SCALE CONSTRUCTION AND EFFECTS OF BRAND AUTHENTICITY

by

Sean Patrick Coary

A Dissertation Presented to the
FACULTY OF THE USC GRADUATE SCHOOL
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
(BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION)

August 2013

Copyright 2013

Sean Patrick Coary
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**LIST OF TABLES**

**LIST OF FIGURES**

**ABSTRACT**

**Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION**
- Overview of Chapters

**Chapter 2: THE BRAND AUTHENTICITY CONSTRUCT**
- Definitions of Authenticity
- Dimensions of Authenticity
- Being the Category Pioneer
- Maintaining the Original Product
- Adhering to Principles
- Review

**Chapter 3: THEORETICAL MODEL AND HYPOTHESES**
- Dimensions of Authenticity
- Effects of Authenticity on Evaluations
- Effects of Trust and Credibility
- Effects of Brand Self-Connection
- Authenticity and Product Types
- Effects of Savoring the Experience

**Chapter 4: EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATIONS**
- Overview of Scale Development
- Pretest for Scale Development
- Study 1: Item Reduction for Brand Authenticity Scale
  - Overview
  - Method
  - Results
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Study 2A: Brand Authenticity Scale Development</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study 2B: Brand Authenticity Scale Development</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study 3: The Effects and Process of Brand Authenticity</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measures</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study 4: Consumer Segments Affected by Brand Authenticity</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measures</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study 5: The Process Driving the Effects of Brand Authenticity for Experiential Products</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measures</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study 6: Effects of Brand Authenticity for Experiential Products</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Definitions of Authenticity and its Dimensions 11
Table 2. Items for Brand Authenticity Scale 33
Table 3. Study 2A – Dimensions of Brand Authenticity Revealed by Exploratory Factor Analysis 36
Table 4. Study 2B – Dimensions of Brand Authenticity Revealed by Exploratory Factor Analysis 40
Table 5. Authenticity versus Trust and Credibility 50
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Conceptual Model for the Process of Brand Authenticity</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Conceptual Model for Experiential Products</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Study 3. Results for Mediation Analysis</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Study 3. Willingness to Engage in Increasingly Difficult Behaviors</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Study 4. Effects of Authenticity on Other Constructs</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Study 4. Interaction of Brand Authenticity and Brand</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-Connection on Attitudes Toward the Brand</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Study 5. Experiential Products – Willingness to Engage in</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increasingly Difficult Behaviors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Study 5. Mediation Results for Experiential Products</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Study 5. Mediation Results for Experiential Products</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Study 6. Effects of Authenticity on Other Constructs</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Study 6. Interaction of Brand Authenticity and Brand</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-Connection on Attitudes Toward the Brand for Experiential Products</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Comparison of Effects of Brand Authenticity and Brand</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-Connection on Attitude Toward the Brand for Experiential versus Functional Products</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigates consumer’s perceptions of brand authenticity, genuineness in a brand’s product and principles. Prior qualitative research on brand authenticity has not identified key dimensions using a systematic and quantitative approach. This dissertation contributes to the branding literature by (1) identifying the key dimensions of brand authenticity through the development of a Brand Authenticity Scale, (2) quantifying the effects of brand authenticity on attitudes towards the brand and behavioral intentions, (3) separating brand authenticity from other key brand constructs, (4) investigating the interaction between brand authenticity and brand self-connection, (5) identifying the underlying process driving the effects of brand authenticity, and finally (6) examining the different effects and process of brand authenticity depending on the product type, either functional or experiential.

Eight studies were conducted to identify the dimension of brand authenticity and investigate its effects and process. Four of these studies, one qualitative and three empirical, identify the three key dimensions of brand authenticity (being the category pioneer, adhering to principles and maintaining the original product) and develop a Brand Authenticity Scale. Using the three dimensions of brand authenticity, four experiments (two for functional products and two for experiential products) demonstrate the significant positive effects of brand authenticity on brand attitudes and behavioral intentions. These effects, moderating variables and the process driving these effects vary depending on the type of product. Unlike experiential products, the effects of brand authenticity are moderated by the relationship the consumer has with the brand (brand self-connection) for functional products, with only those consumers who are high in brand self-
connection evaluating the brand more favorably. Whereas while brand trust mediates the effects of brand authenticity for functional products, due to the sensory nature of experiential products, the combination of brand trust and savoring the experience mediates the effects of brand authenticity for experiential products.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Though researchers and marketers do not seem to share a well-defined notion of what authenticity is, people seem to agree that it is an important property of products. Researchers have explored preference and consumption behavior for those consumers who seek authenticity as authenticity is a central factor in consumption (Crosby and Johnson 2003). Although consumers seek authenticity in products they purchase and consume, the nature and meaning of authenticity may vary depending on what product is being evaluated and how it is being consumed (Grayson 2002). Researchers have demonstrated that authenticity is critical in both product consumption and the role consumers play within many subculture and communal consumption experiences (Holt 1997; Muniz, Albert and O’Guinn 2001; Penaloza, 2000). Consumers continue their quest for authenticity in many of their purchases and acquisitions, from functional products such as clothing to more experiential products, including restaurants and vacation spots (Costa and Bamossy 1995; Thompson and Tambyah 1999; Grayson and Shulman 2000; Kozinets 2002). Whether it is experiencing a fantasy outdoor event in a primitive and natural setting (Belk and Costa 1998) or dining at an ethnic food restaurant (Lu and Fine 1995), an authentic experience is desired by event attendees or consumers as they look for a natural, untouched setting, free from the reach of the outside, marketed culture.

In the Western world and the United States in particular, consumers have long been on a quest for authenticity in their consumption experiences. Since the American Industrial Revolution increased mass production, there has been tension between imitation and authenticity
This large-scale mass production and uniformity result from the cultivation of material welfare. Uniformity in products due to mass production has led to a social identity crisis which may be the main reason for today’s interest in heritage, the past, and the original (Laenan 1989). It is this struggle between consuming the mass production while desiring the original that engages and ignites consumers’ quest for an authentic consumption or product experience. Over the last century, this tension has intensified due to technological advances, facilitating the effective simulation of authenticity (Halliday 2001).

Though consumers are engulfed by many product claims of authenticity, many of them false, they still seek authenticity in personal possessions (Grayson and Shulman 2000), brands (Holt 2002), consumer goods (Goldman and Papson 1996), and retail settings (Wallendorf, Lindsey-Mullikin, and Pimentel 1998); moreover, consumers demand authenticity from brand marketers (Beverland 2005; Gilmore and Pine 2007). This goal is heightened as consumers must sift through the claims of authenticity associated with numerous products (Brown 2001). Consumers must constantly evaluate marketing messages in their quest for a truly authentic product, service, or experience.

This ongoing consumer evaluation is not limited only to the physical products that are mass produced in a factory. Consumers also desire authenticity in experiential products. For example, when consumers book a vacation, they seek authenticity in the sights and exhibits they visit. Consumers also search for authenticity in their consumption of media, such as television and music. In the pursuit for a truly authentic media experience, what could be more real than “reality” television? Indeed, over the last decade, the number of reality television programs on the major networks has grown year after year. Consumption of reality television represents a sophisticated quest for authenticity within traditional fiction-oriented television programming.
(Rose and Wood 2005). Traditional, scripted, fiction-oriented programming becomes mass produced. In contrast, reality television appears real and genuine, which increases its authentic value. Other times, television production companies produce media-driven programming used to deceive and influence the audience, thus lowering the authenticity of regular programming (Boorstin 1964). Restaurants and ethnic foods are another area where consumers seek authenticity in experiential products (Lu and Fine 1995). Authenticity in this domain refers to consumers’ preference for food that is made from an original recipe, relies on traditional cooking methods, or incorporates key ingredients local to certain parts of the world to fulfill their need for authenticity.

For a deeper understanding of why consumers partake in this quest for authenticity, it is necessary to understand why authenticity is important in the consumer environment and why some products or brands are perceived as authentic. Specifically, this paper will address the following the questions: What is brand authenticity? What are its key conceptual properties and dimensions? How can we measure brand authenticity? What quantifiable benefits do authentic products experience compared to those that consumers label as inauthentic? What is the underlying process that drives the effects of authenticity on brand attitudes and behavioral intentions? Do these effects vary, depending on the type of products?

**Overview of Chapters**

This dissertation is outlined in the following manner to appropriately and logically address the questions mentioned earlier. In Chapter Two, the concept of brand authenticity is defined and the key dimensions of brand authenticity are discussed. Three main indicators are
identified from previous literature setting up the current research. Chapter Three develops and outlines the conceptual model and theoretical contributions of this dissertation. Using previous literature and market observations, the three dimensions of authenticity (Being the Category Pioneer, Adhering to Principles and Maintaining the Original Product), potential moderator (brand self-connection) and mediators (brand trust for functional products and the combination of brand trust and savoring the experience for experiential products) are proposed. Chapter Four includes one qualitative and six empirical studies which test the hypotheses. Finally, Chapter Five reviews the results from the studies as well as discusses the theoretical and managerial implications of the results, while providing recommendations for future work.
CHAPTER 2: THE BRAND AUTHENTICITY CONSTRUCT

Previous research has identified consequences of consumers’ perceptions of brand authenticity but has not identified the product cues that convey authenticity to consumers. For example, research has shown that brands that are perceived to be authentic are more commercially successful (Beverland 2005). Authentic brands are consumed more in non-brand-focused communities, such as those consumers who watch football or listen to rock music (Kates 2004).

As described earlier, authenticity may be evaluated differently across consumers based on different constructs and cues. My research aims to identify those specific cues that personally convey authenticity to a consumer. The collection of these relevant cues across all consumers forms the socially constructed understanding of authenticity (Peterson 2005). This socially constructed meaning of authenticity builds the foundation of the definition of brand authenticity.

Definitions of Authenticity

To come to a better understanding of what drives authenticity, it is important to understand how consumers use the term in their everyday consumption experiences. To start with, we begin at the ‘universally accepted’ definition of authenticity, taken from the dictionary. Webster’s Dictionary defines authentic as “not false or copied; genuine; real” and “having the origin supported by unquestionable evidence.” However, the term can be used in numerous
contexts that may stretch this definition, or it can be used to convey a different sentiment by different people or groups. Individual consumers, brand managers, art curators, travel agents, and anthropologists seem often to use the term ‘authentic’ differently in their description of products or experiences. Thus, it is critical to understand the drivers and dimensions of authenticity to come to a universal definition and understanding of the term. Authenticity is a much more complex term to consumers than simply being genuine or the original.

Consistent with Webster’s definition, previous research has stressed the concepts of genuineness or reality in definitions of authenticity. For example, while describing self-taught art, Fine considered authenticity in terms of sincerity, innocence, and originality (Fine 2003). Similarly, authenticity has been used to refer to the genuineness, reality, or truth of something (Bendix 1992; Costa and Bamossy 2001). Other research has discussed this notion of genuineness when authenticity is related to other concepts such as being natural, honest, simple, and unspun (Boyle 2003; Bruner 1994). This notion of being genuine is naturally extended to service products and interaction with customers as consumers view brands that are genuine in their dealings with them as authentic (Price, Arnould and Tierney 1995).

Consumers seek the genuine in their quest for authenticity in a society where they must distinguish between the “real” and the “fake” (Arnould and Price 2000; Firat and Venkatesh 1995). Often, authenticity is used to describe an object that is the real thing and not a fake or imitation (Bruner 1994). In addition to genuineness and realness, consumers often seek traditional products in their search for authentic experiences. For example, the wine industry commonly advertises traditional methods of wine making, while obscuring the industrial processes that have increased its quality and lowered prices (Beverland 2005). This notion of
authenticity emphasizing the timeless value demanded by consumers while downplaying commercial motives is critical to understanding brand authenticity (Beverland 2005).

To date, previous research has focused on one dimension that makes a brand authentic, namely the ‘realness’ of the product (Arnould and Price 2000, Bruner 1994). However, it has been shown that authenticity is a fluid construct and can manifest itself in different ways for different products or category types (Cohen 1988, Squire 1994). To account for these various ways, a new parsimonious understanding is needed that accommodates the multiple uses of the term. Based on that and the earlier mentioned focus on the concept of realness, for this dissertation, brand authenticity is defined as: genuineness in its product and its principles. This genuineness can manifest itself in numerous ways reflecting the key dimensions of brand authenticity.

As consumers use genuineness as a broad concept of authenticity, each consumer begins to apply it to the many products or attractions around them, creating an aggregated socially constructed shared meaning. Consumers begin to realize that they are surrounded by authentic and inauthentic items, creating a “cult of authenticity” that invades numerous aspects of modern life (Lowenthal 1992). A goal of these consumers is to identify the authentic products and separate them from inauthentic products and those products falsely labeled as authentic by companies and marketing managers. Though authenticity may vary, depending on each individual’s perspective and quest for authenticity, there remain key, high-level dimensions that highlight the term authenticity.

As discussed, brand authenticity may be manifested by different dimensions for different brands. Regardless of which dimension is highlighted or valued by the consumer, brand
authenticity remains present and exists independent of the dimensions. Over time or due to brand actions, brand authenticity can fluctuate or change. A change in one or more of the dimensions is reflected by a change in brand authenticity, demonstrating a reflective model where causality flows from brand authenticity to the dimensions. A change in brand authenticity will not necessarily cause a change in all of the dimensions, a key property of reflective constructs. Each dimension reflects a different aspect of brand authenticity and it’s the combination of the dimensions which defines the brand authenticity construct. Dimensions may include more than one item to fully represent that area of brand authenticity. Dropping one of the items in a dimension, such as "being the first one in the market", does not alter or change the conceptual construct of brand authenticity, as brand authenticity exists independent of the measures used. Due to the relationship between the brand authenticity construct and its dimensions discussed above, a reflective measurement model is utilized for the brand authenticity scale development.

