful	.865
Thrilling	.703
Enjoyable	.866
<b>Brand preference</b>	
When I make a dining out decision, I consider this restaurant a viable choice very often.	.814
This restaurant meets my dining needs better than other comparable fine dining restaurants.	.876
I am interested in trying various menu items in this restaurant more than in other comparable fine dining restaurants.	.728

<sup>a</sup> All factors loadings are significant at  $p < .001$ .



The factor loadings were equal to or greater than .621, and all factor loadings were significant at  $p < .001$ , with  $t$ -values ranging from 17.69 to 39.18. As shown in Table 4.2, the average variance extracted (AVE) for all constructs was over .50, which is the threshold value (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). This means convergent validity of the measurement scales was well established. The composite reliabilities of constructs were higher than .70, ranging from .85 to .95. These values showed that all constructs in the model have adequate internal consistency (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006). Finally, discriminant validity was assessed by comparing the AVE values and squared correlations between the two constructs of interest (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). AVE for each construct was higher than all of the squared correlations ( $R^2$ ) between any pair of constructs, except for interactional and outcome qualities. For this exception, discriminant validity was further assessed by combining the two constructs into one construct and then performing a  $\chi^2$  difference test on the values obtained from the combined and uncombined models (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). The combined model showed a  $\chi^2$  of 1594.3 ( $df = 324$ ); thus, the  $\chi^2$  difference was more than 22.46 ( $df = 6$ ), indicating that discriminant validity was well established.

**Table 4.2 Descriptive Statistics and Associated Measures in Full-Service Restaurants**

	No. of Items	Mean (S.D)	AVE	Physical Environment Quality	Interactional Quality	Outcome quality	Utilitarian Attitude	Hedonic Attitude	Brand Preference	R-CSOV
Physical Environment Quality	16	5.72 (.86)	.593	<b>.853<sup>a</sup></b>	.794 <sup>b</sup>	.758	.625	.715	.512	.098
Interactional Quality	19	5.97 (.88)	.836	.630 <sup>c</sup>	<b>.953</b>	.864	.759	.790	.646	.134
Outcome Quality	6	6.29 (.83)	.725	.575	.746	<b>.940</b>	.689	.770	.608	.077
Utilitarian Attitude	5	5.63 (1.01)	.631	.391	.576	.475	<b>.861</b>	.779	.568	.068
Hedonic Attitude	5	5.45 (1.09)	.648	.511	.624	.593	.607	<b>.902</b>	.645	.099
Brand Preference	3	5.32 (1.19)	.653	.262	.417	.370	.323	.416	<b>.864</b>	.256
R-CSOV	2	1.75 (1.36)	N/A	.010	.018	.006	.005	.010	.066	N/A

Goodness-of-fit statistics:

$$\chi^2(318) = 1099.352, p < .001$$

$$\chi^2/df = 3.45$$

$$NFI = .932; CFI = .951; TLI = .941; RMSEA = .063$$

Note: R-CSOV = relative customer share of visits; AVE = average variance extracted; NFI = normed fit index; CFI = comparative fit index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation.

a. composite reliabilities are along the diagonal; b. correlations are above the diagonal; c. squared correlations are below the diagonal.

### ***Structural Model of Full-Service Restaurants***

The proposed model with seven constructs was estimated using structural equation modeling analysis (SEM). Fit indices provided by AMOS showed that the proposed model had an adequate fit (NFI = .924, CFI = .943, TLI = .933, RMSEA = .067; Byrne, 2001).

Figure 4.2 describes the SEM results with standardized coefficients and their  $t$ -values. Hypothesis 1, which predicted a positive relationship between physical environment and interactional qualities, was supported by a positive standardized coefficient of .81 ( $t = 17.99, p < .001$ ). Hypothesis 2 proposed a positive relationship between physical environment and outcome qualities and was supported by a positive standardized coefficient of .24 ( $t = 4.46, p < .001$ ). Hypothesis 3, which proposed interactional quality positively influences outcome quality, was also supported by a positive standardized coefficient of .66 ( $t = 12.69, p < .001$ ). In summary, interrelationships among three service qualities were found. Physical environment quality has positive effects on both interactional and outcome qualities. In addition, interactional quality was a key predictor of outcome quality.

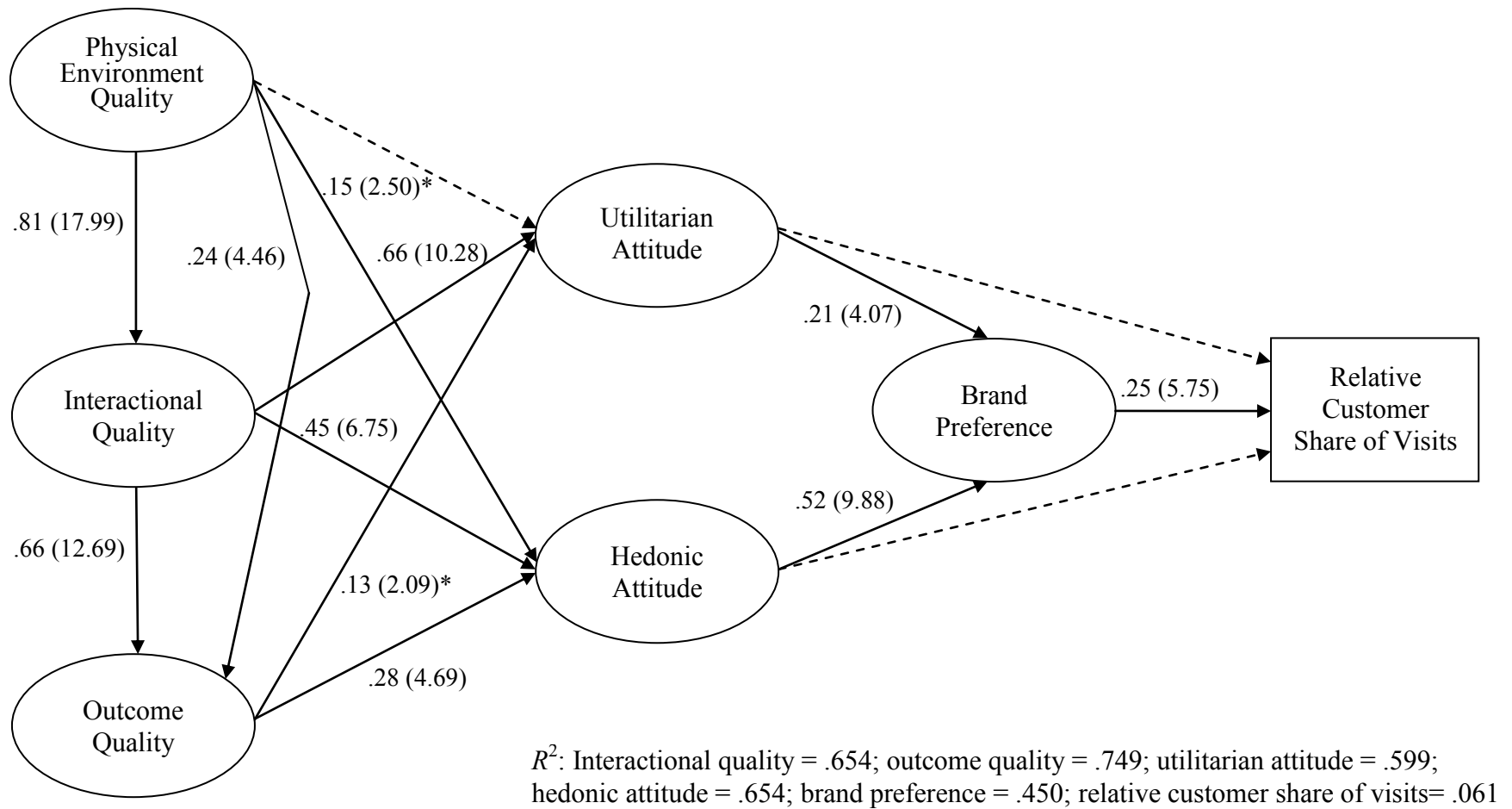
Hypotheses 4 and 5 proposed the relationships between physical environment quality and consumer attitudes toward restaurant brands. Hypothesis 4 was not supported. Hypothesis 5, which predicted a positive effect of physical environment quality on hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand, was supported by a positive standardized coefficient of .15 ( $t = 2.50, p < .05$ ). Hypothesis 6, which suggested the impact of interactional quality on the utilitarian attitude toward a restaurant's brand, was supported by a positive standardized coefficient of .66 ( $t = 10.28, p < .001$ ). Hypothesis 7, which predicted that interactional quality had a positive effect on hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand, was supported by a positive standardized coefficient of .45 ( $t = 6.75, p < .001$ ). Hypotheses 8 and 9 suggested positive relationships between outcome quality and consumer attitudes toward restaurant brands. Hypothesis 8 specifically proposed a positive relationship between outcome quality and the utilitarian attitude toward a restaurant's brand, and it was supported by a positive standardized coefficient of .13 ( $t = 2.09, p < .05$ ). Moreover, Hypothesis 9, which proposed a significant relationship between outcome quality and hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand, was supported by a positive standardized coefficient of .28 ( $t = 4.69, p < .001$ ). In summary, hypotheses 4 to 9 proposed that restaurant service qualities positively affect consumer attitudes, both hedonic and utilitarian,

toward restaurant brands. Five hypotheses indicated that physical environment quality should positively affect hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand and were supported; interactional quality has positive effects on both utilitarian and hedonic attitudes toward restaurant brands; and outcome quality positively influences both utilitarian and hedonic attitudes toward restaurant brands.

Hypotheses 10 and 11 suggested that the utilitarian attitude positively affects both brand preference and relative customer share of visits. Only Hypothesis 10 was supported by a positive standardized coefficient of .21 ( $t = 4.07, p < .001$ ). Finally, hypotheses 12 and 13 suggested positive relationships between hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand and both brand preference and relative customer share of visits, but only Hypothesis 12 was supported by a positive standardized coefficient of .52 ( $t = 9.88, p < .001$ ). The impact of brand preference on relative customer share of visits (Hypothesis 14) was supported by a positive standardized coefficient of .25 ( $t = 5.75, p < .001$ ). In summary, utilitarian and hedonic attitudes toward restaurant brands have positive influences on brand preference; in addition, brand preference has a positive impact on relative customer share of visits.

According to the squared multiple correlations ( $R^2$ ), the physical environment quality construct explained 65.4% of the total variance of interactional quality. Physical environment and interactional qualities constructs explained 74.9% of the total variance of outcome quality. In addition, all three service quality constructs explained 59.9% of the total variance of utilitarian attitude and 65.4% of the total variance of hedonic attitude. Utilitarian and hedonic attitudes explained 45.0% of the total variance of brand preference. Finally, utilitarian and hedonic attitudes and brand preference explained 6.1% of the total variance of relative customer share of visits.

**Figure 4.2 The Results of Structural Relationships in Full-Service Restaurants**



\* $p < .05$ , others  $p < .001$

1. Numbers in parentheses are the  $t$ -values.

2. Numbers in outside of parentheses are the standardized path coefficients.

3. Dotted arrows indicate nonsignificant paths ( $p > .05$ ).

## Invariance Models

Full-service restaurant respondents were divided into casual and fine dining restaurant patrons to examine the differences between an unconstrained model (also known as non-restricted model) and a fully constrained model (also known as full-metric invariance of CFA model) through the  $\chi^2$  differences between two models. The  $\chi^2$  difference was 31.55 ( $df = 32, p > .05$ ) (Table 4.3), indicating no difference between unconstrained model and fully constrained model. However, to find out more and check the differences between casual and fine dining restaurants in the proposed model, this study attempted further analyses with casual ( $n = 318$ ) and fine dining respondents ( $n = 303$ ) separated.

**Table 4.3 Results of the Unconstrained Model and Fully Constrained Model**

Model	$\chi^2$	d.f.	NFI	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
Non-restricted model	1665.358	646	.900	.936	.925	.050
Full-metric invariance of CFA model	1696.917	678	.898	.936	.928	.049
Chi-square difference test $\Delta\chi^2(32) = 31.55, p > .05$ (insignificant)						

## Casual Restaurant Setting

### *Confirmatory Factor Analysis*

The CFA results found that the overall fit of the measurement model was satisfactory (NFI = .898, CFI = .936, TLI = .925, RMSEA = .069; Byrne, 2001). Table 4.4 provides the variables and constructs used in this study with their standardized factor loadings.

**Table 4.4 Confirmatory Factor Analysis in Casual Dining Restaurants: Items and Loadings**

Construct and scale items	Standardized Loading <sup>a</sup>
<b>Physical environment quality</b>	
Ambient conditions	.683
Facility aesthetics	.654
Spatial layout	.768
Seating comfort	.845
<b>Interactional quality</b>	
Assurance	.904
Empathy	.890
Reliability	.913
Responsiveness	.893
<b>Outcome quality</b>	
Taste	.878
Menu variety	.813
Freshness	.866
Portion size	.739
Presentation	.855
Temperature	.902
<b>Utilitarian attitude toward a restaurant's brand</b>	
Effective	.896
Helpful	.923
Functional	.797
Necessary	.648
Practical	.740
<b>Hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand</b>	
Fun	.866
Exciting	.828
Delightful	.866
Thrilling	.681
Enjoyable	.823
<b>Brand preference</b>	
When I make a dining out decision, I consider this restaurant a viable choice very often.	.832
This restaurant meets my dining needs better than other comparable fine dining restaurants.	.897
I am interested in trying various menu items in this restaurant more than in other comparable fine dining restaurants.	.730

<sup>a</sup> All factors loadings are significant at  $p < .001$ .

The factor loadings were equal to or greater than .648, and all factor loadings were significant at  $p < .001$ , with  $t$ -values ranging from 11.82 to 25.42. As shown in Table 4.5, the average variance extracted (AVE) for all constructs was higher than .50, which is the threshold value (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). This shows the convergent validity of the measurement scales was well established. The composite reliabilities of constructs were higher than .70, ranging from .83 to .95. These values indicate that all constructs in the model have adequate internal consistency (Hair et al., 2006). Finally, discriminant validity was assessed by comparing the AVE values and squared correlations between the two constructs of interest (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). AVE for each construct was higher than all of the squared correlations ( $R^2$ ) between pairs of constructs.



**Table 4.5 Descriptive Statistics and Associated Measures in Casual Dining Restaurants**

	No. of Items	Mean (Std dev.)	AVE	Physical Environment Quality	Interactional Quality	Outcome quality	Utilitarian Attitude	Hedonic Attitude	Brand Preference	R-CSOV
Physical Environment Quality	16	5.58 (.81)	.550	<b>.828<sup>a</sup></b>	.735 <sup>b</sup>	.721	.509	.577	.494	.109
Interactional Quality	19	5.82 (.86)	.810	.540 <sup>c</sup>	<b>.945</b>	.839	.737	.720	.620	.162
Outcome quality	6	6.15 (.81)	.712	.520	.704	<b>.937</b>	.672	.676	.625	.124
Utilitarian Attitude	5	5.57 (.95)	.651	.259	.543	.452	<b>.902</b>	.777	.532	.109
Hedonic Attitude	5	5.22 (1.05)	.665	.333	.518	.457	.604	<b>.908</b>	.604	.179
Brand Preference	3	5.26 (1.19)	.677	.244	.384	.391	.283	.365	<b>.862</b>	.344
R-CSOV	2	1.79 (1.38)	N/A	.012	.026	.015	.012	.032	.118	N/A

Goodness-of-fit statistics:

$\chi^2(325) = 812.979, p < .001$

$\chi^2/df = 2.50$

NFI = .898; CFI = .936; TLI = .925; RMSEA = .069

Note: R-CSOV = relative customer share of visits; AVE = average variance extracted; NFI = normed fit index; CFI = comparative fit index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation.

a. composite reliabilities are along the diagonal; b. correlations are above the diagonal; c. squared correlations are below the diagonal.

### ***Structural Model of Casual Dining Restaurants***

The proposed model with seven constructs was estimated using structural equation modeling. Fit indices provided by AMOS showed that the proposed model had a good fit (NFI = .900, CFI = .936, TLI = .925, RMSEA = .050; Byrne, 2001).

