

## **Brand Personality and Customers' Behavioural Intentions in Upscale Quick Service Restaurants(QSRs) in a University Community in Port Harcourt, South-South Nigeria: Mediating Role of Brand Satisfaction**

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**Abstract:** The study investigated the direct and indirect effect of brand personality on customers' behavioural intentions with brand satisfaction as a mediator in upscale Quick Service Restaurants (QSRs) in a university community in the hospitality industry in the garden city of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. The descriptive survey research generated data from 150 customers found in the QSRs during the survey with the use of a well structured questionnaire containing 12 scale items, with four demographic items. The result of the inferential statistical analysis with the aid of SPSS showed that customers' behavioural intentions towards the upscale QSRs is driven by brand personality. The mediating role of brand satisfaction also exist significantly between brand personality and customers' behavioural intentions. Entrepreneurs and their managers operating upscale QSRs in the hospitality industry are expected to build capabilities in the area of humanising the experiential value conceptualisation and delivery based on the needs and expectations of their target market.

**Keywords:** Brand personality. Brand Satisfaction. Brand Loyalty. Repurchase Intention

### **Introduction**

The Quick Service Restaurant (henceforth QSR) business is considered as one of the most lucrative businesses in Nigeria because of the growing population of over 200 million, busy lifestyle of the people, growing urbanisation and the rising profile of the mid-income group. This possibly explain the remarkable growth in the food industry which was estimated by the Association of Fast Food and Confectioners of Nigeria (AFFCON) to be worth over a trillion naira by 2016 ([Alex-Adedipe, 2020](#)).

The foregoing has engendered intensive competition among the several brands of QSRs in Nigeria, such as; Mr Biggs, Tantalizer, Chicken Republic, Kilanmanjero, Genesis, Sammies', etc. The entrepreneurs/managers of QSRs also called fast food restaurants are therefore expected to engage in marketing activities aimed at understanding their target market needs and expectations. The essence is to craft winning marketing strategies that are capable of delivering experiential value to their target market and enhance positive customers' behavioural intentions towards the QSRs to

enable them achieve competitive advantage and capture value in return from the customers (Kotler & Armstrong 2010).

However, it should be emphasised that as a service brand, the achievement of positive customers' behavioural intentions towards QSRs does not depend solely on delivering quality service, because consumers find it very difficult to differentiate service brands based on functional attributes any longer (Petruzzellis, 2010). Two developments are responsible for this: consumers' cognitive judgment of brands is no longer a function of rationality because of the shift from traditional to experiential marketing, and advances in technological developments "have increased the similarities between brand and product commoditisation" (Ebrahim, Ghoneim, Irani & Fan 2016, p.1230).

Consequently, organizations in the hospitality industry are involved in creating relationships between their brands and consumers and in the process confirm the paradigm shift from traditional marketing to experiential marketing (Pine & Gilmore 1999; Schmitt 1999; Brakus, Schmitt, & Zarantonello 2009). The implication is that owners/managers of tourism service organisations like hotels, restaurants, car rental companies, airlines, etc., desirous of enhancing their competitive strategies are expected to develop a unique brand personality profile for their respective brands through the "delivering of excellent brand experiences because of its ability to enhance customers/guests positive behavioural responses to the service brand" (Odor & Ekeke 2020, p.1).

The promotion of personality traits that is descriptive of a brand through memorable experiences delivered by service brands has the capacity to enhance the establishment of emotional bond between the brand and the consumers (Geuens, Weijters & De Wulf 2009; DeChernatony & Dall'Olmo Riley, 1997). This emotional bond between brands and consumers engenders positive customers' behavioural intentions, which explains why, Wang and Yang (2008) argues that brand personality traits emphasises salient brand attributes and by implication, serves as heuristic, self-expressive cue by the target market.

Empirical evidence reveals that, the effect of brand personality have been studied in various market contexts at the exclusion of Nigeria to show that brand personality affects consumer behavioural intentions in. Examples include: seventeen goods and service brands in six studies in Rochester (Brakus, et al., 2009); mobile phone in Egypt (Ebrahim, et al., 2013); Turkish mobile phone business, (Akin, 2011), comparative study on NIKE and SONY in China (Mengxia, 2007); automobile market context in Turkey (Akin, 2017); clothing brand in Portuguese (Birarada, Coelho, & Lizanets 2019). This current study attempts to fill the gap in literature by investigating the effect of brand personality on customers' behavioural intentions towards QSR s in a university community in Nigeria with brand satisfaction serving as the mediating variable.

