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"Spreading the good word": Toward an understanding of brand evangelism

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“SPREADING THE GOOD WORD”: TOWARD AN UNDERSTANDING
OF BRAND EVANGELISM

A Dissertation

by

SAMUEL K. DOSS

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Texas-Pan American
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

August 2010

Major Subject: Marketing

“SPREADING THE GOOD WORD”: TOWARD AN UNDERSTANDING
OF BRAND EVANGELISM

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August 2010

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ABSTRACT

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The objective of this dissertation is to better understand the phenomenon of brand evangelism and the dimensions that are involved in a consumer becoming a brand evangelist. A brand evangelist is a consumer who actively “spreads the good word” of the brand while attempting to influence others’ consumption behavior. Through the development and testing of a model, this study helps to realize the concepts that are involved in a consumer becoming a brand evangelist. To date, little research has examined the dimensions of brand evangelism. It is proposed here that the attributes leading to brand evangelism include brand satisfaction, brand salience, consumer-brand identification, social motivation, and opinion leadership. The results of the study garnered some mixed results. It was found that consumer-brand identification, brand salience, and opinion leadership are all concepts that lead to brand evangelism. However, neither brand satisfaction nor sociability has a statistically significant relationship directly related with brand evangelism. It must be noted, though, that brand satisfaction does have a mediated relationship with brand evangelism through consumer-brand identification. Finally, for the overall proposed model, it was found that there is no statistical difference between males and females, income level of higher/lower than \$100,000, ages of 50 years and older versus under 50 years of age, or being a college graduate versus an individual without a bachelor’s degree.

DEDICATION

In memory of Kristin Utter Fedders.

To my parents, Charles and Jeanette Doss.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

*“When I evangelize and witness to people, I make a few interesting points.”
—Stroud, in reference to Macintosh Computer¹*

The objective of this dissertation is to better understand the phenomenon of brand evangelism. Through the development and testing of a model, this study attempts to explain the dimensions that are involved in a consumer becoming a brand evangelist. A brand evangelist is a consumer who actively “spreads the good word” of the brand while attempting to influence others’ consumption behavior. This behavior goes beyond word-of-mouth communication as it often unprompted, generally positive, and has the intention of “converting” an individual to consume the brand.

To date, little research has examined the attributes of brand evangelism. It is proposed that the constructs leading to brand evangelism include consumer-brand identification, brand salience, brand satisfaction, sociability, and opinion leadership. Consumer-brand identification is the consumer’s self-defined perception of oneness and identification with a brand (Bhattacharya and Sen 2003; Kuenzel and Halliday 2008). Brand salience is the unaided “top-of-mind awareness” that an individual possesses in reference to a product category (Alba and Chattopadhyay 1986; Miller and Berry 1998). Brand satisfaction, used here, is the pleasurable fulfillment of a consumer’s needs, wants, or desires in reference to the brand (Oliver 1997). In

¹ Please see Appendix A concerning quotes used throughout this study.

contrast to satisfaction, sociability reflects the internal desire for human connection and the engagement of relationships (McAdams 1988; Reynolds and Beatty 1999). Finally, opinion leadership is the degree to which certain individuals have an influence on other people's attitudes and behavior concerning a brand (Baumgarten 1975; Rogers 2003).

Purpose of the Research

Although normative pieces have been written concerning brand evangelism (e.g., Collier 2007; Friedman 2007; Kawasaki 1991; McConnell and Huba 2003; Roberts 2004; Rusticus 2006), to date, little research has viewed brand evangelism beyond propositions and cursory attention. This study will further the understanding of brand evangelism by analyzing the dimensions and relationships that lead to this concept. The concept of brand evangelism can be described as the active communication of information, ideas, and feelings concerning a specific brand freely, and often times fervently, to others in a desire to influence consumption behavior. For example, Lyn (age 56) considers herself a brand evangelist for Truvia Sweetener—"If I'm at a function, if it's there, we'll use it. I usually bring it with me, so I'll volunteer it to someone who's using a sweetener not a sugar. I've done that at family reunions." Kawasaki (1991, p. 3) states that "evangelism is the process of convincing people to believe in your product or idea as much as you do. It means selling your dream by using fervor, zeal, guts, and cunning." By including variables from sociology, psychology, and consumer behavior literature, this study will establish a foundation of work for future research.

From a managerial perspective, companies may want to focus limited resources on consumers who possess the characteristics that lead to becoming a brand evangelist. These individual consumers act as "champions" on behalf of the brand and become unpaid

spokespeople (Bhattacharya and Sen 2003). Brand evangelism goes beyond a repurchase commitment and construed loyalty of a brand. As loyalty is not necessarily reflected in satisfaction (Oliver 1999), brand managers need to know the influence the variables have beyond brand satisfaction. These variables are considered here to include consumer-brand identification, brand salience, sociability, and opinion leadership. By further understanding the influences and relationships of these constructs, companies may concentrate efforts in maintaining and growing the evangelists who are active and committed in their consumption behavior.

Contribution of the Research

Because brands are a reflection of the corporation (Williams 2000), understandably, there has been much research concerning how brands are created and developed by firms, as well as used and adopted by the consumers (Fournier 1998; Holt 2002, 2004; Kates 2004; Klein 2002; Levy 1959; Muniz and O'Guinn 2001, Muniz and Schau 2005, 2007, O'Guinn and Muniz 2005; Thompson, Rindfleisch and Arsel 2006). To date, the discussions have centered on the brands themselves, and communities developed around the brands, with little research concerning those consumers who become evangelists on behalf of the brand.

One dimension of brand evangelism that has been proposed but not tested is consumer-brand identification. Consumer-brand identification is the consumer's self-defined perception of oneness with a brand (Bhattacharya and Sen 2003; Kuenzel and Halliday 2008). This oneness is not necessarily how the brand establishes, defines, or enhances an existing identity for the consumer but how the consumer identifies with the brand. There then becomes a sense of "we-ness" with the brand as a social identity is developed. This identification, subsequently, leads to the consumer becoming a strong and positive word-of-mouth communicator, as stated by

Bhattacharya and Sen (2003, p. 76-77) where “consumers become champions of the companies with whom they identify.”

An additional feature unique to this study includes the use of brand salience as an influencer on the relationship of satisfaction and consumer-brand identification. Brand salience is the prominence and unaided “top-of-mind” awareness a consumer has in consideration of a brand (Alba and Chattopadhyay 1986; Miller and Berry 1998). The inclusion of this construct will help clarify the mixed (significant and insignificant) results that previous studies have found concerning the satisfaction and consumer-brand identification relationship. By clarifying the relationship, a stronger foundation concerning satisfaction and identification can be established for future studies.

Most importantly, this research is the first to fully develop and test a model to understand the interrelationships of the variables leading to brand evangelism.

Outline of the Research

The remaining parts of the dissertation are outlined as follows. Chapter 2 reviews the literature on the core concepts of brands, brand evangelism, and brand satisfaction. Additionally, social identity theory is presented as the foundation of consumer-brand identification. Finally, the concepts of brand salience, sociability, and opinion leadership are discussed.

Chapter 3 includes the theoretical framework of the constructs and the research hypotheses. An overall model showing the relationships of consumer-brand identification, brand salience, brand satisfaction, sociability, opinion leadership, and brand evangelism is presented. Each hypothesis is stated within this chapter utilizing the information from Chapter 2 and the literature review.

The research methodology is shown in Chapter 4. Here, the research approach is presented describing the procedural descriptions of the methods. This chapter includes the sampling characteristics, the instruments and scales measured, and the validity, reliability, and characteristics of the constructs. Additionally, the results of the overall proposed model and hypotheses is presented here.

Chapter 5 concludes this study by reviewing the objectives of this research study and discussing the relationships of the objectives and the actual findings of the study. The results of each supported and rejected hypothesis is discussed in detail. Academic and managerial implications are discussed within this chapter. Finally, concluding remarks concerning the limitations of this particular study and proposals for future research are covered.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The following chapter will discuss past literature concerning brands, brand evangelism, brand satisfaction, consumption and social identity theory, consumer-brand identification, brand salience, sociability, and opinion leadership. The review of this literature will set the foundation for the proposed hypotheses in Chapter 3.

Background of Brands

“When it comes to shoes, I won’t wear any other brand.”
—*Reanna, in reference to Nike*

The branding of slaves and cattle began centuries ago to establish a form of ownership and a sense of power (Desmond 2003). But, it was not until the nineteenth century that corporations used the branding of saleable products and commodities to differentiate their goods from existing competitors and potential copies in the marketplace. During the late nineteenth century, branded goods became familiar to most Americans (Low and Fullerton 1994). The post-Civil War economic expansion included improvements in transportation, communication, production processes, and packaging, as well as the increase of advertising and retail outlets (Low and Fullerton 1994). Additionally, changes in US trademark laws eased the protection of trademarks which were “key to brand identity” (Low and Fullerton 1994, p.175; Strasser 1989). Early businesses using branded goods included Quaker Oats, National Biscuit Co., and H.J. Heinz. The branding of products gave an assurance to the consumers that they would receive a

similar or an identical product to the one that had previously been consumed. It became imperative for corporations to develop a brand to represent the company's offerings of goods and services through marketing and business strategies.

Specifically, a brand is a signifier that acts as a representation for the product as well as the reflection of the identity of the corporation (Desmond 2003). These representations and reflections were discussed by Gardner and Levy (1955, p. 35) when a brand name:

tells the consumers many things, not only by the way it sounds (and its literal meaning if it has one) but, more important, via the body of associations it has built up and acquired as a public object over a period of time.

For the brand to have meaning, the consumer must have some form of brand literacy which is the understanding of how the brand is involved within one's culture (Bengtsson and Firat 2006). A consumer who has low levels of literacy "may buy and consume brands but has no or little knowledge of the symbolic meanings brands have acquired in the culture" (Bengtsson and Firat 2006, p. 378). With low levels of literacy, the brand is not understood beyond the physical aspects (e.g., the label and packaging) of a good or the physical surroundings (e.g., servicescape) of a service (Bitner 1992). If a brand does not achieve some higher level of literacy as perceived by the consumer, there will not be an attainment of legitimacy with the brand (Kates 2004). This legitimacy is the "social fitness" the brand establishes with the possibility of becoming "iconic" (Holt 2004).

As few companies are able to elevate their brands to iconic status, brand loyalty is a typical goal for many corporations. This loyalty is an ongoing commitment for individuals to continuously consume the same branded product in the future regardless of adverse situations or opposing corporate marketing efforts (Oliver 1999; Reinartz and Kumar 2002). A consumer

trusts that the branded product purchased will be similar to previously purchased and consumed products under the same brand name.

For a consumer to be brand loyal, however, there must be further concepts associated with the relationship involving the brand. These concepts include love, passion, self-connection, intimacy, and trust (Elliott and Yannopoulou 2007; Fournier 1998). The relationships can become so entwined that consumers may consider the branded product as part of their beings and their “extended self” (Belk 1988). This theory was further exemplified through the work of Fournier (1998) who found consumers stating that certain brands were labeled onto the consumer or vice-versa (e.g. being an Ivory girl or Vicki’s scent).

However, a relationship can be disrupted if one of the parties no longer achieves the desired outcome from the relationship. For consumers of brands, the individual may switch brands when the brand of loyalty no longer meets previous standards associated with it (Fournier 1998). When a product is no longer “the best,” the consumer may deem it necessary to change brands. However, actual changes may depend on the total costs associated with the switching of the brands. Variety seekers tend to switch brands more often than those who enjoy the stability associated with the knowledge of expectations being met from previous consumptions (McAlister and Pessemier 1982). Another desire to switch brands is the inclination by an individual to consume something new to establish a sense of independence (Fournier 1998). This construed independence allows the consumer to disassociate him/herself from the previous brand and develop a new extended self with the new brand.

To capitalize on consumers who are adverse to switching brands, corporations use one brand’s perceptions and image to expand its range of goods and services into new product lines and product classes (Aaker and Keller 1990). There is an intangible asset associated with each

brand that can be leveraged into new markets. Brands are assets, as indicated by merger and acquisition transactions where companies pay above book value because of the brand value associated with the acquired company (Keller 1993).

It is ultimately the decision of the consumer in choosing the branded product for satisfying a need. Three types of consumer needs have been identified for brand selection: functional, symbolic, and experiential (Park, Jaworski, and MacInnis 1986). Functional needs are those that generally instigate a problem-solving search. These needs tend to involve utilitarian products and services. Symbolic needs are the desires for self-enhancement, role position, or ego-identification. The symbolic needs are the foundations for inclusion in social identity theories for consumption behavior. Finally, experiential needs are the desires of goods involving physical and sensory pleasure, variety, and cognitive stimulation. Many brands have the ability to offer a combination of satisfying functional, symbolic, and experiential needs (Park et al. 1986).

Not only do consumers choose particular brands to be “cool” or to “fit in” with their contemporaries, some individuals may choose not to consume certain brands for the same reason—to be “cool” by not participating in the brands associated with other consumers (Nancarrow and Nancarrow 2007). These individuals, discouraged about the homogenization of their peers and their culture, want to hold on to individuality. This can also be true under the circumstances of intergenerational brand purchasing. As discussed by Moore and Wilkie (2005), there may be children who purposely rebel against the brand decisions of their parents and buy competitive brands. In doing so, they choose to establish an identity away from the family norms by consuming competing goods of the loyal brands to their parents.

The perception of the company gleaned by not only the stakeholders but by the general public is a company, or brand, image (Margulies 1977). In this study, the brand image goes beyond the functional characteristics of the product itself and involves symbolic features associated with the product (Aaker 1991; Gardner and Levy 1955; Levy 1959). Here, brand image will be defined as “perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory” (Keller 1993, p. 3). Aaker (1991) suggests that brand image is equivalent to brand associations, those items in one’s memory linked to a brand. As further discussed by Keller (1993), these brand associations are the attributes, benefits, and attitudes perceived by the consumer concerning the brand.

A brand’s image can be interpreted differently by different people, causing a variety of perceptions about the brand. A few characteristics of a brand image stem from the quality associated with the product, such as performance, durability, reliability, features, and aesthetics (Garvin 1984). However, there is an intangibility associated with the brand that develops the attitudes and image of the brand (Aaker 1991; Keller 1993). If the image is perceived poorly, this will reflect on the actual product. When corporations extend their desire to not only have a branded product but to incorporate an image associated with the product by influencing, and even reconstructing, culture, there will be individuals not accepting of these corporate tactics.

There are several potential examples of non-acceptance. Firstly, what might be considered creative advertising by some may be considered disruptive to the original focus of a non-related product. For example, the banners for alleviating erectile dysfunction by pharmaceutical advertisements may not be accepted by all viewers of the “American pastime” of baseball games; nor may the relabeling of college football bowl games (e.g., the Fiesta Bowl becoming the Tostitos Fiesta Bowl) by corporate sponsors be considered an appropriate move for

endorsing a non-professional sporting event. Secondly, the use of branded goods within school systems (e.g., fast food restaurants of McDonald's and Burger King in school cafeterias) may be perceived as deviating from "well-rounded" meals provided for children's lunches. Thirdly, the use of celebrities for advertisements can have a negative effect if the celebrity's value drops or there is an overshadowing of the celebrity's life on the brand. Finally, some corporate brands move into areas that might, on the surface, be considered unrelated or have little synergy to the current brand (e.g., Disney's development of a cruise line or an entire town, Celebration, Florida). From the consumer's perspective, there must be a perceived "fit" or similarity between the existing brand and the new product class (Aaker and Keller 1990).