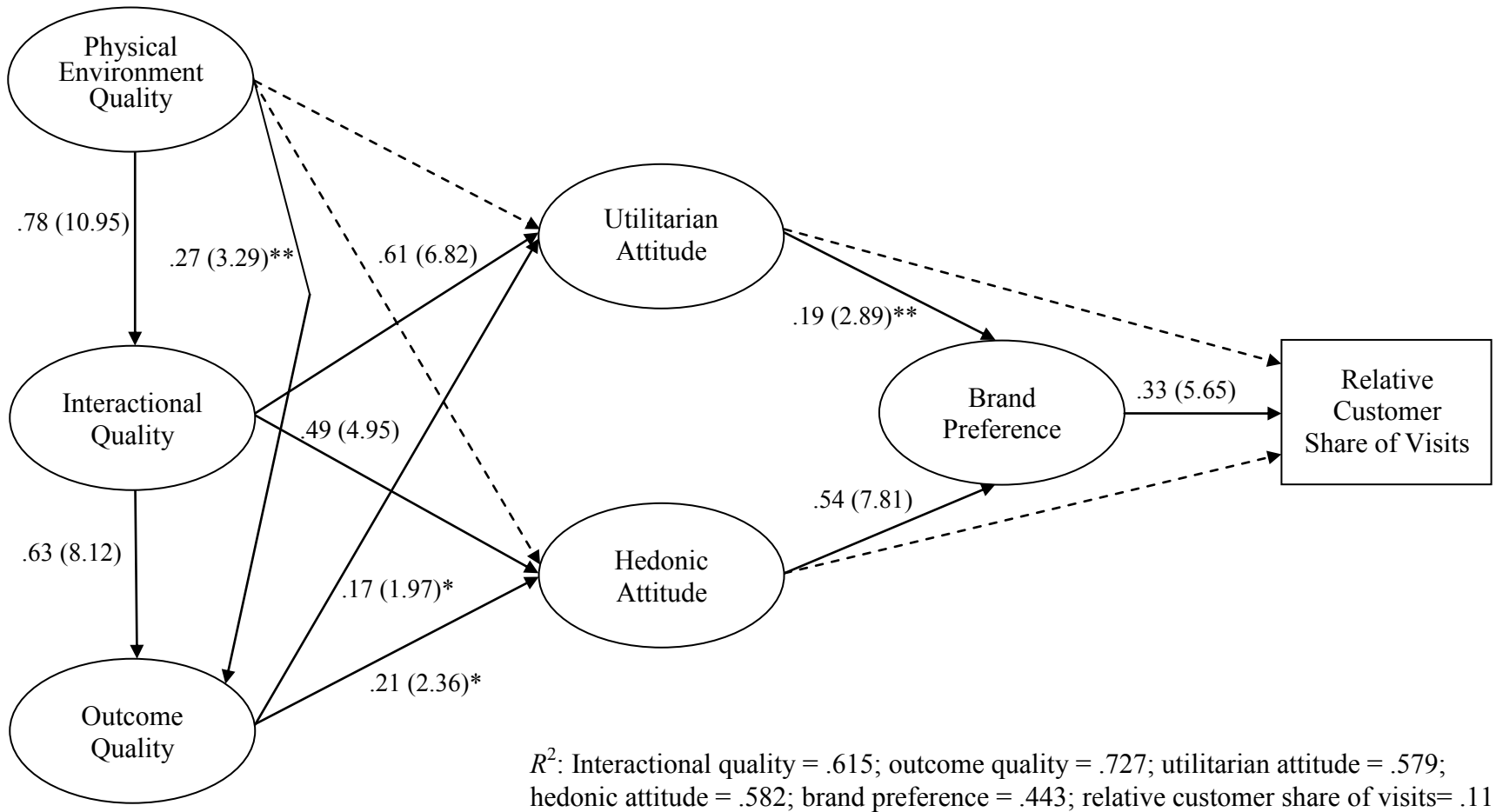
Figure 4.3 shows the SEM results, including both standardized coefficients and their  $t$ -values. Hypothesis 1 proposed a positive relationship between physical environment and interactional qualities and was supported by a positive standardized coefficient of .78 ( $t = 10.95$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Hypothesis 2, which suggested a significant relationship between physical environment and outcome qualities, was supported by a positive standardized coefficient of .27 ( $t = 3.29$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Hypothesis 3 proposed that interactional quality positively affects outcome quality; it was also supported by a positive standardized coefficient of .63 ( $t = 8.12$ ,  $p < .001$ ). In summary, physical environment quality positively affects both interactional and outcome qualities. In addition, interactional quality was an important antecedent of outcome quality.

Hypotheses 4 and 5 proposed relationships between physical environment quality and consumer attitudes, both utilitarian and hedonic, toward restaurant brands; neither was supported. Hypothesis 6, which proposed that interactional quality directly affects the utilitarian attitude toward a restaurant's brand, was supported by a positive standardized coefficient of .61 ( $t = 6.82$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Hypothesis 7 suggested that interactional quality has a positive effect on hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand; it was supported by a positive standardized coefficient of .49 ( $t = 4.95$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Hypotheses 8 and 9 proposed that outcome quality positively affects consumer attitudes toward restaurant brands. Hypothesis 8, which proposed a positive relationship between outcome quality and the utilitarian attitude toward a restaurant's brand, was supported by a positive standardized coefficient of .17 ( $t = 1.97$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Moreover, hypothesis 9, which proposed a positive relationship between outcome quality and hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand, was supported by a positive standardized coefficient of .21 ( $t = 2.36$ ,  $p < .05$ ). In summary, this study proposed six hypotheses to explain the effects of service qualities on consumer attitudes toward restaurant brands. Among them, four hypotheses were supported, indicating that interactional and outcome qualities positively influence both utilitarian and hedonic attitudes toward restaurant brands.

Hypotheses 10 proposed the effects of utilitarian attitude toward a restaurant's brand on brand preference and was supported by a positive standardized coefficient of .19 ( $t = 2.89, p < .01$ ), while the effects of utilitarian attitude on relative customer share of visits was not supported. In addition, Hypothesis 12 and Hypothesis 13 proposed that hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand affected both brand preference and relative customer share of visits; only Hypothesis 12 was supported by a positive standardized coefficient of .54 ( $t = 7.81, p < .001$ ). Finally, the impact of brand preference on relative customer share of visits (Hypothesis 14) was supported by a positive standardized coefficient of .33 ( $t = 5.65, p < .001$ ). In summary, utilitarian and hedonic attitudes toward restaurant brands have positive effects on brand preference, thus, influencing relative customer share of visits.

Based on the squared multiple correlations, the physical environment quality construct explained 61.5% of the total variance of interactional quality. Physical environment and interactional qualities constructs explained 72.7% of the total variance of outcome quality. All three service quality constructs explained 57.9% of the total variance of utilitarian attitude and 58.2% of the total variance of hedonic attitude. Utilitarian and hedonic attitudes explained 44.3% of the total variance of brand preference. Finally, utilitarian and hedonic attitudes and brand preference explained 11.1% of the total variance of relative customer share of visits.

**Figure 4.3 The Results of Structural Relationships in Casual Dining Restaurants**



\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , others  $p < .001$

1. Numbers in parentheses are the  $t$ -values.

2. Numbers in outside of parentheses are the standardized path coefficients.

3. Dotted arrows indicate nonsignificant paths ( $p > .05$ ).

## **Fine Restaurant Setting**

### ***Confirmatory Factor Analysis***

The overall fit of the measurement model was satisfactory (NFI = .909, CFI = .944, TLI = .934, RMSEA = .069; Byrne, 2001). Table 4.6 provides the variables used in this study with their standardized factor loadings.

**Table 4.6 Confirmatory Factor Analysis in Fine Dining Restaurants: Items and Loadings**

Construct and scale items	Standardized Loading <sup>a</sup>
<b>Physical environment quality</b>	
Ambient conditions	.877
Facility aesthetics	.779
Spatial layout	.707
Seating comfort	.793
<b>Interactional quality</b>	
Assurance	.922
Empathy	.905
Reliability	.945
Responsiveness	.920
<b>Outcome quality</b>	
Taste	.894
Menu variety	.790
Freshness	.912
Portion size	.820
Presentation	.896
Temperature	.922
<b>Utilitarian attitude toward a restaurant's brand</b>	
Effective	.906
Helpful	.937
Functional	.794
Necessary	.615
Practical	.673
<b>Hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand</b>	
Fun	.818
Exciting	.769
Delightful	.863
Thrilling	.692
Enjoyable	.885
<b>Brand preference</b>	
When I make a dining out decision, I consider this restaurant a viable choice very often.	.799
This restaurant meets my dining needs better than other comparable fine dining restaurants.	.856
I am interested in trying various menu items in this restaurant more than in other comparable fine dining restaurants.	.723

<sup>a</sup> All factors loadings are significant at  $p < .001$ .

The factor loadings were equal to or greater than .615, and all factor loadings were significant at  $p < .001$ , with  $t$ -values ranging from 12.23 to 30.41. As shown in Table 4.7, the average variance extracted (AVE) for all constructs were greater than .50, which is the threshold value (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). This indicates that the convergent validity of the measurement scales was well established. The composite reliabilities of constructs were higher than .70, ranging from .84 to .96. These values show that all constructs in the model have adequate internal consistency (Hair et al., 2006). Finally, discriminant validity was assessed by comparing the AVE values and squared correlations between the two constructs of interest (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). AVE for each construct was higher than all of the squared correlations ( $R^2$ ) between pairs of constructs except for interactional quality and hedonic attitude toward restaurant's brand and outcome quality and hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand. For these exceptions, discriminant validity was further assessed by combining the two constructs into one and then conducting a  $\chi^2$  difference test on the values obtained from the combined and uncombined models (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). All  $\chi^2$  differences were higher than 22.46 ( $df = 6$ ), showing that discriminant validity was well established between constructs.

**Table 4.7 Descriptive Statistics and Associated Measures in Fine Dining Restaurants**

	No. of Items	Mean (Std dev.)	AVE	Physical Environment Quality	Interactional Quality	Outcome quality	Utilitarian Attitude	Hedonic Attitude	Brand Preference	R-CSOV
Physical Environment Quality	16	5.86 (.88)	.626	<b>.869<sup>a</sup></b>	.829 <sup>b</sup>	.789	.698	.797	.523	.080
Interactional Quality	19	6.12 (.87)	.852	.687 <sup>c</sup>	<b>.958</b>	.873	.781	.847	.682	.120
Outcome quality	6	6.43 (.84)	.763	.623	.762	<b>.951</b>	.698	.836	.621	.042
Utilitarian Attitude	5	5.69 (1.07)	.632	.487	.610	.487	<b>.893</b>	.798	.609	.041
Hedonic Attitude	5	5.69 (1.07)	.653	.635	.717	.699	.637	<b>.903</b>	.662	.030
Brand Preference	3	5.38 (1.19)	.631	.274	.465	.386	.371	.438	<b>.836</b>	.154
R-CSOV	2	1.71 (1.28)	N/A	.006	.014	.002	.002	.001	.024	N/A

Goodness-of-fit statistics:

$\chi^2(312) = 787.250, p < .001$

$\chi^2/df = 2.52$

NFI = .909; CFI = .944; TLI = .934; RMSEA = .069

Note: R-CSOV = relative customer share of visits; AVE = average variance extracted; NFI = normed fit index; CFI = comparative fit index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation.

a. composite reliabilities are along the diagonal; b. correlations are above the diagonal; c. squared correlations are below the diagonal.



### ***Structural Model of Fine Dining Restaurants***

The proposed model with seven constructs was assessed using structural equation modeling. Fit indices provided by AMOS indicated that the proposed model had a good fit (NFI = .900, CFI = .936, TLI = .925, RMSEA = .050; Byrne, 2001).

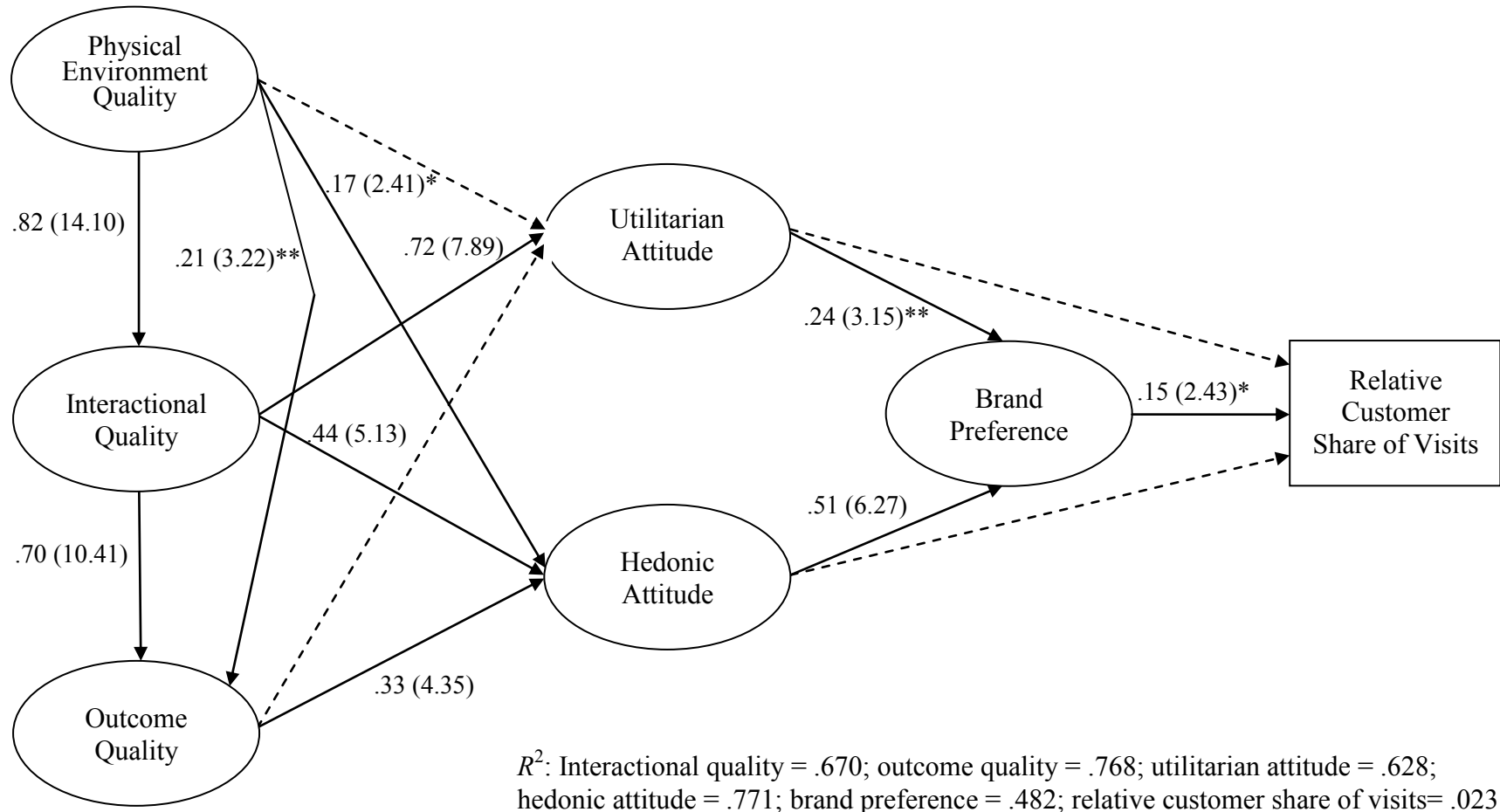
Figure 4.4 provides the SEM results showing standardized coefficients and their  $t$ -values. Hypothesis 1, which proposed a positive relationship between physical environment and interactional qualities, was supported by a positive standardized coefficient of .82 ( $t = 14.10$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Hypothesis 2 proposed that physical environment quality positively affects outcome quality; it was supported by a positive standardized coefficient of .21 ( $t = 3.22$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Hypothesis 3, which proposed a positive relationship between interactional and outcome qualities, was also supported by a positive standardized coefficient of .70 ( $t = 10.41$ ,  $p < .001$ ). In summary, physical environment quality was a significant predictor of both interactional and outcome qualities. Furthermore, interactional quality strongly affects outcome quality.