## **Theoretical Foundations**

### **The Theory of Anthropomorphism**

Both marketing practitioners and academics tend to humanise brands with a view to explaining the degree and importance of consumer-brand relationships. In the concept of physical goods (supermarket), the pioneer work of Fournier (1998) introduced the interpersonal relationship metaphor used in explaining several aspects of the consumer-brand relationship. The author opined that the personalisation of brands is a form of anthropomorphism. The theory of anthropomorphism

finds support from studies on animism which claim that in order to facilitate interactions with the non-material world, human beings tend to anthropomorphise objects.

In brand marketing, anthropomorphism offers clue to the quest to understand how and why people endow human personality qualities on brands that are inanimate objects. As noted by Boyer (1996), this is consequent on the fact that the endowment helps to explain projections of human qualities on both non-human beings (such as gods and animals) and inanimate objects. This process leads to brand personification, which is defined by Cohen (2014, p.3) as, “imbuing trademarked or otherwise proprietary-named products and services with a human form and/or human attributes, including a generally distinctive physical appearance and personality”.

When brands are endowed with personality, it facilitates the cultivation of a mutual interdependence between a consumer and a brand. This development encourages the target market to consider brands in human terms (Brown 2010). Several advantages accrue to marketers and that is why many organisations are very serious with brand management to the extent that brand managers are appointed to take full responsibility for the management and marketing of brands. Such advantages include: brand love, “brand loyalty and commitment, enhanced consumer willingness to disparage competing brands, greater willingness to spread positive WOM, and a willingness to pay a price premium” (Macinnis, & Folkes 2017, p.371).

### **Self-Congruity Theory**

Marketing practitioners and educators are aware that consumers are inclined to be attached to products, services, and brands (branded products, service brands, organisations, etc) that express important aspects of themselves, such as self-identity, value, and goals (Aguirre-Rodriguex, Bosnjak, & Sirgy, 2012). This implies that consumers do not only consume for functional benefits but also for the symbolic meanings behind the brands of their choice (McCracken, 1986). This is a consequence of the theory of self-congruity, which postulates that because products have symbolic character, consumers are attracted to those products with symbolic value propositions that are consistent with how they think about themselves (Gardner & Levy, 1955). Put differently by Fournier (1998), consumers tend to purchase and consume branded products that represent the meanings relevant to their self image. Accordingly therefore, such brands are said to possess characteristics or features that are said to be self-congruent (Aw, Flynn & Chong (2019).

### **Conceptual Review**

#### **Brand Personality**

Aaker (1997, p.347) described product or brand personality as the “set of human characteristics associated with a brand”. With a focus on the relationship that exist between the brand and the consumer, Sweeney and Bradon (2006, p.645) defined brand personality as, “the set of human personality traits that correspond to the interpersonal domain of human personality and are relevant to describing the brand as a relationship partner”. Simply put, consumers tend to establish relationships with brands in a way that demonstrates how the personality of the brand evokes an emotional link between consumers and brands. In the context of supermarket goods, Fournier (1998) introduced the concept of interpersonal relationship metaphor to describe certain aspects of the consumer-brand interaction.

A practical manifestation of the concept of brand personality is where brands are described by personality descriptors, such as energetic, cool, masculine, sophisticated, youthful, etc., (Keller,

1998). Ahmad and Thyagaraj (2015, p.42) offered three ways by which the concept of brand personality could be understood, as follows;

- i. Brand personality helps in the communication of the functional benefits of a brand and by so doing helps in indicating or promoting product related utilitarian benefits and brand attributes.
- ii. Brand personality serves as a medium to express the personality of the consumers. As a result, the brand functions as a reflective symbol of the self image of the consumer.
- iii. Through the help of brand personality, consumers are able to extend their own personality by establishing a relationship with a brand. Consequently, consumers are able to benefit from brand's characteristics even if they do not wish to become like a certain brand personality.

### Brand Satisfaction

He, Li and Harris (2012) posit that customers get satisfied with a brand when the performance of a brand meets the expectations of the consumer. The concept of brand satisfaction is defined by Tse and Wilton (1988, p. 204) as "consumer's response to the evaluation of the perceived discrepancy between prior expectation and the actual performance of the product as perceived after its consumption". Cronin and Taylor (1992) argues that satisfaction with a brand is a judgment which is made by consumers based on specific service encounter or product purchase/consumption. It is on this basis, that Atarodian (2013, p.204) described customer satisfaction as "a level of performance that meets customer expectations".