As brand image is consumer centered and defined, it becomes the "reality" of how and what the consumer perceives the brand to be (De Chernatony and Riley 1998). Sometimes, however, the perception can be different than the brand identity that the corporation strives to create through marketing and business activities. These conflicting images can affect the brand equity associated with the brand.

The foundation of brand equity stems from the information associated with the product (Desmond 2003; Holt 2004; Keller 1993). The different pieces of information related to brand equity are awareness, attributes, benefits, images, thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and experiences (Keller 2003). When consumers become extremely satisfied with a brand, they may seek the company of others with similar experiences within a brand community.

Brand communities are deeply imbedded extensions of one's self through the relationships developed out of a sense of belongingness and commonality centered around a brand (McAlexander, Schouten, and Koenig 2002). Specifically, a brand community is "a specialized, non-geographically bound community, based on a structure set of social relations

among admirers of a brand” (Muniz and O’Guinn 2001, p. 412). However, there can be an underlying negative theme for some brand communities: the dislike of an opposing brand, or “oppositional brand loyalty” (Muniz and Hamer 2001; O’Guinn and Muniz 2005). Muniz and O’Guinn (2001, p. 420) found that members of the Macintosh brand community had a “source of unity” in their opposition to the Microsoft brand. The oppositional viewpoint can not only be adversarial in discussion of the other brand but can instill support for the loyalty of the community’s brand. This was further understood by the research of Belk and Tumbat (2005) in viewing the cult-like status of some users of the Macintosh brand and the anti-Microsoft discussions amongst the community members. These, even sometimes self-described cult-like, communities generally develop through word-of-mouth communication of the consumers and may or may not be sanctioned or approved by the company whose brand is the focus of attention (Muniz and O’Guinn 2001; Muniz and Schau 2005).

Brand Evangelism

“Starwood didn’t ask their customers to “do” anything. Their customers did it on their own. You can’t ask your customers to evangelise for your brand, they will do it for you if you give them something great to talk about.”
—Eric

The concept of brand evangelism is described as “a more active and committed way of spreading positive opinions and trying fervently to convince or persuade others to get engaged with the same brand” (Matzler, Pichler, and Hemetsberger 2007, p. 27). Concepts similar to brand evangelists include champions (Bhattacharya and Sen 2003; Weiser 1995), inspirational consumers (Roberts 2004), advocates (Christopher, Payne, and Ballantyne 2002; Chung and Darke 2006; Rusticus 2006), brand zealots (Eighmey, Sar, and Anghelcev 2006; Rozanski, Baum, and Wolfsen 1999), volunteer salespeople (McConnell and Huba 2003), and customer

apostles (Jones and Sasser 1995). As all of these descriptors have relatively the same connotation, the term “brand evangelism” will be used throughout this study denoting the same construct. This commitment by evangelists goes beyond a love or passion for the brand, and even transcends “loyalty beyond reason” (Roberts 2004, p. 66).

It is considered that the root of “evangelist” stems from the Greek word meaning “to bring good tidings” or “to bring the gospel message” (Moisés 1983). The *Oxford American Dictionary* defines an evangelist as “a zealous advocate of something.” This concept adapted for brand research allows us to view a brand evangelist as a person communicating positive information, ideas, and feelings concerning a specific brand freely, and often times fervently, to others in a desire to influence consumption behavior.

Guy Kawasaki, former Chief Evangelist for Apple Computer (1991, p. 3) stated “evangelism is the process of convincing people to believe in your product or idea as much as you do. It means selling your dream by using fervor, zeal, guts, and cunning.” Kawasaki’s viewpoint, however, is from a company and employee perspective; it is not from the perspective of the consumer of the brand.

Brand evangelism is an extension of positive word-of-mouth communication. Word-of-mouth is an informal mode of communication between individuals concerning the evaluation of a brand (Dichter 1966). Although word-of-mouth communication is not necessarily founded on a persuasive viewpoint, brand evangelism is a mode of persuasion as the evangelist acts as an unpaid spokesperson on behalf of the brand. The communication by the evangelists may even be considered as “preaching” in an attempt to convert others to consume the brand.

A brand may be “hijacked” by existing consumers. Brand hijacking is the process by which a brand’s image and marketing is developed and created by consumers that may be in

contrast to the company's efforts (Wipperfurth 2005). Wipperfurth describes two types of hijacking: serendipitous and co-created. Serendipitous hijacking is "the act of consumers seizing control of a brand's ideology, use, and persona" (Wipperfurth 2005, p. 17). Examples of this include the appropriation of Dr. Marten's boots by the punk subculture and Pabst Blue Ribbon beer by "anti-elitists" in defying the proliferation of mini and micro-breweries. Co-created hijacking is "the act of inviting subcultures to co-create a brand's ideology, use, and persona, and pave the road for adoption by the mainstream" (Wipperfurth 2005, p. 61). This is done by integrating consumers of the products to be active participants in the actual marketing of the brands.

Although there is engagement with other consumers about the brand, brand evangelists will also be proactive in communication with the brand's company (Weiser 1995). These communications may include complaints about the brand and potential solutions to those concerns. True devoted brand consumers and brand evangelists can even continue with the brand long after the brand has been discontinued by the originating company. For example, members of the Apple Newton (a personal digital assistant) brand community continued to give advice and application development for a discontinued product while campaigning for the return of the product (Muniz and Schau 2005). Although unsuccessful in the campaign for the return of the Apple Newton, the sharing of information lasted several years after the discontinuation of the product.

An interesting juxtaposition of brand evangelists is that they are not necessarily materialists. Materialists tend to continually acquire possessions and goods to have a self-fulfillment and a perceived attainment of status (Eastman, Goldsmith and Flynn 1999). Although a brand evangelist may have some materialistic tendencies, a materialist is not necessarily a

brand evangelist. Materialists tend to be highly motivated by social consumption and what others think and feel about certain products, whereas a brand evangelist may not be advocating the most prestigious brands (Fitzmaurice and Comegys 2006). Materialists do, however, derive pleasure from the communicative properties of the ownership of the brand while allowing the brand to “speak for itself” (Richins 1994). This is in stark contrast to brand evangelists who will make efforts to be the spokesperson on behalf of the brand.

Brand Satisfaction

“i love my saab, i know its unusual and quirky and that there are those fools out there would will [sic] attempt to compare it to a freaking commie! but if you appreciate it for what it is (a solidly build [sic], safe, reliable and comfortable vehicle) then you can't go wrong. that's not to say it doesn't have faults, some parts are expensive, they are an old car now and their rear leg room isn't gr8.[sic]but i still love it!”

—Stephen

Because brands are a reflection of the corporation (Williams 2000), understandably, there has been much research concerning how brands are created and developed by the firms, as well as used and developed by the consumers (Fournier 1998; Holt 2002, 2004; Kates 2004; Klein 2002; Levy 1959; Muniz and O’Guinn 2001, Muniz and Schau 2005, 2007, O’Guinn and Muniz 2005; Thompson et al. 2006). Through the understanding of consumption of brands by individuals, brand satisfaction has been an important, albeit not always explicit, construct throughout these studies.

Consumer satisfaction has been considered a consumer’s viewpoint of the confirmation or disconfirmation of expected quality from the perceived actual quality of a product (Oliver 1980). Because there is a judgment by the consumer of expectations from reality, satisfaction can only be considered a post-consumption phenomenon (Bearden and Teel 1983; Oliver 1980, 1997; Oliver and Swan 1989). It is not just the perceived quality that is taken into account for

consumer satisfaction; other factors to be included are perceived value on behalf of the consumer and perceived equity (Cronin and Taylor 1994; Fornell, Johnson, Anderson, Cha, and Bryant 1996; Olsen 2002). For the purpose of this research, the definition of consumer satisfaction will be “a judgment that a product or service feature, or the product or service itself, provided (or is providing) a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfillment, including levels of under- or overfulfillment” (Oliver 1997, p. 13). This definition is resonant of an earlier description that consumer satisfaction is “an evaluation of an emotion” (Hunt 1977, p. 460) through pleasure versus displeasure. The emotional component provides an additional characteristic of satisfaction beyond the cognitive viewpoint from the consumer.

It is imperative that companies understand consumer satisfaction as it is not just a concept that implies loyalty (Oliver 1999). Satisfied consumers are not necessarily loyal, as it was found that 65%-85% of defecting consumers stated that they were satisfied or very satisfied before the period of defection (Reichheld 1996). Additionally, as discovered through a meta-analysis of consumer satisfaction, less than 25% of the variance of construed loyalty is due to consumer satisfaction. As discussed by Chandrashekar, Rotte, Tax, and Grewal (2007), it may be the actual strength of consumer satisfaction that leads to stronger post-consumption behavior, such as a commitment to repeat consumption and loyalty. More importantly, for the purposes of this study, satisfaction may lead to consumer identification with the brand and becoming not only an advocate but an evangelist on behalf of the brand.

Consumption and Social Identification Theory

“I probably won’t buy any other pens. I’ll only buy Pilot pens since they listened to me. I love those pens anyway so that’s a pretty good relationship.”

—Christina

Often, individuals answer the question, “who are you?” by naming several categories and reference groups for identification purposes (Korostelina 2007). Examples of these may include, “I am a father,” “I am an American,” “I am a Catholic,” and “I am a Democrat.” Through these classifications and categorizations, individuals develop an “us” versus “them” mentality. The “us” or “we” groups are considered to be an individual’s ingroup while the “them” or “they” groups are construed as outgroups. As seen above, “I am a father” puts the individual into the ingroup of a male parent rather than the outgroup of a female parent. Additionally, “I am a Democrat” is stating a membership with an unambiguous political party while at the same time stating “I am not a Republican.” This process of specifying differences between ingroups and outgroups is considered reverberated identity (Korostelina 2007). Reverberated identity (p.75) is summarized as:

an ingroup’s identity that results from comparisons with outgroups. It includes all ingroup characteristics that develop in apposition. To understand “who we are,” it is important to define “who we are not” on the basis of “who the others are.”

The grouping and categorization is important to the development of displaying differences between groups. The implicit or explicit differences are used to classify and qualify individuals within the groups themselves. Some types of categories and groups are personal relationships, such as gender [sex], family relationships, and age groups, vocations and avocations, political affiliations and organizational memberships, ethnic, religious groups and affiliations,

regionalizations and nationalizations, and stigmatized groups (Deaux, Reid, Mizrahi, and Cotting 1999; Korostelina 2007; Tajfel and Turner 1985).

Classifying one's self, as well as others, into groups and categories is the foundation of social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner 1985). Social identity theory is concerned with "the part of the individual's self-concept which derives from their knowledge of their membership in a social group together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (Tajfel, 1982, p. 2). Processes within the development of social identity are social categorization, social identification, and social comparison (Tajfel and Turner 1985). Social categorization focuses on the placement of individuals as members of a group while discounting the personal qualities of the individuals. Social identification is the process by which individuals reflect on which group they belong to while social comparison, or reverberated identity, allows individuals to compare their group (ingroup) against other groups (outgroups). As an individual begins to establish his/her identity, the formulation of that identity is partially developed through choice (Giddens 1991). Specifically, social identification allows individuals to choose and select groups with which to identify beyond standard demographic categorizations and also eases fluidity between ingroups and outgroups.

An individual must go through one of two paths for there to be identification with an ingroup; those two paths are either affinity or emulation (Pratt 1998). The affinity path occurs when an individual views a group to have comparable ideals or to endorse ideas similar to theirs. This path is considered when an individual is in a group with "like-minded" individuals. The emulation path occurs when an individual strives to obtain the same viewpoint and endorsements that currently exists by a group. An individual in this path strives to be part of a group through emulating members of this group to "fit in."

The expanded model of organizational identification (EMOI) delineates individual identification, whether positive or negative, and associations with an organized group (Elsbach 1999). Elsbach identifies four types of organizational identification: identification, schizoidentification, neutral identification, and disidentification. The first type, identification, is the standard, positive, self-perceived perception association an individual has with an organization. In schizoidentification, an individual is simultaneously identifying with an organization as well as distancing him/herself from attributes of the organization. The third type is neutral identification which places an individual in neither a positive nor negative association with an organization. Finally, in disidentification, an individual distances him/herself from an organization by complete disassociation.

Social identity allows for one to choose more readily an associative identity through a variety of social categories. Although some are not transient (e.g., ethnic groups and age cohorts), there are strategies for individuals to utilize if they are not satisfied with an associative poor social identity. Tajfel and Turner (1985) proposed that social mobility, social competition, and social creativity may alleviate social identity inadequacies. If possible, individuals may choose to no longer identify with a particular social group and attach themselves to a different group. When this social mobility is not possible, the individuals may choose to strengthen their ties with other groups to which they belong, while deemphasizing the group with which they wish to disengage. Social competition allows individuals to attack other groups to improve their feelings about their own group. Finally, social creativity is the strategy of emphasizing certain aspects of the individuals' group to allow the individuals to believe that their group is superior to other groups.

One way an individual may develop a social identity is through the possession of products (Kleine, Kleine, and Kernan 1993). Fournier (1998) discovered that certain individuals will use brands to classify who and what they are. Through this seminal work, it was found that Vicki was an “Ivory girl” and Karen was not an “Apple person.” The research here touched upon identity formation and how individuals aligned and labeled themselves with a particular brand. Additionally, the study showed individuals may classify themselves through statements of non-identification with a brand.

Consumer-Brand Identification

“When I see another SAAB, and I think about it for a second, I not only have a feeling for the SAAB, but I kind of know what that guy is like...he’s kind of like me...or she’s kind of like me.”
—Bob

Social identity theory is the basis for organizational identification (Ashforth and Mael 1989; Mael and Ashforth 1992), consumer-company identification (Bhattacharya and Sen 2003), and consumer-brand community identification (Algesheimer, Dholakia, and Hermann 2005). Through the self-described chosen identifications, consumers “satisfy one or more important self-definitional needs” (Bhattacharya and Sen 2003, p. 76). These needs generally consist of the stabilization, or augmentation, of self-esteem (Hogg and Turner 1985) and the use of self-expression (Bhattacharya and Sen 2003).

Organizational identification differs from consumer-company identification (and consumer-brand identification) as it is the self-described perception by internal stakeholders of the organization (Ashforth and Mael 1989). This construct generally focuses on the employees of the organization or individuals that are involved in regular contact with the organization (Hatch

and Schultz 1997). The construct of consumer-company identification includes stakeholders outside of the organization who may be direct or indirect consumers.

Most of the literature to date has not specifically addressed consumer-brand identification. However, there have been several studies that have built upon the research of Underwood, Bond, and Baer (2001) focusing on social-identity and brand equity in the context of sports. For example, Boyle and Magnusson (2007) tested the social identity-brand equity model proposed by Underwood et al. (2001) in the context of collegiate sports. It was found that there is strong support for the effect of social identity on brand equity.

Bhattacharya and Sen (2003, p. 86) stated that “in light of the role played by consumer-company interactions in facilitating embeddedness and thus identification, service companies are perhaps more likely to benefit from identification than those that sell products.” Although companies may position themselves for potential ideal identification, it is up to the consumers to choose whether they identify with the companies or not. Importantly, in the new service-dominant logic, consumers are co-creators of the brand’s value (Vargo and Lusch 2004). Therefore, consumers are an important determinant in the formulation of the brand’s overall image and, subsequent, value.

Brand Salience

“It took me a while to recognise that I am kind of addicted to H&M...I know it sounds incredible, but there is rarely a day on which I don't wear something from H&M...But still I am always delighted to see a H&M store wherever I go, asking myself, what I would do without it?”
—Sylvia

As discussed by Alba and Chattopadhyay (1986, p. 363), brand salience “refers to the prominence or ‘level of activation’ of a brand in memory.” It can also be considered, and is often measured, as top-of-mind awareness (Miller and Berry 1998). Top-of-mind awareness is

considered a stronger concept than either brand recognition or brand recall (Aaker 1991). This concept can be tested as asking for the first brand name considered when prompted in a product category.

