

## **How Intimate are You with Your Preferred Brand? - A Study on Brand Personality Congruence**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Brand personality congruence is a concept not widely studied. The present study corrects this lack of knowledge of brand personality congruence by studying it via a service brand like KFC in the Quick Service Restaurant industry. Data were collected in two phases, first for a pilot study from a student sample with exploratory factor analysis applied to the data. Subsequently, data were collected from 473 KFC customers in the city of Bhubaneswar, India and tests like the confirmatory factor analysis and Structural Equation Modelling were applied to validate the conceptual model and estimate the path in the structural model. The findings of the study have practical implications for different service brands in the Quick Service Restaurant industry such as to design their products and services to match the personality of different target groups.

*Keywords:* Brand personality congruence, confirmatory factor analysis, measurement model Quick Service Restaurant, Structural Equation Modelling

### **INTRODUCTION**

Liberalisation and globalisation have already changed the business scenario in India. Domestic companies are facing

tough competition with their multinational counterparts. The present study is based on Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC), a global brand operating in India. The lifestyle of people has changed dramatically and they enjoy their leisure time outside their home. As per Census 2011, more than half of the population of India are below 25 years of age and the age group of 21 to 30 years is the largest segment of fast food consumers in India. Taking advantage of the changing

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demographics in India, which has the highest youth population in the world, global brands like KFC have positioned themselves to attract Indian customers. According to a McKinsey Global Institute (MGI) study, by 2030 more and more people will live in urban areas and there will be a trend of both husband and wife being employed, which will fuel the growth of the Quick Service Restaurant industry in India. The Quick Service Restaurant industry (QSR) is growing rapidly and enjoys huge market potential. In this context it is very difficult to differentiate the service offered by different service brands; hence, it is of paramount importance to build brand personality for the different service brands operating in the QSR Industry.

The concept of brand or branding is not a new strategy, but dates back to primitive times. Studies by Hieronimus (2003) clearly indicated that in primitive times, potters marked their clay-made articles to differentiate and give identity to their product. The term 'brand' comes from the Old Norse word 'bandr' which means 'to burn' and it clearly indicates the primitive practice of farmers who burnt a piece of metal and stamped it on their livestock in order to identify their animals. Today, brands have become part of our day-to-day life. From the moment we rise from bed to the moment we go to bed, we come across different brands.

What, exactly, is a brand? From time to time, academicians and practitioners have defined brands in different ways and from different perspectives. Earlier branding as

a concept was confined to a product only but subsequently the concept was extended to the service sector. In the modern age, the concept has been further extended to places and even people. Travis (2000) has said, "A brand is like a bridge between you and the customers. How your customers feel about your brand isn't a casual question. It is a crucial question. A brand is not a brand to you until it develops an emotional connection with you." Kressman et al. (2006) in their study revealed the positive relationship between self-image congruence on brand loyalty, while Sirgy et al. (2000) studied the relationship between self-congruity and retail patronage. Koksall and Mehmet (2012) in their study on cellular phone users mentioned that "self-congruity has a positive influence on brand loyalty moderated by love and commitment."

The review of literature revealed that very few studies have been done focusing on the relational aspect of branding, so in the present study the mediating role of different dimensions of brand relationship quality on brand personality congruence and brand loyalty was also examined. This study aimed to fill the gap in the literature. Although many studies have been done on different aspects of branding, the present study is based on the personality aspect of branding, which is known as 'brand personality' and its extension 'brand personality congruence'. This research is justified in several ways. In previous studies, different authors (Mocanu, 2014; Andonova et al., 2015; Tsai et al., 2015) have studied the congruence between brand