Brand satisfaction is a very critical concept in hospitality marketing (Golder, Mitra, and Moorman, 2012), even as it has engendered long term interest in several other fields (Li, Ye, & Law, 2013). Brand satisfaction has been found to be an antecedent to customer behavioural intentions towards brands. Dawi, Jusoh, Streimikis, and Mardani, (2018) examined the relationship between service quality, customer satisfaction and behavioural intentions in the context of pay television industry, with switching barriers moderating the relationship. The finding showed that customer satisfaction had significant relationship with customer behavioural intentions: repurchase intentions, positive word of mouth communication and willingness to pay more. In a restaurant context, Ladhari, Brun, and Morales (2008) found that customer satisfaction had significant effect on customers' willingness to pay more.

The foregoing explain why organizations are usually concerned with how to satisfy the consumers at all times, with a view to converting them to customers and retain them as well. As argued by , Zeithaml Berry, and Parasuraman, (1996), organizations strive to maintain zero defection by ensuring that customer retention strategies are implemented due to the high cost associated with recruiting new customers.

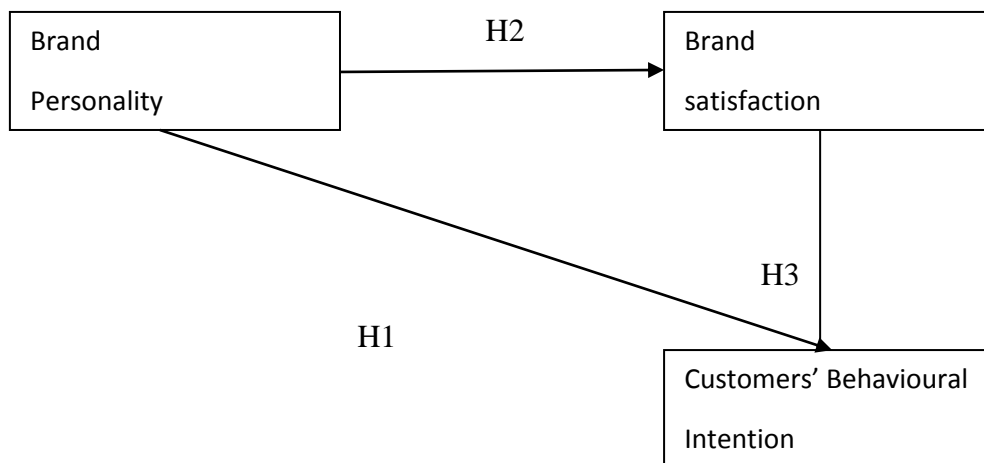
### Customers' Behavioural Intentions

Customers' behavioural intentions connote the responses of consumers towards brands in the marketplace. However, it should be emphasised that, the response to organisational marketing activities could either be positive/favourable or negative/unfavourable (Ladhari, 2009; Zeithaml, et al, 1996). This explain why extant literature tend to suggest that behavioural intentions represent an indicator of whether a customer will like to stay with an organization or go away to a competing brand (Alexandris, Zahariadis, Tsorbatzoudis, & Grouios, 2004; Kang, James, & Alexandris, 2002). Customer behavioural intentions could therefore manifest positively through purchase intention, brand loyalty, repurchase intention, and positive word of mouth communication. As noted

by Jhamb, Mittal and Sharma, (2020, p.363), “customer behavioural intentions can be understood as their behavioural activities to promote the brand, purchase service/product, price point’s comparisons, and complaints”. Negative or unfavourable responses could manifest through customers display of higher probability of brand switching behaviours, engaging in negative word of mouth communication, reduction in volume of business transactions, complaining at any little provocation, and display an unwillingness to pay premium prices (Zeithaml et al , 1996).

Cronin and Taylor (1992) and Zeithaml et al (1996) posit that customer behavioural intentions consist of four principal dimensions: purchase intention, word-of-mouth communications, price sensitivity and complaining behaviour. For this current study, repurchase intention, brand loyalty, positive word of mouth communication and ability to pay premium price are used as the latent measures for customers’ behavioural intentions.

### CONCEPTUAL MODEL AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT



**Figure 1: Brand Personality-Customers’ Behavioural Intentions Model**

The research model demonstrates that brand personality has both direct and indirect influence on customers’ behavioural intentions in the context of upscale QSRs. The indirect influence of brand personality on customers’ behavioural intentions is mediated by brand satisfaction.

### Brand Personality-Customers’ Behavioural Intentions

In the context of the Turkish mobile phone business, Akin (2011), found that two dimensions of brand personality (competency and excitement) had higher impact on behavioural intention than the dimensions of traditionalism and androgyny. Mengxia (2007) investigated the effect of the perception of brand personality on consumers' brand preference, attitude, loyalty, and buying intent (PALI) in China. The findings of the comparative study of two brands (NIKE and SONY), showed that brand personality had positive effect on consumers' brand preference, attitude, loyalty, and buying intent. In the automobile market context in Turkey, Akin (2017), found that two dimensions of brand personality: competency and excitement had stronger positive effect on both behavioural and attitudinal loyalty, than conventionality and androgyny.