Interestingly, brand salience “refers not to *what* consumers think about brands but to *which ones* they think about” (Miller and Berry 1998, p. 78). Without brand salience, the consumer does not necessarily have positive or negative feelings toward the brand. Romaniuk and Sharp (2003) added the frequency to which a consumer mentions the brand across different situations to their understanding of brand salience. A similar concept related to brand salience is brand awareness. Brand awareness is a recognition within one’s memory that the consumer is aware of the brand and has some knowledge of that brand (Ye and Van Raaij 2004). Generally, the brand awareness concept is utilized and tested for individuals who have not consumed the brand or are solely being exposed to some form of brand advertising. Measurements of brand awareness include, but are not limited to, brand recognition, brand recall, and top-of-mind awareness (Aaker 1996; Keller 1993).

The use of brand salience within the marketing literature has been used in various contexts but has been taken for granted within much of the consumer behavior research. Many products and brands become such an integral part of consumers’ lives so much that the goods can be considered a part of the consumers (Belk 1988). Although brand salience is a top-of-mind awareness, it will also be considered a loss if the consumer is forced to give up the brand. So, a consumer may not necessarily think of the brand regularly but would have clear feelings if the brand were removed from the consumer’s life.

Sociability

“If I’m at a function, if it’s there, we’ll use it. I usually bring it with me, so I’ll volunteer it to someone who’s using a sweetener not a sugar. I’ve done that at family reunions.”

—Lyn, in reference to Truvia Sweetener

Individuals with high sociability will seek to maximize social interactions (Hills and Argyle 2001). Generally, consumers who prefer to be alone do not actively seek interactions with others and often attempt to minimize engagement. The characteristic of sociability propels individuals to gravitate to others often with shared interests (Kim, Park and Jin 2008). However, the concept of shared interests is not a prerequisite for the interactions but does facilitate an engagement of the relationships (McAdams 1988).

Sociability differs from the personality characteristic of extraversion. Extraversion contains the trait of sociability but also includes assertive behavior and boldness (John, Naumann and Soto 2008). Additionally, as discussed by Barrick, Stewart, and Piotrowski (2002, p.44), extraverts are status striving and often engage in “actions directed toward obtaining power and dominance.” The extraversion trait incorporates more than is desired here. For example, an introvert may actually avoid an interaction with another individual, whereas someone low on the sociability spectrum may not purposely avoid a personal engagement.

Sociability is also not to be confused with social motivation. An individual may be socially motivated to consume a particular brand when one is attempting to maintain or enhance his/her social identity. Motivations are the internal driving forces and reasons that cause an individual to behave in a particular way (Solomon 2009). Social motivation involves the importance an individual places on others’ perceptions of consumer behavior (Moschis 1981). Put simply, social motivation is the emphasis placed on what others think about the image of individuals who consume a particular brand.

Social motivation does not necessarily require the consumption of prestige brands. Prestige brands are brands that differentiate themselves through a variety of values (Vigneron and Johnson 1999). These values include the attributes of being perceived as conspicuous, unique, socially acceptable, hedonic, and possessing quality. A combination of these attributes contributes to the overall image of a brand. The image, including its associated symbolic meanings, of the brand has been shown to be an influencer in an individual's decision for consumption (Grubb and Grathwohl 1967; Hyatt 1992).

One primary factor for the consumption of particular brands is the social motivation for self-expression and/or to feel socially adequate by "fitting in" (Bearden and Etzel 1982). The social motivation of a consumer can be influenced by a reference group (Park and Lessig 1977). A reference group is "an actual or imaginary individual or group conceived of having significant relevance upon an individual's evaluations, aspirations, or behavior (Park and Lessig 1977, p. 102). It is the value expressive influence of a reference group that can drive a consumer's social motivation. A value expressive influence is the desire to maintain or increase an individual's self-concept in relation to others. Although social motivation is a foundation for individuals to affiliate with others, sociability does not require the consumption of products within its definition or application. As previously described, this research is basing its understanding of sociability as defined by Cheek and Buss (1981, p.31)—"a tendency to affiliate with others and to prefer being with others to remaining alone."

Opinion Leadership

“I enjoy cars and I drive a performance car, so I do talk tires.”
—Martha, in reference to Michelin

Opinion leadership is “the degree to which an individual is able to influence other individuals’ attitudes or overt behavior informally in a desired way with relative frequency” (Rogers 2003, p. 27). A key component of this definition is the concept of influence. Without the ability to influence others’ beliefs, attitudes or consumption behavior, there is no opinion leadership. Additionally, there is a geographic component to opinion leadership as they influence others within their “immediate environment” (Katz and Lazarsfeld 1955, p. 3). Opinion leaders have also been called “influentials” (Watts and Dodds 2007).

Both opinion leaders and influentials are individuals who influence their peers’ behavior. These individuals are not considered leaders or heads of formal organizations, nor are they in the public eye via politics, critics, or other media (Watts and Dodds 2007). Opinion leaders are considered a primary component in the diffusion of innovations because of the word-of-mouth communication by the opinion leaders (Arndt 1967; Bass 1969; Rogers 2003).

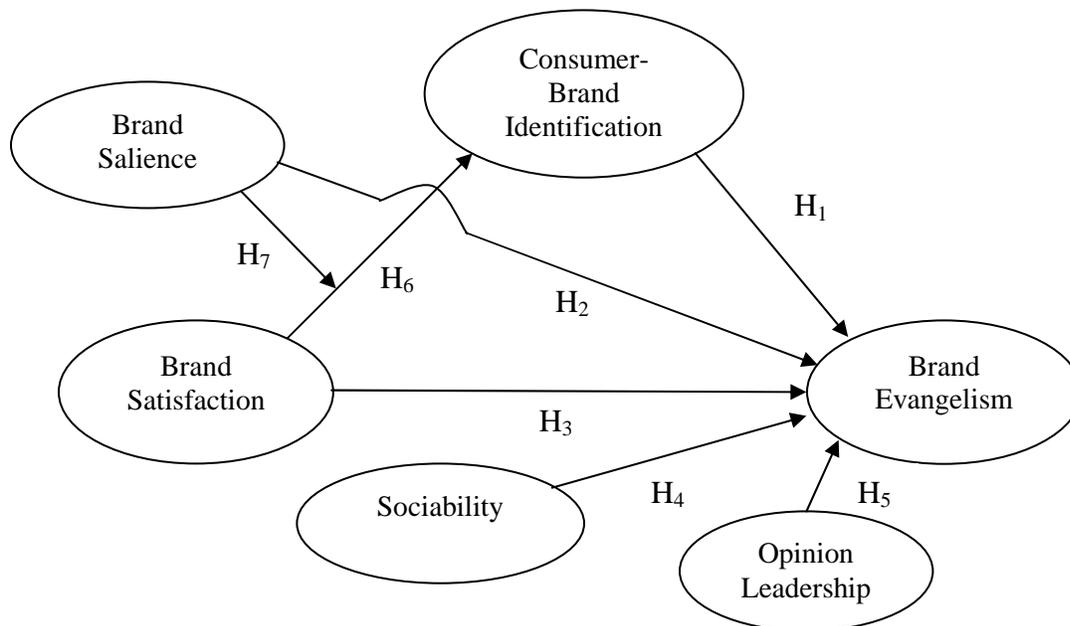
Another concept within the opinion leadership literature is “market mavens.” These individuals are consumers who have a broad knowledge concerning goods, services, the attainment of the products, and general market information (Feick and Price 1987). Like opinion leaders, these individuals respond to opinion seekers. However, market mavens do not possess a depth of knowledge concerning specific product classes and competing brands. Though they freely give out their knowledge, market mavens tend to disseminate information without necessarily having a desire to persuade consumers to act in a certain way or influence the consumption behavior. Market mavens receive satisfaction out of sharing information, helping others and being consulted (Walsh, Gwinner, and Swanson 2004).

Although market mavens have a breadth of knowledge concerning shopping and consumption behaviors, it is opinion leaders that have depth of knowledge of product categories. Opinion leaders are experts for certain products and not others. Their knowledge is sought out by others as they have deep knowledge of the products through prescreening the information, evaluating the products themselves, and are current on the information concerning the products within the marketplace. Opinion leaders are not compensated for their opinions or consumption of particular brands, in contrast to surrogate consumers (Solomon 1986).

CHAPTER III

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Figure 1: Proposed Theoretical Model



Consumer-Brand Identification and Brand Evangelism

Brand evangelists act independently from the brand's company and do not require incentives or loyalty programs to engage in strong word-of-mouth communication while "spreading the word." One purpose of loyalty programs is to reward consumers' repeat purchases. Yet, the brand evangelist is already a committed and loyal consumer who does not need a reward; being a consumer of the brand can be reward enough for brand evangelists.

Bhattacharya, Rao, and Glynn (1995) discovered that individuals who identified with a museum (consumer-museum identification) visited the museum more frequently than those who did not identify with the museum. This finding was the foundation of later research by Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) who later proposed that consumer-company identification will not only lead to company loyalty, but the consumer may become a “champion” on behalf of the company. A further study found that consumer-company identification has a positive effect on loyalty intentions (Marin, Ruiz, and Rubio 2009). Within the context of sports, Fisher and Wakefield (1998) found that a stronger identification with a sports team led to positive consumer behaviors (e.g., attendance and the purchasing of licensed products). From an organizational standpoint in social identity theory, individuals engage in supportive activities for organizations that are congruent with their identities (Ashforth and Mael 1989). To date, brand evangelism, has not been researched in relation to consumer-brand identification. Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

H₁: The stronger the consumer-brand identification, the stronger the brand evangelism.

Brand Salience and Brand Evangelism

An evangelist differs from a devoted customer (Belk, Wallendorf, and Sherry 1989; Pimentel and Reynolds 2004). Consumer devotion transcends loyalty that survives brand and company scandals, poor performance, bad publicity, and other perceived reasons for brand switching. But, the devoted consumer does not necessarily proselytize the brand like a brand evangelist. The brand evangelist tends to think of the brand in many diverse scenarios because of brand salience.

Again, brand salience is not only top-of-mind awareness, but can be viewed as the frequency with which a consumer mentions the brand in a variety of situations (Romaniuk and

Sharp 2003). Because of the often voluntary mentioning of a brand, there is support for the hypothesized relationship of brand salience and brand evangelism. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

H₂: The greater the brand salience, the stronger the brand evangelism.

Brand Satisfaction and Brand Evangelism

As previously discussed, satisfaction is the self-defined response to the pleasurable fulfillment of a consumer's needs, wants, or desires (Oliver 1997). It has been found that satisfied consumers are considered to be more likely to engage in positive word-of-mouth behavior (see De Matos and Rossi 2008 for review of the numerous studies supporting this relationship). Word-of-mouth communication consists of "informal communications directed at other consumers about the ownership, usage, or characteristics of particular goods and services and/or their sellers" (Westbrook 1987, p. 261). It is considered that consumers appreciate word-of-mouth communication as it is recognized as being more reliable and trustworthy than other forms of promotional information (Day 1971).

A brand evangelist not only is considered to be emotionally loyal (Eighmey et al. 2006) but this consumer will be supportive of the brand and will have higher brand satisfaction than other consumers (Jones and Sasser 1995). As brand satisfaction influences word-of-mouth communication (Brown, Barry, Dacin, and Gunst 2005; De Matos and Rossi 2008), this gives credence to the hypothesized relationship of brand satisfaction and brand evangelism. Therefore:

H₃: The stronger the brand satisfaction, the stronger the brand evangelism.

Sociability and Brand Evangelism

Sociable individuals like being with others and do not consider themselves as loners (Reynolds and Beatty 1999). There is an inherent characteristic that the individual gravitates to

others and desires social interaction. A social person is not generally a passive participant in social interactions but is active in the engagement.

Because a social person is already predisposed to interacting with others, discussions of a favorite brand will occur during the natural course of interactions. The consumer will be willing to include the brand as a part of the conversation. With the brand as the catalyst, the consumer can discuss the positive attributes of the brand to others leading to positive word-of-mouth communication. This gives the consumer the opportunity to be a brand evangelist. As previously discussed, an individual low on the sociability spectrum will not want to be actively engaged in communications with others. With little communication, the opportunity to be a brand evangelist is minimized. Additionally, although different constructs, Matzler et al. (2007) found that extraversion is positively related to brand evangelism. Extraversion is viewed as a personality construct that includes attributes of being outgoing and sociable, talkative, full of energy, and an assertive personality. Extraversion contains the construct of sociability but expands it to be a more general personality characteristic. Sociability does not necessarily include the aspect of being talkative and generating a lot of enthusiasm. Clarifying the appropriate personality construct is important for further understanding brand evangelism. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

H₄: The stronger the sociability, the stronger the brand evangelism.

Opinion Leadership and Brand Evangelism

The foundation of being a brand opinion leader is for the consumer to be a product enthusiast. A product enthusiast is a consumer that demonstrates “high levels of product involvement that persist over time and across situations” (Bloch 1986, p. 51). As the enthusiast is sought out for information and advice, he/she moves into the category of being an opinion leader. Opinion leaders are considered a critical component to the diffusion of innovations

(Rogers 2003). As these individuals tend to be innovators and early adopters, they “spread the word” about new product categories, product lines, and specific brands.

From the definition by Eighmey et al. (2006, p. 103), brand zealots are “consumers who frequently engage in brand-related opinion leadership, report high interest in identifying the best brands to buy, and regularly purchase the brand name products they favor.” As seen here, equating brand zealots to brand evangelists, opinion leadership is considered a required dimension to being a brand evangelist. Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

H₅: The stronger the opinion leadership, the stronger the brand evangelism.

Brand Satisfaction and Consumer-Brand Identification

Consumer satisfaction has been viewed as the result of differences between perceived quality and expected quality of a good or service (Oliver 1980). This concept of expected confirmation from disconfirmation has been an accepted viewpoint in understanding, measuring, and testing satisfaction. This post-consumption phenomenon (Bearden and Teel 1983; Oliver 1977, 1980; Oliver and Swan 1989) views the evaluative attitude through the pleasure continuum. For the purposes of this research, the definition of consumer satisfaction is “a judgment that a product or service feature, or the product or service itself, provided (or is providing) a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfillment, including levels of under- or overfulfillment” (Oliver 1997, p. 13).

The use of pleasure does not necessarily remove past experiences associated with consumption but allows the cumulative experiences to determine an overall satisfaction (Bolton and Drew 1991; Garbarino and Johnson 1999). Because the consumption of particular brands can lead to emotional experiences for individuals (Gobé 2001), the inclusion of pleasure is imperative in understanding satisfaction. Put succinctly, satisfaction is the self-defined response

to the pleasurable fulfillment of a consumer's needs, wants, or desires (Oliver 1997). For full understanding of the concept of brand satisfaction, Oliver (2003) suggests that the measurement should include items of expectations, disconfirmation, and attitude, in addition to perceived satisfaction. Disconfirmation, as utilized here, is the perception that the product exceeded or did not meet expectations.

The effect of consumer satisfaction on other constructs has varied concerning repurchase commitments, loyalty, and trust (Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Aleman 2001; Ha and Perks 2005; Olsen 2002; Park and Lee 2005). More importantly for this research, brand satisfaction has been shown to strengthen the quality of the consumer-brand relationship (Park and Lee 2005). It was also found that "the more satisfied a person is with an organization's offerings, the greater the identification" (Bhattacharya et al. 1995, p. 48). The latter finding was further tested with mixed results. Arnett, German, and Hunt's (2003) study in the not-for-profit sector did not find a significant relationship of satisfaction and identification. However, Kuenzel and Halliday (2008) found that satisfaction significantly impacted the degree to which automobile owners identified with the car brand, and Mael and Ashforth (1992) discovered a relationship of alumni's satisfaction with the university and identification with that university.