Hypotheses 4 and 5 proposed relationships between physical environment quality and utilitarian and hedonic attitudes toward restaurant brands; and Hypothesis 5, physical environment affects the utilitarian attitude, was supported ( $\beta = .17$ ,  $t = 2.41$ ,  $p < .05$ ), but not Hypothesis 4. Hypothesis 6 proposed that interactional quality positively affects the utilitarian attitude toward a restaurant's brand; it was supported by a positive standardized coefficient of .72 ( $t = 7.89$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Hypothesis 7, which proposed that interactional quality has a positive influence on hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand, was supported by a positive standardized coefficient of .44 ( $t = 5.13$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Hypotheses 8 and 9 proposed that outcome quality positively influences consumer attitudes toward restaurant brands. Hypothesis 8, outcome quality affects the utilitarian attitude, was not supported, but Hypothesis 9, outcome quality affects hedonic attitude, was supported ( $\beta = .33$ ,  $t = 4.35$ ,  $p < .001$ ). In summary, this study proposed six hypotheses to investigate the effects of service qualities on consumer attitudes toward restaurant brands. Among them, four were supported, indicating that physical environment quality has a positive effect on hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand; interactional quality positively influences both utilitarian and hedonic attitudes toward restaurant brands; and outcome quality has a positive effect on hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand.

Hypotheses 10 and 11 focused on the effects of customers' utilitarian attitude toward restaurant brands on brand preference and relative customer share of visits. The results showed that Hypothesis 10, utilitarian attitude toward a restaurant's brand affects brand preference, was supported by a positive standardized coefficient of .24 ( $t = 3.15, p < .01$ ), while Hypothesis 11 was not supported. In addition, hypotheses 12 and 13 proposed that hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand affected both brand preference and relative customer share of visits. Hypothesis 12, hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand affects brand preference, was supported by a positive standardized coefficient of .51 ( $t = 6.27, p < .001$ ), while Hypothesis 13, hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand affects relative customer share of visits, was not supported. Finally, Hypothesis 14, brand preference affects relative customer share of visits, was supported by a positive standardized coefficient of .15 ( $t = 2.43, p < .05$ ). In summary, utilitarian and hedonic attitudes toward restaurant brands positively affect brand preference, thus influencing relative customer share of visits.

According to the squared multiple correlations, the physical environment quality construct explained 67.0% of the total variance of interactional quality. Physical environment and interactional qualities constructs explained 76.8% of the total variance of outcome quality. In addition, all three service quality constructs explained 62.8% of the total variance of utilitarian attitude and 77.1% of the total variance of hedonic attitude. Utilitarian and hedonic attitudes explained 48.2% of the total variance of brand preference. Finally, utilitarian and hedonic attitudes and brand preference explained 2.3% of the total variance of relative customer share of visits.

**Figure 4.4 The Results of Structural Relationships in Fine Dining Restaurants**



\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , others  $p < .001$

1. Numbers in parentheses are the  $t$ -values.

2. Numbers in outside of parentheses are the standardized path coefficients.

3. Dotted arrows indicate nonsignificant paths ( $p > .05$ ).

## **Discussion and Practical Implications**

Research generally shows that service qualities in the restaurant industry are major components to success because of their effects on customer satisfaction. In fact, many previous studies suggest restaurant owners must focus on service quality to have customers with high levels of satisfaction (e.g., Hyun, 2010; Kim et al, 2006; Namkung & Jang, 2008). Unlike previous studies, however, this study proposed interrelationships among service qualities (i.e., physical environment quality, interactional quality, and outcome quality) and the effects of three service qualities on consumer attitudes toward restaurant brands. In addition, via a thorough literature review, two consequences of customer attitudes toward restaurant brands were derived: brand preference and relative customer share of visits. After integrating the theoretical relationships, a model of 14 hypotheses was proposed and tested using both casual and fine dining respondents ( $n = 621$ ) and then separately using 318 casual and 303 fine dining restaurant patrons.

The important findings of the current study are the interrelationships among three service qualities in all restaurant settings including full-service, casual dining, and fine dining restaurants. More specifically, physical environment quality had positive influences on both interactional (Hypothesis 1) and outcome qualities (Hypothesis 2). In addition, interactional quality had a positive effect on outcome quality (Hypothesis 3). These results suggest that each service quality is not separate but connected to all other service qualities. Most previous studies have viewed each service quality as a separate entity when explaining customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions (e.g., Andaleeb & Caskey, 2007; Andaleeb & Conway, 2006). Thus, this study extended the existing research by finding interrelationships among three service qualities.

Needless to say, first impression is of great importance to all of situations. In the restaurant business, the physical environment provides the first impression, inducing positive emotions like pleasure and arousal in customers, which affects the other service qualities. In other words, as customers first experience the physical environment, that physical environment quality gradually affects interactional and outcome qualities. Thus, the findings showed that physical environment quality helps maximize interactional and outcome qualities. The findings imply that restaurant owners must focus on appealing to customers with eye-catching exterior and interior designs, because of the effect physical environment quality on other service qualities.

In addition, the results of this study indicated that interactional quality affects outcome quality. This means that the customer's evaluation of outcome quality will be negative if employees do not deliver comfortable, quick, and dependable service. Recent work by Chow, Lau, Lo, Sha, and Yun (2007) suggested that service training can enhance the ability of employees to provide good service and satisfy customer needs. Therefore, although training employees may be expensive, restaurant operators should consider systematic training to help enhance interactional quality.

Hypotheses 4 to 9 proposed relationships between three service qualities and consumer attitudes toward restaurant brands. In the full-service restaurant segment, physical environment quality did not affect the utilitarian attitude toward a restaurant's brand (Hypothesis 4), but physical environment quality did improve the hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand (Hypothesis 5). More specifically, in the case of casual dining restaurants, the effects of physical environment quality on both utilitarian and hedonic attitudes toward restaurant brands were not significant. However, in fine dining restaurants, while physical environment quality had no significant effect on the utilitarian attitude, it did significantly affect hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand.

These results can be explained by the M-R model, suggesting that physical environments could induce emotions like pleasure and arousal (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). Utilitarian is related to efficient, functional, and practical benefits; on the other hand, hedonic is associated with fun, excitement, and uniqueness. The hedonic aspect is more associated with emotion, so a physical environment that induces human emotion has a positive impact on hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand. Ryu and Jang (2007) also revealed that the physical environment, including facility aesthetics and ambience, has a positive influence on human emotion. Therefore, this study confirmed the existing literature and further extended it by finding a significant relationship between physical environment quality and hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand, indicating that physical environment quality could improve customers' hedonic attitudes.

In addition, the effect of physical environment quality on hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand was supported only in the fine dining restaurant segment. As the name suggests, because fine dining involves a first-class restaurant with high quality materials in its physical environment, the fine dining restaurant can maximize their customers' hedonic attitudes toward the restaurant's brand. This finding implies that operators must create surroundings suited

to fine dining. Using subdued, comfortable, and warm lighting (cf., Ryu & Jang, 2007) or playing classical music (cf., Areni, 2003) could be ways to create the image of a fine dining restaurant.

In investigating the effects of interactional quality on consumer attitudes toward restaurant brands, this study proposed and found that interactional quality positively affected the utilitarian attitude toward a restaurant's brand (Hypothesis 6) and hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand (Hypothesis 7). These findings stress the important role of interactional quality, indicating that as customers experience great service at restaurants, they are more likely to have better utilitarian and hedonic attitudes toward restaurant brands. The findings suggest that delivering assured, empathetic, reliable, and responsive services improves both utilitarian and hedonic attitudes toward restaurant brands.

This study further revealed that outcome quality had a positive influence on both utilitarian (Hypothesis 8) and hedonic (Hypothesis 9) attitudes toward restaurant brands in the full-service restaurant segment. More specifically, in the casual restaurant segment, outcome quality affects both utilitarian and hedonic attitudes toward restaurant brands. However, the relationship between outcome quality and the utilitarian attitude toward a restaurant's brand was not supported in the fine dining restaurant segment, although outcome quality did have a positive influence on hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand.

Food in the restaurant industry is placed on the utilitarian side because the primary function of food is to satisfy hunger. However, the effect of outcome quality on the utilitarian attitude toward a restaurant's brand was not significant, although outcome quality did have a positive influence on hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand in the fine dining segment. This result can be explained by considering the purpose of visiting a fine dining restaurant. Customers dine out at fine dining restaurants for hedonic reasons (Ryu & Han, 2011). This study supported this argument, finding a positive relationship between outcome quality and hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand. That is, fine dining restaurant patrons expect excitement, fun, and enjoyment (hedonic attributes), not functionality, effectiveness, and practicality (utilitarian attributes).

These results have practical implications for both casual and fine dining restaurant owners. From the managerial standpoint, providing artistic presentation of foods is necessary, making food more attractive, and enhancing customers' hedonic attitudes toward a restaurant's

brand. In addition, an extensive menu enhances hedonic attitudes because a wide selection of delicious meals is fun and exciting. Therefore, restaurant owners must develop different menu styles. Moreover, for casual dining restaurant owners, serving proper food portions, high standards of freshness, and foods held at proper temperatures is also important, because these actions will give customers a positive the utilitarian attitude toward a restaurant's brand.

This study proposed two hypotheses on the relationships between consumer attitudes toward restaurant brands and brand preference; and the results showed that the utilitarian attitude toward a restaurant's brand had a positive effect on brand preference (Hypothesis 10). In addition, the hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand had a positive influence on brand preference in both casual and fine dining restaurants (Hypothesis 12). The findings indicated that consumer attitudes toward restaurant brands are the overall evaluation of the brands of product or service (Bolton & Drew, 1991), so consumers who have positive attitudes toward restaurant brands are more likely to consider the restaurant a viable choice. The relationships between consumer attitudes toward restaurant brands and brand preference have historically been studied in business, and the results of this study are consistent with previous studies. For example, Voss et al. (2003) showed consumer attitudes, including hedonic and utilitarian, have a decisive role in product purchasing. Niedrich and Swain (2003) also revealed that brand attitude has a significant influence on brand preference. The results of this study further confirmed the existing research by finding a positive relationship between consumer attitudes toward restaurant brands and brand preference, indicating that customers showing positive utilitarian and hedonic attitudes toward restaurant brands are more likely to prefer that brand.

In addition, as shown in the results, the effect of the hedonic attitude is stronger than the utilitarian attitude toward a restaurant's brand in both casual and fine dining restaurants. That is, customers are more likely to focus on pleasure oriented consumption, not goal oriented consumption. From the managerial standpoint, although the functional side still affects brand preference in the full-service industry, restaurant owners must focus more on hedonics to make customers prefer their restaurant brand.

Lastly, this study proposed three hypotheses on the antecedents of relative customer share of visits. More specifically, this study hypothesized relationships between (1) the utilitarian attitude toward a restaurant's brand and relative customer share of visits (Hypothesis 11), (2) the hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand and relative customer share of visits (Hypothesis 13),

and (3) brand preference and relative customer share of visits (Hypothesis 14). The relationships between consumer attitudes toward restaurant brands and relative customer share of visits were not supported (Hypothesis 11, Hypothesis 13). This finding is similar with respect to previous studies. Allen, Machleit, and Kleine (1992) sought to find a relationship between attitudes and behavior but found attitude was an ineffective predictor of behavior. This study found just such an insignificant relationship between attitude and behavior, indicating that while consumers may have positive attitudes toward restaurant brands, this does not guarantee an increase in relative share of visits.

However, brand preference was an important antecedent of relative customer share of visits in both casual and fine dining restaurants (Hypothesis 14). The findings are thus consistent with previous studies, indicating brand preference is the primary predictor of relative customer share of visits (e.g., Kim et al., 2010). In fact, expecting customers to exhibit sole loyalty in the restaurant industry is unreasonable, making relative customer share of visits better suited for the restaurant industry than loyalty. The results did indicate that customers normally prefer to visit their favorite restaurant brand more often than other restaurant brands.

### **Limitations and Suggestions for Future Study**

This study collected data on customer share of visits by using retrospective self-report (Verhoef, 2003). The weakness of the retrospective approach is that collecting data on customer share of visits must rely on customer memory, and therefore such data may be inaccurate (Kim et al., 2010). However, individual customer's share of visits can be collected only through customers themselves. To reduce memory bias, this study used direct and indirect methods to improve accuracy in measuring customer share of visits (Kim et al., 2010). The second limitation comes because the data in this study were collected from full-service restaurant customers in the U.S. Therefore, findings may not be generalized to other types of restaurants or to other regions. As mentioned earlier, the concept of relative customer share of visits has been only rarely studied in the restaurant industry. Moreover, although this study proposed both customer attitudes toward restaurant brands and brand preference as antecedents of relative customer share of visits, only brand preference was an important predictor of relative customer share of visits. Therefore, further study investigating other predictors of relative customer share of visits is needed. Finally, despite the statistical significance, some of the relationships were relatively weak (e.g.,



Hypothesis 8 and 9 in the casual dining restaurant setting; Hypothesis 5 and 14 in the fine dining restaurant setting). It seems that the measurement of customer share of visit needs to be further refined.

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# **Chapter 5 - THE EFFECTS OF BRAND PRESTIGE ON BRAND PREFERENCE AND WORD-OF-MOUTH: THE MODERATOR ROLE OF CUSTOMER INVOLVEMENT**

## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of brand prestige on brand preference and word-of-mouth with customer involvement as a moderator in the fine dining restaurant segment. Based on a thorough literature review, this study hypothesized that brand prestige would have positive effects on brand preference and word-of-mouth and that brand preference would have a positive relationship with word-of-mouth. Finally, this study examined the moderating role of customer involvement in the relationships between (1) brand prestige and brand preference, (2) brand prestige and word-of-mouth, and (3) brand preference and word-of-mouth. A total of 293 questionnaire responses were used to empirically test the proposed relationships in fine dining restaurants. This study found that brand prestige has significant effects on brand preference and word-of-mouth. In addition, brand preference had a positive relationship with word-of-mouth. However, customer involvement as a moderator was not supported. Theoretical and managerial implications are suggested.

Keywords: Brand prestige, brand preference, word-of-mouth, customer involvement

## Introduction

Customers no longer focus only on functional value when making purchasing decisions about products/services (Pitta & Katsanis, 1995). Many consumers are more interested in prestigious brands because of the hedonic and social values that particular brands deliver (Dubois & Czellar, 2002; Baek, Kim, & Yu, 2010). Such customers are called prestige brand seekers (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999). The prestige market has grown as customers have become more interested in prestigious brands. Many companies invest hundreds of millions of dollars in attracting such prestige brand seekers (Naik, Prasad, & Sethi, 2008). Emphasis on brand prestige is no exception in a fine dining restaurant. Fine dining restaurant patrons are willing to pay a premium for the signal of their social status, wealth, and power (Alden, Steenkamp, & Batra, 1999). Thus, when customers dine out at a fine dining restaurant, they want to be treated differently from patrons of other, fast food or casual dining restaurants. Thus, understanding the concept of brand prestige is important to restaurants wanting to sustain their status in the fine dining restaurant market because brand prestige attracts more patrons.

Moreover, practitioners and researchers have long spotlighted customer involvement in explaining the relationship between brand and consumer behavior (e.g., Beatty, Kahle, & Homer, 1988; Mittal & Lee, 1989; Park, 1996; LeClerc & Little, 1997). Customer involvement is the personal relevance of a specific object, so it includes personal thoughts, feelings, and behavioral responses to a brand's product (Miller & Marks, 1996; Gordon, McKeage, & Fox, 1998). Thus, the more deeply customers are involved with a specific product, the more they show an interest in that product. Therefore, customer involvement should help explain consumer behavior.