**Dimensions of Authenticity**

The main dimensions of authenticity identified in previous qualitative research are temporal (e.g. heritage or unbroken product tradition) or spatial (e.g. original product location) in nature. These dimensions are used to attribute authenticity to consumer products (Beverland, Lindgreen and Vink 2008, Thompson, Rindfliesch, and Arsel 2006) and the many forms that authenticity can take (Brown, Kozinets and Sherry 2003) resulting in a lack of a strong clear, concise consensus. The temporal and spatial dimensions represent authenticity, where authenticity reflects an unbroken tradition and continued connection to the original, founding
place (Beverland, Lindreen and Vink 2008). The importance of time and place are further discussed by Peirce in his discussion of authenticity and people’s desires to discover what is truthful and real and what is not (Merrell 2000, Peirce 1998). Peirce described index cues as those that have a factual and spatio-temporal link, which pairs products with either a place, time or both. The genuine or “real thing” are those items which have the factual spatio-temporal link and are supported by index cues, such as creation date, original location or original materials. This genuineness extends past the product itself and into the employees associated with or corporate image of the product. An authentic set of behaviors, from a person or company, are those that represent the genuine, true self and not ones that are acted out to achieve a desired effect. These genuine, true behaviors are instrumental to a brand’s authenticity as they need to be developed over time in order to maintain a consistent impression on the consumer.

As far as dimensions go, recall Beverland and his discussion of wines. His research identifies six attributes of authenticity: heritage and pedigree, stylistics consistency, quality commitments, relationship to place, method of production and downplaying commercial interests (Beverland 2006). Separately, nostalgia, another reported dimension of authenticity, can be identified in two areas: personal and communal (Davis 1979). This nostalgic dimension of authenticity is often highlighted by retro brands, a revival of a brand from a previous time which is update to meet current standards (Brown, Kozinets and Sherry 2003). Though previous qualitative research studies have suggested various indicators for authenticity it is crucial to identify through empirical analysis the key indicators of authenticity.

From the above examples, time plays a critical role in determining a brand’s authenticity. This temporal element can be broken down into three key dimensions. First, the length of time the brand has existed creates a temporal relationship signaling the brand’s heritage and history.
Second, a brand’s commitment to their original product through an unbroken tradition is another way to highlight the time element of authenticity as it demonstrates the continuity of the product. Finally, brands that conduct themselves in a genuine manner over time through employee and/or company interactions with their customers while downplaying commercial interests will benefit from being perceived as authentic.

From the previous literature we do see a universal theme for the meaning of authenticity, encompassing both the temporal and spatial aspects. Three key major dimensions emerge from previous literature: being a pioneer, maintaining product originality and adhering to principles. Each of these dimensions plays a critical role in brand authenticity.
Table 1

Definitions of Authenticity and its Dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Summary Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authenticity</td>
<td>Genuineness in its products and principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dimensions of Brand Authenticity</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being A Category Pioneer</td>
<td>Directing or guiding the industry by being an original founder or pioneer thus serving as an exemplar for the industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining the Original Product</td>
<td>Maintain its original product characteristics (i.e. design, taste, sound, process of manufacturing) despite changes in market conditions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adhering to Principles</td>
<td>Being truthful to their original mission statement and their customers despite changes in market conditions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Being The Category Pioneer

Nothing exemplifies that temporal element better than a brand that was the first on the timeline, the starting point for all imitators. Previous research has defined authenticity as being the original and traditional (Munoz et. al 2006). This research has stated that an object is authentic when it is believed to be “the original” or the “real thing” (Barthel 1996, Peterson 1997). This notion of being the original is evident in numerous consumer contexts such as artwork, food, tourism and clothing, where the original is the first in the market with that design, taste or style. Being the first or one of the first companies in the market demonstrates to customers that the product has a long history of production by being dedicated to the industry. Consumers often attribute an original member with being a pioneer in the industry or a leader in the product category as the company laid the foundation for other companies to enter the market. The original brand serves as a model for companies that follow them.

One way that consumers look for verification that a product is the original or the real thing is by searching for indexical cues (Grayson and Martinec 2004). These indexical cues, (traditional, original attributes) are the most crucial factor in judging whether a product or object is true-born or genuine (Kuzenof, Tregear and Moxey 1997). Specific segments of consumers, such as collectors, rely heavily on special indexical cues (Belk, Wallendorf and Sherry 1989). These indexical cues can include signatures, creation dates, and designations, such as the label of first edition. As a segment of customers rely on these indexical cues, some retailers or restaurants take great steps to underscore the authenticity of its products by constantly referring to the indexical cues of their products that they feel make it authentic, such as creation date. Restaurants can stress their heritage and history by highlighting the year that they were founded.
or utilizing the name of a founder (Anand and Jones 2005). By promoting the year that the restaurant opened, the business can showcase the length of time it has provided service and products and allow customers to think about its past and history. Displaying this history or highlighting they are one of the first few in the category stresses the importance of being a leader or pioneer in their business category. By having a long history of production or being an industry pioneer, the company is demonstrating their leadership in the marketplace. Here leadership is defined as directing or guiding the industry by being an original founder or pioneer thus serving as an exemplar for the industry.

**Maintaining the Original Product**

As noted, consumers often use indexical cues or properties to describe a product’s authenticity when it is believed to be the real thing. Here we see that authenticity is defined by the object’s inherent traditional characteristics, product attributes that are native to the original product. Consumers utilize these original traits that have withstood time and changing market conditions as cues to an object’s authenticity as authentic brands are completely dedicated to the product and not an imposter (Schouten and McAlexander 1995). These original traits that have withstood time represent a commitment to the product and its key characteristics.

In multiple disciplines, perceptions of genuineness, which are highly correlated with perceptions of authenticity, may be based on various factors such as whether an object is made by local people according to a tradition, whether the product is handmade or made in a particular region of the world (Beverland 2005, Fine 2003, MacCannell 1976). For example, voodoo dolls are perceived to be genuine and authentic if they are made in specific regions of Louisiana. If
consumers feel that these products are too commercialized, then authenticity may be undermined (Costa and Bamossy 1995, Holt 2002, Kozinets 2002). Authenticity demands that sources, forms and styles derive from a homogenous and unbroken tradition (Rushdie 1991). Consumers look for this unbroken tradition in their quest for authenticity. This contiguous tradition can take numerous forms such as utilizing the same product material, maintaining the original process of manufacturing, or keeping the original taste over time depending on the industry or product being manufactured. Companies have the opportunity to change the most critical product characteristics over the course of time often due to changing market conditions or consumers fads. By maintaining the key characteristics that consumers desire, a brand can demonstrate its commitment to the original product characteristics.

Consumers are able to see this commitment to original key characteristics and unbroken tradition in ethnic food restaurants, such as a Mexican or Chinese restaurant. The ethnic restaurants often present their food as authentic, which for many consumers is a socially desirable image (Lu and Fine 1995). For some restaurants they may stress that their food is made using the original cooking techniques that are native to the original country, thus maintaining the original process of manufacturing the product. Other restaurants may point out that their ingredients are native to the original country, therefore maintaining the original ingredients and raw materials for their product. In both cases, consumers are looking for the original characteristics that have been maintained over time.

**Adhering To Principles**

Interactions between brand representatives (such as employees and corporate officers) with customers are an important factor in influencing a general consumer population’s
perceptions of a brand’s authenticity (Fraxer-Winsted 1993). The genuine actions, attitudes and truthfulness of the employees can be cues for the customers regarding the overall brand or franchise. In the service encounter, authenticity is often described as “the extent to which the service provider is viewed as genuine, his/her own person, out of the ordinary in the sense of being more than just a role” (Price, Arnould and Deibler 1995). Truthful and genuine dealings with customers is a key factor in determining a brand’s authenticity and in service encounters contributes to service satisfaction and positive consumer feelings (Price, Arnould and Tierney 1995).

These types of interactions are not limited to traditional customer service relationships; in a rather unique way, the music industry serves as another example for this dimension of authenticity as a musical group can be perceived as truthful to its listeners/customers wherein the service provided is the actual product – the music itself. In one Australian study, many mass produced hip hop brands formed in the United States were perceived as inauthentic as they were associated with commercialization and being artificial (Arthur 2006). The US bands were seen as deviating from their original mission and compromising their songs by giving in to commercialization and profit maximization. Some listeners consider a band inauthentic if they “give in to the man” and deviate from their core principles and what they stand for. As seen in the subcultures of the hip hop industry, subgroups may find some subgroups more authentic than others. Those subgroups that hold true to their original core values and original sound may be viewed as more authentic by the other group members. Overall, in the music industry an artist is authentic when they are believed to be “the real thing” (Peterson 1997) and are true to their true sound and principles.
The brand may also demonstrate its authenticity by being truthful to itself by following its company’s mission statement. By following a company’s mission statement, a company or brand is saying that they are committed to certain principles and guiding values that they will follow. Commitment to its mission statement and guiding principles has proven to be the foundation for success for brands such as Toms Shoes and Trader Joes. This is especially true for brands that deal with urgent needs, such as medicine, as the need for authenticity is critical (Ashforth and Humphrey 1993, Hochschild 1983, Romm 1989) and “synthetic compassion (inauthenticity) can be more offensive than none at all” (Thompson 1976).

Review

These three dimensions, Being the Category Pioneer, Maintaining the Original Product and Adhering to Principles, encompass the temporal and spatial dimensions of authenticity discussed in previous qualitative research. Both the product and company elements of authenticity are included in these dimensions, capturing the dual nature of genuineness in product and principles. The next step is to empirically demonstrate that brand authenticity is comprised of these three dimensions.
CHAPTER 3:
THEORETICAL MODEL AND HYPOTHESES

In this chapter, hypotheses for the dimensions, effects, moderators and mediators for brand authenticity are developed based on previous research and market observations. Figure 1 outlines the general conceptual model that summarizes the key hypotheses.

Dimensions of Authenticity

Three dimensions rise from the review of authenticity in other disciplines and previous research: Being the Category Pioneer, Maintaining the Original Product and Adhering To Principles. Being a category pioneer refers to the perception that the company was the first or one of the first in the industry. Companies and brands that are one of the first in their industry can highlight their long history of production and excellence. The heritage of their products signals to consumers that they have considerable experience in their industry and possess knowledge that new competitors do not have. Consumers infer that this history allows the company to be a leader or pioneer in the industry due to its experience. The company may further enhance their perception of authenticity if they invented the product. By being the inventor of the product, the product category started with them, therefore the product history is equal to the brand history.

H1: A brand that is a pioneer in the industry leads to the perception of brand authenticity more than a brand that is not a pioneer.
Second, a firm that maintains its key characteristics, such as original style, design, taste or process of manufacturing leads consumers to feel that a brand or company is authentic (Rushdie 1991). This maintenance of a key characteristic is reflected in the view held by consumers that authentic brands should refuse to compromise their key values and principles to changing market conditions or customer fads (Schouten and McAlexander 1995).

H2: A brand maintaining the key characteristic (e.g., style, taste, design, etc.) of an original product over time will lead to the perception of brand authenticity more than a brand that fails to maintain its key characteristic.

Maintaining an original product is not the only steady state that consumers admire and value. Brands also need to “stick to their guns” and keep their internal values and core essence to be perceived as authentic. A company’s mission statement is an ideal place for a company to announce their values and core essence. Often mission statements are used to convey a “captivating vision” of a company (Kissler 1991). This vision often centers on higher order principles and values rather than just getting things done or fulfilling orders (Lengel and Daft 1988, Martin 1985). These principles represent the ego ideal and a standard for which the company can measure itself (Fairhurst, Jordan Neuwirth 1996). As the mission statement is the standard, it is crucial to keep a consistent image in the minds of the consumer. This can be accomplished at two levels: the corporate level and the employee level. At the corporate level, the mission statement provides the company with an opportunity to stress their “values, positive behaviors, and guiding principles” (Swales and Rogers 1995). By maintaining this image and
following through with the positive behaviors and guiding principles, the company can show their dedication to their values and core essence, thus being true to itself. Similarly, at the employee level, interactions with the customer in a truthful manner leads to perception of authenticity as the relationship between the employee and customer appears to be positive and genuine (Price, Arnould and Tierney 1995).

H3: A company’s behavioral conduct that adheres to its original mission in a truthful manner will lead to the perception of brand authenticity more than a company who does not adhere.

Effects of Authenticity on Evaluations

As companies strive to be perceived as authentic, it is important to understand the benefits that an authentic brand receives. How do consumers view authentic brands differently than inauthentic brands? How can managers utilize their authenticity to increase revenue? As the effects and process of authenticity are not clear to managers, many focus on other product attributes. Authenticity provides an opportunity for these companies to distinguish themselves from their competitors and obtain a competitive advantage.

Previous qualitative research has shown that authentic brands receive numerous benefits compared to their inauthentic counterparts. Authentic brands are perceived as more commercially successful (Beverland 2005) and are consumed at a higher rate than inauthentic brands (Kates 2004). This is consistent with the notion that consumers are on a quest for
authentic brands and desire to purchase and consume them. From previous qualitative research and anecdotal evidence of consumers’ quest for authenticity, we know that brand authenticity produces a positive effect on brand attitudes and evaluations. With these increased evaluations, consumers are more likely to engage in increasingly difficult behaviors, such as paying more, defending the brand and being loyal to the brand. Though evidence exists that these effects do occur through observance, there is a lack of empirical evidence on the effects of brand authenticity. Most importantly, the true understanding of why and how these effects occur demands investigation.