For clarification within marketing literature, and to establish a significant relationship, it is hypothesized that:

H₆: The stronger the brand satisfaction, the stronger the consumer-brand identification.

Brand Salience as a Moderator

As discussed by Alba and Chattopadhyay (1986, p. 363), brand salience "refers to the prominence or 'level of activation' of a brand in memory." It can also be considered, and is often measured, as unaided "top-of-mind awareness" (Miller and Berry 1998, p. 78). Salience goes

beyond the construct of brand awareness in that the brand becomes meaningful, either cognitively or emotionally, to the consumer (Alba and Chattopadhyay 1986). Without brand salience, the consumer does not necessarily have positive or negative feelings toward the brand or any attitude about the brand.

It is necessary to include brand salience as a moderator for the relationship of brand satisfaction and consumer-brand identification. For example, a consumer may be satisfied with a particular brand yet not have any more than neutral feelings for the brand. Without the salience, there will be no identification by the consumer with the brand. A cause for the past mixed results may be from the lack of salience as a moderating variable. As discussed by Baron and Kenny (1986, p. 1174), a moderator is “a qualitative or quantitative variable that affects the direction and/or strength of the relation between an independent and dependent or criterion variable.” Brand salience should strengthen the relationship of brand satisfaction and consumer-brand identification. Therefore:

H₇: Brand salience positively strengthens the relationship between brand satisfaction and consumer-brand identification.

Consumer-Brand Identification as a Mediator

In linking consumer-brand identification with brand evangelism, this study builds upon previous research (e.g., Ahearne, Bhattacharya, and Guen 2005; Bhattacharya and Sen 2003) that suggests the more a consumer identifies with a brand, the more the consumer will be an advocate by “spreading the word” about the positive attributes of the brand. It has been previously hypothesized here (Hypothesis 3) that brand satisfaction will have a positive and significant effect on brand evangelism. However, this relationship does not take into account consumer-

brand identification as a mediating variable. A mediator is any variable that “accounts for the relation between the predictor and the criterion” (Baron and Kenny 1986, p. 1176). Thus:

H₈: Consumer-brand identification positively mediates the relationship between brand satisfaction and brand evangelism.

CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS

The purpose of this study is to assess the effectiveness of a model in determining the constructs associated with brand evangelism. This chapter describes the procedures and methodology employed for the quantitative study to support or reject the hypotheses posed. Information concerning the multivariate data analysis of the survey instruments follows. This research is significant as little research to date has examined in depth the relationships of brand evangelism, consumer-brand identification, brand salience, brand satisfaction, sociability, and opinion leadership.

Research Approach

The research method of this study was based on the implementation of self-administered questionnaires. The survey instrument was constructed by the researcher of this study and distributed by the data collection company, MarketTools, Inc. The utilization of an outside company allowed for a wide sampling of a population across the United States in an attempt to garner generalizability. Although no study will be able to attain complete generalizable results, the distribution of the survey amongst various ages, household incomes, and locations across the U.S. is better than using a convenience sample that may not have much variety concerning the demographics. Although convenience samples can still be a reflection of a broader group, broadening the scope of individuals surveyed reduces the lack of diversity that may arise from

research studies. Additionally, the use of a data collection agency allowed for the ability to pre-screen respondents who may be potential brand evangelists. These pre-screened individuals were chosen on their current consumption of “cult-like” goods or services (Belk and Tumbat 2005). Brands in the screening included Harley-Davidson motorcycles, Apple’s iPhone mobile phones, MINI automobiles, Saab automobiles, and Starbucks coffee houses. These products have been referenced within both marketing journals and the practitioner literature as having passionate, loyal consumers who have the propensity for being brand evangelists (Aaker 1992; Brown 2004; Fournier 2001; O’Guinn and Muniz 2004; Schouten and McAlexander 1995; Thompson and Arsel 2004). A requirement for an individual to be chosen to participate in the survey was the consumption of one of the brands within the previous six months. There were no other screening requirements leading to a consumer to have a propensity to be an evangelist.

A final benefit of using a data collection agency was the lack of missing data. No survey was returned with only partial information completed. With only completed surveys, the data analysis was not subjected to ignoring missing items, deleting items (through listwise or pairwise deletions), or utilizing an imputation process.

The online survey was built utilizing software provided by Zoomerang, a subsidiary of MarketTools, and was administered by the company to the prescreened individuals. An additional component to the facilitation of the survey is the required informed consent form. Each respondent was required to acknowledge and have full consent to participating in the survey before they were able to proceed. The informed consent form stated the nature and purpose of the survey while providing contact information of the researcher. Along with the survey being voluntary, based on requirements instilled by both MarketTools and Zoomerang, confidentiality was assured as no information asked could identify any particular respondent.

Heneman (1974) found that individuals are more likely to give unbiased responses when there is assurance of anonymity.

Sampling

Because structural equation modeling (SEM) was utilized, and following Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, and Tatham's (2006) suggestions, it is deemed that the sample size should be at least five times as many the number of variables to be analyzed. Other researchers believe that there should be a minimum of 20 cases for each variable (Hair et al. 2006; Meyers, Gamst, and Guarino 2006). Even with this higher minimum, only 120 completed surveys would be required (6 variables at 20 cases per variable). This research resulted in 528 fully completed surveys used for analysis. By achieving an adequate sample size, no "bootstrapping" technique was required to overcome a small sample size.

Sample Characteristics

A total of 528 surveys were completed. A detailed break-down of the demographics are listed in Table 1. Between 101 and 111 surveys were completed for each of the brands (110 surveys for Harley-Davidson, 103 for iPhone, 101 for MINI, 111 for Saab, and 103 for Starbucks). The overall ages range from 19 to 86 years old with the average age being 48.4 (median age of 49 years). The percentage of males nearly equal the percentage of females at 51% to 49%, respectively. The predominant category for ethnicity is White at 89.4% with the second largest categories being Hispanic/Latino and Asian at 3.4% and 3.2%, respectively. Income levels and education levels are varied with no specific category dominating.

Additional questions were asked to understand if there were biases amongst respondents concerning the particular brands. These questions included the following (Brand X was replaced with the corresponding brand/company name):

- I currently own stock (investor shares) in Brand X.
- I am an employee of Brand X.
- I have a family member that is an employee of Brand X.
- I have a friend that is an employee of Brand X.

A total of 40 individuals were current shareholders, employees, and/or have family members or friends as known employees of the corresponding brand. Thus, approximately 7.6% of the respondents have a potential bias of the brand that was not necessarily induced by the actual use or utilization of the brand itself as a product. It should be noted, however, that the surveyed questions did not investigate further if the brands were consumed due to the relationships and investments by the respondents, or if the investments and relationships occurred because of the consumption of the brands. These individuals were kept in the total sample as less than 8% of the respondents *may* be predisposed to having a sense of brand evangelism through these relationships and investments.

Table 1: Demographics

	Harley-Davidson		iPhone		MINI		Saab		Starbucks		Total (n = 528)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total Respondents	110		103		101		111		103		528	
<i>Sex</i>												
Male	59	54%	49	48%	59	58%	42	38%	48	47%	257	48.7%
Female	51	46%	54	52%	42	42%	69	62%	55	53%	271	51.3%
<i>Ethnicity</i>												
White	101	92%	86	83%	93	92%	103	93%	89	86%	472	89.4%
Black	2	2%	4	4%	2	2%	1	1%	5	5%	14	2.7%
Hispanic/Latino	5	5%	5	5%	3	3%	1	1%	4	4%	18	3.4%
Asian	2	2%	5	5%	2	2%	4	4%	4	4%	17	3.2%
Native Amer.	0	0%	1	1%	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	2	0.4%
Middle Eastern	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	1	1%	2	0.4%
Other	0	0%	2	2%	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%	3	0.6%
<i>Age</i>												
Age Range	19-74		22-86		19-77		20-80		19-78		19-86	
Average Age	49.4		46.6		49.7		49.4		46.5		48.4	
Median Age	50.5		46		50		50		47		49	
<i>Income</i>												
< \$10,000	6	5%	3	3%	5	5%	2	2%	2	2%	18	3.4%
\$10,000-19,999	3	3%	1	1%	4	4%	5	5%	4	4%	17	3.2%
\$20,000-39,999	16	15%	19	18%	9	9%	18	16%	25	24%	87	16.5%
\$40,000-59,999	26	24%	24	23%	10	10%	12	11%	18	17%	90	17.0%
\$60,000-74,999	17	15%	13	13%	14	14%	16	14%	20	19%	80	15.2%
\$75,000-99,999	22	20%	14	14%	22	22%	15	14%	14	14%	87	16.5%
\$100,000-149,999	14	13%	18	17%	24	24%	25	23%	15	15%	96	18.2%
>\$150,000	6	5%	11	11%	13	13%	18	16%	5	5%	53	10.0%
<i>Education</i>												
Some H.S.	4	4%	2	2%	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	7	1.3%
H.S. Graduate	32	29%	16	16%	5	5%	6	5%	16	16%	75	14.2%
Some College	23	21%	23	22%	19	19%	21	19%	25	24%	111	21.0%
Assoc. Degree	18	16%	8	8%	12	12%	6	5%	11	11%	55	10.4%
Bachelor's Degree	18	16%	25	24%	29	29%	30	27%	27	26%	129	24.4%
Some Grad. School	4	4%	6	6%	10	10%	12	11%	7	7%	39	7.4%
Master's Degree	9	8%	20	19%	22	22%	30	27%	12	12%	93	17.6%
PhD or Equivalent	2	2%	3	3%	4	4%	6	5%	4	4%	19	3.6%

Measures

The survey was created to collect information and measure the correlations and relationships of the constructs. All efforts were used to avoid single and two-item constructs as they can cause problems including the inability to distinguish sources of variability, systematic and nonsystematic. The multi-item scales “allow measurement errors to cancel out against each other and thus the reliability of the scale is increased” (Peter 1979, p. 7). It should be noted that determining the number of appropriate items for a scale construct is difficult—too many will cause “boredom and fatigue,” too few will not achieve appropriate reliability (Peter 1979).

The multi-item scales used Likert-type scales (Likert 1932) which have the respondents specifying the level of agreement or disagreement with the statements given. These ratings were anchored from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” on a 5-point continuum. The following sections detail the scales utilized for this study. The majority of the scales used in this study had slight alterations for appropriateness within the context of this study. The brand evangelism scale, however, had a few word choices substituted. Please refer to Appendix B for the scales in their original wording.

Brand Evangelism

As stated by Matzler et al. (2007, p. 27), brand evangelism is described as “a more active and committed way of spreading positive opinions and trying fervently to convince or persuade others to get engaged with the same brand.” The brand evangelism scale by Matzler et al. (2007) had a reliability of 0.90. Following this previous study, the scale of brand evangelism included the following:

- I would make a perfect Brand X salesperson.
- I have preached to several of my friends about Brand X.

- I try to convince as many people as possible of Brand X's attributes.
- I feel the need to tell the world that Brand X is the most appealing brand in the world.
- If someone disapproves of Brand X, I counter with an argument of Brand X's benefits.

Consumer-Brand Identification

The measurement of identification a consumer has with a brand has had scant attention, yet many studies have viewed identification by an individual with an organization or company. Mael and Ashforth (1992) has been a foundation for the development of identification scales within marketing and management literature. Reliabilities have included 0.87 (Bhattacharya et al. 1995), 0.90 (Gwinner and Swanson 2003), 0.81 (Kuenzel and Halliday 2008), 0.87 (Mael and Ashforth 1992), 0.89 (Marin et al. 2008), and 0.94 (Swanson and Davis 2006). The items proposed in this scale were based on Bhattacharya et al. (1995):

- When someone criticizes Brand X, it feels like a personal insult.
- I am very interested in what others think about Brand X.
- When I talk about Brand X, I usually say "we" rather than "they".
- Brand X's successes are my successes.
- When someone praises Brand X, it feels like a personal compliment.
- If a story in the media criticized Brand X, I would feel embarrassed.

Brand Salience

As previously mentioned, brand salience "refers to the prominence or 'level of activation' of a brand in memory" (Alba and Chattopadhyay 1986, p. 363). There will need to be some cognitive recognition and awareness of the brand to adhere to the concept of brand salience.

Previous reliabilities for salience scales have included 0.86 (Arnett et al. 2003) and 0.81 (Callero 1985). Based on these previous research studies, the brand salience scale was:

- Brand X is something I rarely even think about. (Reverse coded).
- I would feel a loss if I were forced to give up Brand X.
- I really don't have any clear feelings about Brand X. (Reverse coded).
- For me, Brand X means more than just using it as a Product Category.
- Brand X is an important part of who I am.

Brand Satisfaction

As previously discussed, brand satisfaction is considered “a judgment that a product or service feature, or the product or service itself, provided (or is providing) a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfillment, including levels of under- or overfulfillment” (Oliver 1997, p. 13). Following this definition, the brand satisfaction scale is based on a subset of Oliver (1997). Reliabilities have ranged from 0.84 (Cronin, Brady, and Hult 2000) to 0.94 and 0.96 (Zboja and Vorhees 2006) with three to six of the scale items included in the measurement instrument. The items for this scale were:

- I am satisfied with my decision to purchase Brand X.
- My choice to buy Brand X was a wise one.
- I think that I did the right thing when I bought Brand X.
- I am not happy that I bought Brand X. (Reversed scored).
- I truly enjoyed my purchase of Brand X.
- I am pleased with Brand X.

Sociability

The characteristic of sociability propels individuals to gravitate to others often with shared interests (Kim, Park and Jin 2008). However, the concept of shared interests is not a prerequisite for the interactions but does facilitate an engagement of the relationships (McAdams 1988). Sociability has been measured by Reynolds and Beatty (1999) with the reliability of 0.82. The sociability scale used, following Reynolds and Beatty (1999), included:

- I like to be with people.
- I prefer working with others than working alone.
- I find spending time with people more enjoyable than solitary activities, such as reading a book.
- I tend to be a loner. (Reverse coded).
- I prefer to do things alone. (Reverse coded).
- I am not very sociable. (Reverse coded).
- I do not like parties or social events. (Reverse coded).

Opinion Leadership

Opinion leaders and influentials, to varying degrees, influence others' attitudes, beliefs, and subsequent consumption behavior (Rogers 2003; Watts and Dodds 2007). Measuring opinion leadership has gone through some iterations in the past. Flynn, Goldsmith, and Eastman (1996) developed a measurement instrument that was used in five separate studies to validate and provide unidimensionality of the reliabilities. The reliabilities ranged from 0.78 to 0.87 for their research. Using the scale by Flynn et al. (1996) as a basis, the scale items were:

- My opinion of Brand X's Product Category seems not to count with other people.
(Reverse coded).

- When they choose Brand X's Product Category, other people do not turn to me for advice. (Reverse coded).
- Other people come to me for advice about choosing Brand X's Product Category.
- I often persuade others to buy Brand X's Product Category that I like.
- I often influence people's opinions about Brand X's Product Category.

Validity and Reliability of the Constructs

Although validated scales were employed, validity and reliability measures must still be utilized for individual research projects. Construct validity is the extent to which the instrument accurately represents the construct being measured (Hair et al. 2006). Three components of construct validity that must be assessed are convergent validity, discriminant validity, and nomological validity. SPSS (version 15) software was used to analyze the validity and reliability of the constructs.