Even though brand prestige is important in a fine dining restaurant market, however, no study has focused on the concept of brand prestige in the restaurant setting. And also, brand prestige significantly affects a fine dining restaurant market; therefore, studying the role of brand prestige in fine dining restaurants could be very meaningful. In addition, because of the effects of customer involvement on consumer behavior, the attempt to test the moderating role of customer involvement in relationships between brand prestige and brand preference and word-of-mouth should provide meaningful implications to the food service industry. Therefore, the purposes of this research were (1) to examine the effect of brand prestige on brand preference and word-of-mouth and (2) to test the moderating effect of customer involvement on the relationships among

brand prestige, brand preference, and word-of-mouth.

## **Review of Literature**

### ***Brand Prestige***

The term brand prestige refers to the relatively high status of product positioning associated with a brand (McCarthy & Perreault, 1987; Steenkamp, Batra, & Alden, 2003). An inherent, unique know-how are key characteristics for a brand to be judged prestigious (Dubois & Czellar, 2002), and a prestigious brand is typically more aggressive on pricing than non-prestigious brands (e.g., Lichtenstein, Ridgway, & Netemeyer, 1993; Wiedmann, Hennigs, & Siebels, 2009; Truong, McColl, & Kitchen, 2009). For that reason, the wealthier social classes are more likely to purchase prestigious brands (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999), which symbolize their social status, wealth, or power (Alden et al., 1999). That is, compared with non-prestigious brands, consumers expect to receive not only tangible benefits like functional value itself from prestigious brands, but also intangible benefits like signaling social status. In addition, prestige brand seekers consider themselves different; they wish to be treated differently from other customers (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999) as part of their compensation for purchasing a prestigious brand. Therefore, the effect of prestige on consumers should be maximized when purchases of certain prestigious brands are rare (Phau & Prendergast, 2000; Verhallen, 1982; Verhallen & Robben, 1994).

We must also distinguish between prestige and luxury. Both terms are used synonymously, but they have different implications. Strictly speaking, brand prestige includes luxury. Vigneron and Johnson (1999) categorized prestigious brands as upmarket, premium, or luxury based on increasing prestige. That is, luxury, part of a smaller category of brand prestige, represents the extreme end of prestigious brands (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999). In consumer behavior and marketing areas, a few researchers have studied the importance of brand prestige and its positive effect on outcomes (e.g., perceived quality, Steenkamp et al., 2003; perceived value, Vigneron & Johnson, 1999; well-being perception, Eastman, Goldsmith, & Flynn, 1999; overall satisfaction, Baek et al., 2010; purchase intentions, Wong & Zhou, 2005). However, despite the importance of brand prestige in a fine dining restaurant where customers are willing to spend more money to display social status, wealth, and power, no studies have examined the

effect of brand prestige on customer behavior.

### ***Effects of Brand Prestige on Brand Preference and Word-of-Mouth***

This study develops hypotheses based on the following inferences. Many consumers purchase prestigious brands to enhance their social status, wealth, or power (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999). In other words, prestige brand seekers link to their self-concept and social image by purchasing prestigious brands (Alden et al., 1999). The restaurant brand that provides an impression of strong prestige will long remain in a customer's memory because prestige brand seekers usually consider upscale and high status as evidence of prestige (Baek et al., 2010; Tellis & Gaeth, 1990; Vigneron & Johnson, 1999). Thus, if a restaurant brand loses the image of upscale and high status, that brand may no longer appeal to prestige brand seekers. Therefore, considering the definition of brand preference, consumers would give a restaurant brand with a strongly prestigious image of high priority. Furthermore, consumers who experience a memorable prestigious impression will spread positive word-of-mouth to others. Following this logic, it is reasonable to hypothesize that brand prestige is positively associated with both brand preference and word-of-mouth.

**H15:** Brand prestige has a positive influence on brand preference in fine dining restaurants.

**H16:** Brand prestige has a positive influence on word-of-mouth in fine dining restaurants.

### ***Word-of-Mouth***

Customers are greatly influenced by information from people around them, their friends, relatives, and colleagues (Söderlund, 1998). Research showed that word-of-mouth was a key factor in judging and choosing new products or services (e.g., Fong & Burton, 2006; Harrison-Walker, 2001; Oliver, 1980; Richins, 1983). From the business standpoint, word-of-mouth is an economical way to promote products/services. Many studies have spared no effort to find out what increases word-of-mouth. According to Westbrook (1987, p. 261), word-of-mouth is “informal communication directed at other consumers about the ownership, usage or characteristics of particular goods and services and/or their sellers.” As a commercial advertisement approaches customers with a particular purpose (e.g., selling and promoting products), it arouses the customer's curiosity; however, the advertisement does not ensure



enough trust to make customers purchase products/services. Unlike commercial advertisements, information from close friends creates trust, and thus word-of-mouth communication has more influence on decisions than other sources. Indeed, studies have confirmed that word-of-mouth has a significant, positive impact on customer decision making as well as post-purchase perceptions (e.g., Herr, Kardes, & Kim, 1991; Hennig-Thurau & Walsh, 2003).

### ***Effects of Brand Preference on Word-of-Mouth***

Brand preference is crucial as a key predictor for word-of-mouth. If customers prefer a certain brand, they spread positive word-of-mouth about a product/service brand to others. Kim, Han, and Lee, (2001) showed that word-of-mouth functions as the most powerful form of communication in the hotel industry. Zhang and Bloemer (2008) noted that customers highly committed to a particular brand are more likely to spread positive word-of-mouth to others. More recently, according to Kim, Magnini, and Singal (2011), the influence of brand preference on positive word-of-mouth is important for restaurant businesses as well. Based on the literature review then, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

**H17:** Brand preference has a positive influence on word-of-mouth in fine dining restaurants.

### ***Customer Involvement***

The concept of customer involvement has been widely studied in the field of consumer behavior, focusing on advertisements, product, brand, and purchase decisions (Zaichkowsky, 1985). Customer involvement has three major antecedents: (a) the person's characteristics: needs, values, and interests; (b) stimulus characteristics: type of communication media or variations within the product class; and (c) situation characteristics: purchase occasion or the perceived risk associated with the purchase decision (Peter, Olson, & Grunert, 1999; Zaichkowsky, 1985). Customer involvement is shaped by the perceived personal relevance of the object based on internal causes like inherent needs, values, and interests, as well as external causes like stimulus and situation (Peter et al., 1999; Zaichkowsky, 1985).

In the low involvement stage, customers attach no importance to a certain product, and therefore, necessity motivates use/purchase (Cushing & Douglas-Tate, 1985; Warrington & Shim, 2000). On the other hand, in the high involvement stage, customers are enthusiastic; thus, they

are motivated to search for a product, brand, or store-related information and use/purchase such things more often (Bloch, Sherrell, & Ridgway, 1986; Shim & Kotsiopulos, 1993). Therefore, highly involved customers have a sharper and stronger ability to distinguish advantages and disadvantages of products/services (Suh & Yi, 2006; Warrington & Shim, 2000). For instance, in Shim and Kotsiopulos's study (1993), customers showing high involvement with clothing visit clothing stores more often and spend more money on clothing than customers with low involvement. Consequently, if a particular brand provides impressive utility values, customers showing high involvement are more likely to patronize the brand more often (Iwasaki & Havitz, 1998; Mittal & Lee, 1989).

Many previous studies in the marketing field have supported the relationship between customer involvement and brand. According to Beatty et al. (1988), involvement positively and directly affects brand commitment. Mittal and Lee (1989) showed that involvement positively affects brand commitment, which in turn positively affects brand support. Park (1996) also proved that involvement and attitudinal loyalty highly correlated. Similarly, LeClerc and Little (1997) found that customers with high levels of involvement were more likely to show brand loyalty.

### ***The Moderating Effects of Customer Involvement***

A fine dining restaurant provides a memorable, prestigious impression for customers, who are thus more likely to have positive brand preference and word-of-mouth. Customers with high involvement in dining out select a restaurant because they are knowledgeable about dining out. Thus, if customers with high involvement in dining-out are satisfied with a particular restaurant brand, they show more interest in that restaurant brand. Finally, they will be more likely to spread positive word-of-mouth to others. It is therefore reasonable to expect brand prestige to play a larger role in brand preference and word-of-mouth formation when customers are highly involved in dining out. In the same manner, brand involvement should have a moderating effect on the relationship between brand preference and word-of-mouth. That is, customers favoring a particular restaurant brand would be more likely to spread positive word-of-mouth to others because of their inherent interest in dining out. A few previous studies have showed the moderating role of involvement. For example, Ambroise et al. (2005) noted that customer involvement was a significant moderator in the relationships between brand personality

and attitude towards the brand and commitment in the soft-drink and sportswear market. Xue (2008) also found involvement significantly moderates the relationships between brand image and brand choice in the automobile industry. More recently, Kim, Ok, and Canter (2010) showed that customer involvement significantly moderated the relationships between brand preference and customer share of visits in the restaurant industry. Based on this theoretical background and empirical studies, the following hypotheses are proposed:

**H18:** Brand involvement moderates the relationship between brand prestige and brand preference in fine dining restaurants.

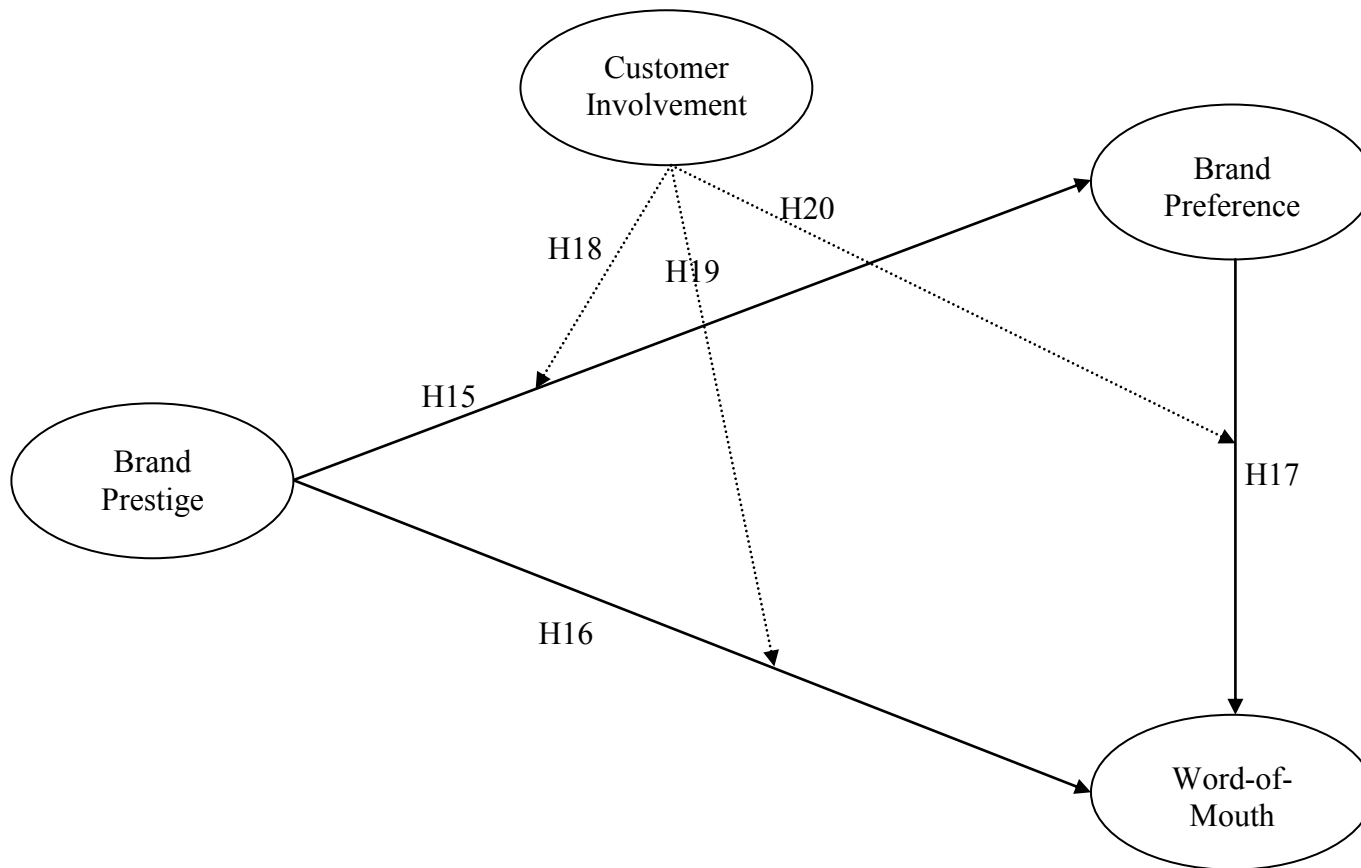
**H19:** Brand involvement moderates the relationship between brand prestige and word-of-mouth in fine dining restaurants.

**H20:** Brand involvement moderates the relationship between brand preference and word-of-mouth in fine dining restaurants.

### **The Proposed Model**

Figure 5.1 presents relationships proposed in the study where brand prestige is conceived as an antecedent of brand preference and word-of-mouth with the moderating role of customer involvement between (1) brand prestige and brand preference, (2) brand prestige and word-of-mouth, and (3) brand preference and word-of-mouth.

Figure 5.1 The Second Proposed Model



## **Methodology**

### ***Measures***

Validated multiple-item measurement scales were adopted from previous studies. Brand prestige was measured with three items from Baek et al. (2010). Three items for word-of-mouth were adapted from Gremler and Gwinner (2000). In addition, customer involvement was measured with ten items adapted from Zaichkowsky (1994). The questionnaire used a seven-point Likert-type scale, and each scale item was rated by asking respondents to indicate their level of agreement ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7).

### ***Data Collection***

The questionnaire was distributed to fine dining customers. The participants were asked to choose the fine dining restaurant that he/she had visited most recently, and to respond to all questions based on the selected restaurant. The questionnaire was distributed to 4,346 general fine dining restaurant customers via an online survey company's system in the United States. From this group, 439 customers completed the questionnaire (10.10% response rate). The data were collected from 36 states. Of the 439 respondents, 25 respondents were disqualified for incomplete responses. In addition, 111 respondents were disqualified for unsuitable responses (e.g., the number of restaurants visited, the average check size per person). In the end, 303 respondents were used (6.97% valid response rate).

## **Results**

### ***Data Screening***

Ten outliers were discovered after performing tests for univariate and multivariate outliers, leaving 293 respondents for further analyses. Next, the test for normality of variable indicated the skewness of the variables were within acceptable ranges, showing normal distributions of the variables. Finally, the test for the multicollinearity was assessed by tolerance. The results indicated that tolerance levels of the variables were less than .10 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). After conducting mean-centering to reduce multicollinearity problems, tolerance levels of the variables were over .10 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

### ***Profile of the Sample***

Of 293 respondents, 173 (59.0%) were male, and 120 (41.0%) were female. Most participants were 50 or older. For annual household income, the highest percentage of respondents earned more than \$100,000 ( $n = 111$ , 37.9%). For education, the largest categories were graduate degree ( $n = 117$ , 39.9%) followed by 4-year College or University ( $n = 86$ , 29.4%). Finally, most participants were White ( $n = 271$ , 92.5%).

### ***Confirmatory Factor Analysis***

Based on the CFA results, the overall fit of the measurement model was satisfactory (NFI = .923, CFI = .959, TLI = .951, RMSEA = .060; Byrne, 2001). Table 5.1 provides the variables used in this study with their standardized factor loadings.

**Table 5.1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis in Fine Dining Restaurant: Items and Loadings**

Construct and scale items	Standardized Loading <sup>a</sup>
<b>Brand prestige</b>	
This fine dining restaurant brand is very prestigious.	.903
This fine dining restaurant brand has high status.	.909
This fine dining restaurant brand is very upscale.	.816
<b>Brand preference</b>	
When I make a dining out decision, I consider this restaurant a viable choice very often.	.717
This restaurant meets my dining needs better than other comparable fine dining restaurants.	.794
I am interested in trying various menu items in this restaurant more than in other comparable fine dining restaurants.	.707
<b>Word-of-mouth</b>	
I encourage others to try this restaurant.	.922
I would like to spread good aspects of this restaurant to others.	.892
I would like to recommend this restaurant to others.	.917
<b>Customer involvement</b>	
When you think of dining out, if is...	
Important	.686
Interesting	.761
Relevant	.746
Exciting	.820
Means a lot to me	.795
Appealing	.662
Fascinating	.780
Valuable	.767
Involved in my life	.654
Necessary	.566

<sup>a</sup> All factors loadings are significant at  $p < .001$ .