**Effect of Trust and Credibility**

One possible explanation for the effects of brand authenticity on brand attitudes and evaluations is through brand trust. Trust is a key construct of any long-term relationship, even with a brand (Larzelere and Huston 1980, Morgan and Hunt 1994) as trust may evolve from past experience and previous interactions with the brand (Curran et al. 1998, Ravald and Gronroos 1996, Rempel et al. 1985). Trust is a significant variable in the development of a desire to maintain a relationship in the future according to the commitment-trust theory (Morgan and Hunt 1994). Authentic brands possess the previously discussed specific traits that can strengthen the commitment-trust relationship. By not sacrificing their values or maintaining the original product, the brand is showing a commitment to their product and to their customers. This commitment may be viewed by the consumers as an element of their relationship with the brand. Consumers may evaluate an authentic brand as being more trustworthy as the brand remains loyal to their values, maintain their product through product commitment and has a history of
being a leader in the industry. This loyalty to their values can be seen in consumers’ loyalty to
the brand as trust can be an important factor in building an emotional commitment to the brand
that leads to long term loyalty (Hess 1995). Besides loyalty, brand trust can enhance positive
and favorable attitudes and strengthen the relationship with the brand (Fournier 1995, Gurviez

Further definition of brand trust is the “feeling of security held by the consumer in his/her
interaction with the brand, that it is based on the perceptions that the brand is reliable and
responsible for the interests and welfare of the consumer” (Delgado-Ballester et al. 2003). This
is critical as brand trust is a feeling of security that the brand will meet these consumption
expectations by being reliable and maintaining proper intentions towards the customer (Delgado-
Ballester and Munuera-Aleman 2000). These consumer expectations are crucial as the nature of
trust is the expectation of each party involved in a transaction and acting on those expectations
(Deutsch 1958). By adhering to core values and being truthful with their customers, a brand
keeps their responsibility to customers and meeting expectations. Product expectations can also
be met by refusing to compromise the product and maintaining the original product, as both acts
demonstrate commitment to the original agreement between the brand and the consumer.

As people are trusted based on their predictability (Remple et al. 1985), reputation
(Zucker 1986) and competence (Andaleep and Anwar 1996), these characteristics may also
construct trust in a brand. Brands can increase their credibility by maintaining a consistent
marketing mix over time (Erdem and Swait 1998). These antecedents of authenticity, such as
maintaining an original product, are examples of how brands can increase their credibility and
the reputation of the company (Herbig and Milewicz 1995).
As stated earlier, trust can act as the lynch pin to all sorts of relationships; it stands to logical reason, then, that companies strive to build brand trust with their customers. Brand trust can be the single most important attribute a brand can possess (Bainbridge 1997, Kamp 1999, Scott 2000, Smith 2001). This is due to brand trust’s positive effects on other key brand measures such as brand loyalty and brand equity. Trust in the brand is a powerful way to build brand loyalty as consumers feel comfortable with brands they can trust and this overall reliability and predictability prevent brand switching (Fournier 1995, Garbarino and Johnson 1999, Morgan and Hunt 1994). Similarly, previous research has demonstrated brand trust’s ability to increase the overall satisfaction with a brand and its brand equity. An increase in brand equity results in a higher market share, lower relative price, more positive relationship with consumers and overall, higher brand evaluations (Chaudhuri and Holbrook 2001, Delgado-Ballester and Monvera-Alena 2005).

Thus due to brand authenticity’s effect on brand trust and the effect of trust on key brand measures, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H4: Brand trust mediates the effects of authenticity on attitudinal measures.
In Figure 1, the overall conceptual model for the hypothesis is illustrated.

*Figure 1. Conceptual Model for the Process of Brand Authenticity*
Effects of Brand Self-Connection

Though authenticity is hypothesized to have positive effects on brand attitudes through brand trust, these effects may be much more pronounced for specific segments of consumers. This could be due to the various relationships consumers have with the brand, relationships built on the different indicators consumers use for determining a brand’s authenticity. Even within a subgroup revolving around the same brand, authenticity may have different meanings. Some owners of the brand may derive a sense of authenticity from simple ownership, their consumption experience, or through an identity construction and confirmation with the brand (Leigh, Peters, Shelton 2006). This notion of authenticity leading to a process of identity construction and confirmation is an important element of a consumer’s experience with a brand. Some consumers authenticate their identity through role performance and communal commitment to the brand (Leigh, Peters, Shelton 2006). This identity formation and identity relationship is essential to brands as consumers form connections and personal relationships with their brands. This segment of consumers who develop a close, intimate identity connection with the brand may be affected by brand authenticity more than those consumers who lack the identity connection.

It’s not just relationships between a consumer and a brand, or a consumer and another with a brand tie-in that are affected; the consumer’s relationship with self is fair game for brands as well. Based on what they purchase and consume, consumers are asking questions of themselves such as who they are and what is the meaning of their existence (Zavestoski 2002). Consumption experiences are a way for people to construct their self-concepts and personal identity (Belk 1988, Richins 1994). Authenticity also helps consumers develop an identity and self-concept (Gecas 1986, 1991). This occurs as the attributes and characteristics of a
consumer’s possession often mirror those of the consumer thus allowing consumers to create their own true identity through consumption (Kleine, Kleine, Allen 1995). Unlike experiential products, functional products can be possessed and kept, thus are likely to be part of the identity process. As consumers utilize products to create their self-identity and consumers desire to be authentic individuals, brand authenticity becomes a critical element of this process. By purchasing specific brands to create their self-concept, consumers are also forming self-brand connections and relationships (Escalas and Bettman 2005). The brand then takes part in a two-step process and provides value during each phase: the assistance in creating and building the self-identity and then the ability to express the self (McCracken 1989).

Authentic brands present what individuals perceive as a unique opportunity for consumers to attain the goal of being authentic themselves. Brands become linked to the self when the brand is able help consumers reach these goals that are motivated by the self (Escalas and Bettman 2005). A consumer may see traits or characteristics in a brand and find that those traits or characteristics are congruent with who they are leading to brand self-connection. It is through this brand self-connection that authenticity affects product evaluations such as brand attitudes and behavioral intentions. A highly perceived degree of authenticity reminds the consumer of the positive traits about themselves thus reinforcing the positive traits of the brand. Consumers who do not view the authentic traits as personally relevant will not evaluate an authentic product higher as there is no connection between the brand and the self. The possession and ownership of these brands help consumers create, reinforce, and maintain their identity and self-concept through the relationship with the brands. As possession of these products is crucial for the identity process, only functional products will be affected by brand
self-connection and not experiential products, as experiential products do not have the temporal component to maintain and reinforce their identities.

H5: Consumers evaluate a brand significantly higher due to brand authenticity only when they view the brand as personally relevant (i.e. high brand self-connection).

**Authenticity and Product Types**

Though trust in the brand is an important factor in describing the relationship between consumers and the brands they consume, it may be highlighted or amplified in different product classes. The relationship that consumers have with functional products may be different than the relationship consumers have with experiential products due to the sensory component of experiential products. The functional role that products and brands play is universally recognized and accepted (Furby 1978, Holbrook and Hirschman 1982, Park et al 1986). Products are classified as functional products or brands when they satisfy necessary functions and provide a solution to externally-imposed consumption needs or problems. Functional products, products that solve consumer-related problems (Fennell 1978) such as clothing and automobiles, are expected to perform in a certain manner to meet consumer expectations, a key component of brand trust. However, experiential products differ from functional products due to the sensory nature involved with experiential products (Park et al. 1986). It is important to investigate if this sensory component of experiential products alters the process of the effects of brand authenticity. Would the proposed model also hold for all products including experiential
products? Testing the generalizability of the model for various product types is important due to the differing characteristics of each product type.

**Effects of Savoring the Experience**

Authentic products which are more experiential in nature may not follow the identical process path as the functional products described earlier. Consumers expect both functional and experiential products to meet certain expectations making brand trust a key variable in the process. However, the additional, sensory component of experiential products may not be fully captured by brand trust. Experiential products are products that highlight the senses and provide emotional arousal (MacInnis and Jaworski 1989, Myers 1985, Park et al. 1986). These experiential products fulfill the needs for sensory stimulation and arousal. The relationship between the consumer and the brand is based on the one-time consumption experience, not possession based product performance found with functional products.

Consumers often purchase experiential products to put themselves in a positive mood. Savoring maintains and extends the positive emotional experiences with the product as savoring is a form of emotion regulation (Bryant 1989; Tugade and Fredrickson 2006). For authentic products, consumers can savor the originality of the brand, which can extend and intensify the experience with the brand. Previous research has demonstrated the positive effects of savoring. Results suggest that savoring led to increased happiness (Shueller 2006; cited from Lyubomirsky 2008). Experiential products, which are more strongly connected to the senses than functional products, may indulge the senses which is a way of promoting savoring the present experience (Bryant and Veroff 2007; Lyubomirksy 2008).
Consider at this juncture the obvious notion that not all brands can be authentic; the dimensions of brand authenticity naturally exclude some brands. For example, not all brands can be a category pioneer or maintain their original product over a long period of time. Due to this exclusive nature of brand authenticity, when consumers are exposed to authentic brands, it is likely that they wish to enjoy the original experience with the authentic brands. One way to heighten the interactions is to savor the experience by highlighting and focusing on the key dimensions of authenticity that separates that brand from others brand. Consumers are able to accentuate the dimensions of brand authenticity by savoring the uniqueness of the brand and the key characteristics that make the brand unlike any other.

Eating at a Mexican restaurant or watching a classic, original movie are instances where consumers can savor the originality of the brand and opportunities to be in a state where they may mindfully attend to positive emotions. By being aware of these positive emotions they are able to maintain them for a longer period of time. Savoring the originality of the brand by anticipating pleasure and joy from its consumption can enhance the experience. This is due to the experiential product being a one-time consumption experience and consumers can focus in on the consumption experience through savoring. Consumers still expect experiential products to meet specific expectations and meet their needs, thus similar to functional products, brand trust is also important. Consumers expect that the brand is trustworthy with the product’s ingredients or formula and its originality.

H6: For experiential products, savoring the originality and brand trust will mediate the effects of authenticity on attitudinal measures.
In Figure 2, the conceptual model for experiential products is illustrated.

*Figure 2. Conceptual Model for Experiential Products*
CHAPTER 4: EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATIONS

Overview of Scale Development

Authenticity has been discussed in numerous contexts throughout various areas of research, but previous literature has failed to identify and empirically test the key dimensions of authenticity and the measure of brand authenticity. The objective of this research is to identify the dimensions of brand authenticity and develop, test and validate a measure of brand authenticity.

Pretest

To generate a potential list of scale items, 26 qualitative interviews were conducted with undergraduate students at a large West Coast university. Participants were asked to think of a brand that they feel is authentic. A wide range of brands were mentioned from technology companies (Apple) to clothing companies (Nike) to food markets and products (Trader Joes). To avoid any bias of the researcher’s understanding of brand authenticity, no initial definition of brand authenticity was presented to the participants. After participants identified a brand that they felt was authentic, participants explained their reasoning and why they felt this brand was authentic. By keeping the description open-ended, the participants were free to choose or focus on any concept or dimension of brand authenticity they felt was relevant. Reasons for why the participants thought a brand was authentic were recorded and analyzed later. Two independent
judges reviewed the list of reasons and generated a list of items to be included in the scale development. Items that were similar in nature were combined (differed only in wording). Items which were mentioned by only one participant were reviewed and discussed. The interview responses combined with previous literature findings were combined to form a final list of 37 items.

The scale development process consists of two stages, Study 1 and Study 2. The goal of the first stage was to remove any items that consumers did not find important to the construction of brand authenticity thus reducing the number of items on the list. This reduction aided in the development of the significant factors of brand authenticity in the second stage. Also, Study 1 provides an opportunity to combine similar items, remove items that were confusing to the participants and reword the phrasing of some items. In Study 2, only the critical items from Study 1 were included. Factor analysis and scale construction was performed on the results of Study 2. Two versions of Study 2 were conducted, Study 2A and Study 2B, with different populations to ensure a generalizable Brand Authenticity Scale.

**Study 1: Item Reduction for Brand Authenticity Scale**

**Overview**

The purpose of Study 1 was to begin the scale development process by reducing the number of items necessary for the final scale. The initial list of items was taken from individual interviews and previous literature allowing for a general representation of the construct. By
reducing the noise from the item list, statistical analysis of future studies can identify the
dimensions of brand authenticity through factor analysis.

**Method**

307 undergraduate students from a large West Coast university participated in this study
for course credit. A total of 37 items, generated from consumer interviews and previous
literature, were included in this study. All participants received the same list of 37 items.
Respondents used a seven point rating scale, ranging from 1 (Not At All) to 7 (Very Much) to
describe the authenticity of a brand in different scenario (i.e. “How authentic is a brand if it
refuses to compromise its products by not following popular market trends?” or “How authentic
is a brand if it adheres to its original values over time?”) for each of the 37 items.

**Results**

To reduce the number of items, items with a mean rating of less than 4.0 along the seven
point Likert scale were eliminated as well as other questions that were confusing or potentially
misunderstood by the subjects. Items that were not responded to more than 10% of the time
were also eliminated under the assumption that these items were confusing or not understood
(Thomson et. al. 2005). This resulted in a final list of 18 items that were used for Study 2 of the
scale development. (See Table 2 for items).
Table 2

*Items for Brand Authenticity Scale*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How authentic is a brand if it keeps its original product (ex: unique characteristics, design, style) throughout its entire history?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How authentic is a brand if it maintains its original product (ex: unique characteristics, design, style) throughout its entire history?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How authentic is a brand if it refuses to compromise its product by not following popular market trends?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How authentic is a brand if it adheres to its original values and principles over time?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How authentic is a brand if it is faithful to its internal factors, such as core values and true essence?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much more authentic is a brand if another brand imitates its original product (ex: unique characteristics, design, style)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How authentic is a brand if it imitates another brand that consumers believe is authentic?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How authentic is a brand that is first in the market with its product?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How authentic is a brand if it is a leader or pioneer in its industry?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How authentic is a brand if it invented the product?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How authentic is a brand if its product makes you think of old times or how things used to be?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How authentic is a brand if it reminds you of my past/nostalgic?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How authentic is a brand if it produces a product that looks old or dated?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How authentic is a brand if it is truthful in its handling of its customers?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How authentic is a brand if it clearly follows its company's mission statement?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How authentic is a brand if it is faithful to its external factors, such as stock shareholders?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How authentic is a brand if it is one of the first few companies in the industry with that type of product?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How authentic is a brand if it has a long history of producing its product?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Discussion

The goal of Study 1 was to reduce the number of items to be used in the second stage of the scale development, known as Study 2. In this aspect, Study 1 was successful as 19 items were eliminated due to low reported values or were confusing to participants. The majority of items that remain were mentioned in numerous qualitative interviews. Items that were eliminated appeared less frequently in the interviews, suggesting these items lack the representative characteristic of brand authenticity. The items that remain provide initial support for the three key dimensions of brand authenticity proposed.