Birarada, Coelho, and Lizanets (2019) investigated the effect of brand personality on consumer behaviour, with a special emphasis on the brand love construct using a sample of 478 Portuguese clothing brand consumers. The statistical results showed that brand personality had a



positive and significant effect on brand love, resistance to negative information and self-disclosure. In another finding, brand love had a positive and significant effect on brand loyalty, word-of-mouth, resistance to negative information, willingness to pay more, self-disclosure and active engagement. Magin, Algesheimer, Huber, and Herrmann, (2003) found a direct influence of self-congruity on customer loyalty in the context of Internet Service Providers (ISP).

Alaa, Chanaka, Mohamed and Tamer, (2016), investigated the role of brand attractiveness in customer relationship building. The empirical results showed that brand attractiveness had a direct influence on repeat purchases and positive word of mouth communication.

From the foregoing empirical evidence, we argue that the relationship between brand personality and customers' behavioural intentions towards upscale QSRs in a university community will be positive and significant. This is based on the argument of Brakus, et al (2019), that because "brand personality offers value to consumers similar to experiences", service brands that are capable of associating more with human characteristics, will tend to enhance the satisfaction level of their customers, while the company will expect positive behavioural outcomes such as brand loyalty and revisit intentions.

We therefore expect that:

**H1: Brand personality has direct and significant effect on customers' behavioural intentions in upscale QSRs in a university community in Port Harcourt.**

#### **Brand Personality and Brand Satisfaction**

Brand personality evokes emotional links with consumers, because it reflects a personality and image of the product they represent (Akin 2017). Perreault, Cannon and McCarthy (2013), posit that the reflections on the personality of the brand which occurs in the consumers' mind helps to form their purchase behaviour. The foregoing suggest that personality of a brand is capable of influencing brand satisfaction. Extant literature has proven that in several contexts, brand personality significantly influenced brand satisfaction.

Brakus, et al, (2009) found that brand personality had significant effect on brand satisfaction and loyalty in the context of variety of goods and services. In the same study, another finding revealed that brand experience had significant effect on satisfaction and loyalty directly and indirectly through brand personality associations. An empirical evidence from Iran in the context of shopping experience by Mirabi, Lajevardi, and Mousavi, (2016) showed that all the dimensions of brand personality (sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness) tested, had significant influence on customer satisfaction.

From the foregoing, we therefore hypothesize that;

**H2: Brand personality significantly affects brand satisfaction in upscale QSRs in a university community in Port Harcourt, Nigeria**

#### **Brand Satisfaction and customers' behavioural intention**

In Melbourne, Australia, Wahyuningsih, and Nurdin, (2010) examined the effect of customer satisfaction on behavioural intentions in the context of car insurance. The results of the study which surveyed 546 car insurance consumers found that, the higher the level of satisfaction, the higher the consumer's intentions to repurchase and inform positive information about the purchased product and company to other people. In the context of Internet Service Providers (ISP), Magin, et al (2003)

investigated the effect of brand personality and customer satisfaction on customers' loyalty. Statistical results showed that customer satisfaction had a significant effect on customers' loyalty.

In Iran, Ali, Hanzaleh, and Ahmadreza (2013) examined the effect of brand identity on customer satisfaction through perceived value and trust. The result showed that both brand identity and identification had an indirect effect on customer satisfaction and loyalty. Balakrishnan, Saufi and Amran, (2008) found that only when customers perceive a service to have distinctive personality does it influence preference.

In a service environment, understanding what constitute the antecedents of customer satisfaction and improves experiential value of consumers by restaurant owners/managers is very critical to organisational performance. This is because, several empirical results confirm that satisfied customers are most likely to be loyal (Brakus, et al, 2009; Ekinici, Dawes & Massy, 2008; Yoon & Uysal, 2005 Zhang, Wang and Zhao, 2014; Chi & Qu, 2008;) , revisit the organisation for re-patronage (Cronin & Taylor, 1992;) and also recommend the service brand to others through positive word of mouth (Yoon, 2010; Pham & Ahammad 2017; Tsao, & Hsieh, 2012; Kim, Ng & Kim 2009; Casalo, Flavián, & Guinalú, 2008).

Based on the foregoing, we can hypothesize that;

**H3: Brand satisfaction significantly affects customers' behavioural intentions in upscale QSRs in a university community in Port Harcourt, Nigeria**

#### Mediating role of Brand Satisfaction

Satisfaction with a service brand is dependent on contentment of the consumers with service offerings in addition to past experiences with the service brand. The degree of contentment simply illustrates the fact that the brand meets the expectations of the consumers(He, et al, 2012). Zhang, et al (2014) examined the effect of brand personality on brand loyalty, with brand satisfaction mediating the relationship. The result showed that satisfaction fully mediated the relationship between excitement and brand loyalty, while the effect was partial in the relationship between sincerity, competence, sophistication and brand loyalty respectively.