Convergent validity "assesses the degree to which two measures of the same concept are correlated" (Hair et al. 2006, p. 137). Firstly, there must be evidence that the factor loadings are statistically significant and should be at a minimum of 0.50, and preferably higher than 0.70. As seen in Table 2, several individual items were removed as they did not have a loading of 0.70 or higher. Thus, Table 2 has the finalized questionnaire items for each concept listed. Convergent validity, as determined by Fornell and Larcker (1981), is achieved through exceeding 0.50 for the average variance explained (AVE). This process entails a calculation of the standardized loadings. To achieve this, a total sum of all squared factor loadings of the individual construct was divided by the number of items. Having an AVE of less than 0.50 means there is more error in the items than the variance explained (Hair et al. 2006). As shown in Table 2, AVE exceeds the minimum of 0.50 for all constructs; Brand Evangelism (0.792), Consumer-Brand

Identification (.780), Brand Satisfaction (0.913), Brand Salience (0.667), Sociability (0.876), and Opinion Leadership (0.792). Additionally, convergent validity assesses the internal consistency of the construct, which can be measured through reliability assessments.

Reliability is defined as the degree to which an instrument is free from unsystematic error and provides consistent and stable results (Pedhazur and Schmelkin 1991). Put simply, reliability is the extent to which items are consistent with what it is intended to measure (Hair et al. 2006). The reliability test used for this study was Cronbach's alpha. Cronbach's (1951) alpha was developed to overcome the problem of differing results via different splitting methods in the split-halves measurement (Peter 1979). Cronbach's alpha "determines the mean reliability coefficient for all possible ways of splitting a set of items in half" (Peter 1979, p. 8); it is the average coefficient of all possible splits (Cronbach 2004).

There has been much discussion in the literature concerning the recommended and adequate levels of Cronbach's alpha (Schmitt 1996). Unfortunately, there is no empirical evidence of what constitutes an appropriate reliability coefficient. Peterson (1994, p. 382), however, assembled a selection of "recommended" reliability levels, ranging from 0.5 to 0.7. Peterson (1994) stated that Nunnally's levels, from both 1967 and 1978, are the most widely cited by researchers (Nunnally 1967, 1978). However, providing further evidence that these numbers are rather arbitrary, Nunnally raised his recommended level for preliminary research from the range of 0.5 to 0.6 to a minimum level of 0.7 without explanation (Peterson 1994). It is, however, standard procedure within the marketing literature to have 0.7 as a minimum acceptable level of reliability for non-exploratory research. As seen in Table 2, each Cronbach alpha exceeded the recommended minimum level of 0.70; Brand Evangelism ($\alpha = 0.912$),

Consumer-Brand Identification ($\alpha = 0.906$), Brand Salience ($\alpha = 0.746$), Brand Satisfaction ($\alpha = 0.969$), Sociability ($\alpha = 0.876$), and Opinion Leadership ($\alpha = 0.901$).

Discriminant validity is “the extent to which a construct is truly distinct from other constructs” (Hair et al. 2006, p. 778). The test for discriminant validity is based on Campbell and Fiske (1959) by assessing the amount of overlap of the constructs. This can be done by calculating the correlation of two constructs divided by the square root of the multiplication of the two individual reliability measurements ($r_{xy} / (r_{xx} \times r_{yy})^{1/2}$). It is preferable to have lower than 0.85 as the resultant (Meyers et al. 2006). As seen in Table 3, all calculations are well below the 0.85 cutoff, thus achieving discriminant validity.

Nomological validity is “the degree that the summated scale makes accurate predictions of other concepts in a theoretically based model” (Hair et al. 2006, p. 138). As the constructs and relationships are based on previous literature and have theoretical support, this type of validity is sound. This could cause difficulty for the research if there were exploratory research involved in the development of the scales and the use of exploratory factor analysis. However, as all scales were adapted from previous published literature and there is support for the relationships defined within and between the constructs, there is little concern for issues concerning nomological validity.

Table 2: Reliabilities, Factor Loadings of the Scales, Average Variance Extracted

<i>Scale</i>	<i>Cronbach α</i>	<i>Loading</i>	<i>AVE</i>
Brand Evangelism	0.912		0.792
I would make a perfect Brand X salesperson.		0.862	
I have preached to several of my friends about Brand X.		0.880	
I try to convince as many people as possible of Brand X's attributes.		0.931	
I feel the need to tell the world that Brand X is the most appealing brand in the world.		0.886	
Consumer Brand Identification	0.906		0.780
When someone criticizes Brand X, it feels like a personal insult.		0.854	
When I talk about Brand X, I usually say "we" rather than "they".		0.862	
Brand X's successes are my successes.		0.901	
When someone praises Brand X, it feels like a personal compliment.		0.915	
Brand Salience	0.746		0.667
Brand X is something I rarely think about. (reverse coded)		0.702	
I would feel a loss if I were forced to give up my Brand X.		0.879	
For me, Brand X means more than just using it as a Product Category.		0.858	
Brand Satisfaction	0.969		0.913
I am satisfied with my decision to purchase Brand X.		0.964	
My choice to buy Brand X was a wise one.		0.965	
I think that I did the right thing when I bought Brand X.		0.966	
I am pleased with Brand X.		0.927	
Sociability	0.876		0.731
I tend to be a loner. (reverse coded)		0.878	
I prefer to do things alone. (reverse coded)		0.857	
I am not very sociable. (reverse coded)		0.854	
I do not like parties or social events. (reverse coded)		0.830	
Opinion Leader	0.901		0.772
My opinion of Brand X's Product Category seems not to count with other people. (reverse coded)		0.841	
Other people come to me for advice about choosing Brand X's Product Category.		0.893	
I often persuade others to buy Brand X's Product Category that I like.		0.852	
I often influence people's opinions about Brand X's Product Category.		0.927	

Table 3: Discriminant Validity Assessment

<i>Variables</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
1. Brand Evangelism					
2. Consumer-Brand Identification	0.46				
3. Brand Salience	0.53	0.51			
4. Brand Satisfaction	0.33	0.31	0.48		
5. Sociability	0.03	0.09	0.01	0.05	
6. Opinion Leadership	0.38	0.28	0.18	0.31	0.03

Descriptive Characteristics and Correlations

Descriptive characteristics and correlations are listed in Table 4. High levels of multicollinearity were not found to be an issue as no correlation exceeded 0.80 (Hair et al. 2006). As multicollinearity was not found to be a problem, this supports the lack of violation for discriminant validity (Table 3).

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations (n = 528; likert scale of 1 to 5)

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
1. Brand Evangelism	3.026	1.019					
2. Consumer-Brand Identification	2.989	1.014	0.763*				
3. Brand Salience	3.390	0.949	0.716*	0.685*			
4. Brand Satisfaction	4.083	0.997	0.580*	0.552*	0.694*		
5. Sociability	3.329	0.872	-0.049	-0.139*	-0.019	-0.062	
6. Opinion Leadership	3.154	0.894	0.632*	0.457*	0.307*	0.417*	0.048

* $p < 0.01$

Overall Fit Measures of Proposed Model

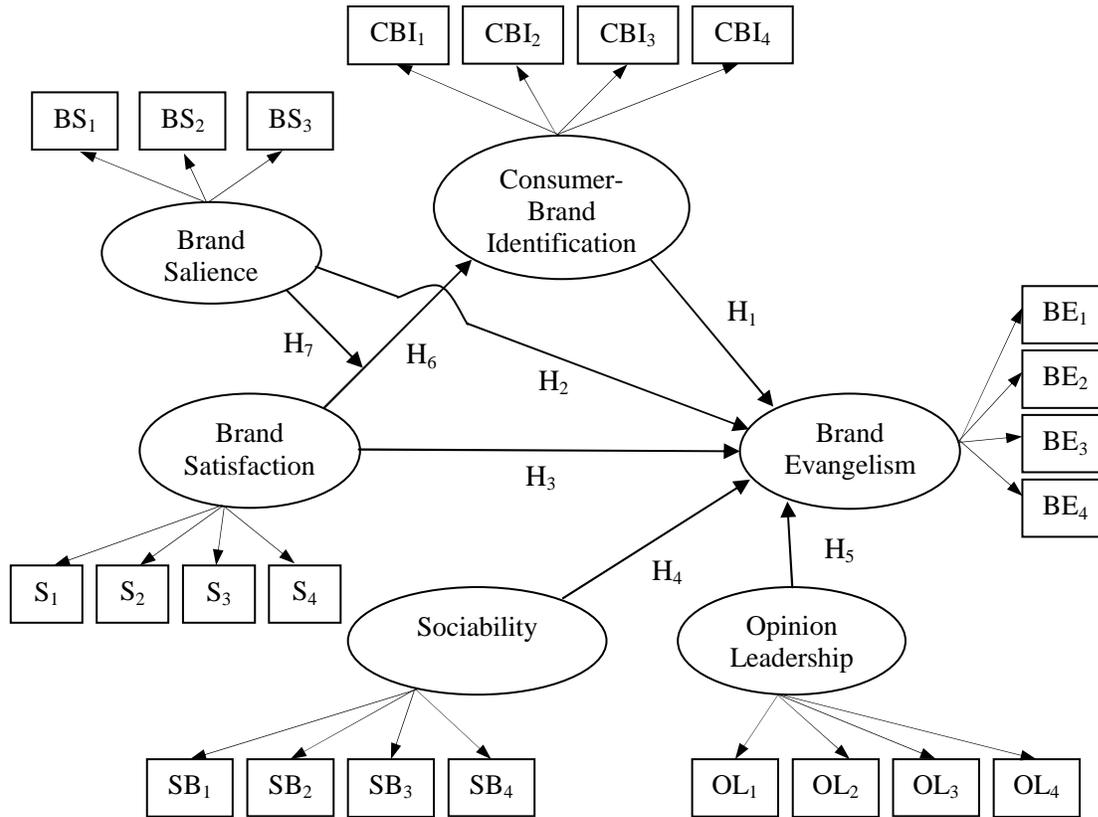
Structural equation modeling (SEM) with AMOS (Analysis of Moment Structures) 5.0 software was used to test and estimate the causal paths of the proposed model. SEM attempts to explain the proposed relationships among the various variables and the interrelationships that

make up the theoretical model (Hair et al. 2006). In other words, SEM combines aspects of multiple regression (examining dependence relationships) and factor analysis (representing unmeasured concepts with multiple variables) in estimating the interrelated dependence relationships simultaneously. This multivariate data technique is appropriate when there is theoretical support for the relationships. As discussed in Chapter 3, each relationship within the model has a theoretical foundation based on past marketing literature. Thus, this allows SEM to be considered a confirmatory analysis technique for the model. The straight, one-way, single-headed arrows associated within the model, or path diagram, represent a structural relationship of dependence going from an antecedent to a subsequent outcome. Figure 2, below, is the proposed model tested (note, for simplicity, error terms were removed from the model presented here).

SEM was employed as a confirming modeling strategy utilizing a maximum likelihood estimation (MLE) procedure. As this study has a single model, MLE assesses the estimated values that result in the highest likelihood that the data matches the model (Meyers et al. 2006). The criteria for defining the fit of the model include goodness-of-fit measures. These measurements are grouped into the categories of absolute measures, incremental measures, and parsimony fit measures (Hair et al. 2006). The absolute fit measures include χ^2 Statistic, Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). The incremental fit measures are Normed Fit Index (NFI) and Comparative Fit Index (CFI). The parsimony fit indices include Parsimonious Normed Fit Index (PNFI) and Parsimonious Comparative Fit Index (PCFI). Per Hair et al. (2006), it is recommended to have at least one absolute fit index and one incremental fit index, in addition to the results of the χ^2 Statistic. Additionally, Meyers et al. (2006) recommends having at least one parsimony fit index with the absolute fit index and incremental fit index. Using the χ^2 Statistic alone is inadvisable due to the

sensitivity of the χ^2 to sample size (Bentler 1990; Jöreskog and Sörbom 1996; Meyers et al. 2006; Schumacker and Lomax 2004).

Figure 2: Proposed Model with Individual Constructs



Absolute Fit Measures

The findings for the absolute fit measures include the χ^2 value at 738.632 (df = 218, $p < 0.001$; Chi-squared/d.f. = 3.388), Goodness of Fit (GFI) at 0.897, and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) at 0.067. For the χ^2 , the desired outcome is to not reject the null hypothesis by desiring a nonsignificant χ^2 . This did not occur here. However, as χ^2 is sensitive to large samples (e.g. greater than 250), this is not necessarily a reliable indicator of fit (Bentler 1990; Jöreskog and Sörbom 1996; Meyers et al. 2006; Schumacker and Lomax 2004). GFI, at 0.897, nearly met the cutoff criteria of 0.90 as set by Bagozzi and Yi (1988) and Hu and Bentler

(1999). RMSEA did in fact meet the cutoff criteria, at 0.067, and is deemed an adequate fit since the results are below 0.08 (Loehlin 2004) and below 0.07 for samples larger than 250 (Hair et al. 2006).

Relative Fit Measures

The relative fit measures utilized here are Comparative Fit Index (CFI) at 0.950 and Normed Fit Index (NFI) at 0.931. For CFI, a good fit is deemed to be at 0.95 or above (Hu and Bentler 1999) while NFI is considered acceptable at 0.90 and above (Meyers et al. 2006). Thus, both relative fit measures show appropriate fits.

Parsimonious Fit Measures

The parsimonious fit measures are Parsimonious Normed Fit Index (PNFI) at 0.802 and Parsimonious Comparative Fit Index (PCFI) at 0.819. As both PNFI and PCFI should be greater than 0.50 (Meyers et al. 2006), the model is considered a good fit.

Summary of Fit Measures

Using the standard measures, CFI, NFI, RMSEA, PNFI, and PCFI show that the model is deemed an adequate fit. However, χ^2 shows a poor model fit (yet may be disregarded due to large sample size) and the GFI results show that it is at a borderline of being considered a good fit.

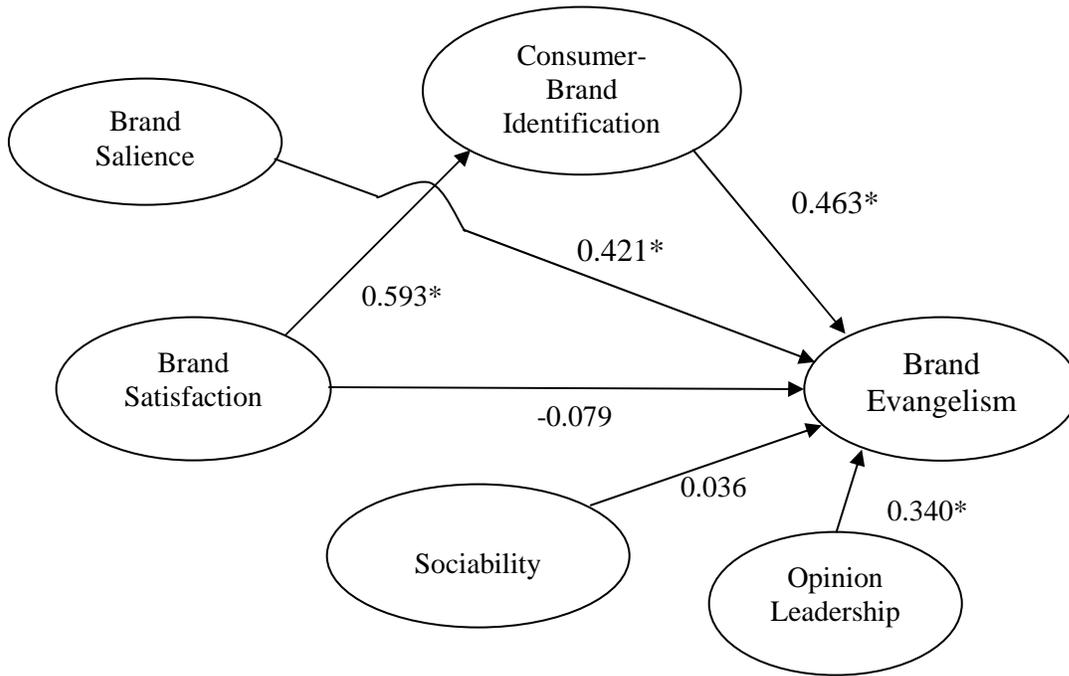
Results of Path Analysis for H₁ to H₆

Figure 3 shows the results of AMOS and the path analysis of the proposed model. Consumer-brand identification has a positive effect on brand evangelism and is statistically significant (standardized path coefficient (β) = 0.463, t-value = 11.603, $p < 0.01$), thus

supporting H₁. Additionally, brand salience is positive and statistically significant for its effect on brand evangelism supporting H₂ ($\beta = 0.421$, t-value = 5.506, $p < 0.01$).