Study 2A: Brand Authenticity Scale Development

Overview

Study 1 reduced the number of items for the scale development from 37 to 18. The goal of Study 2 was to utilize the remaining 18 items and develop the Brand Authenticity Scale. With only pertinent items remaining, factor analysis was conducted on the results from Study 2 and the key dimensions of brand authenticity identified. The results from Study 2 could provide support for Hypotheses 1-3; Being a Category Pioneer, Adhering to Principles and Maintaining the Original Product will be key dimensions of brand authenticity.
Method

194 undergraduate students from a large West Coast university participated in this study for course credit. The 18 items which emerged from the Study 1 were presented to respondents, survey can be found in Appendix A. Similar to the Pretest, respondents used a seven point rating scale, ranging from 1 (Not At All) to 7 (Very Much) to describe the authenticity of a brand in different scenarios.

Results:

Similar steps from Study 1 were utilized in Study 2 before the factor analysis. To reduce the number of items and strengthen the measure of authenticity, items with a mean rating of less than 4.0 along the seven-point Likert scale or items with a greater than 10% no response were again eliminated. These remaining items were used in an exploratory factor analysis with an oblique (Promax) rotation allowing for the factors to be correlated (Gorsuch 1983). With our sample size, a factor loading of 0.5 or greater is considered significant (Hair, 1995). No cross loading factors were greater than 0.4. A three factor solution, eigenvalues > 1, was generated for the remaining items and consists of ten items (see Table 3).
### Table 3

**Study 2A: Dimensions of Brand Authenticity Revealed by Exploratory Factor Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authenticity Item</th>
<th>Being The Category Pioneer</th>
<th>Adhering to Principles</th>
<th>Maintaining the Original Product</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First in the market</td>
<td><strong>0.84</strong></td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader in the market</td>
<td><strong>0.74</strong></td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invented the product</td>
<td><strong>0.76</strong></td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One of the first few in the market</td>
<td><strong>0.90</strong></td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faithful to internal values</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td><strong>0.78</strong></td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow mission statement</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td><strong>0.82</strong></td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truthful with customers</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td><strong>0.81</strong></td>
<td>-0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeps original product</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td><strong>0.83</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain original product</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td><strong>0.91</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refuses to compromise product</td>
<td>-0.16</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td><strong>0.54</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Factory analysis uses an oblique rotation. Bold values indicate the factor in which each item predominantly loads.

The first factor, labeled Being the Category Pioneer, is comprised of being a leader or pioneer in its industry, inventing the product, being the first or one of the first few companies in the industry. The second factor, labeled Adhering to Principles, consists of being truthful in its handling of its customers, being faithful to its internal values and core essence and clearly following its company’s mission statement. The third factor, labeled Maintaining Product Originality, consists of keeping its original product, maintaining its original product and refusing to compromise its product by not following popular market trends. Correlations between these three dimensions are all positive and significant, but on the lower end supporting the notion that
they remain three independent factors. (Leadership – Maintain Product Originality, \( r = 0.33 \); Leadership – Faithful to Original Mission, \( r = 0.26 \); Maintain Product Originality – Faithful to Original Mission, \( r = 0.28 \)). The usage of oblique rotation is supported by the correlations as oblique rotation should be used in cases with any factor correlations above 0.3 (Tabachnick and Fiddell 2007). The alpha reliability coefficient score for the global Brand Authenticity Scale, obtained by averaging Being the Category Pioneer (\( \alpha = 0.85 \)), Adhering to Principles (\( \alpha = 0.75 \)) and Maintaining the Original Product (\( \alpha = 0.72 \)), was sufficient (\( \alpha = 0.77 \)) and satisfies Nunnally’s (1978) guidelines for scale development.

**Discussion**

Results from Study 2 suggest that Being a Category Pioneer, Adhering to Principles and Maintaining the Original Products are all relevant dimensions of brand authenticity. These are the only three factors that emerge with significant factor loadings. Notably, items which focus on nostalgia and reminding of the past do not load on a significant factor. This suggests that even if a brand looks dated or reminds a consumer of their past, it is not enough to be considered authentic. By identifying the three key significant dimensions of brand authenticity, one can start to measure brand authenticity for various brands and companies. Likewise, after the dimensions of brand authenticity have been discovered through an empirical process, these dimensions can now be manipulated creating high and low brand authenticity scenarios to be used for experimental research. However, before these dimensions of brand authenticity are used in experimental research, the dimensions and Brand Authenticity Scale should be tested for its generalizability. The studies to date have used undergraduate students as participants. Study
2 should be replicated with a general adult population to ensure that adult consumers in general view the key dimensions in a similar fashion and the dimensions are not unique to college students/young adults. One criticism of Study 2 may be that consumers were focusing on brand authenticity at a higher abstract level and may not have been thinking of a specific brand that they view as authentic. Study 2B addresses this by having participants focus on the brand that they feel is most authentic.

**Study 2B: Brand Authenticity Scale Development**

**Overview**

To provide evidence for a generalizable scale and verify a three factor scale form, Study 2B was conducted with a different population and structure. If the three key dimensions of brand authenticity are also found in the general population, it provides further evidence for the strength of the Brand Authenticity Scale. By having participants focus on a specific brand that they view to be authentic rather than an overall, generic viewpoint, the results of Study 2A can be strengthened and generalized.

**Method**

167 members from an online panel, consisting of adults from the United States, participated in the survey for a small monetary compensation. Participants were asked to “name the brand that they feel is most authentic”. No definition or dimensions of brand authenticity
were given, allowing each participant to come to an understanding of what authenticity means to them. After naming the company or brand they felt was most authentic, participants then answered questions regarding the 18 items that were used in the factor analysis from the scale development (including all items that were entered in the analysis and not simply the remaining items that loaded on the three factors, e.g. “Has this brand maintained their original product?”, “Was this brand the first in the industry with its product?” and “Has this brand been faithful to internal values and core essence?”).

**Results:**

Exploratory factor analysis with Promax rotation was utilized on the responses from the participants, a similar analysis conducted during the scale development. Three key factors, identical to those discovered during the initial scale development emerged. These factors with their items and factor loadings can be found in Table 4.
Table 4

*Study 2B: Dimensions of Brand Authenticity Revealed by Exploratory Factor Analysis*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authenticity Item</th>
<th>Being The Category Pioneer</th>
<th>Adhering to Principles</th>
<th>Maintaining the Original Product</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First in the market</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader in the market</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invented the product</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One of the first few in the market</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faithful to internal values</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow mission statement</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truthful with customers</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeps original product</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain original product</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refuses to compromise</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Factory analysis uses an oblique rotation. Bold values indicate the factor in which each item predominantly loads.

Again the same three factors emerged: Being the Category Pioneer, Adhering to Principles and Maintaining the Original Product. The same items loaded on to each of the same three factors. The alpha reliability coefficient score for the global Brand Authenticity scale, obtained by averaging Leadership, Maintain Product Originality and Faithful to Original Mission, was sufficient (α = 0.77) and also satisfies Nunnally’s (1978) guidelines for scale development.
Discussion

This replication of the three factors with the same items strengthens the generalizability and validity of the brand authenticity scale. Further strength of the scale is provided by having the participants think of a brand that is most authentic, concentrating on a familiar brand, rather than thinking of authenticity in general. From both of these studies, Being the Category Pioneer, Adhering to Principles and Maintaining the Original Product are the three key dimensions and opportunities for a brand to be authentic. If a brand is able to capitalize on one or all of these dimensions, the brand may be viewed as authentic and receive additional benefits from this perception.

Study 3: The Effects and Process of Brand Authenticity

Overview

Besides identifying the dimensions of brand authenticity, one of the major goals of this dissertation is to demonstrate empirically for the first time, the effects brand authenticity has on key brand measures, such as attitudes towards the brand and behavioral intentions. This study tests the effect of brand authenticity on attitudes towards the brand and behavioral intentions. The process driving these effects, through brand trust (H4), is also investigated. A fictitious clothing company, New England Skiwear, was utilized for this study.
Method:

A one way two level between subjects design was utilized, manipulating authenticity between subjects. A skiwear clothing company was used as the cover brand. Participants read a company description, with authenticity manipulated using a high authenticity scenario (strong description for the three antecedents of authenticity) and a low authenticity scenario (weak description for the three antecedents of authenticity), which can be found in Appendix B. Participants then answered questions using a seven-point Likert scale. 82 participants from an online panel, MTurk, completed the study for a small compensation.

Measures

_Attitudes Toward the Brand_. Participants were asked to respond to the following three items: “For me, this brand is: (1 = Unfavorable; 7 = Favorable), (1 = Negative; 7 = Positive), and (1 = Bad; 7 = Good). The three items were averaged to form a measure for brand attitudes (Cronbach’s α = .96).

_Brand Trust_. Two items were averaged to form this measure (Cronbach’s α = .88)..
Participants were asked to respond to: “How trustworthy is the New England Skiwear brand” and “How credible is the New England Skiwear brand”.

_Behavioral Intentions_. Utilizing the three levels of increasingly effortful behaviors for consumers to engage in with a brand found in Park et al. 2010, participants responded to the following items. Level 1, the least effortful behaviors, consisted of “I want to buy New England Skiwear”, “I want to recommend New England Skiwear to others such as friends and family
members”, “It would be difficult to switch from the New England Skiwear brand to another brand’s clothing”, “I want to look for more information about New England Skiwear”, and “I want to buy New England Skiwear for others such as friends and family members” (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .91$). Level 2, the moderately effortful behaviors, consisted of “I would be willing to pay more for New England Skiwear than other, non-New England Skiwear” and “I want to defend New England Skiwear against any negative information about it” (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .75$). Level 3, the most effortful behaviors, consisted of “I would be willing to wait to buy New England Skiwear, rather than buy clothing from somewhere else”, “I want to actively spread good words about New England Skiwear to others” and “I want to always buy from New England Skiwear” (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .86$). Items for each effortful level were averaged together to compute the measure ($M = 3.50$).

*Savoring The Experience.* To demonstrate that only brand trust and not savoring the experience mediates the effects of brand authenticity, participants were asked to imagine that they will have the chance to receive some New England Skiwear. Using items from Chun’s (2009) Savoring scale, participants responded to the following five items with regards to how much they agreed with each: “I am fully anticipating how much pleasure I will feel from the prospect of wearing New England Skiwear”, “I am appreciating the feelings that the thoughts of wearing New England Skiwear gives me”, “I am feeling joy from the prospect of wearing New England Skiwear”, “I find myself looking forward to it in ways that gives me pleasure” and “I am aware that I am feeling good by thinking about how I would wear New England Skiwear” (1 = Strongly Disagree; 9 = Strongly Agree) (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .95$).
Results:

The authenticity manipulation was successful with those in the high authenticity condition rating the brand as more authentic than in the low authentic condition, $F(1,82) = 18.32, p < 0.001$. According to Hypothesis 4, brand trust, consisting of two measures: trust and credibility, will mediate the effects of authenticity on attitudes towards the brand. To test this hypothesis, an OLS regression using a bootstrapping technique (Preacher & Hayes 2004) was utilized to determine whether brand trust mediates the effects of authenticity on attitudes towards the brand. Participants in the high authenticity condition reported significantly greater brand trust values than those in the low authenticity condition, $B = 1.42, SE = .48, t(81) = 2.95, p < 0.01$. Brand trust has a positive significant effect on attitudes towards the brand, $B = 0.44, SE = .03, t(81) = 13.55, p < 0.001$. Participants in the high authenticity condition evaluated attitudes towards the brand significantly higher than those in the low authenticity condition, 5.93 vs. 5.42, $B = 0.58, SE = 0.25, t(81) = 2.34, p < 0.05$. When brand trust is accounted for, the significant effect of authenticity is reduced to non-significance, $B = -0.01, SE = .15, t(80) = -0.09, p > 0.5$. The 95% bias-corrected interval obtained from the bootstrapping analysis excludes zero, (0.23, 1.00), suggesting a significant indirect effect (Preacher & Hayes 2004). These results provide support and evidence for Hypothesis 4 that brand trust mediates the effects of authenticity on attitudes towards the brand.
A major purpose of this study is to investigate how strong the effects are of brand authenticity on attitudes and behaviors requiring greater behavioral commitment. Previous research has shown that strong attitudes result from effortful thought and these attitudes help guide behavior (Petty and Cacioppo 1986), often due to the personal relevance of the brand or
product. As the personal connection to the brand may be relevant to the effects of brand authenticity, it is important to investigate the effect of authenticity on various types of behaviors. Similarly, consumers may feel a close relationship with the brand, which might lead to positive affect (Mikulincer and Shaver 2007). If consumers view authentic brands as one with themselves they should allocate greater resources towards the brand and be willing to engage in more effortful and difficult behavioral intentions. From Figure 3, we see that brand authenticity has a significant effect on all three levels of behavioral intentions, even the most difficult to engage in. For the least difficult behaviors, Level 1, those in the high authenticity condition were significantly more likely to engage in the behaviors than those in the low authenticity condition, 4.41 vs. 3.52, p < 0.001. Similarly, for the moderate difficult behaviors, Level 2, brand authenticity has a significant effect on willingness to engage, 3.95 vs. 2.97, p < .01. Even for the most difficult behaviors, always buying New England Skiwear or waiting to buy New England Skiwear over other brands now, brand authenticity significantly increases likelihood to partake in the behaviors, 3.44 vs. 2.77, p < 0.05.
To test if authenticity influences other constructs besides brand trust that may mediate the relationship, a separate analysis was conducted. It is possible that when consumers view authentic products they automatically infer other attributes of the brand from a potential halo effect. For example, consumers may view authentic products as higher in quality. Considerable prior research has demonstrated that higher quality leads to elevated attitudes towards the brand. To test this scenario, a separate analysis was conducted. First, a regression was conducted to investigate the effects of authenticity on perceived quality. Results suggest that authenticity does not significantly increase perceived quality of the brand, $B = 0.21$, $SE = 0.22$, $t(81) = 0.95$, $p > 0.05$ **p < 0.01**

*Figure 4. Study 3 – Willingness to Engage in Increasingly Difficult Behaviors*
0.40. As authenticity does not have a significant effect on perceived quality, quality is eliminated as a potential mediator of the effects of authenticity. This result is likely due to the fact that quality was kept constant in both authentic conditions. In both conditions, a high quality, five out of five stars, was utilized leading to a likely ceiling effect for quality.