The factor loadings were equal to or greater than .566, and all factor loadings were significant at  $p < .001$ , with  $t$ -values ranging from 9.07 to 25.80. As shown in Table 5.2, the average variance extracted (AVE) for all constructs was higher than .50, which is the threshold value (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Thus, convergent validity of the measurement scales was well established. The composite reliabilities of constructs were higher than .70, ranging from .784 to .936, indicating the constructs in the model have adequate internal consistency (Hair et al., 2006). Finally, discriminant validity was assessed by comparing the AVE values and squared correlations between the two constructs of interest (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). AVE for each

construct was higher than all of the squared correlations ( $R^2$ ) between any pair of constructs.

**Table 5.2 Descriptive Statistics and Associated Measures in Fine Dining Restaurants**

	No. of Items	Mean (Std dev.)	AVE	Brand preference	Brand prestige	Word-of-mouth	Customer involvement
Brand preference	3	5.49 (1.03)	.548	<b>.784<sup>a</sup></b>	.481 <sup>b</sup>	.556	.235
Brand prestige	3	5.69 (1.03)	.769	.231 <sup>c</sup>	<b>.909</b>	.502	.334
Word-of-mouth	3	6.16 (.96)	.829	.309	.252	<b>.936</b>	.327
Customer involvement	10	5.25 (.90)	.529	.055	.112	.107	<b>.918</b>

Goodness-of-fit statistics:

$\chi^2(142) = 289.135, p < .001$

$\chi^2/df = 2.03$

NFI = .923; CFI = .959; TLI = .951; RMSEA = .060

Note: AVE = average variance extracted; NFI = normed fit index; CFI = comparative fit index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation.

a. composite reliabilities are along the diagonal; b. correlations are above the diagonal; c. squared correlations are below the diagonal.

### *Hierarchical Regression Analyses*

#### *Control Variables*

Demographic factors including gender, age, income, education, and frequency of visiting restaurants that may affect the relationships between variables were used as control variables (e.g., Chow, Lau, Lo, Sha, & Yun, 2007; Huang & Yu, 1999; Slama & Tashchian, 1985).

#### *The Effect of Brand Prestige on Brand Preference and the Moderating Role of Customer Involvement*

Table 5.3 provides the results of hierarchical regression that tested the effect of brand prestige on brand preference and the moderating effects of customer involvement in the relationship between brand prestige and brand preference.



**Table 5.3 The Results of Hierarchical Regression Analyses for Testing the Effect of Brand Prestige on Brand Preference and the Moderating Role of Customer Involvement**

Variable	Brand preference											
	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
	<i>B</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i> -value	<i>B</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i> -value	<i>B</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i> -value	<i>B</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i> -value
Intercept	6.23		12.39***	6.21		14.09***	6.11		14.01***	6.06		13.82***
Gender	-.21	-.10	-1.65	-.24	-.12	-2.25*	-.30	-.14	-2.75**	-.30	-.14	-2.73**
Age	.04	.03	.57	.06	.04	.85	.08	.06	1.16	.08	.06	1.21
Income	-.08	-.14	-2.27*	-.09	-.16	-2.93**	-.08	-.14	-2.53*	-.08	-.14	-2.53*
ED	-.06	-.06	-.91	-.05	-.04	-.80	-.04	-.04	-.70	-.04	-.03	-.63
FOV	.00	.01	.24	.00	.03	.62	.00	.02	.31	.00	.01	.26
BP				.48	.48	9.36***	.42	.41	7.53***	.43	.43	7.61***
CI							.19	.17	2.94**	.19	.16	2.87**
BP × CI										.06	.06	1.11
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.03			.26			.28			.28		
$\Delta R^2$	.03			.23			.02			.00		
$\Delta F$	1.87			87.64			8.62			1.23		

Note. ED = education; FOV = frequency of visiting; BP = brand prestige; CI = customer involvement  
 \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Model 2 indicates that brand prestige was a significant predictor of brand preference ( $\beta = .48, t = 9.36, p < .001$ ). Therefore, Hypothesis 15 was supported, showing that customers who perceived high brand prestige are more likely to have brand preference. Brand prestige alone explained additional 23% of variance in brand preference. In addition, model 3 showed the direct effect of customer involvement along with brand prestige on brand preference. Customer involvement was found to directly affect brand preference ( $\beta = .17, t = 2.94, p < .01$ ). However, contrary to expectations, the interaction effect (brand prestige × customer involvement) in model 4 was not significant ( $\beta = .06, t = 1.11, p = .268$ ). In other words, customer involvement did not significantly moderate the relationship between brand prestige and brand preference. Thus, Hypothesis 18 was not supported.

***The Effect of Brand Prestige on Word-of-Mouth and the Moderating Role of Customer Involvement***

Table 5.4 presents the results of hierarchical regression that examined the effect of brand prestige on word-of-mouth and the moderating role of customer involvement in the relationship between brand prestige and word-of-mouth.

**Table 5.4 The Results of Hierarchical Regression Analyses for Testing the Effect of Brand Prestige on Word-of-Mouth and the Moderating Role of Customer Involvement**

Variable	Word-of-mouth											
	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
	<i>B</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i> -value	<i>B</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i> -value	<i>B</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i> -value	<i>B</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i> -value
Intercept	6.48		13.77***	6.47		15.61***	6.31		15.80***	6.37		15.89***
Gender	.14	.07	1.24	.11	.06	1.05	.02	.01	.22	.02	.01	.19
Age	-.04	-.03	-.55	-.03	-.02	-.43	.00	.00	.08	.00	.00	.02
Income	-.03	-.05	-.86	-.04	-.07	-1.32	-.02	-.04	-.66	-.02	-.04	-.66
ED	-.05	-.05	-.85	-.04	-.04	-.73	-.03	-.03	-.58	-.03	-.03	-.67
FOV	.00	.03	.51	.00	.05	.92	.00	.02	.43	.00	.03	.49
BP				.44	.48	9.19***	.35	.37	6.80***	.33	.35	6.43***
CI							.30	.28	4.93***	.30	.28	5.01***
BP × CI										-.07	-.07	-1.41
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.02			.24			.30			.30		
$\Delta R^2$	.02			.22			.06			.00		
$\Delta F$	.90			84.40			24.30			2.00		

Note. ED = education; FOV = frequency of visiting; BP = brand prestige; CI = customer involvement  
 \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

As predicted, brand prestige was a significant predictor of word-of-mouth ( $\beta = .48$ ,  $t = 9.19$ ,  $p < .001$ ) in model 2. Brand prestige explained additional 22% of variance in word-of-mouth. Thus, Hypothesis 16 was supported, showing that when customers perceived high brand prestige, they are more likely to spread positive word-of-mouth to others. In addition, model 3 was estimated the direct effect of customer involvement along with brand prestige on word-of-mouth, and the results showed that customer involvement directly affected brand preference ( $\beta = .28$ ,  $t = 4.93$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Brand prestige and customer involvement together explained additional 28% of variance in word-of-mouth intention from model 1. However, as shown in model 4, the interaction effect (brand prestige × customer involvement) was not significant ( $\beta = -.07$ ,  $t = -1.41$ ,  $p = .159$ ), showing that customer involvement did not significantly moderate the relationship between brand prestige and word-of-mouth. Therefore, Hypothesis 19 was not supported.

***The Effect of Brand Preference on Word-of-Mouth and the Moderating Role of Customer Involvement***

Table 5.5 provides the results of hierarchical regression that tested the effect of brand preference on word-of-mouth and the moderating role of customer involvement in the relationship between brand preference and word-of-mouth.

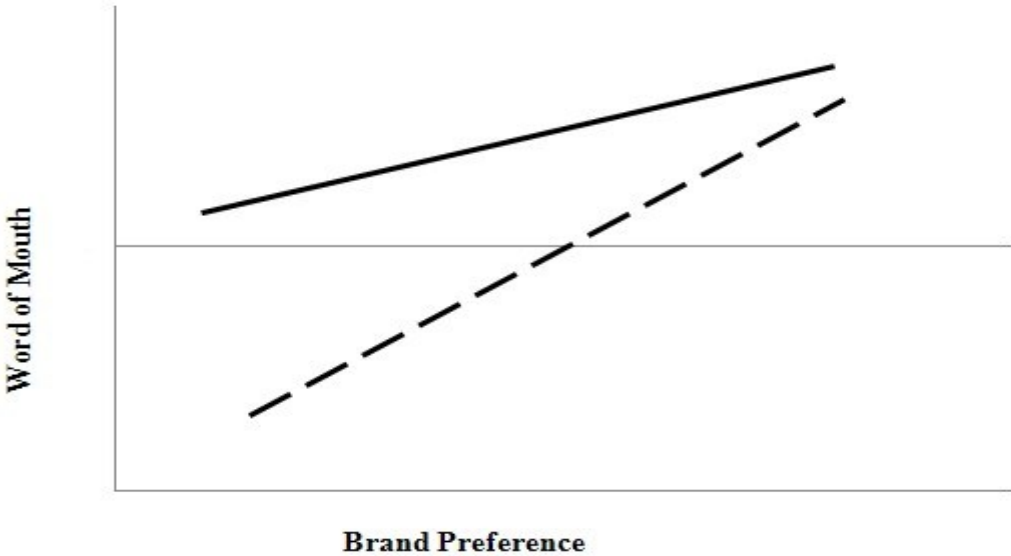
**Table 5.5 The Results of Hierarchical Regression Analyses for Testing the Effect of Brand Preference on Word-of-Mouth and the Moderating Role of Customer Involvement**

Variable	Word-of-mouth											
	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
	<i>B</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i> -value	<i>B</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i> -value	<i>B</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i> -value	<i>B</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i> -value
INT	6.48		13.77***	6.06		16.27***	5.97		16.69***	6.10		17.37***
Gender	.14	.07	1.24	.26	.13	2.85**	.164	.84	1.81	.17	.09	1.88
Age	-.04	-.03	-.55	-.07	-.05	-1.14	-.03	-.03	-.56	-.04	-.03	-.68
Income	-.03	-.05	-.86	.02	.03	.68	.03	.05	1.09	.03	.05	1.06
ED	-.05	-.05	-.85	-.02	-.02	-.36	-.01	-.01	-.24	-.02	-.02	-.50
FOV	.00	.03	.51	.00	.02	.46	.00	.00	.06	.00	.01	.14
BP				.58	.62	13.25***	.50	.54	11.37***	.50	.54	11.46***
CI							.26	.25	5.03***	.28	.26	5.47***
BP × CI										-.16	-.17	-3.86***
$R^2$	.02			.39			.44			.47		
$\Delta R^2$	.02			.37			.05			.03		
$\Delta F$	.90			175.64			25.34			14.91		

Note. INT = intercept; ED = education; FOV = frequency of visiting; BP = brand prestige; CI = customer involvement  
 \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

As expected, brand preference was found to be a significant predictor of word-of-mouth ( $\beta = .62, t = 13.25, p < .001$ ) in model 2. Hypothesis 17 was supported, so customers who have brand preference are more willing to spread positive word-of-mouth to others. In addition, model 3 showed the direct effect of customer involvement on word-of-mouth. Customer involvement directly affected word-of-mouth intention ( $\beta = .25, t = 5.03, p < .001$ ). Brand preference and customer involvement together explained additional 42% of variance in word-of-mouth intention from model 1. The interaction term (brand preference × customer involvement) was significant ( $\beta = -.17, t = -3.86, p < .001$ ) in model 4. However, the direction of standardized coefficients of the interaction terms was negative. Therefore, this study conducted the simple slopes analysis to explain the negative value in the moderating effect of customer involvement. As shown in Figure 5.2, linear regression lines were graphically plotted using one standard deviation (Cohen & Cohen, 1983). As of one standard deviation, the line for customers showing low involvement was steeper than the line for customers showing high involvement, indicating that the relationship between brand preference and word-of-mouth is more stronger when customers' involvement is low, which is contrary to the expected direction. Therefore, Hypothesis 20 was not supported.

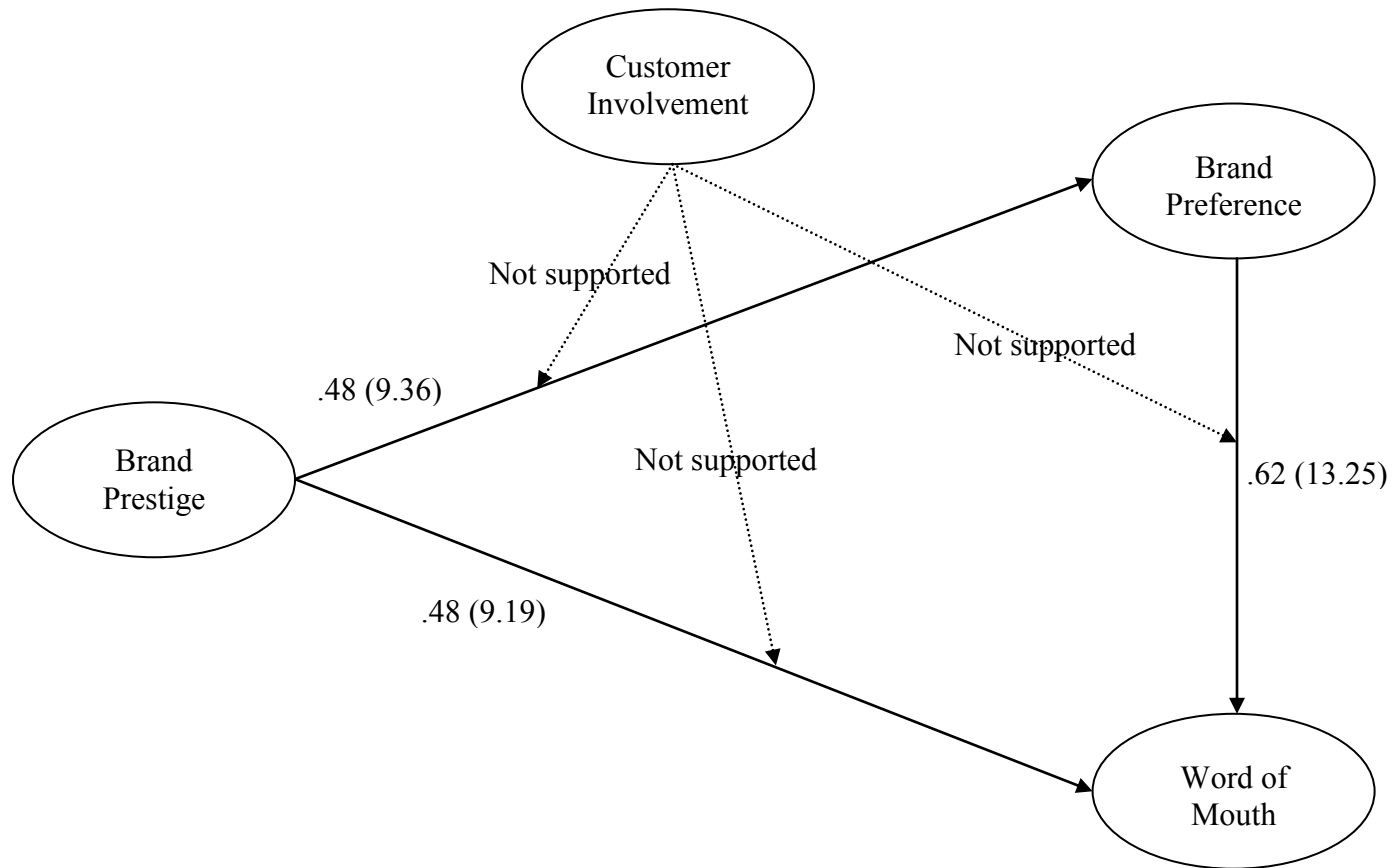
**Figure 5.2 Simple Slopes Analysis for the Moderating Role of Customer Involvement**



Note: Solid line indicates customers showing high involvement.  
Dotted line indicates customers showing low involvement.