Meanwhile, H₃ is not supported as brand satisfaction does not have a statistically significant impact on brand evangelism ($\beta = -0.079$, t-value = -1.198, $p > 0.10$). H₄ is also not supported as sociability is not statistically significant as a path relationship with brand evangelism ($\beta = 0.036$, t-value = 1.188, $p > 0.10$). Opinion leadership, however, is shown to have a statistical association with brand evangelism for support of H₅ ($\beta = 0.340$, t-value = 8.590, $p < 0.01$). Finally, brand satisfaction has a positive effect on consumer-brand identification ($\beta = 0.593$, t-value = 14.154, $p < 0.001$). A summary of the hypotheses and the results are listed in Table 5.

Figure 3: AMOS Results of the Proposed Model



* $p < 0.01$

Table 5: Summary of Hypotheses and Results

<i>Hypotheses</i>	<i>Method</i>	<i>Results</i>
H ₁ : The stronger the consumer-brand identification, the stronger the brand evangelism.	Path Coefficient	Supported
H ₂ : The greater the brand saliency, the stronger the brand evangelism.	Path Coefficient	Supported
H ₃ : The stronger the brand satisfaction, the stronger the brand evangelism.	Path Coefficient	Not Supported
H ₄ : The stronger the sociability, the stronger the brand evangelism.	Path Coefficient	Not Supported
H ₅ : The stronger the opinion leadership, the stronger the brand evangelism.	Path Coefficient	Supported
H ₆ : The stronger the brand satisfaction, the stronger the consumer-brand identification.	Path Coefficient	Supported
H ₇ : Brand saliency positively strengthens the relationship between brand satisfaction and consumer-brand identification.	Moderated Multiple Regression	Not Supported
H ₈ : Consumer-brand identification positively mediates the relationship between brand satisfaction and brand evangelism.	Regression Estimates and Sobel Test	Supported

Result of Moderation Testing for H₇

Recall that Hypothesis 7 includes a moderating variable in brand salience. It was hypothesized that brand salience positively strengthens the relationship between brand satisfaction and consumer-brand identification. The moderator here, brand salience, is a continuous variable. It was once thought that a continuous variable could be rescaled into a discrete variable (James and Brett 1984). However, the rescaling can create groups that do not necessarily exist and can lower statistical power (Bagozzi, Baumgartner, and Yi 1992). Thus, following the suggestion of Bagozzi et al. (1992), the moderator was analyzed through multiple regression and the creation of a new variable via interaction of the existing variables.

The mean centered process, as suggested by Aiken and West (1991), was used in tandem with a moderated multiple regression analysis to test Hypothesis 7. This process is considered a precursor to moderated multiple regression analysis (Aiken and West 1991). A moderated relationship is a relationship which has an additional variable interacting with a predictor variable to change the relationship between the predictor and the outcome variable (Sharma, Durand, and Gur-Arie 1981). This was done by including the interaction variable formed by the product of the independent variable, brand satisfaction, by the introduced moderator variable, brand salience. If the interaction variable is significant, then a moderated relationship is indicated (Aiken and West 1991). However, in this study, through moderated multiple regression, brand salience is not a moderator in strengthening the relationship between brand satisfaction and consumer-brand identification ($t = 1.072, p = 0.284$) and there is not support for H₇ (Table 6).

Table 6: Moderated Multiple Regression for H₇

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>Standard Coefficient</i>	<i>t-Statistic</i>	<i>Significance</i>
Intercept	-0.25	0.40		-0.637	0.524
Brand Salience*	0.613	0.048	0.573	12.866	0.000
Brand Satisfaction*	0.178	0.052	0.175	3.438	0.001
Salience* X Satisfaction*	0.039	0.036	0.041	1.072	0.284

* Variables centered

Note: Regression on Consumer-Brand Identification: $R^2 = 0.482$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.479$, $F = 162.291$ ($p < 0.01$)

Result of Mediation Testing for H₈

The use of SEM facilitated the analysis of Hypothesis 8. This hypothesis states that consumer-brand identification positively mediates the relationship between brand satisfaction and brand evangelism. According to Hair et al. (2006), the steps involved in testing a mediating variable include:

1. Verification that each relationship, or correlation, is significant (brand satisfaction and brand evangelism, brand satisfaction and consumer-brand identification, and consumer-brand identification and brand evangelism).
2. If the relationship between brand satisfaction and brand evangelism remains significant and unchanged when consumer-brand identification is included in the model, then mediation is not supported.
3. If the relationship between brand satisfaction and brand evangelism is reduced but remains significant with the inclusion of consumer-brand identification as an additional predictor, then partial mediation is supported.
4. If the relationship between brand satisfaction and brand evangelism is reduced to a point where it is not significantly different from zero after consumer-brand identification is included, then full mediation is supported.

The utilization of testing for mediation actually employed the following method described by Baron and Kenny (1986)—estimation of regression equations (regressing the mediator on the independent variable, regressing the dependent variable on the independent variable, and regressing the dependent variable on both the independent variable and on the mediator) and the Sobel (1982) test, an approximate significance test.

The Sobel test uses the unstandardized regression coefficient for the association between the independent variable (satisfaction) and the mediator (consumer-brand identification), the unstandardized regression coefficient for the association between the mediator (consumer-brand identification) and the dependent variable (brand evangelism), and the standard errors of the regression coefficients. The formula for the Sobel test is $z\text{-value} = a*b/(b^2*s_a^2 + a^2*s_b^2)^{1/2}$. For the purposes of this study, a (regression coefficient of the association between satisfaction and consumer-brand identification) = 0.561, s_a (standard error of a) = 0.037, b (regression coefficient of the association between consumer-brand identification and brand evangelism) = 0.766, s_b (standard error of b) = 0.028. The test statistic for the Sobel test resulted in 13.262 (standard error of 0.032) with a p -value < 0.01. Thus, it is deemed that consumer-brand identification is a mediator for the relationship of brand satisfaction and brand evangelism, and H_8 is supported.

Additional Information Concerning this Study

Males and Females

Further analysis of the data included comparing the data dependent on the sex of the respondents. The means of the constructs utilized for this study for males and females can be viewed in Table 7.

Table 7: Male and Female Means and Standard Deviations

	<i>Number Respondents</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>
Brand Evangelism			
Male	240	3.089	1.002
Female	288	2.973	1.302
Consumer-Brand Identification			
Male	240	3.001	1.016
Female	288	2.973	1.014
Brand Salience			
Male	240	3.406	0.943
Female	288	3.377	0.954
Brand Satisfaction			
Male	240	4.058	0.995
Female	288	4.104	1.000
Sociability			
Male	240	3.278	0.832
Female	288	3.371	0.904
Opinion Leadership			
Male	240	3.278	0.852
Female	288	3.050	0.917

Separate one-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs) for comparison of the individual constructs are in Table 8. The majority of the constructs did not have any significant differences in the means. However, it should be noted that there is a significant difference in the means

between males and females for the construct of opinion leadership. As the means of opinion leadership is higher for males, males surveyed here self-report on having more knowledge and expertise concerning the product category of the respective brand.

Table 8: One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Results for Males and Females

	ANOVA	
	F	<i>p</i>
Brand Evangelism	1.707	0.192
Consumer-Brand Identification	0.167	0.683
Brand Salience	0.116	0.734
Brand Satisfaction	0.276	0.600
Sociability	1.475	0.225
Opinion Leadership	8.613	0.003

Further analysis comparing males and females was done through multi-group comparisons of the proposed structural equation model (Figure 1). Following the procedures described by Meyers et al. (2006) including constraining the factor loading to be equal, individual models were verified to have adequate fit. For the male group, the goodness-of-fit tests resulted in χ^2 value at 976.437 (df = 436, $p < 0.001$; Chi-squared/df = 2.240), RMSEA = 0.049, CFI = 0.986, NFI = 0.975, PNFI = 0.770, and PCFI = 0.779. For the female group, χ^2 value is 993.298 (df = 459, $p < 0.001$; Chi-squared/df = 2.164), RMSEA = 0.047, CFI = 0.970, NFI = 0.975, PNFI = 0.810, and PCFI = 0.820. The results from the model comparison are χ^2 difference of 16.862 (df = 23, $p = 0.816$). This suggests that there is no statistically significant difference between males and females.

Income

Similar analysis compared data models by separating the data into two models for reported income. The data was split with 379 respondents having annual income of less than

\$100,000 and 149 respondents claiming income of \$100,000 or more. It was found that there is no statistically significant difference between the models as the χ^2 difference resulted in 24.644 (df = 24, $p = 0.425$). The fit indices show mixed (adequate and inadequate) fit for both models. The below \$100,000 group resulted in χ^2 value of 998.23 (df = 436, $p < 0.001$; Chi-squared/df = 2.290), RMSEA = 0.05, GFI = 0.865, CFI = 0.947, NFI = 0.910, PNFI = 0.784, and PCFI = 0.816. For the \$100,000 and above group χ^2 value is 1022.874 (df = 460, $p < 0.001$; Chi-squared/df = 2.224), RMSEA = 0.048, GFI = 0.862, CFI = 0.947, NFI = 0.908, PNFI = 0.825, and PCFI = 0.861.

Age

The separation of data into age groups was also performed. The groups were divided into under 50 years of age (n = 269) and age 50 and above (n = 259). It was found that there is nearly a statistically significant difference between the models as the χ^2 difference resulted in 34.837 (df = 23, $p = 0.054$). The fit indices show mixed (adequate and inadequate) fit for both models. The below 50 group resulted in χ^2 value of 1089.289 (df = 459, $p < 0.001$; Chi-squared/df = 2.373), RMSEA = 0.051, GFI = 0.853, CFI = 0.941, NFI = 0.902, PNFI = 0.819, and PCFI = 0.853. For the 50 and above group χ^2 value is 1054.452 (df = 436, $p < 0.001$; Chi-squared/df = 2.418), RMSEA = 0.052, GFI = 0.853, CFI = 0.942, NFI = 0.906, PNFI = 0.819, and PCFI = 0.812.

Education

The separation of data into education level was also performed. The groups were divided into under college graduates and above (n = 280) and no bachelor's degree (n = 248). It was found that there is not a statistically significant difference between the models as the χ^2

difference resulted in 30.625 ($df = 23, p = 0.132$). The fit indices show mixed (adequate and inadequate) fit for both models. The below college graduate group resulted in χ^2 value of 995.721 ($df = 459, p < 0.001$; Chi-squared/ $df = 2.169$), RMSEA = 0.047, GFI = 0.863, CFI = 0.949, NFI = 0.910, PNFI = 0.825, and PCFI = 0.861. For the non-college graduates, χ^2 value is 965.095 ($df = 436, p < 0.001$; Chi-squared/ $df = 2.214$), RMSEA = 0.048, GFI = 0.869, CFI = 0.950, NFI = 0.912, PNFI = 0.786, and PCFI = 0.818.

Potential Biases

Similar analysis compared all data with the removal of the potentially biased respondents (those 40 individuals who were current shareholders, employees, and/or have family members or friends as known employees of the corresponding brand). It was found that there is no statistically significant difference between the models as the χ^2 difference resulted in 1.415 ($df = 23, p = 1.000$).

Individual Brands

Analysis comparing the individual brands follows. Table 9 shows the means and standard deviations of the constructs for each brand.

Table 9: Means and Standard Deviations by Individual Brands

	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>St. Dev.</i>		<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>St. Dev.</i>
Brand Evangelism				Brand Satisfaction			
Harley	110	3.478	0.892	Harley	110	4.520	0.730
iPhone	103	2.658	1.035	iPhone	103	3.975	0.885
MINI	101	3.188	0.984	MINI	101	4.200	1.097
Saab	111	2.885	0.932	Saab	111	3.912	1.037
Starbucks	103	2.903	1.065	Starbucks	103	3.796	1.050
Consumer-Brand Identification				Sociability			
Harley	110	3.605	0.887	Harley	110	3.257	0.876
iPhone	103	2.369	1.002	iPhone	103	3.356	0.909
MINI	101	3.121	0.965	MINI	101	3.480	0.948
Saab	111	2.964	0.874	Saab	111	3.213	0.805
Starbucks	103	2.852	0.948	Starbucks	103	3.328	0.813
Brand Salience				Opinion Leadership			
Harley	110	3.933	0.807	Harley	110	3.489	0.833
iPhone	103	2.880	0.894	iPhone	103	3.108	0.897
MINI	101	3.564	0.915	MINI	101	3.050	0.867
Saab	111	3.183	0.850	Saab	111	2.988	0.938
Starbucks	103	3.372	0.947	Starbucks	103	3.114	0.862

The following tables (Tables 10-15) compare the means of the individual constructs (brand evangelism, consumer-brand identification, brand salience, brand satisfaction, sociability, and opinion leadership). There are mixed results of significant differences in the comparison of the means. One interesting aspect is that the means of Harley-Davidson differ significantly from

all other brands for all constructs except for sociability. As seen in Table 9, Harley-Davidson has the highest means for each construct except for sociability.