Hypothesis 6 states that along with brand trust, savoring the experience mediates the effects of brand authenticity for experiential products. To ensure that this is not the case for all products, a separate mediation analysis was conducted including savoring the experience as a potential mediator. For the simultaneous mediation, savoring the experience must first mediate the effects of brand authenticity by itself. A regression was conducted to investigate the effects of authenticity on savoring the experience. Brand authenticity does not lead to significantly higher savoring, $B = 0.66, SE = 0.44, t(81) = 1.48, p > 0.10$. These results provide additional support for Hypothesis 4, that brand trust alone fully mediates the effects of brand authenticity on attitudes towards the brand.

**Discussion:**

By creating the two company scenarios for high and low authenticity which used the three indicators developed in Study 1 and having a main effect for authenticity, the scale and indicators of authenticity are strengthened as this provides evidence of the measure. Study 3 investigated the underlying process driving the effects of authenticity and provided support for Hypothesis 4 that brand trust mediates the effects of authenticity on attitudes towards the brand. Results suggest that it is brand trust (trust and credibility) that mediates the effects and not other attributes such as quality. It is important to note that authenticity does not affect the perceived
quality of the brand. This is likely due to the fact that in both authenticity conditions, quality is constant and high with a five out of five star rating.

Study 3 demonstrates the effects and process of brand authenticity but was limited in certain aspects. Though a main effect for authenticity’s effect on other constructs such as trustworthiness and credibility was found, the correlation between authenticity and these two constructs is high at 0.64 and 0.63 respectively. Study 3 does not separate authenticity from these constructs and provide evidence that authenticity causes higher levels of trust and credibility and not the other way around.

Separating brand authenticity from other constructs such as trust and credibility is necessary. To investigate if brand authenticity is a higher order construct, questions about the relationship between authenticity and other measures such as trust and credibility were presented to 123 participants. Four statements, two focusing on trust and two on credibility, were presented to participants randomly manipulating order: If a brand is authentic in its unique characteristics, style and design, does it mean that a brand is also trustworthy (credible) and If a brand is trustworthy (credible) does it necessarily mean that a brand is also authentic in its unique characteristics, style and design. Question order was manipulated but did not produce a significant effect, so all questions were collapsed. Results are presented in Table 5.
Results demonstrate that authenticity is a separate construct from trust and credibility.

Authenticity implies trust, $M = 4.43$, but trust does not necessarily imply authenticity, $M = 3.69$.

Authenticity implies credibility (F(6,116) = 3.89, $p < 0.01$), $M = 4.74$, but credibility does not necessarily imply authenticity, $M = 3.85$ (F(6,116) = 3.08, $p < 0.01$). These significant differences provide further evidence of authenticity’s effect on other constructs and the higher order nature of authenticity compared to other constructs.

Study 4: Consumer Segments Affected by Brand Authenticity

Study 4 investigates the relationship consumers have with authentic brands and the role of brand self-connection to understand these behaviors. It investigates brand self-connection as a potential moderator for these effects (H5). Study 3 demonstrated the main effects for brand authenticity and identified brand trust as a mediator driving the effects. Results provide evidence
that for authentic brands, consumers are willing to engage in even the most difficult behavior. This is proposed by the closeness and personal relevance of the brand, brand self-connection.

Method:

A one way two level between subjects design was utilized, manipulating authenticity between subjects. 90 participants from a large West Coast university participated in the survey for course credit. A similar authenticity manipulation, manipulation of the three key dimensions, that was utilized in Study 3 was used. A shoe company, Camper Shoes, was used as the cover story for the product. Participants read a description of the shoe brand and then responded to questions using a seven-point Likert scale. The brand descriptions, including the authenticity manipulations, can be found in Appendix C.

Measures:

Attitudes Toward the Brand. Participants were asked to respond to the following three items: “For me, this brand is: (1 = Unfavorable; 7 = Favorable), (1 = Negative; 7 = Positive), and (1 = Bad; 7 = Good). The three items were averaged to form a measure for brand attitudes (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .96$).

Brand Self-Connection. Using key elements from Escalas and Bettman’s (2003) Brand Self-Connection scale, participants were asked “The Camper Shoe brand seems to relate to me personally”, “The Camper Shoe brand description seemed to be written with me in mind”, “I can easily relate myself to the Camper Shoe brand” and “I can easily form similarities between
myself and the Camper Shoe brand” (1 = Not At All; 7 = Very Much). The four items were averaged to form a measure of brand self-connection (Cronbach’s α = .93).

Results:

The authenticity manipulation was successful, F(1, 89) = 114.71, p < 0.001, indicating that participants in the high authenticity condition viewed the company as more authentic (M = 6.36) than those in the low authenticity condition (M = 3.83). An effect for authenticity was found for trustworthiness (F(1,89) = 38.13, p < 0.001) and credibility (F(1,89) = 22.84, p < 0.001). Participants in the high authenticity condition (M = 5.89, 6.09 for trustworthiness and credibility respectively) evaluated the brand significantly higher than in the low authenticity condition (M = 4.35, 5.02). The effect for brand authenticity on these constructs can be seen in Figure 5.
Authenticity influenced attitudes (an average of a three item measure of “unfavorable/favorable”, “bad/good” and “negative/positive”). High authenticity (M = 5.79) leads to significantly higher attitudes (F = 1,89) = 33.19, p < 0.001) than low authenticity (M = 4.45). Additionally, participants in the high authenticity condition (M = $53.26) were willing to pay significantly more than participants in the low authenticity condition (M = $44.24), F(1,89) = 5.88, p <0.05, demonstrating the continued benefits of authenticity.

After reading the brand description, participants responded to four brand self-connection measures: “The brand seems to relate to me personally”, “I can easily relate myself to this
brand”, “The brand descriptions seem to be written with me in mind”, and “I can easily form similarity judgments between myself and the brand description”. A potential moderator of the effects of authenticity is brand self-connection, the process by which customers match their own traits and self-concept with the traits of the brand. As stated in Hypothesis 5, only customers who view the brand as authentic and see those same traits in themselves will evaluate the product higher as they feel a closer relationship with the brand as they see themselves in the brand. Regression analysis supports Hypothesis 5. There was a significant interaction between authenticity and brand self-connection, \( B = 0.10, SE = 0.05, t(1,87) = 2.06, p < 0.05 \).

Authenticity does not have a significant effect on attitudes towards the brand for those participants with low brand self-connection. However, authenticity does have a significant effect on attitudes towards the brand for those with high brand self-connection as seen in Figure 6.

![Figure 6](image_url)

*Figure 6.* Study 4 – Interaction of Brand Authenticity and Brand Self-Connection on Attitudes Toward the Brand
Discussion:

This study provides additional evidence of the effects of brand authenticity on key attitudinal and behavioral measures. Additionally, participants viewed the authentic brands as more trustworthy, credible, favorable and were willing to pay a higher price.

The results also provide support for Hypothesis 5 that only authentic brands that are personally relevant and high in brand self-connection, benefit from the effects of authenticity. Even in the high authenticity condition, when participants do not feel the traits of the authentic brand are personally relevant, participants may still recognize the brand as authentic (higher authentic ratings) but these feelings of authenticity may not carryover to increased attitudes towards the brand. Thus it is crucial for brands to implement a two part strategy in their brand communication. Brands must not only convey their authenticity to their customers but they must also do so in a way that appears personally relevant to the consumer and in a manner that the consumers can connect the brand traits with their own self-traits.

Study 5: The Process Driving the Effects of Brand Authenticity for Experiential Products

This study investigates the underlying cognition processing driving the effects of authenticity on attitudes towards the brand for experiential products. As mentioned above, experiential products differ from functional products on one critical dimension, mainly their appeal to the senses. Due to this sensory nature of experiential products, it is predicted that
brand trust alone will not fully mediate the effects of authenticity. To account for the sensory component, savoring the experience is added to the model. According to Hypothesis 6, brand trust and savoring the experience will mediate the effects of authenticity.

**Method:**

A one way two level between subjects design was utilized, manipulating authenticity between subjects in a similar manner as Study 3. 94 participants from Amazon’s online panel, MTurk, completed the study for a small compensation. For the experiential product, El Medrano’s Mexican restaurant was utilized as the brand. Similar to Study 3, participants read a company description, with authenticity manipulated using a high scenario (strong description for the three antecedents of authenticity) and a low scenario (weak description for the three antecedents of authenticity), which can be found in Appendix D. Then participants evaluated the brand using a seven point likert scale. The savoring measure consisted of the average of five items taken from Chun’s 2009 Savoring Scale.

**Measures**

*Attitudes Towards the Brand.* Participants were asked to respond to the following three items: “For me, this brand is: (1 = Unfavorable; 7 = Favorable), (1 = Negative; 7 = Positive), and (1 = Bad; 7 = Good). The three items were averaged to form a measure for brand attitudes (Cronbach’s α = .95).
Brand Trust. Two items were averaged to form this measure (Cronbach’s α = .88).
Participants were asked to respond to: “How trustworthy is the El Medrano’s brand” and “How credible is the El Medrano’s brand”.

Behavioral Intentions. Utilizing the three levels of increasingly difficult behaviors for consumers to engage in with a brand found in Park et al. 2010, participants responded to the following items. Level 1, the least difficult behaviors, consisted of “I want to buy from El Medrano's”, “I want to recommend El Medrano's food to others such as friends and family members”, “It would be difficult to switch from El Medrano's food to another restaurant's food”, “I want to look for more information about El Medrano's”, and “I want to buy El Medrano's food for others such as friends and family members” (Cronbach’s α = .87). Level 2, the moderately difficult behaviors, consisted of “I would be willing to pay more for El Medrano's food than other, non-El Medrano food” and “I want to defend El Medrano's against any negative information about it” (Cronbach’s α = .69). Level 3, the most difficult behaviors, consisted of “I would be willing to wait to buy El Medrano's food, rather than buy food from somewhere else”, “I want to actively spread good words about El Medrano's to others” and “I want to always buy from El Medrano's” (Cronbach’s α = .80).

Savoring The Experience. Participants were asked to assume that they will have a chance to taste El Medrano’s food shortly and respond to the following items. Using items from Chun’s (2009) Savoring Scale, participants responded to the following five items with regards to how much they agreed with each: “I am fully anticipating how much pleasure I will feel from the prospect of eating El Medrano’s food”, “I am appreciating the feelings that the thoughts of eating El Medrano’s food gives me”, “I am feeling joy from the prospect of eating El Medrano’s food”, “I find myself looking forward to it in ways that gives me pleasure” and “I am aware that I am
feeling good by thinking about how I would eat El Medrano’s food” (1 = Strongly Disagree; 9 = Strongly Agree) (Cronbach’s α = .96).