Figure 5.3 The Results of Hierarchical Regression Analyses in Fine Dining Restaurant

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$p < .001$

1. Numbers in parentheses are the  $t$ -values.
2. Numbers in outside of parentheses are the standardized path coefficients.

## **Discussion and Practical Implications**

Today, many customers are more interested in prestigious brands (Dubois & Czellar, 2002; Baek et al., 2010). Fine dining is no exception. Fine dining restaurant patrons are willing to spend a premium for hedonic and social values, but despite the theoretical plausibility, the relationships between brand prestige and its consequences have rarely been studied in the restaurant industry. Based on the literature, this study hypothesized that brand prestige forms brand preference and word-of-mouth. In addition, brand preference was proposed as a significant antecedent of word-of-mouth. Finally, in light of the literature, this study proposed that customer involvement moderates the relationships between (1) brand prestige and brand preference, (2) brand prestige and word-of-mouth, and (3) brand preference and word-of-mouth. After integrating the theoretical relationships stated above, six hypotheses were proposed and tested using fine dining restaurant patrons.

Most notably, the results showed the importance of brand prestige in fine dining restaurants. Brand prestige showed positive effects on brand preference and word-of-mouth. In other words, when fine dining restaurant patrons feel that a restaurant brand is prestigious and upscale, they are more likely to develop brand preference and to recommend others try the restaurant by spreading positive word-of-mouth. These results support previous research. Wong and Zhou (2005) indicated that as customers perceive a brand as having a prestigious image, they were more likely to purchase that brand.

These results appear to be related to customer value. According to Parasuraman (1997, p. 154), customer value refers to “a customer’s perceived preference for and evaluation of those product attributes, attribute performance, and consequences arising from use that facilitate achieving the customer’s goals and purposes in use situations.” Because customer value evaluation can differ for different purposes, people, and situations, it is not absolute but relative. Today, customers purchase a product to symbolize social status, wealth, or power (Baek et al., 2010). Customers dine out to satisfy their hunger (also known as utilitarian value) in the restaurant industry. However, for the fine dining restaurant segment, food is not enough. Fine dining patrons may focus more on hedonic and social values than utilitarian value. When fine dining restaurant patrons perceive that a fine dining restaurant is a prestigious brand, they are more likely to try out the restaurant and to spread positive word-of-mouth to others. The findings

of this study have practical application as well. Brand prestige is a core condition for fine dining. Therefore, building a prestigious brand that delivers high status and an upscale image is critical in the fine dining segment. To create such an image, this study recommends (1) developing specific dedicated meal courses, (2) designing an elegant ambience, and (3) systematically training employees to provide professional service.

In addition, this study found that brand preference was an important antecedent of word-of-mouth. Customers who favor a particular restaurant brand spread positive word-of-mouth to others. Brand preference has historically been a key determinant of patron behavior. The findings of this study are consistent with previous studies, further emphasizing the importance of brand preference. Rundle-Thiele and Mackay (2001) showed that brand preference was significant in affecting customer behavior. Hellier, Geursen, Carr, and Rickard (2003) also indicated that brand preference has a positive influence on customers' future behavior intentions. More recently, Kim et al. (2010) suggested that brand preference was significantly related to relative customer share of visits, indicating that as customers develop a high level of brand preference for a specific restaurant, they are more likely to visit that restaurant brand.

Lastly, this study found customer involvement did moderate the relationships between brand preference and word-of-mouth. This study originally proposed that consumers who are highly involved with dining-out will spread positive word-of-mouth considerably more than consumers who are less involved as a function of brand preference, but the results did not support that hypothesis. Although consumers who are more involved with dining-out tended to spread more word-of-mouth than those who are less involved, the gap was much larger in low brand preference situations.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

Despite this study's beneficial theoretical and practical implications, the following limitations should be acknowledged in interpreting results. The data were collected for fine dining restaurants in the U.S., so the findings may not generalize to other types of restaurants. Future research should test the proposed model using different populations in different cultures to ensure external validity. Despite the increasing importance of brand prestige in the fine dining restaurant, little research has been conducted on brand prestige itself; thus, the findings may serve as a guide for future research on better understanding brand prestige management in the

restaurant industry.



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## **Chapter 6 - SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **The Antecedents and Consequences of Consumer Attitudes toward Restaurant Brands (Study 1)**

Study 1 tested the interrelationships among three service qualities (i.e., physical environment quality, interactional quality, and outcome quality) and their effects on consumer attitudes toward restaurant brands. In addition, the research model explored the effects of consumer attitudes toward restaurant brands on brand preference and customer share of visits. Figure 6.1 provides a conceptual model for the first study.

To test the proposed relationships in the full-service restaurant setting, this study first tested both casual and fine dining responses combined ( $n = 621$ ). Then, to find the differences between casual and fine dining restaurants, this study evaluated casual ( $n = 318$ ) and fine dining ( $n = 303$ ) responses separately.

Hypotheses 1 to 3 proposed interrelationships among three service qualities. Hypothesis 1 proposed the relationship between physical environment and interactional qualities. The findings showed that physical environment quality had a positive influence on interactional quality in all restaurant settings including full-service, casual dining, and fine dining restaurants. Hypothesis 2 proposed a relationship between physical environment and outcome qualities. The results indicated that physical environment quality positively affects outcome quality in all restaurant settings. Hypothesis 3 proposed a relationship between interactional and outcome qualities. The results found that interactional quality had a positive effect on outcome quality in all restaurant settings.

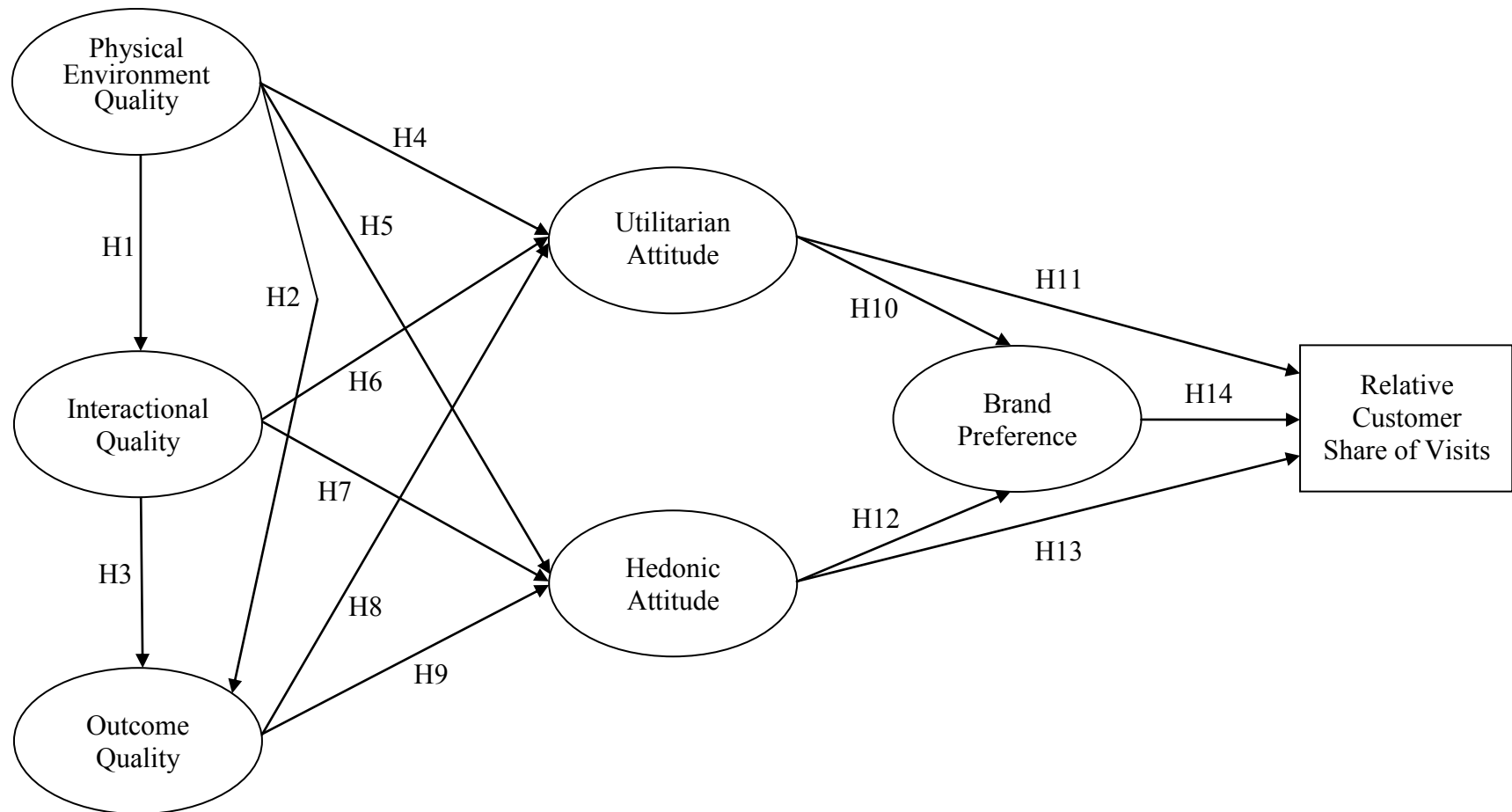
Hypotheses 4 to 9 proposed relationships between three service qualities and consumer attitudes toward restaurant brands. More specifically, Hypothesis 4 proposed a relationship between physical environment quality and the utilitarian attitude toward a restaurant's brand. The findings showed that physical environment quality did not affect the utilitarian attitude toward a restaurant's brand in all restaurant settings. Hypothesis 5 proposed a relationship between physical environment quality and hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand. The results indicated that physical environment quality positively affects hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand in the full-service and fine dining restaurants. Hypotheses 6 and 7 proposed relationships between interactional quality and utilitarian and hedonic attitudes toward a

restaurant's brand. The results found that interactional quality had positive effects on both utilitarian and hedonic attitudes toward restaurant brands in all restaurant settings. Hypothesis 8 proposed a relationship between outcome quality and the utilitarian attitude toward a restaurant's brand. The findings showed that outcome quality had a positive influence on the utilitarian attitude toward a restaurant's brand in full-service and casual dining restaurants. Hypothesis 9 proposed a relationship between outcome quality and hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand. The results indicated that outcome quality positively affects hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand in all restaurant settings.

Hypotheses 10 to 13 proposed relationships between consumer attitudes toward restaurant brands and both brand preference and relative customer share of visits. More specifically, Hypothesis 10 proposed a relationship between the utilitarian attitude toward a restaurant's brand and brand preference. The findings showed that the utilitarian attitude toward a restaurant's brand positively affects brand preference in all restaurant settings. Hypothesis 12 proposed a relationship between hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand and brand preference. The findings showed that hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand had a positive influence on brand preferences in all restaurant settings. However, contrary to expectation, Hypothesis 11 (the effect of the utilitarian attitude toward a restaurant's brand on relative customer share of visits) and 13 (the effect of the hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand on relative customer share of visits) were not supported.

Finally, Hypothesis 14 proposed the relationship between brand preference and relative customer share of visits. The results indicated that brand preference positively affects relative customer share of visits in all restaurant settings. Table 6.1 provides a summary of the major findings in study 1.

**Figure 6.1 Conceptual Model for the First Study**





**Table 6.1 Major Findings of Study 1**

	<b>Effects of</b>	<b>On</b>	<b>Full-service dining</b>	<b>Casual dining</b>	<b>Fine dining</b>
H1	Physical environment quality	Interactional quality	$\beta = .81$ $t = 17.99$	$\beta = .78$ $t = 10.95$	$\beta = .82$ $t = 14.10$
H2	Physical environment quality	Outcome quality	$\beta = .24$ $t = 4.46$	$\beta = .27$ $t = 3.29^{**}$	$\beta = .21$ $t = 3.22^{**}$
H3	Interactional quality	Outcome quality	$\beta = .66$ $t = 12.69$	$\beta = .63$ $t = 8.12$	$\beta = .70$ $t = 10.41$
H4	Physical environment quality	Utilitarian attitude	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported
H5	Physical environment quality	Hedonic attitude	$\beta = .15$ $t = 2.50^*$	Not Supported	$\beta = .17$ $t = 2.41^*$
H6	Interactional quality	Utilitarian attitude	$\beta = .66$ $t = 10.28$	$\beta = .61$ $t = 6.82$	$\beta = .72$ $t = 7.89$
H7	Interactional quality	Hedonic attitude	$\beta = .45$ $t = 6.75$	$\beta = .49$ $t = 4.95$	$\beta = .44$ $t = 5.13$
H8	Outcome quality	Utilitarian attitude	$\beta = .13$ $t = 2.09^*$	$\beta = .17$ $t = 1.97^*$	Not Supported
H9	Outcome quality	Hedonic attitude	$\beta = .28$ $t = 4.69$	$\beta = .21$ $t = 2.36^*$	$\beta = .33$ $t = 4.35$
H10	Utilitarian attitude	Brand preference	$\beta = .21$ $t = 4.07$	$\beta = .19$ $t = 2.89^{**}$	$\beta = .24$ $t = 3.15^{**}$
H11	Utilitarian attitude	Relative share of visits	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported
H12	Hedonic attitude	Brand preference	$\beta = .52$ $t = 9.88$	$\beta = .54$ $t = 7.81$	$\beta = .51$ $t = 6.27$
H13	Hedonic attitude	Relative share of visits	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported
H14	Brand preference	Relative share of visits	$\beta = .25$ $t = 5.75$	$\beta = .33$ $t = 5.65$	$\beta = .15$ $t = 2.43^*$

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , others  $p < .001$

### ***Discussion and Practical Implications***

The important findings of study 1 are interrelationships among three service qualities. More specifically, physical environment quality had positive influences on both interactional and outcome qualities. In addition, interactional quality had a positive effect on outcome quality. These results suggest that each service quality is not a separate entity but connected to the other service qualities. Most previous studies have treated each service quality as a separate entity in explaining customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions (e.g., Andaleeb & Caskey, 2007; Andaleeb & Conway, 2006). In this respect, this study extended existing research.

Needless to say, first impression is of great importance in all situations. In the restaurant business, the physical environment provides the first impression, inducing positive emotions such as pleasure and arousal among customers, which affect the other service qualities. In other words, as customers are first exposed to the physical environment, it has a gradual effect on interactional and outcome qualities. Thus, the physical environment helps maximize interactional and outcome qualities. The findings indicate that restaurant owners should focus more on appealing to customers by setting up eye-catching interior and exterior designs.

In addition, the results of this study indicated that outcome quality can be affected by interactional quality. This means that when a customer evaluates outcome quality, the evaluation will not be positive if employees do not deliver comfortable, quick, and dependable service. Recent work by Chow, Lau, Lo, Sha, and Yun (2007) suggested that service training helps enhance the ability of employees to provide good service and satisfy customers' needs. Therefore, although it costs a great deal to train employees, restaurant operators should consider implementing systematic training to enhance interactional quality.

Hypotheses 4 to 9 proposed the relationships between three service qualities and consumer attitudes toward restaurant brands. In the full-service restaurant segment, the physical environment quality did not affect the utilitarian attitude toward a restaurant's brand, but it did affect the hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand. More specifically, in the case of casual dining restaurants, the effects of physical environment quality on both utilitarian and hedonic attitudes toward restaurant brands were not significant. However, in fine dining restaurants, while physical environment quality had no significant effect on the utilitarian attitude, it did significantly affect hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand.

This can be explained by the M-R model, which suggests that the physical environment can induce emotions like pleasure and arousal (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). The utilitarian attitude relates to efficient, functional, and practical benefits; on the other hand, hedonic is associated with fun, excitement, and uniqueness. The hedonic aspect is more associated with emotion, so a physical environment that induces human emotion has a positive impact on hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand. Ryu and Jang (2007) also revealed that physical environments, including facility aesthetics and ambience, have a positive influence on human emotion. Therefore, this study confirmed existing research and further extended that research by finding a significant relationship between physical environment quality and hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand.