Antón, Camarero, and Carrer (2007), in an insurance firm found that price unfairness and anger incidents directly and indirectly through satisfaction had a strong effect on switching behaviour of customers. The authors also found that poor service quality and low firm commitment undermined consumer satisfaction and had only an indirect effect on switching intentions,

In India, Katraria and Saini (2019) examined the mediating effect of customer satisfaction in the relationship between brand equity and brand loyalty in the context of oral care medical market segment in Delhi and the surrounding areas. One of the findings showed that, customer satisfaction partially mediated the relationship between perceived quality and perceived value of cost with brand loyalty. On the other hand, customer satisfaction fully mediated the relationship between lifestyle congruence and brand trust with brand loyalty.

In the context of the telecommunication in Malaysia, Yew and Rahman (2019) investigated the mediating effect of satisfaction in the relationship between perceived quality and customer loyalty. The findings of the study showed that perceived quality had significant effect on customer loyalty, perceived quality also influenced satisfaction. Brand satisfaction was found to mediate the relationship between perceived quality and customer loyalty. In the context of mobile phone industry, Nikhashemi, Valaei, and Tarofder, (2017) found that customer satisfaction mediated the relationship between brand personality and customers' switching behaviour intentions.

Stevens, Knutson, and Patton, (1995) argues that, though guarantee is not certain that satisfied customers will revisit a restaurant after the first patronage, there is near certainty (90 %) that dissatisfied customers will not revisit the restaurant. This implies that restaurant entrepreneurs/managers are to ensure that their customers are satisfied at all times through offering them favourable brand personality which is similar to memorable experiences in order to enhance their level of satisfaction. Brakus et al (2009, p.64) confirms that “brand personality offers value to consumers similar to experiences”. In services marketing customer satisfaction is of great interest to marketers. This is predicated on the fact that customer satisfaction has positive links with consumers’ behavioural intentions (such as repeat purchase, attitude change, loyalty and positive word-of-mouth) in various market contexts with empirical proofs (Akin, 2017; Fornell, Johnson, Anderson, Cha, & Bryant, 1996; Stevens, et al, 1995; Oliver, 1994, 1997; Mengxia 2007;).

From the foregoing, we can hypothesize that;

**H4: Brand Satisfaction mediates the causal effect of brand personality on customers’ behavioural intentions significantly in upscale QSRs in a university community in Port Harcourt, Nigeria**

### Research Methodology

**Research design:** The descriptive research design was adopted for the study. Its choice is due to the fact that the study required the collection of data based on the attitude, preference, behaviour and perception of customers of upscale QSRs with a focus on the human attributes that influence customers’ behavioural intentions to the upscale QSRs in a university community with brand satisfaction mediating the relationship.

**Sample and data collection:** The population of study were current customers of five upscale QSRs operating at Choba, a university community in the garden city of Port Harcourt. With Freund and William’s formula for sample size determination from unknown population, a sample size of 150 customers was determined from the unknown population. The sample of customers studied were those found dining at the upscale QSRs at the time of questionnaire administration. A convenience sampling technique was adopted to generate primary data using a well-structured questionnaire. A total of 140 questionnaires were retrieved out of the 150 administered, with 102 being useful was subjected to data analysis.

**Demographic Profile of Respondents:** The analysis of the respondents’ profile showed the following: both male and female respondents had 51 respondents (50%) each, for age brackets distribution, <20 years were 24 respondents (23.5%), 20-29 years had 54 respondents (52.9%), 30-39 years had 22 respondents (21.6%), > 40 years were only 2 respondents (2%). Those in majority were within the ages of 20 – 29 years. The respondents’ profile on level of education, were as follows; senior secondary school certificate (SSCE/GCE) were 23 (22.5%), Higher National Diploma and Bachelor degree (HND/B.SC) 35 (34.3%), MA/MSc/MBA (42) (41.2%) and PhD (2) (2%). Respondents with a second degree were of the majority, with the implication that more educated customers patronised the upscale QSRs at the university campus. The rates showing the period of continuous patronage of sampled customers’ were; 14(13.7%) less than 2 years, 49(48%), 2-4years, 25(24%) 9 years and above. Majority of the respondents sampled had patronised the upscale QSRs between 2 and 4 years.