 Results:

 Again the manipulation for authenticity was successful, F(1,93) = 89.18, p <0.001. In Study 3, brand authenticity was shown to go beyond simply attitudes and willingness to pay and have significant effects on increasingly difficult behavioral intentions for functional products. A similar analysis is conducted for experiential products and results are similar, demonstrating the powerful and far reaching effects of brand authenticity. Participants were increasingly more willing to participate in the least difficult behaviors, 4.99 vs. 3.68 for high and low authenticity respectively, F(1,93) = 34.86, p < 0.0001. Similar results hold for moderately difficult behavior, 4.29 vs. 3.11, F(1,93)= 18.12, p < 0.001, and for the most difficult behaviors, 4.37 vs. 3.10, F(1,93) = 26.06, p < 0.001. Results can be seen in Figure 7.
Hypothesis 6 predicts that the combination of brand trust and savoring the experience simultaneously mediate the effects of authenticity on attitudes towards the brand. A similar approach to that used in Study 5 was utilized for analysis, using Hayes’ PROCESS technique, which again uses an OLS regression with a bootstrapping technique (Hayes 2013). Participants in the high authenticity condition reported significantly greater brand trust values than those in the low authenticity condition, B = 7.20, SE = 0.80, t(92) = 8.95, p < 0.001. Brand trust has a significant effect on attitudes towards the brand, B = 0.39, SE = .03, t(92) = 11.54, p < 0.001. Similarly, participants in the high authenticity condition reported significantly higher levels of savoring the experience, B = 4.35, SE = 0.67, t(92) = 6.47, p < 0.001. This increased savoring has a significant effect on attitudes towards the brand, B = 0.52, SE = 0.05, t(92) = 10.45, p <
Participants in the high authenticity condition held significantly higher attitudes towards the brand than those in the low authenticity condition, $B = 3.45$, $SE = 0.43$, $t(92) = 8.11$, $p < 0.001$. However, when brand trust and savoring the experience are both accounted for simultaneously, the significant effect of authenticity is reduced and no longer significant, $B = 0.67$, $SE = 0.44$, $t(90) = 1.52$, $p > .10$. The 95% bias-corrected interval obtained from the bootstrapping analysis excludes zero for both brand trust and savoring the experience respectively, (0.60, 2.15) and (0.82, 2.64), suggesting a significant indirect effect for both brand trust and savoring the experience (Preacher and Hayes 2004).
Figure 8. Study 5 – Mediation Results for Experiential Product
To test if savoring the experience and brand trust are both necessary for full mediation, the analysis was conducted separately with only brand trust and savoring the experience. Brand trust alone did not reduce the significant effect of authenticity to insignificant, $B = 1.19$, $SE = 0.47$, $t(91) = 2.52$, $p = 0.01$. Likewise, savoring the experience by itself did not reduce the significant effect of authenticity to insignificant, $B = 1.75$, $SE = 0.42$, $t(91) = 4.15$, $p < 0.001$. From these two alternative analyses, we see that neither brand trust nor savoring the experience fully mediate the effects of authenticity on attitudes towards the brand by themselves. Only
when brand trust and savoring the experience are both accounted for in a simultaneous process, do the two variables fully mediate the effects of authenticity. These results provide support for Hypothesis 7, that both brand trust and savoring the experience mediate the effects of brand authenticity for experiential products. It is important to recognize the sensory component and nature of experiential products, thus creating the need for the second mediator, savoring the experience.

**Discussion:**

Similar to the results of Study 3 for functional products, brand authenticity can have a powerful effect for experiential products on key brand constructs such as trust and credibility as well as brand evaluations and behaviors, including attitudes and willingness to pay. Consumers rate authentic brands considerably higher, trust them more and are willing to pay a significant price premium for authentic brands. Brands with experiential products in their portfolio can benefit from the effects of authenticity by building or stressing the three key dimensions of authenticity.

Two important findings emerge from this study. First, unlike functional products, brand trust alone does not fully mediate the effects of brand authenticity on brand attitudes. Brand Trust and Savoring the Experience simultaneously mediate the effects of brand authenticity, as experiential products contain a sensory component which is not present in functional products. Similar to functional products, experiential products that are authentic lead to greater levels of brand trust, a key construct and goal for brand managers. Marketers can highlight the authenticity of their experiential products to increase consumers’ trust in their brand. As brand
authenticity leads to higher savoring, it may be beneficial to remind consumers to savor the experience and make them mindful of the experience, thus realizing the positive effects of brand authenticity.

Second, brand authenticity is shown to significantly increase not only attitudes towards the brand but also various difficulty levels of behavioral intentions. Consumers are not only willing to pay more for authentic brands but they are also willing to engage in difficult and costly behavioral intentions such as defend the brand against negative information, be loyal to the brand and wait extended periods of time for the brand over other brands. These results demonstrate that brand authenticity is a very powerful construct and goes beyond simple attitudes towards the brand.

**Study 6: Effects of Brand Authenticity for Experiential Products**

As previously stated, experiential products differ from functional products on numerous dimensions and thus may not be affected by authenticity in an identical way due to the sensory nature of experiential products. This study investigates the effects of authenticity for experiential products utilizing a similar design and methodology to Study 4.

**Method:**

74 participants from an online panel (Amazon’s MTurk) participated in the survey, found in Appendix E, for a small compensation. Similar to Study 5, a one way two level
between subjects design was utilized, manipulating authenticity between subjects in a similar manner. Participants read a brand description for an experiential product. El Medrano’s Mexican restaurant was utilized as the company description. Participants then answered questions using a seven-point Likert scale.

**Measures**

*Attitudes Toward the Brand.* Participants were asked to respond to the following three items: “For me, this brand is: (1 = Unfavorable; 7 = Favorable), (1 = Negative; 7 = Positive), and (1 = Bad; 7 = Good).” The three items were averaged to form a measure for brand attitudes (Cronbach’s α = .95).

*Brand Self-Connection.* Using key elements from Escalas and Bettman (2003), participants were asked “The El Medrano brand seems to relate to me personally”, “The El Medrano brand description seemed to be written with me in mind”, “I can easily relate myself to the El Medrano brand” and “I can easily form similarities between myself and the El Medrano brand” (1 = Not At All; 7 = Very Much). The four items were averaged to form a measure of brand self-connection (Cronbach’s α = .97).

**Results:**

Again, the authenticity manipulation was successful, F(1,73) = 81.00, p < 0.001, indicating that participants in the high authenticity condition viewed the company as more authentic (M = 6.68) than those in the low authenticity condition (M = 4.11). Similar to Study
4, main effects were found for other constructs such as trustworthiness (F(1,73) = 40.95, p < 0.001) and credibility (F(1,73) = 48.13, p < 0.001) where participants in the high authenticity condition (M = 6.50, 6.54 for trustworthiness and credibility respectively) evaluated the brand significantly higher than in the low authenticity condition (M = 4.83, 4.59). Results can be seen in Figure 10.

![Bar chart showing effects of authenticity on other constructs](image)

* p < 0.05  ** p < 0.01

*Figure 10. Study 6 – Effects of Authenticity on Other Constructs for Experiential Products*

A main effect for authenticity was also found for attitudes, F(1,73) = 23.80, where those in the high authentic condition evaluated attitudes towards the brand significantly higher than in the low authentic condition, M = 6.47 vs. 5.13 respectively. Participants in the high authenticity
condition (M = $9.25) were willing to pay significantly more than participants in the low authenticity condition (M = $7.95), F(1,73) = 9.08, p <0.01. These results suggest that authenticity has powerful effects not only for functional products but for experiential products as well.

According to Hypothesis 5, only those consumers with a high brand self-connection will experience the effects of authenticity. To test, H5, a regression analysis was conducted, regressing authenticity and brand self-connection on attitudes towards the brand. Results reveal a significant main effect for authenticity, B = 2.06, SE = 0.61, t(1,68) = 3.41, p <0.001, a significant main effect for brand self-connection, B = 0.12, SE = .03, t(1,68) = 4.38, p <0.001, and a significant interaction between authenticity and brand self-connection, B = -.08 SE = .04, t(1,68) = -2.17, p < 0.05. Again, brand self-connection moderates the effects of brand authenticity. However, these results appear to mirror the regression results for functional products. For experiential products, results suggest that a brand can receive significantly higher attitudes towards the brand if one of two brand constructs (brand authenticity and brand self-connection) are present than if none are present. If a brand is either authentic (regardless of brand self-connection) or has a high brand self-connection (regardless of brand authenticity), brand attitudes are significantly greater than when the brand is low in authenticity and low in brand self-connection. Only consumers who view the brand as not authentic and have a low brand self-connection evaluate the brand significantly less than those consumers that either view the brand as authentic or have a high brand self-connection. These results suggest that experiential brands can receive benefits from either high brand authenticity or high brand self-connection, but the combination of both high brand authenticity and high brand self-connection does not provide additional benefits.
Discussion:

The effects of authenticity are evident again from this study. Unlike functional products where only consumers that view the brand as authentic and have a strong brand self-connection evaluate the brand more favorably, for experiential products consumers who either view the brand as authentic or have a high brand self-connection evaluate the brand more favorably. This buffering moderation occurs as the effect of the moderator, brand self-connection diminishes as brand authenticity increases. For those with low brand self-connection, brand authenticity has a
significant effect on attitudes towards the brand. However, as brand self-connection increases, the effect of brand authenticity on attitudes towards the brand decreases. When brand self-connection is high, the effect of brand authenticity is minimal and non-significant. This allows the firm to consider numerous marketing and advertising strategies. For those consumers who are high in brand self-connection, stressing a brand’s authenticity to this segment may not be the most beneficial strategy for firms. Results suggest that the brand can receive more favorable evaluations by either possessing brand authenticity or brand self-connection with their customers. However, for those consumers who are low in brand self-connection, the results suggest that a brand could receive more favorable evaluations by building or highlighting their authenticity in their marketing strategy.

It is important to understand why these results are counter to Hypothesis 5 and the findings for functional product in Study 4. A post-hoc hypothesis for the differing results is that functional products are considered possessions and are owned for a longer amount of time. As functional products have a longer product life, the product and brand have a greater amount of time to be assimilated into the self and create a stronger brand self-connection. However, experiential products are not possessed but rather consumed. Also, many experiential products are short lived and do not have the product life of functional products. Due to this shorter time with the consumer and being consumed rather than possessed, there may not be the interaction between authenticity and the self-connection with the brand.

Another possible explanation for these differing results can be traced back to the differences between functional and experiential products. Consumers’ primary motive for experiential products is to enjoy the experience with the product. As the experience is the focus, a consumer may not focus on the relationship they have with the brand. For functional products,
product performance is the primary concern and the consumer is focused on the brand meeting performance expectations. The performance of the brand can be a reflection of the individual as they chose the brand, thus the relationship between the self and the brand may be more relevant.

Experiential Products

![Graph showing comparison of effects of brand authenticity and brand self-connection on attitudes towards the brand for experiential versus functional products.]

Functional Products

![Graph showing comparison of effects of brand authenticity and brand self-connection on attitudes towards the brand for experiential versus functional products.]

*Figure 12.* Comparison of Effects of Brand Authenticity and Brand Self-Connection on Attitudes Towards the Brand for Experiential versus Functional Products
CHAPTER 5: OVERALL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Contribution

This dissertation demonstrates the powerful effects of brand authenticity, a theoretically and managerially relevant construct. Due to the lack of previous empirical research on what brand authenticity is and its effects, the Brand Authenticity Scale was empirically developed. Three key dimensions emerge: Being the Category Pioneer, Adhering to Principles and Maintaining the Original Product. Utilizing these three key dimensions as the representation of brand authenticity, six empirical studies demonstrate the significant positive effects of brand authenticity on key brand measures such as attitudes and behavioral intentions. Results from the studies show the effects and process of brand authenticity differ for various product categories, functional versus experiential products. For example, the consumer’s brand self-connection is only a necessary boundary condition for the positive effects of brand authenticity for functional products and not experiential products. This is a critical finding for marketers as the need to build this personal brand self-connection is necessary for authentic products and marketers need to concentrate their efforts to establish and build this relationship. Also, due to the sensory nature of experiential products, savoring the experience along with brand trust fully mediate the effects of brand authenticity. This differs from functional products where brand trust alone fully mediates the effects of brand authenticity.
With my previously discussed theoretical model and empirical studies serving as a backbone, the following section discusses the managerial implications of this research and proposes possible future research areas to build on these findings.

**Managerial Implications**

The above theoretical contributions are useful for not only academic researchers but also for marketing and brand managers. Products are commonly labeled as authentic. One only needs to walk into any department store to see companies advertise their brands as authentic or go to a supermarket or restaurant and see food described as authentic. By describing their products as authentic, companies seem to hope to benefit from the effects of authenticity. However, simply labeling or advertising a product may not be sufficient as the consumer may look for signals of the key dimensions of brand authenticity to validate this advertisement. The three dimensions of brand authenticity provide managers with directions for shaping their advertising campaigns so that they are reaping the benefits of authenticity. If a brand is strong in one of these dimensions a firm can utilize that strength and focus on that dimension in its advertising campaign. Consumers will then have information to support the claims of authenticity and can assist in the evaluation of the claims of authenticity that the brand makes.

Brand self-connection was found to be a necessary boundary condition for functional products. Though brand authenticity is appreciated and valued by all consumers, the consumers who feel a strong self-connection with the brand authenticity are stronger in their positive response to the brand. In order to benefit from authenticity, marketers of functional products must focus on both elements of the process: create a strong brand self-connection and highlight
the strong dimension(s) of authenticity for their brand. Results suggest that simply being authentic is not enough for functional products to benefit from authenticity. Marketers may be able to combine their efforts by focusing on building the personal relationships with their customers through advertising the dimensions of authenticity. Some of the dimensions of authenticity are personal traits that many people strive for in their own lives. For example, many people strive to be a “pioneer” by being a leader in a workplace, organization or social circle. If marketers can connect the link between the consumer’s desire to be a leader and the company being a pioneer/leader, they may be able to build a strong brand self-connection. Consumers also have a desire to follow their core principles and be truthful with others, similar to the core of the dimension “Adhering to Principles”. By highlighting the dimensions of brand authenticity that consumers can feel a strong personal connection with allow the brand to reap the rewards of brand authenticity.

Companies are consistently trying to build and maintain consumers’ trust in their brand. Brand trust is an extremely important construct as brand trust leads to repeat purchasing, loyalty and willingness to pay a price premium. Results from this dissertation suggest that brand authenticity leads to higher levels of brand trust for both functional products and experiential products which then leads to significantly greater attitudes towards the brand and behavioral intentions. As authenticity is a way to build brand trust, companies have an incentive to actively highlight their authenticity or take actions to strengthen it. Though building authenticity is not an easy task and it is difficult to be authentic, brands can benefit from the effects of brand authenticity and gain a critical competitive advantage over their competitors.
Future Research

This dissertation investigated the key dimensions of brand authenticity and the effects of brand authenticity on attitudinal and behavioral measures. After the dimensions of brand authenticity were discovered empirically, high and low authenticity scenarios were created. In each scenario, quality remained constant across conditions and was high in all cases, either 4.5 or 5.0 stars out of 5.0. However, not all brands that are highly authentic may also be high in quality. There are many brands, such as Ramen Noodles, that are rated very high in authenticity but are also rated average to below average in quality. It would be interesting to investigate the interaction between quality and brand authenticity.