In addition, the effect of physical environment quality on hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand was only supported for the fine dining restaurant segment. As the name suggests, because the fine dining restaurant is a first-class restaurant equipped with high quality materials, it has an excellent chance to maximize customers' hedonic attitudes toward restaurant brands. Thus, operators should attempt to create surroundings suited to a fine restaurant, using, for example, subdued, comfortable, and warm lighting (cf., Ryu & Jang, 2007) or playing classical music (cf., Areni, 2003).

In an attempt to investigate the effects of interactional quality on consumer attitudes toward restaurant brands, this study proposed and found that interactional quality had a positive effect on utilitarian and hedonic attitudes toward restaurant brands. These findings stress the importance of interactional quality, indicating that as customers perceive great interactional quality, they are more likely to have better utilitarian and hedonic attitudes toward restaurant brands. Thus, delivering assured, empathetic, reliable, and responsive services positively affects utilitarian and hedonic attitudes of customers toward restaurant brands.

This study further revealed that outcome quality had a positive influence on both utilitarian and hedonic attitudes toward restaurant brands in the full-service segment. More specifically, in the casual restaurant segment, outcome quality affects both utilitarian and hedonic attitudes toward restaurant brands. However, the relationship between outcome quality and utilitarian attitude toward a restaurant's brand was not significant in fine dining restaurants, while outcome quality did have a positive influence on hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand.

Although food falls under the utilitarian side because the primary function of food is to satisfy customers' hunger, the effect of outcome quality on the utilitarian attitude toward a restaurant's brand was not significant, while outcome quality did have a positive influence on hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand in the fine dining restaurant segment. Customers dine out at the fine dining restaurant more for hedonic reasons, not utilitarian reasons (Ryu & Han, 2011). This study added support to this argument by finding a positive relationship between outcome quality and hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand. That is, fine dining restaurant patrons expect more excitement, fun, and enjoyment instead of the more functional, effective, and practical aspects.

These results have practical implications for both casual and fine dining restaurant owners. From the managerial standpoint, food presentation should be aesthetically pleasing. Making food look more attractive will provide customers with a more hedonic experience, affecting their attitudes toward restaurant brands. In addition, an extensive menu provides customers with a more hedonic experience with the same ultimate effect. Therefore, restaurant owners should develop different menu styles. For the casual dining restaurant owners, serving proper food portions, having a high standard of freshness, and making sure foods are held at adequate temperatures should provide customers with a positive utilitarian attitude toward the restaurant's brand.

For the relationships between consumer attitudes toward restaurant brands and brand preference, this study proposed two hypotheses; results showed that the utilitarian attitude toward a restaurant's brand had a positive impact on brand preference. In addition, hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand has a positive influence on brand preference in both casual and fine dining restaurants. The results indicated that consumer attitudes toward restaurant brands are the overall evaluation of the brands of product or service (Bolton & Drew, 1991), so consumers who have positive attitudes toward restaurant brands are more likely to consider the restaurant a viable choice. The relationships between consumer attitudes toward restaurant brands and brand preference have historically been studied in business; the results of this study are consistent with previous research (e.g., Voss et al., 2003; Niedrich & Swain, 2003). The results confirmed a positive relationship between consumer attitudes toward restaurant brands and brand preference, indicating that customers with positive utilitarian and hedonic attitudes toward restaurant brands are more likely to prefer those brands.

In addition, the effect of the hedonic attitude toward a restaurant's brand on brand preference is stronger than the effect of the utilitarian attitude toward a restaurant's brand in both casual and fine dining restaurants. That is, customers are more likely to focus on pleasure oriented consumption, not the goal oriented consumption. From the managerial standpoint, although the functional side as it affects brand preference remains important, restaurant owners should focus more on the hedonic side to encourage customers to prefer their brand.

Lastly, this study proposed three hypotheses on the antecedents of relative customer share of visits, but those relationships were not supported. This finding is again consistent with previous studies. Allen, Machleit, and Kleine (1992) sought a relationship between attitude and behavior but found attitude was an ineffective predictor of behavior. This study also found the relationship between attitude and behavior was insignificant, indicating that although consumers have positive attitudes toward restaurant brands, the attitude does not guarantee increased relative share of visits.

As predicted, brand preference was an important antecedent of relative customer share of visits in both casual and fine dining restaurants. These findings are consistent with previous studies. Customers who favor a particular restaurant brand visit such a restaurant relatively more often (e.g., Kim et al., 2010). In fact, expecting customers to have sole loyalty to one restaurant would be unreasonable because customers want variety, making the concept of relative customer share of visits more suited to the restaurant industry. Generally, this study shows customers prefer to visit their favorite restaurant brand relatively more often than other restaurant brands.

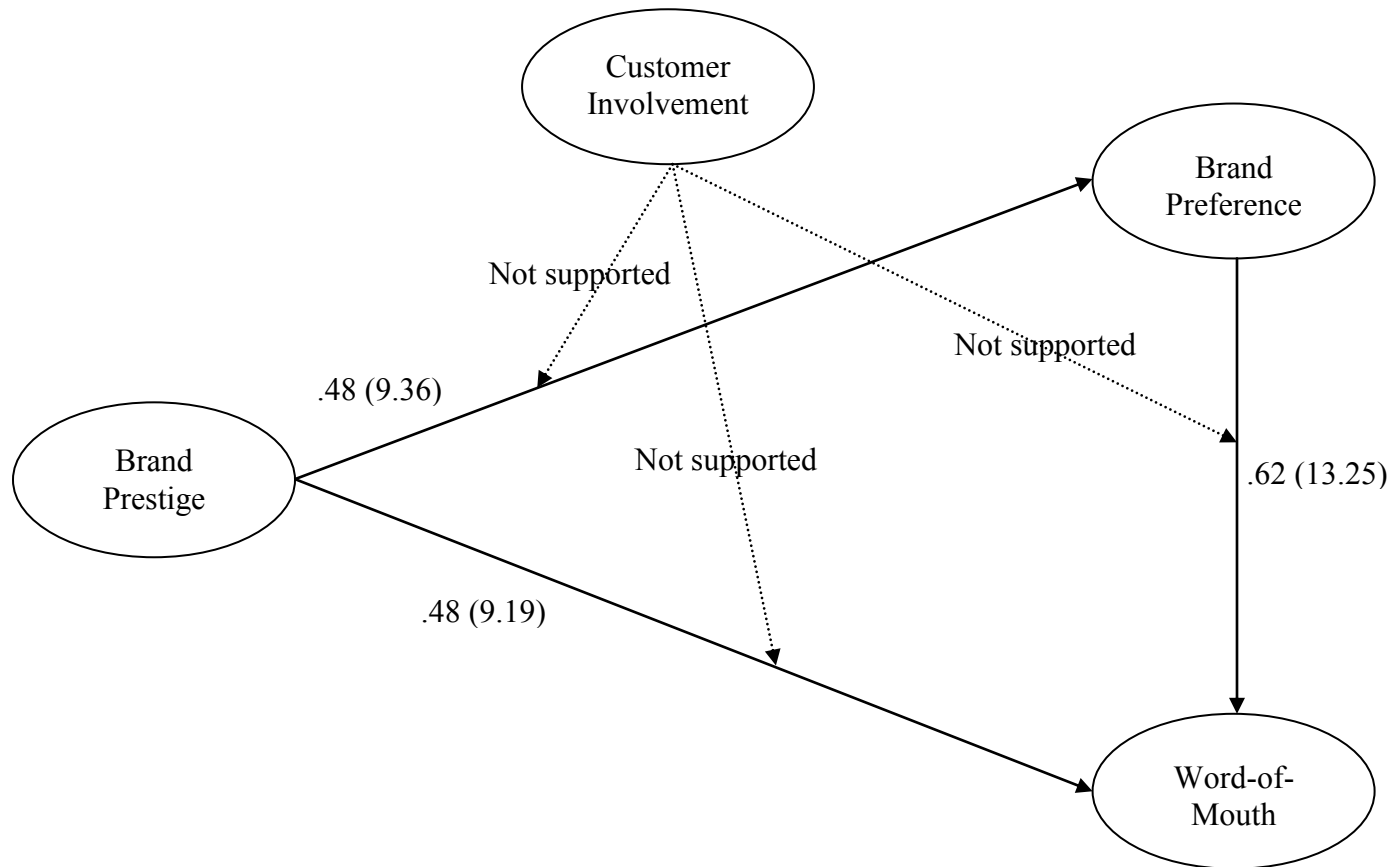
### **The Consequences of Brand Prestige with Customer Involvement as a Moderator (Study 2)**

Study 2 tested the effects of brand prestige on brand preference and word-of-mouth with customer involvement as a moderating effect. This study used 293 fine dining responses to questionnaires.

Hypothesis 15 proposed a relationship between brand prestige and brand preference. The findings showed that brand prestige had a positive influence on brand preference. Hypothesis 16 proposed a relationship between brand prestige and word-of-mouth. The results indicated that brand prestige positively affects word-of-mouth. Hypothesis 17 proposed a relationship between brand preference and word-of-mouth. The results showed that brand preference had a positive

impact on word-of-mouth. Hypotheses 18 to 20 proposed customer involvement as the moderator among brand prestige, brand preference, and word-of-mouth. However, these hypotheses were not supported. Figure 6.2 provides the results of study 2.

Figure 6.2 The Results of Hierarchical Regression in Fine Dining Restaurants



$p < .001$

1. Numbers in parentheses are the  $t$ -values.
2. Numbers in outside of parentheses are the standardized path coefficients.

### ***Discussion and Practical Implications***

The most notable feature of study 2 is the importance of brand prestige in the fine dining restaurant. Brand prestige showed positive effects on both brand preference and word-of-mouth. In other words, when fine restaurant patrons feel that a restaurant brand is prestigious and upscale, they are more likely to develop brand preference and to recommend that others try the restaurant. These results resemble previous research results. Wong and Zhou (2005) suggested prestige had a positive effect on consumer behavior, indicating that as customers perceive prestigious images, they are more likely to purchase brand products.

These results appear to be related to customer value. According to Parasuraman (1997, p. 154), customer value refers to “a customer’s perceived preference for and evaluation of those product attributes, attribute performance, and consequences arising from use that facilitate achieving the customer’s goals and purposes in use situations.” Because customer evaluation of value can differ for different purposes, people, and situations, it is not absolute but relative. Today, customers purchase a product to symbolize social status, wealth, or power (also called social value) (Baek et al., 2010). Of course, customers dine out to satisfy their hunger (the utilitarian value). Fast food restaurant patrons focus more on eating to satisfy hunger. However, for the fine dining restaurant segment, eating the food is not the entire focus. Fine dining patrons may focus more on hedonic and social values than utilitarian value. When fine dining restaurant patrons perceive that a fine dining restaurant is a prestigious brand, they are more likely to try out the restaurant and to spread positive word-of-mouth to others. The findings have practical implications as well. Brand prestige is a core condition for fine dining restaurants. Therefore, building a prestigious brand name that delivers high status and an upscale image is critical in the fine dining restaurant segment. The image of a prestigious brand requires (1) developing specific dedicated meal courses, (2) designing an elegant ambience, and (3) providing systematic training to employees to provide professional service.

In addition, brand preference was found to be an important antecedent of word-of-mouth. Customers who favor a particular restaurant brand spread positive word-of-mouth to others. Brand preference has historically a key determinant of patrons’ behavior. The findings are thus consistent with previous studies, emphasizing the importance of brand preference (e.g., Rundle-Thiele & Mackay, 2001; Hellier, Geursen, Carr, & Rickard, 2003; Kim et al., 2010).



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**Appendix A - Main Survey Questionnaire of Casual Dining  
Restaurant with Consent Letter**

## AXIO SURVEY

### **E-reward Brand preference and its impacts on customer share of visits and word of mouth intention: An empirical study in the casual dining restaurant segment**

#### **Opening Instructions:**

First and foremost, thank you for participating in this study of consumer behavior in casual dining restaurants.

We are conducting a research project to better understand how customers evaluate various aspects of 'dining experiences' in casual dining restaurants. The results of this study are expected to help restaurants provide customers with better services, foods, and restaurant environments.

Your help is important for the success of this study. Participation in this survey is strictly voluntary. Submission of a completed questionnaire indicates your willingness to participate. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled, and the subject may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled.

It should take you about 10 minutes to complete this questionnaire. There are no right or wrong answers, so just answer the questions based on your true feelings and best judgments. You must be at least 18 years old to participate. All responses will remain confidential and anonymous. No individual responses will be shared. Only aggregate responses will be reported.

This study has been approved by the committee for Research Involving Human Subjects (IRB # 5890) on June 13, 2011 at Kansas State University. If you have any question regarding this study, please feel free to contact me at 785-532-2213 or Dr. Chihyung Ok at 785-532-2207. For questions about your rights as a participant or the manner in which the study is conducted, you may contact Dr. Rick Scheidt, Chair of the Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, (785) 532-3224, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506.

Again, your cooperation and contribution to this study are greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Jinsoo Hwang, Ph.D. Candidate  
Chihyung Ok, Assistant Professor  
Kansas State University

Some questions may look similar, but each question was designed to measure different aspects.

So, **please respond to all the questions**.

There are no right or wrong answers.

So, please answer the questions based on **your true feelings and best judgments**.

---

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

How often do you dine at casual dining restaurants on an average? (     ) time(s) **per year**

**\*Note:** A casual dining serves moderately-priced food in a casual atmosphere. Except for buffet-style restaurants, casual dining restaurants typically provide table service. They usually have a full bar with separate bar staff and a limited wine menu. Average check is above \$15 per person including alcohol and beverage. Ex) Chili's or Applebee's

Characters Remaining: 4

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

How many different casual dining restaurant brands would you consider when dining out at a casual dining restaurant?

Characters Remaining: 2

---

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

Provide the name of the casual dining restaurant that you visited **most recently**.

**\*Note:** A restaurant that is your workplace, out-of-town, or owned or operated by one of your family members, relatives, or close friends is not qualified.

Characters Remaining: 40

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

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When was your most recent visit to this casual dining restaurant?

- Within the past 1 week
- Within the past 2 weeks
- Within the past 1 month
- More than 1 month ago

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

---

How long have you been a customer of this casual dining restaurant?

- Less than 3 months
- 3 months to less than 6 months
- 6 months to less than 1 year
- 1 to 3 years
- More than 3 years

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

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How often do you dine at this casual dining restaurant on an average? (     ) time(s) **per year**

Characters Remaining: 4

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

---

What is your approximate average 'dinner' check size (including taxes and tips) **per person** when you dine out at this casual dining restaurant? \$

Characters Remaining: 3

**Question 9**

---

**For the past 6 months**, the number of my visits to this casual dining restaurant was about (     )% of my total visits to casual dining restaurants.