### Measurement Instrument and Questionnaire design

A well-structured questionnaire was the major instrument for data collection. All the measurement items were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale anchored by: Strongly Disagree [SD](1). Disagree [D](2), Agree [A](3), Agree fairly strongly(4) and Strongly Agree [SA](5) to express the degree of agreement with the items or otherwise.

All the items were adapted from extant literature. The two latent variables of brand personality; excitement and sophistication were measured using items adapted from (Aaker 1997). Customer satisfaction's items were three and modeled after Oliver 1980, while items for customers' behavioural intentions were adapted from Jiang, Yang, and Jun (2012) and Ryu, Lee, and Kim, (2012).

### Research Results Reliability Analysis

**Table 1 Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.981	.988	12

A Cronbach Alpha of .981 as shown in Table 1 ascertained the reliability of the research instrument and the value is above the threshold value of .7 as suggested by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994). Thus the measuring instrument is internally consistent and considered useful in measuring opinions of customers of upscale QSRs in the quest to determine the effect of brand personality on customers' behavioural intentions with brand satisfaction mediating the relationship.

### Discriminant Validity

**Table 2 Correlation Matrix**

	Brand Personality	Brand Satisfaction	Customer Behavioural Intentions
Brand Personality	<b>1.000</b>		
Correlation Brand Satisfaction	.765	<b>1.000</b>	
Customer Behavioural Intentions	.698	.936	<b>1.000</b>

Discriminant validity is defined by Hair Jr, Black, Babin, and Anderson, (2010, p.126) as the "the degree to which two conceptually similar concepts are distinct". Fornell and Larcker (1981)

argues that discriminant validity occurs if the diagonal elements are higher than all the off-diagonal elements in their columns and rows. The foregoing explain why the correlation matrix shown in Table 2 above was used to determine the discriminant validity of the measurement instrument. The result as shown in Table 2, therefore confirms the discriminant validity.

### Sampling Adequacy

**Table 3 KMO and Bartlett's Test**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.690
Approx. Chi-Square		279.850
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Df	3
Sig.		.000

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was performed on 12 exploratory items of determinants of brand personality and customers' behavioural intentions as specified in the conceptual model in Figure 1 for the conduct of the KMO and Bartlett's Test. The result is shown in Table 3 and demonstrates that Bartlett's test of sphericity is significant at  $p=.000$ , while KMO measure of sampling adequacy is .690 which is far greater than 0.5 that has been suggested as a minimum level by Kasser (as cited in Wong & Musa 2010, p. 3417).

### Data Analyses and hypotheses testing

To ascertain the effect of brand personality on customers' behavioural intentions, in the hypothesized relationships were subjected to statistical analysis using Multiple regression analysis

#### Testing of hypotheses 1, 2 and 3

#### Decision Rule

If  $PV < 0.05$  = Hypothesis is supported  
 $PV > 0.05$  = Hypothesis is not supported

#### Hypothesis one

Table 4 describes the summary of the multiple regression analysis showing the effect of brand personality on customers' behavioural intentions.

**Table 4. The regression analysis for the influence of brand personality on customers' behavioural intentions**

Dependent variable	Independent Variable	Beta( $\beta$ )	t-value	p-value
Customer Behavioural Intentions	Brand Personality	.588	9.735	0.00**

Notes:  $P \leq 0.05$ ;  $R=.689$ ;  $R^2=.487$ ; Adjusted  $R^2=.481$ ;  $F=94.77$ ;  $P=0.000$

From the Table, the following results are shown; un-standardized beta ( $\beta$ ) of brand personality ( $\beta = 0.588$ ), adjusted R square = 0.481,  $F = 94.77$  &  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ . This specifies that brand personality explains 48.1% variation in customers' behavioural intentions in QSRs in a university community in Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

The outcome of analysis show that brand personality had significant effect on customers' behavioural intentions to the QSRs ( $\beta = 0.588$ ,  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ). Therefore hypothesis one is supported.

### Hypothesis two

Table 5 describes the summary of the multiple regression analysis showing the effect of brand personality on brand satisfaction.

**Table 5. The regression analysis for the influence of brand personality on brand satisfaction**

Dependent variable	Independent Variable	Beta( $\beta$ )	t-value	p-value
Brand Satisfaction	Brand Personality	.725	3.900	0.00**

**Notes:**  $P \leq 0.05$ ;  $R = .765$ ;  $R^2 = .586$ ; Adjusted  $R^2 = .582$ ;  $F = 141.471$ ;  $P = 0.000$

From the Table, the following results are shown; un-standardized beta ( $\beta$ ) of brand personality ( $\beta = 0.725$ ), adjusted R square = 0.582,  $F = 141.471$  &  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ . This specifies that brand personality explains 58.2% variation in brand satisfaction in QSRs in a university community in Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

The outcome of analysis show that brand personality had significant effect on brand satisfaction to the QSRs ( $\beta = 0.725$ ,  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ), therefore hypothesis two is supported.