image, brand identity, brand personality and self-concept or image of customers but this study has uncovered how brand personality congruence is a better concept than the previous ones. This study explains how brand personality congruence can be useful in predicting brand loyalty. As the study was based on a quick service restaurant brand, which is also an experiential brand, the role of consumer-brand relationship dimensions like intimacy (consumer-brand) and intimacy (brand-consumer) were also explored.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Today the concept of brand has been extended from products to services, places and even people, and has become an integral part of our day-to-day life. Burawat (2015) extended the concept of branding even to employers. Several studies were conducted on brands and have been on the centrestage of marketing literature. The American Marketing Association (AMA, 2010) defined brand by highlighting its identification aspects, whereas Murphy (1987) highlighted the tangible as well as intangible assets associated with a brand. Similarly, Broadbent and Cooper (1987) highlighted the legal aspects of branding. De Chernatony and Dall'Olmo Riley (1998) in their review of different studies of branding summarised the different perspectives and themes of brands, such as legal instrument, logo, company, short hand, risk reducer, identity system, image in consumer's mind, value system, personality, relationship, adding value and evolving entity. Travis

(2000) emphasised the role of a brand in developing an emotional relationship with customers. Aaker (1996) mentioned that customers buy branded products and services because they believe that its use or consumption will enhance their identity. As opined by Kapferer (2008), brand identity means "specifying the facets of the brands' uniqueness and value" but there was no clear cut idea about what he meant by "uniqueness" and "value." So, brand identity is a dynamic concept that is flexible to contextual changes.

According to Keller (1993) brand image is "the set of associations linked to the brand that consumers hold in memory." However, from the viewpoint of Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000), the associations that customers have with the brand can be short-term and tactical. The concept of anthropomorphisation of a brand is not new but has gained momentum after Aaker (1997) developed a valid and reliable scale to measure the personality of a brand, which is known as the brand personality scale (BPS). She described BPS as the human characteristics associated with a brand. Although most of the studies on brand personality were based on Aaker's (1997) brand personality scale, the scale was not totally applicable in different contexts. According to Chitale et al. (2013), "Personality represents the total pattern of characteristic ways of the thinking, feeling and behaving that form the individual's distinctive method of relating to the environment." They further elaborated that personality is the sum total of internal

and external traits of an individual, which are relatively stable and which make the individual different from others; hence, there is merit in studying brand personality. Wirdamulia and Afiff (2013) suggested that marketers should emphasise integrated customer value proposition for developing the required brand personality, while Tekke et al. (2015) even studied the personality of religion. Although brand identity, brand image and brand personality are interrelated and have been used interchangeably in the existing literature, they are distinct constructs.

Sigry and Su (2000) in their study found that consumers have a tendency to buy brands when there is a match between brand image and self-concept, but in a previous study, Sigry (1982) mentioned that self-concept is of four types, and according to Rosenberg (1979), these can vary. So from this we came to the conclusion that there is merit in studying consumer personality instead of self-image or self-concept. Indeed, self-concept, self-image and consumer personality are also distinct concepts and it is wise to study the congruence between brand personality and consumer personality in the context of consumer behaviour.

Although many studies have been done on brand personality, very few studies were done on brand personality congruence. Sigry et al. (2000) found the link between self-congruity and brand loyalty. Accordingly, Kressman et al. (2006) found that positive self-image congruence can lead to brand loyalty. Asperin (2007) mentioned that brand

personality congruence was a match between consumer personality and brand personality and developed a valid and reliable scale. Kuenzel and Halliday (2010) found a positive relationship between reputation, brand personality congruence and brand loyalty; similarly, brand personality and self-congruity play a positive role (Das, 2014) in predicting store loyalty. Khan and Farahat (2012) made a congruity study in the context of the Indian apparel market and mentioned its importance in predicting consumer choice. Labrecque et al. (2011) in their study mentioned that self-image congruence is found to enhance brand loyalty only for those consumers who are ready to conform. Koksai et al. (2012, p.97) revealed that “self-congruity has a positive influence on brand loyalty moderated by love and commitment”. The congruence between human and brand personality is influenced by culture (Shan, 2012) and the personalities of students and the brand personalities of universities are positively related (Kazemi et al., 2013). Fazel (2015) mentioned that the congruency between cultural specific brand personality and national culture has a positive effect on brand evaluation.