Table 10: Brand Evangelism by Individual Brands

<i>Brand Evangelism</i>	Harley-Davidson		iPhone		MINI		Saab	
	t	p	t	p	t	p	t	p
iPhone	6.202	0.000*						
MINI	-2.245	0.026*	3.745	0.000*				
Saab	-4.835	0.000*	1.684	0.094*	-2.306	0.022*		
Starbucks	4.283	0.000*	6.202	0.000*	1.986	0.048*	-0.133	0.894

* $p < .05$

Table 11: Consumer-Brand Identification by Individual Brands

<i>Consumer-Brand Identification</i>	Harley-Davidson		iPhone		MINI		Saab	
	t	p	t	p	t	p	t	p
iPhone	9.543	0.000*						
MINI	-3.792	0.000*	5.460	0.000*				
Saab	-5.410	0.000*	4.638	0.000*	-1.966	0.051*		
Starbucks	5.987	0.000*	3.553	0.000*	2.011	0.046*	0.900	0.369

* $p < .05$

Table 12: Brand Salience by Individual Brands

<i>Brand Salience</i>	Harley-Davidson		iPhone		MINI		Saab	
	t	p	t	p	t	p	t	p
iPhone	9.032	0.000*						
MINI	-3.111	0.002*	5.401	0.000*				
Saab	-6.725	0.000*	2.541	0.012*	-3.144	0.002*		
Starbucks	4.664	0.000*	3.834	0.000*	1.474	0.142	-1.539	0.125

* $p < .05$

Table 13: Brand Satisfaction by Individual Brands

<i>Brand Satisfaction</i>	Harley-Davidson		iPhone		MINI		Saab	
	t	p	t	p	t	p	t	p
iPhone	4.920	0.000*						
MINI	-2.514	0.013*	1.616	0.108				
Saab	-5.039	0.000*	-0.477	0.634	-1.966	0.051		
Starbucks	5.875	0.000*	-1.320	0.188	2.687	0.008*	0.810	0.419

* $p < .05$ **Table 14: Sociability by Individual Brands**

<i>Sociability</i>	Harley-Davidson		iPhone		MINI		Saab	
	t	p	t	p	t	p	t	p
iPhone	-0.817	0.415						
MINI	-0.350	0.727	-1.107	0.270				
Saab	1.971	0.050	1.049	0.295	2.216	0.028*		
Starbucks	-0.611	0.542	-0.242	0.809	-0.929	0.354	1.374	0.171

* $p < .05$ **Table 15: Opinion Leadership by Individual Brands**

<i>Opinion Leadership</i>	Harley-Davidson		iPhone		MINI		Saab	
	t	p	t	p	t	p	t	p
iPhone	4.126	0.000*						
MINI	-3.753	0.000*	0.487	0.627				
Saab	-3.267	0.001*	0.958	0.339	0.483	0.630		
Starbucks	3.225	0.001*	1.005	0.316	-0.533	0.594	-0.050	0.961

* $p < .05$

Further analysis comparing the brands was done through multi-group comparisons of the proposed structural equation model (Figure 1). All individual models have mixed results for fit as seen in Table 16. The results from the model comparison are the χ^2 differences shown in Table 17 and suggest that there is no statistically significant difference between any individual brand

and the overall model. However, the individual models do not have adequate fit for all fit measures.

Table 16: Model Fit Measurements by Individual Brands Compared to Overall Model

	Overall Model	Harley-Davidson	iPhone	MINI	Saab	Starbucks
Chi-Square	2668.835	2696.654	2693.133	2701.053	2695.411	2690.426
df	1308	1311	1311	1311	1311	1311
Chi-Square/df	2.040	2.026	2.023	2.029	2.025	2.021
<i>p</i>	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
RMSEA	0.031	0.031	0.031	0.031	0.031	0.031
GFI	0.832	0.830	0.830	0.830	0.830	0.831
CFI	0.936	0.935	0.935	0.935	0.935	0.936
NFI	0.882	0.881	0.881	0.881	0.881	0.881
PNFI	0.760	0.772	0.772	0.772	0.772	0.773
PCFI	0.806	0.820	0.820	0.820	0.820	0.820

Table 17: Model Comparisons Differences of Individual Brands to Overall Model

	Harley-Davidson	iPhone	MINI	Saab	Starbucks
Chi-Square	27.818	24.297	32.218	26.576	21.591
df	23	23	23	23	23
<i>p</i>	0.274	0.096	0.223	0.545	0.387

Performing analysis of the individual brands in comparison to each brand’s model is shown in Table 18. Each brand was analyzed for difference in χ^2 to each individual brand. There are significant differences between several of the models. However, as seen in Tables 19-23, adequate fit is not accomplished for all utilized fit indices. “Bootstrapping” techniques were performed to increase the number of samples for each model; however, no significant changes were seen in the model fit measurements.

Table 18: Model Comparison Difference of χ^2 of Individual Brands to Each Other

		Harley-Davidson	iPhone	MINI	Saab
iPhone	χ^2	39.987			
	df	23			
	p	0.020			
MINI	χ^2	35.838	45.002		
	df	23	23		
	p	0.043	0.004		
Saab	χ^2	42.179	33.785	31.814	
	df	23	23	23	
	p	0.009	0.068	0.104	
Starbucks	χ^2	36.251	24.634	45.373	29.685
	df	23	23	23	23
	p	0.039	0.369	0.004	0.159

Table 19: Model Fit Measurements with Harley-Davidson as the Base Model

	<i>Harley-Davidson</i>	iPhone	MINI	Saab	Starbucks
Chi-Square	1925.643	1964.630	1961.481	1967.821	1961.894
df	1090	1113	1113	1113	1113
Chi-Square/df	1.767	1.765	1.762	1.768	1.765
p	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
RMSEA	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038
GFI	0.775	0.770	0.771	0.769	0.771
CFI	0.921	0.920	0.920	0.920	0.920
NFI	0.838	0.835	0.835	0.835	0.835
PNFI	0.722	0.735	0.735	0.734	0.735
PCFI	0.794	0.809	0.810	0.809	0.810

Table 20: Model Fit Measurements with iPhone as the Base Model

	<i>iPhone</i>	Harley-Davidson	MINI	Saab	Starbucks
Chi-Square	1925.643	1964.630	1970.644	1959.427	1950.276
df	1090	1113	1113	1113	1113
Chi-Square/df	1.767	1.765	1.771	1.760	1.752
<i>p</i>	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
RMSEA	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038
GFI	0.775	0.770	0.771	0.772	0.773
CFI	0.921	0.920	0.919	0.920	0.921
NFI	0.838	0.835	0.834	0.835	0.836
PNFI	0.722	0.735	0.880	0.880	0.880
PCFI	0.794	0.809	0.809	0.810	0.811

Table 21: Model Fit Measurements with MINI as the Base Model

	<i>MINI</i>	Harley-Davidson	iPhone	Saab	Starbucks
Chi-Square	1925.643	1961.481	1970.644	1957.456	1971.016
df	1090	1113	1113	1113	1113
Chi-Square/df	1.767	1.762	1.771	1.759	1.771
<i>p</i>	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
RMSEA	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038
GFI	0.775	0.771	0.771	0.772	0.771
CFI	0.921	0.920	0.919	0.921	0.919
NFI	0.835	0.835	0.834	0.835	0.834
PNFI	0.722	0.735	0.734	0.735	0.734
PCFI	0.794	0.810	0.809	0.810	0.809

Table 22: Model Fit Measurements with Saab as the Base Model

	<i>Saab</i>	Harley-Davidson	iPhone	MINI	Starbucks
Chi-Square	1925.643	1967.821	1963.753	1957.456	1955.328
df	1090	1113	1113	1113	1113
Chi-Square/df	1.767	1.768	1.764	1.759	1.757
<i>p</i>	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
RMSEA	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038
GFI	0.775	0.769	0.772	0.772	0.773
CFI	0.921	0.920	0.920	0.921	0.921
NFI	0.838	0.835	0.835	0.835	0.836
PNFI	0.722	0.734	0.735	0.735	0.735
PCFI	0.794	0.809	0.809	0.810	0.810

Table 23: Model Fit Measurements with Starbucks as the Base Model

	<i>Starbucks</i>	Harley-Davidson	iPhone	MINI	Saab
Chi-Square	1925.643	1961.894	1971.016	1955.328	1925.643
df	1090	1113	1113	1113	1113
Chi-Square/df	1.767	1.763	1.752	1.771	1.757
<i>p</i>	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
RMSEA	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038
GFI	0.775	0.771	0.773	0.771	0.773
CFI	0.921	0.920	0.921	0.919	0.921
NFI	0.838	0.835	0.836	0.834	0.836
PNFI	0.722	0.735	0.736	0.734	0.735
PCFI	0.794	0.810	0.811	0.809	0.810

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND SUMMARY

This chapter reviews the objectives of this research study, discusses the relationships of the objectives, and the actual findings of the study. Additionally, academic and managerial implications will be discussed along with limitations and proposals for future research.

Discussion of Results

“I like Apple because of the quality. Its unofficial slogan is ‘it just works’. I never have any problems with Apple. I wouldn’t know what I’d do if I had to get another computer.”

—Tori

The objective of this dissertation was to better understand the phenomenon of brand evangelism. Again, the definition used throughout this research for brand evangelism is actively “spreading the good word” of a particular brand while attempting to influence others’ consumption behavior. Through the development and testing of a model, this study helps to realize the dimensions that are involved in a consumer becoming a brand evangelist. To date, no research has examined the dimensions of brand evangelism. It was proposed here that these dimensions included brand satisfaction, brand salience, consumer-brand identification, sociability, and opinion leadership. The results of the study garnered some mixed results. It was found that consumer-brand identification, brand salience, and opinion leadership are all concepts that lead to brand evangelism. However, neither brand satisfaction nor sociability has a statistically significant relationship directly related with brand evangelism. It must be noted,

though, that brand satisfaction does have a mediated relationship with brand evangelism through consumer-brand identification.

Brand evangelism historically has occurred more when there is a strong product differentiation in the marketplace distinguishing the brands from competitors. For example, an automobile purchase is not just about the functionality of the car but the features and symbolism associated with the particular brand. As discussed by Merz, He, and Vargo (2009), brands moved from just being an identifier of a good to having functional and symbolic value associated with the branded product. The symbolism aspect was clearly stated by Levy (1959, p.118) as “people buy things not only for what they *can do*, but also for what they *mean*.” Although some may view an automobile as just a mode of transportation, others have such strong feelings about the automobile that it can be considered an extension of oneself (Belk 1988). A key determinant in understanding brand evangelism is the concept of consumer-brand identification. As previously discussed, consumer-brand identification is the consumer’s self-defined perception of oneness and identification with a brand (Bhattacharya and Sen 2003; Kuenzel and Halliday 2008). It was originally Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) who proposed that consumer-company identification will not only lead to company loyalty, but the consumer may become a “champion” on behalf of the company. It was hypothesized in this study that the stronger the consumer-brand identification, the stronger the brand evangelism. This hypothesis was shown to be supported significantly by the research results. To date, there have been limited studies concerning consumer-brand identification and the understanding of this phenomenon. Utilizing this construct here aids in the strengthening of the consumer-brand identification concept in marketing. Consumer-brand identification is based on the understanding of social identification theory, as well as the acceptance that consumers have relationships with brands.

Another supported construct leading into brand evangelism is brand salience. Brand salience is not only top-of-mind awareness, but can be viewed as the frequency with which a consumer mentions the brand in a variety of situations (Alba and Chattopadhyay 1986; Miller and Berry 1998; Romaniuk and Sharp 2003). The supported hypothesis in this study stated that the greater the brand salience, the stronger the brand evangelism. Thus, the more a consumer has top-of-mind awareness, the more apt that consumer is likely to engage in brand evangelism. Looking at this relationship from a different perspective, a brand evangelist is not likely to evangelize the brand if the brand is not at the forefront in the consumer's mind. Because of the brand salience aspect, a brand that lends itself to becoming evangelized is a product that may be utilized on a regular basis. Without the regularity of use, a consumer may not have the brand at the forefront of the mind.

It was also found here that the stronger the brand satisfaction, the stronger the consumer-brand identification. This supported previous research where "the more satisfied a person is with an organization's offerings, the greater the identification" (Bhattacharya et al. 1995, p. 48). Although there has been mixed findings concerning this relationship in the past, it appears that the utilization of branded products rather than intangible not-for-profit brands may be the delineating factor concerning the mixed results. It was also proposed here that brand salience positively strengthens the relationship between brand satisfaction and consumer-brand identification. This hypothesis was not supported and may be due to the fact that a strong relationship between brand satisfaction and consumer-brand identification does not need a moderator to strengthen the existing relationship.

Another hypothesis proposed here was the stronger the satisfaction with a brand, the stronger the brand evangelism. This hypothesis, however, was also not supported in this study.

Depending on the brand and product class, a consumer may be satisfied with the brand yet not have any actual strong feelings associated beyond the satisfaction. As the definition of satisfaction used in this study was the pleasurable fulfillment of a consumer's needs, wants, or desires in reference to the brand (Oliver 1997), pleasurable fulfillment may not necessarily be enough to be an impetus for a consumer to become a brand evangelist.

An interesting juxtaposition to this unsupported hypothesis, however, is that consumer-brand identification positively mediates the relationship between brand satisfaction and brand evangelism. This means that in fact there is a relationship between brand satisfaction and brand evangelism but the construct of consumer-brand identification is involved. Therefore, without a consumer identifying with a particular brand, brand satisfaction does not have a significant relationship with brand evangelism.

Another interesting finding of this research is that an individual with the propensity to be sociable does not necessarily lead into that individual becoming a brand evangelist. It was proposed that the stronger the sociability, the stronger the brand evangelism; this was not supported. The reasoning behind the proposed hypothesis was that a more gregarious person may be more predisposed to be a brand evangelist. Additionally, it was previously found that a person with the personality characteristic of extroversion has a propensity to being a brand evangelist (Matzler et al. 2007). As sociability is a concept within extroversion, sociability may be too narrow of a viewpoint in understanding an appropriate personality characteristic that predisposes an individual to be a brand evangelist.

Finally, it was found that the stronger the opinion leadership, the stronger the brand evangelism. Opinion leaders are product enthusiasts that are well versed in and have information concerning products within a product category. As brand evangelists "spread the good word"

about their brands, it is imperative for the brand evangelist to be respected on their viewpoint and the evangelist is able to understand the characteristics of competing brands. As opinion leaders are knowledgeable on a variety of brands within a product category, so too, is it necessary for a brand evangelist. Without the depth of knowledge of a product category, those individuals listening to a brand evangelist may not be swayed to understand the benefits of the particular brand if the brand evangelist is unable to compare and contrast the evangelized brand from competitors.

Research Contributions and Implications

“Looking at the flipside of brand loyalty I have a brand with which I disassociate myself completely! Whilst I can't even remember the Nestle powder milk controversy at the time I still find myself banishing their products from my shopping basket... and for a KitKat addict believe me it was a sacrifice! One wrong turn for Nestle many moons ago has meant that I am not alone in this behaviour. With great brands comes a great deal of responsibility in my opinion, Nestle did not rise to this responsibility.”
—Daniel

Academic Implications

Although normative pieces have been written concerning brand evangelism (e.g., Collier 2007; Friedman 2007; Kawasaki 1991; McConnell and Huba 2003; Roberts 2004; Rusticus 2006), to date, little research has viewed brand evangelism beyond propositions and cursory attention. This study furthers the understanding of brand evangelism by analyzing the dimensions and relationships that lead to the phenomenon. This phenomenon of brand evangelism can be described as the communication of information, ideas, and feelings concerning a specific brand freely, and often times fervently, to others in a desire to influence consumption behavior. The dimensions found to be statistically significant in better understanding brand evangelism are consumer-brand identification, brand salience, and opinion

leadership. Additionally, this study found that brand satisfaction is a characteristic leading to brand evangelism utilizing consumer-brand identification as a mediator.

Managerial Implications

Results of this study suggest that managers may want to focus on increasing the consumer-brand identification concept, top-of-mind awareness of the brand, and the building of opinion leaders in the marketplace. Additionally, the continuation of brand satisfaction is imperative to maintain consumer-brand identification on behalf of the consumer. The desired effect of these dimensions is to have the consumers acting as “champions” on behalf of the brand and become unpaid spokespeople (Bhattacharya and Sen 2003). Brand evangelism goes beyond a repurchase commitment and construed loyalty of a brand. As loyalty is not necessarily reflected in satisfaction (Oliver 1999), brand managers need to know the influence the variables have beyond brand satisfaction.

A key desired outcome for companies is for the consumer to have intent to repurchase while giving referrals and endorsements of the brand (Jones and Sasser 1995). To propagate the brand evangelism of the consumers, brand managers must move beyond the mere satisfaction that a consumer has with the brand but get to the point where the consumer identifies with the brand. Bhattacharya and Sen (2003, p. 86) discussed one particular way to increase consumer identification with a company is through co-creation activities. Different activities, beyond the co-creation of products and advertising, would be including the consumers in organizational decision making, such as the development and restructuring of company policies and personnel recruitment. Bringing consumers into the development of the company itself could instill further identification the consumer has with the organization and the family brand (Ulwick 2002).