### Hypothesis three

Table 6 describes the summary of the multiple regression analysis showing the effect of brand satisfaction on customers' behavioural intentions.

**Table 4. The regression analysis for the influence of brand satisfaction on customers' behavioural intentions**

Dependent variable	Independent Variable	Beta( $\beta$ )	t-value	p-value
Customers' Behavioural Intentions	Brand Satisfaction	.833	5.405	0.00**

**Notes:**  $P \leq 0.05$ ;  $R = .936$ ;  $R^2 = .876$ ; Adjusted  $R^2 = .874$ ;  $F = 704.296$ ;  $P = 0.000$

From Table 6 above, the following results are reflected; un-standardized beta ( $\beta$ ) of brand satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.833$ ), adjusted R square = 0.874,  $F = 704.296$  &  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ . This specifies that brand satisfaction explains 87.4% variation in customers' behavioural intentions in QSRs in a

university community in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. The outcome of analysis show that brand satisfaction had significant effect on customers' behavioural intentions to the QSRs ( $\beta = 0.833$ ,  $p=0.000 < 0.05$ ). therefore hypothesis three is supported.

#### Hypothesis four

**H4: Brand Satisfaction mediates the causal effect of brand personality on customers' behavioural intentions significantly in upscale QSRs in a university community in Port Harcourt, Nigeria**

Hypotheses four seeks to test the mediation effect of brand satisfaction in the relationship between brand personality and customers' behavioural intentions in QSRs in Choba, a university community in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. The statistical analysis are presented in three Tables (7,8 & 9) below.

**Table 7 Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.107	.284		3.900	.000
1 Brand Personality	.725	.061	.765	11.894	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Satisfaction

**Table 8 Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.801	.149		5.382	.000
1 Brand Personality	-.038	.046	-.045	-.823	.413
Brand Satisfaction	.864	.049	.970	17.680	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Behavioural Intentions

Table 9 Sobel test

Input:		Test statistic:	Std. Error:	<i>p</i> -value:	
<i>a</i>	1.12	Sobel test:	3.896	0.247	0.000
<i>b</i>	.86	Aroian test:	3.889	0.248	0.000
<i>s</i> <sub>a</sub>	.28	Goodman test:	3.902	0.247	0.000
<i>s</i> <sub>b</sub>	.05				

Table 7 represents the regression coefficient for the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable while Table 8 represents the introduction of the mediating variable into the relationship. The values ( $a=1.12$ ;  $s_a=.28$ ;  $b=.86$ ,  $s_b=.05$ ) extracted from the two Tables were substituted into the Sobel Test calculator and the result is represented in Table 9. As shown in Table 9, the test statistic for the Sobel test is 3.896 with an associated  $p$ -value= 0.000. The fact that the  $p$ -value is  $< 0.05$  is an indication that the association between the independent variables (brand personality) and the dependent variable (customers' behavioural intention) is reduced significantly by the inclusion of the mediating variable (brand satisfaction) in the model. This is an indication of a clear evidence of mediation. Accordingly, we conclude that hypothesis four is supported

From the foregoing, all the hypotheses (H1, H2, H3 & H4) were all supported.

## Discussion of Results

**Hypothesis 1** showed a significant effect of brand personality on customers' behavioural intentions to the QSRs ( $\beta = 0.588$ ,  $p=0.000 < 0.05$ ). Therefore, H1 is supported. This finding is consistent with the findings of Akin (2010;2017), Mengxia (2007), Birarada, et al (2019), Magin, et al (2019) and Brakus, et al (2019).

**Hypothesis 2** posited a significant effect of brand personality on brand satisfaction to the QSRs. With  $\beta = 0.725$ ,  $p=0.000 < 0.05$ , the effect is significant. This result is consistent with the prediction of H2 and is therefore supported. Thus, a higher level of demonstration of human characteristics such as competence and sophistication provided by QSRs the higher the propensity by customers to be satisfied. This finding is consistent with the findings of Akin (2017), Brakus, et al (2019) Vahdati and Mousavi (2016).

**Hypothesis 3** posited a significant effect of brand satisfaction on customers' behavioural intentions to the QSRs. With  $\beta = 0.833$ ,  $p=0.000 < 0.05$ , the effect is significant. This result is consistent with the prediction of H3 and is therefore supported. Thus, a higher level of brand satisfaction which occurs as a result of the high level of competence and sophistication of the QSRs is associated with a high propensity by customers to revisit the restaurants, pay premium price, recommend the



restaurants to family and friends and loyalty. This finding is consistent with the findings of Lai (2004), Wahyuningsih, and Nurdin, (2010), Magin, et al (2003) and Saufi and Amran, (2008).