Travis (2000) mentioned that a successful brand is one which establishes an emotional relationship with customers. Although several studies were done by different authors like Altman and Taylor (1973), Davis and Latty-Mann (1987) and Mizerski and White (1986) on consumer-brand relationship, Fournier (2000) dimensionalised the consumer-brand

relationship known as the brand relationship quality scale (BRQ). The present study focusses on intimacy as an important dimension of the brand relationship quality scale developed by Fournier (2000). Intimacy refers to how close the consumers feel to the brand and vice versa. Chaplin and John (2005) revealed the development of self-brand connections among children and adolescents, while Ahuja (2008) mentioned the importance of customer relationship for organisational success. Aaker et al. (2004) and Sahay and Sharma (2010) mentioned that intimacy is two-way communication. Malar et al. (2011) mentioned that actual self-congruence has the greatest impact on emotional brand attachment. That is to say, there is closeness between the brand and the consumer and each one understands the other. Intimacy not only involves consumers' understanding exhibited by the brand but also a consumer's personal experience with the brand will lead to strong brand loyalty. Ahmad and Thyagraj (2014) revealed the role of the consumer-brand relationship in building brand equity, while Haspari and Adiwijaya (2014) studied the relationship between self-congruity, brand relationship quality and brand loyalty. Hudson et al. (2015) mentioned that consumers develop an emotional bond with the brand via social media interactions and these interactions also have a positive relationship on brand relationship quality. In the present paper, instead of self-congruity, we have hypothesised the relationship between brand personality congruence, brand relationship quality and brand loyalty because brand

personality congruence is a better concept than self-congruity as explained in the earlier part of the literature review.

### **Objectives of the Study**

For the purpose of studying an experiential brand, KFC was chosen because the brand is new to the Bhubaneswar market but still a very popular brand. KFC is an acronym of the company name, 'Kentucky Fried Chicken'. It has its headquarters in Louisville, Kentucky in the United States of America. This fast food restaurant chain specialises in fried chicken and is the world's second largest restaurant chain, as measured by sales. The present paper aimed to study the application of brand personality congruence in the Quick Service Restaurant industry and the mediating role of intimacy on the effect of brand personality congruence on brand loyalty.

### **Hypotheses**

Fournier (2000) outlined two types of intimacy i.e. intimacy (consumer-brand) and intimacy (brand-consumer), which are important dimensions of consumer-brand relationship. Koksai and Demir (2012, p.97) mentioned that "self-congruity has a positive influence on brand loyalty mediated by love and commitment," so it is clear that consumers develop some form of relationship with the brands they use. Nyffenegger et al. (2014) in their study on service brand relationship quality revealed two new dimensions, namely hot brand relationship quality and cold brand

relationship quality. Hot brand relationship quality is based on emotions, whereas cold brand relationship quality is based on object relevant beliefs, but emotions can only be developed if there is intimacy between the consumer and the brand. In the present study it was understood that brand personality congruence is a more superior concept than ‘self-congruity’. Hence, in the present study it was hypothesised that brand personality would have a positive influence on brand loyalty mediated by intimacy (consumer-brand) and intimacy (brand-consumer).

Hypothesis 1, H1: Brand personality congruence has significant effect on brand loyalty.

Hypothesis 2, H2: Brand personality congruence has significant effect on intimacy (Brand-Consumer).

Hypothesis 3, H3: Brand personality congruence has significant effect on intimacy (Consumer-Brand).

Hypothesis 4, H4: Intimacy (Brand-Consumer) has significant effect on brand loyalty.

Hypothesis 5, H5: Intimacy (Consumer-Brand) has significant effect on brand loyalty.