While the brand's corporation integrates the consumer into identifying with the organization and brand, it should also educate the consumer of the product class (or classes) associated with the brand. By allowing the consumer to garner more information concerning the product class, the consumer can become an opinion leader. Providing information to the consumer concerning even positive information on competitors' brands can further strengthen evangelism as the consumer has more depth of knowledge of all products in the class. Although a brand manager may be hesitant providing positive information of competitors, this information can allow the potential brand evangelists to be a better opinion leader, in turn, leading to this consumer becoming a brand evangelist.

Finally, brand managers must continue to advertise and promote the brand for top-of-mind awareness. Having a brand be salient on behalf of the consumer is a necessary dimension leading into brand evangelism. Separate promotional activities may be appropriate for existing consumers of the brand, in addition to promotional activities for non-customers. Loyalty programs are successful in customer retention and in motivating customers to increase purchasing (Lewis 2004). Although loyalty programs can aid in repeat purchasing, it may not have the influencing factor to instill brand evangelism. The loyalty program may be a perk to a brand evangelist, but the utilization of the program as a reminder and recall aid in brand selection can aid in the development of brand evangelism.

A potential problem with having brand evangelists is the potential former or disgruntled brand evangelist. An individual in this category may be as fervent in his/her evangelism against the brand as before the change in brand consumption. The dislike of this brand may be considered to be what Hogg (1998, p. 135) described as "anti choice" or Muniz and Hamer (2001, p. 355) labeled "oppositional brand loyalty." Former brand evangelists may become as passionate for

being an anti-brand evangelist as they were while they consumed the particular brand. The remaining brand evangelists however would be resilient to negative information which could continue to offset the disgruntled former consumers (Bhattacharya and Sen 2003).

Limitations and Further Research

“Those of us who work in publishing want readers to get into brand awareness too (so far, Penguin Classics stands out in book brand awareness). So check out the publisher or imprint of your favorite reading materials and let that help you find other books to love.”

—Caleb

There are several limitations with this study. Firstly, the sampled population resulted in a predominantly White category in the demographics (89.4%). The next two populations were Hispanic/Latino and Asian at 3.4% and 3.2%, respectively. Here, the category of White is larger than the 2009 estimate of the US at 65.6% (US Census Bureau). Additionally, in the US, the category of Hispanic/Latino is estimated at 15.4%, Black at 12.8%, and Asian at 4.5% (US Census Bureau). It is unclear if the surveyed individuals were a true representation of those who utilize the brands. For example, the consumers of the selected brands may be predominantly White, so the representation may be appropriate. Further research should include brands that may be geared specifically to different ethnicities and races. Ethnic differences in consumption may bring in a slight variance in the dimensions leading into brand evangelism.

Leading into the potential underrepresented ethnic/race groups may also be the result of having five brands utilized in this study. The brands used here are reflected in the marketing literature as having some predisposition to having brand evangelists. Incorporating more brands would broaden the scope of this research stream.

A further extension of this research would include the perceptions of brand evangelism in cultures outside of the United States. For example, as some countries are more collectivist than

individualistic (Hofstede 1983), there may be a difference in the understanding and dimensions leading into brand evangelists of another culture's consumer base. Additionally, collectivistic societies may have consumers that learn about brands and develop their understandings of the brands differently than individualistic-based societies.

Another limitation related to the use of the five brands in this study is that the five brands are mainly perceived as goods; there were no "pure" services included. One may perceive a continuum where Saab, MINI, and Harley-Davidson are more goods than services yet iPhone and Starbucks are closer to services. Although each brand has supplementary services associated with the organization, no individual brand's core business is a service. As services are different than goods (Berry 1980; Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry 1985), a separate study including only brands of services could bring more depth to the understanding of brand evangelism.

Summary

*"And THANK YOU, Apple."
—Debbie in reference to iPhone*

Companies have focused on differentiating their brands from competitors. As this continues, companies will diverge within product categories rather than converge. Each company is striving to be unique and irreplaceable (Barney 1991) while building what McKenna (1991, p. 148) describes as a "special relationship" between the consumer and the brand. This relationship is understood when it is seen that the consumers are co-creators of the brand itself (Brown, Kozinets and Sherry 2003; Muniz and O'Ginn 2001). Brand evangelists assist in the co-creation of the overall brand image as they actively engage others in the attributes of the brands. Merz et al. (2009, p. 341) suggested including volunteered consumers in the co-creation process "from the bottom up rather than from the top down" to rethink the brand process. As described by Holt

(2004), brands are ever-changing shared cultural property and not just the ownership of the company. Although the brand evangelists, and co-creators, may not necessarily change the overall message, some evangelists have become unpaid designers of actual advertising and promotional activities for their brands.

These unpaid creators are often referred to as vigilante marketers. Muniz and Schau (2007, p. 187) describe vigilante marketing as “unpaid advertising and marketing efforts, including one-to-one, one-to-many, and many-to-many commercially oriented communications, undertaken by brand loyalists on behalf of the brand.” It would be considered here that vigilante marketers are an extreme example of brand evangelists as they may actually go beyond standard communication practices of “spreading the good word” of a particular brand.

Brand evangelists are committed customers who have a positive emotional connection to the brand. These consumers have moved beyond just being a consumer of the brand but have a connection of identifying with the brand while having the propensity to share the positive attributes of the brand with others. The direct characteristics of identifying with the brand, having a top-of-mind awareness of the brand, and being an opinion leader all aid in the development of a consumer becoming a brand evangelist. This research has helped establish the dimensions of what leads into being a brand evangelist. Additionally, these dimensions aid in garnering a better appreciation and understanding to those individuals who communicate information, ideas, and feelings concerning a specific brand freely, and often times fervently, to others in a desire to influence consumption behavior.

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APPENDIX A

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QUOTES USED THROUGHOUT DISSERTATION

The quotes throughout this dissertation were gathered from past literature, review of websites, and various conversations the researcher had with friends, family, and acquaintances.

Quotes from literature and websites are quoted exactly as they appeared.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Original Quote and Source</i>	<i>Brand</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Sex</i>	<i>Page #</i>
Stroud	“When I evangelize and witness to people, I make a few interesting points.”	Macintosh	Not known	Not known	1
	Belk, Russell W. and Gülnur Tumbat (2005), “The Cult of Macintosh,” <i>Consumptions, Markets and Culture</i> , 8 (3), 205-217.				
Lyn	“If I’m at a function, if it’s there, we’ll use it. I usually bring it with me, so I’ll volunteer it to someone who’s using a sweetener not a sugar. I’ve done that at family reunions.”	Truvia	56	Female	2 & 23
	Personal Interview				
Reanna	“When it comes to shoes, I won’t wear any other brand.”	Nike	21	Female	6
	Personal Interview				
Eric	“Starwood didn’t ask their customers to “do” anything. Their customers did it on their own. You can’t ask your customers to evangelise for your brand, they will do it for you if you give them something great to talk about.”	Starwood	Not known	Male	12
	Friedman, Eric (2007, March 7), The Rights and Wrongs of Brand Evangelism! [Web log], Retrieved from http://www.marketing.fm/2007/03/07/the-rights-and-wrongs-of-brand-evangelism				

<i>Name</i>	<i>Original Quote and Source</i>	<i>Brand</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Sex</i>	<i>Page #</i>
Stephen	“i love my saab, i know its unusual and quirky and that there are those fools out there would will [sic] attempt to compare it to a freaking commie! but if you appreciate it for what it is (a solidly build [sic], safe, reliable and comfortable vehicle) then you can't go wrong. that's not to say it doesn't have faults, some parts are expensive, they are an old car now and their rear leg room isn't gr8.[sic]but i still love it!”	Saab	Not known	Male	15
	Stephen (2008, August 11), 1989 Saab 900 Reviews [Discussion board comment], Retrieved from www.cargurus.com/Cars/reviews-c16337-1989-900.html				
Christina	“I probably won’t buy any other pens, I’ll only buy Pilot pens since they listened to me. I love those pens anyway so that’s a pretty good relationship.”	Pilot Pens	26	Female	17
	Personal Interview				
Bob	“When I see another SAAB, and I think about it for a second, I not only have a feeling for the SAAB, but I kind of know what that guy is like...he’s kind of like me...or she’s kind of like me.”	Saab	Not known	Male	20
	O’Guinn, Thomas C. and Albert M. Muniz, Jr. (2005), “Communal Consumption and the Brand,” in <i>Inside Consumption: Consumer Motives, Goals, and Desires</i> , ed. S. Ratneshwar and David Glen Mick, New York: Routledge, 252-272.				
Sylvia	“It took me a while to recognise that I am kind of addicted to H&M...I know it sounds incredible, but there is rarely a day on which I don't wear something from H&M...But still I am always delighted to see a H&M store wherever I go, asking myself, what I would do without it?”	H&M	Not Known	Female	21
	Nienhaus, Sylvia (2010), Blog Your Brand! [Web log comment], Retrieved from www.blogyourbrand.com/blog				

<i>Name</i>	<i>Original Quote and Source</i>	<i>Brand</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Sex</i>	<i>Page #</i>
Martha	“I enjoy cars and I drive a performance car, so I do talk tires.”	Michelin	Late 50s	Female	25
	Personal Interview				
Tori	“I like Apple because of the quality. Its unofficial slogan is ‘it just works’. I never have any problems with Apple. I wouldn’t know what I’d do if I had to get another computer.”	Apple	21	Female	68
	Personal Interview				
Daniel	“Looking at the flipside of brand loyalty I have a brand with which I disassociate myself completely! Whilst I can’t even remember the Nestle powder milk controversy at the time I still find myself banishing their products from my shopping basket... and for a KitKat addict believe me it was a sacrifice! One wrong turn for Nestle many moons ago has meant that I am not alone in this behaviour. With great brands comes a great deal of responsibility in my opinion, Nestle did not rise to this responsibility.”	Nestle	Not known	Male	72
	Murray, Daniel (2010), Blog Your Brand! [Web log comment], Retrieved from http://www.blogyourbrand.com/blog				

<i>Name</i>	<i>Original Quote and Source</i>	<i>Brand</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Sex</i>	<i>Page #</i>
Caleb	“Those of us who work in publishing want readers to get into brand awareness too (so far, Penguin Classics stands out in book brand awareness). So check out the publisher or imprint of your favorite reading materials and let that help you find other books to love.”	Penguin	Not known	Male	75
	Caleb (2007, November 15), Brand Affinity [Web log comment], Retrieved from www.mentalfloss.com/blogs/archives/9596#comment-35978				
Debbie	“And THANK YOU, Apple.”	iPhone	Not known	Female	76
	Ridpath, Debbie (2009, April 12), Debbie’s Blatherings [Web log], Retrieved from www.blatherings.com/2009/04/why-i-love-my-iphone/				

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

ORIGINAL SCALES

The following are the sourced scales in their original formats with the appropriate references (“rc” refers to reverse coding). The following all used likert scales with anchors of “strongly agree” and “strongly disagree.”

Brand Evangelism:

- I would make a perfect GTI salesperson.
- I have proselytized several of my friends to the GTI brand.
- I try to convince as many as possible of my GTI.
- I feel the need to tell the world that the GTI is the most appealing car of the world.
- If someone tries to decry a GTI, I will tell him off unmistakably.

Matzler, Kurt, Elizabeth A. Pichler and Andrea Hemetsberger (2007), “Who is Spreading the Word? The Positive Influence of Extraversion on Consumer Passion and Brand Evangelism,” American Marketing Association, Winter, 25-32.

Consumer-Brand Identification:

- When someone criticizes the museum, it feels like a personal insult.
- I am very interested in what others think about the museum.
- When I talk about the museum, I usually say we rather than they.
- The museum's successes are my successes.
- When someone praises the museum, it feels like a personal compliment.
- If a story in the media criticized the Museum, I would feel embarrassed.

Bhattacharya, C.B., Hayagreeva Rao, and Mary Ann Glynn (1995), “Understanding the Bond of Identification: An Investigation of Its Correlates among Art Museum Members,” *Journal of Marketing*, 59 (October), 46-57. Based on Mael and Ashworth (1992), “Alumni and their alma mater: A partial test of the reformulated model of organizational identification,” *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 13 (2), p103-123

Brand Salience

- Blood donation is something I rarely even think about. (rc)
- I would feel a loss if I were forced to give up donating blood.
- I really don't have any clear feelings about blood donation. (rc)
- For me, being a blood donor means more than just donating blood.
- Blood donation is an important part of who I am.

Callero, Peter L. (1985), "Role-Identity Salience," *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 48 (3), 203-215.

Brand Satisfaction:

- I am satisfied with my decision to purchase this manufacturer's product.
- My choice to buy this manufacturer's product was a wise one.
- I think that I did the right thing when I bought this manufacturer's product.
- I am not happy that I bought this manufacturer's product. (rc)
- I truly enjoyed my purchase of this manufacturer's product.
- I am pleased with the manufacturer's product.

Zboja, James J. and Clay M. Voorhees (2006), "The Impact of Brand Trust and Satisfaction on Retailer Repurchase Intentions," *Journal of Services Marketing*, 20 (5), 381-390. Based on a subset of Oliver, Richard L. (1997), *Satisfaction: A Behavioral Perspective on the Consumer*, New York: McGraw-Hill.

Sociability:

- I like to be with people.
- I prefer working with others than working alone.
- I find spending time with people more enjoyable than solitary activities, such as reading a book.
- I tend to be a loner. (rc)
- I prefer to do things alone. (rc)
- I am not very sociable. (rc)
- I do not like parties and social events. (rc)

Reynolds, Kristy E. and Sharon E. Beatty (1999), "A Relationship Customer Typology," *Journal of Retailing*, 75 (4), 509-523.

Opinion Leadership:

- My opinion on (product category) seems not to count with other people.
- When they choose a (product category), other people do not turn to me for advice.
- Other people come to me for advice about choosing (product category).
- People that I know pick (product category) based on what I have told them.
- I often persuade others to buy the (product category) that I like.
- I often influence people's opinions about (product category).

Flynn, Leisa Reinecke, Ronald E. Goldsmith, and Jacqueline K. Eastman (1996), "Opinion Leaders and Opinion Seekers: Two New Measurement Scales," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 24 (2), 137-147.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Samuel K. Doss received his Ph.D. from the University of Texas-Pan in Business Administration, specializing in Marketing, (August 2010). Other degrees held include a Bachelor of Science with a major of Finance from Butler University (1999) and a Master of Business Administration from University of Notre Dame (2001).

Samuel K. Doss is an Assistant Professor of Marketing for Florida Institute of Technology in Melbourne, Florida (2009 to present). Previous positions held include Assistant Professor of Business for Kansai Gaidai University in Hirakata City, Japan (2004 to 2006), Owner of Body Focus, LLC in Indianapolis, Indiana (2001 to 2004) and Registered Representative for Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. in Indianapolis, Indiana (1995 to 1998).

Publications for Samuel K. Doss include: Samuel K. Doss and Yong J. Wang (2010), "The Acculturation and Commercialization of Thematic Holidays in the Globalization," *International Journal of Business and Globalisation*, 5 (4), 411-420; Yong Jian Wang, Samuel K. Doss, Chiquan Guo and Wenjing Li (2010), An Investigation of Chinese Consumers' Outshopping Motives from a Culture Perspective: Implications for Retail and Distribution," *International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management*, 38 (6), 423-442; Samuel K. Doss and Ebru Ulusoy (2008), Videography, "Body and Appearance Perceptions of Latino Youth," 22 minutes. Distributed with Michael Solomon, *Consumer Behavior: Buying, Having, and Being*, 8th Edition, Prentice Hall.