**Hypothesis 4:** The result of the Sobel test reveals that the test statistic is 3.896 while the  $p$ -value is  $0.000 > .050$  which means that the association between brand personality and customers' behavioural intentions is reduced significantly because the observed  $p$ -value falls below the established alpha value of .05. The findings of this study shows that brand satisfaction mediates the relationship between brand personality dimensions and customers' behavioural intentions indirectly through the mechanism and framework of customer satisfaction. This finding is consistent with Zhang (2014), Antón, et al, (2007), and Katraria and Saini (2019)

### Conclusion

The research effort examined the effect of brand personality on customers' behavioural intentions at QSRs in the hospitality market segment in a university community at Choba, Rivers State, Nigeria with brand satisfaction mediating the outcome of the intervention. The empirical results supported all the research hypotheses significantly. A very important finding of the study is the fact that statistical analysis of the effect of brand satisfaction in the QSRs explain up to 87.4% variation in customers' behavioural intention. The reason may not be far-fetched, as it could be ascribed to the fact that an average QSR is designed and equipped to offer pleasurable experiences that march the self congruence of its target market. This is in support of the self-congruity theory

It is therefore safe to conclude by stating that the outcome of the research indicates that brand personality in terms of competence and sophistication is an important determinant of customers' behavioural intentions such as revisiting the QSRs for re-patronage, positive word of mouth, ability to pay premium price, and loyalty to the brands. It is very important for entrepreneurs and managers of QSRs to identify, evaluate, develop and manage personality attributes capable of attracting target consumers to their brands of QSR. Insightful and fruitful implications to both entrepreneurs (the practitioners) and academics could be provided from this empirical study.

### Implications of the Study

The relationship dynamics between consumers and brands which shows that brands work as a relationship partner with consumers and postulated by the theory of anthropomorphism and self-congruity have been confirmed through this study. Thus brand confers a personality status to products, services and organisations and through interactions, emotional bond is established between consumers and brands.

The current study is an attempt to investigate the influence of brand personality as a predictor of customers' behavioural intention in terms of brand loyalty, repurchase intention and positive word of mouth communication, with brand satisfaction mediating the relationship in an African context. To a large extent, the findings of the study are expected to provide fruitful and useful implications to both practitioners and academicians.

On the academic side, this current study contributes significantly to the brand management literature by systematically exploring the impact of brand personality on customers' behavioural intentions with brand satisfaction mediating the relationship in Nigeria in the context of QSRs. Therefore, the findings of this study provides tentative support to the proposition that brand

personality and brand satisfaction should be recognized as significant antecedents for gaining and sustaining positive customers' behavioural intentions in QSRs in Nigeria.

On the practitioners' side, the significant influence of brand personality and mediating role of brand satisfaction in Nigeria is highlighted. Certainly, marketers can benefit from the implications of these findings. For instance, given the robust relationship (adjusted R squared) between brand personality and customers' behavioural intentions (0.481), brand personality and brand satisfaction (0.582) and also between brand satisfaction and customers' behavioural intentions (0.874), marketers ought to pay attention to both brand personality and brand satisfaction in order to build customers' behavioural intentions. For example, by improving the personality attributes of the restaurant brand by shaping a distinct brand personality in alignment with their target markets' self-image, an emotional bonding could be created. This could be achieved through enhancing the quality of restaurant environment, execution of marketing communication with humanized content and delivering robust service quality capable of enhancing customers' emotions and excite the human senses. It is certain that if consumers are able to perceive QSRs' brand personality while developing a self-connection towards their brand of interest, then the QSRs will be more successful in building positive relationships with their customers. Customers are likely to be satisfied through the resulting experiential value. Eventually, the customers will become loyal to the brand, be willing to pay premium prices and recommend the QSR to family and friends through positive word of mouth communication.

### Limitations and Future Research

The research has its limitations despite how useful this current study is as discussed above. First and most significantly, the data was collected from a cross section of Nigerians who patronised many brands of QSRs operating within the precinct of a university campus. Thus the generalizability of this research can be improved upon if future research replicates this research model in other business areas across the country. Second, the current study was limited to Nigeria. For results comparison, subsequent research effort should contemplate replicating this study in other developing countries like Benin Republic, Ghana South Africa and Kenya. Finally, the present study examined only three (excitement, competence and sophistication) out of the five dimensions of brand personality. Future studies should examine all the dimensions of brand personality as proposed by Aaker (1997). When implemented, these suggested future avenues of study will immensely contribute new knowledge to the existing body of brand management literature in Africa.

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