In Study 3, brand authenticity did not have a significant impact on perceived quality of the brand. This was due to the brand being describe as high quality and receiving a five out five star rating, resulting in both the high authentic brand and low authentic brand both receiving high quality ratings (6.05 vs. 5.89 respectively). It would be important to investigate the relationship between brand authenticity and product quality for those brands that are not high quality (five out of five star product rating). Are these two constructs mutually exclusive? Or does one lead to an increase/decrease in the other? In the studies presented here, authenticity significantly enhanced attitudes, behavioral intentions, brand trust, attitude strength, and other brand constructs.

Perhaps authenticity has a halo effect on other constructs, such as quality, for lower quality brands. This halo effect would not have been realized in the reported study as the brand was very high in quality to begin with and a possible ceiling effect could have occurred. A brand that is high in authenticity may be able to elevate the perceived quality of their products by
highlighting their authenticity to the consumers if they currently have a low perceived quality. The consumers may evaluate the quality of the high authentic brand higher than that of a low authentic brand even if the quality of the two brands are equal, due to the halo effect of authenticity. This could be tested by manipulating both brand authenticity and product quality. If there is a halo effect of authenticity on product quality (where authenticity increased the perception of the low quality brand), a sequential mediation analysis could be investigated where brand authenticity leads to higher perceived quality, leading to brand trust, which increases attitudinal and behavioral intentions.

Further investigating the relationship between quality and authenticity, high end luxury brands are often associated with high quality. Luxury brands, such as Rolex and Prada, are often described as authentic by consumers. This occurs for two reasons: to distinguish the real, genuine luxury brand from the counterfeit brands and due to the dimensions identified in the Brand Authenticity Scale. Counterfeit products are a common problem for luxury brands. If there is an interaction between quality and authenticity, consumers may evaluate the quality of a product incorrectly if they believe that the brand is authentic, not necessarily the product. For example, if an authentic brand is counterfeited, does the counterfeit product receive any of the benefits of brand authenticity such as increased attitudes or possible increased perceived quality? Though consumers recognize that the product is a counterfeit and not the real thing, does the authenticity of the counterfeited brand carry over to the counterfeit product raising attitudes and quality of this product? Or, do the effects of brand authenticity disappear regardless of the brand once consumers realize that the product itself is a counterfeit product even though the brand that is being copied is authentic? Many consumers purchase counterfeit products simply to signal the brand and fully realize the lower product quality. If the brand is at core of the decision to
purchase counterfeit goods, then brand traits such as brand authenticity may influence the attitudes of the counterfeit product.

The interaction between brand authenticity and brand self-connection was investigated for both functional products and experiential products. Hypothesis 5, consumers will evaluate an authentic brand more favorable when the brand is high in brand self-connection than when it is not, was only supported for functional products. Experiential products received the benefits of brand authenticity regardless of the brand self-connection, either high or low. One post hoc explanation is that functional products are more of possessions while experiential products are more about consumption. Future studies investigating this explanation could be conducted to identify why brand authenticity and brand self-connection interact only for functional products. This interaction impacts how brands advertise their products and the efforts they take to build relationships with their customers. Could some experiential products benefit from a high brand self-connection and thus have an interaction with authenticity? One could examine experiential products that affect the physical self or used to attain a goal for the self (i.e. become healthier or lose weight), such as vitamins or supplements.

For established industries and market sectors, the dimensions of authenticity, i.e. Being the Category Pioneer and Maintaining the Original Product, may be time dependent. Brands in new or emerging industries may not be as affected by time as they still may be considered an early entrant into a young industry, even if the ratio of time in the market to total market time is the same (i.e. 2-year-old brand in a 5-year-old market vs. a 40-year-old brand in a 100-year-old market). This element of time may also be seen from the consumer perspective in regards to their consumption over time. In the studies presented, the measures taken were after one exposure of a brand. It is possible that multiple exposures over time may dampen the effects of
brand authenticity as the authentic product becomes the norm and is expected. One could examine the sustainability of brand authenticity over time and whether these effects wear off over time through repeated consumption. Brands, specifically those of experiential products, may benefit from authenticity because they are seen as unique or special, i.e. delicious chocolate or a bold wine. However, if they are repeatedly purchased or consumed, this uniqueness may wear off and instead be viewed as a “normal” product or an everyday product. If this is the case, the positive effects of authenticity may begin to decrease as consumers may not highlight the authenticity in the brand as it may no longer be a defining characteristic that sets it apart from other brands as they get used to it. This is especially true for experiential products such as food. The first time one consumes the brand, one can truly savor the experience with the brand as it truly is a unique, original experience. After repeated consumption, consumers may not savor the experience as strongly as the brand may lose some of its uniqueness and originality as it has become a stable consumption item.

In repeated surveys (Study 2A and Study 2B) and interviews (qualitative pre-test study) when consumers are asked “What is the most authentic brand/company?”, one of the top three responses is always Apple, a technology company. The fact that a technology company is highly authentic may seem ironic to some as technology is made to adapt and change, traits that appear to be counter to the core of brand authenticity. However, after a deeper look at why consumers believe that Apple is authentic, the key dimensions are evident. Consumers highlight that Apple keeps an aesthetic design and consistently creates easy to use operating systems and software. By being a market share leader in the cellphone and tablet industry by continuously reinventing product categories, Apple positions itself as a category pioneer. This leads to the larger question of the balance and interaction between brand authenticity and technological advances. Are some
technological advances too great that a brand’s authenticity may diminish due to the new product’s vast differences from the older product? Or vice versa, if a company fails to advance their technology in a reasonable fashion, could their brand authenticity be damaged? Depending on the industry, the relative importance of each dimension of brand authenticity may differ. For industries where adhering to a key mission statements such as creativity or being a category pioneer are the most important dimensions of brand authenticity, a technology company may be able to stress that dimension while advancing their products through technological changes or advancements, while maintaining their authenticity. As our society becomes more reliant on technology and upgrades to many ordinary, functional products such as refrigerators and thermostats, researchers and marketers need to better understand the process of maintaining a brand’s authenticity through technological advancements.
REFERENCES


Appendix A

Survey for Brand Authenticity Scale Development for Study 2A

How authentic is a brand if it **keeps its original product (ex: unique characteristics, design, style)** throughout its entire history?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not at All Very Much

How authentic is a brand if it **maintains its original product (ex: unique characteristics, design, style)** throughout its entire history?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not at All Very Much

How authentic is a brand if it **refuses to compromise its product by not following popular market trends**?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not at All Very Much

How authentic is a brand if it **adheres to its original value and principles** over time?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not at All Very Much

How authentic is a brand if it is **faithful to its internal factors**, such as its core values and true essence?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not at All Very Much
How much more authentic is a brand if another brand imitates its original product (ex: unique characteristics, design style)?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at All Very Much

How authentic is a brand if it imitates another brand that consumers believe is authentic?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at All Very Much

How authentic is a brand that is first in the market with its product?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at All Very Much

How authentic is a brand if it is a leader or pioneer in its industry?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at All Very Much

How authentic is a brand if it invented the product?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at All Very Much

How authentic is a brand if its product makes you think of old times or how things used to be?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at All Very Much

How authentic is a brand if it reminds you of my past/nostalgic?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at All Very Much
How authentic is a brand if it produces a product that **looks old or dated**?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not at All                               Very Much

How authentic is a brand if it is **truthful in its handling of its customers**?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not at All                               Very Much

How authentic is a brand if it clearly **follows its company’s mission statement**?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not at All                               Very Much

How authentic is a brand if it is **faithful to its external factors**, such as shareholders?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not at All                               Very Much

How authentic is a brand if it is **one of the first few companies in the industry with that type of product**?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not at All                               Very Much

How authentic is a brand if it has a **long history of producing** its product?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not at All                               Very Much
Appendix B
Survey for Study 3

(High Authenticity Condition)

Please read the following company description, then answer the questions that follow.

New England Skiwear, NES, is a manufacturer of jackets and ski boots located in Vermont. The NES brand is the living history of a family business from a great family of innovators, who for more than a century have dedicated themselves to the skiwear industry.

Here is key information below that you are asked to read carefully.

New England Skiwear, NES, is a leading manufacturer of winter clothes located in Essex, Vermont. They were the first company to introduce the ski jacket in 1884. New England Skiwear has continued to manufacturer their jackets in the same way since 1924. NES continues to utilize the same, high quality fabrics they have used from day one despite fluctuating prices of the fabrics. This commitment to high quality was clear even when fabric prices nearly doubled in the late 1970’s. NES’s mission statement is to produce high quality products that their customers can utilize while causally enjoying skiing and fully experiencing being outside with nature. NES has continued to maintain their mission statement by producing jackets that fit with the notion of enjoying skiing and the outdoors. Despite popular clothing trends in the 60’s and 70’s, New England Skiwear has maintained their original, sleek design that separates them from their competitors. The traditional style of NES’s ski jackets has remained a constant trademark for their company and is worn by skiers of all ages.

Has the NES brand maintained its original design?

NO      YES

Has the NES brand been committed to its mission statement?

NO      YES
New England Skiwear, NES, is a manufacturer of jackets and ski boots located in Vermont. The NES brand is the living history of a family business from a great family of innovators, who for more than a century have dedicated themselves to the skiwear industry.

**Here is key information below that you are asked to read carefully.**

New England Skiwear, NES, is a leading manufacturer of winter clothes located in Essex, Vermont. They were the **third** company to introduce the ski jacket in 1924. New England Skiwear has **continued to change** how they manufacturer their jackets since 1924. Due to fluctuating prices of fabrics, NES **changes the fabrics** they utilize though this did not affect the high quality of their product. This flexibility of fabric used was clear when fabric prices nearly doubled in the late 1970’s.

NES's mission statement is to produce high quality products that their customers can utilize while causally enjoying skiing and fully experiencing being outside with nature. NES has changed their focus as skiing trends have changed from causally enjoying skiing to high thrill skiing.

Due to popular clothing trends in the 60’s and 70’s, New England Skiwear has frequently **changed their original design** to conform with their competitors and popular market trends. The traditional style of NES’s ski jackets has fluctuated for their company over the years due to these market conditions.

Has the NES brand maintained its original design?

NO  YES

Has the NES brand been committed to its mission statement?

NO  YES
Please answer the following questions regarding the NES skiwear brand after reading the brand description.

How **authentic** is the NES skiwear brand?

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  
Not at All  Very Much

How **genuine** is the NES skiwear brand?

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  
Not at All  Very Much

How **trustworthy** is the NES skiwear brand?

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  
Not at All  Very Much

How **credible** is the NES skiwear brand?

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  
Not at All  Very Much

For me, the NES skiwear brand is:

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  
Unfavorable  Favorable

For me, the NES skiwear brand is:

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  
Bad  Good

For me, the NES skiwear brand is:

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  
Negative  Positive

How certain are you about your thoughts and feelings towards the NES skiwear brand?

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  
Not at All  Very Much
How confident are you about your thoughts and feelings towards the NES skiwear brand?

1  2  3  4  5  6  7

Not at All  Very Much

The average price for a jacket in the category of NES skiwear is $50. How much would you be willing to pay for a jacket from NES skiwear?

$_____.__________

I want to buy this brand.

1  2  3  4  5  6  7

Not at All  Very Much

I want to use products with the NES logo.

1  2  3  4  5  6  7

Not at All  Very Much

I want to see and wear this brand.

1  2  3  4  5  6  7

Not at All  Very Much

I want to look for more information about this brand.

1  2  3  4  5  6  7

Not at All  Very Much

I want to be loyal to this brand.

1  2  3  4  5  6  7

Not at All  Very Much

I want to defend this brand against any negative information about it.

1  2  3  4  5  6  7

Not at All  Very Much
It would be difficult to switch from a NES skiwear jacket to a non-NES jacket.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at All Very Much

I want to resist any negative information about it.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at All Very Much

I want to join the community of this brand by being an active member.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at All Very Much

I want to actively spread good words about this brand to others.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at All Very Much

I want to always buy the new model of NES skiwear.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at All Very Much

I want to buy NES skiwear for others such as friends and family members.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at All Very Much

I want to recommend NES skiwear to others such as friends and family members.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at All Very Much

I want to donate my time and energy to promote this brand to others.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at All Very Much
I would be willing to pay more for NES skiwear than other, non-NES skiwear.

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  
Not at All  Very Much

I would be willing to wait several months to buy NES skiwear, rather than buy non-NES skiwear.

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  
Not at All  Very Much

Assuming that you will have a chance to wear a jacket from NES skiwear shortly, please answer the following questions.

I am fully anticipating how much pleasure I will feel from the prospect of wearing NES skiwear.

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  
Strongly Disagree  Strongly Agree

I am appreciating the feelings that the thoughts of wearing NES skiwear gives me.

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  
Strongly Disagree  Strongly Agree

I am feeling joy from the prospect of wearing NES skiwear.

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  
Strongly Disagree  Strongly Agree

I find myself looking forward to it in ways that gives me pleasure.

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  
Strongly Disagree  Strongly Agree

I am aware that I am feeling good by thinking about how I would wear NES skiwear.

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  
Strongly Disagree  Strongly Agree
Appendix C

Survey for Study 4

(High Authenticity Condition)

Please read the following company description, then answer the questions that follow.

Camper shoes is a manufacturer of boots and shoes located in Barcelona, Spain. The Camper brand is the living history of a family business from a great family of innovators, who for more than a century have dedicated themselves to the footwear industry. Here is key information below that you are asked to read carefully.