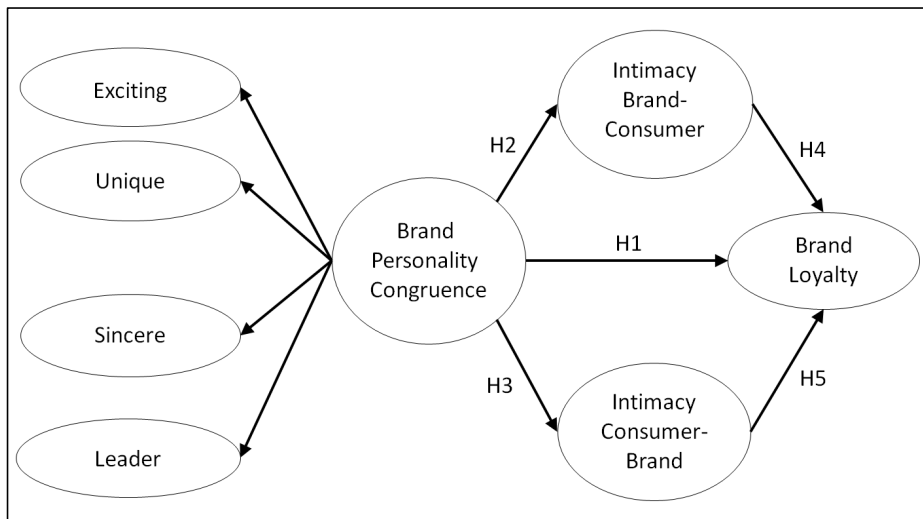


Figure 1. Conceptual model

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

Previous study of consumer behaviour in the context of branded vegetarian restaurants was conducted by Catherine and Magesh

(2015) and Padmavathy and Thangavel (2015) in the context of employee engagement in KFC Chennai. Because no previous study with regard to brand

personality congruence was conducted in the context of brand personality congruence for the KFC brand, which is known for its non-vegetarian food, we selected it for our study. Also as the study was based on quick service retailing, we selected the KFC brand, which truly represented the quick service retailing sector and was also a well-known and established brand. Furthermore, KFC is also an experiential brand, so there is merit in studying the intimacy dimension of Brand Relationship Quality in relation to brand personality congruence and brand loyalty. Because no previous study was done on brand personality congruence in India, we conducted a pilot study to determine the underlying structure of brand personality congruence. The pilot study consisted of a student sample of 519 subjects from different higher education institutes of Bhubaneswar city. Exploratory factor analysis was done with varimax rotation and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) value of 0.923 with the Bartlett Test of Sphericity, significant at 0.000 levels, indicating the appropriateness of the exploratory factor analysis. The factor loadings of the 17 items ranged from 0.703 to 0.849, which loaded on four factors. The four factors explained 72.687% of the variance. In the exploratory factor analysis, three items were dropped because we considered factor loadings only above 0.60, which failed to load on any factors. Before conducting the measurement and structural model, the second order four-factor brand personality congruence (Figure 2) was analysed. The initial model

provided a reasonable fit for the four-factor structure (Chi square=174.610,  $df=115$ ;  $p=0.000$ ,  $RMR=0.022$ ;  $CFI=0.988$ ;  $GFI=0.959$  and  $RMSEA=0.033$ ). Based on modification indices intra construct errors were allowed to covariate ( $e1-e2$ ;  $e7-e11$ ) and it improved the fit (Chi square=161.242,  $df=113$ ;  $p<0.002$ ,  $RMR=0.021$ ;  $CFI=0.991$ ;  $GFI=0.963$  and  $RMSEA=0.030$ ).

For the final study, structured questionnaires were distributed at KFC, Jayadev Vihar in Bhubaneswar city between 5:30pm and 7:30pm. Initially, the respondents were screened; they were asked whether they had visited KFC Bhubaneswar in the last one year. The sample composed of those respondents who had visited KFC Bhubaneswar in the last one year. The rationale for doing so was that brand loyalty was one of the important constructs in our study. In the present study a non-probability sampling approach i.e. convenience sampling had been applied and data was mostly collected on Sundays because it was found that most of the customers visited KFC on Sundays and were relatively free on that day to complete the questionnaire. Altogether, 614 questionnaires were distributed, but we received only 583 completed questionnaires and out of them, only 473 were used for the final study. The remainder was discarded because they were incompletely filled. To study the brand personality congruence, we adapted the scale developed by Asperin (2007), and for the intimacy construct, Fournier's (2000) Brand Relationship Quality Scale was adapted. For brand

loyalty, Oliver's (1999) scale was adapted and for the entire study a 5-point Likert scale was used. Brand personality congruence was taken as a second-order factor because there is merit in studying a second-order construct. Second-order constructs are easy to interpret (Chen, Sousa & West, 2005), may account for the pattern of relations among the first-order factors and usually lead to relatively error-free estimates. All the analyses were done with the help of statistical software such as SPSS Ver. 20 and Amos Ver 20. Missing value analysis

and outliers were checked with the help of SPSS. Data were also checked for other assumptions of multivariate analysis and it was found that there were no serious violations of normality nor did the problem of multicollinearity or homoscedascity exist. We applied confirmatory analysis to test the measurement model, and the structural equation modelling technique was applied to test the hypothesised relationship between the different constructs. Both confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modelling were done by Amos.