Characters Remaining: 3

Note: Please indicate your levels of agreement with the following statements pertaining **“only” to the restaurant named earlier.**

**Question 10** *\*\* required \*\**

**1 - Strongly disagree | 2 - Disagree | 3 - Somewhat disagree  
4 - Neutral | 5 - Somewhat agree | 6 - Agree | 7 - Strongly agree**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>10.1</b> The overall lighting level in this restaurant environment is appropriate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>10.2</b> The temperature in this restaurant is comfortable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>10.3</b> The aroma in this restaurant is pleasant.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>10.4</b> The background music, played overhead, makes this restaurant a more enjoyable place.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>10.5</b> This restaurant's architecture gives it an attractive character.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>10.6</b> This restaurant is decorated in an attractive fashion.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>10.7</b> The use of color in the décor scheme adds excitement to this restaurant environment.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>10.8</b> The interior décor of this restaurant is attractive.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>10.9</b> This is an attractive restaurant.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>10.10</b> In this restaurant, the aisles between the tables are wide enough to pass through easily.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>10.11</b> The signs in this restaurant environment provide adequate direction.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>10.12</b> It is easy to walk around this restaurant environment.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>10.13</b> The number of tables does not make this restaurant environment difficult to navigate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>10.14</b> This restaurant's chairs allow me to sit at a comfortable distance from the table.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>10.15</b> This restaurant's seats are comfortable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>10.16</b> It is easy to get in and out of the seats at this restaurant.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Question 11** *\*\* required \*\**

1 - Strongly disagree | 2 - Disagree | 3 - Somewhat disagree  
 4 - Neutral | 5 - Somewhat agree | 6 - Agree | 7 - Strongly agree

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11.1 This restaurant has employees who can answer your questions completely.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11.2 This restaurant makes you feel comfortable and confident in your dealings with them.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11.3 This restaurant has personnel who are both able and willing to give you information about menu items, their ingredients, and methods of preparation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11.4 This restaurant makes you feel personally safe.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11.5 This restaurant has personnel who seem well trained, competent, and experienced.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11.6 This restaurant seems to give employees support so that they can do their jobs well.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11.7 This restaurant has employees who are sensitive to your individual needs and wants, rather than always relying on policies and procedures.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11.8 This restaurant makes you feel special.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11.9 This restaurant anticipates your individual needs and wants.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11.10 This restaurant has employees who are sympathetic and reassuring if something goes wrong.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11.11 This restaurant seems to have the customer's best interests at heart.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11.12 This restaurant serves you in the time promised.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11.13 This restaurant quickly corrects anything that is wrong.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11.14 This restaurant is dependable and consistent.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11.15 This restaurant provides an accurate guest check.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11.16 This restaurant serves your food exactly as you ordered it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11.17 During busy times, this restaurant has employees shift to help each other maintain speed and quality of service.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11.18 This restaurant provides prompt and quick service.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11.19 This restaurant gives extra effort to handle your special requests.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



**Question 12** *\*\* required \*\**

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**1 - Strongly disagree | 2 - Disagree | 3 - Somewhat disagree**

**4 - Neutral | 5 - Somewhat agree | 6 - Agree | 7 - Strongly agree**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>12.1</b> The food in this restaurant is tasty.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>12.2</b> This restaurant has a variety of menu items.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>12.3</b> The freshness of food in this restaurant is good.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>12.4</b> This restaurant has healthy food.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>12.5</b> The portion size in this restaurant is suitable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>12.6</b> The food presentation in this restaurant is attractive.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>12.7</b> Food is served at the appropriate temperature in this restaurant.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Question 13** *\*\* required \*\**

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Based on all my experiences with this restaurant, my attitude towards this restaurant brand was...

**1 - Strongly disagree | 2 - Disagree | 3 - Somewhat disagree**

**4 - Neutral | 5 - Somewhat agree | 6 - Agree | 7 - Strongly agree**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>13.1</b> Effective	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>13.2</b> Helpful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>13.3</b> Functional	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>13.4</b> Necessary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>13.5</b> Practical	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>13.6</b> Fun	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>13.7</b> Exciting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>13.8</b> Delightful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>13.9</b> Thrilling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>13.10</b> Enjoyable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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

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1 - Strongly disagree | 2 - Disagree | 3 - Somewhat disagree

4 - Neutral | 5 - Somewhat agree | 6 - Agree | 7 - Strongly agree

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14.1 When I make a dining out decision, I consider this restaurant a viable choice very often.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14.2 This restaurant meets my dining needs better than other comparable casual dining restaurants.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14.3 I am interested in trying various menu items in this restaurant more than in other comparable casual dining restaurants.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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

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1 - Strongly disagree | 2 - Disagree | 3 - Somewhat disagree

4 - Neutral | 5 - Somewhat agree | 6 - Agree | 7 - Strongly agree

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15.1 This casual dining restaurant brand is very prestigious.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15.2 This casual dining restaurant brand has high status.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15.3 This casual dining restaurant brand is very upscale.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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

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1 - Strongly disagree | 2 - Disagree | 3 - Somewhat disagree

4 - Neutral | 5 - Somewhat agree | 6 - Agree | 7 - Strongly agree

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16.1 I encourage others to try this restaurant.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16.2 I would like to spread good aspects of this restaurant to others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16.3 I would like to recommend this restaurant to others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Question 17** *\*\* required \*\**

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When you think of dining-out, it is...

**1 - Strongly disagree | 2 - Disagree | 3 - Somewhat disagree**  
**4 - Neutral | 5 - Somewhat agree | 6 - Agree | 7 - Strongly agree**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>17.1</b> important	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>17.2</b> interesting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>17.3</b> relevant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>17.4</b> exciting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>17.5</b> means a lot to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>17.6</b> appealing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>17.7</b> fascinating	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>17.8</b> valuable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>17.9</b> involved in my life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>17.10</b> necessary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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\*Note: The purpose of following questions is to gather some basic demographic information on participations. Please place a mark in the category that describes you best for the following questions. Your responses are **for research purpose only**.

**Question 18** *\*\* required \*\**

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What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

**Question 19** *\*\* required \*\**

---

What is your age group?

- Younger than 20
- 20-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50 or older

**Question 20** *\*\* required \*\**

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What is your Race/ Ethnicity?

- Black/African-American
- White
- Asian
- Hispanic/Latino
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- American Indian/Alaska Native
- Other:

**Question 21** *\*\* required \*\**

---

What is your highest level of education completed?

- Less than High School
- High School
- 2-year College (i.e., junior college, community college, etc.)
- 4-year College or University
- Post Graduate (i.e., Master's or Doctoral)

**Question 22** *\*\* required \*\**

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Which category describes your total income level before taxes?

- Under \$25,000
- \$25,000-\$39,999
- \$40,000-\$54,999
- \$55,000-\$69,999
- \$70,000-\$84,999
- \$85,000-\$99,999
- Over \$100,000

**Question 23** *\*\* required \*\**

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Please type in your 5-digit zip code.

Characters Remaining: 5

**Closing Message**

Congratulations!

**Appendix B - Main Survey Questionnaire of Fine Dining  
Restaurant with Consent Letter**

## AXIO SURVEY

### **E-reward Brand preference and its impacts on customer share of visits and word of mouth intention: An empirical study in the fine dining restaurant segment**

#### **Opening Instructions:**

First and foremost, thank you for participating in this study of consumer behavior in fine dining restaurants.

We are conducting a research project to better understand how customers evaluate various aspects of 'dining experiences' in fine dining restaurants. The results of this study are expected to help restaurants provide customers with better services, foods, and restaurant environments.

Your help is important for the success of this study. Participation in this survey is strictly voluntary. Submission of a completed questionnaire indicates your willingness to participate. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled, and the subject may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled.

It should take you about 10 minutes to complete this questionnaire. There are no right or wrong answers, so just answer the questions based on your true feelings and best judgments. You must be at least 18 years old to participate. All responses will remain confidential and anonymous. No individual responses will be shared. Only aggregate responses will be reported.

This study has been approved by the committee for Research Involving Human Subjects (IRB # 5890) on June 13, 2011 at Kansas State University. If you have any question regarding this study, please feel free to contact me at 785-532-2213 or Dr. Chihyung Ok at 785-532-2207. For questions about your rights as a participant or the manner in which the study is conducted, you may contact Dr. Rick Scheidt, Chair of the Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, (785) 532-3224, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506.

Again, your cooperation and contribution to this study are greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Jinsoo Hwang, Ph.D. Candidate  
Chihyung Ok, Assistant Professor  
Kansas State University

## Page 1

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Some questions may look similar, but each question was designed to measure different aspects.

So, **please respond to all the questions**.

There are no right or wrong answers.

So, please answer the questions based on **your true feelings and best judgments**.

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

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How often do you dine at fine dining restaurants on an average? ( ) time(s) **per year**

**\*Note:** A fine dining restaurant is defined as a full service restaurant with specific dedicated meal courses. Décor of such restaurants feature higher quality materials with an eye towards the ambience desired by the restaurateur. The wait staff is usually highly trained and often wears more formal attire. Average check is above \$50 per person including alcohol and beverage. Ex) Ruth's Chris Steak House

Characters Remaining: 4

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

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How many different fine dining restaurant brands would you consider when dining out at a fine dining restaurant?

Characters Remaining: 2

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

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Provide the name of the fine dining restaurant that you visited **most recently**.

**\*Note:** A restaurant that is your workplace, out-of-town, or owned or operated by one of your family members, relatives, or close friends is not qualified.

Characters Remaining: 40



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

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When was your most recent visit to this fine dining restaurant?

- Within the past 1 week
- Within the past 2 weeks
- Within the past 1 month
- More than 1 month ago

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

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How long have you been a customer of this fine dining restaurant?

- Less than 3 months
- 3 months to less than 6 months
- 6 months to less than 1 year
- 1 to 3 years
- More than 3 years

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

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How often do you dine at this fine dining restaurant on an average? ( ) time(s) per year

Characters Remaining: 4

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

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What is your approximate average 'dinner' check size (including taxes and tips) per person when you dine out at this fine dining restaurant? \$

Characters Remaining: 3

**Question 9** *\*\* required \*\**

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**For the past 6 months**, the number of my visits to this fine dining restaurant was about ( )% of my total visits to fine dining restaurants.

Characters Remaining: 3

\*Note: Please indicate your levels of agreement with the following statements pertaining **“only” to the restaurant named earlier.**

**Question 10** *\*\* required \*\**

**1 - Strongly disagree | 2 - Disagree | 3 - Somewhat disagree**

**4 - Neutral | 5 - Somewhat agree | 6 - Agree | 7 - Strongly agree**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>10.1</b> The overall lighting level in this restaurant environment is appropriate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>10.2</b> The temperature in this restaurant is comfortable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>10.3</b> The aroma in this restaurant is pleasant.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>10.4</b> The background music, played overhead, makes this restaurant a more enjoyable place.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>10.5</b> This restaurant's architecture gives it an attractive character.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>10.6</b> This restaurant is decorated in an attractive fashion.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>10.7</b> The use of color in the décor scheme adds excitement to this restaurant environment.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>10.8</b> The interior décor of this restaurant is attractive.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>10.9</b> This is an attractive restaurant.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>10.10</b> In this restaurant, the aisles between the tables are wide enough to pass through easily.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>10.11</b> The signs in this restaurant environment provide adequate direction.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>10.12</b> It is easy to walk around this restaurant environment.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>10.13</b> The number of tables does not make this restaurant environment difficult to navigate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>10.14</b> This restaurant's chairs allow me to sit at a comfortable distance from the table.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>10.15</b> This restaurant's seats are comfortable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>10.16</b> It is easy to get in and out of the seats at this restaurant.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Question 11** *\*\*required\*\**

**1 - Strongly disagree | 2 - Disagree | 3 - Somewhat disagree**  
**4 - Neutral | 5 - Somewhat agree | 6 - Agree | 7 - Strongly agree**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>11.1</b> This restaurant has employees who can answer your questions completely.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>11.2</b> This restaurant makes you feel comfortable and confident in your dealings with them.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>11.3</b> This restaurant has personnel who are both able and willing to give you information about menu items, their ingredients, and methods of preparation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>11.4</b> This restaurant makes you feel personally safe.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>11.5</b> This restaurant has personnel who seem well trained, competent, and experienced.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>11.6</b> This restaurant seems to give employees support so that they can do their jobs well.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>11.7</b> This restaurant has employees who are sensitive to your individual needs and wants, rather than always relying on policies and procedures.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>11.8</b> This restaurant makes you feel special.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>11.9</b> This restaurant anticipates your individual needs and wants.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>11.10</b> This restaurant has employees who are sympathetic and reassuring if something goes wrong.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>11.11</b> This restaurant seems to have the customer's best interests at heart.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>11.12</b> This restaurant serves you in the time promised.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>11.13</b> This restaurant quickly corrects anything that is wrong.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>11.14</b> This restaurant is dependable and consistent.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>11.15</b> This restaurant provides an accurate guest check.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>11.16</b> This restaurant serves your food exactly as you ordered it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>11.17</b> During busy times, this restaurant has employees shift to help each other maintain speed and quality of service.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>11.18</b> This restaurant provides prompt and quick service.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>11.19</b> This restaurant gives extra effort to handle your special requests.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Question 12** *\*\* required \*\**

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**1 - Strongly disagree | 2 - Disagree | 3 - Somewhat disagree**

**4 - Neutral | 5 - Somewhat agree | 6 - Agree | 7 - Strongly agree**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>12.1</b> The food in this restaurant is tasty.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>12.2</b> This restaurant has a variety of menu items.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>12.3</b> The freshness of food in this restaurant is good.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>12.4</b> This restaurant has healthy food.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>12.5</b> The portion size in this restaurant is suitable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>12.6</b> The food presentation in this restaurant is attractive.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>12.7</b> Food is served at the appropriate temperature in this restaurant.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Question 13** *\*\* required \*\**

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Based on all my experiences with this restaurant, my attitude towards this restaurant brand was...

**1 - Strongly disagree | 2 - Disagree | 3 - Somewhat disagree**

**4 - Neutral | 5 - Somewhat agree | 6 - Agree | 7 - Strongly agree**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>13.1</b> Effective	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>13.2</b> Helpful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>13.3</b> Functional	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>13.4</b> Necessary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>13.5</b> Practical	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>13.6</b> Fun	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>13.7</b> Exciting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>13.8</b> Delightful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>13.9</b> Thrilling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>13.10</b> Enjoyable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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

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**1 - Strongly disagree | 2 - Disagree | 3 - Somewhat disagree**

**4 - Neutral | 5 - Somewhat agree | 6 - Agree | 7 - Strongly agree**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>14.1</b> When I make a dining out decision, I consider this restaurant a viable choice very often.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>14.2</b> This restaurant meets my dining needs better than other comparable fine dining restaurants.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>14.3</b> I am interested in trying various menu items in this restaurant more than in other comparable fine dining restaurants.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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

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**1 - Strongly disagree | 2 - Disagree | 3 - Somewhat disagree**

**4 - Neutral | 5 - Somewhat agree | 6 - Agree | 7 - Strongly agree**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>15.1</b> This fine dining restaurant brand is very prestigious.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>15.2</b> This fine dining restaurant brand has high status.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>15.3</b> This fine dining restaurant brand is very upscale.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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

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**1 - Strongly disagree | 2 - Disagree | 3 - Somewhat disagree**

**4 - Neutral | 5 - Somewhat agree | 6 - Agree | 7 - Strongly agree**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>16.1</b> I encourage others to try this restaurant.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>16.2</b> I would like to spread good aspects of this restaurant to others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>16.3</b> I would like to recommend this restaurant to others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Question 17** *\*\* required \*\**

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When you think of dining-out, it is...

**1 - Strongly disagree | 2 - Disagree | 3 - Somewhat disagree**

**4 - Neutral | 5 - Somewhat agree | 6 - Agree | 7 - Strongly agree**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>17.1</b> important	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>17.2</b> interesting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>17.3</b> relevant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>17.4</b> exciting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>17.5</b> means a lot to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>17.6</b> appealing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>17.7</b> fascinating	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>17.8</b> valuable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>17.9</b> involved in my life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>17.10</b> necessary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The purpose of following questions is to gather some basic demographic information on participations. Please place a mark in the category that describes you best for the following questions. Your responses are for research purpose only.

**Question 18** *\*\* required \*\**

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**What is your gender?**

- Male
- Female

**Question 19** *\*\* required \*\**

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**What is your age group?**

- Younger than 20
- 20-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50 or older

**Question 20** *\*\* required \*\**

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**What is your Race/ Ethnicity?**

- Black/African-American
- White
- Asian
- Hispanic/Latino
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- American Indian/Alaska Native
- Other:

**Question 21** *\*\* required \*\**

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**What is your highest level of education completed?**

- Less than High School
- High School
- 2-year College (i.e., junior college, community college, etc.)
- 4-year College or University
- Post Graduate (i.e., Master's or Doctoral)

**Question 22** *\*\* required \*\**

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**Which category describes your total income level before taxes?**

- Under \$25,000
- \$25,000-\$39,999
- \$40,000-\$54,999
- \$55,000-\$69,999
- \$70,000-\$84,999
- \$85,000-\$99,999
- Over \$100,000

**Question 23**

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**Please type in your 5-digit zip code.**

Characters Remaining: 5

**Closing Message**

Congratulations!