In 1877, Camper was the first company to utilize machines to manufacturer shoes, introducing new technology to the industry. It also promotes its mission that people should learn and enjoy the concept of leisurely walking, as opposed to running. It adheres to its original mission of leisurely walking even today. Camper also continues to utilize the same, high quality fabrics they have used from day one despite fluctuating prices of the leather, rubber and other materials. This commitment to the original materials was clear even when leather prices nearly doubled in the late 1970’s.

Despite popular shoe trends in the 60’s and 70’s, Camper has maintained their original, sleek design that separates them from their competitors. The traditional style of Camper shoes has remained a constant trademark for their company.

Industry and fashion experts have consistently awarded Camper a quality rating of 5 stars (out of 5). This rating means that the Camper brand is superior to other leading brands in quality.

Has the Camper shoe brand maintained its original design and mission statement?

NO

YES

Was the Camper shoe brand the first to use machines in its manufacturing process and invent new technology?

NO

YES
Please read the following company description, then answer the questions that follow.

Camper shoes is a manufacturer of boots and shoes located in Barcelona, Spain. The Camper brand is the living history of a family business from a great family of innovators, who for more than a century have dedicated themselves to the footwear industry. Here is key information below that you are asked to read carefully.

In 1877, Camper was the third company to utilize machines to manufacturer shoes, copying new technology from competitors. It originally promoted its mission that people should learn and enjoy the concept of leisurely walking, as opposed to running. Now-a-days, Camper has changed its mission to promote running instead of leisurely walking.

Camper has continued to change how they manufacturer their shoes. Due to fluctuating prices of materials, Camper has often changed which materials they utilize, but these material changes did not affect the high quality at all. Due to popular fashion trends in the 60’s and 70’s, Camper has frequently changed their original design to conform with their competitors and popular market trends. The traditional style of Camper shoes has fluctuated for their company over the years due to these market conditions.

Industry and fashion experts have consistently awarded Camper a quality rating of 5 stars (out of 5). This rating means that the Camper brand is superior to other leading brands in quality.

Has the Camper shoe brand maintained its original design and mission statement?

NO  YES

Was the Camper shoe brand the first to use machines in its manufacturing process and invent new technology?

NO  YES
Please answer the following questions regarding the Camper shoe brand after reading the brand description.

How **authentic** is the Camper shoe brand?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not at All  Very Much

How **genuine** is the Camper shoe brand?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not at All  Very Much

How **unique** is the Camper shoe brand?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not at All  Very Much

How **sincere** is the Camper shoe brand?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not at All  Very Much

How **trustworthy** is the Camper shoe brand?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not at All  Very Much

How **credible** is the Camper shoe brand?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not at All  Very Much

How good/poor is the **quality** is the Camper shoe brand?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not at All  Very Much
How good/poor is the **reliability** is the Camper shoe brand?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not at All                                    Very Much

Is the Camper shoe brand a **pioneer** of shoe products?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not at All                                    Very Much

Is the Camper shoe brand a **an innovative leader** of shoe products (ex: innovative leader in the way to make, wear or design shoes)?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not at All                                    Very Much

For me, the Camper shoe brand is:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Unfavorable                                    Favorable

For me, the Camper shoe brand is:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Bad                                            Good

For me, the Camper shoe brand is:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Negative                                       Positive

How certain are you about your thoughts and feelings towards the Camper shoe brand?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not at All                                    Very Much
How confident are you about your thoughts and feelings towards the Camper shoe brand?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not at All                                Very Much

The average price for shoes in the category of Camper's shoes is $50. How much would you be willing to pay for a pair of Camper shoes?

$____ . __________

The Camper brand seemed to relate to me personally.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not at All                                Very Much

I can easily relate myself to the Camper brand.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not at All                                Very Much

The Camper brand description seemed to be written with me in mind.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not at All                                Very Much

I can easily form similarity judgments between myself and the Camper brand description.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not at All                                Very Much
Appendix D

Survey for Study 5 - Experiential Product Survey

(High Authenticity Condition)

Please read the following company description, then answer the questions that follow.

El Medrano's is a Mexican restaurant located in New York City. The El Medrano brand is the living history of a family business from a great family of culinary experts, who for more than a century have dedicated themselves to the food industry.

In 1894, El Medrano’s was the first Mexican restaurant to open its doors in New York City, introducing a new cuisine to the area. The restaurant promotes its mission of providing high quality, original, local Mexican cuisine to its customers rather than quick, generic meals. It adheres to its original mission of original, local cuisine even to this day by using fresh ingredients and recipes native to Mexico. El Medrano’s continues to utilize the same, high quality ingredients they have used from day one despite fluctuating prices of beans, meats and other ingredients. This commitment to the original recipe and ingredients was clear even when black and pinto bean prices nearly doubled in the late 1970’s.

Despite popular restaurant trends in the 60’s and 70’s, El Medrano’s has maintained their original, local taste that separates them from their competitors. The traditional, unique, fresh taste of El Medrano’s has remained a constant trademark for their company as consumers can taste the fresh ingredients used.

El Medrano's constantly receives high marks for its food from both customers and food critics, averaging over 4.5 stars out of 5 on food sites such as Yelp, Zagat and Grubhub. This means that El Medrano's food is superior to other leading restaurants in quality.

Has the El Medrano brand maintained its original taste and mission statement?

NO

YES

Was the El Medrano brand the first Mexican restaurant in New York City?

NO

YES
(Low Authenticity Condition)

Please read the following company description, then answer the questions that follow.

El Medrano's is a Mexican restaurant located in New York City. The El Medrano brand is the living history of a family business from a great family of culinary experts, who for more than a century have dedicated themselves to the food industry.

El Medrano's constantly receives high marks for its food from both customers and food critics, averaging over 4.5 stars out of 5 on food sites such as Yelp, Zagat and Grubhub. This means that El Medrano's food is superior to other leading restaurants in quality.

In 1894, El Medrano’s was the eighth Mexican restaurant to open its doors in New York City, copying cuisine from others in the area. El Medrano uses ingredients often seen in the industry which gives their food a common taste. The restaurant’s mission is to “provide high quality, original, local Mexican cuisine to its customers rather than quick, generic meals”. However, El Medrano has continued to change its recipes and its ingredients it uses as customers want a quicker ‘on the go’ meal. Due to fluctuating prices of beans, meats and other ingredients, El Medrano changes its menu and ingredients, but these changes did not affect the quality at all.

Due to popular restaurant trends in the 60’s and 70’s, El Medrano’s has frequently changed their original taste and recipes to conform with their competitors and popular market trends. The traditional taste of El Medrano’s has fluctuated over the years due to these changing market conditions.

El Medrano's constantly receives high marks for its food from both customers and food critics, averaging over 4.5 stars out of 5 on food sites such as Yelp, Zagat and Grubhub. This means that El Medrano's food is superior to other leading restaurants in quality.

Has the El Medrano brand maintained its original taste and mission statement?

   NO       YES

Was the El Medrano brand the first Mexican restaurant in New York City?

   NO       YES
Please answer the following questions regarding El Medrano's after reading the brand description.

How authentic is the El Medrano's brand/restaurant?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at All Very Much

How genuine is the El Medrano's brand/restaurant?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at All Very Much

How trustworthy is the El Medrano's brand/restaurant?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at All Very Much

How credible is the El Medrano's brand/restaurant?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at All Very Much

How much do you enjoy eating Mexican food?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at All Very Much

For me, the El Medrano's brand/restaurant is:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Unfavorable Favorable

For me, the El Medrano's brand/restaurant is:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Bad Good

For me, the El Medrano's brand/restaurant is:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Negative Positive
How certain are you about your thoughts and feelings towards the El Medrano's restaurant?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at All Very Much

How confident are you about your thoughts and feelings towards the El Medrano's restaurant?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at All Very Much

The average price for a burrito dinner with chips, rice and beans in the category of El Medrano's is $8. How much would you be willing to pay for a burrito dinner at El Medrano's?

$ _____ . ______________

I want to buy from El Medrano's.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at All Very Much

I want to use cooking utensils with the El Medrano’s logo.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at All Very Much

I want to look for more information about El Medrano's.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at All Very Much

I want to be loyal to El Medrano's.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at All Very Much

I want to defend El Medrano's against any negative information about it.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at All Very Much
It would be difficult to switch from El Medrano's food to another restaurant's food.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at All Very Much

I want to resist any negative information about El Medrano's.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at All Very Much

I want to join the community of El Medrano's by being an active member.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at All Very Much

I want to actively spread good words about El Medrano's to others.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at All Very Much

I want to always buy from El Medrano's.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at All Very Much

I want to buy El Medrano's food for others such as friends and family members.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at All Very Much

I want to recommend El Medrano's food to others such as friends and family members.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at All Very Much

I want to donate my time and energy to promote El Medrano's to others.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at All Very Much
I would be willing to pay more for El Medrano's food than other, non-El Medrano food.

Not at All

Very Much

I would be willing to wait to buy El Medrano's food, rather than buy food from somewhere else.

Not at All

Very Much

Assuming that you will have a chance to taste El Medrano's food shortly, please answer the following questions.

I am fully anticipating how much pleasure I will feel from the prospect of eating El Medrano's food.

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

I am appreciating the feelings that the thoughts of eating El Medraono's food gives me.

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

I am feeling joy from the prospect of eating El Medrano's food.

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

I find myself looking forward to it in ways that gives me pleasure.

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

I am aware that I am feeling good by thinking about how I would eat El Medrano's food.

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree
Appendix E
Survey for Study 6 - Experiential Product Survey

(High Authenticity Condition)

Please read the following company description, then answer the questions that follow.

El Medrano’s is a Mexican restaurant located in New York City. The El Medrano brand is the living history of a family business from a great family of culinary experts, who for more than a century have dedicated themselves to the food industry.

In 1894, El Medrano’s was the first Mexican restaurant to open its doors in New York City, introducing a new cuisine to the area. The restaurant promotes its mission of providing high quality, original, local Mexican cuisine to its customers rather than quick, generic meals. It adheres to its original mission of original, local cuisine even to this day by using fresh ingredients and recipes native to Mexico. El Medrano’s continues to utilize the same, high quality ingredients they have used from day one despite fluctuating prices of beans, meats and other ingredients. This commitment to the original recipe and ingredients was clear even when black and pinto bean prices nearly doubled in the late 1970’s.

Despite popular restaurant trends in the 60’s and 70’s, El Medrano’s has maintained their original, local taste that separates them from their competitors. The traditional, unique, fresh taste of El Medrano’s has remained a constant trademark for their company as consumers can taste the fresh ingredients used.

El Medrano's constantly receives high marks for its food from both customers and food critics, averaging over 4.5 stars out of 5 on food sites such as Yelp, Zagat and Grubhub. This means that El Medrano's food is superior to other leading restaurants in quality.

Has the El Medrano brand maintained its original taste and mission statement?

NO

YES

Was the El Medrano brand the first Mexican restaurant in New York City?

NO

YES
El Medrano's is a Mexican restaurant located in New York City. The El Medrano brand is the living history of a family business from a great family of culinary experts, who for more than a century have dedicated themselves to the food industry.

El Medrano's constantly receives high marks for its food from both customers and food critics, averaging over 4.5 stars out of 5 on food sites such as Yelp, Zagat and Grubhub. This means that El Medrano's food is superior to other leading restaurants in quality.

In 1894, El Medrano’s was the eighth Mexican restaurant to open its doors in New York City, copying cuisine from others in the area. El Medrano uses ingredients often seen in the industry which gives their food a common taste. The restaurant’s mission is to “provide high quality, original, local Mexican cuisine to its customers rather than quick, generic meals”. However, El Medrano has continued to change its recipes and its ingredients it uses as customers want a quicker ‘on the go’ meal. Due to fluctuating prices of beans, meats and other ingredients, El Medrano changes its menu and ingredients, but these changes did not affect the quality at all.

Due to popular restaurant trends in the 60’s and 70’s, El Medrano’s has frequently changed their original taste and recipes to conform with their competitors and popular market trends. The traditional taste of El Medrano’s has fluctuated over the years due to these changing market conditions.

El Medrano's constantly receives high marks for its food from both customers and food critics, averaging over 4.5 stars out of 5 on food sites such as Yelp, Zagat and Grubhub. This means that El Medrano's food is superior to other leading restaurants in quality.

Has the El Medrano brand maintained its original taste and mission statement?

NO

YES

Was the El Medrano brand the first Mexican restaurant in New York City?

NO

YES
Please answer the following questions regarding El Medrano's after reading the brand description.

How **authentic** is the El Medrano's brand/restaurant?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at All Very Much

How **genuine** is the El Medrano's brand/restaurant?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at All Very Much

How **trustworthy** is the El Medrano's brand/restaurant?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at All Very Much

How **credible** is the El Medrano's brand/restaurant?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at All Very Much

How much do you enjoy eating Mexican food?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at All Very Much

For me, the El Medrano's brand/restaurant is:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Unfavorable Favorable

For me, the El Medrano's brand/restaurant is:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Bad Good

For me, the El Medrano's brand/restaurant is:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Negative Positive
How certain are you about your thoughts and feelings towards the El Medrano's restaurant?

1  2  3  4  5  6  7
Not at All  Very Much

How confident are you about your thoughts and feelings towards the El Medrano's restaurant?

1  2  3  4  5  6  7
Not at All  Very Much

The average price for a burrito dinner with chips, rice and beans in the category of El Medrano's is $8. How much would you be willing to pay for a burrito dinner at El Medrano's?

$ _____ . ______________

The El Medrano's brand seemed to relate to me personally.

1  2  3  4  5  6  7
Not at All  Very Much

I can easily relate myself to the El Medrano's brand.

1  2  3  4  5  6  7
Not at All  Very Much

The El Medrano's brand description seemed to be written with me in mind.

1  2  3  4  5  6  7
Not at All  Very Much

I can easily form similarity judgments between myself and the El Medrano's brand description.

1  2  3  4  5  6  7
Not at All  Very Much