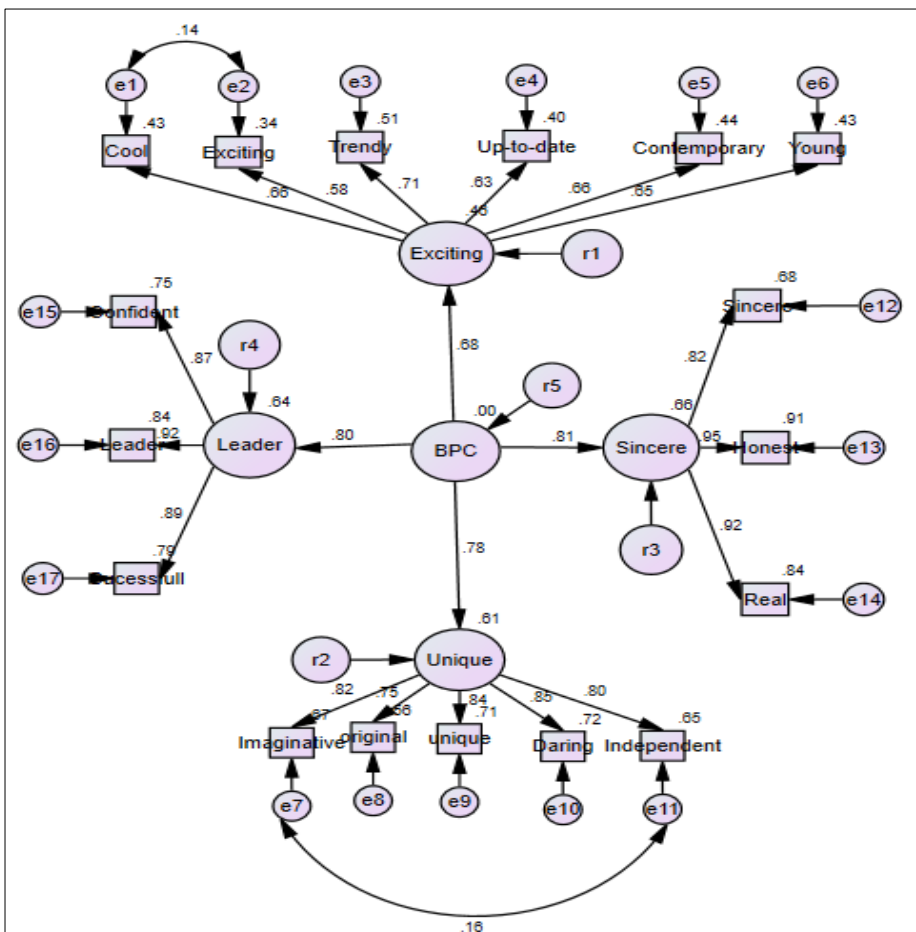


Figure 2. Second-order factor structure of brand personality congruence



**RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

Table 1 shows that the sample comprised 57.9% female customers compared to male customers, while 67.4% of the respondents belonged to the age group of 17-27 years followed by 19.9% in the age group of 28-38 years. Most of the respondents were graduates (58.8%), followed by intermediates (28.3%). Private sector employees comprised 28.8% of the sample and most of the respondents were single.

A two-step approach was adopted for the final study, as suggested by Anderson and Gerbing (1988). First, confirmatory factor analysis was applied using Amos version-20 to test the measurement model. A measurement model specifies how variables measured logically and systematically represent constructs involved in a theoretical model. The confirmatory factor analysis provided acceptable model fit indices (Table 2) as suggested by Hu and Bentler (1999), (Chi square=692.469, df=332;  $p < 0.000$ ) and Normed Fit Index (NFI)=0.952; Comparative Fit Index (CFI)=0.974; Tucker Lewis Index (TLI)=0.971 and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)=0.048 as suggested by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994).

Table 1  
*Sample profile*

	Respondents	Percentage (%) N=473
Age	17-27 years	67.4
	28-38 years	19.9
	39-49 years	10.1
	50 years and above	2.5
Education	High School Certificate Examination	3
	Higher Secondary Education	28.3
	Graduation	58.8
	Post-Graduation and above	9.9
Gender	Male	42.1
	Female	57.9
Marital Status	Single	74.8
	Married	16.2
	Others	9
Profession	Student	38.3
	Government Employee	13.1
	Private Sector Employee	28.8
	Professionals	9.6
	Others.	10.2
Monthly Income	Rs. 15,000-25,000	57.9
	Rs. 26,000-39,000	9.5
	Rs. 37,000-47,000	10.8
	Rs. 48,000 & above	21.8

Table 2  
*Fit indices for measurement model (N=473)*

Fit indices	$\chi^2$	df	GFI	AGFI	RMSEA	NFI	CFI	PNFI	PCFI
Values	692.469	332	0.909	0.888	0.048	0.952	0.974	0.836	0.856

The average variance extracted was calculated from the standardised factor loadings of the variables (Table 3) and the standardised factor loadings ranged from 0.568 to 0.949.

Table 3  
Means, standard deviations and standardised factor loadings of brand personality congruence\*\*, intimacy (consumer-brand) \*, intimacy (brand-consumer)\* and brand loyalty \* \* (N=473)

Standardised Loadings **** of BPC***						
Item No	Items	Factor 1 Exciting	Factor 2 Unique	Factor 3 Sincere	Factor 4 Leader	M ± SD
1	Cool	0.660				4.03 ± 0.608
2	Exciting	0.568				4.07 ± 0.448
3	Trendy	0.723				4.05 ± 0.655
4	Up to date	0.636				4.08 ± 0.586
5	Contemporary	0.637				4.06 ± 0.511
6	Young	0.645				4.07 ± 0.580
7	Imaginative		0.819			4.12 ± 0.773
8	Original		0.753			4.21 ± 0.758
9	Unique		0.848			4.14 ± 0.795
10	Daring		0.832			4.13 ± 0.801
11	Independent		0.774			4.14 ± 0.788
12	Sincere			0.826		4.07 ± 0.848
13	Honest			0.949		4.06 ± 0.884
14	Real			0.920		4.03 ± 0.887
15	Confident				0.864	4.00 ± 0.998
16	Leader				0.919	3.92 ± 1.002
17	Successful				0.890	3.93 ± 0.998
Intimacy (Consumer-Brand) *						
Item No	Items	Standardised Factor Loadings**** of Intimacy (Consumer-Brand)*			M ± SD	
18	I know the KFC brand history/background.	0.990			4.36 ± 1.273	
19	I know what the KFC brand stands for.	0.868			4.40 ± 1.352	
20	I know more about the KFC brand than the average consumer.	0.986			4.36 ± 1.270	
Intimacy (Brand-Consumer)*						
Item No	Items	Standardised Factor Loadings ****of Intimacy (Brand-Consumer)*			M ± SD	
21	The KFC brand understands my needs.	0.982			4.01 ± 1.524	
22	The KFC brand knows me so well and could design products for me.	0.932			4.04 ± 1.589	
23	The KFC brand knows a lot about me as a person.	0.931			4.01 ± 1.576	

Table 3 (continue)

Brand loyalty **			
Item No	Items	Standardised**** Factor Loadings of Brand Loyalty **	M ± SD
24	KFC is superior to other brands in its class.	0.961	4.31 ± 1.477
25	I have grown close to KFC more than to other QSR outlets in its class.	0.944	4.29 ± 1.472
26	I intend to continue to visit KFC in the future.	0.946	4.26 ± 1.454
27	When I have a need to go to a non-vegetarian restaurant, I will only visit KFC.	0.946	4.25 ± 1.465
28	Overall, I consider myself loyal to KFC.	0.952	4.32 ± 1.530

\*adapted from Fournier's (2000) presentation at the Association for Consumer Research Conference, Salt Lake City: UT.

\*\* Source: Oliver (1999)

\*\*\* Scale adapted from Asperin (2007)

\*\*\*\* All factor loadings were significant at 0.001

To test the convergent validity, average variance extracted was calculated (Table 4) and for all the latent variables and all the average variance extracted, where the unit of variance was fixed to 1 as suggested by Bryne (2001), values were above the cut-off

value of 0.5 as mentioned by Kline (1998) and Fornell and Larcker (1981).

Similarly, to test the divergent validity, the squared correlation values among the constructs were compared with the average variance values and was found

Table 4

Construct reliability and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for latent variables (N=473)

	Brand Personality Congruence	Intimacy (Brand-Consumer)	Intimacy (Consumer-Brand)	Brand Loyalty
Construct Reliability	0.801	0.702	0.748	0.792
AVE	0.602	0.899	0.901	0.903

Table 5

Standardised correlations (squared correlation) for latent variables (N=473)

	Brand Personality Congruence	Intimacy (Brand-Consumer)	Intimacy (Consumer-Brand)	Brand Loyalty
Brand Personality Congruence	1	0.554 (0.306)	0.693 (0.480)	0.722 (0.521)
Intimacy (Brand-Consumer)		1	0.714 (0.509)	0.605 (0.366)
Intimacy (Consumer-Brand)			1	0.734 (0.538)
Brand loyalty				1

that (see Table 5) the squared correlation values were less than the average variance extracted. So from the above results, the convergent and divergent validity of brand personality congruence as a second-order construct, intimacy as a first-order construct and brand loyalty as a first-order construct was appropriate. Similarly, to check the reliability of the measures, we used the construct reliability method as suggested by Hair et al. (2015) because it gives the best results when structural equation modelling is to be applied. All the constructs displayed appropriate reliability results because the construct reliability values (Table 4) of all

the measures were above the cut-off value of 0.7 as suggested by Malhotra (1981). So from the above discussion we concluded that all the constructs used in the study displayed appropriate validity and reliability.

A structural theory is a conceptual representation of the structural relationships between constructs. The structural relationship between any two constructs is represented empirically by the structural parameter estimate also known as the path estimate. Structural models are referred to by several terms, including 'theoretical model' or, occasionally, 'causal model'. A causal model infers that the relationships meet the conditions necessary for causation.

Table 6  
*Fit indices for structural model (N=473)*

Structural model	$\chi^2$	df	GFI	AGFI	RMSEA	NFI	CFI	PNFI	PCFI
Values	808.132	333	0.897	0.874	0.055	0.944	0.966	0.832	0.851

The structural model (Table 6) provided acceptable model fit indices (Chi square=808.132, df=333;  $p < 0.000$ ), Normed Fit Index (NFI) =0.944; Comparative Fit Index (CFI)=0.966; Tucker Lewis Index (TLI)=0.962 and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)=0.055. To test the hypothesised relationship among the different constructs, structural equation modelling was applied by using Amos 20. All three hypothesised relationships, from brand personality congruence to brand loyalty, brand personality congruence

to intimacy (consumer-brand), brand personality congruence to intimacy (brand-consumer) and from intimacy (consumer-brand) to brand loyalty were statistically (Table 7) significant at the 0.05 level. The hypothesised relationship from intimacy (brand-consumer) to brand loyalty was also significant at the 0.05 level.

To test the mediating effect of intimacy on the effect of brand personality congruence on brand loyalty, we first tested all three conditions in accordance with Barron and Kenny (1986) to check whether intimacy

(Consumer-Brand) and intimacy (Brand-Consumer) satisfied all the conditions mentioned below:

1. The brand personality congruence (independent latent variable) should positively influence intimacy (Consumer-Brand) and intimacy (Brand-Consumer), which are assumed to be acting as mediating variables.
2. Intimacy (Consumer-Brand) and Intimacy (Brand-Consumer), which are assumed to be acting as mediating variables, should

positively influence brand loyalty (dependent latent variable).

3. When the relationship between brand personality congruence and intimacy (Consumer-Brand) and intimacy (Brand-Consumer) and the relationship between intimacy (Consumer-Brand) and intimacy (Brand-Consumer) with brand loyalty are controlled, then the relationship between brand personality congruence and brand loyalty should no longer be significant.

Table 7  
Standardised direct, indirect and total effects

	Intimacy (Consumer- Brand) Direct	Intimacy (Brand- Consumer) Direct	Brand Loyalty Direct	Brand Loyalty Indirect	Brand Loyalty Total
Brand personality congruence	0.766 t=11.009 p=0.000	0.665 t=5.774 p=0.000	0.471 t=5.774 p=0.000	0.303	0.774
Intimacy (Consumer- Brand)	-	-	0.312 t=5.603 p=0.000	-	0.312
Intimacy (Brand- Consumer)	-	-	0.095 t=2.120 p=0.034	-	0.095

From our study we found that both dimensions of intimacy (Consumer-Brand) satisfied the first two conditions only. The study further revealed that intimacy (Consumer-Brand) partially mediated

(Table 7) the relationship between brand personality congruence on brand loyalty because the effect of brand personality congruence on brand loyalty decreased in the presence of both dimensions of intimacy.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

The study revealed that brand personality congruence had direct effect on brand loyalty, intimacy (Consumer-Brand) and intimacy (Brand-Consumer). The study further revealed that intimacy (Consumer-Brand) and intimacy (Brand-Consumer) are important constructs and act as a positive mediator on the effect of brand personality congruence on brand loyalty. The findings of this study confirmed the notion that consumers might prefer brands that have a personality compatible with their own personality. Thus, our findings are in line with those reported by Jamal and Goode (2001) and Kazemi et al. (2013). The present study indicated that brand should also develop a positive relationship with consumers. The results of the study have practical implications for strategists and marketers because in the Indian context, marketers should design products and services that should match the personality of consumers. In a country like India, where people of different religions, races and cultures co-exist, business organisations should develop food products by taking different factors like religious belief, food habits, climatic conditions, income etc. into consideration so that brand personality congruence for different margin segments can be maximised and lead to brand personality congruence. In sum, global brands like KFC should design food products by taking into consideration the personality aspect of their brand as well as that of the consumers in order to successfully do

business in India. Taking advantage of the growing population there as well its youth segment, rising disposable income of Indian customers, ever increasing demand for fast food and the growth of the quick service retailing, KFC should build a different brand personality that matches Indian customers more accurately and profitably.

In the present study, we examined the mediating role of only one dimension of Brand Relationship Quality, but by studying the other dimensions some more important information could have been collected. Future researchers are encouraged to study the brand personality congruence construct in both industrial as well as service brands and across different product categories. From a marketing perspective, future researchers can even study the effect of colour, design, logo etc. on brand personality congruence. From the communication perspective researchers could also study the effect of online websites on building brand community and ultimately, brand personality congruence.

## **Limitations**

The quick service restaurant industry has experienced tremendous change in the last decade. The findings of this research should be interpreted with caution as all research suffers from inherent shortcomings (McGrath, 1981). Although the present study makes significant contribution to the existing literature on brand personality, it does have some limitations. The present study was conducted in the context of a very popular quick service restaurant

brand i.e. KFC and other global, local and non-chain quick service restaurant brands were not included in the study. Findings of the study apply within the context of respondents of a particular city which may tap into some contextual factors and may influence the findings of the study. The sample represented respondents of a particular city i.e. Bhubaneswar, the capital city of Odisha, and excludes residents of other rural and urban areas and hence, the findings of the study may not be generalised. In the present study, the mediating role of consumer brand relationship dimensions like intimacy (Consumer-Brand) and intimacy (Brand-Consumer) on the relationship between brand personality congruence and brand loyalty were included in the study but there are other relational constructs like commitment, nostalgic attachment partner quality and interdependence etc. that were not included in the study. Future researchers are encouraged to study the brand personality congruence construct in both industrial as well as service brands and across different product categories.

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